CHAPTER 1 - Organizing the Expedition

(Which tells when the fleet left, and the officers and men that went in it)

*Section 1*

1 On the seventeenth day of June of one thousand five hundred and twenty-seven, Governor Pánfilo de Narváez left the port of San Lucar de Barrameda on the authority and orders from Your Majesty to conquer and govern the provinces that extend from the River of Palms to the cape of Florida, which are on the mainland. The fleet he took had five ships, in which went six hundred men, a few more or less. The officers he took (since they must be mentioned) were those named here: Cabeza de Vaca, treasurer and master-at-arms; Alonso Enríquez, accountant; Alonso de Solís, Your Majesty's agent and inspector. A friar of the Order of Saint Francis named Juan Suárez went as the commissary, along with four other friars from the same order.

*End Section 1*

2 We arrived at the island of Santo Domingo, where we stayed about forty-five days, gathering the things we needed, especially horses. Here, more than a hundred and forty men, who wanted to remain there because of the promises and proposals the people of that country made to them, left our fleet.

3 We left from there and came to Santiago (which is a port on the island of Cuba), where, in the few days we were there, the governor acquired men, arms, and horses. It happened there that a gentleman named Vasco Porcalle, a resident of the town of Trinidad (which is on the same island), offered to give the governor certain supplies that he had in Trinidad, which was a hundred leagues from the said port of Santiago. The governor left for there with the whole fleet, but when we arrived at a port called Cape Santa Cruz, which was halfway on the route, it seemed to him that it was better to wait there and send one ship to bring the supplies. For this, he ordered
one Captain Pantoja to go with his ship, and for I, for better security, go with him [in another
ship], and he remained with four ships, for on the island of Santo Domingo he had bought
another ship.

*Section 2*

We arrived on these two ships at the port of Trinidad. Captain Pantoja went with Vasco
Porcalle to the town, which is one league from there, to receive the supplies. I remained at sea
with the pilots, who told us that we should leave as quickly as possible, because it was a very bad
port, and many ships had been lost in it.

*End Section 2*

Because what happened to us there was very notable, it seemed to me that it would not be
outside of the purpose and end with which I wanted to write this narrative to tell it here. The next
morning, there were signs of bad weather. It started to rain, and the sea was intensifying so much
that, although I gave the men permission to go ashore, when they saw what was happening with
the weather, and that the town was a league away, many returned to the ship rather than be wet
and cold. At this time, a canoe came from the town, bringing me a letter from a resident of the
town, greatly urging me to go there so that they could give me the supplies which they had, and
were necessary. I excused myself of that, saying that I could not leave the ships.

At midday, the canoe returned with another letter asking the same thing, with great
insistence, and it brought a horse for me to go on. I gave the same response I had given the first
time, saying that I would not leave the ships,

*Section 3*

but pilots and the men begged me greatly to go, to hurry and bring the supplies as quickly as
possible, so we could leave from there, where they were in great fear that the ships would be lost
if they stayed there much longer. For this reason, I decided to go to the town, although before I went, I left instructions and ordered the pilots that if the south wind, which had often destroyed ships there, should blow and they saw themselves in great danger, to bring the ships across the beam in a place where the men and the horses could be saved.

*End Section 3*  
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With that, I left, although I wished to take some people with me, to go together, but they did not want to leave, saying it was wet and cold, and the town was very far, and that the next day, which was Sunday, they would come, God willing, to hear Mass.

An hour after I left, the sea started to become very ferocious, and the north wind became so severe that neither did the boats dare to land, nor was there any way to bring the ships across the beam, because of the wind from the bow. With very great difficulty, with two contrary winds and much rain, they stayed that day and Sunday, until the night.

*Section 4*

At that time, the rain and the tempest began increasing, making no less trouble in the village than on the sea. All of the houses and churches fell, and to be able to protect from the wind carrying us, it was necessary for seven or eight men to go arm-in-arm. We were no less afraid of walking among the trees than in the houses, of being killed beneath them when they fell. We went about all night in danger in this tempest, without finding any place or anywhere that we could be safe for half an hour.

*End Section 4*  
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Following this, we heard all night, especially after midnight, a lot of racket - a roar of voices, and a great sound of bells, flutes, tambourines, and other instruments - which lasted until
morning, when the terror ceased. Nothing so fearful has ever been seen in these parts. I sent a testimony proving it to Your Majesty.

*Section 5*

On Monday morning, we went down to the port, and did not find the ships. When we saw their buoys in the water, we knew they were lost. We went along the coast to see if we could find anything of them. Not finding anything, we went into the woods. A fourth of a league from the water, we found a boat from one of the ships atop some trees. Ten leagues from there, by the coast, we found two men from my ship and some box covers. The bodies were so disfigured from the blows of the rocks that they could not be identified. We also found a cape and a quilt rent to pieces; nothing else was apparent. Sixty people and twenty horses on the ships were lost. Those who went ashore the day the ships arrived, which would be up to thirty, were what remained from both ships.

We were there several days, with much hardship, and in need, for the provisions and supplies the village had, and some livestock, were lost. The country was left such that it was a great pity to see it: trees were fallen, forests were burned, all leafless and barren. And so we waited until the fifth day of the month of November, when the governor arrived with his four ships, also having been through a great storm and also having escaped by getting to a safe place in time. The people he had in them, and those he found, were so frightened by what had happened that they were very afraid to go back out to sea in the winter, and begged the governor to wait there. He, seeing their will and that of the residents, wintered there. He put me in charge of the ships, and of the people, to go with them to spend the winter at the port of Xagua, which is twelve leagues from there, and where I stayed until the twentieth day of the month of February.
CHAPTER 2 - From Cuba to Florida

(How the governor came to the port of Xagua and brought a pilot with him)

*Section 6*

1 At this time, the governor arrived there with a brigantine that he bought in Trinidad, and he brought with him a pilot named Miruelo. He had taken him on because he said he knew the River of Palms and had been there, and was a very good pilot on all of the North coast. He also left, on the coast of Havana, another ship he bought, in which he left álvaro de la Cerda as captain, with forty men and twelve horsemen.

2 Two days after the governor arrived, he embarked. The people he was carrying were four hundred men and eighty horses, on four ships and one brigantine.

*End Section 6*  

The pilot we had newly taken put the ships into the shallows called Canarreo, so that the next day, we were on dry land. We stayed there fifteen days - the keels of the ships touching dry land many times. At the end of [the fifteen days], a storm from the south put so much water on the shallows that we were able to leave, although not without much danger.

3 Having left here and arrived at Guaniguanico, another storm took us, and we were at the moment of being lost. At Cape Corrientes we had another; we were there three days. After this, we rounded Cape San Antonio, and we went with contrary winds until we were twelve leagues from Havana. On the next day, when we tried to enter, a wind from the south kept us away from the land, so we went across to the coast of Florida.
*Section 7*

We arrived at the land on Tuesday, the twelfth day of April and we sailed along the coast of Florida. On Holy Thursday, we anchored on the same coast, in the mouth of a bay, at the end of which we saw some houses and habitations of Indians.

*End Section 7*  

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CHAPTER 3 - The Arrival at Florida

(How we arrived at Florida)

*Section 8*

1 On this same day, the accountant, Alonso Enríquez, went to an island that was in the same bay and called to the Indians, who came and were with him for a good bit of time. By way of exchange, they gave him fish and some pieces of venison. The following day, which was Holy Friday, the governor disembarked with as many men as the little boats he brought could hold. We came to the Indian huts or houses we had seen, and found them deserted and empty, because the people had gone that night in their canoes. One of those huts was very large; it could fit more than three hundred people. The others were smaller. We found a gold rattle among the nets.

2 The next day, the governor raised banners on behalf of Your Majesty, took possession of the land in your Royal Name, presented his credentials, and was acknowledged as governor, as Your Majesty commanded him. At this time, we presented those [credentials] of ours before him, and he acknowledged them according to their contents. Afterward, he commanded that all of the rest of the men disembark, with the horses we had left, which were no more than forty-two, because the rest of them died due to the great storms and the long time he had been at sea, and these few we had left were so thin and exhausted, that they could be of little use to us at the present.
The next day, the Indians of that village came to us. Although they spoke to us, we did not understand them, since we did not have an interpreter. They did make many signs and threats, and it seemed to us that they were telling us to leave the country. With that, they left, without making any problems for us, and they went away.

*End Section 8*

CHAPTER 4 - The Initial Exploration of Florida

(How we entered the country)

On the following day, the governor decided to go forth into the country, to explore it and see what was in it. We went with him - the commissary, the inspector, and I - with forty men. Six among them had horses, which were able to be of little benefit to us. We went to the north until at the hour of vespers we came to a very large bay, which appeared to go far inland. We stayed there that night.

The next day, we returned to where the ships and men were. The governor ordered that the brigantine go sail along the way of the coast of Florida and look for the port that the pilot, Miruelo, had said he knew (yet he had erred, and did not know where we were, nor where the port was). He ordered that if the brigantine did not find it, it should cross over to Havana, look for álvaro de la Cerda's ship, take on some supplies, and return to look for us.

After the brigantine left, we returned to explore the country - the same ones as before, plus some more men. We followed the coast of the bay we had found for four leagues, then encountered four Indians. We showed them corn to see if they knew what it was, because up to that point, we had not seen any sign of it. They told us that they would take us to where it was, and they took us to their village, which is at the end of the bay, close to there, and in it they showed us a little corn that was not ready for picking. There we saw many boxes of Castilian
merchandise, and in each one of them was a dead person's body. The bodies were covered with some painted deerskins. To the commissary, this appeared to be some form of idolatry, and he burned the box with the bodies. We also found pieces of linen and cloth and helmet crests that appeared to be from New Spain. We also found samples of gold. Using signs, we asked the Indians where they had found those things. They signed to us that very far from there was a province called Apalache, where there was much gold. They made signs that there was a great quantity of everything we valued in it. They said that in Apalache, there was plenty.

4 Taking some of these Indians as guides, we left there. Having walked ten or twelve leagues, we found another village with fifteen houses, where there was a good patch of sewn corn that was ready to pick. We also found some that was already harvested.

5 After two days there, we returned to where the accountant, the men, and the ships were. We told the accountant and the pilots what we had seen and the news that the Indians had given us.

*Section 9*

6 The next day, which was the first of May, the governor called aside the commissary, the accountant, the inspector, myself, a sailor named Bartolomé Fernández, and a scribe named Gerónimo de Alaniz. Once gathered, he told us that he had the desire to explore inland, while the ships go along the coast until they reach the port that the pilots said and believed was the way to the Palms, which was very close to there. He asked us to give him our opinions of this.

7 I responded that it seemed to me that we should not leave the ships for any reason until they were in a safe and settled port, and that it looked like the pilots were unsure and did not agree on one thing, nor did they know where we were. Beyond this, the horses were such that we could not take advantage of them for any need that may arise. Above all, we were going around
mute, without an interpreter, where we understood the Indians poorly, nor [did they] know what we wanted from the land. We were entering a land that we had no records of, and did not know of what sort it was, neither what was in it, nor what kind of people lived there, nor what part of it we were in. Above all this, we did not have supplies to explore the unknown, in view of the fact that the ships did not have more than a pound of biscuit and a pound of bacon to give each man as rations for entering the country. My opinion was that we should embark and go look for a port and country that was better for settlement, since that which we had seen was the most deserted and poorest ever found in those parts.

*End Section 9*

To the commissary, everything seemed to the contrary. He said that we should not embark, but we should go in search of the port, always staying along the coast, for the pilots said it was not but ten or fifteen leagues from there, on the way to Panuco. He said it was impossible, by always going along the coast, not to come to it, since he said the land came inward twelve leagues. The first ones to find it should wait there for the others. He said that for us to embark was to tempt God, because after we left Castile so many hardships had taken place - we had so many storms, so many losses of ships and men prior to arriving there. For these reasons, he would have us go by the length of the coast until arriving at the port, and the other ships, with the other men, would go the same way until they arrived at the same port.

It seemed good to everyone who was there, except for the scribe, that was what should be done. He said that before we abandon the ships, they should be left in a known and safe port, in a place that could be settled. Once that is done, we could explore the interior of the land and do as we wished.
The governor held to his opinion, and to that which the others advised. Seeing his determination, I required him, on Your Majesty's behalf, not to leave the ships until they were left in a port and secured. I asked for a testament from the scribe of what transpired there with us.

*Section 10*

[Narváez] responded that he was satisfied with the opinions of the majority of the other officers and commissary, that I had no part in making those requirements, and he asked the scribe for a testament how, since that country had no sustenance to be able to populate it, nor a port for the ships, he took up the people that had settled there, and they went with him in search of a port and a country that would be better. He then gave an order to notify the men who were going with him to prepare themselves with whatever they were going to need for the journey. After that decree, he said to me, in the presence of everyone there, because I was so opposed, and afraid of exploring the country, that I would stay and take charge of the ships and the men remaining on them, and settle [the port] if I arrived before him. I excused myself of this.

That same evening, after leaving there, saying that it did not seem to him that there was anyone he could trust with that, [Narváez] sent word to me to ask me to take charge of it. In view of how it bothered me so much, I still excused myself. He asked me what the reason was that I avoided accepting it, to which I responded that I avoided charging myself with that because I felt certain, and knew, that he would never again see the ships, nor the ships him, and that I understood this, seeing how he was so poorly equipped for exploring the interior country. I would much rather risk the danger that he and the others were risking, and endure what he and they would endure. [I told him] not to put me in charge of the ships and give occasion for saying that I had opposed the expedition and remained out of fear, placing my honor in dispute, and that I would much rather risk my life than put my honor in that position.
Seeing that he had gotten nowhere with me, he asked many others to speak to me about it and plead with me. I responded the same to them as to him. So, he arranged for his lieutenant to stay on the ships - an alcalde he brought whose name was Caravallo.

CHAPTER 5 - The Journey to Apalache

(How the governor left the ships)

*Section 11*

1 On Saturday, the first of May, the same day that this happened, [Narváez] ordered that each man going with him be given two pounds of biscuit and a half pound of bacon. We then left to explore the country. The sum of all the men that we took was three hundred. Among them were the commissary, Friar Juan Suárez, another friar named Juan de Palos, three clerics, and the officers. The horsemen who went with us, we were forty horsemen. And so, we proceeded with the provisions that we brought for fifteen days, without finding anything else to eat, except for palmettos, like those of Andalusia.

*End Section 11*
because we were certainly new to such hardships, beyond exhausted, and we arrived very
weakened from hunger.

3 On our third day there, the accountant, the inspector, the commissary, and I came
together and requested of the governor that we venture out to the sea to see if we could find a
port, because the Indians said that the sea was not very far from there. He responded to us that
we would not make ourselves better off by speaking of that, because it was very far from there.
Since I was being the most insistent, he told me to go and discover it and look for a port, and to
go on foot with forty men. So, the next day I left with Captain Alonso del Castillo and some
forty men of his company. We walked thusly until noon, when we arrived at some sandbars that
seemed to go far inland. We walked along them for a league and a half, with the water halfway
up our legs, stepping on top of oysters, from which we received many puncture wounds on our
feet. They were the cause of much trouble for us until we arrived at the river we had
crossed earlier, which emptied into the same inlet. Since we could not cross it, on account of having the
wrong equipment, we returned to the camp and reported what we had found to the governor -
that it was necessary to cross the river again in the same place we had crossed it earlier in order
to explore that inlet well and see if there was a port.

4 The next day, [Narváez] ordered a captain named Valenzuela to cross the river with sixty
men and six horsemen, follow it down to the sea, and find out if there was a port. After being out
for two days, [Valenzuela] returned and said that he had explored the inlet, and the whole bay
was knee-deep, and there was no port. Also, he had seen five or six Indian canoes crossing one
way or the other, and that the Indians were wearing many feathered headdresses. Knowing this,
we left from there the next day, always going in quest of that province that the Indians had called
Apalache, bringing as guides those of them who we had taken.
And so we continued until the seventeenth day of June, without finding Indians that would dare to wait for us. And then a lord, who an Indian carried on his back, came out to us, covered in a painted deerskin. He brought many people with him. Ahead of him, they came playing flutes made of cane. He came to where the governor was and stayed with him for an hour. By signs, we made him understand that we were going to Apalache. By signs that he made, we took him to be an enemy of those of Apalache, and that he would go to help us against them. We gave him beads, bells, and other items of barter, and he gave the governor the hide that he was wearing. Then he turned back, and we went following on the path that he went.

*Section 12*

That night, we came to a river that was very deep and very wide, and the current very strong. Since we could not cross over on rafts, we made a canoe for it. We took a day to cross it. If the Indians had wanted to offend us, they could well have hindered our passing. Even with them helping us, we had great difficulty. One horseman, who was called Juan Velázquez, a native of Cuellar, not wanting to wait, entered the river. The current, which was strong, swept him from the horse. He kept hold of the reins, and so he and the horse drowned. The Indians of that lord, whose name was Dulchanchelín, found the horse. They told us where down the river we would find him, and so they went for him. His death gave us much pain, because until then, we had not lost anyone. The horse made dinner for many that night.

Moving on from there, the next day we arrived at that lord’s village, and he gave us corn there. That night, where they went to get water, a Christian was shot with an arrow; God willed that they did not hurt him.

*End Section 12*
The next day, we left there without any of the native Indians appearing, for all had fled, but going on our trail, Indians who came to battle appeared. Although we called to them, they did not come back, neither did they wait, but they withdrew, following us by the same trail that carried us. The governor left an ambush of some horsemen on the trail. When they passed it, [the horsemen] came up on them and took three or four Indians, and these we took along as guides from there on. They took us through a country that was very difficult to traverse and marvelous to see, because in it there are many great forests, and the trees are marvelously tall. So many of them were fallen on the ground that they obstructed the trail in such a way that we could not pass them without going a long way around and with a very great effort. Of those that were not fallen, many were split open from top to bottom from lightning, which strikes in that country, as there are always many great storms and tempests.

*Section 13*

With this difficulty, we traveled until the day after Saint John's, when we came within sight of Apalache, without the Indians of the country sensing us. We gave many thanks to God for seeing we were so close to it, believing that what those of the other country had told us was true: that there the great hardships we had endured would be finished, for our road had been long and bad, and we had endured great hunger. Although we had found corn at times, most of the time we had walked seven or eight leagues without coming across it. There were many among us who, beyond the great fatigue and hunger, were dealing with wounds made on their backs from carrying their weapons, besides other things that occurred. But on seeing ourselves arrived where we wished to be, and where we were told so much sustenance and gold would be, it was as if a great part of our labor and fatigue had been taken away.

*End Section 13*
CHAPTER 6 - At Apalache

(How we arrived at Apalache)

*Section 14*

1 Having arrived within sight of Apalache, the governor ordered that I take nine horsemen and fifty footmen and enter the village. The inspector and I undertook this. We entered, finding nothing except women and children, for the men were not in the village at that time. A little later, as we were walking through it, they came and began to fight. They shot arrows at us, killing the inspector's horse, but finally they fled and left us.

*End Section 14*  

2 There was a great quantity of ripe corn there, and much dry [corn] that they had stored. We found many deerskins, and among them some small thread blankets, which the women used to cover themselves somewhat; they were no good. They had many vessels for grinding corn. The village had forty small houses and buildings, low and in sheltered locations, for fear of the great tempests that continuously occur in that country. The construction is straw. They are surrounded by a very thick forest, large groves, and many bodies of water, where there are so many and such large fallen trees that they are hindered. They are the reason that it is impossible to walk around without a lot of effort and danger.

CHAPTER 7 - From Apalache to Aute

(On the manner of the country)

1 The land between where we disembarked and this village and country of Apalache is, for the most part, level. The soil is sand and earth. Throughout it there are very large trees and open forests, where there are walnuts, laurels, others that are called sweetgums, cedars, junipers, live
oaks, pines, oaks, and low palmettos, of the kind of those of Castile. Throughout it there are many large and small lagoons, some of which are very troublesome to cross, partly because of the great depth, and partly because there are so many fallen trees in them. Their bottoms are sandy, and we found those in the Apalache region to be much bigger than those on the way there.

There are many cornfields in this province. The houses are quite scattered around the countryside, in the manner of those that are in Los Gelves. The animals that we saw there were: three kinds of deer, rabbits, hares, bears, lions, and other wild beasts. Among those we saw an animal that carries its young in a pouch that it has in its belly. The whole time they are small, it carries them there, until they know how to look for food. If it so happens that they are looking for food and people come, the mother does not flee until they have gathered in her pouch.

Through there, the country is very cold. It has very good pastures for cattle. There are many kinds of birds: large numbers of geese, common ducks, wild ducks, mallards, flycatchers, egrets, herons, and partridges; we saw many falcons, female falcons, sparrow hawks, pigeon hawks, and many other birds.

Two hours after we arrived at Apalache, the Indians that had fled from there came back to us in peace, asking us for their women and children. We gave them to them, except that the governor detained one of their chiefs with us. For this reason, they left offended, and the next day, they returned on the warpath and attacked us with such courage and speed, that they set fire to the houses we were in. When we came out, they had fled, taking refuge in the lagoons that were very close by. Because of this, and because of the large cornfields that were there, we could not do them harm, except for one that we killed. The following day, other Indians from another village that was on the other side came to us and attacked us with the same skill as the first ones, and fled in the same manner. One of them also died.
We were in this village twenty-five days, during which we made three trips into the country and found it very thinly populated and very bad for travel, because of the bad crossings, forests, and lagoons it had. We asked the chief that we had detained, and the other Indians that we brought with us, who were neighbors and enemies of theirs, about the manner and population of the country, the quality of its people, and about supplies and everything else about it. They responded to us, each one for himself, that Apalache was the largest village in all that country, and that further on there were fewer people who were much poorer than them, and that the land was not well-populated, and its inhabitants were very scattered. Even further in, there were large lagoons, dense thickets, and vast, unpopulated deserts. We then asked them about the country that was to the south - about the villages and resources it had. They said that nine days' travel in that direction, toward the sea, there was a village called Aute. The Indians there had much corn, and that they had beans and gourds, and that by being so close to the sea, they caught fish, and they were friends of theirs.

*Section 15*

We, in view of the poverty of the country and the bad reports about its population and everything else they gave us, and how the Indians had made constant war on us, wounding the men and horses in the places where we went to collect water - and this from the lagoons, so safe that we could not harm them, because they shot arrows at us while nestled in the them, and they killed a lord of Tescuco named Don Pedro, who came with the commissary - decided to leave there and go and look for the sea and that village of Aute that they had told us about. We therefore left at the end of twenty-five days after our arrival.

The first day, we passed those lagoons and crossings without seeing an Indian. But on the second day, we came to a lagoon that was very hard to cross, because the water came to our
Cabeza de Vaca’s Relation

chests, and it had many fallen trees in it. We were in the middle of it when many Indians, who were hidden within the trees so that we could not see them, attacked us. Others were on top of the fallen [trees]. They commenced to shoot arrows in such a manner that they wounded many of our men and horses. They also took from us the guide we had brought. Before we could get out of the lagoon, and after they got out of it, they turned around and continued [the attack], wanting to hinder the crossing in such a way that we could not get an advantage by getting out of it or make ourselves stronger and want to fight them, who would stay hidden in the lake, and from there wound our men and horses. In view of this, the governor ordered that the horsemen dismount and attack them on foot. The accountant dismounted with them. They then attacked. All of [the Indians] fled into a lagoon, and so we won the crossing.

Some of our men were wounded in this revolt; the good armor they took did not protect them. There were men this day who swore that they had seen two live oaks, each one of them as thick as a man’s lower leg, shot completely through with the Indians’ arrows. This is not so amazing if one considers the force and skill with which they shoot; I myself saw an arrow in the base of a poplar, which penetrated it by a span. All of the many Indians we saw throughout Florida are archers. Because their bodies are so large and they go around naked, from afar they appear to be giants. These people are amazingly fit - very slender, and with great strength and agility. The bows they use are as thick as a man’s arm - eleven or twelve palms long - and they shoot arrows at two hundred paces with such great care that in no case do they miss.

*End Section 15*

After we made this crossing, we came to one of the same kind one league from there, except that because it was so long - it went on for half a league - it was much worse. We crossed
this one freely and without hindrance from the Indians, because they had spent their whole supply of arrows at the first one; they had none left with which to dare to attack us.

9 The next day, while passing through a similar crossing, I found evidence of people that crossed ahead of us. I notified the governor, who was at the rearguard, of this so that we could be prepared if the Indians should attack us, and they would not be able to harm us. When we came out onto the plain, they were still following us. We turned on them in two groups and killed two Indians. They wounded me and two or three other Christians. They then returned to the forest, and we could not do them any more harm or damage.

10 We traveled eight days in this manner. After the crossing I described previously, no more Indians came out to us until the place to which I said we were going was one league ahead. There, as we were going along our trail, Indians came out without being noticed and struck our rearguard. A boy who was back there, who belonged to a nobleman named Avellaneda, let out some screams. Avellaneda turned around and went back to help, and the Indians hit their mark with an arrow at the edge of his armor. It gave him such an injury that the arrow passed almost all the way through his neck. He then died there, and we carried him to Aute. We arrived there from Apalache in nine days of travel. When we arrived, we found all of its people gone and the houses burned. There was much corn, gourds, and beans, all of which were ready to begin to pick.

11 We rested there for two days. After these passed, the governor ordered me to go explore the sea, which the Indians had said was quite close by. On the trip we had just made, we had discovered a very large river that we had given the name, River of the Magdalene. Accordingly, I left the following day to explore it, joined by the commissary, Captain Castillo, Andrés Dorantes, seven other horsemen, and fifty footmen. We traveled until the hour of vespers, when we reached
an inlet, or entrance of the sea, where we found many oysters, which the men enjoyed. We gave many thanks to God for having brought us there.

12 The next morning, I sent twenty men to inspect the coast and take a look at its layout. They returned the following night. They said that its inlets and bays were very large and reached far inland, which greatly hindered their discovery of what they wanted, and that the coast was very far from there. With this new knowledge, and seeing how poorly organized and prepared we were for exploring the coast, I returned to the governor.

13 When we arrived, we found the governor ill, along with many others. The previous night, the Indians had struck and put them under the greatest stress, which is why this sickness came upon them so unexpectedly. Also, one horse had died. I reported that which I had done and about the poor layout of the country. We remained there that day.

CHAPTER 8 - Building Boats

(How we left Aute)

*Section 16*

1 We left Aute the following day and traveled all day until we arrived where I had been. We went on the trail with extreme difficulty, because neither were the horses sufficient to carry the sick, nor did we know how to cure them. They suffered every day; it was a very painful and pitiful thing to see the need and hardship that they were in. The further we went, I saw how unprepared we were for going forward, because we did not know where to go. Neither even if we did could the men move forward, because they were mostly sick - so sick that few of them were able to be of much good. I refrain from reporting about it at greater length, because any one can imagine what might happen in such a strange and bad country, without any aid of any kind, either for staying there or for leaving it.
As much as the surest aid was our Lord God, and of this we never doubted, something happened next that aggravated me more than all of this. Among the horsemen, the largest part of them began to go secretly, thinking they would find their own aid, and abandoning the governor and the sick, who were weak and powerless. Still, since many among them were noblemen and men of a good sort, they did not want this to happen without bidding farewell to the governor and Your Majesty's officials. We then chastised them for their proposal, making our case about abandoning their captain, the sick, and the weak, and separating themselves from Your Majesty's service at such a time. They agreed to stay, and that whatever happened to one, happened to all, with no one abandoning another.

Upon this, the governor called everyone together, and each person for himself, to give his impression of that bad country, so that we could leave it and look for some aid, for none was to be had there. A third of our people were greatly infirmed, and this grew every hour, so that we were totally certain that if we stayed there, the only way out was death, which that place would make even more dire. Considering this and many other problems, and that we had tried many remedies, we agreed on a very difficult one to put into action, which was to make ships in which we would escape. It seemed impossible to everyone, because we did not know how to make them, neither had we any tools, iron, forges, oakum, pitch, or rigging. In the end, out of all of the many things that would be needed, we had none, nor did anyone know anything about their fabrication. Above all, there was nothing to eat while they did it, and those who had to work the labor that we had said. Considering all this, we agreed to think about it more carefully. This ended our discussion that day. Each one went entrusting it to our Lord God, that He would lead him on the path that would most serve Him.
The next day, God willed that one of our company came saying that he would make some tubes from sticks, and some bellows could be made from deerskins. Since we were in such a state that anything that had the resemblance of aid seemed good to us, we told him to put himself to the task. We agreed to make nails, saws, axes, and other tools which we needed so badly from the stirrups, spurs, crossbows, and other iron objects that we had. To give assistance, so to have sustenance for the time that they did this, four incursions were made on Aute, with all of the horses and men that were able to go. On every third day, a horse was killed and was divided among those who were working on the boat project and those who were sick. The incursions were made with the men and horses that were able; they returned with up to four hundred bushels of corn - although not without contending and quarreling with the Indians. We gathered many palmettos, making use of their fibers and husks, twisting and preparing them to use in place of oakum for the boats. Work on them was begun by the only carpenter we had in our company. We were so diligent that, starting from the fourth day of August, five boats were completed on the twentieth of September. Each one was twenty-two cubits long. They were caulked with palmetto oakum and tarred with a kind of pitch that a Greek man named Don Teodoro made from some pines. We made ropes and rigging from palmetto fibers and the tales and manes of horses, sails from our shirts, and oars - which we thought were going to be necessary - from the junipers that were there. Such was the land in which our sins had placed us that it was with great effort that we were able to find stones for ballast and anchors for the boats, for we had not seen one in all of it. We also skinned the horses' legs whole and tanned the hides to make pouches in which we could carry water.
*Section 17*

5 During this time, some went to the nooks and inlets of the sea to gather seafood. The Indians struck them twice. They killed ten men in view of the camp, without our being able to help them. We found them shot with arrows all the way through. Although some of them were wearing good armor, it was not enough to withstand, because nothing was, because they shot with such skill and force, as I said above.

*End Section 17*

6 By the statement and oath of our pilots, we had traveled two hundred and eighty leagues, more or less, from the bay, which we gave the name of the Cross, to here. In this whole country, we did not see a mountain range, nor saw any sign of one in any way.

*Section 18*

7 Before we embarked, besides those of us that the Indians killed, more than forty men had died of sickness and hunger. On the twenty-second day of September, they had finished eating the horses, with only one left. On that day, we embarked in this order: forty-nine men went in the governor's boat; the same amount went in a boat he gave to the accountant and the commissary; he gave the third to Captain Alonso del Castillo and Andrés Dorantes with forty-eight men; he gave another to two captains named Téllez and Peñalosa, with forty-seven men; he gave the other to the inspector and me, with forty-nine men. After our clothing and supplies were brought aboard, the boats had no more than a span left above the water. Besides this, we were so pressed together that we were unable to move. Necessity is so powerful that it brought us to venture out in this manner, putting ourselves into such a troubled sea, and without any knowledge of the art of navigation out of everyone who went.

*End Section 18*
CHAPTER 9 - Leaving the Bay of Horses

(How we left the Bay of Horses)

1 That bay we left from is named the Bay of Horses. We went along those inlets for seven days, in waist-deep water, without seeing any sign of anything like a coast. At the end of these [days], we came to an island that was close to the mainland. My boat went forward, and from it we saw five Indian canoes coming. When the Indians saw that we were going to them, they abandoned [the canoes] and left them in our hands. The other boats went on forward and set upon some houses on the same island. We found many mullets and their eggs, which were dry. This was a very great help for the need that we were in. After taking them, we proceeded further. Two leagues from there, we passed through a strait where the island met the mainland. We called it Saint Michael, because we made through it on his day. Leaving it, we arrived on the coast where, with the five canoes I had taken from the Indians, we repaired the boats somewhat, making waist boards of them and adding them so that they rose two palms above the water.

2 After this, we resumed traveling along the length of the coast toward the River of Palms. Our thirst and hunger were growing every day, because our supplies were very small and coming close to the end, and our water was finished, because the pouches we had made from the legs of our horses had become rotten and of no benefit. Sometimes we entered inlets and bays that reached very far inland; we found all of them shallow and dangerous. We made our way through them for thirty days. Sometimes we found Indian fishermen - poor and miserable people.

3 One night, at the end of these thirty days, going along the coast in extreme need of water, we sensed a canoe coming. When we saw it, we waited for it to arrive. It did not want to show itself, and although we called to it, it did not want to turn around or wait for us. Because it was
night, we did not follow it, but went on our way. When dawn came, we saw a small island and went to it to see if we could find water, but our labor was in vain, for there was none.

*Section 19*

While we were anchored there, a very large storm overtook us. We were stopped there for six days without daring to go out to sea. As we had gone five days without drinking, our thirst was such that we were compelled to drink salt water. Some of us were so distressed by it that suddenly, five men died.

I relate this briefly because I do not believe it is necessary to relate in particular the miseries and hardships in which we saw ourselves. Moreover, considering the place where we were and the small hope we had for relief, each person can imagine what happened there. Seeing how our thirst grew and the water was killing us, although the storm had not ceased, we agreed to entrust ourselves to our Lord God and risk ourselves to the sea's danger rather than wait for the certainty of death by thirst. So, we left in the direction of the canoe we had seen the night we came there. On that day, we could see ourselves drowning many times, and were so lost that there was no one who did not believe that death was certain.

It pleased our Lord, who shows His favor in our times of greatest need, that at sunset we turned a point of land where we found fair weather and a haven. Many canoes came out to us. The Indians in them came and spoke to us and, without waiting for us, turned around. The people were large and well-built, and carried neither arrows nor bows. We went, following them to their houses, which were near there in a tongue of water. We landed, and among the houses we saw many containers of water and a great quantity of cooked fish. The lord of those lands offered all of it to the governor and, taking him with him, brought him to his house. Their houses were matted in a way that appeared to be fixed. After we entered the chief's house, he gave us much
fish, and we gave him our corn. They ate it in our presence and asked us for more, and we gave it. The governor gave him many items of barter.

6 While [we] were with the chief in his house, half an hour after sunset, the Indians suddenly struck us and those who were lying on the beach, very sick. They also attacked the chief's house, where the governor was, and they wounded him in the face with a stone. Those [of us] who were with the chief seized him, but since those of his were so close by, he broke free, leaving a robe in their hands made of sable, which I believe is the best that can be found in the world. They have an odor that is not unlike amber and musk that reaches so far, it seems like it is from a great number of them. We saw others there, but none were as such as these.

*End Section 19*

7 Those of us who happened to be there, seeing the governor wounded, laid him down in a boat. We had most of the men follow him to the boats, and we left about fifty of us on land to deal with the Indians. They attacked us three times that night with such vigor that each time, they made us retreat more than a stone's throw. None of us were left unhurt; I was hurt in the face. If they would have had more arrows (since only a few were found), they would have done much more damage, without a doubt. On the last occasion, Captains Dorantes, Peñalosa, and Téllez placed themselves in ambush with fifteen men and struck them in the rear, in such a manner as to make them flee, leaving us alone.

8 The morning of the next day, I destroyed more than thirty canoes, which helped us with a north wind, for we had to stay there all day, very cold, not daring to go out onto the sea because of a great storm that was in it. When it passed, we went back out on the boats. We navigated for three days, with only a small amount of water to drink, and as the vessels we were carrying were also very few, we were finding ourselves in the same plight as before.
Continuing on our way, we entered a swamp, and in it we saw a canoe of Indians coming. When we called to them, they came to us. The governor, to whose boat they had come, asked them for water. They offered to give him what our people could carry. A Greek Christian called Doroteo Teodoro (of whom I made mention above) said he wanted to go with them. The governor and others tried hard to stop him, but were unable to. He wanted to go with them no matter what, and so he went, taking a Negro with him. The Indians left two of their company as hostages. At night, the Indians returned bringing many vessels without water, and they did not bring the Christians that they had taken. Those that had stayed as hostages, when the others spoke to them, tried to jump into the water, but our men who were in the boat stopped them. So, the Indians in the canoe fled, leaving us very confused and sad for having lost those two Christians.

CHAPTER 10 - Trouble on the Sea

(Of the Indians' skirmish against us)

When morning came, many canoes of Indians came to us, asking us for the two comrades who they had left in the boat as hostages. The governor said that he would give them if they brought the two Christians they had taken. With these people came five or six lords, who seemed to us to be more capable and composed, and have more authority than those we had seen previously, albeit not so large as those of whom we have related. They wore their hair loose and very long, and they were covered with mantles of marten, of the kind that we had taken earlier. Some of them were made in a very strange manner, as there were knots on them made of patches of tawny skins, which looked very good. They asked us to go with them and said they would give us the Christians, water, and many other things. Many canoes continued to help surround us, with the goal of controlling the mouth of that inlet. Because of this, because the country was very
dangerous to stay in, we departed for the sea, where we stayed with them until noon. Because they did not want to give us the Christians, and for that reason we would not give them the Indians, they began to hurl stones with slings and throw staffs. They made threats of shooting arrows at us, although we saw but three or four bows among all of them.

During this conflict, the wind renewed, and they turned around and left us. We navigated that day until the hour of vespers, when my boat, which was in front, discovered a point of land. On the other end of it was a very large river and an islet that made the point where I anchored to wait for the other boats. The governor did not want to come; instead he put into a bay very close by, in which there were many islets. We joined him there and took sweet water from the sea, because the river entered into the sea like a flood. We went onto that island to toast some corn that we had brought, because we had eaten it raw for two days, but because we could not find firewood, we agreed to go to the river that was across the point, one league from there. Going there, the current was such that it would not let us approach in any way. Instead, it separated us from the land, although we struggled and contended with it. The north [wind] that came from the land began to increase so much that it put us out to sea, without us being able to do anything. A half-league from where we were driven out, we sounded and found even with thirty fathoms, we could not take the depth; we could not determine whether the current was the reason we could not take it.

We navigated nevertheless for two days, struggling to reach land. At the end of them, a little before the sun was gone, we saw many smoke columns on the coast. Working to approach there, we found ourselves in three fathoms of water. Because it was night, we did not dare to land, because we had seen so many smoke columns, we believed that could be the greater
danger. We could not see, on account of the great darkness, what we ought to do, so we decided to wait until morning.

4 When dawn came, each boat had found itself lost from the others. I found myself in thirty fathoms. Continuing on my way, I saw two boats at the hour of vespers. As I went to them, I saw that the first one I came to was the governor's. He asked me what it seemed to me we should do. I told him that he should regroup with the other boat that was ahead, and in no way leave it, and we would follow, all three boats together, the way God willed to carry us. He responded that could not be done, because the boat was very far out to sea, and he wanted to reach land, and that if I wanted to follow him, the men on my boat had to take the oars and go to work, because with the strength of our arms it was possible to reach land. He was advised on this by a captain he had with him, who was named Pantoja, telling him that if he did not reach land that day, that he would not reach it in six days, and in that time, to die from hunger was inevitable. Seeing his determination, I took my oar, and everyone on my boat did the same. We rowed almost until sunset, but since the governor had with him the strongest and healthiest men of all, we could not keep up or follow him in any way. When I saw this, I asked him to give me a rope from his boat, so that I could follow him. He responded that it would not be a small thing to them if they alone could reach land that night. I said to him that since I saw little chance of our being able to follow him and do as he had ordered, to tell me what it was that he was ordering me to do. He answered that this was no time for some to give orders to others, that each one should do what seemed best to him to save his life, and that is what he intended to do. Saying this, he sheared off with his boat.

5 Since I could not follow him, I went after the other boat, which was out at sea and which waited for me. Reaching it, I found that it was the one belonging to Captains Peñalosa and
Téllez. We navigated together for four days, eating a ration of a half a handful of raw corn each day. At the end of these four days, a storm came to us, and we lost [sight of] the other boat. By the great mercy God showed for us through it all, we did not sink. In accordance with the weather, and it being winter, and very cold, and suffering from hunger for so many days, with the injuries we sustained while at sea, the men began to become very dismayed the next day in such a way that when the sun went down, everyone who was in my boat had fallen down on top of each other, so close to death that few were conscious, and in that hour there were not five men standing.

6 When night came, only the mate and I were left who were able to work the boat. Two hours into the night, the mate told me that I had to take charge of it, because he was in such a state that he believed he was going to die that night. So, I took the helm. After midnight, I went to see whether the mate was dead. He responded that he instead was better and that he would steer until morning. At that moment, I surely would much rather have tasted death than see so many people around me in such a condition.

7 After the mate took charge of the boat, I rested a little without much rest. There was nothing further from my mind than sleep. Around dawn, it seemed like I heard the sound of breakers, because the coast was low, it made a lot of sound. With this sudden surprise, I called to the mate, who responded that he thought we were close to land. We took a sounding and found we were in seven fathoms. He thought that we should stay on the water until daybreak. Therefore, I took an oar and rowed toward the shore, which we were a league from, and turned the stern seaward.

8 Near land, a wave took us and tossed the boat out of the water like a horseshoe in a game. With the great blow from that, almost everyone in the boat who was like dead came to
themselves. When they saw we were close to land, they began to slip out, crawling on their hands and feet. As they went out to some gullies on the shore, we made a fire and toasted our corn, and found rainwater. With the warmth from the fire, the people came around and began to revive somewhat. The day that we landed was the sixth of the month of November.

CHAPTER 11 - On an Island

(Of that which happened to Lope de Oviedo with some Indians)

1 After the men had eaten, I ordered Lope de Oviedo, who was the strongest and most robust of all, to go to some trees that were close by there, climb one of them, survey the land we were in, and collect some information about it. He did so and learned that we were on an island. He saw that the land was rutted in the manner of land where cattle walk, and it seemed to him that it was a land of Christians, and he told us so. I ordered him to return and look very particularly to see if there were any trails that went through, and to do it without greatly increasing the danger that he could be in. He went, and chancing upon a footpath, followed it for nearly a half a league and found some Indian huts that were empty because the Indians had gone out to the field. He took one of their pots, a little puppy, and a few mullets from them and came back to us.

2 It seemed to us that he was delayed, so I sent two other Christians to look for him and see what had happened to him. They chanced upon him close to there and saw three Indians with bows and arrows, coming to him and calling to him, and he likewise was calling to them by signs. So he came to where we were, and the Indians stayed back a little ways, seated on the same shore. After a half hour, a hundred more Indian archers joined them. They were so large now, or not, our fear made them appear to be giants. They were close to us, where the first three
were. It was needless to think that there would be one among us who could defend himself, because it was difficult to find six who were able to raise themselves from the ground. The inspector and I went over to them and called to them, and they came to us. We tried to assure them and assure ourselves as best as we could. We gave them beads and bells, and each one of them gave me an arrow as a sign of friendship. By signs they told us that they would return in the morning bringing food, because then they had none.

CHAPTER 12 - Losing the Boat

(How the Indians brought food to us)

1 The next day, as the sun was coming out, which was the hour that the Indians had said, they came to us, as they had promised, and brought us a lot of fish and some roots that they eat, which are like nuts, some bigger or smaller, most of which are taken from below the water, with great effort. In the afternoon, they returned and brought us more fish and some of the same roots. They made their women and children come to see us, and so they returned rich in bells and beads that we gave them. They returned to visit us on other days with the same things as the other times.

2 As we saw that we were supplied with fish, roots, water, and the other things we asked for, we decided to apply ourselves to embarking and continuing on our way. We raised the boat out of the sand in which it was lodged. It was necessary for us to remove all of our clothing for this, and we endured great difficulty to cast it out on the water, because we were such that other, much lighter things sufficed to put us in it.

3 And so, we embarked. At two crossbow shots out at sea, such a great wave hit us that it soaked everyone. Since we were naked, and it was very cold, the oars dropped out of our hands. At the next blow that the sea gave us, the boat overturned. The inspector and two others clung to
it to save themselves, but the reverse happened, and the boat took them down and drowned them. As the coast is very rough, the sea threw everyone else in a heave, enveloped in waves and half-drowned, onto the coast of the same island, without losing more than the three who the boat had taken down. Everyone else escaped harm, as naked as how we were born, and lost all that we carried. Although it was worth little, it was also worth much.

4 Since it was November and it was very cold, and we were such that our bones could be counted with little difficulty, we were made into the figure of death itself. For myself, I know I can say that since the previous month of May I had not eaten anything but toasted corn, and sometimes I found myself having to eat it raw, because although they killed the horses while the boats were being made, I could never eat of them, and there were not ten times that I ate fish. I say this to explain the reasons why anyone could see why we were in such a state. On top of everything stated, a north wind arose, so that we were closer to death than to life. It pleased Our Lord that, while searching for the remnants of the fire that we had made, we found wood, with which we made large fires. And so we were asking Our Lord, crying many tears, for mercy and forgiveness of our sins. Each one of us took pity not only on himself, but everyone else who he saw in the same state.

*Section 20*

5 At the hour of sunset, the Indians, believing that we had not gone, returned to look for us and bring us something to eat. When they saw us in such different attire from before, and such a strange kind, they became so frightened that they turned back. I went over and called to them, and they came, very frightened. I made them to understand by signs how our boat had sunk and three of us had drowned. There, in their very presence, they saw two dead, and those who were left of us were going down that same path. The Indians, seeing the disaster that had come to us
and the disaster we were in, with so much misfortune and misery, and with great pain and sadness at our plight, sat down among us and began to weep loudly and so sincerely that it could be heard far away. This lasted more than a half hour. Truly, seeing these men who were so crude and lacking in reason, like brutes, so pained for us increased my own emotions, and that of the others in the company, for what we had been through.

After all of the weeping had calmed down, I spoke to the Christians and asked them if they thought I should request the Indians to take us to their houses. Some of them who had been in New Spain answered that I should not speak about it because if they took us to their houses, they would sacrifice us to their idols. Still, seeing that there was no other remedy, and that by any other course, death would be closer and surer, I did not heed what they said, and asked the Indians to take us to their houses. They showed great pleasure at that. They had us wait for a moment, so that they could do that which we wanted. Later, thirty of them loaded themselves with firewood and went to their houses, which were far from there, and we waited with the others until almost night. Then they took hold of us and carried us with great swiftness to their houses. Because it was very cold, they had arranged to make four or five very large fires at intervals so that some would not die or faint. They warmed us at each one of them, and when they saw that we had gained some strength and warmth, they carried us to the next one so quickly that our feet hardly touched the ground. In this manner, we went to their houses, where we found that they had made a house for us, with many fires in it. An hour after our arrival, they began to dance and have a great party, which went on all night. For us, though, there was no pleasure, party, or sleep, as we were waiting for when they were going to sacrifice us.

In the morning, they came to us to give us fish and roots. They gave us such good treatment that we were somewhat assured and lost some of our worry of sacrifices.
CHAPTER 13 - More Survivors On the Island

(How we knew of other Christians)

1  This same day, I saw a trinket on one of those Indians, and I knew that it was not one of those that we had given him. I asked where he had gotten it, and they answered by signs that some other men like us, who were behind [them], had given it. Learning this, I sent two Christians and two Indians to guide them to those people. They happened upon them very close by, because they had also come looking for us, because the Indians that were staying with them had told them of us. They were Captains Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo, with all the people of their boat. When they came to us, they were very frightened to see us in the state we were in. They were very grieved at having nothing to give us, since they had no other clothing except that they were wearing. They stayed there with us, and they related to us how their boat had capsized a league and a half from there on the fifth of that same month, and they had escaped without losing anything.

2  All together, we agreed to repair their boat. Those of us who had the strength and inclination could go in it; the others would remain there until they recovered, then going as they were able along the coast, and that they wait there until God would take them with us to a land of Christians. So, we put ourselves to our plan. Before we cast the boat into the water, Tavera, a gentleman of our company, died.

3  The boat that we thought would carry us was finished, but it could not stay afloat, and so it sank.

4  Because we were left in the state I have described - most of us naked - and the weather was so rough for walking and for swimming across rivers and inlets, nor were there any
provisions or way to carry them, we determined to do what necessity asked, which was to winter there. We also agreed that four men, who were the strongest ones there, would go to Panuco, believing it was close to there, and that if our Lord God would be served by taking them there, they would tell about those who remained on that island, and of our need and trouble. These were very great swimmers: one they called álvaro Fernández, a Portuguese carpenter and sailor; the second was called Méndez; the third, Figueroa, who was a native of Toledo; the fourth, Astudillo, native of Zafra. They took an Indian of the island with them.

CHAPTER 14 - The Natives of the Island of Misfortune

(How the four Christians departed)

A few days after these Christians left, such cold and stormy weather came that the Indians could not pull roots, and the channels in which they fished would not provide anything. Since the houses were such poor shelter, the people began to die.

*Section 21*

Five Christians staying in the huts on the coast came to such an extreme that they ate each other until only one remained who, being alone, had no one to eat him. Their names were these: Sierra, Diego López, Corral, Palacios, Gonzalo Ruiz. The Indians were so disturbed by this - there was such a great scandal among them - that without a doubt if they had seen this at the beginning, they would have killed them, and all of us would have found ourselves in a lot of trouble.

Finally, in a very little time, of eighty men of our both parties who arrived there, only fifteen were left. After these died, the Indians of the country had a sickness of the stomach from which half of them died. They believed that we were those who were killing them. Taking it as a certainty, they decided among themselves to kill those of us who remained. But when they came to put it into effect, an Indian who kept me told them not to believe that we were the ones killing
them, because if we had such power, we would have exempted ourselves, and so many of us
would not have died (since they saw who had died) without being able to cure ourselves, and that
now but very few of us remained, none of whom had done any harm or damage, and it was better
to leave us alone. Our Lord willed that the others followed this counsel and opinion, and so their
plan was obstructed.

*End Section 21*

3 We gave this island the name "Island of Misfortune." The people we saw there were large
and well-formed. They have no other weapons than arrows and bows, with which they are
extremely adept. The men have one nipple pierced from one side to the other; there are some
who have both. They place a cane as long as two and a half palms and as thick as two fingers
through the hole they make. They also have their lower lip pierced, and they put a piece of cane
as thin as half a finger through it. The women do a lot of work.

4 The habitation of this island is from October until the end of February. The sustenance is
the roots I have told of, harvested from below the water in November and December. They have
channels for fishing, which have more fish at this time than any other. From then on, they eat the
roots. At the end of February, they go to other places to look for their sustenance, because the
roots are beginning to sprout then, and are no good.

5 Of all the people in the world, they love their children the most and give them the best
treatment. When it happens that one of their children should die, the parents and relatives and the
whole village cry for it. The weeping lasts for a complete year, in which every day, in the
morning, before sunrise, the parents begin to cry first, and after this the whole village. They do
the same thing at midday and nightfall. When a year of weeping has passed, they pay their
respects to the dead, and they wash and clean themselves of all the paint they wear. They mourn
all of their dead this way, except for the elderly, of whom they make no occasion, because they say that they have had their time and they are of no use except to occupy the ground and take sustenance from the children.

There is another custom, which is that when some child or sibling dies, those of his house do not gather food for three months, leaving themselves to die of hunger, and their relatives and neighbors provide for them to have something to eat. And since, in the time we were there, so many of their people died, there was very great hunger in most of the houses, due to their
observance of their customs and ceremonies - those who searched had to work very hard - and also because the weather was so rough, they could find but very little.

Because of this, the Indians who kept me left the island, and went on canoes to the mainland, where there were some bays that had many oysters. For three months of the year, they eat nothing else, and they drink very bad water. There is a great lack of firewood, and the mosquitos are in very great abundance. Their houses are built out of mats over many oyster shells. They sleep over them on hides, which they only have by chance. We stayed there until the end of April, when we went to the seashore, where we ate blackberries all month, during which time they never ceased to have their ceremonial dances and celebrations.

CHAPTER 15 - Becoming Healers

(Of what happened to us on the Island of Misfortune)

On that island, which I have discussed, they wanted to make healers of us without examining us or asking us for our credentials, because they cure illnesses by blowing on the sick, and with that puff and their hands, they remove the sickness from a person. They ordered us to do the same thing, thereby serving some purpose to them. We laughed at them, saying that it was a joke and that we did not know how to heal. And so they took our food from us until we did what they told us to. Seeing our obstinacy, one Indian said to me that I did not know what I said in saying that I did not want to take advantage of what he knew, since the rocks and other things that grew in the fields have power. [He said that] he, with a hot stone, placed on the stomach, healed and removed pain, and that we were surely men who possessed greater virtue and power. In the end, we saw ourselves in such a necessity that we had to do it, without fear that anyone would punish us for it.
This is the manner in which they cure a person: when they feel sick, they call a doctor. After being cured, they give him not only all that they possess, but they look for things for their relatives to give him. What the doctor does is cut a few scars where the pain is, and they suck around them. They cauterize with fire, a thing which is considered very beneficial by them. (I have experimented with it, and it worked well for me.) After this, they blow on the spot that hurts them, and with this, they believe that the malady has left them.

The manner with which we cured was to make the sign of the Cross over them, blow on them, recite an Our Father and a Hail Mary, and pray as best as we could to our Lord God to give them health and inspire them to give us some good treatment. Our Lord God willed, in His mercy, that all those for whom we entreated, after we made the sign of the Cross over them, said to the others that they were sound and well. For this reason, they treated us well and stopped eating so that they could give food to us. They also gave us hides and other small things.

The hunger that went through there was so extreme that many times, I went three days without eating anything at all, and they were also [like this], and it seemed impossible to me for life to go on, although later on, I saw myself in other, greater states of hunger and need, as I will relate later.

The Indians who kept Alonso del Castillo, Andrés Dorantes, and the others who were still left alive, who were of another language and another bloodline, had gone to another part of the mainland to eat oysters. They stayed there until the first day of the month of April and then returned to the island, which was almost two leagues from there, where the water is widest. The island is a half a league across and five in length.

All of the people in this country go nude; only the women wear on their bodies some covering made of a wool that grows on the trees. The girls cover themselves with deer skins.
They are a very liberal people with regard to [giving] what they have to others. There is no lord among them. All who are of the same lineage stay together. Two manners of language inhabit them. The first are called Capoques, and the others Han. They have a custom when they know each other and see each other from time to time, before they speak, they spend a half hour crying. After this is over, the one who is being visited rises first and gives all that he has to the other, and after a little while, he leaves with it. Sometimes, after receiving it, they leave without speaking a word. They have other strange customs, but I have related the most important and notable ones in passing forward and relating what else happened to us.

CHAPTER 16 - A Group Leaves the Island

(How the Christians left the Isla de Malhado)

1 After Dorantes and Castillo returned to the island, they gathered together all of the Christians, who were scattered. They found fourteen in all. I, as I have said, was in another place on the mainland, where my Indians had taken me and where a great illness had come over me. In other circumstances, I would have had a hope of surviving, but that was enough to totally remove [that hope] from me. When the Christians learned this, they gave an Indian the marten mantle that we had taken from the chief, as we stated earlier, so that they could come to where I was and see me. So, twelve came to me, because two of them were so feeble that they did not dare to bring them with them. The names of those who came were: Alonso del Castillo, Andrés Dorantes, Diego Dorantes, Valdivieso, Estrada, Tostado, Chaves, Gutiérrez, a cleric from Asturias, Diego de Huelva, Estevanico the Negro, and Benítez. As they came to the mainland, they found another one of ours, who was called Francisco de León, a total of thirteen along the coast. After they had passed through, the Indians who kept me advised me of it, and how
Hierónimo de Alaniz and Lope de Oviedo remained on the island. My sickness hindered me, so that I could not follow or see them.

I had to stay with these same Indians of the island more than a year, and for the hard work they gave me to do and the poor way they treated me, I decided to flee from them and go to those who dwell in the forests on the mainland - they are called "those of Charruco." I was unable to bear the life I had with these others, because, among many other hardships, I had to gather the roots to eat from the ground below the water, from among the reeds, where they were deep in the soil. My fingers were so worn out from this that touching one straw made them bleed. The reeds would cut me in many places, because many of them were broken and I had to go among them in the clothing that I have said I wore. This is why I put myself to the task of going over to the others. It was somewhat better for me with them, because I made myself into a merchant. I made the most use of that office that I knew how, and for this they gave me food and treated me well and entreated me to go from one place to another to get things that they needed, for the reason that they bring war continually, therefore there is not much travel or trade.

And so, with my wares and merchandise, I journeyed inland as far as I wished, and I extended forty or fifty leagues along the coast. The main part of my trade was in the shells and bodies of sea snails and a shell with which they cut a fruit that is like beans, which they use for curing and in their dances and celebrations - this is the most precious thing that they have - and beads from the sea and other things. This was what I carried across the land, and in barter and exchange for it, I brought hides, red ochre - with which they rub and dye their faces and hair - flint for arrow points, glue and hard canes for making them, and some tassels which they make from deer hair, which they dye until they are red. This office was good to me, because while going about it I had the liberty to go where I wanted, and I was not obligated to anything, and
was not a slave. Wherever I went, they treated me well and gave me food in consideration for my
wares. The most important reason for going about this is that I was trying to find out where I
might be going later.

4 I was very well-known among them. They greatly enjoyed when they saw me and when I
brought them that which they needed. Those who did not know me desired and took measures to
see me because of my fame.

5 It would take a long time to relate all of the hardships, dangers, and hungers I endured
during this time, along with storms and cold, many of them overtaking me alone and in the field.
Through the great mercy of our Lord God, I escaped. Because of this, I did not attempt to
perform the office in the winter, for that was the season in which they stayed in their huts and
dwellings, and did not protect or assist themselves.

6 The time I spent in this country alone among them was almost six years. I was naked, like
all of them went about. The reason for staying so long was so I could take a Christian who was
on the island with me, called Lope de Oviedo. (The other companion, Alaniz, who had remained
with him when Alonso del Castillo and Andrés Dorantes left with all of the others, died later.) In
order to take him from there, I went over to the island every year and proposed to him that we go
in the most skillful way we could in search of Christians, and each year, he put me off, saying
that we would go the following year.

7 Finally, I got him out in the end. I took him across the inlet and four rivers that were on
the coast, because he did not know how to swim. And so we went forward with some Indians
until we came to an inlet that is one league across and is deep everywhere. From what we saw of
it, it seemed to us to be the one called del Espíritu Santo.

8 On the other side of it,
we saw some Indians, who came to meet those who were with us. They told us how further on, there were three men like us, and they told us their names. When asked about the others, they replied that all were dead of cold and hunger, and how the Indians of further on had killed Diego Dorantes, Valdivieso, and Diego de Huelva for their own amusement, because they had gone from one house to another. The other Indians, their neighbors, who now had Captain Dorantes, had killed Esquivel and Méndez because of a dream that they had dreamt. We asked them how the ones who were alive were doing; they told us that they were treated very poorly, as the boys and some other Indians who were lazy and ill-behaved kicked them, struck them on the face, and hit them with sticks many times, and that was the life that they lived with them. We asked them to inform us about the land further on and the sustenance that was in it. They responded that it was very thinly inhabited, there was nothing to eat in it, and [people] died of cold because they had no hides or any covering. They also told us that if we wanted to see those three Christians, who were two days from there, the Indians who had them would come to eat nuts a league from there, on the bank of the river. So that we could see what they had told us of the poor treatment of the others was true, while we were staying with them, they beat my companion and struck him with sticks. I also endured my share of it. They threw many balls of mud at us and held their arrows to our hearts each day, saying that they wanted to kill us like the others did our companions. Fearing this, Lope de Oviedo, my companion, said that he wanted to return with some of the Indian women who had crossed the inlet with us and had stayed behind somewhat. I contended greatly with him not to do it, and tried everything, but in no way could I make him stay. So, he returned and left me alone with those Indians, who were called Quevenes. The others who he went with were called Deaguanes.
CHAPTER 17 - A Happy Reunion

(How the Indians came and brought Andrés Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico)

1 Two days after Lope de Oviedo had gone, the Indians who had Alonso del Castillo and Andrés Dorantes came to the same place that they had told us about to eat those nuts on which they subsist, grinding some grains with them, two months of the year, without eating another thing. Even at that, they do not have them every year, because they grow one and not another. They are the size of those of Galicia, and the trees are very large, and there are a large number of them.

2 An Indian advised me that the Christians had arrived, and that if I wanted to see them, I should sneak away and hide on the edge of a forest which he pointed out to me, because he and his relatives had come to see those Indians, and they would take me with them to where the Christians were. I trusted them and decided to do it, because they had a different language than that of my Indians. Putting myself to the task, they went the next day, and they found me in the place that he had pointed out, and so I went with them.

3 When I came near to where they were lodging, Andrés Dorantes came out to see who it was, because the Indians had also said how a Christian would be coming. When he saw me, he was very frightened, because he had believed me to be dead for many days, and the Indians had told him so. We gave many thanks to God for being reunited. This day was one of the happiest that we had in all of our days. Coming to where Castillo was, they asked me where I was going. I told them that I intended to travel to a land of Christians, and that I went on this trail on this search. Andrés Dorantes responded that for many days, he had urged Castillo and Estevanico to go forward, but they did not dare to do so because they did not know how to swim, and they
Cabeza de Vaca’s *Relation*

were very afraid of the rivers and inlets through which they had to pass, of which that land had many. Still, as it had pleased our Lord God to protect me among so many hardships and illnesses and finally brought me into their company, they decided to flee, as I would take them across the rivers and inlets that we encountered. They advised me to in no way give the Indians to understand, nor that they would know from me, that I wanted to go onward, because then they would kill me. For this reason, it was necessary that I stay with them six months, at which time those Indians went to another country to eat tunas. (This is a fruit that is the size of eggs. They are black and bright red and taste very good. They eat them three months of the year, in which they do not eat anything else.) At the time when they gather them, other Indians from beyond come to them, bringing bows to barter and exchange with them. When those departed, we would flee from ours with them, and return with them.

With this decided, I stayed there. They gave me as a slave to an Indian with whom Dorantes stayed. This one was cross-eyed, as was his wife and one of his children, and another that kept in his company; all of them were cross-eyed. These are called Mariames. Castillo was with others, their neighbors, called Iguaces.

*Section 23*

Staying here, they related what happened after they left the Island of Misfortune. Along the coast, they found the boat belonging to the accountant and the friars on its side. Continuing, passing some rivers - four very large ones, with strong currents - the boats in which they crossed were carried off, and four of them drowned. They went further until they crossed an inlet, which they crossed with much trouble. Fifteen leagues further, they found another. By the time they arrived there, another two of their company had died in the sixty leagues that they had traveled, and the same was going to happen to those who were left. On the whole trail, they had not eaten
anything but crawfish and seaweed. When they came to this last inlet, they said that they found Indians in it who were eating blackberries. When they saw the Christians, they went away to the other end. While [the Christians] were trying and looking for a way to cross the inlet, an Indian and a Christian crossed over to them. When they arrived, they recognized that [the Christian] was Figueroa, one of the four who we had sent ahead from the Island of Misfortune.

[Figueroa] related for them there how he and his companions had come to that place, where two of them and an Indian had died - all three of cold and hunger, because they had come and stayed in the worst weather in the world. He told them that the Indians had taken him and Méndez. While staying with them, Méndez had fled, going as best as he could in the direction of Panuco, and that the Indians had gone after him and had killed him. While staying with these Indians, [Figueroa] learned from them that a Christian staying with the Mariames had passed over from the other side. He had been found with those called Quevenes. This Christian was Hernando de Esquivel, a native of Badajoz.

*End Section 23*
page who was sick stayed with him. There was no water or anything to eat on the boat. At midnight, a north wind came that was so rough, it carried the boat out to sea without anyone seeing it, because it had nothing for an anchor but a rock, and they knew nothing more of him.

Seeing this, the people who remained on land went along the coast. As they found themselves so greatly impeded by water, they made rafts with much difficulty, and passed in them to the other side. Going further, they came to a point of a forest at the edge of the water, and they found Indians, who, when they saw them, put their dwellings into their canoes and passed over to the other part of the coast. The Christians, in view of the season, because it was the month of November, stopped to stay in these woods, because they found water, firewood, some crawfish, and seafood, yet they began to die little by little of cold and hunger. Furthermore, Pantoja, who had remained as lieutenant, treated them poorly. Sotomayor, the brother of Vasco Porcallo of the island of Cuba, who had come on the fleet as field master, was unable to bear it. He quarreled with him and hit him with a stick, so that Pantoja fell dead.

*Section 24*

And so this was their end, and those who died, the others made jerky out of them. The last one to die was Sotomayor. Esquivel made jerky of him, and eating of him, held on until the first of March, when one of the Indians who had fled came to see if they were dead, and took Esquivel with him. Being in the custody of this Indian, Figueroa spoke to him and learned from him all that we have related, and he entreated that he go with him, to both go in the direction of Panuco. Esquivel did not want to do this, saying that he had learned from the friars that Panuco was behind them. So, he remained there, and Figueroa went to the coast to where he had been previously.

*End Section 24*
CHAPTER 18 - The Mariames and Iguaces

(Of the account that Esquivel gave)

Figueroa gave all of this account of the narrative that Esquivel had made known to him. And so, hand in hand, it came to me. Through it, one can see and know the end of the whole fleet and the particular events that happened to each one of the others. [Figueroa] also said that if the Christians spent some time walking through there, they might be able to meet Esquivel, because he knew that he had fled from that Indian with whom he was staying to others who were their neighbors, who were called the Mareames.

*Section 25*

As [Figueroa] finished speaking, he and the Asturian wanted to go to other Indians further on, but when the Indians who were keeping them heard about it, they came over to them and clubbed them many times. They disrobed the Asturian and passed an arrow through his arm.

In the end, the Christians fled and escaped and remained with those Indians. They ended up being taken as slaves, although no slaves, or men of any sort, were ever as mistreated as they were while serving them, because of the six who were there, not content with giving them many beatings, whipping them, and pulling their beards for their own amusement, for only going from one house to another, they killed three of those who I told above: Diego Dorantes, Valdivieso, and Diego de Huelva, and the other three who remained expected to meet the same end.

Unable to bear this life, Andrés Dorantes fled and went over to the Mareames, who were those to whom Esquivel had gone. They related to him what had happened to Esquivel there, and how staying there, he desired to flee because a woman had dreamed that he would kill her son, and the Indians went after him and killed him. They showed Andrés Dorantes his sword, rosary,
book, and other things of his. They have this as one of their customs, which is that they kill their own children because of dreams.

4 When daughters are born, they leave them for the dogs to eat, and they throw them out. The reason why they do this is - according to what they said - because everyone in the land is their enemy, and they are continually at war with them. If it should happen that they give their daughters in marriage, their enemies could multiply so much that they might subjugate them and take them as slaves. For this reason, they prefer to kill them, rather than that they bear those who would be their enemy. We asked them why they do not wed them among themselves. They said that among them, it was a bad thing to wed them to their relatives, and it was better to kill them than give them to either their relatives or their enemies. Only they and the others, their neighbors who are called the Iguaces, follow this custom; no one else in their land keeps it.

5 When they are to be married, they buy women from their enemies. The price each one gives for his is one bow - the best that can be had - with two arrows. If it happens that he does not have a bow, a net up to one fathom wide and one long. They kill their children and buy another's. Marriage lasts no longer than as much as they are content; they undo marriage over trifles.

*End Section 25*  

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6 Dorantes was with these, then fled after a few days. Castillo and Estevanico went into the mainland to the Iguaces.

7 All of these people are archers and well-built, although not as large as those who we left behind. They wear the nipple and lip pierced.
*Section 26*

Their principal sustenance is two or three kinds of roots, and they look for them throughout the country. They are very bad, and cause gas in those who eat them. It takes two days to roast them, and many of them are bitter. In addition, pulling them is hard work. Those people are so hungry that they cannot get by without them, and they walk two or three leagues searching for them. Sometimes they kill some deer, and at times they catch some fish, but this is so little, and their hunger is so great, that they eat spiders, ant eggs, grubs, newts, salamanders, snakes, and vipers that kill the men that they bite. They eat earth, wood, and all that they are able to - deer dung, and other things that I am leaving out. I surely believe that if there were rocks in that country, they would eat them. They keep the bones of the fish that they eat, and of the snakes and other things, to grind all of them later and eat their powder.

*End Section 26*
they follow them until they tire, and sometimes they take them alive. Their houses are of mats placed over four arches. They carry them on their backs and move every two or three days to look for food; they sow nothing than can be of any use.

9 They are a very joyful people; though they are very hungry, this does not stop them from dancing or having their celebrations and ceremonial dances. For them, the best time that these have is when they eat tunas, because then they are not hungry, and they pass all of their time dancing, and they eat of them night and day. The whole time that they last, they squeeze them, open them, and set them out to dry. After they are dry, they put them in some baskets, like figs, and keep them to eat along the trail for their return. They grind the rinds and make them into powder. Many times when we were with them, it would happen that we would go three or four days without eating, because they do not have [anything]; they, to cheer us up, would tell us to not be sad, for soon there would be tunas, and we would eat much, and drink their juice, and we would have very large bellies, and would be very content and merry, and without any hunger. From the time that they would say this to us until there were tunas to eat would be five or six months.

10 Finally, having waited those six months, when it was time, we went to eat tunas.

*Section 27*

11 We found a very great quantity of three kinds of mosquitos in the country. They are very bad and bothersome, and they gave us great anguish for most of the summer. To defend ourselves, we made many fires of rotten, wet wood all around the community, so that they made smoke but did not burn. This defense gave us another hardship, because at night we could do nothing but weep because of the smoke it sent into our eyes. On top of this, the great heat of the
many fires caused us to leave and sleep on the coast. If at some time we were able to sleep, they would come to us and club us to return and kindle the fires.

12 Those from further inland use another remedy for this that is even more unbearable than this one that I explained, which is to go around with burning sticks in their hands, setting fire to the plains and forests that they come to, so that the mosquitos flee, and also to draw out the lizards and other similar things from below the ground so they can eat them. They also usually kill deer by encircling them with many fires. They also use this to drive the animals from the pasture, so out of necessity they have to go looking for it where [the Indians] want. Because of this, they never situate their houses except where there is water and firewood. Sometimes they load themselves with these provisions and go to look for deer, which quite commonly are where there is neither water nor wood. On the day they arrive, they kill deer and anything else they can. They use up all their water and firewood cooking their food and with the fires they make to defend against the mosquitos. They wait another day to get something to take for the road. When they leave, the mosquitos have been such that they appear to have the infirmity of Saint Lazarus. They satisfy their hunger in this manner two or three times a year, at such a great cost, as I have said. From having been through it, I can affirm that no hardship or suffering in the world equals this.

13 In this country, there are many deer and other birds and animals than those that I have related so far. Cattle come as far as here. I have seen them three times and eaten them. It appears to me that they will be the size of those of Spain. They have small horns, like Moorish [cattle], and very long, wooly hair, like a rug. Some are brown, and others black. It seems to me that they have better and fattier meat than those from over here. From those that are not large, the Indians make blankets to cover themselves with, and from the bigger ones, they make shoes and shields.
These [cows] come from the north, from the land further on, up to the coast of Florida. They are found in all of the country for over four hundred leagues, and in all of this way, through the valleys in which they come, the people who live there go down and subsist on them, and a great quantity of hides are found inland.

*End Section 27*

CHAPTER 19 - The Plan to Escape

(How the Indians separated us)

1 When the six months were complete that I stayed with the Christians, waiting to put our plan we had made into effect, the Indians went for tunas. From there to where they picked them was almost thirty leagues. Right when we were about to flee, the Indians with whom we were and the others quarreled over a woman, and they hit and beat and wounded each other, and in the great furor that they made, each one took up his house and went his own way. It was necessary, therefore, that all of the Christians who were there also separated, and there was no way for us to get together for another year.

2 In this time, I had a very bad life, as much as from the great hunger as from the bad treatment that I received from the Indians. It was such that I had to flee three times from my masters. Each time, they went to search for me diligently in order to kill me, but our Lord God, in His mercy, willed to protect me and save me from them.

3 When the time of tunas came around, we returned to that same place to get together. We had already planned to flee and chose the day. That very day, the Indians separated us, and each one went his own way. I told the other comrades that I would wait for them in the tunas until the full moon. This day was the first day of September and the first day of the moon. I advised them that if they did not come as planned at that time, I would go alone and leave them. And so, we
parted, each one going with his Indians. I remained with mine until the thirteenth of the moon, and I had decided to flee to other Indians with the full moon. On the thirteenth day of the month, Andrés Dorantes and Estevanico came to where I was, and they told me how they had left Castillo with other Indians who were called Anagados, who were close to there. They had endured many hardships and had been lost. The next day, our Indians moved on to where Castillo was, and were going to join those who kept him, to make friends with each other, because until then they had been at war. In this way, we recovered Castillo.

The whole time that we ate tunas, we were thirsty. For relief of this, we drank the juice of the tunas, extracting it in a hole we made in the ground. When it was full, we drank of it until we were satisfied. It is sweet and the color of must. [The Indians] make it this way for lack of other vessels. There are many kinds of tunas, and among them there are some very good ones, although they all were good in my opinion, as hunger never gave me a moment to choose or to reflect on which ones were the best. All of the rest of the people drink rainwater collected from various places because, although there are rivers, since they never stay settled, they never have known or marked places.

Throughout the land, there are many large and beautiful meadows, with very good pastures for cattle. It seems to me that it would be good land, and very productive, if it were worked and inhabited by people of reason. We did not see mountains in all of it as long as we were there.

Those Indians told us that there were others further, called Camones, who live toward the coast, and who had killed all of the people who came in Peñalosa and Téllez's boat. They were so weak, that although they were being killed, they could not defend themselves, and so they finished them off. They showed us some of their clothing and weapons and said that the boat was
there, on its side. This is the fifth boat that was lost. We already told how the governor's was carried away by the sea, and the accountant and friars' was seen capsized on the coast. Esquivel told us of their end. The two in which Castillo, Dorantes and I were, we have already told how they both sank at the Island of Misfortune.

CHAPTER 20 - Accepted by the Avavares

(Of how we fled)

Two days from after we had been moved, we commended ourselves to our Lord God and fled, trusting that, although it was late and the tunas were dwindling, with the fruits that remained in the field, we would be able to cover a good part of the country. As we went on our way that day, completely afraid that the Indians would follow us, we saw some smoke [columns]. Going towards them, we reached that place after vespers. There we saw an Indian who fled as he saw us coming to him, not wanting to wait for us. We sent the Negro after him, and as he saw him coming alone, he waited for him. The Negro told him that we were going in search of that people who had made that smoke. He responded that there were houses close to there, and that he would guide us there. And so, we followed him, and he ran to give notice that we were on our way. When the sun set, we saw the houses. Two crossbow shots before we reached them, we found four Indians who were waiting for us, and they received us well. We told them in the language of the Mariames that we were looking for them. They indicated that they accepted our company, and so they took us to their houses. Dorantes and the Negro were placed in the house of one healer, and Castillo and I in the house of another. These speak another language and are called Avavares. They are those who used to bring bows to ours and trade with them. Although they were of another nation and language, they understood the language of those with who we had been before, and they had arrived with their houses that very day.
Then the villagers offered us many tunas, because they had already heard of us and how we had cured, and of the wonders that our Lord had worked through us. Even if there had been no others, I was greatly gratified that there were ways opened for us through such an uninhabited country, and for giving us people in places where at many times there were none, and saving us from such perils, and not permitting us to die, and sustaining us through such hunger, and putting in those people's hearts to treat us well, as we will relate further.

CHAPTER 21 - Cabeza de Vaca Gets Lost

(How here we cured some suffering ones)

That same night that we arrived, some Indians came to Castillo and told him that they were very sick in their heads, entreating him to cure them. After he made the sign of the Cross and commended them to God, at that moment the Indians said that all of the illness had left them. They went to their houses and brought many tunas and a piece of venison - something that we did not know what it was. As this became publicized among them, many other sick came that night for him to heal them, and each one brought a piece of venison. There were so many that we did not know where to put the meat. We gave many thanks to God because every day His mercy and favors grew. After the cures were finished, they began to dance and make their ceremonial dances and celebrations until the sun came out the next day.

The celebration over our arrival lasted three days. At the end of them, we asked them about the land further on, about the people we may find in it, and what sustenance there is in it. They responded that there are many tunas throughout the whole land, except that they were gone now, and that no people were there, because they had all gone to their homes, all the tunas having been gathered. They said that the country was very cold and there were very few skins in
it. In view of this, with the winter and cold temperatures already moving in, we decided to spend it with these [Indians].

3 At the end of five days from our arrival, they left to look for more tunas where other people of other nations and languages were. We walked five days with very great hunger, because there were no tunas nor any other fruit on the way. We came to a river, where we set up our houses. After they were set up, we went to look for a fruit of certain trees, which is like peas. Since there are not any trails in this whole country, I stayed too long looking for [the fruit]. The people returned and left me alone. Going to look for them that night, I became lost. It pleased God that I found a burning tree, and I spent that cold night by its fire. In the morning, I loaded myself with firewood, took two firebrands, and went back to looking for [the Indians]. I walked this way five days, always with my fire and load of wood, because if the fire died on me in a place where there was no firewood - as in many parts there is none - I would have the means of making other firebrands and not be left without fire, because I had no other remedy from the cold, as I was going about as naked as I was born.

4 At night, I had this solution, which is that I went to the brush in the woods that were close to the rivers, and stopped in them before the sun set. I made a pit in the ground and threw a lot of firewood - which comes from the many trees - into it. There is a very great quantity of it there, and I collected a lot of firewood from that which had fallen and dried up from the trees. Around the circumference of that hole, I made four fires in a cross, and I took charge and was careful to rebuild the fire from time to time. I made bundles of the long straw that was around there and covered myself with them in that pit. In this manner, I sheltered myself from the cold of the night. One of those [nights] the fire fell onto the straw with which I was covered, and while I was
sleeping in the pit, it began to burn very rapidly. I got out with great speed; nevertheless it left a mark on my hair of the danger that I was in.

5 In all this time, I did not eat a mouthful, neither did I find anything that could be eaten. As I was going with bare feet, much blood ran from them. God had mercy on me that in all of this time, there was no north wind, because in that event, there would have been no way for me to live.

6 At the end of five days, I arrived at the bank of a river, where I found my Indians, who, along with the Christians, had reckoned me as dead. They believed all along that a viper had bitten me. They all had great pleasure in seeing me, especially the Christians. They told me that they had until then been going about very hungry, and this was the reason that they had not searched for me. That night they gave me the tunas that they had. We left there the next day and went to where we found many tunas, with which we all satisfied our great hunger. We gave many thanks to our Lord, because His aid never failed us.

CHAPTER 22 - Life with the Avavares and Their Neighbors

(How they brought us other sick ones the next day)

1 The morning of the next day, many Indians there came and brought five sick people, who were crippled and very ill. They came in search of Castillo, so he could cure them, and each one of the sick offered his bow and arrows. He received them, and at sunset he made the sign of the Cross and commended them to our Lord God. All of us entreated Him in the best way we could to bring them health. And He saw that there was no other remedy by which those people would help us and to get us out of such a miserable life, and He acted so mercifully, that when the morning came, all of them awoke so well and sound, and were so hearty, as if they had never had
any illness. This caused very great admiration among them, which moved us to give many thanks to our Lord, that we more fully knew His goodness and had a firm faith that He would save us and bring us to where we would be able to serve Him. For myself, I can say that I always had faith in His mercy, that He would take me from that captivity, and I always told my companions so.

2 As the Indians were going and taking away their healthy Indians, we departed to where there were others eating tunas. These are called Cutalches and Malicones, which are other languages. Alongside them, there were others who were called Coayos and Susolas. In another place, others called Atayos, and these were at war with the Susolas, with whom they exchanged arrow shots every day.

3 As nothing was spoken of in the whole country but the mysteries that our Lord God worked through us, they came from many places to seek us so that we would cure them. At the end of two days from their arrival, some Indians of the Susolas came to us and asked Castillo to go and cure a wounded person and some sick people. They said that one of their people was at the very end. Castillo was a very timid physician, especially when the cures were very worrisome and dangerous; he believed that his sins would interfere so that the cures would not succeed every time. The Indians told me to go and cure them, because they liked me, and they remembered that I had cured them at the nut groves. They had given me nuts and hides for that -this had happened when I was coming to join the Christians. So, I had to go with them, and Dorantes and Estevanico went with me.

4 When I came close to the huts that they had, I saw that the sick one that we came to cure was dead, because there were many people around him, crying, and his house torn down, which is the sign that the owner was dead. And so, when I arrived, I found the Indian with his eyes
turned, without any pulse, and with all of the signs of death. It seemed that way to me, and
dorantes said the same. I removed a mat that was on top of him, which was covering him, and as
best I could, I requested our Lord to be served by giving health to that one and to all the others
who were in need. After I made the sign of the Cross and blew many times, they brought me a
bow and gave it to me, and a basket of ground tunas, and they took me to cure many others who
were ill from drowsiness. They gave me two more baskets of tunas, which I gave to our Indians,
who had come with us. With this done, we returned to our lodgings.

Our Indians, to whom I gave the tunas, stayed there. At night, they returned to their
houses and said that the one who was dead and who I had cured in their presence had awoken
well and had been walking, eating, and speaking with them, and that all who had been cured
were left healthy and very happy. This caused very great admiration and awe, and nothing else
was spoken of in the whole country. All those to whom this fame reached came to us seeking for
us to cure them and make the sign of the Cross over their children. When the Indians who were
in the company of ours, who were the Cutilchiches, had to go to their country, they offered us all
of the tunas they had for their journey before they parted, without leaving any for themselves.
They also gave us flints as large as a palm and a half, with which they cut, and are a very highly
valued thing among them. They implored us to remember them and pray to God that they would
always be well. We promised it to them, and with this, they parted, the most content men in the
world, having given us all the best that they had.

We stayed with those Avavares Indians eight months. (This is the count we made of the
moons.) In all this time, [people] came from many parts to seek us, and they said that truly we
were children of the sun. Until then, dorantes and the Negro had not cured, but because of the
heavy demands on us, as they were coming from many places to seek us, we all came to be
doctors. I, however, was the most well-known for being bold and daring to undertake any cure.

Never did we cure anyone who did not tell us that he became well, and they had such confidence that if we healed someone they would be cured, that they believed that as long as we stayed there, none of them had to die.

7 These [Indians] and those further behind us told us a very strange thing, and by the account that they represented to us, it seemed that it had been fifteen or sixteen years since it had happened. They said that in that country a man went about who they called "Bad Thing." He was small of stature and had a beard, although they were never able to see his face clearly. When he came to the house where they stayed, their hair would stand on end, and they trembled. Later, a piece of burning wood would appear at the door of the house. Next, that man would enter and take whichever of them he wanted and give them three large cuts on their sides with a very sharp flint, as big as a hand and two palms in length. He would insert his hand into the cuts and remove the entrails, and that he cut an entrail more or less [the size] of a palm, and he threw that cut one into the coals. Next, he gave [the person] three cuts on the arm. He made the second one inside the elbow and disjointed it. After a little while, he returned it to normal and he put his hands over the wounds, and they told us that they would later be healed. He would often appear among them when they danced, in a woman's clothing sometimes, and other times as a man. When he wanted to, he took a hut or house and would toss it up high, and a moment later he would fall with it in a very great crash. They also told us that many times, they would give him food, which he never ever ate. They asked him where he was going and where his home was, and that he showed them a fissure in the ground and said his home was down there.

8 We laughed a lot at these things that they told us, making fun of them. When they saw that we did not believe it, they brought many of those who they said he had taken, and we saw
the marks from the cuts that he had made in the places and in the manner that they related. We told them that he was an evil one, and in the best way we could, we gave them to understand that if they believed in our Lord God and became Christians like us, they would no longer fear that one, nor would he dare to come and do those things, and they would be certain that as long as we were staying in the country, he would not dare to appear in it. They were very eased by this, and lost a great part of the fear that they had.

9 These Indians told us that they had seen the Asturian and Figueroa with others who stayed further on the coast, who we called "of the figs."

10 All of these people do not know the seasons by the sun or the moon, nor do they keep count of the month and year, but they understand and know the different seasons when the fruits come and mature, the time that the fish die, and the appearance of the stars, in which they are very skilled and practiced. We were always treated well with these, although whatever we ate, we dug, and we carried our own loads of water and firewood. Their houses and sustenance are like those from earlier, although they are much more hungry, because they are not near any corn, acorns, or nuts. We always went about undressed, like them, and at night we covered ourselves with deer skins.

11 Of the eight months that we stayed with them, we suffered from much hunger for six, for they are not near fish either. At the end of this time, the tunas began to ripen. Without them being aware, we left to others who were staying further ahead, called Maliacones. These, where the Negro and I went, were a day's journey away. At the end of the three days, I sent [him] to bring Castillo and Dorantes, and they came. We left together with the Indians, who went to eat a little fruit of some trees, which they subsist on ten or twelve days, during which the tunas appear. There they joined with these other Indians who are called Arbadaos. We found them very sick,
thin, and swollen; so much that we were very amazed at them. The Indians with whom we had come returned by the same trail. We told them that we wanted to stay with those; they showed grief over this. So, we stayed with those in the field, close to their houses.

When they saw us, they came together, after having spoken among themselves, and each one of them took his own [of us] by the hand and took us to their houses. We suffered more hunger with these than with the others, for we ate nothing all day but two handfuls of that fruit, which was green and had so much milk that it burned our mouths. With the lack of water, it gave much thirst to anyone who ate it. Since our hunger was so great, we bought two dogs from them and, in exchange, gave them some nets and other things, and a hide with which I covered myself.

*Section 28*

I have already told how we went about naked through all of this land. Not being accustomed to it, we shed our skins two times a year, like snakes. With the sun and the air making very large blisters on our chests and backs, we were in very great pain because of the very large loads that we carried, which were very heavy, and which had ropes that cut into our arms.

The country is so rough and so closed that many times when we made firewood in the woods, when we finished gathering it, we were bleeding in many places from the thorns and bushes that we came up against, which cut us wherever they touched us. Sometimes after making it, after it costing me much blood, I could not gather it, either on my back or by dragging it.

When I found myself in these hardships, I had no other remedy or consolation but to think about the Passion of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and of the blood that He spilled for me, and to consider how much greater was His torment, from the thorns He endured, than those from which I suffered.

*End Section 28*
I contracted with these Indians, making combs, bows, and arrows for them, and we made mats from reeds, as these are the things for which they have the greatest need. Although they know how to make them, they do not want to do any work when they could be searching for something to eat. When they are engaged in this, they experience very great hunger. Other times, they told me to scrape and soften skins. The greatest luxury I experienced was the day that they gave me some to scrape, because I scraped thoroughly and ate the scrapings. That sustained me for two or three days. Also, with these and those we had left behind, when it happened that they gave us a piece of meat, we ate it raw, because if we grilled it, the first Indian who came by would take it and eat it. We thought that it was not good to take this chance, and also we were not to give ourselves the trouble of eating it grilled, and we also could not endure as raw. This is the life we had there, and we earned that little sustenance with the barter that we made with our hands.

CHAPTER 23 - A Village With Fifty Houses

(How we departed after having eaten the dogs)

*Section 29*

After we ate the dogs, we felt that we had the will to be able to go ahead. Commending ourselves to our Lord God to guide us, we took our leave of those Indians, and they set us on the path to others of their language who were close to there. While going on our way, it rained, and we walked in water that whole day. Furthermore, we lost the trail and came to a stop in a very large forest. We ate many tuna leaves and roasted them that night in an oven that we made. It gave off so much heat that in the morning, they were ready to eat. After we had eaten them, we commended ourselves to God and departed, and found the trail that we had lost.

*End Section 29*
Past the woods, we found more Indian houses. Upon arriving there, we saw two women and some children, who were scared and went into the woods. They fled at the sight of us and went to call to the Indians who were in the woods. They came, and they stopped to look at us through some trees. We called to them, and they approached in great fear. After having spoken to them, they told us that they were very hungry, and there were many of their own houses close to there, and they said that they would take us to them.

That night, we arrived at a place where there were fifty houses. They were scared to see us and showed great fear. After they became somewhat less afraid of us, they approached us and reached their hands to our faces and bodies. Next, they brought their own hands to their faces and bodies. We stayed there that night. When morning came, they brought their sick to us, requesting that we bless them. They gave us from what they had to eat, which were baskets of tunas and grilled green tunas. For the good treatment that they gave us, and because they gave us that which they had, gladly and of free will, and they were content with being left without anything to eat from giving it to us, we stayed with them several days. When we were there, others came from further on. When they wanted to depart, we said to the first ones that we wanted to go with those. They were very grieved, and begged us very earnestly not to go. At the end, we said goodbye to them, and left them crying at our departure, because it grieved them a great deal.

CHAPTER 24 - The Indians' Customs Regarding Disputes and Warfare

(Of the customs of the Indians of that country)

Since the Island of Misfortune, all the Indians of this land that we saw have the custom that from the day that the women know they are pregnant, they do not sleep together until two years have passed since the children have been born. They nurse until they are of the age of
twelve years, at which they are then at the age that they know how to search for food. We asked them why they raise them so; they said that it is because of the great hunger that exists in the land, it often occurs, as we saw, that two or three days go by without eating - sometimes four - and for this reason, they are left to nurse, so that they would not die during the times of hunger, and although some escaped, they would be left very delicate and weak.

2 In the event that some of them become sick, they leave them to die in those fields if he is not a child. All the rest, if they cannot go with them, are left behind, except if they are a son or brother; they are taken and carried on their backs.

3 All of them have a custom to leave their wives when there is disagreement among them, and to turn around and marry whoever they want. This is among the youths; those who have children remain with their wives and do not leave them. In some villages, when [the men] quarrel and have disputes with each other, they strike and beat [each other] until they are very tired, and then they separate. Sometimes the women go between them and separate them, but men do not go in and separate them. Regardless of their passion, they do not use either bows or arrows. From the time that they have fought and settled the matter, they take their houses and wives and go to live in the fields apart from the others until their anger has passed. When they are calmed down and without ire, they return to their village, and from there forward, they are friends as if nothing had happened between them. There is no need for anyone to make pacts, because they make them in this manner. If those who argue are unmarried, they each go to their neighbors. Even if they are their enemies, they receive them well and are very relaxed with them and give to them from what they have in such a way that when their anger has passed, they return to their village wealthy.
*Section 30*

4 All of this people are warlike and have such cunning about protecting themselves from their enemies, as if they had been born in Italy and in constant war. When they are in a place where their enemies can offend them, they set down their houses at the edge of the roughest and thickest woods that they find there, and together, they make a pit, and in this they sleep. All of the men of war are covered with brushwood, and they make their loopholes, and they are so covered and concealed, yet although [their enemies] are nearby, they do not see them. They make a very narrow trail and enter the middle of the forest, and there they make a place for the women and children to sleep. When night comes, they burn fires in their houses so that if there were spies, they would believe that [the men] are in them, and before dawn, they would return to burn the same fires, and in case the enemies came to engage the same houses, those who are in the pit leave them and do much damage from the ditches, without those outside seeing them nor able to find them.

*End Section 30*  

5 When there are no woods in which they can hide themselves in this manner and make their ambushes, they settle down on the part of the plain that seems the best, surround themselves with trenches covered with brushwood, and make their loopholes, with which they shoot arrows at the Indians. They make these defenses for the night. While I was those of Aguenes, they were not warned. Their enemies came at midnight and attacked them, killed three, and hurt many others in such a way that they fled to their houses through the woods ahead. Once they felt that the others had gone, they returned and recovered all of the arrows that the others had shot, and followed them as covertly as they could. They were there that night, at the houses, without being detected, and at the quarter of dawn, they attacked and killed five. Many others were wounded.
They made them flee and leave their houses and bows, and all their belongings. In a short time, the women of those who are called Quevenes came, and they reached an understanding with them and made friends with them, although sometimes they are the cause of the war.

*Section 31*

All of these people, when they have particular enmities, when they are not of one family, kill by night with traps and inflict great cruelties upon each other.

*End Section 31*

CHAPTER 25 - How the Indians Fight

(How the Indians are ready with a weapon)

1 These people are the most ready with a weapon of all I have seen in the world, because if they fear their enemies, they are awake all night with their bows and a dozen arrows near them. He who sleeps tests his bow, and if he does not find it in order, he gets up to fix it. Often, they leave their houses down on the ground, so as not to be seen, to look and spy in all places to sense what is there. If they sense something, all of them are in the field with their bows and arrows on the spot. They so remain until daybreak, running from one place to another, when they see that it is necessary or they believe that their enemies can be there. When the day comes, they loosen their bows until they leave to hunt.

*Section 32*

2 Their bowstrings are deer sinews. The manner in which they fight is crouched to the ground. While they shoot, they go about talking and always jumping from one spot to another, watching for the arrows of their enemies, such that they are generally able to receive very little damage from crossbows and arquebuses. Rather, the Indians mock them, because these arms are worthless against them in open fields, where the Indians jump about; they are good in narrow
and watery places. Most of all, horses are what can subdue them, and are what the Indians fear universally.

3 Whoever fights against them must be very wise that [the Indians] do not sense weakness or greed for what they have. During war, one must treat them very badly, because if they are aware of any fear or greed, these are people who know the time to avenge themselves, and to take strength from the fear of their foes.

*End Section 32*

When they have shot arrows in war and spent their ammunition, they each go their own way, even though some are many, and the others few; this is their custom.

4 Often, the arrows pass all the way through, and they do not die of the wounds if the bowels or the heart are not touched; rather, they heal quickly. They see and hear better and have more acute senses, I believe, than all of the people in the world. They are great sufferers of hunger, thirst, and cold, as they are more accustomed to it and used to it than others. I wished to state this because, besides that all men desire to know the customs and practices as others, those who go to see them at some time would be wise to their customs and tricks, as there is usually some benefit in similar cases.

CHAPTER 26 - The Indians' Drinking Ceremony and Other Customs

(Of the nations and languages)

1 I also want to mention their nations and languages, which are from the Island of Misfortune to the last ones. On the Island of Misfortune there are two languages, some called Caoques and others called Han. On the mainland, facing the island, there are others who are called "of Chorruco"; they take the name of the woods where they live. Further on the sea coast, others dwell who are called Doguenes, and facing them, others by the name of Mendica. Even
further on the coast are the Quevenes, and facing them, further within the mainland, the
Mariames. Going further along the coast are others who are called Guaycones, and facing them,
within the mainland, the Yguaces. At the end of these are others who are called Atayos, and in
back of these, others, Acubadaos. There are many on the path ahead of these. Others called
Quitoles live on the coast, and facing these, within the mainland, the Avavares. The Maliacones
are joined with these, and others, Cutalchiches, and others who are called Susolas, and others
who are called Comos, and further on the coast are the Camoles. Further on the same coast,
others who we call "those of the figs." All of these people have homes and villages and diverse
tongues. Among these there is a language in which they call men to look here, "arre acá", and
dogs, "xó."

2 In all of the country, they get drunk with a smoke, and they give all they have for it.

3 They also drink another thing that they collect from the leaves of trees, similar to oak,
toasting it in some bowls over the fire. After they have toasted them, they fill the bowl with
water, and so hold it over the fire. When it has boiled two times, they pour it into a pot and it is
cooled with half of a gourd. When there is a lot of foam, they drink it as hot as they can stand,
and from when they take it from the bowl until they drink it, they shout, saying "Who wants to
drink?" When the women hear these voices, they stop without daring to move - although they
may be heavily loaded, they do not dare to do anything. In the event that one of them moves,
they dishonor her and beat her, and with very great anger, they spill the water that they have to
drink, and he who has drunk it heaves it out, which they do effortlessly and without any pain.
The reason they gave for this custom, they said, is that when they want to drink that water, if the
women move from where they hear the shouts, that a bad thing enters the body through that
water, and in a short time, makes them die. All the time that the water is cooking, the pot has to
be covered, and in the event it is uncovered and some woman passes by, they spill it, and do not drink more of that water. It is yellow and is drunken three days without food, and each day, each of them drinks an *arroba* and a half of it.

4  When the women are with their custom, they do not look for any food except for themselves, because no other person eats what they bring.

5  In the time that I was with them, I saw a diabolical thing, which is that I saw a man married to another. These were some effeminate, impotent men, and they went about dressed as women and performing the duties of women. They pull the bow and carry very great loads. We saw many of them among them - effeminate, as I said. They are burlier than other men, and taller. They bear very great loads.

CHAPTER 27 - The Mesquite Eaters at the Large River

(Of how we moved and went well-received)

1  After we parted from those who we left crying, we went with others to their houses. Those who stayed in them received us well and brought their children so that we could touch their hands, and they gave us much mesquite flour. This mesquite is a fruit that when it is in the tree is very bitter, and is in the manner of carobs. They eat it with dirt, and with it, it is sweet and good to eat. The manner they prepare it is this: they make a pit in the soil, to whatever depth each one pleases, and after they cast the fruit in this pit, they grind it with a stick as thick as a leg and a fathom and a half long until it is very ground. In addition to the dirt that sticks to it in the pit, they take fistfuls and throw it into the pit and take another turn grinding. After that, they put it in a wooden bowl, like a basket, and add enough water to cover it, in such a way that there is water on the top. He who ground it tests it, and if it seems to him that it is not sweet, he asks for dirt and mixes it in. He does this until he finds it sweet. They sit all around, and each one sticks his
hand in and takes out what he can. They throw the pips in that basket, add water as before, and squeeze the juice and water that they produce. They put the pips and hulls in a hide, and in this fashion take three or four times in grinding it. Those who are in this banquet, which is very large for them, are left with very large bellies from the dirt and water that they have drunk.

2 Of this, the Indians made a very great party for us, and held very grand dances and ceremonies among them the whole time that we were there. When we slept at night, six men looked after each one of us at the door of the hut where we stayed, so that no one would dare to enter within until the sun came out.

3 When we wanted to part from them, some women from others who live further on came there. Informed by them where their houses where, we departed from there, although they begged us much to remain with them that day, because the houses where we were going were far, there was no trail to them, those women came tired, and if we rested another day, they would go with us and guide us. With that, we said goodbye. A little ways out, the women who had come followed us with others from the same village. As there were no trails in that country, we became lost. We went four leagues, and at the end of them, we came to drink at a spring where we found the women who had followed us. They told us about the trouble they had gone through to catch up with us.

4 We departed from there, taking them as guides. When it was already evening, we passed a river that had water up to our chests. It may have been as deep as the one of Seville, and ran very strong.

5 At sunset we arrived at a hundred Indian houses. Before we arrived, all of the people who were in them came out. They received us with shouts, such as if they were frightened, slapping their thighs hard with their palms. They carried gourds with holes in them and rocks inside. This
is the thing of great celebration - they do not take them out except to dance or to cure, and no one dares to hold them but them. They said that those gourds had power and came from Heaven, because they are not of that land, and they do not know where they are found, except that the rivers bring them when the floods come.

6 These [people] were so worried and anxious to be the first to come and touch us that they squeezed us so hard that they nearly killed us, and they carried us to their houses without letting our feet touch the ground. So many were in charge of us and in such a manner that pressed against us that we stayed put in the houses that they made for us, and we did not consent in any way that night for them to make more celebrations with us. They passed that whole night among themselves in ceremonies and dances.

7 The morning of the next day, they brought all of the people of that village to us for us to touch them and bless them, as we had done to the others with whom we had stayed. After doing this, they gave many arrows to the women of the other village who had come with theirs.

8 We departed from there the next day. All of the people of the village went with us. When we came to other Indians, we were received well, like those of the past, and they gave us of what they had and the deer that had died that day. We saw a new custom among these - it is that those were with us took the bow, arrows, shoes, and beads, if they had any, from those who came to be cured. After having taken them, they placed them before us, so that we would cure them. Those who were cured were very content, saying they were well.

9 And so, we parted from those and went to others, who received us very well, and brought us their sick. Upon making the sign of the Cross over them, they said they were well, and he who was not healed believed that we could heal him. With that which the others who we cured told them, they held so many festivities and dances that they did not let us sleep.
Parting from these, we went to many other houses, and from here another new custom began, and it is that, receiving us very well, that those who went with us began to behave so poorly that they took their property and sacked their houses, without leaving anything else. We were very grieved by this, to see the poor treatment of those who had received us so well, and we also worried that it would be a cause of some altercation or scandal among them, but it was not for us to remedy it, nor to dare to chastise those who had done this. We had to bear it, then, until we had more authority over them. Also, the same Indians who lost their possessions, understanding our sadness, consoled us, saying that they did not receive sorrow from it; that they were so pleased at having seen us that they gave their possessions for a good use, and that further on they would be paid by others who were very rich.

We had very great difficulty on this whole trail because of the many people who followed us. We could not flee from them, although we tried, because the urgency they had to come and touch us was very great. The annoyance of them over this was so much that three hours passed that we could not finish with those who left us.

The next day, they brought all the people of the village to us. The majority of them have one clouded eye, and others of them are blind from the same cause, by which we were appalled. They are very well-built, with very good faces - whiter than all others who we had seen there.

We began to see mountains here, and it seemed that they came from the direction of the North Sea. From the account that the Indians gave us of them, we believe that they are fifteen leagues from the sea.
*Section 33*

We parted from here with these Indians up to these mountains that we describe. They took us to where some of their relatives were, because they did not want to take us except where their relatives inhabited, and they did not want for their enemies to enjoy the benefit, as they saw it, of seeing us.

When we arrived, those who went with us sacked the others, and as they knew the custom, before we arrived, they hid some things. After we were received with much celebration and joy, they took out that which they had hidden and presented it to us; this was beads, red ochre, and some little pouches of silver. We, following the custom, gave it then to the Indians who came with us. When we had given it to them, they began their dances and celebrations and sent for others of another village that was near there, for them to come and see us. All of them came in the afternoon and brought us beads, bows, and other little things, which we also distributed.

*End Section 33*

The next day, when we wanted to depart, all of the people wanted to take us to other friends of theirs who were staying on a point of the mountains, and they said that there were many houses and people there, and that they would give us many things. But since it was out of our way, we did not wish to go to them, and we took the plain by the mountains, which we believed were not far from the coast. All of the people of [the coast] are very bad, and we thought it best to cross the country, because the people who are further inland are better conditioned, and treated us better, and we believed for certain that we would find the country more populated and with superior sustenance. Finally, we did this because, by crossing the country, we would see many of its particulars, because if our Lord God was served to bring out
some of us and take us to a land of Christians, he would be able to give news and an account of it.

7 As the Indians saw that we were determined not to go to where they had directed us, they told us that there were no people where we wanted to go, nor tunas or anything else to eat, and they begged us to stay there that day, which we did. They then sent two Indians to look for people on the way that we wanted to go, and we departed the next day, bringing many of them with us. The women went loaded with water, and our authority was so great among them that no one dared to drink without our permission.

8 Two leagues from there, we came across the Indians who had gone to look for people. They said that they found no one. The Indians were grieved at that and resumed entreating us to go by way of the mountains. We did not want to do it, and they, upon seeing our determination, said goodbye to us, although with much sadness. They turned back down the river to their houses, and we proceeded up the river. After a while, we came across two women carrying loads. When they saw us, they stopped, unloaded themselves, and brought us from what they were carrying, which was corn meal. They told us that further on that river, we would find houses, many tunas, and more of that meal. And so we said goodbye to them, because they went to the others where we had left.

9 We walked until sunset and arrived at a village of about twenty houses, where they received us weeping and with great sadness, because they already knew that wherever we arrived, all were sacked and robbed by those who accompanied us. As they saw that we were alone, they lost their fear and gave us tunas, and nothing else. We stayed there that night. At dawn, the Indians we had left the previous day set upon their houses, and as [those of the village] had taken themselves to be safe, and were unprepared, they took all they had, without there being
any place to hide anything. They wept much at this. The robbers, to console them, told them that we were children of the sun, and that we had the power to heal the sick and to kill them, and other lies even bigger than these, which they know to make when they feel it better suits them. They told them that they brought us with great reverence, and they must take care not to anger us in any way, and that they were to give us all that they had, and to try to take us to where there were many people, and when they arrived, they would rob them and sack that which the others had, because so was the custom.

CHAPTER 29 - In a Land of Plenty

(Of how they rob each other)

1 After making them well-informed and instructed what they had to do, they returned, and left us with those [Indians] which, keeping in mind that what the others had said to them, began to treat us with the same fear and reverence as the others. We journeyed with them for three days, and they took us to where there were many people. Before we arrived, they announced of our coming, and said about us all the others had indicated. They added much more, because all of these Indian-folk are great story-tellers and very deceitful, especially when they have something at stake.

2 When we arrived close to the houses, all of the people came out to receive us with much pleasure and celebration. Among other things, two of their healers gave us two gourds. From here, we began to carry gourds with us. We added this ceremony, which is very great to them, to our authority. Those who had accompanied us sacked the houses, but as there were many and they were few, they could not carry all they took, and they left more than half of it lost.
From here, following the skirt of the mountains, we turned inland for more than fifty leagues, and at the end of them, we found forty houses. Among other things that they gave us, Andrés Dorantes had a large, thick copper bell, on which a face was represented. They showed that they regarded this highly, and they said that they had obtained it from others, their neighbors. Upon asking them where it had come from, they told us that they had brought it from the north, and that there was much there, and it was held in great esteem. We understood that wherever it had come from, there was a foundry and [metal] was cast in molds.

And with this, we departed the next day and crossed through a mountain seven leagues long. Its stones were iron slags. In the evening, we arrived at many houses that were located on the bank of a very beautiful river. The lords of the houses came out to halfway on the road and received us with their children on their backs. They gave us many pouches of fool's gold and ground antimony (they smear this on their faces). They gave us many beads and many cowhide robes and loaded all who came with us with everything they had. They ate tunas and pine nuts; there are small pines in that country, and their cones are like small eggs, but their nuts are better than those of Castile, because they have very thin husks. When they are green, they grind them and make them into balls and eat them that way. If they are dry, they grind them with husks and eat them as meal. Those who received us there, upon having touched us, returned running to their houses, then turned around to us. They never ceased running, going and coming. They brought us many things for the trail in this manner.
*Section 35*

5 They brought a man to me here, and they told me that a long time ago, he had been wounded by an arrow in the right side of his back, and the arrowhead was over his heart. He said that it gave him much pain, and that he was always sick because of it. I touched him and felt the arrowhead and saw that it had passed through the cartilage. With a knife I had, I opened his chest up to that place and saw that the point had passed through and was very bad to remove. I resumed cutting and inserted the tip of the knife, and with great effort, I finally removed it. It was very long. Using my experience in medicine, I made two stiches with a deer bone, and making them, I was bled upon, and I stopped the blood with [hair] scraped from a hide. When the point had been removed, they asked me for it, and I gave it, and the whole village came to see it, and sent it further inland so that those who were there could see it. They had many dances and celebrations over this, as they usually do.

6 The next day, I cut the Indian's two stiches, and he was well. It did not seem that the wound that was made there was less than a line of the palm of the hand, and he said that he felt no pain and had no problems. This cure gave us such standing among them throughout the whole land, as much as they were able to and knew how to value and praise.

7 We showed them that bell that we had brought. They told us that in that place where it had come from, many sheets of that [metal] were buried, that it was a thing that they esteemed greatly, and there were fixed houses there.

*End Section 35*  
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We believe that this is [on] the South Sea, for we have always heard that sea is more rich than that of the north.
At this, we departed and walked among so many kinds of people and of so many different tongues that there is not enough memory to be able to relate. They always sacked each other, and in that, those who lost as well as those who gained were left very content. We carried so much company that we could in no way derive any worth from them. Through those valleys where we went, each one of them carried a club as large as three palms, and they all went in a wing, and when a hare (which there are plenty of there) came out, they closed in on it, and so many clubs fell down over it that it was a thing to marvel. In this manner, they made it move from one to the other, that to me, seeing it was the most beautiful hunt that can be imagined, because many times they [the hares] came up to their hands. When we stopped at night, they had given us so many that each one of us carried eight or ten loads of them.

Those who carried bows did not seem to be in front of us; rather, they went separately into the mountains to look for deer. When they came at night, they brought five or six deer for each one of us, and parrots, quail, and other game. Finally, that people put everything they found and killed before us, without daring to touch anything unless we blessed it first, although they would die of hunger. That was their custom after walking with us.

The women brought many mats, with which they made houses for us - a separate one for each, with all of his company. When this was done, we ordered that they roast those deer, hares, and all that they had taken. They also did this very quickly in some ovens that they had made for this. We took a little of all of it, and we gave the rest to the principal of the people who came with us, ordering that he distribute it among all. Each one came to us with his own part for us to blow on it and make the sign of the Cross over it; they did not dare to eat of it by any other manner. Many times, we brought three or four thousand persons with us, and it was a great labor for us that for each one, we had to blow on and bless that which he had to eat and drink. They
asked our permission for many other things that they wanted to do, so one can see how much of a
nuisance it was for us to receive them. The women brought us tunas, spiders, worms, and
whatever they could, because although they would die of hunger, they ate nothing without giving
it to us.

Going with these, we crossed a great river, which came from the north. Crossing some
thirty leagues of plains, we found many people who came far from there to receive us, and came
out to the trail of where we had to go. They received us in the manner of those of earlier.

CHAPTER 30 - The People of the Cows

(Of how the custom of receiving us changed)

From here, there was another manner of receiving us, with regard to the plunder, because
those who came out to the trails to bring something to those who came with us were not robbed,
but after we entered their houses, those same ones offered us that which they had, and the houses
with them. We gave them to the principals to divide among them, and those who were left
dispossessed always followed us to where many people thrived in order to recoup their loss.

They told them to be careful and not to hide anything that they had, because it could not be done
without us knowing, and we would make it so that everyone would die, because the sun would
tell us so. They put such fear in them that the first few days that we stayed with them, they were
always trembling, and did not dare to speak or lift their eyes toward the sky.

These guided us for more than fifty leagues of desert and very rugged mountains. As it
was so dry, there was no game in them, and we endured great hunger because of this. Finally,
[they guided us] to a very large river; the water came up to our chests. From there, many of the
people who we brought suffered from the great hunger and hardship that had taken place in those
mountains, which were extremely acrid and troublesome.
These same ones took us to some plains at the end of the mountains, where [others] came from very far away to receive us. They received us like those earlier, and gave so much of their estates to those who came with us that they left half of it for being unable to carry it. We said to the Indians that had given it to take it back and carry it so that it would not be lost there. They responded that in no way would they do that, because it was not their custom to take something back once they had offered it. So, not valuing it as anything, they left it all to be lost.

*Section 36*

We told these that we wanted to go toward the sunset. They responded to us that the people over there were very distant. We ordered them to send there and make it known that we were going there. They excused themselves of this as best as they could, because those were their enemies, and they did not want us to go to them. But, they did not dare to do differently, and so they sent two women - one of their own, and one that they had taken captive. They sent these because the women are able to negotiate even though there is war. We followed them, and we stopped in a place where it had been agreed that we would wait. We waited five days, and the Indians said that they must not have found people. We told them to take us northward; they responded in the same manner, saying that there were no people there, except very far away, and that there was nothing to eat and no water to be found. Through all of this, we insisted and told them that we wanted to go there, and they still excused themselves as best as they could.

*End Section 36*

We became angry at this, and I went out one night to sleep in the field, apart from them, but then they came to where I was, and they stayed awake all night, very fearful, speaking to me and telling me how scared they were, begging us not to be angry any longer, and even though they knew they would die on the trail, they would take us to where we wanted to go. We still
feigned being angry so that their fear would not leave them, and then a strange thing happened, which was that many of them became sick that very day, and the following day, eight men died. Through all the land where this became known, they had such fear of us that it seemed that they were worried they would die from looking at us. They begged us not to be angry with them and that we would not wish death upon more of them, and they knew for certain that we killed them simply by willing it. In truth, the sorrow we received from this could not have been greater, because beyond seeing those who died, we feared that all would die or that they would leave us by ourselves out of fear, and that all of the other people from there forward, seeing what had happened to them, would do the same. We prayed to our Lord God for His aid, and so all those who had been sick began to become well.

6 We saw something that was of great wonder: the parents, siblings, and wives of those who died had great pain on seeing them in that state, and after they died, they showed no feeling, neither did we see them cry, talk to each other, or make any other indication, neither did they dare to go over to them until we ordered them to take them and bury them.

7 In more than fifteen days that we stayed with them, we never saw them speak to each other, nor did we see them laugh or any infants cry, except, because one cried, they took it very far from there and cut it with some sharp mouse teeth from its shoulders almost to its legs. I, seeing this cruelty and angry about it, asked them why they did this. They responded that it was to punish it because it had cried before me. All of these fears that they had of us were placed upon all of the new ones who came to meet us, with the result that they gave us all that they had, because they knew that we did not take anything and we had to give all of it to them.

8 This was the most submissive people that we found in this land, and in the best condition; they were generally very well-built.
With the afflicted recovering, and we had already been there three days, the women who we had sent out returned, saying that they had found very few people, and that everyone had gone after the cows, as it was the season for them. We ordered those who had been sick to stay there, and those who had been well would go with us. After a two-day journey, those same two women would go with two of us to gather people and bring them to the trail for them to meet us.

With this, all those who were the healthiest split off with us the next morning, and after a three-day journey we stopped. The following day, Alonso del Castillo left with Estevanico the Negro, taking the two women as guides. The one of those who was a captive took them to a river that ran through some mountains where there was a town in which her father lived. These were the first houses we saw that had the appearance and form of [houses]. Castillo and Estevanico arrived here. After having spoken with the Indians, at the end of three days Castillo came to where he had left us, and he brought five or six of those Indians. He told of how he had found houses that were fixed, with people, and that this people ate beans and gourds, and that he had seen corn. This cheered us up more than anything in the world, and we gave infinite thanks for it to our Lord. He said that the Negro would come with all the people of the houses to wait on the road nearby, and for this reason, we departed.

When we had walked a league and a half, we ran into the Negro and the people who had come out to receive us, and they gave us beans, many gourds to eat and for carrying water, cowhide robes, and other things. Since these people and those who had come with us were enemies, and did not understand each other, we took leave of the first ones, giving them all that that had been given to us.
We went with these, and six leagues from there, when night was already coming, we came to their houses, where they made many celebrations with us. We stayed here one day, and we left the following one.

We took some of them with us to other fixed houses, where they ate the same as those. From here on, we found a new custom: those who knew of our coming did not go out and receive us on the trails, like the others had done, but we found them in their houses, and they had made others for us. They were all seated, and all had their faces turned to the wall, their heads lowered, and their hair put over their eyes. Their belongings were put in a pile in the middle of the house. From here on, they began to give us many leather robes; they had nothing that they did not give us.

These people had the best bodies that we saw, were the most lively and skilled, and best understood us and responded to what we asked them. We called them "of the cows," because the majority of them that die are close to there, and because they go up that river more than fifty leagues to kill many of them. This people go about completely naked, in the manner of those who we first found. The women go about covered with some deer hides - and a few men, especially those who are old, who do not serve in war. It is a very populated country.

We asked them why they did not plant corn. They responded that it was so as not to lose what they planted, because there had been a lack of water for two successive years, and the weather had been so dry, that all of the corn had been lost to the moles, and they did not dare to go back to planting unless it rained much first. They implored us to speak to Heaven that it would rain, and so we prayed, and we promised them that we would do so. We also wanted to know from where they had brought their corn. They told us that it was from where the sun sets, that it existed in that whole country, moreover that the shortest way to it was on that trail.
We asked them, "Where would it be good for us to go?" and that they inform us of the trail, because they did not want to go there. They told us that the way to go was up that river, which went to the north, and that in seventeen days of travel we would not find anything to eat except for a fruit that they called *chacán*, which they crush between some stones, and even after taking this measure it cannot be eaten, being rough and dry. That was the truth, because they showed it to us there, and we could not eat it. They also told us that while we went up the river, we would always be among people who were their enemies and spoke their same language. They would not have anything to eat to give us, but they would receive us very willingly, and they would give us many cotton robes and hides and other things of that which they had. Still, it seemed to them that we should in no way take that road.

In doubt about what we ought to do, and which road would most be to our purpose and advantage, we remained with them for two days. They gave us beans and gourds to eat. Their manner of cooking them is so new, that as such, I wanted to put it here, so that one can see and understand how different and strange are the ingenuity and workings of humans. They do not understand pots, and to cook what they want to eat, they fill a medium-sized gourd full of water. They throw many stones that heat up easily into the fire, and they become heated, and when they see that they are burning, they take them with some wooden tongs, and they throw them in the water that is in the gourd, until it boils with the heat that the stones carry. When they see that the water boils, they pour it in that which they are making to eat. During all of this time, they take out some stones and throw in other burning ones, so that the water boils to cook that which they want, and this is how they cook.

CHAPTER 31 - Gifts of Turquoise

(Of how we followed the road of the corn)
After two days of staying with them, we determined to go in search of corn, and we did not want to follow the road of the cows, because it went to the north, and this to us was a very great detour, because we always held it for certain that going toward the sunset would be how to find what we wanted. And so, we went on our way, and crossed all the land as far as the South Sea. The fear of the great hunger that would come to pass - which did, in fact, befall us - was not enough to hinder us for the whole seventeen-day journey that [the Indians] had told us of. For all of these [days] up the river, they gave us many cowhides. We did not eat of that fruit, but our sustenance every day was as much as a handful of deer fat, which, out of necessity, we always tried to keep. And so we passed the whole seventeen-day journey. At the end of it, we crossed the river and traveled another seventeen [days]. At sunset, on some plains, and among some very large mountains that form them, we found a people that eat nothing but powdered straw for a third of the year. Since that was the season when we traveled there, we also had to eat it until, at the end of this journey, we found some fixed houses, where there was much corn gathered, and they gave us a great quantity of it, and of their flour, and of gourds, beans, and cotton robes. We loaded those who had brought us there with all of it, and with this, they returned the most contented [people] in the world. We gave many thanks to our Lord God for having brought us there, where we had found so much sustenance.

*Section 37*

Among these houses, there were some of them that were of earth, and the others were of cane matting. From here, we traveled more than a hundred leagues of land, and we always found fixed houses, much sustenance from corn and beans, and they gave us many deer and many cotton blankets - better than those of New Spain. They also gave us many beads of some coral
that is in the South Sea, many very good turquoises that they get from the north, and finally, they gave here all that they had.

3. They gave to me five emeralds made into arrowheads; with these they made their ceremonies and dances. They appeared to me to be very good. I asked them where they had come from. They said that they brought them from some very tall mountains that were to the north, and traded for them with parrot plumes and feathers. They said that there were villages with many people and very large houses.

4. Among these people, we saw the most decently-treated women in any part of the Indies that we have seen. They wear cotton shirts that reach down to the knees, and over them, half-sleeves of a few strips of deerskin, without hair, that touch the ground. They wash them with using some roots as soap, which clean them well, and so they keep them very well cared for. [The shirts] are open in front and closed with straps. They walk shod with shoes. All of these people came to us so that we would touch them and bless them. They were so importune in this that we endured it with great difficulty, because all, suffering and healthy, wanted to be blessed. It occurred many times that the women who went with us would give birth, and then, being born, bring the baby to us for us to touch and bless it. They always accompanied us until leaving us in the care of others, and among all of these people, it was held for very certain that we came from Heaven.

*End Section 37*
them; he inquired about the road that we wished to go on, the villages that were there, and the things that we wanted to know. We came across a great number and variety of languages; our Lord God favored us with all of them, because they always understood us and we understood them, with us asking them and them responding by signs, as if they understood our tongue and we theirs.

*Section 38*

Although we knew six languages, we could not take advantage of them everywhere, because we found more than a thousand differences.

6 In all of these lands, those who were at war with others would become friends upon seeing us, so as to receive us and bring us everything that they had. In this way, we left the whole country at peace.

7 We told them, by signs so that they understood us, that there was a man in Heaven who we called God, the one who had created Heaven and Earth, that we worshipped Him and held him to be our Lord, that we did as He commanded us, that all good things came from His hand, and that it would be very good for them if they did likewise. We saw such a great readiness in them, that if there had been a language with which they could have understood us perfectly, we would have left all of them Christians.

8 This we gave them to understand as best as we could. From then on, when the sun came out, they would lift their hands together to the sky with a great uproar, then pass them all over their bodies. They did the same when it set.

*End Section 38*  

They are a well-conditioned people, ready to follow anything that is well-prepared.
(Of how they gave us deer hearts)

1 In the village where they gave us the emeralds, they gave to Dorantes more than six hundred deer hearts, opened, of which they always had a great abundance for their sustenance, and because of this, we named it the Village of the Hearts. Through it is the entrance to many provinces on the South Sea, and if anyone going to look for it does not enter through there, they will be lost, because the coast does not have corn. They eat ground weeds, straw, and fish that they catch on rafts, because they do not understand canoes. The women cover their privates with grass and straw. They are a very lowly and timid people.

2 We believe that near the coast, in the direction of those villages that we came to, there are more than a thousand leagues of inhabited land, and that they have plenty of food, because they plant beans and corn three times a year. There are three kinds of deer, one of which is the size of the steers of Castile. There are fixed houses, which are called buhíos.

*Section 39*

They have a plant - it is from some trees the size of apple [trees] - and it is only necessary to take the fruit and wipe the arrow with it, and if it does not have fruit, they break a branch and do the same with its milk. There are many of these trees that are so poisonous that if they pound its leaves and wash them in some nearby water, all of the deer and any other animals that drink of it burst afterward.

*End Section 39*  

3 We stayed in this village three days. One day's journey from there was another, in which such rains overtook us that we could not cross one river, because it rose so much. We stayed there five days. In this time, Castillo saw, around the neck of an Indian, a little buckle from a sword belt, with a shoeing nail sewn in it. He took it, and we asked him what it was. They told us
that it had come from the sky. We asked him further about who had brought it from there. They answered that some men who had beards like us had come from the sky and arrived at that river, and that they brought horses, lances, and swords and had lanced two of them. We asked them, as slyly as we could, what had happened to those men. They responded that they had gone to the sea and put their lances below the water, and that they also had been put below, and that later they saw them on the waves going toward the sunset.

4 We gave many thanks to our Lord God for that which we heard, because we had been doubtful of hearing news of Christians. On the other hand, we found ourselves greatly confused and sad, believing that people were some who had come from the sea only for discovery. In the end, as we had such a certain report of them, we hastened on our way. We always heard more news of Christians, and we told [the Indians] that we came to look for them, in order to tell them not to kill them or take them as slaves, or to take their lands or do any other bad thing to them. They were put greatly at ease by this.

5 We walked over a lot of land, and found all of it deserted, because its inhabitants had run away to the mountains, without daring to take their houses or to labor, for fear of the Christians. It was something that made us very sad - seeing such fertile land, very pretty and full of waters and rivers, and to see the places deserted and burned, and the people so thin and sick, displaced and in hiding. Since they did not plant, they were so hungry that they sustained themselves on tree bark and roots. We nearly reached this level of hunger all along this road, because they were ill-able to provide for us, being so unfortunate that it seemed as if they wanted to die. They brought us blankets that they had hidden from the Christians and gave them to us, and even related to us how the Christians had entered the land other times, and had destroyed and burned
the villages, and taken half of the men and all of the women and children, and that those who could escape their hands ran fleeing.

6 Since we saw them so frightened, not daring to stay anywhere and neither wanting nor able to plant or work the land, almost having determined to let themselves die, believing that to be better than to stay there and be treated with such cruelty, and they showed the greatest pleasure with us, although we feared that those who were on the frontier with the Christians and fought with them would mistreat us as payback for what the Christians had done against them. But, as our Lord God was served in taking us to them, they began to respect and defer to us, as the former ones - even a little more so - at which we were left not a little amazed. By this it is clearly seen that in order for these people to be attracted to become Christians and obedient to the Imperial Majesty, they should all be brought with good treatment, and that this is a very certain way, not otherwise.

7 These took us to a village that is in the cleft of a mountain, which one must climb by a very rough [trail]. There we found many people who had gathered together out of fear of the Christians. They received us very well and gave us whatever they had, and they gave us more than two thousand loads of corn, which we gave to those miserable and hungry ones who had brought us there.

8 The next day we dispatched four messengers from there to the land, as we were accustomed to do, to call and convene as many people as they could to a village that was a three-day journey from there. With that done, we parted the next day from all of the people who were there, and we always found traces and signs where the Christians had slept. At noon, we happened upon our messengers, who told us that they had not found anyone - that all had run to the woods, hidden, fleeing so that the Christians would not kill them and make them slaves - and
that the previous night, staying behind some trees, they had seen the Christians and were watching what they were doing, and that they saw how they carried many Indians in chains. Those who came with us became upset with this, and some of them returned to give notice through the land how Christians were coming; many more would have done this if we had not told them not to, nor to be afraid. This assured them and greatly relaxed them. At that time, some Indians had come with us from a hundred leagues away, and we could not conclude with them so that they could return to their homes. To assure them, we slept there that night, and the next day, we traveled and slept on the trail.

9 The following day, those who we had sent out as messengers guided us to where they had seen the Christians. Arriving at the hour of vespers, we clearly saw that they had told the truth, and we knew the people were horsemen from the stakes on which the horses had been tied. From here, which is called the Petutan River, to the river where Diego de Guzmán reached, there can be up to it - since where we knew of Christians - eighty leagues, and from there to the village where the waters took us, twelve leagues, and from there to the South Sea was twelve leagues.

10 Through all this land, where the mountains reach, we saw large samples of gold, antimony, iron, copper, and other metals. Where there are fixed houses, it is hot - so much so that it is very hot in January. From there to the south of the country, which is unpopulated as far as the North Sea, is wretched and poor, where we endured great and incredible hunger, and those who inhabit and roam that land are the cruelest and of the worst inclination and customs. The Indians who have fixed houses, and those behind them, make nothing of gold and silver, nor do they find any use for them.

CHAPTER 33 - Contact With Other Spaniards

(How we saw signs of Christians)
After we clearly saw a sign of Christians and knew how close we were to them, we gave many thanks to our Lord God for desiring to remove us from such a sad and miserable captivity. Anyone can imagine the pleasure we felt at this, considering the time we stayed in that land and the dangers and hardships we endured.

That night, I entreated one of my companions to go after the Christians, who were going through where we had left the land secured - it had been three days on the trail. They made themselves out to be sick over this, excusing themselves because of tiredness and exhaustion. Although each one of them could do it better than I, being stronger and younger, seeing their determination, the next morning I took the Negro and eleven Indians with me, and following the signs of the Christians we had found, I went to three places where they had slept. I walked ten leagues that day.

*Section 40*

The next morning, I reached four Christians on horseback, who were highly agitated on seeing me so strangely dressed and in the company of Indians. They kept looking at me for a long time, so astonished that they neither spoke to me nor were able to ask me anything. I told them to take me to where their captain was, and so we went a half league from there, where Diego de Alcaraz, the captain, was. After having spoken to him, he told me that [he] was very distraught there, because it had been many days that he had been unable to take Indians, and he did not [know] where to go, because they were getting hungry and deprived. I told him how Dorantes and Castillo, who were ten leagues from there, remained behind with many people that had brought us. He then sent three horsemen and fifty Indians that they had brought, and the Negro returned with them to guide them. I stayed there and requested that they give me a testament of the year and the month and day that I had arrived, and the manner in which I came,
and they did so. From this river to San Miguel, which is in the jurisdiction of the province called New Galicia, there are thirty leagues.

*End Section 40*

CHAPTER 34 - Saying Goodbye to the Indians

(Of how I sent for the Christians)

1 Five days later, Andrés Dorante and Alonso del Castillo arrived with those who had gone for them, and they brought more than six hundred people with them, who were from the village that the Christians had made to go up to the woods and had gone about hidden in the land. Those who had come there with us had taken them out of the woods and turned them over to the Christians. They had dismissed all of the other people who they had brought to that point.

*Section 41*

2 When they came to where I was, Alcaraz entreated me to send out a call to the people of the villages that were on the bank of the river, who went about hidden in the woods of the country, and for us to order them to bring food (although this was not necessary, because they always took care to bring us all that they could). We then sent out our messengers to call them, and six hundred people came, and they brought us all the corn they could get their hands on, and brought it in some mud-covered pots, which they had buried and hidden. They brought us everything else that they had, but we did not want to take of any of it except the food, and we gave all the other to the Christians to distribute among themselves.

3 After this, we had many great quarrels with them, because they wanted us to make the Indians who brought us into slaves. Upon leaving in anger, we left many Turkish bows that we brought, and many pouches and arrows (and among them the five emeralds) that we did not remember from them, and so we lost them. We gave many cowhide robes to the Christians, and
other things that we brought. We saw the Indians were very troubled because they would have returned to their homes and secured them and sowed their corn. They did not want to without going with us until they could leave us, as they were accustomed, with other Indians, because if they returned without doing this, they feared that they would die [and] that in going with us, they did not fear the Christians or their lances.

4 This weighed on the Christians, and they had their interpreter say to them that we were the same as them, and we had been lost for a long time, and were people of poor luck and valor, and that they were the lords of that land, who must be obeyed and served. But the Indians gave little or no regard to all that they said to them; rather, they talked amongst themselves, saying that the Christians were lying, because we came from where the sun rose, and they where it sat; that we healed the sick and they killed those who were well; that we came naked and barefoot, and they were dressed and on horses and with lances; and that we had no greed for anything, and all that they gave us we turned and gave later, and were left with nothing, and the others never ceased to rob everything they could find, and never gave anything to anyone. In this manner, they related all these things and praised us, in contrast to the others.

*End Section 41*

5 They so responded to the interpreter of the Christians, and made the same known to the others in a language that they have among them, by which we understood them. Those who use it, we properly call Primahaitu (which is like saying Basque), which, more than four hundred leagues of those we traveled, we found used among them, without there being another in all those lands.

6 Finally, it was never settled with the Indians to believe that we were of the other Christians. With great effort and annoyance, we made them return to their homes and charged
them to be assured and stay in their villages, and sow and work the earth, which, for being so deserted, was now very full of woods, which without doubt is the best of all there is in these Indies, and most fertile and productive - they sow three times per year. They have many fruits and very beautiful rivers, and many other very good waters. There are great signs and signals of gold and silver mines. The people of them are very well-conditioned; they serve the Christians (those who are friends) out of very good will. They are well disposed, much more than those of Mexico, and finally, it is a land that lacks nothing to become very good.

Upon seeing the Indians off, they told us that they would do as we charged them, and would settle in their villages if the Christians left them alone. So I say and affirm with great certainty that if they do not do so, it will be the fault of the Christians.

After we had sent the Indians away in peace, thanking them for the trouble they had gone through with us, the Christians sent us away, out of caution, to an alcalde, Cebreros, and two others with him, who took us through the woods and uninhabited lands to sever our communication with the Indians, and so we would not see or understand that which they were doing. And so it seems how much the plans of men are fooled, in that we went about looking for their liberty, and when we thought that they had it, something very different happened. They had planned to attack the Indians we had sent away assured of peace. And as they thought, they did; they took us through those woods for two days, without water, lost and without a trail. All of us thought we would be lost to thirst, and seven men succumbed to it. Many friends that the Christians brought with them could not arrive until almost the next day at noon, to [a place] where we found water that night. We traveled with them twenty-five leagues, more or less, and at the end of them we came to a village of peaceful Indians. The alcalde who brought us left us
there, and he went another three leagues to a village called Culiacan, where Melchior Díaz, chief alcalde and captain of that province, was.

CHAPTER 35 - Melchior Díaz, the Alcalde of Culiacan

(Of how the chief alcalde received us well the night that we arrived)

1 Whereas the chief alcalde was informed of our departure and arrival, he left later that night and came to where we were staying. He wept much with us, giving praise to our Lord God for having used such mercy with us. He spoke to us and treated us very well, and on behalf of Governor Nuño de Guzmán and himself offered to us all that he had and could do, and showed much sorrow for the poor welcome and treatment that we had found from Alcaraz and the others. We felt for certain that if he had been there, that which was done to us and the Indians would have been avoided.

2 That night passed, and we left the next day. The chief alcalde entreated us greatly to stay there - that this would be a very great service to God and Your Majesty, because the country is unpopulated, unworked, and all very ruined, and the Indians went about hidden and running in the woods, not wanting to come settle in their villages - and for us to send out a call for them and command them on behalf of God and Your Majesty to come and populate the plain and work the land. This seemed very difficult to us to put into effect, because we did not bring one Indian of ours, nor did those who accompanied us when we left understand these things. In the end, we ventured for this two Indians of those who had been brought there as captives, who were from the same part of the country. These had been found with the Christians when we first came to them, and saw the people who had accompanied us, and knew from them of the great authority and power that we had held and carried throughout that land, and the marvels that we had done, and the sick that we had cured, and many other things. With these Indians, we sent others of the
village to jointly go and call out to the Indians who went up to the mountains, and those of the Petaan River, where we had found the Christians, and say to them to come to us, because we wanted to speak with them. To ensure their going, and that the others would come, we gave them one of the large gourds that we had carried in our hands, which was our principal insignia and symbol of great status, and with this, they left and went about there for seven days.

At the end, they came and brought with them three lords of those who had gone up to the mountains, who brought fifteen men, and they brought us beads, turquoises, and feathers. The messengers told us that they had not called out to the natives of the river where we had left, because the Christians had made them flee again to the woods.

Melchior Díaz said to the interpreter to speak to those Indians on our behalf, and he told them he came on the behalf of God, who is in Heaven, and that we had gone about the world for many years, telling all the people that we had found to believe in God and serve Him, because He is Lord of all things in the world, and that He gave rewards and paid the good, and eternal pain of fire to the wicked, and when the good died, He carried them to Heaven, where no one ever dies, nor has hunger, nor cold, nor thirst, nor any other need, only the greatest glory that can be imagined, and that those who do not want to believe or obey His commandments, He casts below the earth in the company of the demons in a great fire, which never ceases, but torments them forever. Moreover, if they wanted to be Christians and serve God in the manner that we directed, the Christians would take them as brothers and would treat them very well, and we would command that no one would injure them or take their lands from them, but that the Christians would become their great friends, but if they did not want to do this, the Christians would treat them very badly, and would take them as slaves to other lands. To this they responded to the interpreter that they would be very good Christians and serve God.
When asked who they worshipped and offered sacrifices, and to who they asked for water for their corn fields and for their health, they responded, to a man who was in the sky. We asked them what he is called, and they said Aguar, and that they believed that he had created all the world and the things in it. We asked them in return how they knew this, and they responded that their fathers and grandfathers had told them, that they had known this for a long time, and that the water and all the good things were sent to them by him. We told them that one of whom they spoke, we called God, and that they were to call Him such, and serve and worship Him as we directed, and they would find themselves very well for it. They responded that they understood everything very well, and would do so.

We directed them to come down from the mountains, go safely and in peace, populate all the land, build their houses, among them build one for God, and put in the entrance a cross like the one we had there, and when the Christians came there, they were to go out to receive them with crosses in their hands, not bows or weapons, and to take them to their houses, and give them of what they have to eat, and in this manner they would do no harm to them, but would be their friends. They said that they would do as we had directed. The captain gave them blankets and treated them very well, and so they returned, taking those two who had been captives and had gone as messengers. This happened in the presence of the scribe that they had there and many other witnesses.

CHAPTER 36 - On to Mexico City

(Of how we had them make churches in that land)

As the Indians returned, all those of that province, who were friends of the Christians, who had heard of us, came to us to see, and brought us beads and feathers, and we directed them to build churches and put crosses in them, because until then, they had not built them. We had
them bring the children of their principal lords and baptize them, and then the captain made a solemn pledge to God to not make or consent to any foray, nor to take a slave of the land and people who we had made secure, and that he would keep and comply with this unless His Majesty and Governor Nuño de Guzmán, or the viceroy in his name, should decree something that better served God and His Majesty.

After the children were baptized, we left for the town of San Miguel, where, upon our arrival, Indians came, who told us how many people came down from the mountains and occupied the plain, and built churches and crosses and all that we had directed. Every day we had news of how this was being done and more fully carried out.

After we had been there fifteen days, Alcaraz came with the Christians who had gone on that foray and related to the captain how the Indians were down from the mountains and had occupied the plain, and how they found villages with many people, which had earlier been unpopulated and deserted, and that the Indians had gone out to receive them with crosses in their hands, taken them to their houses, and gave to them of what they had, and that they slept with them there that night. Astonished at such a change, and at how the Indians told them how they were now secure, he ordered that nothing bad be done to them, and so they departed.

*Section 42*

May our Lord God in His infinite mercy desire that in the days of Your Majesty and under your power and rule, these people come to be truly and entirely willing subjects of the true Lord who created and redeemed them. We hold for certain that it will be so, and that Your Majesty will be the one who will put it into effect (that it will not be difficult to do), because we traveled two thousand leagues through the land and on the sea on the boats, and another ten months after leaving captivity, without stopping, going about through the land, we did not
encounter sacrifices or idolatry. In this time we traversed from one sea to the other, and from the information that we were able to understand, with great diligence, from one coast to the other at the most wide, there could be two hundred leagues. We were able to understand that on the South coast there are pearls and many riches, and that the best and richest is near it.

*End Section 42*

5 We stayed in the town of San Miguel until the fifteenth day of the month of May. The reason we stopped there so long was because from there to the city of Compostela, where Governor Nuño de Guzmán resided, are a hundred leagues, all of which were deserted and [inhabited by] enemies, and people, including twenty horsemen, had to go with us. They accompanied us up to forty leagues, and from there forward, six Christians, who brought five hundred Indian slaves, came with us.

6 We arrived in Compostela. The governor received us very well, and gave us clothing from what he had. For many days, I could not put it on, nor could we sleep except on the floor.

7 Ten or twelve days later, we left for Mexico. We were treated well by the Christians the whole way, and many came out to see us on the roads and gave thanks to God for having freed us from such dangers. We arrived in Mexico on Sunday, one day before the eve of Saint James, where we were treated very well and received with great pleasure by the viceroy and the marquis of the Valley. They gave us clothing and offered us all that they had, and on the day of Saint James, there was a party, a game of canes, and bulls.

CHAPTER 37 - The Voyage to Europe

(Of what happened when I desired to come)
After we rested in Mexico two months, I wanted to come to this realm. Upon going to embark in the month of October, a storm came which hit the ship crossways, and it was lost. Seeing this, I decided to remain and pass the winter, because in those parts the weather is very rough for navigating in it.

After winter passed, during Lent, we left Mexico - Andrés Dorantes and I - for Veracruz, in order to embark. There we had to wait until Palm Sunday, when we boarded. We were on board more than fifteen days for lack of wind, and the ship we were on took on a lot of water. I left it and went over to others which were arriving, and Dorantes remained in that one.

On the tenth day of the month of April, three ships left the port. They sailed together for a hundred and fifty leagues. On the way, two ships had taken a lot of water, and one night we lost them from the convoy, because the pilots and captains, according to how it later appeared, did not dare to go further with their ships, and returned again to the port where they had departed, without giving notice of that, neither did we know more of them.

We continued our voyage, and on the fourth day of May, we arrived at the port of Havana, which is on the island of Cuba, where we stayed waiting on the other two ships, believing that they would come, until the second day of June. We left there in great fear of running into the French, who had taken three of our ships there a few days before. When we arrived off the island of Bermuda, a storm which tends to take everyone who passes through there, according to the people who travel there, took us. For a whole night, we took ourselves to
be lost. It pleased God that, when morning came, the storm ceased, and we continued on our way.

At the end of twenty-nine days since we departed Havana, we had traveled a thousand and one hundred leagues, which is said that there are from there to the village of Azores. The next day, we passed the island called "of the Raven." We came upon a French ship; at the noon hour, it commenced to follow us with a caravel that it had taken from the Portuguese, and gave us chase. That afternoon, we saw other new sails, and they were so far away, we could not know if they were Portuguese or of the same as those who were following us. When night came, the French one was a cannon-shot away from our ship. When it was dark, we stole the defeat by diverting ourselves from it. Since it was so close to us, it saw us and traced our path, and we did this three or four times. It could have taken us if he had wanted, but he left it for morning. It pleased God that when morning came, we found the French [ship] and ours together, surrounded by the new sails that I said that we had seen the afternoon before, which we knew were of the Portuguese fleet. I gave thanks to our Lord for having me saved from the hardships of the land and dangers of the sea.

*End Section 44*

Since the French [captain] knew it was the Portuguese fleet, he let go of the caravel that he had taken, which was loaded with Negros, who he had brought with them so that we would believe that it was Portuguese and we would wait for it. When he let it go, he told its captain and pilot that we were French and of his convoy. As he said this, they put sixty oars of their ship into the water, and so, by oar and sail, it began to go, and it went so [quickly] that it could not be believed.
The caravel that [was] let go went to the galleon and said to the captain that our ship and the other were French, so when our ship approached the galleon, and since the whole fleet saw that we went to them believing for certain that we were French, they put themselves at the point of war and came up to us. When they came close we hailed them. [It] knew that we were friends; they had found themselves deceived for that corsair having escaped by having been told that we were French and of his company. And so four caravels went after it, and the galleon came to us. After being greeted, the captain, Diego de Silveira, asked us where we came from and what merchandise we brought. We responded that we came from New Spain and that we brought silver and gold. He asked us how much there was; the captain told him that we brought three hundred thousand castellanos. The captain responded, "Faith, you come back very rich, although you have a bad craft and miserable artillery. That dog of a French renegade has lost a fat morsel, the bastard! Now, go ahead, since you escaped; follow me closely, and, God helping, I shall lead you back to Spain."

A little later, the caravels that had pursued the French [ship] returned, because it seemed that they had traveled much, and so as not to leave the fleet, which was guarding three ships that came loaded with spices.

And so we arrived at Terceira Island, where we stayed to rest for fifteen days, taking refreshment and waiting for another ship that came loaded from India, which was in the convoy of the three ships that the fleet carried. When fifteen days passed, we departed from there with the fleet and came to the port of Lisbon on the ninth of August, eve of Master Saint Lawrence, the year of one thousand five hundred and thirty seven years.
Because the truth is so - what I told in this above Account - I have signed my name. *Cabeza de Vaca*. The Account was signed in your name, and with your coat of arms, where it was published.

CHAPTER 38 - Of Narváez's Ships

(Of that which happened to the rest that entered the Indies)

Since I have made an account of everything mentioned above on the voyage, and the entrance and exit from the country, until returning to this realm, I want to likewise try to remember and relate what happened to the ships and the people that remained in them, which I did not remember to do in what I told previously, because we never had news of them until after exiting. We found many of the people in New Spain, and others here in Castile, from whom we learned the outcome and the conclusion of it and in what manner it happened.

After we left the three ships (because the other was already lost on the rough coast, where they were in great danger) there were almost a hundred people left with a few supplies. Among them were ten married women, and one of them had said to the governor many things that happened on the voyage, before they took place. She said to him, when he entered the country, not to enter it, because she believed that neither he nor any of those who went with him would settle the land, and that if anyone left it, that it would be by great miracles of God, but she believed that few or none would escape. The governor then responded to her that he and all those who entered with him were going to fight and conquer many very strange people and lands, and that he held it for certain that many would die conquering them, but those who remained would have good luck and would become very rich, because of the news that he had obtained of the riches that were in that land. He spoke further and implored for her to tell him: the things that she had said past and present - who had told them to her? She answered and said that in Castile a
Moor woman of Hornachos had told it to her, which she had been telling us before we left from Castile, and the whole voyage had happened to us in the same manner that she had told us.

3 After the governor had left as his lieutenant, and captain of all the ships and people who had left there, to Carvallo, native of Cuenca of Huete, we parted from them. Upon leaving, the governor ordered that, by all means, all would then gather onto the ships and would continue the voyage straight to Panuco, always going by way of the coast and looking for the best port that they could find, so that in finding it, they would stop in it and wait for us. In that time that they gathered on the ships, they said that those people who were there, seeing and hearing very clearly how that woman said to the others that since their husbands entered the interior country and put themselves in such great danger, not to take them into account anymore, that they should look for whom they would marry, because thus she had to do, and so she did it, that she and the rest married and became concubines to those who remained on the ships.

4 After they left from there, the ships made sail and continued their voyage. They did not find the port further on, and came back. Five leagues below from where they had disembarked, they found the port, which extended six or eight leagues inland, and was the same that we had discovered, where we found the Castilian boxes about which I have written above, where the bodies of the dead men were, those who were Christians. In this port and on this coast, the three ships, and the other which came from Havana, and the brigantine went about looking for us close to a year. Since they did not find us, they went to New Spain.

5 This port that we speak of is the best in the world, and enters the land seven or eight leagues, is six fathoms at the entrance, and near the land it is five, and the bottom of it is mud. There is no sea inside nor fierce storm. It holds many ships; it has a very great quantity of fish. It is a hundred leagues from Havana, which is a village of Christians in Cuba, and is at north-south
with this village, and here the breezes always prevail. They come and go from one part to another in four days, because the ships come and go on the quarter.

Now that I have given the account of the ships, it will be good for me to tell who are, and of what place in this realm, those who Our Lord was served in escaping from these hardships. The first is Alonso del Castillo Maldonado, native of Salamanca, son of Doctor Castillo and of Mrs. Aldonza Maldonado. The second is Andrés Dorantes, son of Pablo Dorantes, native of Bejar and citizen of Gibraleon. The third is álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, son of Francisco de Vera and grandson of Pedro de Vera - the one who won Canaria. His mother was called Doña Teresa Cabeza de Vaca, native of Jerez de la Frontera. The fourth is called Estevanico; he is an Arabian Negro, native of Azamor.