



shore and sped towards the ships, carrying some of the chiefs and *Ossichauar*, a man who on the previous voyage had shown notable friendship to the Admiral. They came up hastily to announce that the arrival of the Spaniards was pleasing to King Guacanagarí, and that the return of the Christians gave joy to the Indians. They made signs that the people were happy. They signified the pleasure they anticipated by nods and gestures as well as by a sweet melody, sung softly and tenderly, which assuages grief. For the Admiral on his departure had commended the Spaniards to the special protection of King Guacanagarí and had won his friendship and devotion. Therefore a swift small boat was launched at once to reassure the Indians and tow them to the Admiral's ship. But they hesitated and refused to come any closer, unwilling to trust themselves to the ships before seeing and recognizing the Admiral with the faithful witness of their own eyes. As soon as an opportunity for speaking had been afforded, the Admiral first made solicitous inquiries about

Guacanagarí and then eagerly asked for news of the Christians. They replied that Guacanagarí was sick from a wound and that all the Christians had been slain. Simultaneously they presented munificent gifts, two vessels of pure gold like those used on the tables of the wealthy to serve water. It was evident that nothing could be learned from them that night about the manner or the cause of death. They then hastened back to their king and after daybreak some of Guacanagarí's personal staff came to pay their respects to the Admiral. They related how the men had met their death, and that they had been killed by Caonabò, a strong and powerful ruler of a warlike spirit and varied talents, who was universally feared. He had carried out the slaughter of the Christians with the aid of a certain king by the name of *Marian*.² In the ensuing conflict Guacanagarí was wounded seriously in the arm while earnestly supporting a column of our men.

Bad feeling arose and broke out into warfare because of the licentious conduct

of our men towards the Indian women, for each Spaniard had five women to minister to his pleasure—for the sake of progeny, I have no doubt. But the husbands and relatives of the women, unable to take this, banded together to avenge this insult and eliminate this outrage (no race of men being free from jealousy), and attacked the Christians in great force. Although they resisted staunchly to the last man, our men were unable to withstand the close-order attacks of the enemy very long, and they were at length ruthlessly cut down. The truth of these words was

demonstrated both by Guacanagarí and by the corpses of ten Spaniards which had been found by our men, miserably deformed and corrupted, smeared with dirt and foul blood, and hideously discolored. For they had lain out in the open neglected and unburied for almost three months. The comrades over whom they wept and mourned were disfigured beyond recognition. After prayers for their souls they were given a Christian burial.

1. Puerto Rico.

2. Mayrení, a cacique and brother of Caonabò, as appears from Dr. Chanca's Letter (Jane I 48-54).

*e. How the Christians were Received in State by
Guacanagarí, and Exchanged Gifts*

Three days later the Admiral made ready to visit the king who had his seat some ten miles from the shore. He took along 100 of the more distinguished Spaniards and started out for the region from which smoke was arising and in which the largest number of roofs were seen. They proceeded to the royal palace in martial array to the accompaniment of flutes and drums. They were given the customary royal welcome, and a delegation selected for this purpose was sent in to the king. They saluted Guacanagarí as he lay in his swinging couch skilfully worked to resemble silk, and exchanged pledges of friendship and promise of loyalty. The king rejoiced in the presence of the Spaniards. When friendly relations had been re-established and good will restored, the king reported the death of the Christians in unhappy tones. He gave details mournfully, told of the battle, described the king's furious behavior, remarked on the superior forces of the enemy, discussed the perilous situation, and exhibited his

wound. When he finished speaking, he arose from the royal couch, removed the gold ornament he wore on his forehead, and bestowed it upon the Admiral deferentially. He also took off his cotton coronet and placed it upon the Admiral's head. In addition [he gave] twelve belts wondrously polished, some of them embellished by small bits of gold inlay work ingeniously interlaced with cotton. He munificently added a large number of gourds filled with a great quantity of gold in the state that it is unearthed in mines. The gold weighed over twelve *besses*, the *bes* being reckoned in bankers' tables as the equivalent of eight ounces. Bedecked with so many gifts and marks of tribute from Guacanagarí, the Admiral, taking his turn as giver, splendidly attired the cacique with an under robe of Moorish manufacture profusely adorned with magnificent colors. Moreover, the Admiral presented Guacanagarí with a wide brass basin used for washing hands and several tin rings; lastly he reverently unfolds an

image presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mother which, he explains, should be piously adored. Following this example the Indians, weighted down with a great amount of gold, urged the Spaniards to accept their gifts. For all the men were not permitted to accept gifts indiscriminately from the Indians, but only those who gave something in return, even if it were nothing but trifles like pins, bits of glass, bronze bells like those fastened to the tinkling talons of hawks. The Ethiopians and the Arabs are strangely fascinated by these bells and exchanged them for their wares, as we know from the history books. So it was that in exchange for the most worthless little trinkets the Spaniards that day carried off more than 30 *besses* of gold, the Indians grinning gleefully over the cheap brass [that they got], and our men in turn at this trade of gold for brass, since the Indians paid huge sums of gold in exchange for a single brass boss. But no one should be surprised by this, since it is demand which creates prices. Pennyroyal, he tells us, the least valuable of all the plants in our fields, is more highly prized by the Indians than pepper.

While this barter was going on, the king's wife with twelve naked girls without a stitch of clothing followed Guacanagarí in admiring the objects, while their friends and retainers lay stretched out on the ground as they were accustomed to do. Lest the royal welcome be deemed deficient in any respect, Guacanagarí emerged from his palace and spoke in a friendly manner with the Admiral, after chairs had been set up there. The Admiral then summoned his Indian interpreter and bade him inform the king of the reasons for their expedition. The Spaniards had set out for foreign parts

for the purpose of civilizing the inhabitants thereof by precept and admonition, and for the purpose of taking possession of the islands for the mighty monarchs of Spain, but King Guacanagarí above all others was to be treated as a friend and an ally. As soon as the king heard this from the Indian, he sprang to his feet and pounded the ground with his foot, raised his eyes toward Heaven, and called out to his people. Thereupon, the rest of the Indians assembled there, some 600 in number, joined in the outcry. This startled and alarmed our men so much (we had 100 light-armed men on the spot) that some grasped their sword-hilts, thinking that the business was to be settled by force of arms.

Order and confidence having been restored, Guacanagarí came down to the coast to visit the ships. There he was moved to admiration by the high bulwarks, inspected the rigging of the ships, studied our metal tools, and especially directed his gaze to the horses, which are not to be found in these regions. For the Spaniards had brought along a great many of their best horses, fleet of foot and capable of bearing armor. They had engraved bits, bright-hued caparisons, and handsomely polished belly-bands. Their formidable appearance did not fail to terrify the Indians. For they suspected that the horses fed on human flesh. When he got to the Admiral's ship, he was piped aboard with great pomp, welcomed by the beating of drums, the clashing of cymbals, and the flashing bombardment of the ship's cannon. After taking a seat on the deck, he enthusiastically welcomed our invitation. The table was laid sumptuously with sugar-cakes, confections and similar good things. The rest of the Indians looked

with amazement upon all these things, but the king preserved a ceremonious decorum and a gravity worthy of his rank. The king returned to his people at midnight.

The Spaniards made plans to survey the island and explore the countryside. So, setting out from the harbor they called Navidad, which has capacity for several vessels, they proceeded for 15 miles in their eagerness to see new lands. In that place, penetrating deep into the coast, was a well-protected harbor. It is called *Regalis*,¹ and, on the authority of seamen who know the seas, it is inferior to none, being abundantly endowed with fruit, and chiefly notable for its favorable natural position. Going up beyond this point toward the gold mines and the richly [laden] streams, they came upon another delightfully secluded body of water. This they called the Harbor of the Graces.²

A week before Christmas they landed in a lovely country through which the gleaming river *Caudal* runs.³ The land there is quite flat but rises gently now and then in hilly slopes. The climate is extraordinarily equable so that anyone could guess the vines were soon to bear grapes, and the wheat soon to render a rich crop. For garden seeds came up five days after they were planted, the gardens grew green over night, flourishing with onions and melons, radishes and salad greens and bringing new hope to all hands, for the ground, though more productive in the gardens near the city, nevertheless refuses no seed that is deposited there and accepts nothing which it does not reproduce much more profusely and with considerable interest. So great was the harvest the Spaniards reaped in a short time from the seeds which they planted that they were of the

opinion that it would provide vegetables for 20 years. Soon, the young vines were set out, the plains smiled with bounteous produce, then the tender ears of corn appeared, and the sharp pointed crops ripened to maturity, providing all the grain and all the wine that could be used for two whole years.⁴ I should be justified in calling this island fertile whether it be an Arabian or an Indian isle. In addition to all kinds of vegetables it yields large quantities of cinnamon, which men of ancient times were not permitted to harvest except with a god's permission. Ginger grows there as well as Indian spice with branches three cubits long and white bark. It abounds in silk, is redolent with castor (which we call musk), and offers favorable conditions for the growing of frankincense (one species of which, the Indian, is reddish brown, as we learn from Dioscorides, and the other, the Arabian, is white). The place abounds in rhubarb,⁵ a useful remedy in all maladies. Pliny calls it *raconia*. Furthermore, the rich soil is not grudging or stingy in its yield of these precious products, but pours them forth so liberally and so lavishly that our men are piling up huge and endless masses of commodities for use in trading operations. Wax-bearing trees⁶ flourish there; and wool-bearing trees, very useful for bedding and cushions, also bloom.⁷ There is a wide production of flax-like thread, thin as a hair, which the natives use for thread and out of this they manufacture ropes stronger and more durable than those made of hemp. There is a great variety of odoriferous trees, most of which are unknown and have never before been seen. In short, it has been found that all these natural products grow wild in this island as abundantly as we said shortly be-

fore they do in the Guadeloupe of the Caribs. The Spaniards will cultivate it and tame it by sowing seeds, bringing colonists and farmers to work the soil, break it

with hoes, and stimulate production by plowing and weeding. Because of the favorable climate there is no need of fertilizer.

1. This Puerto Real is shown on the Bologna Map of 1516 (see Introduction to Part III above, note 6), and is evidently the present Fort Liberté Bay.

2. *Gratiarum Portus*, a translation of Columbus's *Rio de Gracia*, Puerto Blanco. See his Journal for 10 January 1493, note 1.

3. Probably the Rio Yaque del Norte.

4. Much too optimistic. Within a year the Spaniards declared that they were starving.

5. For an attempt to identify these false attributes, see notes to Columbus's Journal for 30 December 1492, note 1.

6. *Cerifere arbores*. Translated "bread-fruit trees" in Thacher II 257, but the breadfruit was not introduced to the West Indies until after the famous voyage of the *Bounty*. Cf. Cuneo's report of a wax-bearing tree above.

7. The silk-cotton tree.