

THE CONQUEST OF NEW GRANADA

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The conquest of New Granada by Sir Clements Markham

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SIR CLEMENTS MARKHAM

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BY

SIR CLEMENTS MARKHAM, *Blue*
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HONORARY MEMBER OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF ANTIOQUIA

Siempre la brevedad es una cosa
Con gran razon de todos alabada,
Y vemos que una plática es gustosa
Quanto mas breve y menos afectada.

Araucana, Canto xxvi

WITH A MAP

NEW YORK

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31 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

1912

DEDICATED

(by permission)

TO HIS EXCELLENCY DON CARLOS E. RESTREPO

PRESIDENT

OF THE

REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

255406

PREFACE

SOME knowledge of the civilisation of the Aztecs and Incas, of the conquests of Mexico and Peru as told by Prescott, with the stories of Cortes and Pizarro, is part of a liberal education. But the civilisation of the Chibchas and the story of the conquest of New Granada by Quesada has found no Prescott, and is unknown to our English literature.

A great many years ago, General Mosquera—a former well-known President of New Granada—dined with Sir Roderick Murchison at the Geographical Club, and took me in his carriage to the meeting. In conversation the General expressed regret that although Mexico and Peru had found a historian, writing in the English language, his own country—the story of which was quite as interesting—had not. General Mosquera was himself an author.¹

¹ *Geografía de la Nueva Granada*, por General Tomas Cipriano de Mosquera (New York, 1858). General Mosquera was born at Popayán in 1798. He was a comrade and intimate friend of Bolívar. President, 1844-49; again in 1863 and 1866. He died in 1878.

I pondered over this expression of regret by an eminent Colombian. At that very time I was consulting the most important of the New Granada chronicles, by Fray Pedro Simon, for another purpose.¹ I was then led to read 'Piedrahita,' a later chronicle, and to translate 'Cieza de Leon'; and I received encouragement to write on the subject from Sir Woodbine Parish.

But I waited for some more competent person with greater local knowledge to undertake the task of presenting to English readers the story of Chibcha civilisation and of the conquest of New Granada. I have waited for fifty years.

My personal knowledge of Colombia is confined to Santa Martha, Cartagena, and the Isthmus. But I have had occasions for studying the geography of that interesting country for official purposes. It became an object, in connection with chinchona cultivation in British India, to obtain and publish the valuable drawings of plants of the chinchona genus growing in Colombia, by Mutis, which I found in the tool-house of the Botanical Gardens at Madrid. I then obtained sanction for their publication under the editorship

¹ I was writing the Introduction to a volume of the Hakluyt Society entitled *The Search for El Dorado*.

of an eminent Colombian botanist, Don José Triana.¹ Afterwards I employed Mr. Cross, a very able gardener and traveller, to explore the region of the *C. Pitayensis*, to the east of Popayán and Timaná. He brought me back a detailed description of that interesting region. I also published, in 1867, translations of the works of Dr. Mutis and of Dr. Karstan on the chinchona genus, with introductory notes and lives. A letter from Señor Don Narciso Lorenzano, dated March 1864, on the subject of the cultivation of chinchona-trees in their original habitat, led to my publication, in Spanish, in 1867, of a handbook of chinchona cultivation for the use of Colombian proprietors. I subsequently had some official correspondence on Colombian forest conservancy, and was elected an Honorary Member of the Historical Society of Antioquia. In obtaining the MS. of the fourth part of the work of Mutis at Madrid, and printing it for the first time, M. Weddell was so good as to say that I rendered great service to the memory of the illustrious botanist of Colombia.

I mention these transactions to show that circumstances have conduced to a continuance of

¹ *Nouvelles études sur les quinquinas accompagnées de facsimile des dessins de la quinologie de Mutis*, par J. Triana (folio, Paris, 1870).

that interest in the land of the Chibchas which was first aroused by my conversation with General Mosquera.

I submit the following brief account of Chibcha civilisation and of the conquest of New Granada without any thought of its taking a place by the side of the works of Prescott. My intention is far enough from that. Its object is only to stop a gap in English literature until such time as it may be worthily filled by another more detailed work from the pen of some one who is intimately acquainted with all the localities, as well as with all the original sources of information, some of which are still undiscovered. I trust that such a future author may already exist, or will exist in due course. I have to offer my cordial thanks to His Excellency Don Ignacio Gutierrez-Ponce for assistance and advice. Don Ignacio is descended from three of the companions in arms of Quesada.

CLEMENTS B. MARKHAM.

21 ECCLESTON SQUARE, S.W.

September, 1912.