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Title: *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies Or, a faithful NARRATIVE OF THE Horrid and Unexampled Massacres, Butcheries, and all manner of Cruelties, that Hell and Malice could invent, committed by the Popish Spanish Party on the inhabitants of West-India, TOGETHER With the Devastations of several Kingdoms in America by Fire and Sword, for the space of Forty and Two Years, from the time of its first Discovery by them.*

Author: Bartolome de las Casas; Release Date: January 9, 2007 [EBook #20321]

Language: English1) Though the original title does not appear in this version, this is (apart from the preface) a translation of: "Brevisima relacion de la destruccion de las Indias", by Bartolome de las Casas, originally published in Seville in 1552. 2) The original archaic spelling and punctuation has been retained]

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*Composed first in Spanish by Bartholomew de las Casas, a Bishop there, and Eye-Witness of most of these Barbarous Cruelties; afterward Translated by him into Latin, then by other hands, into High-Dutch, Low-Dutch, French, and now Taught to Speak Modern English.*

*London, Printed for R. Hewson at the Crown in Cornhil, near the Stocks-Market. 1689.*

THE  
ARGUMENT  
OF THIS NARRATIVE  
By way of  
PREFACE  
TO THE  
READER.

*The Reverend Author of this Compendious Summary was Bartholomaeus de las Casas alias Casaus, a Pious and Religeous person, (as appears by his zealous Transports in this Narrative for promotion of the Christian Faith) elevated from a Frier of the Dominican Order to sit in the Episcopal Chair, who was frequently importuned by Good and Learned Men, particularly Historians, to Publish this Summary, who*

*so prevailed with him, that he Collected out of that copious History which might and ought to be written on this subject, the contents of this concise Treatise with intention to display unto the World the Enormities, &c. the Spaniards committed in America during their residence there, to their eternal ignominy; and for the author finding that no Admonitions or Reprehensions, how mild soever could operate upon or sink into the rocky-hearted Tyrants in those Occidental parts; he therefore took up a firm resolution, being then about 50 years of age (as he himself declares) to run the Hazards and Dangers by Sea, and the Risque of a long voyage into Spain there to acquaint and Certifie the most Illustrious Prince Phillip the Son and Heir of his Imperial Majesty Charles the Fifth of Blessed Memory, with the Horrid crimes, &c. perpetrated in those countries, part whereof he had seen, and part heard from such as boasted of their Wickedness. Whereupon his Caeserean Majesty moved with a tender and Christian compassion towards these Inhabitants of the Countries of America, languishing for want of redress, he called a Council at Valedolid, Anno Dom. 1542. consisting of Learned and Able Men, in order to the reformation of the West-Indian government, and took such a course, that from that time their Tyranny and cruelty against those Barbarians was somewhat repressed, and those Nations in some measure delivered from that intolerable and more then Aegyptian Bondage, or at least the Spaniards ill usage and treatment of the Americans was alleviated and abated. This Book mostly Historical, part Typographical, was Published first by the Author in Spanish at Sevil, after that Translated into Latin by himself; and in process of time into High Dutch, Low Dutch, French and now English; which is the Sixth Language it has been taught to speak, that anyone of what Nation soever might in this Narrative contemplate and see as in a mirror the dismal and pernicious fruits, that lacquey and attend unlimited and close fisted Avarice, and thereby Learn to abhor and detest it, Cane pejus & angue: it being the predominant and chiefest motive to the comission of such inexpressible Outrages, as here in part are faintly, not fully represented. Which sin the Pagan Indians themselves did exprobate in the Spaniards with all Detestation, Ignominy and Disgrace: for when they had taken some of them Prisoners (which was rarely) they bound them hand and foot, laid them on the ground, and then pouring melted Gold down their Throats, cried out and called to them aloud in derision, yield, throw up thy Gold O Christian! Vomit and spew out the Mettal which hath so inqinated and invenom'd both Body and Soul, that hath stain'd and infected they mind with desires and contrivances, and thy hands with Commission of such matchless Enormities. I will then shut up all this, being but an Extract of what is in the Prefatory part of the Original. I earnestly beg and desire all Men to be perswaded, that this summary was not published upon any private Design, sinister ends or affection in favor or prejudice of any particular Nation; but for the publick Emolument and Advantage of all true Christians and moral Men throughout the whole World.*

Farewell

THE CRUELTIES  
OF THE  
Spaniards  
Committed in  
AMERICA.

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America was discovered and found out *Ann. Dom.* 1492, and the Year ensuing inhabited by the *Spaniards*, and afterward a multitude of them travelled thither from *Spain* for the space of Nine and Forty Years. Their first attempt was on the *Spanish* Island, which indeed is a most fertile soil, and at present in great reputation for its Spaciousness and Length, containing in Circumference Six Hundred Miles: Nay it is on all sides surrounded with an almost innumerable number of Islands, which we found so well peopled with Natives and Forreigners, that there is scarce any Region in the Universe fortified with so many Inhabitants: But the main Land or Continent, distant from this Island Two Hundred and Fifty Miles and upwards, extends it self above Ten Thousand Miles in Length near the sea-shore, which Lands are some of them already discover'd, and more may be found out in process of time: And such a multitude of People inhabits these Countries, that it seems as if the Omnipotent God has Assembled and Convocated the major part of Mankind in this part of the World.

Now this infinite multitude of Men are by the Creation of God innocently simple, altogether void of and averse to all manner of Craft, Subtlety and Malice, and most Obedient and Loyal Subjects to their Native Sovereigns; and behave themselves very patiently, submissively and quietly towards the *Spaniards*, to whom they are subservient and subject; so that finally they live without the least thirst after revenge, laying aside all litigiousness, Commotion and hatred.

This is a most tender and effeminate people, and so imbecile and unequal-balanced temper, that they are altogether incapable of hard labour, and in few years, by one Distemper or other soon expire, so that the very issue of Lords and Princes, who among us live with great affluence, and fard deliciously, are not more effminate and tender than the Children of their Husbandmen or Labourers: This Nation is very Necessitous and Indigent, Masters of very slender Possessions, and consequently, neither Haughty, nor Ambitious. They are parsimonious in their Diet, as the Holy Fathers were in their frugal life in the Desert, known by the name of *Eremites*. They go naked, having no other Covering but what conceals their Pudends from publick sight. An hairy Plad, or loose Coat, about an Ell, or a coarse woven Cloth at most Two Ells long serves them for the warmest Winter Garment. They lye on a coarse Rug or Matt, and those that have the most plentiful Estate or Fortunes, the better sort, use Net-work, knotted at the four corners in lieu of Beds, which the Inhabitants of the Island of *Hispaniola*, in their own proper Idiom, term *Hammacks*. The Men are pregnant and docible. The natives tractable, and capable of Morality or Goodness, very apt to receive the instill'd principles of Catholick Religion; nor are they averse to Civility and good Manners, being not so much discompos'd by variety of Obstructions, as the rest of Mankind; insomuch, that having suckt in (if I may so express my self) the the very first Rudiments of the Christian Faith, they are so transported with Zeal and Furvor in the exercise of Ecclesiastical Sacraments, and Divine Service, that the very Religioso's themselves, stand in need of the greatest and most signal patience to undergo such extream Transports. And to conclude, I my self have heard the *Spaniards* themselves (who dare not assume the Confidence to deny the good Nature praedominant in them) declare, that there was nothing wanting in them for the acquisition of Eternal Beatitude, but the sole Knowledge and Understanding of the Deity.

The *Spaniards* first assaulted the innocent Sheep, so qualified by the Almighty, as is premention'd, like most cruel Tygers, Wolves and Lions hunger-starv'd, studying nothing, for the space of Forty Years, after their first landing, but the Massacre of these Wretches, whom they have so inhumanely and barbarously butcher'd and harass'd with several kinds of Torments, never before known, or heard (of which you shall

have some account in the following Discourse) that of Three Millions of Persons, which lived in *Hispaniola* itself, there is at present but the inconsiderable remnant of scarce Three Hundred. Nay the Isle of *Cuba*, which extends as far, as *Valledolid* in *Spain* is distant from *Rome*, lies now uncultivated, like a Desert, and intomb'd in its own Ruins. You may also find the Isles of *St. John*, and *Jamaica*, both large and fruitful places, unpeopled and desolate. The *Lucayan* Islands on the North Side, adjacent to *Hispaniola* and *Cuba*, which are Sixty in number, or thereabout, together with those, vulgarly known by the name of the Gigantic Isles, and others, the most infertile whereof, exceeds the Royal Garden of *Sevil* in fruitfulness, a most Healthful and pleasant Climat, is now laid waste and uninhabited; and whereas, when the *Spaniards* first arriv'd here, about Five Hundred Thousand Men dwelt in it, they are now cut off, some by slaughter, and others ravished away by Force and Violence, to work in the Mines of *Hispaniola*, which was destitute of Native Inhabitants: For a certain Vessel, sailing to this Isle, to the end, that the Harvest being over (some good Christian, moved with Piety and Pity, undertook this dangerous Voyage, to convert Souls to Christianity) the remaining gleanings might be gathered up, there were only found Eleven Persons, which I saw with my own Eyes. There are other Islands Thirty in number, and upward bordering upon the Isle of *St. John*, totally unpeopled; all which are above Two Thousand miles in Length, and yet remain without Inhabitants, Native, or People.

As to the firm land, we are certainly satisfied, and assur'd, that the *Spaniards* by their barbarous and execrable Actions have absolutely depopulated Ten Kingdoms, of greater extent than all *Spain*, together with the Kingdoms of *Arragon* and *Portugal*, that is to say, above One Thousand Miles, which now lye wast and desolate, and are absolutely ruined, when as formerly no other Country whatsoever was more populous. Nay we dare boldly affirm, that during the Forty Years space, wherein they exercised their sanguinary and detestable Tyranny in these Regions, above Twelve Millions (computing Men, Women, and Children) have undeservedly perished; nor do I conceive that I should deviate from the Truth by saying that above Fifty Millions in all paid their last Debt to Nature.

Those that arriv'd at these Islands from the remotest parts of *Spain*, and who pride themselves in the Name of Christians, steer'd Two courses principally, in order to the Extirpation, and Exterminating of this People from the face of the Earth. The first whereof was raising an unjust, sanguinolent, cruel War. The other, by putting them to death, who hitherto, thirsted after their Liberty, or design'd (which the most Potent, Strenuous and Magnanimous Spirits intended) to recover their pristin Freedom, and shake off the Shackles of so injurious a Captivity: For they being taken off in War, none but Women and Children were permitted to enjoy the benefit of that Country-Air, in whom they did in succeeding times lay such a heavy Yoak, that the very Brutes were more happy than they: To which Two Species of Tyranny as subalternate things to the Genus, the other innumerable Courses they took to extirpate and make this a desolate People, may be reduced and referr'd.

Now the ultimate end and scope that incited the *Spaniards* to endeavor the Extirpation and Desolation of this People, was Gold only; that thereby growing opulent in a short time, they might arrive at once at such Degrees and Dignities, as were no wayes consistent with their Persons.

Finally, in one word, their Ambition and Avarice, than which the heart of Man never entertained greater, and the vast Wealth of those Regions; the Humility and Patience of the Inhabitants (which made their approach to these Lands more facil and easie) did much promote the business: Whom they so despicably

contemned, that they treated them (I speak of things which I was an Eye Witness of, without the least fallacy) not as Beasts, which I cordially wished they would, but as the most abject dung and filth of the Earth; and so sollicitous they were of their Life and Soul, that the above-mentioned number of People died without understanding the true Faith or Sacraments. And this also is as really true as the praecedent Narration (which the very Tyrants and cruel Murderers cannot deny without the stigma of a lye) that the *Spaniards* never received any injury from the *Indians*, but that they rather revered them as Persons descended from Heaven, until that they were compelled to take up Arms, provoked thereunto by repeated Injuries, violent Torments, and unjust Butcheries.

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#### Of the Island HISPANIOLA.

In this Isle, which, as we have said, the *Spaniards* first attempted, the bloody slaughter and destruction of Men first began: for they violently forced away Women and Children to make them Slaves, and ill-treated them, consuming and wasting their Food, which they had purchased with great sweat, toil, and yet remained dissatisfied too, which every one according to his strength and ability, and that was very inconsiderable (for they provided no other Food than what was absolutely necessary to support Nature without superfluity, freely bestow'd on them, and one individual *Spaniard* consumed more Victuals in one day, than would serve to maintain Three Families a Month, every one consisting of Ten Persons. Now being oppressed by such evil usage, and afflicted with such greate Torments and violent Entertainment they began to understand that such Men as those had not their Mission from Heaven; and therefore some of them conceal'd their Provisions and others to their Wives and Children in lurking holes, but some, to avoid the obdurate and dreadful temper of such a Nation, sought their Refuge on the craggy tops of Mountains; for the *Spaniards* did not only entertain them with Cuffs, Blows, and wicked Cudgelling, but laid violent hands also on the Governours of Cities; and this arriv'd at length to that height of Temerity and Impudence, that a certain Captain was so audacious as abuse the Consort of the most puissant King of the whole Isle. From which time they began to consider by what wayes and means they might expel the *Spaniards* out of their Countrey, and immediately took up Arms. But, good God, what Arms, do you imagin? Namely such, both Offensive and Defensive, as resemble Reeds wherewith Boys sport with one another, more than Manly Arms and Weapons.

Which the *Spaniards* no sooner perceived, but they, mounted on generous Steeds, well weapon'd with Lances and Swords, begin to exercise their bloody Butcheries and Strategems, and overrunning their Cities and Towns, spar'd no Age, or Sex, nay not so much as Women with Child, but ripping up their Bellies, tore them alive in pieces. They laid Wagers among themselves, who should with a Sword at one blow cut, or divide a Man in two; or which of them should decollate or behead a Man, with the greatest dexterity; nay farther, which should sheath his Sword in the Bowels of a Man with the quickest dispatch and expedition.

They snatcht young Babes from the Mothers Breasts, and then dasht out the brains of those innocents against the Rocks; others they cast into Rivers scoffing and jeering them, and call'd upon their Bodies when falling with derision, the true testimony of their Cruelty, to come to them, and inhumanely exposing others to their Merciless Swords, together with the Mothers that gave them Life.

They erected certain Gibbets, large, but low made, so that their feet almost reacht the ground, every one of which was so order'd as to bear Thirteen Persons in Honour and Reverence (as they said blasphemously) of our Redeemer and his Twelve Apostles, under which they made a Fire to burn them to Ashes whilst hanging on them: But those they intended to preserve alive, they dismiss'd, their Hands half cut, and still hanging by the Skin, to carry their Letters missive to those that fly from us and ly sculking on the Mountains, as an exprobaton of their flight.

The Lords and Persons of Noble Extract were usually expos'd to this kind of Death; they order'd Gridirons to be placed and supported with wooden Forks, and putting a small Fire under them, these miserable Wretches by degrees and with loud Shreiks and exquisite Torments, at last Expir'd.

I once saw Four or Five of their most Powerful Lords laid on these Gridirons, and thereon roasted, and not far off, Two or Three more over-spread with the same Commodity, Man's Flesh; but the shril Clamours which were heard there being offensive to the Captain, by hindring his Repose, he commanded them to be strangled with a Halter. The Executioner (whose Name and Parents at *Sevil* are not unknown to me) prohibited the doing of it; but stopt Gags into their Mouths to prevent the hearing of the noise (he himself making the Fire) till that they dyed, when they had been roasted as long as he thought convenient. I was an Eye-Witness of these and and innumerable Number of other Cruelties: And because all Men, who could lay hold of the opportunity, sought out lurking holes in the Mountains, to avoid as dangerous Rocks so Brutish and Barbarous a People, Strangers to all Goodness, and the Extirpaters and Adversaries of Men, they bred up such fierce hunting Dogs as would devour an *Indian* like a Hog, at first sight in less than a moment: Now such kind of Slaughters and Cruelties as these were committed by the Curs, and if at any time it hapned, (which was rarely) that the *Indians* irritated upon a just account destroy'd or took away the Life of any *Spaniard*, they promulgated and proclaim'd this Law among them, that One Hundred *Indians* should dye for every individual *Spaniard* that should be slain.

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*Of the Kingdoms contained in Hispaniola.*

This Isle of *Hispaniola* was made up of Six of their greatest Kingdoms, and as many most Puissant Kings, to whose Empire almost all the other Lords, whose Number was infinite, did pay their Allegiance. One of these Kingdoms was called *Magua*, signifying a Campaign or open Country; which is very observable, if any place in the Universe deserves taking notice of, and memorable for the pleasantness of its Situation; for it is extended from South to North Eighty Miles, in breadth Five, Eight, and in some parts Ten Miles in length; and is on all sides inclosed with the highest Mountains; above Thirty Thousand Rivers, and Rivulets water her Coasts, Twelve of which prodigious Number do not yield in all in magnitude to those famous Rivers, the *Eber*, *Duer*, and *Guadalquivir*; and all those Rivers which have their Source or Spring from the Mountains lying Westerly, the number whereof is Twenty Thousand) are very rich in Mines of Gold; on which Mountain lies the Province of rich Mines, whence the exquisite Gold of Twenty Four Caracts weight, takes denomination. The King and Lord of this Kingdom was named *Guarionex*, who governed within the Compass of his Dominions so many Vassals and Potent Lords, that every one of them was able to bring into the Field Sixteen Thousand Soldiers for the service of *Guarionex* their Supream Lord and Soverain, when summoned thereunto. Some of which I was acquainted with. This was

a most Obedient Prince, endued with great Courage and Morality, naturally of a Pacifick Temper, and most devoted to the service of the *Castilian* Kings. This King commanded and ordered his Subjects, that every one of those Lords under his Jurisdiction, should present him with a Bell full of Gold; but in succeeding times, being unable to perform it, they were commanded to cut it in two, and fill one part therewith, for the Inhabitants of this Isle were altogether inexperienced, and unskilful in Mine-works, and the digging Gold out of them. This *Caiu* proffered his Service to the King of *Castile*, on this Condition, that he would take care, that those Lands should be cultivated and manur'd, wherein, during the reign of *Isabella*, Queen of *Castile*, the *Spaniards* first set footing and fixed their Residence, extending in length even to *Santo Domingo*, the space of Fifty Miles. For he declar'd (nor was it a Fallacie, but an absolute Truth,) that his Subjects understood not the practical use of digging in Golden Mines. To which promises he had readily and voluntarily condescended, to my own certain knowledge, and so by this means, the King would have received the Annual Revenue of Three Millions of *Spanish* Crowns, and upward, there being at that very time in that Island Fifty Cities more ample and spacious than *Sevil* it self in *Spain*.

But what returns by way of Remuneration and Reward did they make this so Clement and Benign Monarch, can you imagine, no other but this? They put the greatest Indignity upon him imaginable in the person of his Consort who was violated by a *Spanish* Captain altogether unworthy of the Name of Christian. He might indeed probably expect to meet with a convenient time and opportunity of revenging this Ingominy so unjuriously thrown upon him by preparing Military Forces to attaque him, but he rather chose to abscond in the Province *De los Ciquayos* (wherein a Puissant Vassal and subject of his Ruled) divested of his Estate and Kingdom, and there live and dye an exile. But the *Spaniards* receiving certain information, that he had absented himself, connived no longer at his Concealment but raised War against him, who had received them with so great humanity and kindness, and having first laid waste and desolate the whole Region, at last found, and took him Prisoner, who being bound in Fetters was convey'd on board of a ship in order to his transfretation to *Castile*, as a Captive: but the Vessel perished in the Voyage, wherewith many *Spaniards* were also lost, as well as a great weight of Gold, among which there was a prodigious Ingot of Gold, resembling a large Loaf of Bread, weighing 3600 Crowns; Thus it pleased God to revenge their enormous impieties.

A Second Kingdom was named *Marien*, where there is to this day a Haven, upon the utmost Borders of the Plain or open Countrey toward the North, more fertile and large than the kingdom of *Portugal*; and really deserving constant and frequent Inhabitants: For it abounds with Mountains, and is rich in Mines of Gold and *Orichalcum*, a kind of Copper Mettal mixt with Gold; The Kings name of this place was *Guacanagari*, who had many powerful Lords (some whereof were not unknown to me) under his subjection. The first that landed in this Kingdom when he discovered *America* was an Admiral well stricken in years, who had so hospitable and kind a reception from the aforesaid *Gracanagari*, as well as all those *Spaniards* that accompanied him in that Voyage, giving them all imaginable help and assistance (for the admiral's vessel was sunk on their Coasts) that I heard it from his own mouth, he could not possibly have been entertained with greater Caresses and Civilities from his own parents in his own Native Country. But this King being forced to fly to avoid the *Spanish* slaughter and Cruelty, deprived of all he was Master of, died in the Mountains; and all the rest of the Potentates and Nobles, his subjects, perished in that servitude and Vassalage; as you shall find in this following Treatise.

The Third Kingdom was distinguished by the Appellation of *Maquana*, another admirable, healthful and fruitful Region, where at present the most refined sugar of the Island is made. *Caonabo* then reigned there, who surmounted all the rest in Power, State, and the splendid Ceremonies of His Government. This King beyond all expectation was surpriz'd in his own Palace, by the great subtilty and industry of the *Spaniards*, and after carried on board in order to his transportation to *Castile*, but there being at that time six Ships Riding in the Haven, and ready to set Sail such an impetuous storm suddenly arose, that they as well as the Passengers and Ships Crew were all lost, together with King *Canabao* loaded with Irons; by which judgement the Almighty declared that this was as unjust and impious an Act as any of the former. This Kind had three or four Brothers then Living, Men of strength and Valour, who being highly incensed at the Captivity of their King and Brother, to which he was injuriously reduc'd, having also intelligence of the Devastations and Butcheries committed by the *Spaniards* in other Regions, and not long after hearing of their Brothers death, took up Arms to revenge themselves of the Enemy, whom the *Spaniards* met with, and certain party of Horse (which proved very offensive to the *Indians*) made such havoc and slaughter among them, that the half of this Kingdom was laid waste and depopulated.

*Xaraqua* is the Fourth Kingdom, and as it were the Centre and Middle of the whole Island, and is not to be equalled for fluency of Speech and politeness of Idiom or Dialect by any Inhabitants of the other Kingdoms, and in Policy and Morality transcends them all. Herein the Lords and Peers abounded, and the very Populace excelled in stature and habit of Body: Their King was *Behechio* by name and who had a Sister called *Anacaona*, and both the Brother as well as Sister had loaded the *Spaniards* with Benefits and singular acts of Civility, and by delivering them from the evident and apparent danger of Death, did signal services to the *Castilian* Kings. *Behechio* dying the supreme power of the Kingdom fell to *Anacaona*: But it hapned one day, that the Governour of an Island, attended by 60 Horse, and 30 Foot (now the Cavalry was sufficiently able to unpeople not only the Isle, but also the whole Continent) he summoned about 300 Dynasta's, or Noblemen to appear before him, and commanded the most powerful of them, being first crouded into a Thatcht Barn or Hovel, to be exposed to the fury of the merciless Fire, and the rest to be pierced with Lances, and run through with the point of the Sword, by a multitude of Men: And *Anacaona* her self who (as we said before,) sway'd the Imperial Scepter, to her greater honor was hanged on a Gibbet. And if it fell out that any person instigated by Compassion or Covetousness, did entertain any *Indian* Boys and mount them on Horses, to prevent their Murder, another was appointed to follow them, who ran them through the back or in the hinder parts, and if they chanced to escape Death, and fall to the ground, they immediately cut off his Legs; and when any of those *Indians*, that survived these Barbarous Massacres, betook themselves to an Isle eight miles distant, to escape their Butcheries, they were then committed to servitude during Life.

The Fifth Kingdom was *Hiquey*, over whom Queen *Hiquanama*, a superannuated Princess, whome the *Spaniards* Crucified, did preside and Govern. The number of those I saw here burnt, and dismembered, and rackt with various Torments, as well as others, the poor Remnants of such matchless Villanies, who surviving were enslaved, is infinite. But because so much might be said concerning the Assassinations and Depopulating of these people, as cannot without great difficulty be published in Writing (nor do I conceive that one fragile part of 1000 that is here contained can be fully displayed) I will only add one remark more of the prementioned Wars, in lieu of a Corollary or Conclusion, and aver upon my Conscience, that notwithstanding all the above-named Injustice, profligate Enormities and other Crimes which I omit, (tho sufficiently known to me) the *Indians* did not, nor was it in their power to give



any greater occasion for the Commission of them, than Pious Religioso's Living in a well regulated Monastic Life did afford for any Sacrilegious Villains to deprive them of their Goods and Life at the same time, or why they who by flight avoided death should be detain'd in perpetual, not to be ransom'd Captivity and Slavery. I adde farther, that I really believe, and am satisfied by certain undeniable conjectures, that at the very juncture of time, when all these outrages were committed in this Isle, the *Indians* were not so much guilty of one single mortal sin of Commission against the *Spaniards*, that might deserve from any Man revenge or require satisfaction. And as for those sins, the punishment whereof God hath reserved to himself, as the immoderate desire of Revenge, Hatred, Envy or inward rancor of Spirit, to which they might be transported against such Capital Enemies as the *Spaniards* were, I judge that very few of them can justly be accused of them; for their impetuosity and vigor I speak experimentally, was inferior to that of Children of ten or twelve years of age: and this I can assure you, that the *Indians* had ever a just cause of raising War against the *Spaniards*, and the *Spaniards* on the contrary never raised a just war against them, but what was more injurious and groundless then any undertaken by the worst of Tyrants. All which I affirm of all their other Transactions and passages in *America*.

The Warlike Engagements being over, and the Inhabitants all swept away, they divided among themselves the Young Men, Women, and Children reserved promiscuously for that purpose, one obtained thirty, another forty, to this Man one hundred were disposed, to the other two hundred, and the more one was in favor with the domineering Tyrant (which they stiled Governor) the more he became Master of, upon this pretence, and with this Proviso, that he should see them instructed in the Catholick Religion, when as they themselves to whom they were committed to be taught, and the care of their Souls instructed them were, for the major part Idiots, Cruel, Avaritious, infected and stained with all sorts of Vices. And this was the great care they had of them, they sent the Males to the Mines to dig and bring away the Gold, which is an intollerable labor; but the Women they made use of to Manure and Till the ground, which is a toil most irksome even to Men of the strongest and most robust constitutions, allowing them no other food but Herbage, and such kind of unsubstantial nutriment, so that the Nursing Womens Milk was exsiccated and so dried up, that the young Infants lately brought forth, all perished, and females being separated from and debarred cohabitation with Men, there was no Prolification or raising up issue among them. The Men died in Mines, hunger starved and oppressed with labor, and the Women perished in the Fields, harrassed and broken with the like Evils and Calamities: Thus an infinite number of Inhabitants that formerly peopled this Island were exterminated and dwindled away to nothing by such Consumptions. They were compelled to carry burthens of eighty or one hundred pound weight, and that an hundred or two hundred miles compleat: and the *Spaniards* were born by them on the Shoulders in a pensil Vehicle or Carriage, or kind of Beds made of Net-work by the *Indians*; for in Truth they made use of them as Beasts to carry the burthens and cumbersom baggage of their journeys, insomuch that it frequently happened, that the Shoulders and Backs of the *Indians* were deeply marked with their scourges and stripes, just as they used to serve a tired Jade, accustomed to burthens. And as to those slashes with whips, blows with staves, cuffs and boxes, maledictions and curses, with a Thousand of such kind of Torments they suffered during the fatigue of their laborious journeys it would require a long tract of time, and many Reams of Paper to describe them, and when all were done would only create Horror and Consternation in the Reader.

But here is is observable, that the desolation of these Isles and Provinces took beginning since the decease of the most Serene Queen *Isabella*, about the year 1504, for before that time very few of the Provinces situated in that Island were oppressed or spoiled with unjust Wars, or violated with general devastation as after they were, and most if not all these things were concealed and masked from the Queens knowledge (whom I hope God hath crowned with Eternal Glory) for she was transported with fervent and wonderful zeal, nay, almost Divine desires for the Salvation and preservation of these people, which things so exemplary as these we having seen with our eyes, and felt with our hands, cannot easily be forgotten.

Take this also for a general Rule, that the *Spaniards* upon what *American* Coasts soever they arrived, exercised the same Cruelties, Slaughters, Tyrannies and detestable Oppressions on the most innocent *Indian* Nation, and diverting themselves with delights in new sorts of Torment, did in time improve in Barbarism and Cruelty; wherewith the Omnipotent being incensed suffered them to fall by a more desperate and dangerous lapse into a reprobate state.

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*Of the Isles of St. John and Jamaica.*

In the Year 1509, the *Spaniards* sailed to the Islands of *St. John* and *Jamaica* (resembling *Gardensa* and *Bee-hives*) with the same purpose and design they proposed to themselves in the Isle of *Hispaniola*, perpetrating innumerable Robberies and Villanies as before; whereunto they added unheard of Cruelties by Murdering, Burning, Roasting, and Exposing Men to be torn to pieces by Dogs; and Finally by afflicting and harassing them with un-exampled Oppressions and torments in the Mines, they spoiled and unpeopled this Contrey of these Innocents. These two Isles containing six hundred thousand at least, though at this day there are scarce two hundred men to be found in either of them, the remainder perishing without the knowledge of Christian Faith or Sacrament.

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Of the Isle of Cuba.

In the Year of our Lord 1511. They passed over to *Cuba*, which contains as much ground in length as there is distance between *Valledolid* and *Rome*, well furnished with large and stately Provinces and very populous, against whom they proceeded with no more humanity and Clemency, or indeed to speak truth with greater Savageness and Brutality. Several memorable Transactions worthy observation, passed in this Island. A certain *Cacic* a potent Peer, named *Hathney*, who not long before fled *Hispaniola* to *Cuba* for Refuge from Death, or Captivity during Life; and understanding by certain *Indians* that the *Spaniards* intended to steer their course thither, made this Oration to all his People Assembled together.

You are not ignorant that there is a rumor spread abroad among us of the *Spaniards* Arrival, and are sensible by woeful experience how such and such (naming them) and *Hayti* (so they term *Hispaniola* in their own language) with their Inhabitants have been treated by them, that they

design to visit us with equal intentions of committing such acts as they have hitherto been guilty of. But do you not know the cause and reason of their coming? We are altogether ignorant of it, they replied, but sufficiently satisfied that they are cruelly and wickedly inclined: Then thus, he said, they adore a certain Covetous Deity, whose cravings are not to be satisfied by a few moderate offerings, but they may answer his Adoration and Worship, demand many unreasonable things of us, and use their utmost endeavors to subjugate and afterwards murder us. Then taking up a Cask or Cabinet near at hand, full of Gold and Gems, he proceeded in this manner: This is the *Spaniards* God, and in honour of him if you think well of it, let us celebrate our *Arcytos* (which are certain kinds of Dances and caprings used among them); and by this means his Deity being appeas'd, he will impose his Commands on the *Spaniards* that they shall not for the future molest us; who all unanimously with one consent in a loud tone made this reply. Well said, Well said, and thus they continued skipping and dancing before this Cabinet, without the least intermission, till they were quite tired and grown weary: Then the Noble *Hathney* re-assuming his discourse, said, if we Worship this Deity, till ye be ravished from us, we shall be destroyed, therefore I judge it convenient, upon mature deliberation, that we cast it into the River, which advice was approved of by all without opposition, and the Cabinet thrown in to the next River.

When the *Spaniards* first touched this Island, this *Cacic*, who was thoroughly acquainted with them, did avoid and shun them as much as in him lay, and defended himself by force of Arms, wherever he met with them, but at length being taken he was burnt alive, for flying from so unjust and cruel a Nation, and endeavoring to secure his Life against them, who only thirsted after the blood of himself and his own People. Now being bound to the post, in order of his Execution a certain Holy Monk of the *Franciscan* Order, discours'd with him concerning God and the Articles of our Faith, which he never heard of before, and which might be satisfactory and advantageous to him, considering the small time allow'd him by the Executioner, promising him Eternal Glory and Repose, if he truly believ'd them, or other wise Everlasting Torments. After that *Hathney* had been silently pensive sometime, he askt the Monk whether the *Spaniards* also were admitted into Heaven, and he answering that the Gates of Heaven were open to all that were Good and Godly, the *Cacic* replied without further consideration, that he would rather go to Hell than Heaven, for fear he should cohabit in the same Mansion with so Sanguinary and Bloody a Nation. And thus God and the Holy Catholick Faith are Praised and Reverenced by the Practices of the *Spaniards* in *America*.

Once it so hapned, that the Citizens of a Famous City, distant Ten Miles from the place where we then resided, came to meet us with a splendid Retinue, to render their Visit more Honourable, bringing with them delicious Viands, and such kind of Dainties, with as great a quantity of Fish as they could possibly procure, and distributing them among us; but behold on a sudden, some wicked Devil possessing the minds of the *Spaniards*, agitated them with great fury, that I being present, and without the least Pretence or Occasion offered, they cut off in cold Blood above Three Thousand Men, Women and Children promiscuously, such Inhumanities and Barbarisms were committed in my sight, as no Age can parallel.

Some time after I dispatch Messengers to all the Rulers of the Province of *Havana*, that they would by no means be terrified, or seek their refuge by absence and flight, but to meet us, and that I would engage (for they understood my Authority) that they should not receive the least of Injuries; for the whole Country was extremely afflicted at the Evils and Mischiefs already perpetrated, and this I did with the advice of

their Captain. As soon as we approached the Province, Two and Twenty of their Noblemen came forth to meet us, whom the Captain contrary to his Faith given, would have expos'd to the Flames, alledging that it was expedient they should be put to Death, who were, at any time, capacitated to use any Stratagem against us, but with great difficulty and much adoe, I snatcht them out of the fire.

These Islanders of *Cuba*, being reduc'd to the same Vasselage and Misery as the Inhabitants of *Hispaniola*, seeing themselves perish and dy without any redress, fled to the Mountains for shelter, but other Desperado's, put a period to their days with a Halter, and the Husband, together with his Wife and Children, hanging himself, put an end to those Calamities.

By the ferocity of one *Spanish* Tyrant (whom I knew) above Two Hundred *Indians* hang'd themselves of their own accord; and a multitude of People perished by this kind of Death.

A certain Person here in the same Isle constituted to exercise a kind of Royal Power, hapned to have Three Hundred *Indians* fall to his share, of which in Three Months, through excessive labour, One Hundred and Sixty were destroy'd, insomuch that in a short space there remained but a tenth part alive, namely Thirty, but when the number was doubled, they all perisht at the same rate, and all that were bestow'd upon him lost their lives, till at length he paid his last Debt to Nature and the Devil.

In Three or Four Months time I being there present, Six Thousand Children and upward were murder'd, because they had lost their Parents who labour'd in the Mines; nay I was a Witness of many other stupendous Villanies.

But afterward they consulted how to persecute those that lay hid in the Mountains, who were miserably massacred, and consequently this Isle made desolate, which I saw not long after, and certainly it is a dreadful and depolorable sight to behold it thus unpeopled and laid waste, like a Desert.

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