

Whereupon the priest lost patience. He had spent too much time ready in trying to convert this infidel. "Set on at once, I absolve you," he cried to Pizarro, who was only awaiting the word. Martial music struck up, cannon and muskets began to fire, and the Spanish horsemen rode in among the astonished Peruvians. Not a single Spaniard fell, and four thousand Peruvians were slaughtered. "The Spaniards," says Robertson, "pursued them towards every quarter, and with deliberate and unrelenting barbarity continued to slaughter wretched fugitives, who never once offered to resist. The carnage did not cease until the close of day."

The Inca was a captive, and his kingdom was ransacked for gold. It was divided up on the festival of St. James, the patron saint of Spain. "Though assembled," as Robertson says, "to divide the spoils of an innocent people, secured by deceit, extortion, and cruelty, the transaction began with a solemn invocation of the name of God." More than eight thousand pounds fell to the lot of each horseman, and half as much to each foot soldier. Pizarro's own share must have amounted to a large fortune.

These infamous wretches capped the rest of their crimes by their treatment of the captive Inca. They resolved to try him in a Spanish criminal court, Pizarro being one of the judges. Never was there such a tragical-farce, or such a farcical comedy. Amongst other charges against the Inca were these: he had incited his subjects to resist the Spaniards, and had wasted treasure which belonged to the conquerors! For these wonderful offences he was condemned to be *burnt alive*. Such was the sentence of the court presided over by the base and bloody Pizarro, and Father Valverde warranted it to be just. The poor monarch, tried and sentenced by foreigners in his own country, pleaded with tears to be sent to Spain, but the unfeeling Pizarro ordered him to immediate execution. Father Valverde, however, made an effort to convert him. He was promised a mitigation of his punishment if he would embrace the Christian religion. The offer was accepted, the poor Inca was baptized, and then strangled at the stake instead of being burnt to death.

Pizarro with his Spaniards went through Peru, slaughtering and robbing to his heart's content. Happily he paid the penalty of his crimes at last, being beheaded for rebellion against his own sovereign. The fact is, the Spaniards quarrelled amongst themselves over the spoils of Peru, which were richer than those of Mexico. They killed each other like greedy devils, but the natives were the worst sufferers. The civilization of the country was absolutely destroyed. A hundred years afterwards its scanty inhabitants looked with ignorant astonishment at the mysterious ruins of its recent greatness.

It is beyond doubt that Cortes, Pizarro, and nearly all the other Spaniards engaged in the conquest of America were devoted sons of the Church, and felt that they were not violating any religious principle in their treatment of the