

not slackened since their departure from St. Augustine: they had, moreover, been obliged to cross marshes, with water up to the waist. The rain then poured down so violently that they had great difficulty in protecting their arms, powder, and matches. So many difficulties made the soldiers lose heart: nothing was to be heard but maledictions on the general; and Ferdinand Perez, an ensign in San Vicente's company, was even heard to say aloud, that he did not understand how so many brave men let themselves be sold in this way by an Asturian mountaineer, who knew no more about making war on land than a horse did: that for his part, if he had been master, he would have treated him, the day they left St. Augustine on this accursed expedition, as he would soon be treated by the French.¹

1565.
What the
army had to
suffer dur-
ing the
march.

The adelantado was well aware of all said against him, but he wisely dissembled; and firm in his resolve, he called the maestro-de-campo and all the captains two hours before daybreak: he told them that all night long he had not ceased consulting Heaven, and praying the Almighty to inspire him with what best became His service; that he was satisfied that they had done the same, each by himself; that it was at last time to determine what was to be done in the sad strait in which they were, harassed, without force, bread, munitions, or any human resource.

Menendez
consults his
officers.

Some replied that it was of no use to lose time in deliberating; that they should at once take up the march back to St. Augustine; that the palm-trees would make up for the bread they needed; and that by further delay they merely exposed themselves to manifest danger of perishing. Menendez agreed that this advice was wise; that he nevertheless begged them to allow him to say a word, after which they should be at liberty to do as they chose;—that if, so far, he had only followed his own ideas, he wished in future to be guided by the counsel of his friends and com-

Reply of
some.

¹ Barcia, *Ensayo Cronologico*, p. 79. Mendoza, in his account, accuses Menendez of temerity. Ternaux-Compans, *Recueil*, p. 211.