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A VISIT TO NEBRASKA IN 1662.

BY JUDGE JAMES W. SAVAGE.[Communicated to the Society.]

When, a few years since, a paper was read before this society,* containing some reasonable grounds for belief in the theory that Coronado, in his expedition to the mysterious kingdom of Quivira, reached the territory now embraced within the state of Nebraska, there was little foundation for an argument that the gallant and uxorious knight marched any considerable distance beyond its southern boundary. The relation of his patient and painstaking follower, Castaneda, and his own report, left him at the fortieth parallel of latitude, now the dividing line between the states of Kansas and Nebraska; and the only reason for supposing him to have prolonged his journey farther to the north was the difficulty of believing that so adventurous a soldier would have turned back until he was stopped by some natural obstacle at least as formidable as the Platte or the Republican river. From the sources of information then at hand therefore, the author of that essay, while, suggesting that he may have reached the Platte, was inclined to place Quivira south of that stream, and somewhere between Gage county, in this state, on the east, and Furnas on the west.

The recent publication, by Mr. John Gilmary Shea, of a manuscript† found in Madrid by the late Buckingham Smith, enables us to supplement the conjectures which were made in that communication, and perhaps to come a little nearer the exact location of a kingdom which has eluded the search of geographers for more than three centuries.

It is easy to understand that the daring Spanish cavaliers, with their ardor for adventure and renown, and the holy friars, no less brave, would not rest satisfied with the meagre fruits of Coronado's march. The Franciscan monk, John de Padilla, as we have seen,‡ returned to Quivira with a small party of followers, and materials wherewith to minister alike to the physical and spiritual wants of the subjects of Tattarrax, the king; but the natives being in no mood to change their

* See Transactions and Reports, Vol. I., pp. 180-202.

† Penalos's Expedition to Quivira.

‡ The Discovery of Nebraska, p. 39. Trans. and Reports I. p. 201.

religion, speedily put him in the way of obtaining the martyr's crown which he had travelled so far to seek.

Fifty-seven years after the journey of Coronado, in the year 1599, the Spaniard, Onate, made an effort to reach Quivira ; but the accounts of his expedition are so ambiguous and indistinct that the point to which he penetrated cannot yet be very definitely ascertained. We gather from them, however, that he marched from Santa Fé, over prairies and by rivers of varying magnitude, some seven or eight hundred miles to a populous Indian city extending for several leagues. Here the cowardice of his followers constrained him to relinquish his undertaking and return to Santa Fé. Of him and his expedition we can only say, that he may have reached Nebraska, as, if he travelled his "two hundred leagues and a little further" in the right direction, he certainly did. But the obscurity and indefiniteness of his report forbid us to say more than that it was supposed at the time that he had advanced north of the fortieth parallel.

The passionate ardor of the Catholic clergy in the cause to which with sublime enthusiasm they had devoted alike their fortunes and lives, would have supplied us with more geographic material had the zealous fathers in their reports thought of or cared for such mundane matters as dates, courses, or descriptions. Several pious pilgrimages were set on foot to reach the heathen of this unknown region, but none of them has added much to our stock of information. One of these journeys is said to have ended some seven hundred miles from Santa Fé, upon the banks of a large and rushing river, whose terrors proved too much for their Indian guides, so that they were forced to return without having christianized any pagans. Another party had a happier fortune. They reached a nation north of Quivira, in the region now known as Dakota, and converted the tribe so suddenly and effectually that the venerable priests could only attribute the result to the direct and miraculous interposition of divine grace.

The expedition to which your attention is now invited is that of Don Diego, count of Penalosa, which took place in the year 1662. The life of this knight was marked by all the glitter, romantic enterprise, and vicissitude which so charmed the Spanish soldiers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Penalosa was not, however, himself, a Spaniard, but a Creole, that is a native of America of Spanish descent. Born at Lima in the year 1624 of quite illustrious ancestry, if we are

to believe his own somewhat turgid story, he became, at the immature age of fifteen, regidor of the city of La Paz; then alcalde and judge of the same; soon after a captain of cavalry, governor of a Peruvian province, and finally, by a judicious outlay of money, provincial alcalde of the city of La Paz and of the five provinces dependent thereon. At this point his upward career was checked for a little time by a difficulty with the brother of the Peruvian viceroy. This altercation, and the desire for seeing Spain, as he naïvely remarks, induced him to leave Peru. Probably the altercation, as he calls it, had more to do with his expatriation than any yearning after the country of his ancestors, for his flight ended in Mexico, where fortune once more smiled on him and turned her wheel. The viceroy of Mexico took him into distinguished favor, gave him high commands in his army, made him governor of several provinces, and bestowed upon him other conspicuous evidences of regard. At last, grave complaints being made to the viceroy against the governor of New Mexico, the latter officer was recalled from his command, and Penalosa was selected to rule in his stead. His commission as governor and captain-general of New Mexico was issued to him in the year 1660, when he had arrived at the age of thirty-six years. It was not, however, until the following year that he proceeded in a leisurely manner to the scene of his duties, halting two months at Zacatecas on his way, and another month at Parral, New Biscay, for equipage and provisions.

The position of a governor of New Mexico in those days, though important and dignified, was not without its difficulties. While, on the one hand, the command of the province was largely left to his discretion—while his distance, over a rugged and dangerous road, from the Mexican viceroy gave him an apparent independent freedom from controlment which the adventurous always covet, on the other, there was a dark and portentous shadow which never failed to hang over his return. The very remoteness and inaccessibility of his dominion, the unexplored regions which bordered it, the rumors of wealth and magnificence in larger cities to which Santa Fé was supposed to be the gateway, and the romantic fictions which for more than a century had inflamed the imagination of the covetous and domineering Spaniards, were constantly raising high expectations of each new governor, which as constantly were disappointed. His very isolation not unfrequently enhanced the precariousness of his position; for an enemy or rival

could spread in Mexico complaints and slanders, and poison the minds of superiors for a long time before any opportunity for refutation could be afforded. At the period of Penalosa's accession another element of danger existed in the Inquisition, whose officers had penetrated New Mexico, and, willing to bear a part in the temporal as well as spiritual control of that province, were not averse to occasional collisions with its haughty and high-spirited rulers. From the last inconvenience we shall presently see that the hero of this sketch was not able to exempt himself.

For years, therefore, each new commander had sought to signalize his administration by the accumulation of precious metals and gems, the annexation of new territory, the conquest of opulent cities, or, not least in order of importance, the discovery of the mythical land, shaded by stately trees, where golden bells were jangled by summer breezes; traversed by rivers where golden birds adorned the barges of royalty; the land where the commonest utensils were of beaten silver, and the poorest ate from golden plates and drank from golden beakers. It was a glittering and gorgeous dream from which, one after another, the luckless governors of New Mexico awoke to disgrace or inglorious obscurity. The Quivira of the Spaniards' fancy was never to be trodden by the foot of the explorer.

The count of Penalosa spent the first few months after his arrival at Santa Fé in making war upon the Apaches, then as now implacable and deadly foes of the white invader, in erecting several public buildings, and in founding one or two new cities. But these were little more than the ordinary routine duties of the captain-general of New Mexico. He felt that the fame which he had hoped to win from his command would elude his grasp unless he could report to his superiors more important exploits. He therefore set on foot his expedition to Quivira.

On the 6th of March, in the year 1662, when in New England and Virginia hardy colonists were laying the foundations for an empire which was destined, in less than two centuries, to extend over Quivira and New Mexico also, Penalosa marched in state from Santa Fé to explore the realms to the eastward and north, and to follow the tracks which Coronado had made one hundred and twenty years before. The composition of the expedition shows the fondness of its leader for luxury and pomp. There marched in his train a thousand Indians armed with bows and arrows, and fourscore Spanish knights of good

family and repute rode before them. Thirty-six wagons carried his provisions and munitions of war; six cannon, eight hundred horses, and three hundred mules accompanied the force. Two chaplains, with their vestments and materials requisite for the celebration of mass, added to the brilliancy of his array; while for his personal ease he had provided, besides horses, a commodious coach, a litter, and two sedan-chairs. Thus comfortably furnished, the count led his force in a northeasterly direction for three months, through pleasant and fertile prairies, "so agreeable," says the reverend friar, Nicholas de Freytas, one of the two chaplains, and the chronicler of the enterprise, "that not in all the Indies of Peru and New Spain, nor in Europe, have any other such been so delightful and pleasant." They admired, as had the soldiers of Coronado, the enormous herds of buffalo, the numerous and beautiful rivers, the luxuriant forests and fruit trees, the useful and fragrant plants, clover, flax, hemp, and marjoram, the partridges, quails, turkeys, deer, and elk, the oceans of roses, the great abundance of delicious strawberries, and, at a later period, no doubt, though they are spoken of in the same category, the plums and the huge clusters of grapes, whose flavor seemed to their thirsty palates finer even than that from the vines of their beloved Spain.

With their senses thus regaled, the adventurous band proceeded during the balmy months of spring, along their course, until their progress was impeded by a wide and rapid river. Here they encountered a war party of the Escanzaques nation, who dwelt along the fortieth parallel of latitude, and who represented themselves as bound for one of the great cities of Quivira, with whose inhabitants they were at war.* Joining this force, which numbered about three thousand warriors, Penalosa and his men marched westwardly for a day along the right bank of the rushing river, until it made a bend so that its current came from the north. Following up its course they marched northward for a day, and thereafter pursuing the sinuosities of the stream and guided by it, they proceeded on their course, until they perceived to the northward, beyond the river, a high ridge whose sides were covered with signal smokes, and understood that the natives were advised of their approach. Still pressing forward, for a time and distance left by the chronicler provokingly obscure, they at last halted at a spot where on the opposite side another beautiful river, flowing

* This was probably the tribe since known as the Kansas. Father de Smet found them still at war with the Pawnees in 1841.

from the ridge, entered the stream they had previously followed. Here they found themselves within sight of a vast settlement or city, situated in the midst of a spacious prairie, and upon both banks of the last mentioned stream.

This was the city, or one of the cities, of Quivira. It contained thousands of houses, mostly circular in shape, some two, three, and even four stories in height, framed of a hard wood which seems to have been black walnut, and skillfully thatched. It extended along both sides of this second river for more than two leagues, at which distance a third stream flowed into the second. Beyond this, the city again stretched out for many miles, just how far is uncertain, for the troops never reached its ultimate boundary. The plain upon which this huge village lay was some eighteen or twenty miles in breadth, and when the army came in sight of it and bivouacked over against it on the south side of the river, the vast number of inhabitants, men, women, and children, who came out to gaze at the invaders, excited the liveliest curiosity. Soon appeared a delegation of some seventy caciques or chiefs, splendidly attired, who welcomed Penalosa with many marks of love and respect. The gentle savages brought with them, as tokens of their good will, many gifts of their most precious possessions—furs of ermine, otter, and beaver, deer, and buffalo skins, pumpkins and beans, bread of maize, with great stores of wild game and fresh fish of various sorts. These they gave as an earnest of the hospitable reception promised when the Spaniards should cross the river on the next day.

Two of the chiefs who thus visited the count were detained by him, says the friar, with good words and better deeds, until far into the night. It is to be hoped that no more persuasive measures to secure their stay than fair speeches and presents were resorted to; but before morning, after long examination by the general and his chaplains about their country and its tribes, they became alarmed, found means of escaping, and recrossed the river to their city.

The pathetic story of cruelty, and rapine, and oppression, of which the histories of Spanish conquests are so full, and which are not absent from American annals of later days, had been retold during the night. Under cover of the darkness, the Escanzaques had, without the orders or knowledge of Penalosa (as the writer declares, and as perhaps, in the absence of any opposing testimony, we are bound to believe),

forded the river, fallen upon the peaceful dwellers of the city, and so ravaged, burned, and murdered, that at sunrise, when the general (who with some difficulty had also crossed the stream before dawn) encamped before the city, not a living soul was to be found within it. The timid and unwarlike natives who had survived the slaughter, had all fled.

The soldiers spent the day in extinguishing the flames, and in efforts to repress the fury of the Escanzaques. The next day they marched through the town, admiring the vast number of dwellings, the innumerable paths which entered the city from the highlands behind it, the fertility of the soil, which was black, strong, and covered with rich grasses, and the beauty of the scene, which from the city to the ridge seemed to them like a paradise. But their search for the golden birds, or bells, or rich dishes, or precious stones, was as vain as that of their predecessors had been; so that Don Diego, after sending a small force still farther on, who could report no end to the settlement, no new discoveries, and above all no signs of gold, concluded to return. The reasons he assigned for this sudden abandonment of the enterprise were that the pursuit of fleeing men would be fruitless, that there was no certainty that his huge, lumbering coach could find passage over the broken grounds before them, and that he had no orders to proceed farther. It is pretty evident from the nature of these excuses that when the hope of finding gold vanished, the count's zeal in the undertaking disappeared also. On the 11th of June, 1662, therefore, he turned his face southward, and after a journey without special adventure, except a sanguinary battle with his former allies, the Escanzaques, regained his post in New Mexico.

Such, so far as they relate to our special purpose, are the principal features of the narration of Father Nicholas de Freytas. The object of this paper is to show that the termination of Penalosa's expedition was in the state of Nebraska, not far from where now flourishes the city of Columbus, in that fertile and attractive region, along the borders of the Loup, which the novelist, Cooper, has celebrated as affording a last hunting-ground and a grave for his hero, Leatherstocking, which, at the cession to the United States by the Pawnees, in 1857, of their vast possessions, was retained by them as the dearest and most valuable of their spacious hunting-grounds, and which allured the experienced eye of the Mormon exile as he fled westward from civil-

ization, in 1856.* But before presenting in detail the arguments which seem to lead irresistibly to this conclusion, it may not be uninteresting to trace, in a few words, the life of the leader of the march to the end of his romantic career.

Penalosa was, so far as can be inferred from our scanty materials, a man of inordinate vanity, arrogant, high spirited, and supercilious. Upon his return to Santa Fé, he addressed to the Spanish crown a memorial of his journey, and awaited with impatient anxiety the response which he expected would add to his numerous self-bestowed titles that of Duke of Quivira.†

But he could not humble himself to the Inquisition, then asserting supreme authority in all the Spanish provinces, nor conciliate its officers. It was not long before he came into actual collision with them. Wishing, as he said, to check the tyrannical and extravagant flights of the commissary-general of the order, he was rash enough to place that officer in arrest and to keep him confined for several days in the palace at Santa Fé. As in New Mexico he possessed sufficient power to sustain himself, his temerity went for a time unpunished; but when, two years afterwards, he ventured into Mexico, the Inquisition, which could afford to delay chastisement, though never to pardon so glaring a breach of its authority, had him arrested, detained in prison for nearly three years, deprived of his governorship, and condemned to a fine which left him penniless. Nor was this all. On the 3d of February, 1668, that tribunal celebrated a special *auto-da-fe* at the convent of Santo Domingo, at which Don Diego de Penalosa, governor of New Mexico, was condemned to penance for irreverent language towards the priests' and lords' inquisitors, and certain wild freaks which seemed almost blasphemous. He came forth to walk in the procession of penitents, with a green candle in his hand, his hair carefully dressed, arrayed in a skirt of exquisite fineness, ungartered hose, and wide ruffles about his wrists of Flemish point-lace. Thus attired, says a writer of that day, he was an object of sincere compassion.

* The district now known as Nance county was the home of the Pawnees, until their removal to the Indian territory, in 1879. Within its limits the Mormons established, about 1856, a settlement, which they called Genoa, where they dwelt until they were driven out by the United States troops, at the request of the Indians.

† The relation of Freytas, doubtless prepared under the count's supervision, thus describes him: "Don Diego Dionysio, of Penalosa, Bricena and Verdugo, Ocampo and Valdivia, lord of the cities of Guarina and Farara, and their eleven towns, tributary knight vassal in the city of La Paz, provincial alcalde and perpetual ruler therein, and in the five provinces of its district, governor and captain-general of New Mexico, lawful successor and heir of the marquise of Arauco, the countship of Valdivia (province of Chili), the viscountship of La Imperial, and the marquise of Oristan, claiming to be marquis of Farara, and count of Santa Fe de Penalosa, adelantado of Chili and of the Great Quivira in the west of this new world of America."

With this indignity ended Penalosa's services to the Spanish government. He made some ineffectual efforts to obtain redress ; but as the power of the Inquisition had become too great for his feeble opposition, he determined to seek more grateful and less superstitious patrons. Soon after, he appeared in London ; but driven thence as he asserts by the persecutions of the Spanish ambassadors at the English court, he betook himself to France, where in 1682 he addressed a memorial to the French government, proposing the occupation of Texas, and the despatch of an expedition, of which he should be the commander, to co-operate with La Salle in the foundation of a French empire in the New World. His project seems to have been looked upon with some favor and carried out so far as La Salle was concerned ; but for some reason the support of the government was withdrawn, La Salle was left to his fate in the Texan wilds, and Penalosa's schemes of power were again frustrated. He lingered four or five years longer in Paris, a wrecked, unhappy man, and died in that city at the age of sixty-three. Of his eventful career, his glowing ambition, his bold projects, his journeys, his quarrels, his successes, his disappointments, and his death, we have but these vague and unsatisfactory outlines. But there is some reason to hope that close investigation may yet bring to light further details of the life of a man who was certainly, whatever his weaknesses or his faults, a type of the brave and stirring western adventurer.

It may prove a dull task to examine with minute criticism all the evidences which point to the valleys of the Loup and Platte rivers as the location of the city which Penalosa visited ; but the importance of the inquiry to those interested in the early annals of Nebraska will perhaps justify a somewhat searching and thorough investigation of the story of De Freytas. Ambiguous and desultory as his account is, a careful study of it enables us to fix upon a few ascertained localities ; and a comparison of its statements with those of other explorers and with our knowledge of the country will, it is thought, serve to establish in the minds of impartial students the situation of the kingdom and city of Quivira beyond reasonable doubt.

In determining this point we can first assure ourselves that Quivira lay north-easterly from Santa Fé. This was the line of Coronado's march, as we are informed both by his own report and those of his lieutenant Jaramillo and the soldier Castaneda. Gomara, in his narra-

tive of the expedition, declares that the march was towards the north-east. The missionary fathers previously mentioned traveled in the same direction. Freytas constantly speaks of it as "the north-east land;" and the Indian guides always persisted that the route to it by way of Taos was shorter and more direct than that usually followed.

We are able to come somewhat nearer the spot by the certainty that it was north of the fortieth parallel of latitude. Coronado reported that he penetrated thus far to the north; and in this statement he was supported by the evidence of all who accompanied him. Penalosa, more than a century later, found the Escanzaques, enemies of the Quiviras, dwelling along that parallel, and ranging over the country northward. With them he marched north to attack the Quiviras. This statement, if true, proves incontestably that the habitations of the latter were above that line.

The distances travelled by the several explorers, while not always either definitely given or harmonious, all indicate that the region we are discussing was at least as far from Santa Fé as Nebraska. The length of Coronado's march has already been made a topic of inquiry in the paper upon his expedition read before this society in 1880, and it is unnecessary to say more about it here than that it appeared of sufficient length to have ended in this state. The march of Onate from Santa Fé in 1599 was, according to his account, upwards of two hundred leagues. The Spanish league being, as appears by the United States Ordnance Manual, 3.42 American miles, we may fairly suppose that he travelled between six hundred and seventy-five and eight hundred and fifty miles. Freytas, writing from Santa Fé his account of the expedition we are now considering, declares that "this north-east land, so populous and wealthy, begins one hundred and fifty leagues from here, and stretches to where the city commences almost as far again." In other words, he makes the distance of the chief city of Quivira from Santa Fe between two hundred and fifty and three hundred leagues; that is between eight hundred and fifty and a thousand miles.

Now by the "Map of the Territory of the United States, west of the Mississippi River, prepared by the authority of the Honorable the Secretary of War, in the office the chief of engineers," in the year 1879, the distance in an air line from Santa Fé to Columbus, Neb., is nearly six hundred miles. By rail the distance from Santa Fé to

the river Platte is nine hundred and eighty-six miles; and inasmuch as the Atchison and Santa Fé Railroad follows very closely the old and natural route so well known to travellers as the Santa Fé trail, it is not a violent presumption that all the early adventurers pursued for a portion of their journey this easy pathway. After making, then, liberal allowance for guesses, imperfect measurements, and exaggerations, we are forced to the conclusion that the reported length of the various marches confirms our hypothesis.

Another belief of the Spanish geographers with regard to the site of Quivira was, that it was nearly surrounded by the sea. This, while at first it may seem opposed to our view of the situation, affords on examination a powerful argument in support of it. "It is known by evident proof," says Freytas, "that the sea encircles and surrounds all that land in those four points,—east, north-east, north, and west." But this "evident proof" was manifestly only the stories of their Indian guests and captives; for we have abundant assurance that the Spaniards did not themselves reach any large body of water. That the unlettered topographers of the region, in attempting to trace for their visitors the course of the Missouri River, should, in their description of the largest stream they had ever seen or heard of, have conveyed the idea that they were speaking of the ocean, can be readily comprehended.* If it were otherwise, the savages were simply seeking to deceive, for there is no spot which Coronado or Penaloza could possibly have reached in their respective marches which is thus surrounded by salt water. Assuming, however, that by the word or sign which the Spanish cavaliers translated "sea," the Indians meant "great river," we can at once perceive that the proposed situation of Quivira would answer precisely to the description. From the site which is now suggested that majestic current can be reached by a journey, not long, neither to the north-west, north, north-east, or east.

Taking it for granted, then, that the metropolis of this vast kingdom of Quivira lay north-eastwardly from Sana Fé, our nearest absolutely ascertained point, at a distance of between six hundred and a thousand miles; that it was encircled by a stream or body of water from the north-west round to the east, and that it was watered by

* Mrs. Elvira G. Platt, the matron of the Indian school at Genoa, an accomplished lady who has lived among the Pawnees for many years, informs me, in corroboration of this explanation, that the name given by this nation to the Missouri means, "the miraculous water." Others define it "the medicine water." The word translated "medicine," or "miraculous," was applied to whatever was so far out of their experience or above their comprehension as to suggest the idea of divine power.

various rivers, as mentioned in the foregoing pages, let us endeavor, from the equivocal account we have, to trace out Penalosa's exact route.

The course of his march, though in one place it is spoken of as towards the east, was, as we have seen, in a north-easterly direction, and the first object to be identified is the wide, rapid, and beautiful river where they encountered their Indian allies, the Escanzaques. As this tribe dwelt along the fortieth parallel of latitude, and were at this time marching northward to attack the Quiviras, this river must have been north of the present state of Kansas. No stream answers to the description given and to the subsequent details except the Platte; and I am of opinion that they struck that river about where the Missouri Pacific Railway from Omaha to Hiawatha makes its crossing.

Along the banks of that stream they marched westward for a day, reaching a point not far from the present site of the attractive village of Ashland. Here the Platte, as we know, makes an abrupt bend, and for some twenty miles flows from north to south. The narrator's account is as follows: "From this point," that is, the spot reached by them after their first day's march with the Indians, "we directed our course to the north, following the river which drew its current thence, keeping the east on our right hand, and that day the army encamped on its prairies." This halt, if our conjectures thus far have been correct, was in Saunders county, opposite the city of Fremont.

On the next day they resumed their journey, still following up the course of the river, and after a march of fifteen miles, noticed upon a high ridge to the north frequent signal smokes by which the spies of Quivira were announcing the approach of strangers. This would indicate a point not far from the town of North Bend, fifteen miles west of Fremont, where the ridge which borders the valley of the Platte on the north draws near to that stream, and fairly answers to the description given by Freytas. It is at least doubtful if at any spot within a thousand miles of Santa Fé so many conditions of the problem presented can be satisfied as have already been met.

The narrative proceeds as follows: "Soon after we discovered the great people or city of Quivira, situated on the broad prairies of another beautiful river which came from the range to enter and join that which we had been following." It is to be regretted that these

words "soon after"* are so indefinite. They may indicate a march of an hour, a day, or a week. Indeed, as the account was manifestly written after the return of the force to Mexico, it may well be that the chaplain's own mind was not clear as to the precise distance. But the other features of the story can only be identified by admitting that this picturesque river coming from the range was the Loup. The distance from North Bend to a point on the Platte opposite the mouth of that stream is about thirty miles; not certainly a very long distance to the veteran troops who had then been in the field upwards of three months, and must have been inured to travel.

It has not escaped notice that the river up which the Spaniards had been marching, while it is spoken of as rapid and broad, was fordable. This, while it disposes finally of any theory that it could have been the Missouri, exactly describes the Platte. The latter is a stream as wide in many places as the Missouri, and nearly as swift; and yet there are few points where a ford cannot be readily discovered. The buffalo in their migrations were rarely compelled to swim its tide, and the older members of this society have not infrequently in early days driven their vehicles through its turbid and rushing current, at spots much nearer its mouth than our adventurers had now reached.

Let us now, therefore, cross the Platte with Penalosa and his men, and examine the features of the country to the north of it. After arresting the conflagration kindled by the implacable Escanzaques, the army, we are told, proceeded through a city whose buildings they numbered by thousands some two leagues until they came to a halt upon the bank of another stream which flowed through it, and into what we have called the Loup. If we have correctly traced the march up to this point, and its line was on the left bank of the Loup, this halt was probably upon either Lost creek or Looking-glass creek, little streams which flow into the Loup about eight or ten miles from the Platte.† "At this point," says the narrator, "the ridge or lofty range which ran along the right side of the city towards the north was distant from it some six leagues." This description corresponds fairly with the condition at the mouth of Lost

* Poco despues.

† Mrs. Platt is inclined to think that this was Cedar creek, which unites with the Loup at Fullerton; and it cannot be denied that the former is now a stream which would present more of an obstacle to an invading force than either of the rivulets mentioned. But two hundred years may have altered the bulk of these water-courses very materially; and, inasmuch as their position answers more nearly to the narrative, I have ventured, not without hesitation, to adhere to the statement in the text. Lost creek it must be admitted, at present hardly rises to the dignity of a stream.

creek, the valley of the Loup being at that place apparently some fifteen or twenty miles in width.

From this point northward, the army proceeded no farther. A small detachment of soldiers was sent to examine the town, but did not reach its northern boundary, and the men reported upon their return that streets and houses stretched far beyond the ultimate spot of their exploration. The city, according to these reports, must have extended along the borders of the Loup for a distance, upon the most moderate calculation, of not less than twenty miles.

Such are the evidences of the size and situation of the famous city of Quivira which are to be derived from the narrations of early explorers and the natural features of the country. They point so convincingly to the mouth of the Loup as the location of this mysterious and long-sought-for capital, that, even if we should discover upon the indicated site no traces whatever of ancient habitation or signs of human occupation, we could content ourselves with responding to criticism founded on the absence of such proofs, that no such remains have been detected at any other place which could possibly answer a single one of the conditions of this investigation. It would certainly not be strange if the lapse of more than two centuries, with their desolating wars, conflagrations, and tornadoes, should have utterly effaced all vestiges of the lofty structures of earth and wood, the skin garments, the pictorial records, and the frail implements and utensils of this primitive people.

Fortunately, however, for the advocates of the location now suggested, such evidences do exist in great abundance. From near where the Union Pacific Railway crosses the Loup about two miles from the Platte, for several miles north-westwardly along the margins of the former stream, have been found for many years, and by the careful observer may still be discovered, unmistakable traces of a once dense population. Prominent among these are the fragments of pottery. Time and the elements have reduced these frail memorials, in most instances, to so small a size that the shape of the vessels of which they formed a part cannot be ascertained; but a few utensils have been secured so nearly entire as to warrant the assertion that they correspond remarkably with those which are still occasionally brought to light in the vicinity of the Aztec Pueblos, of New Mexico. Mr. Eugene L. Ware, one of the civil engineers in the employ of the Union

Pacific company, and a zealous antiquarian, to whom I am much indebted for help in the preparation of this essay, while professionally engaged in the construction of the railroad now running up the Loup, was struck with the immense number of these potsherds which strewn the ground for miles. Many of the largest he secured; and a collection of them, made by him, is, or should be, now in the museum of the state university. The ornamentation of these pieces consists of lines and figures rudely indented in the clay, while plastic, by a stick or finger. In this respect they differ from the work of the modern Pueblo Indians, who usually, after baking or drying, draw with a brush their uncouth devices upon the surface. But they correspond, in a remarkable degree, with some of the more ancient specimens still to be found about the ruined cities of Cibola, which Coronado visited. A little fragment from the edge of a plate or bowl, shown me by Mr. Ware, so closely resembles a piece of similar size picked up near the deserted village of Pecos, that it is difficult to distinguish them.

Upon the prairie strewn with these shards are also noticeable several artificial mounds. If the people who reared these mysterious fabrics were, as it seems not improbable, of the Aztec race, the structures were perhaps (unlike the mounds of the Miami valley and the East) sacrificial altars, such as the *teocallis* of the city of Mexico and Cholula. Whatever their use, however, they mark the centre of a huge population, and belong to a period removed at least three centuries from our own time.

Whether the inhabitants of this city were of kindred with the race which Cortez found on the table-land of Mexico bears upon our inquiry only so far as it may show that the former were not of the nomadic tribes which then roamed at will over a large portion of the western prairies. But if we can convince ourselves that the Pawnees have for centuries dwelt upon the Loup,* have customs in common with the Aztecs, and have traditions of such a city as Quivira, a circumstance, however slight, will be added to the mass of proof already collected.

In 1673, only eleven years after Penalosa's visit, Father Marquette passed the mouth of the Missouri on his voyage down the Mississippi. He questioned the natives whom he found at the confluence of those streams, and from the information thus gained, and his own observa-

* There were four divisions or tribes of the Pawnees—the Tapages, the Republicans, the Grands, and the Skidis. The statements in the text generally refer to the last named.

tion of the country west of the Mississippi, prepared a map, which, after being lost for nearly two centuries, was discovered a few years ago in St. Mary's college in Montreal. Upon this map appear the Panis, a nation occupying the very position which we have assigned to Quivira.

When the French and English traders began to pass over the territory, the Pawnees were a warlike race, living mainly by the chase, and at first sight differing but little from that of their neighbors. But they had certain customs not known to other tribes. Prominent among these was the practice of offering human sacrifices as a religious rite. It is well known, of course, that all the Indians of the plains tortured and murdered their captives. Revenge and barbarity were in their eyes lofty and ennobling traits of character. But it is believed that the Pawnees were alone among them in regarding such cruelty in the light of a sacrifice, and in regularly practising it as a means of propitiating their deities. In the pampering of their victims prior to immolation, in the solemn festivals and processions on the sacrificial day, and especially in the tearing out of the still palpitating heart of the unhappy sufferer and the tasting of the flesh by the executioner, the resemblance to the Aztecs is extraordinary. I subjoin in a note at the close, for those whose sensibilities may allow them to read it, a description by Father de Smet of a Pawnee sacrifice, which may be compared with Prescott's narrative of similar rites by Mexican priests.

The traditions of the Pawnees are, that at a period so remote that details have been lost, their ancestors migrated from a land far to the south, and subduing the nations in the vicinity of the Platte, took possession of their territory and held it by right of conquest.

In their fondness for white magic or jugglery, also, the Pawnees resembled the inhabitants of Anahuac. Their medicine-men possessed apparently, the power of imbuing inanimate objects with life and motion; they shot arrows through their bodies and crushed in their skulls with tomahawks without harm; they planted corn in the earth and in a few minutes made it grow to maturity, and performed many such adroit tricks and cunning sleights as the followers of Cortez admired in Mexico.

Their lofty dwellings, three and four stories in height, their gentle welcome to the white invaders, and their offerings of food and orna-

ments, remind us of the people of Montezuma and the cities of Cibola; and, in short, so many features and habits disclose this similarity, that it is difficult to believe that the Pawnees of 1662 were not the descendants of Aztec ancestors, changed by climate and surroundings, but still retaining many of the traits of their forefathers.

This being the case, it is easy to see how the Spanish conquerors heard on all sides the fable of the opulent city in the northeast, which, in its luxury and splendor, rivalled the dreams of eastern potentates, and which excited the cupidity of adventurers, and the religious zeal of pious ecclesiastics.

It may be added, finally, that all who have sojourned long enough among the Pawnees to become familiar with their oral records, have noticed their tradition of a once great city upon what was from 1859 to 1876 their reservation. They still boast of its glories, and believe in its magnificence. Loath to leave its site, when a Christian civilization drove them southward, they yearn in their new home for its familiar scenes, and a few remnants of the tribe yet linger within its loved boundaries.

At the risk of incurring the censure of tediousness, all of which, like Dogberry, I could find in my heart to bestow on this topic, I venture to recapitulate the principal indications which serve to establish the site of Quivira on the Loup River near Columbus.

It was situated north-easterly from Santa Fé.

Its distance from the latter city was eight or nine hundred miles.

It was north of the fortieth parallel of latitude, the southern boundary of Nebraska.

Inasmuch as none of the narrations of the several expeditions to Quivira speak of so formidable an impediment to a march as the Missouri would have formed, a fair presumption rises that the city was west of that river.

It lay north of a wide but fordable stream, upon an affluent of it, which in its turn received another water-course flowing through the town.

All these conditions are fulfilled upon the Loup, at a place where are found many vestiges of an ancient city.

The natural features of the surrounding country correspond with the relation of De Freytas.

At the period of Penalosa's march, and for two hundred years after-

wards, the territory was occupied by the Pawnees, a nation having many traits in common with the Aztecs.

Traditions of the Pawnees confirm our theory.

No other spot has been suggested which will at all conform to the descriptions of the several explorers.

If these evidences do not amount to a demonstration, we can at least say, with Gibbon, that "though each of the proofs may be singly weak and defective, their concurrence has great weight." I have, however, purposely reserved for the close of this monograph an argument, crowning and conclusive to the fortunate homesteader along the fruitful, black-soiled banks of the Loup and its tributaries, and not without its force to dwellers in less favored parts of this state. "There were on this journey," explains the chronicler in a burst of enthusiasm, "men of divers nations of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America; and all with one voice declared that they had never beheld a land so fertile, fair, and agreeable as that;" and in the common sentiment, all that has been hitherto conquered and colonized under the name of America is unlovely in comparison with what is comprised in this new portion of the New World.

APPENDIX.

The description of the Pawnee sacrifice, referred to in the text, is as follows: "The Pawnees are in some respects true believers with regard to the certainty of a future life, and display a pharisaical punctuality in the observance of their superstitious rites. Dancing and music, as well as fasting, prayer, and sacrifice, form an essential part of their worship. The most common worship among them is that which they offer to a stuffed bird, filled with herbs and roots, to which they attribute a supernatural virtue. They protest that this Manitoo had been sent to their ancestors by the Morning Star, to be their meditator when they should stand in need of some particular favor. Hence, whenever they enter upon some important undertaking, or wish to avert some great evil, they expose the Mediator bird to public veneration; and in order to render both him and the Great Manitoo (or Spirit), by whom he is sent, propitious to them, they smoke the calumet, and blow the first smoke that issues from it towards the part of the sky where shines their protectress.

"On the most solemn occasions, the Pawnees add a bloody sacrifice to the oblation of the calumet; and according to what they pretend to have learned from the bird and the star, the sacrifice most agreeable to the Great Spirit is that of an enemy, immolated in the most cruel manner. It is impossible to listen without hor-

ror to the recital of the circumstances that attended the sacrifice of a young female of the Sioux tribe, in the course of the year 1837. It was about seed-time, and they thus sought to obtain a plentiful harvest. I shall here give the substance of the detailed account which I have given of it in a former letter. This young girl was only aged fifteen; after having been well treated and fed for six months, under pretence that a feast would be prepared for her at the opening of the summer season, she felt rejoiced when she saw the last days of winter roll by. The day fixed upon for the feast having dawned, she passed through all the preparatory ceremonies, and was then arrayed in her finest attire, after which she was placed in a circle of warriors who seemed to escort her for the purpose of showing her deference. Besides their wonted arms, each one of these warriors had two pieces of wood which he had received at the hands of the maiden. The latter had, on the preceding day carried three posts, which she had helped to fell in the neighboring forest; but supposing that she was walking to a triumph, and her mind being filled with the most pleasing ideas, the victim advanced towards the place of her sacrifice with those mingled feelings of joy and timidity which, under similar circumstances, are naturally excited in the bosom of a young girl of her age.

"During their march, which was rather long, the silence was interrupted only by religious songs and invocations to the Master of life, so that whatever affected the senses tended to keep up the deceitful delusion under which she had been till that moment. But as soon as she had reached the place of sacrifice, where nothing was to be seen but fires, torches, and instruments of torture, the delusion began to vanish and her eyes were opened to the fate that awaited her. She burst into tears; she raised loud cries to heaven; she begged, entreated, conjured her executioners to have pity on her youth, her innocence, her parents; but all in vain; neither tears nor cries nor the promises of a trader, who happened to be present, softened the hearts of these monsters. She was tied with ropes to the trunk and branches of two trees, and the most sensitive parts of her body were burnt with torches made of the wood which she had with her own hands distributed to the warriors. When her sufferings lasted long enough to weary the fanatical fury of her ferocious tormentors, the great chief shot an arrow into her heart, and in an instant this arrow was followed by a thousand others, which, after having been violently turned and twisted in the wounds, were torn from them in such a manner that her whole body presented but one shapeless mass of mangled flesh, from which the blood streamed on all sides. When the blood had ceased to flow, the greater sacrificator approached the expiring victim, and to crown so many atrocious acts, tore out her heart with his own hands; and after uttering the most frightful imprecations against the Sioux nation, devoured the bleeding flesh amid the acclamations of his whole tribe. The mangled remains were then left to be preyed upon by wild beasts, and when the blood had been sprinkled on the seed to render it fertile, all retired to their cabins, cheered with the hope of obtaining a copious harvest."—*Narrative of a Year's Residence among the Indian Tribes of the Rocky Mountains.* By P. J. De Smet, S. J., 1843.