

What was the lamentable result? Some score of years later the Spanish Governor of Hispaniola, one of the Greater Antilles, wanted labourers. He turned his thoughts to the Bahamas, and was authorized by this very Ferdinand to procure them from there.

Want of  
labour.

Now the reverence and love of these natives for their dead relatives was very great; so the Spaniards promised to convey these unhappy "savages" in their ships to the "heavenly shores," where their departed friends dwelt. In this way about 40,000 of them were kidnapped and transported to Hispaniola, where they perished miserably working in the mines. These Spaniards were the subjects of "his most Christian Majesty" Ferdinand of Spain, whose wife, Isabella, instituted the Inquisition; and now say which were the Savages and which were the Christians—the Spaniards or the natives?

Treach-  
ery.

Chris-  
tians

After that date there is no record of a Spanish visit to the Bahamas, except the extraordinary cruise of Juan Ponce de Leon. This man spent months here searching for the Island of Bimini, which was reported to contain the Elixir of Life, the miraculous "Fountain of Youth." A hundred years later the deserted islands were visited by the English, who formed a settlement in New Providence, whence after a time the Spaniards expelled them.

The foun-  
tain  
of youth.

1629  
1641

Later on the English made a fresh settlement. The same King Charles who brought Bombay to the English nation made a grant of these islands to some of his favourites. The French and the Spaniards, however, made a descent on New Providence, blew up the fort, burnt the settlement, and carried off the Governor and the inhabitants to Cuba. News travelled slowly in those days, and when a new Governor arrived from England to take over the administration, he found no one to govern, there wasn't a single living soul in the place.

A  
deserted  
settle-  
ment

It was after this that the islands became the resort of pirates. Things got so intolerable that some Bristol merchants petitioned the English Government, who sent

In  
English  
hands