

saw in the sand the print of the savages' feet trodden that night; and as we entered up the sandy bank, upon a tree at the very brow thereof were curiously carved these fair Roman letters, C R O, which letters presently we knew to signify the place where I should find the planters seated, according to a token agreed upon at my departure." He had told them in case of distress to carve over the letters or name a cross; but no such sign was found. At the spot itself where he expected the settlement, he found the houses taken down, and the place enclosed with logs or trees. Many heavy articles, bars of iron, pigs of lead, shot, and so forth, were lying about, almost overgrown with grass and weeds. Five chests, of which three were his own, were found at last, but they had been evidently broken into by the savages. "About the place," says White, "many of my things, spoiled and broken, and my books torn from the covers, the frames of some of my pictures and maps rotten and spoiled with rain, and my armour almost eaten through with rust." But on one of the trees or chief posts of the enclosure, the word CROATOAN was carved in large letters, and he now understood that they were with Manteo's tribe. It was agreed that they should make for that place; but again fortune was against them.

One disaster followed another, and when at last they left Virginia, it was with the intention of wintering in the West Indies, and returning the following spring; but even this was not to be. Stress of weather drove them to the Azores, and once there it was naturally decided to return to England. No later attempt was made to succour them, and the fate of ninety-one men, seventeen women, and nine children, and of two infants born there, the names of which are preserved in Hakluyt, was never known. Raleigh has been greatly blamed for inhumanity in this connection. His excuse is that it was the busiest part of his eventful life. He had just borne his part in the defeat of the Armada; had been one of eleven hundred gentlemen who ventured on the unfortunate Portuguese expedition; had been sent, in what was regarded as an honourable banishment, but none the less an exile, to Ireland; on regaining his place in the queen's favour had taken an active part in Parliamentary service; was concerned in a fresh naval expedition from which he was recalled by the queen, and had his first taste of that cell in the Tower, which later on he left only for the scaffold.

In 1595, we find Raleigh bent on a discovery which had long been a feverish dream with him—the conquest of the fabled El Dorado. It was but the result of the discoveries of the Spaniards in Mexico and Peru; and all over the Spanish main there was a fond belief extant in something greater and richer than anything yet found. One of the traditions of the day was that a relative of the last reigning Inca of Peru, escaping from the wreck of that empire, with a large part of its remaining forces and treasure, had established himself in a new country, which was found to be itself as rich in mines as that from which he had migrated. "The Spaniards," says Southey, "lost more men in seeking for this imaginary kingdom than in the conquest of Mexico and Peru."

Raleigh was encouraged in this enterprise by such men as Cecil, and the Lord High Admiral Howard, who contributed to its cost. His idea was to enter the land of gold by the Orinoco, and prior to his own voyage he despatched a ship, under Captain Whiddon, to reconnoitre on that part of the coast, and to seek information at the island of Trinidad. When Raleigh and his squadron had arrived at one of its ports he found a company of Spaniards