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CHAPTER VI.

ON THE TRAIL OF MOSCOSO, 1542.

Subheading
A Study of the Route of ~~the~~ Luis Moscoso de Alvarado, in the Six Months' March which he led from the Mississippi River Westward Across the Wilds of Arkansas and Texas, as Governor and Captain-General of the Army of ~~the~~ Hernando de Soto, After the latter's Death.

The interest and the historical importance of Moscoso's long march into Texas ~~has~~ have been too little appreciated. The strange wanderings of Cabeza de Vaca from southeastern Texas to the Pacific, preceded it by a few years, and have diverted attention from it; and it has been relatively lost sight of also in the more ambitious undertaking of the Adelantado, De Soto, of whose famous land expedition in greater Florida it was not only the concluding chapter, but an extension of no mean magnitude. The explorations led by De Soto himself, extended but a ~~very~~ few miles southwest of the Arkansas River.

Moscoso's expedition was that in which white men first traversed the territory of Northern Texas; and for the light it sheds upon the early distribution of the aborigines of the Red River Valley and of the whole country from the lower Arkansas River to and beyond the upper Colorado River of Texas, as well as incidentally upon their character and condition, it is of considerable value.

To trace Moscoso's route in detail, therefore, merits a ~~very~~ *effort*, even if that effort—like the present one—be not final, but tentative.

~~Many have been the theories—most of them off-hand guesses—as to the route of Moscoso; some of them making its terminus at the base of the central Rocky Mountains. A few writers—the~~

latest of them Lewis,* whose results ours in part follow— have

Footnote

*See writings of Theodore H. Lewis in Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vols. VI and VII; and his annotations of "The Narrative of the Expedition of Hernando de Soto, by the Gentleman of Elvas", in Charles Scribner's Sons' "Spanish Explorers in the Southern United States 1528-1543", published (1907) as one of the series of "Original Narratives of Early American History, reproduced under the auspices of the American Historical Association", and under the general editorship of Dr. J. Franklin Jameson.

made the matter a subject of serious study.

Moscoso's retinue consisted of several hundred Spanish and Portuguese foot and horse, most of them armored, some black servants, and a variable number of native slaves and burden-bearers.

As the objects and limits of this chapter do not allow a complete narrative of the expedition, our readers are referred, for much interesting matter concerning it, to the original accounts that have been written by the Gentleman of Elvas, Biedma, Ranjel, and Garcilaso de la Vega, and to the translations, annotated reprints, and ~~edited~~ compilations that have been made from those originals.* For

Footnote

*See especially Bourne's "Narratives of the Career of Hernando de Soto." (New York, 1904.)

the omission here of much of the bloody and harrowing detail of the march, as the army, like a ruthless and devastating tornado, swept through the country, leaving oftentimes death and desolation in its wake, apology is unnecessary. A few episodes, of romantic or other ~~special~~ interest, are introduced from the pen of Theodore Irving.

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Soon after De Soto's death, a council of the captains and principal men having been convened by Moscoso, the new governor, the relative merits of sea and land were discussed, as to which would be the better way of return to New Spain.

"To every one it appeared well to march westwardly, because in that direction" [really south of westward, as they doubtless know] "was New Spain, the voyage by sea being held more hazardous and of doubtful accomplishment, as a vessel of sufficient strength to weather a storm could not be built, nor was there captain nor pilot, needle nor chart, nor was it known how distant might be the sea; neither had they any tidings of it, or if the river did not take some great turn through the land, or might not have some fall over rocks where they might be lost. Some, who had seen the sea-card, found that by the shore, from the place where they were to New Spain, there should be about five hundred leagues; and they said that by land, though they might have to go round about sometimes, in looking for a peopled country, unless some great impassable wilderness should intervene, they could not be hindered from going forward that summer; and, finding provision for support in some peopled country where they might stop, the following summer they should arrive in a land of Christians; and that, going by land, it might be they should discover some rich country which would avail them."*

Footnote *Narrative by the Gentleman of Elvas, l. c., page 236. ~~Handwritten note: The same is known also as "The Portuguese Narrative."~~ The land expedition was therefore decided upon.

"Monday, the fifth of June, the Governor left Guachoya, receiving a guide from the cacique who remained in his town. They passed through a province called Cataite; and, going through a desert" [i.e., an uninhabited tract] "six days' journey in extent, on the twentieth of the month they came to Chaguete."*

Footnote *L. c. ~~Handwritten note: The name of this province is generally spelled "Chaguete".~~ in said narrative.

The places named ~~as those through which~~ ^{Moscoso's} ~~the~~ army ~~passed~~ successively passed on its march from Guachoya westward in quest of New Spain, lay almost wholly in territory of the Caddoan linguistic family. ~~Handwritten note: Among~~

Footnote to 6th page The chroniclers of early Spanish expeditions in America often designate a direction by the main point of compass nearest to the direction they have in mind; as, "westward", for west-southwestward or west-northwestward.

them, curiously enough, the Kadohadacho, or Caddo village proper, seems not to be included. They may be commented upon as follows:

Cataita. This province has not been identified; neither its distance from Guachoya nor its extent being stated. It is the first province crossed, and therefore presumably adjoined or was not very far from the borders of Guachoya province, from which it evidently lay to the west. ^{Phonetically,} the word, Cataita, recalls certain short names of the Caddo nation, especially Cadaqui. The resemblance is not necessarily significant; yet it should not be overlooked in this connection, that, in 1687, according to Joutel, there was a nation of "Cadaquis" distinct from the Kadohadacho of Red River, and presumably living eastward from them; for, in his account of the Four Nations ~~and~~ and

*So called by La Harpe, 1719. Joutel, 1687, refers to "the four villages which compose their district and their troop, which form only one body," and which he names as ~~the~~ "Assoni" (Massoni), "Mastchez", ~~Kadohadacho~~ "Matschitos" (the upper Matchitoches), and "Cadodaquious" (Kadohadacho, whose village he also calls "Cadodaquis"). But his ~~"Mastchez"~~ "Mastchez" is ~~probably a misprint for "Matschos"~~ ~~probably a misprint for "Matschos"~~ probably a misprint for "Matschos", with which, in his list of "allies", he replaces, agreeing thus with La Harpe's enumeration of the "Four Nations." The Four Nations had their villages in Long Prairie, on the south side of Red River, in Bowie County, Texas. For farther information concerning them, see Rocky Mountain Library, Volume I, Part VII.

their allies and enemies, in 1687, the "Cadodaquis" are named as one of "the four villages" that composed it and are placed in the list of "allies", and the "Cadaquis" are named in the list of "enemies"; while the statement is made, in explanation of these lists, that "The greater part of those who are enemies are in the East."

Chagueta. The chief town of this province was ~~probably situated~~ reached after traversing an uninhabited tract, apparently about 80 miles in width, which separated it from Cataita. It ~~must have been about 200 miles by their route from Guachoya, and~~ ~~was probably situated southeastwardly from the Arkansas River town of~~ ~~it was 15 days' march from Guachoya, and~~ Autiamque and at no great distance from it; for the Gentlemen of Bivas tells us that its cacique had visited De Soto at Autiamque in the winter of 1541-'42, ^{and had taken him "presents of shawls, skins and salt."} Autiamque was "on the south side" of the river and "within thirty miles east of Fort Smith," according to Lewis, who regards Chagueta as having been "probably on Saline River in Saline County"; from which, says the same authority, Moscoso's army "turned to the south-southeast."

This town and province are of special interest; for a tale of romance is connected with them, and they can boast the honor of having attracted the first white settler of Arkansas. Their cacique seems to have been a man of some geniality, as well as sagacity and firmness of character, and one who understood how to deal with both De Soto and Moscoso so as to gain ^{enough of} their good will to avoid the hostilities which ~~had been threatened~~

the late Adelantado had managed to stir up with many of the eastern and northern caciques, and which Moscoso was destined to experience in much of his western entrada. We shall therefore interrupt our examination of Moscoso's route, long enough to show in how tactful a manner the cacique dealt with Moscoso at Chaguete, and to present the first part of the story of ^{White} The First Settler of Arkansas, the conclusion of which will appear in connection with Moscoso's return journey from the Far West.

Says the Gentleman of Eivas,

"The day before Luys de Moscoso arrived" [at Chaguete], "a sick Christian becoming missed, whom the Indians were suspected to have ~~kill~~ killed, he sent word to the cacique to look for and return him--that in (doing so) he would continue to be his friend; if otherwise, the cacique should not hide from him anywhere, nor he nor his, and that he would leave his country in ashes. The chief directly came, and bringing the Christian, with a large gift of shawls and skins, he made this speech:

"Excellent Master:

"I would not deserve that opinion you have of me for all the wealth of the world. Who impelled me to visit and serve that excellent lord, the Governor, your father, in Autiamque, which you should have remembered, where I offered myself, with all loyalty, truth, and love, to serve and obey his lifetime: or what could have ~~been~~ been my purpose, having received favors of him, and without either of you having done me any injury, that I should be moved to do that which I should not? Believes me, no outrage, nor worldly interest, could have been equal to making me act thus, or could have so blinded me. Since, however, in this life, the natural course is, after one pleasure should succeed many pains, fortune has been pleased with your indignation to moderate the joy I felt in my heart at your coming, and have failed where I aimed to hit, in pleasing this Christian, who remained behind lost, treating him in a manner of which he shall himself speak, thinking that in this I should do you service, and intending to come with and deliver him to you at Chaguete, serving you in all things, to the extent possible in my power. If for this I deserve punishment from your hand, I shall receive it, as coming from my master's, as though it were ~~my~~ favor."

[I] The Governor answered, that because he had not found him in Chaguete he was incensed, supposing that he had kept away, as others had done; but that, as he now knew his loyalty and love, he would ever consider him a brother, and would favor him in all matters. The cacique went with him to the town where he resided, the distance of a day's journey. They passed through a small town where was a lake, and the Indians

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gradually stripped him of all that he had brought to the army, or captured on the march; and but four days before the march, he had lost his clothes, his arms, a horse, and a female captive, recently taken in the course of a foray. De Gusman had honourably paid all his losses, until it came to his captive, but here there was a struggle between pride and affection. The girl was but eighteen years of age, and extremely beautiful; so that he conceived a passion for her. He had put off the winner, therefore, with the assurance that he would give her up to him in the course of four or five days. De Gusman had been seen in the camp the day before the march: he was now missing, and the girl had disappeared likewise. On hearing all these circumstances, the Governor concluded that, ashamed of having lost his arms and steed, and unwilling to give up his Indian beauty, he had escaped with her to her people. He was confirmed in this suspicion, on hearing that the female was the daughter of the Cacique of Chaguata.

"The General now summoned before him four Chiefs of the province, who were among his escort, and ordered them to cause the Spaniard who had deserted to be sought out and brought to the camp; telling them, that unless he was produced, he should conclude that he had been treacherously murdered, and should revenge his death.

"The chiefs, terrified for their own safety, sent messengers in all speed. They returned with the account that De Gusman was with the Cacique, who was feasting him and treating him with all possible kindness and distinction, and that he could not be prevailed upon to return to the army.

"The Governor refused all credit to this story, ~~and persisted~~ and persisted in his surmises that De Gusman had been murdered. Upon this, one of the Chiefs turned to the Governor with a proud and lofty air. "We are not men," said he, "who would tell you falsehoods. If you doubt the truth of what the messengers have said, send one of us four to bring you some testimonial of the fact; and if he bring not back the Spaniard, or some satisfactory proof that he is alive and well, the three of us that remain in your hands will answer for his loss with our lives."

"The proposition pleased the Governor and his officers; and after consultation, Baltazar de Gallegos, who was a friend and townsman of De Gusman, was instructed to write ^{to} him, condemning the step he had taken, and exhorting him to return and perform his duty as became a cavalier; assuring him that his horse and arms should be restored to him, and others given to him in case of need. An accompanying message was sent to the Cacique, threatening him with fire and sword.

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CEDAR SALINE, 5 MILES SOUTHEAST OF WINNFIELD, *(Winn Parish, La.)*

unless he delivered up the fugitive.

"The following day the messenger returned, bringing back the letter of Gallegos, with the name of De Guzman written upon it in charcoal; a proof that he was alive. He sent not a word, however, in reply to the contents of the letter; and the messenger said that he had no intention nor wish to rejoin the army.

"The Cacique, on his own part, sent word, assuring the Governor that he had used no force to detain Diego de Guzman in his territories, nor should he use any to compel him to depart; but rather as a son-in-law, who had restored to him a beloved daughter, he would treat him with all possible honour and kindness, and would do the same to any of the strangers who chose to remain with him. If, for having done his duty in this manner, the Governor thought proper to lay waste his lands and destroy his people, he had the power in his hands, and could do as he pleased.

"The Governor, seeing that Diego de Guzman would not return, and feeling that the Cacique was justifiable in not delivering him up, abandoned all further attempt to recover him, and set the Indian Chiefs at liberty, who continued, however, to attend him until he reached the frontier."*

Footnote *Conquest of Florida, Vol. II, pp. 178-182.

Aguacay. "Before arriving at this province, they received five Indians, coming with a gift of skins, fish, and roasted venison, sent on the part of the cacique." The ~~latter's~~ latter's town "was found deserted." It was reached on the Fourth of July, which doubtless was being celebrated by the cacique of Chagnote, his daughter, his subjects, and his new son-in-law, as an "Independence Day," because they were now well rid of Moscoso and his army.

Taking up his quarters in the deserted town, whose ~~inhabitant~~ inhabitants had considered discretion the better part of valor, and were quietly "hiding out," "he remained in it ~~for~~ a while, making some inroads, in which many Indians of both sexes were captured. There they heard of the South Sea. Much salt was got out of the sand, ~~and~~ gathered in a vein of earth like slate, and was made as they make it in Cayas."*

Footnote *Harr. Gent. of Flv., i.c., page 238.

Needless to say, ~~that~~ the "South Sea" they heard of, was no more than a badly distorted account ^(for they had lost, by death Juan Ortiz, their only efficient interpreter) of one the great salt plains, — probably that of the Salt Fork of the Arkansas, noted among the Indian traders of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as "the Rock Saline."*

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"Salt lakes," or