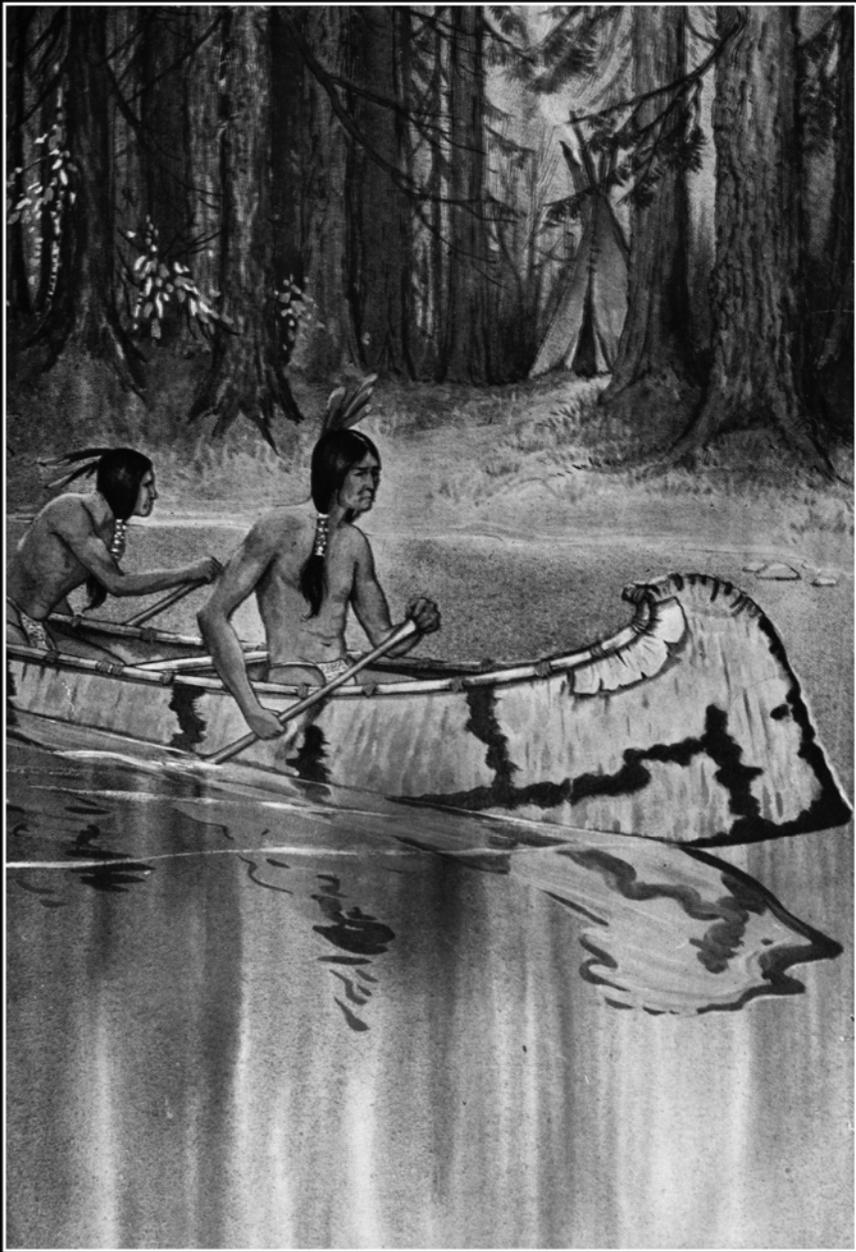


AMERICA FIRST

**ONE HUNDRED STORIES
FROM OUR OWN HISTORY**



“WITH LONG PADDLES AND STRONG ARMS, THE INDIANS FORCED THEIR CRAFT ALONG THE RIVER.”

AMERICA FIRST

**ONE HUNDRED STORIES
FROM OUR OWN HISTORY**

BY

LAWTON B. EVANS

ILLUSTRATED BY

MILO WINTER



YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS

CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

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INTRODUCTION

When children advance beyond the nursery age, no story is so wonderful as a true story. Fiction to them is never as appealing as fact. I have often been faced with the inquiry: whether or not a story is a true one. The look of gratification, when told that “it actually happened,” was most satisfying to me as a story-teller.

The nearer a story is to the life and traditions of the child, the more eagerly it is attended. True stories about our own people, about our neighbors and friends, and about our own country at large, are more interesting than true stories of remote places and people. We naturally are interested in our own affairs, and the nearer they are to us the greater the interest we feel.

That history is just a long, thrilling story of the trials and triumphs of pioneers and patriots is well known to those who have had to do with the teaching of history to youthful minds. That the dry recital of political and governmental history does not interest children is also well known. History should be made

vital, vibrant, and personal if we expect children to be stirred by its study.

To gratify the love of children for the dramatic and picturesque, to satisfy them with stories that are true, and to make them familiar with the great characters in the history of their own country, is the purpose of this volume.

It is hoped that through appeal to youthful love of adventure, this collection of stories, covering the entire range of American history, will stimulate the ambition and strengthen the patriotism of those young citizens whose education has been the constant concern of the author for many years.

LAWTON B. EVANS

Augusta, Ga.



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LEIF, THE LUCKY

Leif was a bold Norseman, and was called “Lucky” because he came safely through so many dangers. He was the bravest seaman of his race, and the sailors believed that whatever boat carried him would come safely into port, no matter how fierce the storm.

When voyagers from the far seas brought word to Iceland that fair lands covered with forests lay to the west, for they had seen them, Leif the Lucky called for thirty-five strong and true men. “Let us sail to this country, and get wood for our ships, and perhaps gold and silver to sell to the kings of Europe,” he said. The men came forward and the ship set sail in the summer.

They went by way of Greenland, where they stopped for more news of the strange lands, and then sailed southwest for many days. The first place they saw was a land of ice and mountains. This was probably Newfoundland. Then they reached a level country covered with trees. This was probably Nova Scotia. Still sailing onward, the little ships with their brave crews came to a beautiful country abounding in

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trees, grass, and flowers. Here they landed, and carried all their baggage ashore with them. The place was so beautiful, they resolved to spend the winter there, and at once set about building houses. This was probably somewhere in Rhode Island.

When the Norsemen had built their houses, Leif said to his men, "Let us explore the land; some of us will stay to guard the houses, and the rest will find out what there is to see." So they set forth into the interior.

Soon they came upon an abundance of grapevines hanging from trees and covered with luscious fruit. Leif was delighted, and at once named the country Vinland, or the Land of Vines. So they gathered grapes, and cut wood for their ships, and built more houses, and settled down to spend the winter in this delightful spot. The cold came on, but the Norsemen did not mind it, for they had plenty of food and great fires; besides which, they were accustomed to cold weather.

In the spring they loaded their ships with timber, and sailed for home. Here they narrated their marvelous story of the new land. Leif offered his ship to his brother, Thorwald, and told him he might go and spend a winter in Vinland. So Thorwald fitted himself out and started for the new country, but he was not as lucky as his brother. He found the homes that had been built by those who had been before him; but the Indians attacked his party one night, and killed Thorwald with a poisoned arrow. He was buried on the shore, and his men set sail for home as soon as the weather allowed them to leave.

LEIF, THE LUCKY

About eight hundred years after this, a skeleton clothed in armor was found buried in the earth at the head of Narragansett Bay. No one knew who it was; but we have every reason to believe that it was the remains of the brave old Norse warrior, Thorwald, or, maybe, of one of his followers. At any rate, the Skeleton in Armor has been the subject of much romance and poetry, and the traditions of the Norsemen have been handed down to us as sagas in the writing of the seafaring Icelanders.

HOW THE SPANIARDS CONQUERED MEXICO

The one thing the early Spaniards wanted above all else was gold. For it they were willing to abandon their homes and families in the Old World, undergo all kinds of hardships and suffering, treat the Indians with great cruelty, and often imperil their own lives. Thus we see what men will do when possessed of a greed for wealth!

In Cuba there lived a Spanish gentleman named Hernando Cortez. He was the son of wealthy parents, and he had studied law. But when nineteen years of age, he had run away from home to find adventures in America. He possessed wonderful courage and great command over men; but by nature he was very cruel. He loved gold, as all the others did in those days, but he loved power and adventure as much as he did wealth.

Cortez heard stories about the wonderful wealth of the King of Mexico. It was said that gold was so common among them that the very people ate and drank from golden vessels. The King was said to live in a palace so covered with gold that it shone like the

HOW THE SPANIARDS CONQUERED MEXICO

sun, while he and all his attendants were believed to wear gold embroidered clothes every day. These fabulous stories were told by the natives, and the Spaniards were wild with excitement.

Cortez was placed at the head of an expedition designed to conquer Mexico, and with him were the bravest of the Spanish captains and the wildest adventurers in the New World. Nothing suited Cortez better than this expedition, and with hope he and his men set forth.

The ruler of Mexico was the proud Montezuma. He was far beyond the ordinary Indian in his ways and manners. He lived in a palace, and fared sumptuously upon the dainties of his land. Was it not said of him that he ate fresh fish, brought every day from the coast by runners who came in relays over two hundred miles? Around him was every kind of comfort and luxury, and Mexico, the capital city, showed many evidences of a high civilization.

When Cortez landed at Vera Cruz, Indian runners carried swift word of the stranger to Montezuma, as he sat on his throne in Mexico City. The King turned pale as he heard of the white men, riding strange animals, killing their enemies with the aid of weapons that gave out smoke and made noises like many thunders. He cried in dismay, "They are the children of the sun, who, according to the traditions of my country, have come to take away my throne. Alas! woe is me, and woe is Mexico!" And the brave Indian monarch shed tears of distress.

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The runners were sent back to Cortez, bearing presents of gold, jewels, and rich cloth, and begging him to begone with his men and leave the country in peace. When Cortez saw the gifts, his eyes blazed with greed, and he said, "Go tell your Montezuma we will visit him in his palace, even if we have to force our way. Tell him also that we have a disease of the heart; it will take much gold to cure us!"

The King heard this message with dismay, for he did not understand why men should want gold. They could not eat or wear it, and he feared their coming to his beautiful capital.

Cortez burned his ships, so that his men could not think of retreat, and then set out on his march to Mexico City. The terrified natives fled before him at the sight of his horses, and at the sound of his cannon and guns. The roads over the mountains were smooth, with here and there a stone house built nearby for the convenience of traders.

At last Cortez and his adventurers came to a point where they could look down over the city of Mexico. Great white stone buildings, were seen on an island in the middle of a lake, connected with the mainland by means of bridges. The temples and palaces were reflected in the clear water, and the whole scene was peaceful and beautiful. "The Land of Gold! The City of Plenty!" exclaimed Cortez, and he rested awhile before preparing for his triumphal entry.

Montezuma sat in his palace with his attendants around him. "The strangers are in the mountains," announced his chief warrior. "Shall I drive them away,

HOW THE SPANIARDS CONQUERED MEXICO

or let them enter?” Montezuma thought awhile, and replied, “It will be of no avail to try and drive them away. Let them enter the city.”

Cortez, on a fine horse and covered with all the trappings of war, attended by his captains and men, rode into the city. Montezuma was carried to meet him in a chair beneath a canopy of feathers. His mantle was decorated with gold and precious stones, and his bearers brought with them great quantities of food and rich gifts for the strangers. Alas for poor Montezuma! If he thought that was the way to get rid of the cruel and greedy Spaniard, he was much mistaken!

Cortez was given the freedom of the city. He went everywhere, observing the means of defense and the provisions of warfare. He visited the temples and saw the priests offering up human lives to the heathen gods. He resolved to force these people to adopt the Christian religion, and to abandon their heathen rites. He was very arrogant, and made the Mexicans give him everything he demanded.

So matters went on for several weeks, until the Mexicans showed plainly that they wanted the Spaniards to leave. But the Spaniards wanted more and more gold, and Cortez became anxious, for the natives were growing tired and unfriendly. He felt that he was walking over a volcano that might blow up at any minute. A Mexican slew one of his soldiers. This proved to Montezuma’s subjects that the white man could be killed. Cortez demanded that the murderer be turned over to him for punishment, and, when this was done, the Spaniards burned him alive in the public

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square. The Mexicans became more sullen and dangerous.

Cortez had only two hundred men with him, and around him were thousands of Mexicans. He and his men, already loaded with plunder and in fear of their lives, resolved to escape with what they had. It would mean for them certain destruction if the Mexicans once began hostilities. Montezuma, whom Cortez had quite terrified, advised him to go, so as to escape the wrath of the Mexican people. Just about this time, Alvarado, one of the Spanish captains, witnessing the sacrifice of human lives at a Mexican religious festival, grew so indignant that he ordered his men to fire their cannon into the group, thereby killing some of the priests.

This brought matters to a crisis. The Spaniards must now indeed leave, and leave quickly. So they planned to go by night. But as they departed over the bridge that connected the city with the mainland, the Mexicans discovered them, and began a merciless attack upon them. They swarmed forth by the thousands, cutting away portions of the bridge, hurling stones and arrows, and rushing upon the Spaniards with their spears. Cortez lost many men before he could withdraw. The greedy Spanish soldiers would not follow his advice to drop their packs of gold as they fled. They clung to their plunder to the very last, and, in consequence, many were killed who might have escaped. In Spanish histories this is known as “the sorrowful night.”

HOW THE SPANIARDS CONQUERED MEXICO

It took a whole year for Cortez to get enough men from Cuba and Spain to march again upon Mexico. In the meantime Montezuma had been slain by his own people, and Guatemazin reigned in his stead. This time the siege lasted three months, and thousands of the Mexicans were slain before the proud city gave way, and the conquest of Mexico was complete. Cortez had at last broken the heart of the ancient race, and from that time on Mexico was in possession of the Spanish conquerors.

THE CONQUEST OF PERU

Francisco Pizarro was a Spaniard of low birth, and was so ignorant that never in all his life did he learn to read and write. His parents were very poor, and his wicked mother deserted him when he was a child. He would have died if he had not been nursed by an old sow.

When Pizarro became old enough to work, he took up the occupation of a swineherd, feeding and tending pigs. He became very rough and lawless, but like all other Spaniards of the day, was eager for conquest in America. So he ran away from his master, and shipped in a vessel bound for the West Indies. Here he met Vasco Nunez de Balboa, and was one of the party that went with this explorer when he beheld the waters of the Pacific Ocean. He heard a great deal about a land to the south, abounding in gold and silver.

Of course Pizarro wanted to conquer this land, just as Cortez had conquered Mexico. With a small party of men and some horses, he started out in one ship to explore the west coast of South America,

THE CONQUEST OF PERU

where the Peruvians lived. As he went down the coast he saw signs of villages here and there, and some large towns with houses and streets. The people he noticed wore clothing, and appeared to have plenty of gold ornaments.

At one place a party of fifty of his men landed with their horses and began a march into the interior. The Peruvians came against them by the thousands, but the Spaniards fired off their guns and dismounted their horses. The strange noise of armor, and the appearance of an animal that could separate itself into two parts,—for the natives thought the horse and rider were one, so terrified the savages that they fled in dismay.

Seeing the vast numbers of people in this new land, and also its limitless riches of gold and silver, Pizarro decided to return to Spain for larger forces and more supplies, and then to return for the complete conquest of Peru. So he made his way back to Spain and reported to his King what he had seen. The Spanish monarch told Pizarro that he might be governor of all the land he subdued, and in addition he might keep half the gold he found. But the King did not give him any money with which to buy ships and supplies.

Pizarro was not daunted, however, by this. After a few months he found enough men and borrowed enough money to start afresh. He landed again on the Peruvian coast, and remained a year in one place, awaiting reinforcements and supplies. He then started on his march inland to meet Atahualpa, who was the

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King of the country. Atahualpa sent friendly messages, beautiful presents of gold, silver, and precious stones, together with plentiful provisions for the Spaniards.

Pizarro marched over the narrow mountain passes with a few hundred men, while Atahualpa could easily have gathered fifty thousand soldiers to overwhelm him. But Pizarro's men were fierce as wolves, while the Peruvians were as timid as sheep. There was no opposition to the onward march of the Spaniards. At last they came to a large village, which had been abandoned by the inhabitants and left for the use of the Spaniards. In this village Pizarro quartered his men, and made himself comfortable.

He was now with about two hundred men in the heart of Peru, a thickly settled country of thousands of Indians, who could destroy him at any time they saw fit. But the Indians were superstitious, timid, and not warlike; while the Spaniards had horses and guns, and were long accustomed to war.

Pizarro fortified his town as best he could, and then sent his own brother, with forty men, to Atahualpa's camp to ask him to pay the Spaniards a visit. "Tell the Inca that he must come, or else I shall make him. I will take a few horses and my men, and lay waste all his country."

The terrified King then made haste to visit the Spanish camp.

Pizarro waited all day for Atahualpa to appear. Late in the afternoon he learned that the King and his men were on the outskirts of the village. So word was sent him that supper was prepared and that it would be

THE CONQUEST OF PERU

kept waiting until he arrived. In the meantime, Pizarro made ready for an attack, inasmuch as he feared the treachery of the Spaniards.

Atahualpa appeared, borne on a litter, plated with silver and gold, and adorned with feathers. With him were five thousand soldiers, carrying clubs, slings, and bags of stones. The cortege halted in the great square, and Pizarro came forward to greet his guest. After an exchange of courtesies, a Spanish priest began to expound the Christian religion. The King listened, and grunted as if he were not interested.

Then Atahualpa glanced around at his soldiers, speaking to them in their own language. The Spaniards thought this was a signal for war, drew their swords, and rushed upon the Indians. They met with but slight resistance. Hundreds of the Indians fell in the pursuit, for they all ran away. Those who bore the King's litter dropped it, leaving the poor monarch on the ground. He was easily taken prisoner, all of his army having fled with loud cries over the mountains.

Atahualpa saw what the Spaniards wanted, and offered to buy his life and liberty by giving up many wagon-loads of gold and silver. Pizarro agreed to this and the wagons began to come in, bringing riches in such abundance that it would have been impossible to carry all away. There were vessels, cups, bowls, idols, earrings, ornaments of all kinds—everything of pure gold or silver.

“Take this and leave my country. Also baptize me as a Christian, if you will, for I would serve your

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God if you will give me back to my people," said Atahualpa.

The eyes of Pizarro burned at the sight of so much wealth. If this were a part of it, why not have it all? His men gathered around the great pile and began to wonder at their own riches.

Pizarro, for no reason whatsoever, began to accuse his captive of treachery, claiming he had an army ready to overwhelm the Spaniards, and hence deserved death for his conduct. He then put the King in chains, and had him tried for treason and for being a heathen.

Poor Atahualpa was sentenced to be burned at the stake. In spite of his willingness to give up all his gold and silver, and to become a Christian, he was cruelly put to death. Thus did Pizarro carry out the practices of the early Spaniards in America, and complete the Conquest of Peru.

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Ponce de Leon was a brave Spanish soldier who came over with Columbus on his second voyage. He was so fine a soldier that he was made governor of a part of Hispaniola. One day he stood on a high hill, and saw the fair shores of Porto Rico. "I will conquer that island," said he, and forthwith sailed across the waters, annexing it as one of his possessions and establishing himself as governor.

Like all the early Spaniards he was cruel to the Indians and greedy for gold. He made the poor natives work hard, and slew them for the slightest offenses. In consequence, De Leon was hated as were all the Spanish oppressors of that period.

De Leon was getting old; his hair was white, his strength was waning, and he longed for the vigor and fire of youth. One time he complained to an Indian of his coming age. The cunning savage replied: "Across the sea, only a few days' sail from here, there is a beautiful land full of flowers and fruit and game. It is the most beautiful place in the world, far more lovely than this island. Somewhere yonder there is a fountain

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of magic water, in which, if one bathes, his hair will become black and his limbs will become strong. He then can carry his sword without fatigue, and conquer his enemies with his strong arm. He will again be a young man!”

De Leon listened gladly to the story of this wily savage who was merely trying to get him and his men to leave Porto Rico. He resolved to find the beautiful country, so that he might bathe in the Fountain of Youth. He called his men to him at once and told them about the wonderful water. In a few days he set sail on his quest, full of foolish hope and pride.

It was in the early spring; the breeze was soft and the air was mild. In a short while the ship came to land, and De Leon named it Florida. He anchored his ship, and his men rowed him to shore. The spot where they landed was near the mouth of the St. John River, not far from where St. Augustine now stands. They were the first white men to set foot on the soil of the mainland of North America, since the days of the Northmen, five hundred years before.

Now began the vain search for the Fountain of Youth. Deep into the forests the soldiers plunged, wondering at the gorgeous flowers, the abundant fruit, and the plentiful game. The Indians scurried away at the approach of the strange white faces. De Leon and his men were bent on other things than Indians and flowers; they were hunting for their lost youth! In every stream, brook, river, and creek they bathed. Up and down the coast they wandered, trying the waters

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

everywhere. They had never bathed as much before in all their lives, but it was all in vain!

No matter where or how often he bathed, Ponce de Leon's hair remained white, his skin was dried and his limbs were bent with age and fatigue. In vain he tried a hundred places, and at last exclaimed, "There is no such fountain here; we must return to Porto Rico."

Accordingly, he set sail for the island from whence he had departed, just as old, just as white haired, and just as foolish in his belief as when he had started out on his fruitless mission. If De Leon did not find his Fountain of Youth, he at least did discover a beautiful country, and give a name to one of the future states of our Union.

For nearly a year afterwards, De Leon and his men wandered up and down the coast of Florida. Perhaps they were still seeking the Fountain of Youth. One day, they were attacked by the Indians, and De Leon was wounded by an arrow. His followers put him on board ship and sailed away to Cuba. Here De Leon died of his wounds, with all his hopes unfulfilled.

DE SOTO DISCOVERS THE MISSISSIPPI

Hernando de Soto had been with Pizarro in Peru, and had seen there the temples all plated with gold. He was eager for conquests and wealth of his own, and called for volunteers to follow him into the unexplored lands which lay northward. Hundreds of warriors flocked to his standard, thirsting for gold and adventure. It was always so with the Spaniards of those days!

In May, 1539, De Soto, with six or seven hundred followers, landed at Tampa, in Florida. He carried blood-hounds to hunt the Indians and chains to fetter them. A drove of hogs was brought along for fresh meat. The men were provided with horses, fire-arms, cannon, and steel armor. It was a gay and cruel band, bent on war and on finding gold.

They had not gone far before out of the forests there stepped a white man, named Juan Ortiz, who had been captive among the Indians for ten years. He knew the Indian language well, and joined the adventurers as guide and interpreter.

DE SOTO DISCOVERS THE MISSISSIPPI

The band marched northward, everywhere robbing the villages of food, and terrifying the Indians. A year passed, and there was no gold. Fear alone made the Indians meet them with peace, but this was repaid by the Spaniards with many brutal deeds. At last they came to the banks of the Savannah River, where they were met by a beautiful Indian Princess. As they neared the village, she came out to meet them and welcome them, hoping thus to make friends with them. She was borne on a litter by four of her subjects. She alighted before De Soto, and made signs of peace and friendship. Taking a double string of pearls, which she wore, she hung it around the neck of De Soto and bade him follow her into the village.

Here the party rested for awhile, entertained by the Princess and her people. But De Soto ill repaid her kindness. On leaving, he and his men robbed the village of all the valuables they could find, and took the Princess captive. They made her follow them into the wilderness. But De Soto gained little by this cruelty, for, after a few days' marching, the Princess escaped, taking with her a large box of pearls, which De Soto had prized very highly.

They now marched westward and then southward, until they came to the town of Mavila, where Mobile, Alabama, now stands. The Indian Chief met De Soto with a great show of friendship, and begged him and a few of his soldiers to enter the palisade which protected the village. No sooner had they done so than the Chief shouted a word of insult and ran into one of the houses. In a moment a cloud of arrows swept from the houses, and many of the

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Spaniards fell dead. Only De Soto and a few of them escaped. Enraged by this treatment, the Spaniards assaulted the town, and a terrible battle followed, lasting nine hours. In the end the Spaniards won, but they lost many men, and nearly all of their property was destroyed. The town was burned and hosts of Indians killed, but De Soto could ill afford to lose anything more, for his men were few and the natives were many.

A year and over had now passed, and the adventurers were tired of their journey. They had found no gold, but had experienced only hardship and battle and danger. They clamored to go home, but De Soto would not hear of it. He made them again take up their journey northward and westward.

It was now a strange-looking army. The uniforms with which they had started had worn out, and were replaced by skins, and mats made of rushes and bark. Their hair and beards had grown until they looked like wild men. All the hogs had long since been eaten, or had died on the march. The Indians, forced to go along and carry the baggage, often escaped at night, taking with them or destroying before they left whatever they could. The remaining horses were gaunt and haggard. There was no longer any medicine, and but little ammunition for the guns. These men were sick at heart and sorely discouraged.

Onward they trudged, day by day, avoiding the Indians as much as they could. Two years passed, and again it was May. One morning they marched out of the thick undergrowth, and stood on the banks of a

DE SOTO DISCOVERS THE MISSISSIPPI

great river. It was the Mississippi, the Father of Waters, gazed upon for the first time by the eyes of a white man. It was a noble and imposing sight, as the vast volume of water rolled majestically before them on its way to the Gulf of Mexico.

Little, however, did De Soto care for the majesty or beauty of this river. In his heart still burned the desire for gold. He cried to his men: "Let us hasten and build boats that we may cross. It was a hard task for his enfeebled followers, but they undertook the labor, that they and their few horses might get to the other side. Once over, they began the fruitless search, but always with the same result.

For another year they wandered over the country, west of the Mississippi. Sometimes they had to fight the Indians, always losing a few men and shortening their ammunition supply. Sometimes they were kindly treated, and rested in the villages. At one place the Indians thought De Soto was a god, and brought to him the sick to be healed and the blind to be cured. They were sorely disappointed at the result.

De Soto was now weary, emaciated and ill. He had at last lost his dreams, and the time had come for him to die. He had caught a fever from camping in a swampy place, and he knew his final hours were at hand. Calling his men around him, he begged their forgiveness for the perils and suffering he had made them endure, and appointed one among them to be his successor. The next day he died, and was buried near the camp.

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His followers, however, feared the Indians would attack them, should they discover that De Soto was dead, or find his body. For all along he had pretended that he was immortal and could neither die nor be slain. Therefore, at night, his body was taken up, wrapped in clothes filled with sand and stones, and carried to the middle of the river, where it was dropped into the keeping of the mighty current he had discovered.

What was left of the band of adventurers fashioned a few boats of rough material, and embarked on the river to make their way out of the wilderness. For many days and weeks they sailed and toiled, until at last a ragged remnant reached a settlement in Mexico, where they told the sad story of their wanderings and misfortunes.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Walter Raleigh was a gallant young man of England, very bold and fond of adventure. He was an officer in Queen Elizabeth's army. One day, in London, he had an opportunity of attracting the attention of the Queen, herself. She was out for a walk in the royal park, attended by her courtiers, when the party came to a muddy place in the path over which the Queen must go. As she hesitated for a moment, there stepped from the bystanders a young man who threw his cloak down over the mud so that she might pass without soiling her shoes. When she had crossed, she called the young man to her side and offered to pay for the velvet cloak.

"The only pay I desire, your Majesty, is permission to keep the cloak; for since your Majesty's foot has pressed on it, it has become valuable indeed," was the reply of the young officer.

The Queen was pleased at the answer, and asked his name. "Walter Raleigh, most gracious lady," said he. The Queen passed on, but the next day she sent for him and made him one of the guards in the royal household.

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Raleigh soon grew into favor with the Queen. Court life was very gay in the reign of Elizabeth. Raleigh was among the most brilliant and successful of all the courtiers. He had many suits of satin and velvet, he wore a hat with a band of pearls, and his shoe-buckles cost several thousand dollars. He also had a suit of silver armor, studded with diamonds. He paid for all these things himself, for he was not only a fine soldier and sailor, but was also one of the best business men of his time.

Among the cherished plans of Raleigh was one to found a colony in the New World. The Queen said he might plant a colony in America anywhere he could find a place, but that he must do so at his own expense. The Queen was as thrifty as Raleigh was adventurous.

So he fitted out two ships, and collected a lot of poor people who were willing to go anywhere, and he sent them across the ocean to plant a colony in the New World. After four months' sailing, they came to Roanoke Island, off the coast of North Carolina. Taking a look at the land, they sailed back home, and reported that the country was very beautiful, but that they would rather be in England. Raleigh named the land Virginia, in honor of the Virgin Queen; he was not quite sure where it was.

The next year another company was sent out by Raleigh. They landed on Roanoke Island and started a colony, but in a short while they grew tired and a passing ship took them also back to England. Thus the second effort was a failure.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

These colonists, however, brought back to Raleigh many products of the country, among other things some tobacco, which they told Raleigh the Indians burned in their pipes, drawing the smoke through their mouths. Raleigh liked the idea of smoking, and soon began to use tobacco like the Indians. As he sat in his room one day with his pipe, blowing the smoke into the air, his servant came in with a pot of ale. He was amazed to see smoke coming out of Raleigh's mouth. "The master is on fire," he cried in alarm, and threw the ale into Raleigh's face, very much to the latter's amusement and chagrin.

One day while smoking before the Queen, Raleigh laid her a wager he could weigh the smoke coming from his pipe. The Queen accepted the bet. Raleigh thereupon weighed a small quantity of tobacco, smoked it all, and then carefully weighed the ashes. The difference between the weight of the tobacco and the weight of the ashes, he said, must be the weight of the smoke. The Queen laughingly paid the wager.

Raleigh tried to found a third colony in America, but it came to grief and was lost; he therefore gave up all his plans of colonization. He had spent large sums of money, and besides he had married one of the Queen's maids-of-honor, which so displeased Elizabeth that Raleigh lost his favored place at Court. He managed to get up an exploring party to go to South America in search of gold. Soon after his return to England, the Queen died, and James I. became King.

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King James did not like Raleigh, and listened to his enemies, who were envious of his popularity. Charges were preferred against him, and he was thrown into prison. On the day of his trial, he pleaded his own cause with great eloquence. He spoke all day long, from early morning until dark, but he was condemned to death.

For some reason he was not executed for fifteen years, but was kept confined in prison, where he spent his time writing a history of the world.

He met death like a brave man, asking to be executed in the morning hours, for he had a fever at the time, and he knew that if he waited until evening the chill would come and he would shake; thus his enemies might think he trembled for fear. His request was granted. As he mounted the block, he touched the headsman's axe, saying, "It is a sharp medicine, but it will cure all ills."

He then laid his aged head upon the block, and, when the axe fell, the old courtier's troubles were over.

THE LOST COLONY OF ROANOKE

When Sir Walter Raleigh tried a third time to plant a colony on Roanoke Island, he sent across the ocean farmers, mechanics and carpenters, with their wives, thinking that families would be more content to stay than single men. The expedition was in charge of Captain John White.

The colonists landed on the island, built houses and forts, planted gardens, and cultivated the fields. Raleigh had advised them to make friends with the Indians. So, when one of the Chiefs came in, Captain White greeted him, and gave him some cheap jewelry, a gaudy handkerchief, and a knife as presents. He then asked the Indian to kneel down while he conferred on him the title of Lord of Roanoke.

All went well with the little colony. The houses were ready for the coming winter, the crops were growing, and the Indians were friendly. There was great rejoicing when it was announced that Mrs. Dare, the daughter of the Governor, had a little baby girl, the first white child of English parents to be born in America.

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Governor White thought he might safely sail back to England in order to get some supplies for the winter; he planned to return to his colony in a few weeks. So he went to England, leaving his happy people on Roanoke Island. But, when he reached England, he found that country in a state of great excitement over the threatened Spanish invasion.

It seems that a bold Englishman, Sir Francis Drake, had sailed into the harbor of Cadiz, in Spain, and had burned or captured all the ships there. This had made the Spaniards angry, especially as he had said, "I have singed the beard of the Spanish King."

The King of Spain fitted out a great fleet intended to destroy the English navy; he would land an army on English soil and plunder England herself! The fleet consisted of about one hundred and thirty ships, with 30,000 soldiers and sailors. It would not be considered wonderful in these days, but it was considered a great fleet then, and was called the "Invincible Armada."

This expedition created consternation in England, and everybody was hurried on board ships to fight the Spaniards. Hardly had the Armada sailed out of the harbor before a severe storm scattered the English ships; so that, later on, Drake and the other English sea captains fought the enemy singly. Fortunately, the English ships were light and were able to sail all around the big, heavy Spanish ships, doing them much damage and not suffering much themselves. The Armada circled the British Isles, meeting storm after storm, and pursued and harried by

THE LOST COLONY OF ROANOKE

the English. At last the great fleet was broken up in a terrible gale, many of the ships were lost, and the great Armada came to nought.

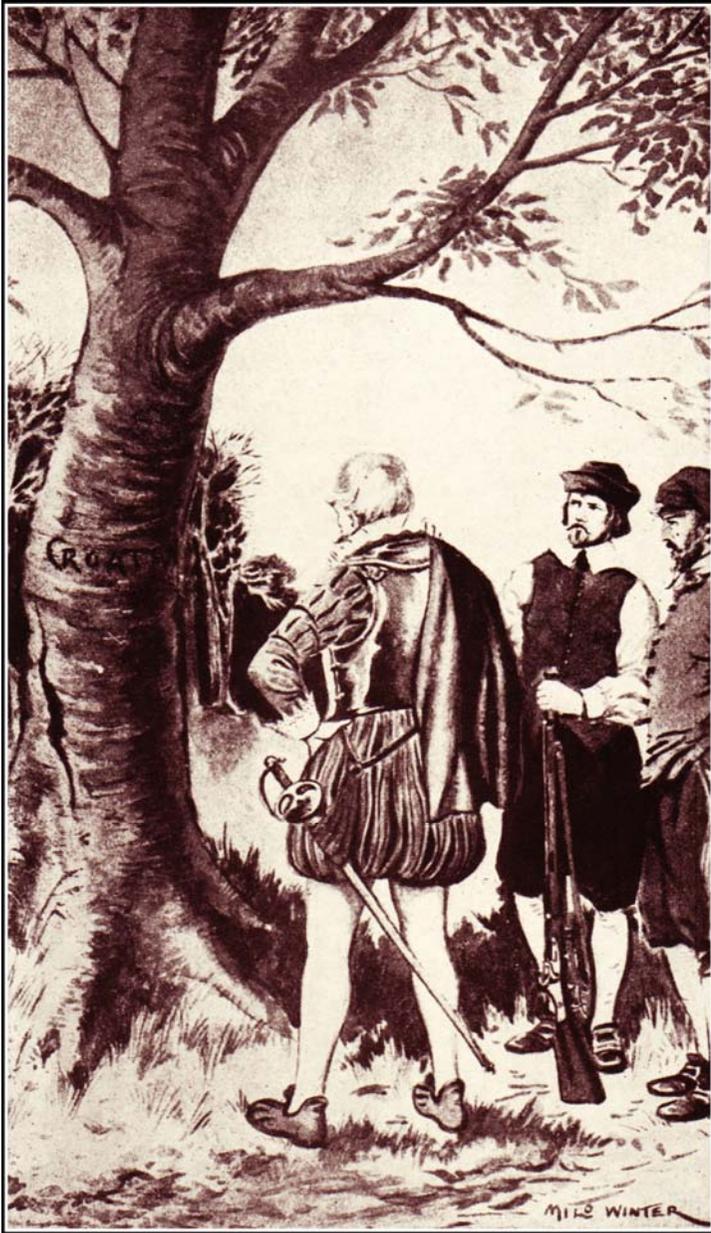
It took a long time for all this to happen, and, in the meanwhile, Governor White could not get back to his colony at Roanoke. One ship was fitted out and ready to sail, but the Government seized it and sent it off to fight the Spaniards. Another ship was made ready, and actually sailed, but the Captain turned pirate, and went after Spanish vessels in the West Indies. It was nearly three years before Governor White found himself on board his own ship, on his way to the colonists and to his little granddaughter.

We can imagine the feelings of the old Captain as he sailed over the seas, wondering what had become of his friends and family, and how they had fared all this time. They had looked for him to return to them in a few months, and here it was nearly three years!

Land was sighted one day just after dark, and a light glimmered on shore. "That must be the home of one of the colonists," exclaimed the Governor. Hastily, a boat was lowered and he was rowed to shore. On landing, his men with him looked about, called aloud, blew trumpets and fired off their guns, but there was not a sight or a sound of any of the colonists.

All night they searched, and next day. At last they came to a few huts, broken down and long unused; there were also some torn bits of clothing scattered about. No signs could be found of any

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ON A TREE NEARBY WAS
CARVED THE WORD 'CROATAN.'

THE LOST COLONY OF ROANOKE

colonists having been near in a great while. On a tree near by was carved the word, *croatan*. Governor White, when he saw this, thought he knew what had become of the colonists, because he had told them that if, for any cause, it was necessary for them to move away, they should carve on a tree or door-post the name of the place to which they were going. Croatan was the name of a tribe of Indians, and the Governor at once thought his colonists had gone to the island where those Indians lived.

He tried to reach this island, but storms arose and blew him off his path. Besides which, his crew demanded that he return home. So he set sail for England, leaving the lost colony to its fate. From that day to this no one has ever known what became of the lost colony of Roanoke, or of the little baby girl whose eyes first saw the light on the soil of America.