THE DISCOVERY OF THE AMERICAN BISON BY THE SPANiards.

I.

It has often been repeated that the American bison was first seen by the Spanish conquerors in the Palace of Montezuma at Mexico city in 1519. This story is repeated by Herrera, (p. 376), who gives Antonio de Solis, (p. 76), a Spanish historian who wrote in the late part of the seventeenth century, as his authority. Herrera states:

In the year 1534, when Cortes reached Anahuac, the American bison was seen for the first time by civilized Europeans, if we may be permitted to thus characterize the horde of blood-thirsty plunder-seekers who fought their way to the Aztec capital. With a degree of enterprise that marked him as an enlightened monarch, Montezuma maintained, for the instruction of his people, a well-appointed menagerie, of which the historian de Solis (1736) wrote:

"In the second square of the same House were the Wild Beasts, which were either presented to Montezuma, or taken by his Hunters, in strong Cage of Steel, fastened in good Order, and under Cover: Lions, Tigers, Bears, and all sorts of the savage Kind which New-Spain produced; among which the greatest Rarity was the Mexican Bull; a wonderful composition of diverse Animals: It has crooked Shoulders, with a Horn on its Head like a Camel; its Flanks dry, its Tail large, and its Neck covered with Hair like a Lion. It is eleven Footed, its Head armed like that of a Bull, which it resembles in Fierceness, with no less Strength and Agility."

In a translation of a description of the bison given to Alcunez by the Indians, Hakluyt suggested "This might be the crooks backed one of Cuivira." (Vitae, 402).

II.

Prescott, who was a most careful and scholarly historian, makes no mention in his work on the Conquest of Mexico of the discovery of the bison by the Conquistadores in Mexico City, or elsewhere. But Prescott, (v. iii, pp. 194-301), gives a sketch of Antonio de Solis, and an appraisal of his work, as follows:

"Don Antonio de Solis was born of a respectable family, in October, 1510, at Alcala de Henares. He showed a decided turn for dramatic composition, and produced a comedy, at the age of seventeen, which would have reflected credit on a riper age. He afterwards devoted himself with assiduity to the study of ethics, the fruits of which are visible in the moral reflections which give a didactic character to the lightest of his compositions. His taste for dramatic composition, was, no doubt, nourished by his intimacy with the great Calderon, for whose
drama he prepared several long, or prologues. — The increasing reputation of Solis attracted the notice of the Court, and, in 1581, he was made secretary of the queen doyager, — an office which he had declined under Philip the Fourth, — and he was also preferred to the still more important post of Historiographer of the Indies, and appointment which stimulated his ambition to a bold career, different from anything he had yet attempted. Five years after this event, at the age of fifty-six, he made a most important change in his way of life, by engaging the religious profession, and was admitted to priest's orders in 1586. From this time he discontinued his addresses to the comic Muse; and, if we may credit his biographers, even refused, from conscientious scruples, to engage in the composition of religious dramas, styled autos sacramentales, though the field was now opened to him by the death of the poet Calderon, but such tendencies of conscience it was difficult to reconcile with the publication of his various comedies, which took place in 1591. It is certain, however, that he devoted himself zealously to his new profession, and to the historical studies in which his office of chronicler had engaged him. At length the fruits of these studies were given to the world in his Conquista de Nijlo, which appeared in Madrid in 1599. He designed, it is said, to continue the work to the times after the Conquest. But, if so, he was unfortunately prevented by his death, which occurred about two years after the publication of his history, on the 10th of April, 1598. He died at the age of seventy-six, much regarded for his virtues, and admired for his genius, but in that poverty with which genius and virtue are too often requited. — As to the value of the researches made by Solis in the compilation of his work it is not easy to speak, for the page is supported by none of the notes and references which enable us to track the modern author to his quarry whence he has drawn his materials. It was not the usage of the age. The people of that day, and, indeed, of preceding times, were content to take the author's word for his facts. They did not require to know why he affirmed this thing or doubted that; whether he built his story on the authority of a friend, or a foe, of an writer of good report, or of evil report. They were content to take it at trust. This was very comfortable to the historian. It saved him a world of trouble in the process, and it prevented the detection of error, or, at least, of negligence. It prevented it with all who did not carefully go over the same ground with himself. They who have occasion to do this with Solis will probably arise from the examination with no very favorable idea of the extent of his researches; they will find, that, though his situation gave his access to the most valuable repositories in the kingdom, he rarely ascends to original documents, but contented himself with the most obvious and accessible; that he rarely discriminates between the contemporary testimony and that of later dates; in a word, that, in all that constitutes the scientific value of history, he falls far below his learned predecessor, Herrera, — rapid as was the composition of this last. — End, when his views are contradicted by the statements of honest Diaz, Solis is sure to find a motive for the discrepancy in some sinister purpose of the veteran. He knew more of Cortez, of his actions and his motives, than his companions in arms, or his admiring chaplain.

III.

The writings of only four of the men who conquered Mexico have come down to us. These are: Hernando Cortes; Bernal Diaz del Castillo; the
Narrative of Andres de Tapia, and that of the Anonymous Conquistador.

Hernando Cortes, (36), in his second despatch to the Emperor, sent from Queretaro de la Frontera on the 30th of October, 1530, describes, among other things, the Palace of Montezuma in Mexico City, and says:

"Other large rooms on the ground floor were full of cages made of stout wood very firmly put together and containing large numbers of lions, tigers, wolves, foxes and wild cats of various kinds; there also were given as many chickens as they wanted. There were likewise another three hundred men to look after these animals and birds."

Bernard Duss, (pp. 62-67), after describing the extent of Montezuma's Palace, and the order observed in the conduct of his Court, and his Armory and aviary, proceeds to the following description:

"Let us leave this and go on to another great house where they keep many Idols, and they say that they are their fierce gods, and with them many kinds of carnivorous beasts of prey, tigers and the kinds of lions, and animals something like wolves which in this country they call jackals and foxes, and other smaller carnivorous animals, and all these carnivores they feed with flesh, and the greater number of them breed in the house. They give them no food deer and fowls, dogs and other things which they are used to hunt, and I have heard it said that they feed them on the bodies of the Indians who have been sacrificed. It is in this way; you have already heard me say that when they sacrifice a wretched Indian they saw open the chest with stone knives and hasten to tear out the palpitating heart and blood, and offer it to their Idols in whose name the sacrifice is made. Then they cut off the thighs, arms and head and eat the former at feasts and banquets, and the head they hang up on some bones, and the body of the man sacrificed is not eaten but given to these fierce animals. They also have in that cursed house many vipers and poisonous snakes which carry on their tails things that sound like bells. These are the worst vipers of all, and they keep them in jars and great pottery vessels with many feathers, and there they lay their eggs and rear their young, and they give them to eat the bodies of the Indians who have been sacrificed, and the flesh of dogs which they are in the habit of breeding. We even know for certain that when they drove us out of Mexico and killed over eight hundred of our soldiers that they fed those fierce animals and makes for many days on their bodies, as I still relate at the proper time and season. And those snakes and wild beasts were dedicated to those savage Idols, so that they might keep them company."

Andres de Tapia, in his "Relacion," says the following: (pp 554) -

"This Montezuma had a Palace with many court yards and apartments in it, where he had clothes and other things, and in that Palace, in some court yards of it, were contained in large cages lions and tigers, and lynxes and wolves and foxes, in quantity, and many of each, and in other court yards were contained in other sorts of cages, falcons of many kinds, and eagles, and sparrow hawks and all sorts of birds of prey."

The Anonymous Conquistador has nothing to say about a collection of wild
animals in, or near, Montezuma's Palace. He does, however, give a
description of the animals found in Mexico. About these the Anonymous
Conqueror, (p. 17), say the following:

"Of the Animals. There are many different kinds, as tigers, lions,
and wolves, and likewise jackals, which are between a fox and a dog,
and others between lion and wolf. The tigers are of the same size
as the lions, or perhaps a little larger, except that they are more
robust and ferocious; they have the whole body full of white spots,
and none of these animals have the Spaniards, but to the people of
the country they show no temerity, but on the contrary eat them.
There are also deer, and wild foxes, fowl, deer, hares, and rabbits.
The pigs have the navel in the spine (Fascia), and there are many
other and divers animals, particularly one rather larger than a tomod,
which has a purse (pouch) in its belly in which it hides its
young when it wants to flee with them, because they never leave her,
and she carries them unseen and unknown, and when it flies, still
sees with them into trees." (Gomara, or animal similar to one.)

In this connection the History of Lopez de Gomara should be
considered. While not an original source, Gomara had the advantage of
being the Chaplain of Hernando Cortes, after the latter's return to
Spain, and thus had the opportunity of obtaining much first hand
information from Cortes. Indeed, it was the publication of Gomara's
General History of the West Indies that impelled Bernal Diaz to
write his True History of the Conquest of New Spain, which he did when
past his eighty fourth year. Diaz wrote to contradict many of Gomara's
statements, and to correct others. But Gomara agrees both with Cortes,
Dias, Tapia, and Anonymous in one respect. His catalogue of animals and
vipers in Montezuma's collection, and in Mexico, in no way differs
from that of the Conquistadores. And he makes no mention of the American
Bison, either in captivity in Mexico City, or elsewhere in Mexico.

IV.

What is believed to be the first description of the American Bison
is to be found in the Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca. Nor did de Vaca
acquire his name, as some assert, by reason of his giving an account of
the Bison. He states at the end of his Narrative that his mother's name
was de Vaca. De Vaca (p. 106), states as follows:
"Cattle came as far as here. Three times have I seen them and eaten of their meat. I think they are about the size of those in Spain. They have small horns like the cows of Morocco; the hair is very long and fleshy like the serino’s. Some are tawny, others black."

The period of de Vaca’s wanderings across the North American Continent, from Florida to Mexico, was from 1536 to 1539. The year and the exact location of his first encounter with the American Bison are unknown.

The expedition of Alarcon has been noted above. Alarcon proceeded up the east coast of Mexico by sea in 1540, and fell among the Yana Indians, who described to him the Bison. This expedition was conducted as an adjunct to the expedition of Don Francisco Vasquez Coronado, who explored Mexico north of the Rio Grande in search of the Seven Cities of Cibola from 1540 to 1542. In the account of Pedro de Castaneda of this expedition, of which he was a member, the following is related: (Vinson, 420) —

"They (the Indians) described some cows which, from a picture which one of them had painted on his skin seemed to be cows, although from the hides this did not seem possible, because the hair was wooly and snarled so that we could not tell what sort of skin they had."

Thus was the first description of the Bison conveyed to the members of the Coronado expedition. At a later date, according to Castaneda:

"After ten days more they came to some settlements of people who lived like Arabs and who are called Queruchs (Quanches) in that region. They had seen the cows for two days. These folks live in tents made of tanned skins of cows. They travel around near the cows, killing them for food. They did nothing unusual when they saw our array, except to come out of their tents to look at us, after which they came to talk with the advance guard, and asked who we were."

Castaneda then relates that Coronado wished to send out a scouting expedition, but the scouts went to hunting bison, and the following occurred:

9The General sent Captain Diego Lopez with ten companions lightly equipped and a guide to go at full speed toward the sunrise for two days and discover Haza, and then return to meet the array, which set out in the same direction next day. They came across so many animals that those who were on the advance guard killed a large number of
bulls. As these fled they trampled one another in their haste until they came to a ravine. So many of the animals fell into this that they filled it up, and the rest went across on top of them. The men who were chasing them on horseback fell in among the animals without noticing where they were going. three of the horses that fell in among the cows, all saddled and bridled, were lost sight of completely."

Gastenada later describes (Winship, p. 303) how the expedition was presented with a tipi. He says:

"The General sent Don Rodrigo Maldonado, with his company, forward from here. He travelled four days and reached a large ravine like those of Collies, in the bottom of which he found a large settlement of people, Ebene de yasa and norantes had passed through this place, so that they presented Don Rodrigo with a pile of tanned skins and other things, and a tent as big as a house, which he directed them to keep until the army came up."

Gastenada (Winship, pp. 327-330) in the Second Part of his Narrative gives an excellent account of the buffalo hunting prairie Indians, as follows:

"These people are called Queresanos and Tejas. They described some large settlements, and judging from what was seen of these people and from the accounts they gave of other places, there are a good many more of these people than there are of those at the settlements. They have better figures, are better warriors, and are more feared. They travel like the Arabs, with their tents and troops of dogs loaded with poles and having Moorish pack saddles with girths. When the load gets disarranged, the dogs howl, calling some one to fix them right. These people eat raw flesh and drink blood. They do not eat human flesh. They are a kind people and not cruel. They are faithful friends. They are able to make themselves very well understood by means of signs. They dry the flesh in the sun, cutting it thin like a leaf, and then dry they grind it like meal to keep it and make a sort of sea soup of it to eat. A handful thrown into a pot smells up so as to increase very much. They season it with fat, when they always try to secure when they kill a cow, they empty a large gut and fill it with blood, and carry this around the neck to drink when they are thirsty. When they open the belly of a cow, they squeeze out the chewed grass and drink the juice that remains behind, because they say that this contains the essence of the stomach. They cut the hide open at the back and pull it off at the joints, using a flint as large as a finger, tied in a little stick, with as much ease as if working with a good iron tool. They give it an edge with their own teeth, The quickness with which they do this is something worth seeing and noting."

An excellent description is given of the Bison by gastenada, (Winship, pp. 342-343), as follows:

"Now that I wish to describe the Bull's appearance of the bull, it is to
be noticed first that there was not one of the horses that did not take flight when he saw them first. For they have a narrow, short face, the nose two palms across from eye to eye, the eyes sticking out at the side, so that, when they are running, they can see who is following them. They have very long beards, like goats, and when they are running they throw their heads back with the beard dragging on the ground. There is a sort of girdle round the middle of the body. The hair is very coarse, like a sheep's, very fine, and in front of the girdle the hair is very long and rough like a lion's. They have a great hump, larger than a camel's. The horns are short and thick, so that they are not seen much above the hair. In May they change the hair in the middle of the body for a down, which makes perfect lines of them. They rub against the small trees in the little ravines to shed their hair, and they continue this until only the down is left, as a snake changes his skin. They have a short tail, with a bunch of hair at the end. Then they run, they carry it erect like a scorpion. It is worth noticing that the little calves are red and just like cubs, but they change their color and appearance with time and age.

Another strange thing was that all the bulls that were killed had their left ears slit, although those were whole when young. The reason for this was a puzzle that could not be guessed. The wool ought to make good cloth on account of its fineness, although the color is not good, because it is the color of burial. (A coarse woolen, greenish sley.) Another thing worth noticing is that the bulls traveled without cows in such large numbers that nobody could have counted them, and so far away from the cows that it was more than 40 leagues from where we began to see the bulls to the place where we began to see the cows."

Mendoza, in a letter to the King of Spain, dated April 17, 1540, (Winship, 543), describes "the skin of a cow, like the one which Cabaco de Vaca and Dorente brought, which Your Lordship saw."

The Relacion Postera de Nivola, written in 1541, (Winship, 570-571), describes the bison, and gives an account of the uses made of that animal by the buffalo hunting tribes of the prairie. The Relacion says:

"Four days from the village they came to a country as level as the sea, and in these plains there are many multitudes of cows that they are numberless. These cows are like those of castile and somewhat larger, as they have a little hump on the withers, and they are more reddish, approaching black; their hair, more than a span long, hangs down around their horns and ears and chin, and along the neck and shoulders like mains, and down from the knees; all the rest is a very fine wool, like serino; they have very good, tender meat, and much fat. Having proceeded many days through these plains, they came to a settlement of about 300 inhabited houses. The houses were made of the skins of the cows, tanned white, like pavilions or army tents. The maintenance or sustenance of these Indians comes entirely from the cows, because they neither eat nor reap corn, with the skins they make their houses, with the skins they clothe and shoe themselves, of the skins they make ropes, and also of the wool; from the skins they make thread, with which they sew their clothes and also their houses;"
from the bones they make awls; the dung serves them for wood, because there is nothing else in that country; the steenoes serve them for pitchers and vessels from which they drink; they live on the flesh; they sometimes eat it half roasted and warmed over the dung, at other times raw; seating it with their fingers they pull it out with one hand and with a flint knife in the other they cut off mouthfuls, and then swallow it half chewed; they eat the fat raw, without chewing it; they drink the blood just as it leaves the cows, and at other times after it has run out, cold and raw; they have no other means of livelihood. These people have dogs like those in this country, except that they are somewhat larger, and they lead these dogs like beasts of burden, and make saddles for them like our pack saddles, and they fasten them with their leather things, and these make their backs sore on the sivers like pack animals. Then, when they go hunting, they load them with their necessities, and when they move — for these Indians are not settled in one place, since they travel wherever the cows move, to support themselves — these dogs carry their houses, and they have the backs of their houses dragging along tied on to the pack-saddles, besides the load which they carry on top, and the load may be, according to the dog, from 35 to 50 pounds; it is 50 leagues, or even more, from Chibola to these plains, where they went. The plains stretch away beyond, nobody knows how far."

In the Relacion del Succeso, (VINEKIP, p. 570), which also covers the Coronado expedition of 1540-1542, the numbers of bisons, and the risks of hunting them are described as follows:

"and after four days' march he found the cows, which are the most monstrous thing in the way of animals which has ever been seen or read about. He followed this river for 100 leagues, finding more cows every day, we provided ourselves with some of those, although at first, until we had had experience, as the risk of the horses, there is much quantity of them that I do not know what to compare them with, except with the fish in the sea, because on this journey, as also on that in which the whole army afterwards made when it was going to Quivira, there were so many that many times when we started to pass through the midst of them and wanted to go through to the other side of them, we were not able, because the country was covered with them. The flesh of these is as good as that of castile, and some said it was even better. The bulls are large and brave, although they do not attack very much; but they have wicked horns, and in a fight use them well, attacking fiercely; they killed several of our horses and wounded many, we found the pike to be the best weapon to use against them, and the musket for when this misses."

Coronado, (VINEKIP, pp. 600-601), describes the buffalo hunting plains Indian in a letter to the King, dated October 30, 1541, he says:

"I started from this province on the 33d of last April, for the place where the Indians wanted to guide us. After nine days' march I reached some plains, so vast that I did not find their limit anywhere that I went, although I traveled over them for more
than 300 leagues. And I found such a quantity of cows in those of the kind that I wrote Your Majesty about, which they have in this country, that it is impossible to number them, for while I was journeying through those plains, until I returned to where I first found them, there was not a day that I lost sight of them. And after seventeen days' march I came to a settlement of Indians who are called Querechoes (Querechoes), who travel around with these cows, whose not-painted, and who eat the raw flesh and drink the blood of the cows they kill, and they tan the skins of the cows, with which all the people of this country dress themselves here. They have little field tents made of the hides of the cows, tanned and greased, very well made, in which they live while they travel around near the cows, eating with these. They have dogs which they feed, which carry their tents and poles and belongings. These people have the best figures of any that I have seen in the Indies, and while we were lost in those plains, some horsesmen who went off to hunt cows fell in with some Indians who also were out hunting, who were some of these that I had seen in the last settlement, and another sort of people who are called Teyas (Teyas); they have their bodies and faces all painted, are a large people like the others, of a very good build; the eat the raw flesh just like the Querechoes, and live and travel around with the cows in the same way as these."

Captain Juan Jarabillo, of the Coronado expedition, (Siniship, pp. 387-388), describes the mode of life of the plains buffalo hunting Indians. He states the following:

"Leaving this settlement (Tiemas is doubtless referred to) and the said river, we passed two other villages whose names I do not know, (one of them probably Ximena) and in four days came to Elculque (Zecua), which I have already mentioned. The direction of this is toward the northeast. From there we came to another river, which the Spaniards named after the Cisculaque, in three days; if I remember rightly, it seems to me that we went rather toward the northeast to reach this river where we crossed it, and after crossing this, we turned more to the left hand, which would be more to the northeast, and began to enter the plains where the cows are, although we did not find them for some four or five days, after which we began to come across bulls, of which there are great numbers, and after going on in the same direction and meeting the bulls for two or three days, we began to find ourselves in the midst of very great numbers of cows, yearlings and bulls all in together. We found Indians among these first cows, who were, on this account, called Querechoes by those who in the flat-roof houses. They do not live in houses, but have sets of poles which they carry with them to make some nests at the places where they stop, which serve them for houses. They tie these poles together at the top and stick the bottoms into the ground, covering them with some cowhides which they carry around, and which, as I have said, serve them for houses. From what was learned of these Indians, all their human needs are supplied by these cows, for they are fed and clothed and shod from these. They are a people who wander around here and there, wherever seems to them best. We went for eight or ten days in the same direction, along those streams which are among the cows."
The De gote expedition (1580-1580) according to the Narrative of
the Gentleman of Elvas, (Smith, 137, 138, 139-140), procured bison hides,
but saw no bison and did not enter the country where they ranged. The
Gentleman of Elvas says:

"(p. 136) These days from that time came many Indians, by his order,
with offerings of shells, deer-skins, and two conchides; they stated
that at the distance of five or six leagues towards the north were
many cattle, where the country, being cold, was thinly inhabited;
and that, to the best of their knowledge, the province that was
better provisioned than any other, and more populous, was one to
the south called gayas."

"(p. 137) The Indian stated, that the largest population about there
was that of a province lying to the southward, thence a day and a
half's travel, called Tula; that he could give him a guide, but no
interpreter; that the tongue of that country was different from his,
and that he and his ancestors had ever been at war with its chiefs,
so that they neither conversed together nor understood each other."

"(p. 138) To raise him up, and the man made a speech, but there
was none to understand him. The Governor, by signs, told him to
return and say to the Cadice, that he must send him some one who
would speak with the people of Gayas. Three Indians came the next
day with loads of cow-skins, and three days afterward came twenty
others. Among them was one who understood those of Gayas."

"(p. 140) He brought a present of many cow-skins, which were found
very useful; the country being cold, they were taken for bed covers,
as they were very soft and the wool like that of sheep. Near by,
to the northward, are many cattle. The Christians did not see them,
nor go where they were, because it was a country thinly populated,
having little maize."

VI.

That the American Bison was known by report by Spaniards who lived
a great distance from its range is evident from the letter of the
Aedelantado Pedro Hernandez de Avila to the King of Spain, (Bulldis, pp.
84-90 of Tose II), written from Saint Augustine October 15, 1585.
Hernandez says, referring to the Chesapeake Bay, the following:

"This is the bay of Saint Mary's, which is in thirty seven degrees
(North Latitude), and within half a league there is another arm of
salt water that bears east by northeast. It is suspected that this
goes to the south sea, and the Indians kill many cows of New Spain,
which were found in these plains by Francisco Vasques Coronado, and
they take the skins in exchange to the New Land and sell them to the
French, in exchange by barter, through this branch; and in two years
from this branch they (the French) have taken to Rochelle in the
fishing boats more than six thousand of those skins."
In the brief and true Account of the Exploration of New Mexico by Escalante and Barredo, (Bolton, pp. 183-187), bison are described. This expedition was in New Mexico in the years 1821 and 1822. The account says:

"We, the said nine companions and the three fathers, discovered also, about thirty leagues to one side of said pueblo, an immense number of huspbacked cows, which have on their shoulders hump a cubit high. These cows are found over a continuous space of more than two hundred leagues in length; the width we do not know. They are not very wild cattle, and they run but little, their meat is better than that of this country, and the cattle are larger than those of this country."

In his Account of the Journey to the Provinces and Settlements of New Mexico in 1822, (Bolton, pp. 173, 188, 189, 190), Antonio Espazo calls the bison cows, but refers to their hides as buffalo hides. He states that the Indians called the bison gizola. Espazo says:

(173) "The caciques came out to receive us, each with his people, without bows or arrows, giving us portions of their food, while some gave us manta (blankets) and buffalo hides, very well tanned. The natives they make of the hides of deer; they also are tanned, as is done in Flanders. The hides are from the huspbacked cows which they call gizola, and whose hair is like that of cows of Ireland. The natives dress the hides of these cows as hides are dressed in Flanders, and make shoes of them, some of the natives using them for clothes."

(183) "Here they gave us many manteas, deerskins, and strips of buffalo-hide, tanned as they tan them in Flanders."

(189) "The number of people in these pueblos is great, seeming to us to be about twenty thousand souls. They dress in white and colored mantas, and tanned deer and buffalo hides."

(190) "The Juane Indian, 1822 — "who brought us fish of many kinds, prickly pears and other fruits, and gave us buffalo hides and tanned deer skins."

In a declaration made by Vincente de Saldivar Vencesco, on February 33, 1829, (Bolton, pp. 228-282), bison are described, and the horns of the animal are declared to resemble those of the "bufalo." Vencesco says:

"Its shape and form are so marvelous and laughable, or frightful, that the more one sees it the more one desires to see it, and as one could be so melancholy that if he saw to see at a hundred times a day he could keep from laughing heartily as many times, or could fail to marvel at the sight of so ferocious an animal. Its horns are black, and a third of a vara long, as already stated, and resemble those of the bufalo; its eyes are small, its face, mouth, teeth, and
beef are the same from our cows, with the exception that both male and female are very much bearded, similar to he-goats. They are so thickly covered with wool that it covers their eyes and face, and the forelock nearly envelopes their horns. This wool, which is long and very soft, extends almost to the middle of the body, but from there on the hair is so high that they appear unpeaked, although in reality and in truth they are not greatly so, for the lump easily disappears when the hides are stretched. In general, they are larger than our cattle. Their tail is like that of a hog, being very short, and having few bristles at the tip, and they twist it upward when they run. At the knee they have natural garters of very long hair. In their haunches, which resemble those of oxen, they are humped and crippled, and they therefore run, as already stated, in leaps, especially down hill. They are all of the same dark color, somewhat tawny, in parts their hair being almost black. Such is their appearance, which at sight is far more ferocious than the pan can depict."

A letter from Don Juan Onate to the Viceroy, (Bolton, p. 315),
from New Mexico, dated March 3, 1609, calls the cows buffalo, and
reports on them as follows:

"I assured their return and the outcome for some days, during which time I sent my agents nuvo to find and utilize the buffalo to the east, where he found an infinite multitude of them, and had the experience which he set forth in a special report."

Juan Onate in this same letter refers to buffalo hides and wool,
so follows (Bolton, p. 317):

"Others wear buffalo hides, of which there is a great abundance, —— it is a land abounding in flesh of buffalo."

In the true account of the Expedition of Juan Onate to the East in
1601, (Bolton, p. 333), the bison is described as follows:

"All these cattle are of one color, namely brown, and it was a great marvel to see a white bull in such a multitude. Their form is so frightful that one can only infer that they are a mixture of different animals. The bulls and cows alike are humped, the curvature extending the whole length of the back and even over the shoulders, and although the entire body is covered with wool, on the hump, from the middle of the body to the head, the breast, and the forelegs, to just above the knees, the wool is much thicker, and so fine and soft that it could be spun and woven like that of the Castilian sheep. It is a very savage animal, and is inseparably larger than our cattle, although it looks small because of its short legs."

Juan Onate is probably the first writer to refer to an albino
bison.
The American Bison was not seen or described by Cortez, Diaz, de Tapia or the Anonymous Conqueror. When later Spanish explorers and conquerors encountered the bison, they did not neglect to describe that animal and its habits in detail.

Descriptions of the bison and its habits were available in Spain from written reports for over a half a century before the birth of Antonio de Solis, and for over a century before he commenced his work upon the Conquest of Mexico.

CONCLUSIONS.

1. The first Spaniard to see a bison, and describe it, was Caboca de Vaca, (1528-1538).

2. The collection of animals observed in Mexico city in 1519 by Cortes, Diaz and de Tapia was in no sense a scientific collection, or a "Zoo." It was a collection of carnivorous animals, birds and vipers, taken by the Aztecs associated with their gods, and this collection was kept in a temple and was associated with the religious worship of the country.

3. The introduction of the horse by the Spaniards among the Indians of the plains affected no change in the material culture of those Indians, that is to say, in the pattern of that culture. These plains, buffalo hunting Indians, were nomadic and non-agricultural when the Spaniards first encountered them, and used dogs to transport their equipment. Acquisition of the horse simply gave them an added facility.

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