

religious care. But when he offered—wishing to obtain possession of the relic—to exchange it for an image of the Virgin, the chief made an evasive reply, and next morning was missing, having fled with the picture in his possession. It was all in vain that Las Casas sent messages after him, “assuring him that he should not be deprived of the relic, but, on the contrary, that the image should likewise be presented to him.” The cacique would not return to the village till he knew that the Spaniards had departed.

We find Ojeda next in Jamaica, and afterwards in San Domingo, where he inquired earnestly after the Bachelor Enciso, who had, it will be remembered, promised to aid him with reinforcements and supplies. He was assured that that ambitious lawyer had sailed for the settlement, which was a fact. Next we find the sanguine Ojeda endeavouring to set on foot another armament, but the failure of his colony was too well understood, and there were no more volunteers, either as regards personal service or pecuniary aid. The poor adventurer was destined never again to see his settlement, the subsequent history of which is a series of intrigues and disasters. He died in abject poverty in San Domingo, and “so broken in spirit that, with his last breath, he intreated his body might be buried in the monastery of St. Francisco, just at the portal, in humble expiation of his past pride, *that every one who entered might tread upon his grave.*” Nicuesa, after many vicissitudes, was lost at sea. The Bachelor Enciso was rather snubbed when he arrived at Ojeda’s colony, but made some fortunate ventures, and plundered a village on the banks of a river named Darien, collecting great quantities of gold ornaments, bracelets, anklets, plates, and what not, with food and cotton to the value of ten thousand castillanos, or about ten thousand seven hundred pounds sterling. Among the men who for a time served with Enciso was Vasco Nuñez de Balbao, afterwards the discoverer of the Pacific from the Isthmus of Darien, of whom these pages have already furnished some account. He joined the expedition of Enciso in a very curious manner. He had been a man of very loose and prodigal habits, but had settled down on a farm in Hispaniola, where he soon became hopelessly involved in debt. The proposed armament gave him the opportunity he sought of running away from his creditors. He concealed himself in a cask, which was taken on board the vessel as though containing provisions. When the vessel was fairly out at sea “Nuñez emerged like an apparition from his cask, to the great surprise of Enciso, who had been totally ignorant of the stratagem. The Bachelor was indignant at being thus outwitted, even though he gained a recruit by the deception, and, in the first ebullition of his wrath, gave the fugitive debtor a very rough reception, threatening to put him on shore on the first uninhabited island they should encounter. Vasco Nuñez, however, succeeded in pacifying him, ‘for God,’ says the venerable Las Casas, ‘reserved him for greater things.’” It was Nuñez who afterwards directed Enciso to the village where he obtained so much plunder.

Another remarkable man of that age was Juan Ponce de Leon, the conqueror of Porto Rico, and the discoverer of Florida. He had amassed a considerable amount of wealth in the former place, and, like many of the active discoverers of that energetic age, was ambitious for new triumphs. By accident he met with some Indians who assured him “that far to the