

who had adventured into the forests on this mad expedition. Parties were sent ashore and round the coasts, where they fired signal guns and sounded trumpets, but in vain. At length some of them arrived at a great thicket of mangrove trees, amid the entanglements of which they caught a glimpse of a man in Spanish attire. Approaching, they found that it was their commander, buckler on shoulder and sword in hand, but so weak with hunger and fatigue that he could not utter a word. When he was a little revived by the fire they made on the shore, and the food and wine they gave him, he told the story of how he had escaped from the savage bands, how he had hidden every day, and struggled forward at night among rocks and thickets and matted forests till he reached the coast. As another proof of the special protection of the Virgin he showed them his buckler bearing the marks of 300 arrows, while he had received no wound whatever.

Just as this transpired, the fleet of Nicuesa arrived, and Ojeda was much troubled in mind, remembering his late rash challenge. He ordered his men to return to the ships, and leave him on the shore till his rival should depart. Some of the men went to Nicuesa and intreated him not to take advantage of Ojeda's misfortunes. But there was no need for this, and Nicuesa blushed with indignation that they should think him a gentleman so unworthy the name. He told them to bring their commander to him, and when they met he received his late foe with every show of friendship. "It is not," said he, "for hidalgos, like men of vulgar souls, to remember past differences when they behold one another in distress. Henceforth, let all that has occurred between us be forgotten. Command me as a brother. Myself and my men are at your orders, to follow you wherever you please, until the deaths of Juan de la Cosa and his comrades are revenged." This noble offer was not one of words only, and the two commanders became fast friends. Four hundred men, with several horses, were landed, and they approached the village, which had cost them seventy lives, in the dead of the night, their near approach being heralded by the numerous parrots in the woods, which made a great outcry. The Indians paid no attention, however, believing that the Spaniards had been exterminated, and they found their village in flames before they took the alarm. The Spaniards either killed them at their doors or drove them back into the flames. The horses, which they supposed to be savage monsters, caused great alarm. The carnage was something fearful, for no quarter was given. While ranging about in search of booty they found the body of La Cosa tied to a tree, swollen and discoloured in a hideous manner by the poison of the Indian arrows. "This dismal spectacle had such an effect upon the common men that not one would remain in that place during the night." The spoil in gold and other valuables was so great that the share of Nicuesa and his men amounted to 37,281 dollars.

Ojeda now, somewhat late in the day, took the advice of his late faithful lieutenant, and steered for the Gulf of Uraba, where he formed a settlement which he named St. Sebastian. The Indians of the surrounding country proved unfriendly and hostile, and at length their provisions began to fail. "In one of their expeditions they were surprised by an ambuscade of savages in a gorge of the mountains, and attacked with such fury and effect that they were completely routed, and pursued with yells and howlings to the very gates of St. Sebastian. Many died in excruciating agony of their wounds, and others recovered with extreme difficulty. Those who were well no longer dared to venture forth