

**THE CONQUERORS OF THE NEW WORLD
AND THEIR BONDSMEN: BEING A
NARRATIVE OF THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS
WHICH LED TO NEGRO SLAVERY IN THE
WEST INDIES AND AMERICA, VOL. I**

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The conquerors of the New world and their bondsmen: being a narrative of the principal events which led to negro slavery in the West Indies and America, Vol. I by Arthur Helps

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ARTHUR HELPS

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H. G. Lacroix
1831

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VOLUME THE FIRST

LONDON
WILLIAM PICKERING

1848



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TO THE
REV. ROBERT PHELPS D.D.
MASTER OF SIDNEY SUSSEX COLLEGE
CAMBRIDGE.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

BELIEVE it is a general complaint of authors that dedications and epistles dedicatory are very intolerable things to write; which I feel to be true, though in the present case it does not lessen in the least the pleasure I have in inscribing your name to this book, as a memorial of our long and uninterrupted friendship.

History being a favourite study of yours, you will need but little preface or explanation, to make you take an interest in the following work, even if your wonted re-

gard for the author were not sure to win your attention to anything which has been for some time the daily labour of his life. Still, in order that you may better understand the nature and aim of this narrative, I will tell you how I came to write it.

Wishing to submit to the "Friends in Council," whom you know of, certain essays on the subject of slavery, I had occasion to refer to some of the general works of history which treat, incidentally, of this matter. The more I read, the less satisfied I felt with the result of that reading, and the greater wish I experienced to make out something like the full and true story for myself.

To do that, it was necessary to refer to certain Spanish records which remain unpublished: these I was not only permitted to examine and to copy from, but also assisted in doing so, with a kindness and a frankness for which I feel grateful to the Historical Academy at Madrid, and its officers.

I may mention that no one could have made much of these papers, unless with very long study, if the task of collecting and arranging them had not been undertaken by one so competent to it as the historian Muñoz, whose accuracy and research deserve the highest praise, and whose early death was a loss to European literature.

With regard to the general aim of the work, I can best explain that to you by showing the want which this narrative is intended to supply.

In considering the present condition of the West Indies or the southern States of America, it may occur even to a comparatively unobservant person, that these countries are largely peopled by a race not native to the soil: he hears of another race which in some parts has entirely passed away; and he sees a third which is and was dominant over both. He naturally

wishes to know the account of these things, thinking rightly, that study of the past furnishes the steadiest lights for deciphering the present; or, as the Spaniards have it, "*De la relacion veridica del hecho, nace y tiene origen el derecho*" which, being somewhat liberally rendered, runs thus, The true version of the story gives the right view of the case.

What I aim at, then, in this narration, is to show such an enquirer how the black people came to the New World, how the brown people faded away from certain countries in it; and what part the white people had in these doings.

This is not an easy undertaking. You, as an artist, know how difficult it is from scattered objects, picturesque and interesting enough, perhaps, in themselves, but not so connected together as readily to fall into any harmonious grouping, to select those which shall fully represent the locality meant to be depicted, and yet not form an

unpleasing picture. You will, therefore, be indulgent to my attempt at a similar piece of composition.

I have taken a larger scope than was absolutely needful, in beginning with the Portuguese discoveries in Africa, which I might have supposed to be known to my readers. But I have little scruple in doing this, as I generally find I gain most from those books which presume the reader to be most ignorant. Before studying this subject of slavery I had no knowledge of what may be supposed to be the well-known facts of the case; and as I traced up the matter to its source for my own information, so my narrative is simply formed by retracing my steps.

I have said enough in explanation of the book, and have now only to commend it to your friendly perusal.

I am glad that this happens to be one of your years of office as Vice-Chancellor, as, in dedicating this book to you now, I have