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COLUMBUS

THE LIFE OF
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

BY FRANCESCO TARDUCCI,

AFTER THE LATEST DOCUMENTS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

BY HENRY F. BROWNSON.

VOLUME I.



DETROIT:
H. F. BROWNSON, PUBLISHER.

1890.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE distinguished Italian publicist, Francesco Tarducci, author of "The Life of Christopher Columbus," was born at Piobbico in the neighborhood of Urbino, February 16th, 1842.

Finishing his collegiate course at Cagli in 1861, he accepted a chair in the gymnasium in that city for two years, after which he was a professor in the Lyceum-Gymnasium Dante Alighieri in Ravenna for eight years. He next passed ten years in private instruction in the family of Princess Luisa Murat, Countess Rosponi, the daughter of King Joachim Murat. At the end of that period, Signor Tarducci resumed public teaching as Professor of Greek and Latin Literature at Modena, which he still continues.

The published writings of the learned Professor are quite varied in subject, and treat of ancient mythology and classical studies; Italian marriage-customs, and the curiosities of surnames; Plato and Cicero; magic, astrology, and witchcraft; historical and biographical essays; not to mention a sprinkling of fiction.

The life of Columbus is to be followed by a history of John and Sebastian Cabot, which the author announces for next year.

Professor Tarducci belongs to the better school of Italian writers who are successfully resisting the tendency which was developed in the first half of this century to adopt French expression as well as thought. On Machiavelli's principle, that decayed institutions can be reformed only by going back to first principles, these writers have retored the Italian language to all the force and beauty of the xiii century,—the golden age of Italian literature,—and still retained the clearness of thought and of expression which is characteristic of the French.

The story of Columbus is told with as much simplicity and truthfulness as if written by Columbus himself; and Tarducci has so completely studied the character and thought of Columbus, and so identified himself with his hero that, when he is not giving the very words of Columbus, he gives us what Columbus himself would have said.

In most biographies, a very erroneous conception of the subject would be received from a man's own account of himself and his deeds. But in the case of Columbus there is no such danger. No man ever presented so faithful a mirror to reflect all his thoughts and dreams, hopes and disappointments, greatness of soul with petty weaknesses, as Columbus.*

* Compare the simple narrative of Columbus to the Spanish sovereigns, with the pretentious letters of Amerigo Vespucci to Lorenzo de Medici and Soderini, in which he puts forth an impudent claim to the discovery of the American continent. Vespucci's fraud has been exposed by numerous authors, but especially by the Portuguese Barros y Souza, Viscount of Santarem. (*Vespuccius and his Voyages*. Little and Brown, Boston, 1850.)

Tarducci has, consequently, given a faithful picture of Columbus, and an accurate account of his life and discoveries, in a graceful and natural style. The fault to be found with previous histories of Columbus is either that an attempt is made to picture Columbus as a model of perfection, or there is a want of accuracy in details.

The habit of writing the life of a man as though he were an angel sojourning on earth, is very common, especially when the man is held to be a saint. St. Alphonsus says, the "saints are in heaven," and if we could get at the facts, we should, no doubt, find that the passions still live, and that they are even strongest in the greatest saints, as they are in all men of intense character and energy.

It is also discouraging to the reader to find the man he would take as a model, so far above his imitation; whilst, on the other hand, the faults and weaknesses of the one whose life we read, draw our sympathy, and win our affectionate interest.

Many documents have been brought to light within the last half-century, which with the aid of intelligent criticism have greatly increased our knowledge of Columbus. Aided by these documents and this criticism, and correcting careless extracts and translations from the old historians, Signor Tarducci has presented the details of Columbus's life with accuracy and consistency.

Application has been made to the Roman court for the canonization of Columbus. Objection is made that his life was not always free from blemish. Such objections might be made to the veneration we have for a great number of saints, for instance, to David, the man after God's own heart, and between whom and Columbus there is a very marked resemblance of character.

When we consider the work that Columbus performed, the sufferings of soul and body he underwent in its execution, and the pure intention of glorifying God from which he acted, we must confess him one that seems worthy of religious veneration; just as when we remember the epoch in which he lived; his wonderful observation of natural phenomena, and sagacity in explaining them, and the glorious plans which his genius conceived, and his energy carried out, we must look on him as one of the greatest of men. He is, as Alexander v. Humboldt calls him, a giant standing on the confines between mediæval and modern times, and his existence marks one of the great epochs in the history of the world.

He is worthy of the study of the profoundest thinker and the pen of the most graceful historian; and his life, such as Francesco Tarducci has written it, comes now, at the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America, to claim the attention of those who are indebted to Columbus for nearly every blessing they enjoy in the world.

DETROIT, Nov. 12, 1890.

H. F. BROWNSON.

Note. The illustrations in these volumes are from paintings in Notre-Dame University, by Luigi Gregori.

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TO THE READER.

MANY lives of Christopher Columbus have been written in Italy ; some meriting praise ; but none has given all the details of his gloriously active life. They are all restricted to the main facts of the story, wholly omitting matters of minor importance, or giving only a scanty account of them.

The consequence is that if any one wishes to follow all the steps of his wonderful career from his father's work-shop to his triumphant discovery and his painful death in a lodging-house, he must have recourse to a life written by a foreigner. Two such lives, by Washington Irving and Roselly de Lorgues, dispute the field in this respect. Irving's history leaves little to desire in diligent research, sound sense, impartial judgment, or order and clearness of narration. But since his time, further investigation has discovered, cleared up, or conjectured much that was then unknown ; so that, if Irving's history was a conscientious and faithful guide, for his days, in tracing all that history had transmitted or criticism discovered concerning Christopher Columbus, it does not altogether meet the needs of to-day. In this respect, Roselly has the advantage over Irving, and deserves special praise for having in many instances brought in new light to confirm or correct doubtful or erroneous judgments concerning Columbus ; and his history has much to make it interesting and useful reading ; but in his zeal for the glorification of Columbus, he has sometimes, even if he had good grounds for the opinion, suffered the writer's feelings to control the historian's pen.

Considering that Italy has no life relating at length the labors,

TO THE READER.

glories, and sufferings of Christopher Columbus, and that a new work on the subject would have some advantages over the two mentioned, I concluded to undertake to write such life. In the execution of the work, I have had in view the mass of readers who want information without the fatigue of too much discussion, trusting to the diligence and honesty of the writer to see that what he says is well founded.

Hence, I have not gone into the disputes as to when and by whom the New World was first discovered. But I have not failed to mention, and, when it seemed proper, even to discuss at some length, both the historical and scientific questions that arise. The citations at the foot of the page indicate the authority for what is said in the text or the source from which it is taken; as also where fuller information may be sought for

Modena, March, 1885.



THE LIFE OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

BOOK FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

The birth-place of Columbus.—His parentage.—Condition of his family.—Probable date of his birth.—His early education.

FERNANDO, the son of Christopher Columbus, commences the history which he wrote of his father, by telling how he had been urged to clear up the questions of his country and birth, on both which there were contradictory opinions. As to his country, one said he was from Nervi, another from Cugureo, and another from Buggiasco—small places of the Riviera of Genoa; others maintained he was from the city of Genoa itself, others from Savona, and some from Piacenza. But, instead of answering the question, he wanders off into idle reflections and ill-concealed delight that his father's name should occasion such glorious contention.* At first the matter was passed over very quietly, because there was no contest, but merely a difference, of opinion. The real contest began in 1578, upon the death in that year of Diego Columbus, the last direct heir of Christopher. The latter had instituted in his family a tail male in favor of his eldest son Diego and his male descendants, to the absolute exclusion of females; failing a male heir among the descendants of Diego, the other son Fernando succeeded, with his male descendants, substituting his brother Bartholomew and his male descendants upon the failure of an heir male in the line of Fernando; and

* Fernando Colombo, *Historie . . . della Vita e dei Fatti dell' Ammiraglio D. Cristoforo Colombo, suo padre.* Venezia, 1678, cap. i.

upon a like failure in the line of Bartholomew, the nearest male relative of the last heir, being of legitimate birth and bearing the surname of Columbus by inheritance, should inherit under the same conditions, in whatever part of the world he might be found. A female could inherit only in case no legitimate male heir could anywhere be found.* Diego Columbus, the last heir of the entail, died without issue, and no male heir being known who could show a clear right to the inheritance, the females who were the nearest related to the last heir, presented their claim. This was contested by a certain Bernardo Colombo of Cogoleto, who pretended to be a descendant of Bartholomew, the brother of Christopher Columbus; and Baldassare Colombo, of the counts of Cuccaro in the Montferrat, who claimed descent from a paternal uncle of the same Christopher. Then began one of the most important suits ever known, to determine who should inherit the property, rank, and honors left by the discoverer of the New World.

Bernardo's pretensions were soon disposed of, as it was proved that Bartholomew was never married; but it was different with Baldassare, who fought unweariedly while he lived, and dying left his son the same pertinacity in continuing the fight. In support of his rights he showed the genealogical tree of his family, where there was a Domenico Colombo, who, he maintained, was identical with Christopher's father, who was also named Domenico. He proved that this Domenico lived at the right time to be father to Christopher Columbus, and produced a number of witnesses, who made oath that they had heard say that the celebrated navigator was born in the castle of Cuccaro, whence he fled with his brothers in early childhood. But after many proofs and counterproofs, the pretensions of the lords of Cuccaro were set aside for many reasons, but especially because the Domenico through whom they claimed, appeared by their genealogical tree itself to have died in 1456, whilst the Domenico, father of Christopher Columbus, was proved by indisputable documents to have been alive many years later.

After the decision of the great suit for the inheritance of Christopher Columbus, the question of his country and birth relapsed into the former calm. It was revived in the first years of the following century, by the Canon Pietro Maria Campi, in his ecclesiastical his-

* Navarrete, *Coleccion diplomática*. Doc. CXXVI.

tory of Piacenza. Having found some memoirs from which it appeared that the grandfather and father of Christopher Columbus, and Christopher himself with his brother Bartholomew, had possessed a small estate in the village of Pradello in the neighborhood of Piacenza, from the fact of this possession he attempted to prove his birth in the same place, and shouted victory for his Piacenza. But his argument was looked upon as a flight of fancy, and was soon forgotten, and the matter was again left quiet.

Still the family of Cuccaro kept up its pretensions, and, attributing the unfavorable decision of the Spanish courts to the interest that Spain had in keeping the contested property and honors at home, went on boasting of their relation to Christopher Columbus; and not seldom they enjoyed the sight of some traveller presenting himself at the gate of the old castle to visit the place where he had heard that the discoverer of the New World was born. Cogoleto, too, pointed out a house where tradition said Christopher Columbus was born, and many more pilgrims visited that house as a sanctuary than were seen at Cuccaro. Thus each place, for nearly two centuries, went on nourishing its pretensions, without harm to the other.

And now, at the beginning of the present century, comes forth Count Francesco Galeani Napioni, and defends the abandoned cause of Cuccaro. Napioni was a writer of considerable reputation for highly praised works, and therefore his entry into the field in favor of that castle raised quite a noise, and many other champions, after his example, took up arms, one for one, and another for another of the contesting localities, and the question of the country of Christopher Columbus acquired greater importance and excited greater interest than ever. Archives were hunted up and studied with unwearied diligence, old memoirs examined and compared, even the most useless letters disinterred, and the merest trifle lent argument and breath to continue the contest, and render it still fiercer. As the question broadened and deepened, new memoirs which were discovered opened the door to new pretensions, and, in a short time, from six claimants in the first years after the death of Christopher Columbus, the number grew to fifteen: Genoa, Quinto with Terrarossa in the valley of Fontanabuona, Bogliasco, Chiavari, another Terrarossa, Cogoleto or Cugureo, Albissola, Savona, Oneglia with a third Terrarossa—all places or lands on the Ligurian coast: and beyond the Appenines, Casseria, Cuccaro in the Montferrat,

Pradello near Piacenza ; the city of Calvi in Corsica ; I know not what part of France ; even England ; nor would I warrant that no name has escaped me in the long list.*

It would take long and would tire the reader to relate even succinctly all the changes of this glorious dispute, and therefore I confine myself to saying that after a lengthy battle, in the judgment of most men, all the places not comprised in the Genoese territory, were left out of the question, because Spotorno proved that Christopher Columbus was a Genoese, by such a number of documents as to leave no reasonable ground for doubt.† The question was narrowed, but not solved ; because, in the time of the Republic of Genoa, the name of Genoese was given alike to the inhabitants of the capital, and of any other part of its territory. But here the battleground became still more restricted, and the contestants were reduced to two, Genoa and Cogoletto (the Cugureo of Fernando), a small village near Savona. Genoa had on its side the writers contemporary with Columbus, like Antonio Gallo, Bartolomeo Senarega, Agostino Giustiniani, Alessandro Geraldini, who expressly say he was from Genoa ;‡ it has the probability of induction, because many authentic documents prove beyond question that the father of Columbus belonged to the city of Genoa ;§ and Don Bartholomew, his brother, says of himself that he was a native of Genoa ;|| and if father and brother were undoubtedly of Genoa, it is reasonable to believe that Christopher was of the same city ; finally, it had the testimony of Fernando Columbus himself, who, without perceiving it, tells indirectly that his father was from Genoa, when finding fault with Giustiniani for some expressions in the *Salterio*, which he thought injurious to Christopher Columbus, he makes the fault all the greater, because the injury was done to one of his own place :¶ but Giustiniani was certainly of Genoa, and, therefore, Christopher Columbus must have been from the same city

* *Giornale Ligustico* of Archæology, History, and the Fine Arts. Year IV, p. 31

† *Della Origine e della Patria di Cristoforo Colombo*, lib. iii. Genova, 1891.

‡ See the work of Gallo, *De Navigatione Columbi*, in Muratori (R. Ital., vol. xxiii.).—Senarega's commentaries, *De Rebus Genuensibus*, in vol. xxiv. of the same collection of Muratori.—*Il Salterio* of Giustiniani, at the xviii. Psalm, and the Annals of Genoa.—Geraldini's *Itinerarium*, &c.

§ Spotorno, *Della Origine e della Patria di Cristoforo Colombo*, cap. xviii

|| Fernando Colombo, cap. xi

¶ *Id.* cap. ii.

In his will of 1502, Christopher Columbus bequeathed to the Bank of San Giorgio in Genoa, for ever, the tenth of his annual revenue, to relieve the duty on wine, grain, and other victuals consumed in that city. He was under no special obligation to Genoa; but rather, as we shall see, there is good reason for believing that it rejected his offer to undertake his discovery on its own account. What other reason can we imagine for such munificence, than the indissoluble bond with which nature binds every noble soul to that place which was the cradle of its infancy, however far the circumstances of after-life may have driven it therefrom? The whole letter in which Columbus notifies the Bank of his bequest, breathes the love of his native country: "Although in body I am far distant from you," he says in the beginning, "in heart I am always there." And in the letter of thanks, which the managers of the Bank wrote to him, they call him "fellow-citizen," and express their joy at seeing him so "affectionate towards the country of his origin."*

But forcible as were the arguments put forward by Genoa, they were not sufficient to put an end to the opposition of Cogoleto: the proofs on both sides were balanced, or rather, in the opinion of many, the scale inclined to the side of the little village. Genoa had, indeed, another argument, sufficient of itself alone to settle the question, but its authenticity was doubtful, and on account of its doubtfulness the other side refused to accept it.

To understand this matter well, we must anticipate and briefly refer here to the last wills of Christopher Columbus. Four wills of his are mentioned: the first, that of 1498; the second, of 1502; the third, called the military codicil, because made under the law giving special privileges, in executing wills, to soldiers in the field, of May 4th, 1506; and, finally, the codicil which he delivered to the notary with his own hands, on the eve of his death, May 19th, of the same year. The military codicil is not now in question, and will be spoken of in its proper place; the last codicil is still kept in the archives of the Duke of Veragua, a descendant of Christopher Columbus, through the female line; no trace remains of the will of 1502, but its execution is undoubted, because testified to in the last codicil; a copy of the first will was preserved, but it was a mere draft, with-

* See the *Codice Diplomatico-Colombo-Americano*. Genova, 1823.—The original of the letter of Christopher Columbus was found in the archives of San Giorgio "1502 A. G."

out attestation or other mark of authenticity. It was a point of capital importance for Genoa to establish the validity of this copy, because twice in that will Christopher Columbus declares he was born in Genoa.* It attempted to establish it by arguing from the dates, because the date of the will instituting the entail follows closely after the royal grant authorizing that entail; and it was natural that Columbus, who was about to start on a new voyage, should avail himself at once of that authorization, without waiting till his return; it sustained that validity by the entire agreement between the institution of the entail as it is in that draft, and as it is given, or rather referred to, in the codicil of May 19th, 1506, on which point there is and can be no doubt; it proved it, finally, by the fact that the famous suit for the inheritance of the entail instituted by Christopher Columbus, which was argued for twenty-five years, was based on the will of 1498, that of 1502 having been lost, and neither of the contending parties made any objection, but counsel and court founded their arguments and decisions on it.

But the other side was stubborn and demanded authentic proof. Navarrete then came to Genoa's aid, by discovering and publishing an authentic copy of the will produced in the suit for the inheritance of the entail—a copy which agreed *de verbo ad verbum* with that in the draft above mentioned, except a very few variations, of no importance.† After this publication nearly all acquiesced in the judgment in favor of Genoa, and only rarely has a voice been raised since in the vain attempt to revive the contest thus ended.

The question of the parentage of Christopher Columbus is connected, often identified, with that of his birth-place, and has been carefully studied and discussed both in that connection and separately by itself. After the name of Christopher Columbus became so glorious, every family that could make the least pretension to it, claimed relation with the discoverer of the New World; many of these claims were founded on the surname, because Colombos are found everywhere in the Genovesat, in Piedmont,

* *Siendo yo nacido en Genova*, "I being born in Genoa;" and further on speaking of that city, he adds: *pués que della salí y en ella nací*, "since I came from and was born in it." Don Martin Fernandez de Navarrete, *Coleccion de Viajes y Descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los Españoles*. Madrid, 1825-1827, Doc. Diplom., No. cxxvi.

† Navarrete, *Colec. Diplom.*, No. cxxvi'

in Lombardy, in Venice, in Central and Southern Italy, and even in France. Herrera mentions a charter of the Emperor Otho II. in 940, to three brothers Colombo, who possessed many large fiefs in Piedmont, Liguria, and Lombardy.* It has been pretended that those three brothers were the original stock of the numerous families of Colombo found in those provinces in the following centuries, and, therefore, also of that from which the discoverer of the New World sprang. His son Fernando seems to support that pretension when he says that his family was reduced to poverty by the wars and feuds of Lombardy.† But modern criticism has failed to find any foundation for the charter mentioned by Herrera, and so the entire edifice of the ancient nobility of Christopher Columbus, which was built upon it, fell with it. After the glory to which he attained, it is not of the slightest account whether he was born of an illustrious or of a common family; but in writing his life it is proper to mention the matter, because the attempt of powerful and illustrious houses to find some thread to connect them with him, adds something to the glory of his name.

But whatever was the former condition of his family, it was humble enough at the time of his birth. Domenico, his father, was a weaver of woolen, which was probably an hereditary trade in the family; for, more than a century previously, in 1311, there is found in Genoa another Colombo, who was also a worker in wool. The immediate origin of the family seems to have been from Quinto, a place four miles distant from Genoa on the eastern coast, because his grandfather Giovanni is always designated as *de Quinto*; Domenico, his father, is surnamed *de terra rubra*, the brother Bartholomew signed himself *Columbus de terra rubra*, and so did Christopher also sometimes in his youth; and *Terra rubra* (Terrarossa) is a hamlet in the territory of Quinto.‡

The family was not so far without means as to be termed poor; for, besides the trade of wool-weaving, it appears, from various documents, to have possessed several parcels of land. All we know of his mother is that she was named Susanna, and was daughter of a certain Giacomo Fontanarossa in the valley of the Bisagno.

* Herrera y Tordesillas, *Historia General de los Hechos de los Castellanos en las Islas y tierra firme del mar Oceano*. Madrid, 1601, dec. i, lib. i, cap. vii.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. ii.

Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, lib. i, cap. ii.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xi.

Domenico Colombo and Susanna had four sons and one daughter. The sons were named Christopher, Bartholomew, Pellegrino, and James; the name of the daughter is not known, but she became the wife of Giacomo Bavarello, a cheesemonger.* The date of Christopher's birth is uncertain, and the different opinions founded on statements in his writings and those of his contemporaries, vary from 1430 to 1456. The three dates, however, most frequently accepted, and which present the greatest probabilities, are 1436, 1446, and 1456.† Of these I prefer the first, as resting on the authority of Andres Bernaldez, better known as the Curate of Los Palacios.‡

It is true that some of the other dates in his life do not agree with this: but the same difficulty meets us at whatever time we place his birth, and we are obliged to conclude that there is an error in some one of the dates. Or rather, there is a place where the error is so manifest that all agree it must be corrected; but it is in the correction that the disagreement begins. And it seems to me safer to take as a starting-point the authority of Bernaldez, who was not only most intimate with Christopher Columbus, but even had him for some time as a guest in his house, and must be supposed, from his familiarity with him, to have known something of his affairs. Bernaldez says that Christopher Columbus died at a very advanced age, verging on his 70th year. But his death took place on the 20th of May 1506: therefore, his birth must have happened in 1435 or 1436.

There is still much question as to the education he received in his first years. Antonio Galli, his fellow-countryman and contemporary, relates that he and his brother Bartholomew were taught the elementary branches in their childhood, and spent some time at their father's

* Spotorno, *Introduzione al Codice Diplomatico-Colombo-Americano*, foglio xi.

† M. d'Avezac, *Année véritable de la Naissance de Christophe Colomb*, in the *ulletin de la Société de Géographie de Paris*, sixième série, t. quatrième, p. 14.

‡ In the *Gazzetta dell' Emilia*, July 6th, 1883, I found a notice of a letter of the Marquis Marcello Staglieno, which asserts that after long and patient search he has been able to designate with precision the house of Domenico Colombo. I have not seen the letter and I know not what judgment the erudites of Genoa have passed on the discovery and argument of Staglieno. But his knowledge of the history of Genoa, and his perfect accuracy in his other historical studies, are sufficient guaranties that his announcement cannot fail to be founded on the truth. It is the house number 37, formerly 305, in the *Carrogio diritto di Ponticello*, in which, according to him, Christopher Columbus was born.

trade of working in wool. Agostino Giustiniani, another fellow-countryman and contemporary, says that he was barely taught the first elements in his childhood ; and in another place he says more specifically that he learnt grammar and arithmetic, after the custom of the country. This is also confirmed by Bartolomeo Senarega, also a contemporary of Christopher Columbus and the Chancellor of the Republic of Genoa.* But his son Fernando exaggerates the matter, and relates that in his childhood he *studied in Pavia* and learnt enough to understand the cosmographers, whom he was very fond of reading ; and on that account gave himself up to astronomy and geometry, because these sciences are so closely connected that one cannot stand without the other ; and further, that he learnt enough of drawing to lay out countries and make cosmographical bodies either flat or spherical.† The University of Pavia lately erected a monument to commemorate the glory of having had such a pupil ; and Monsignor Rocco Cocchia, the fortunate finder of the bones of Christopher Columbus, has consecrated the memorial by sending a part of the relics to that university, as he had done to Genoa.

But the assertion of Fernando is strongly combatted by others as wanting all probability. Spotorno, who was the first to attack it, supposes *Pavia* to be a typographical error for *Patria*, in the translation we have of Fernando's history, the original, as is well known, having been lost.‡ The ease with which *tr* might be changed into *v* in a poor manuscript, and the enormous number of errors in the printing of that translation, made Spotorno's supposition very likely. But the recent publication of the history of Bartholomew Las Casas has destroyed that supposition, for he, too, says, *estudió en Pavia*, "he studied in Pavia." This was a great blow for those who denied the story of Fernando, but they had good arguments left, and continued the contest. For my part, I have read over and over again the arguments on both sides of the question ; and my mind is still very doubtful ; but I incline to the side of those who reject Fernando's story. That a boy under the age of fourteen years,—for at that age, Christopher Columbus himself tells us, he began a sea-

* Ant. Gallii, *De Navigatione Columbi, &c., commentariolus*, in Muratori *Rerum Italic, &c.*, vol. xxiii.—Giustiniani, *Salterio*, Salmo xviii., and in the *Annali di Genova*.—Senarega, *De Rebus Genuensibus*, in Muratori *Rerum Ital.*, vol. xxiv.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. iii.

‡ See notes to the translation of Irving's *Columbus*. Genova, 1828, vol. i.

faring life, and ever after continued it,—that a boy of that tender age should attend the university schools, is a most unusual case, but not wholly unprecedented, and, therefore, I easily get over this difficulty. But, as appears from the very words of his son, the studies which Columbus was making were a preparation for navigation, and it is impossible that these could not have been made in a city so devoted to navigation as Genoa. The catalogue which has been produced of the branches taught and of the professors in the University of Pavia at that time, does not show any thing special to claim the preference of students in such matters; and the financial condition of Domenico Colombo was not such as to enable him to make a serious pecuniary sacrifice without a clear prospect of real advantage.* Fernando himself, in another place, presents us with serious grounds for questioning his assertion. Shortly before mentioning his father's studies at Pavia, he becomes furious at Giustiniani for saying that his father was born of the lowest parentage, and worked with his father at the wool-trade. These were two offences which Fernando could not pardon, and he attacks Giustiniani through the next five pages, hunting through his works for some inaccuracies concerning Christopher Columbus, which he calls falsehoods and lies, to convince the reader that no reliance can be placed on Giustiniani. He tries to show that Giustiniani contradicts himself, because in the *Annals* he says that Christopher Columbus worked with his father in wool, and in the *Psalter* he relates that "in his tender years he learnt the elementary branches and then gave himself wholly to the art of navigation," &c. From these words Fernando seeks to draw the clear proof that if his father in his boyhood applied himself to get the elements of education, he could not have been employed at his father's trade.† To me it seems obvious that in the fact that the family was able to support a son at the University, Fernando had an easy and conclusive argument that it was not so humble as Giustiniani made out. And the years spent at the University of Pavia, would have served his purpose much better than the time spent in getting an elementary education, to show that there was no room in the boyhood of Co-

* See the various publications of Angelo Sanguinetti in Genoa against Fernando's story, and the replies of Doctor Carlo dell' Acqua, librarian of the Royal University of Pavia.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. ii.

lumbus for the exercise of the paternal trade. But Pavia is not once mentioned. In telling of his father's low birth, it is plain how unwillingly he makes the confession, and whenever an opportunity offers, he tries, as we shall soon see, to relieve the lowness of that origin by assertions not strictly accurate. Did not the fact of having frequented the celebrated Lombard university naturally afford the most favorable opportunity to surround, with a little embroidery, the poverty of his father's boyhood? But the university studies nowhere appear in Fernando's history; all is reduced to the dry expression, that *he studied in Pavia*—an expression that would sound well enough in a concisely written history, but does not accord with the loquacity of Fernando in collecting every circumstance which might shed a little lustre on the obscure origin of his family.

The confirmation by Las Casas does not weigh much with me; for he only repeats the assertion of Fernando in his very words, *estudió en Pavia*, with no addition or remark. It is clear that he has merely copied the assertion from Fernando's history, and, therefore, the whole matter rests on the latter.*

CHAPTER II.

Extent and multiplicity of studies necessary in order to understand Christopher Columbus.—His youth.—Life of Italian mariners, especially Genoese, in the Mediterranean.—Wars of Aragon and Anjou for the throne of Naples, and the part taken by Genoa.—The share of the youthful Christopher Columbus in those wars.—The two French admirals surnamed Columbus.—Arrival of Christopher Columbus at Lisbon.

GREAT men are, so to speak, the synthesis of the tendencies, the passions, the wants, the desires, in a word, of the spirit of their times; and consequently, to understand them thoroughly it is requisite to enter into the movement of the places and times in which they lived, and to study their character in reference to these. This is true of

* See A. Sanguinetti, *Appendice alla Memoria se Cristoforo Colombo abbia studiato en Pavia*. Genova, 1880.

all great men, but perhaps of none to so great a degree as of Christopher Columbus. Whoever, therefore, would thoroughly comprehend the great Genoese, must study the various and complex causes which all, in a greater or less degree, concurred in the foundation of what, to our mind, is less a man than a power incarnated in a man. Therefore, the study of his life ought to be preceded by a broad and profound study of the commercial activity of our maritime cities ; of the expansion, beyond the national circle, of the individual forces of the numerous navigators, merchants, adventurers ; of the fierce sentiments united to the most generous chivalry of the military, the sailors, and the civilians ; of the fervor of religious faith, generally rugged, often defiled by superstition and carried away by passion, but ever grand, imperturbable, boundless ; and, above all, of the state of geographical and cosmographical knowledge in the xv century, and the extraordinary development that recent voyages and travels had given to the search after new peoples and countries. But this grand picture extends far beyond the modest limits of my work, nor have I the power to draw and to color it as the fulness, variety, and richness of its different parts demand. On the other hand, a life of Christopher Columbus seems to me too incomplete, which presents him isolated, alone in his grandeur, with no mention of his times, save so far as necessary to show them to us as the ground on which his greatness is supported and elevated. Hence, I have thought proper here and there in my narrative to hint at much that ought to be known in order to form a just idea of the character of Christopher Columbus and to appreciate his work at its proper value ; as the painter, who, in order to present to the fancy of the spectator the full conception of his picture, brings in here and there figures and landscapes as accessories and surroundings of the action expressed by the picture, to be enlarged by the spectator's imagination to the proportions required for its full understanding. Only to touch, as it were, in passing, matters so varied in time, and place, and custom, and so rich in events, may meet the condemnation alike of those who know the subject thoroughly and of those to whom it is new, or almost so. To those I shall seem to have produced only a mutilation ; and in these I shall only have excited a taste for more substantial food. To the former I can only say, in my defence, that I have thought it best ; but as to the latter, I shall bless the defect of my

work, if it shall induce them to seek after that better food ; and they will join me in that blessing, when they feel themselves nourished and strengthened thereby.

The climate of the times, if I may be allowed the expression, was more favorable than ever before to the natural tendencies of mind of Christopher Columbus ; and the soil on which he was born could not have been more fitted to give them aliment and vigor till their full maturity. A boy of Genoa sucked in with his mother's milk a taste for the sea and for a sailor's life. The first impressions on his childish mind were of the sea ; the first tales that excited his fancy and stirred his heart were of the sea. His city had sprung and grown from the sea ; the sea supported it ; its glory was on the sea. On the side of the land, surrounded and almost shut in by a chain of high mountains, it seemed cut off from the Continent and pushed to the sea for its sole occupation ; and the sea spread broad and inviting before it. The most wealthy, powerful, and noble families had won their wealth, their power, and their nobility on the sea ; the most illustrious persons, of whom the city was proud, had all been men of the sea ; and there was no broader and safer way to wealth, honor, or rank, than that of the sea. Therefore, it was that all the young men of Genoa who could, poor or rich, noble or plebeian, took to the sea ; and the ships of Genoa floated on the furthest waters, on the most hidden bays : and the greatest princes and kings had recourse to Genoa in their expeditions and wars, asking the help of its fleets and captains.

Christopher Columbus himself tells us he commenced his career as a sailor at the tender age of fourteen years.* The mind tries to tear aside the thick veil which hangs before it, and to follow the young Columbus in the lowly and laborious duties of the sailor, in the dangers and terrors of the tempest, and in the heat of the battle, from the time when he first made a part of the bold youth of Genoa, who were covered with wounds and glory on so many seas, to the time when, a full-grown man and a valiant leader, he went forth with the plan which was to double the space of the then known Earth. It tries to behold through what dangers and adversities, through what bitter privations and sufferings, was formed and matured that wonderful character of his, so conspicuous for its bold dar-

ing, its imperturbable magnanimity, its patience, firmness, and all the other virtues necessary to carry out the discovery of the New World, and to support him in the fierce struggle he had to undergo. But this part of his life is involved in thick darkness, and we barely catch a few glimpses of two or three points briefly illuminated by a straggling ray of light. But the habits and political state of the times, and the occasional twilight which breaks the darkness, make up in part for the want of positive facts, and enable us to imagine with sufficient certainty what might and must have been his life in all those years.

The life of a sailor on the Mediterranean in those days was one of danger, of daring, and of combat. The states along its coast, especially the Italian, were in a perpetual warfare, and the ships of one were almost constantly in pursuit of the ships of the other. Squadrons of privateers, armed at every point, roamed the sea in every direction, and if they were not hired to fight and rob for any one else, they did it on their own account, as the only reason for their existence and means of their maintenance. Not a few of those who had fiefs along the coast, maintained ships and fleets of war under pretext of protecting their rights and privileges in some bay or strait, and used them to plunder and rob any merchant vessel that fell into their hands. Some had organized a regular system of piracy, cruising in every direction, and seizing every vessel, without regard to its flag, which they believed might yield some booty. Every vessel had to be always prepared for war, every mariner ready to lay down the oar and seize his arms ; and the least of the evils dreaded by the pilot, as he left the port, were head-winds and furious storms. Terrible, above all, were the chase and attack, on both sides, by Christians and Mussulmans, whose inveterate religious hatred left no ray of hope to the vanquished. All this had made the Mediterranean such a bloody scene of misery and carnage, that the mere thought of it is enough to fill one with horror.

In that rough school Christopher Columbus got his growth and education ; and precisely in one of these battles we see the first twilight that breaks through the darkness of this first part of his life.

In the war of René of Anjou and Alfonso V of Aragon for the throne of Naples, Genoa took the side of René, and with its powerful fleet not only reduced the king of Aragon to extremity, but, in a great battle fought near Gaeta, utterly routed and took him pris-

oner with all the nobility of his kingdom that were with him. But Alfonso gathered new strength and vigor from his misfortune, and the fortunes of the war changed, and René, conquered and wholly subdued, yielded to his adversary the hotly-contested throne of Naples.

Alfonso did not forget the losses and humiliation he had suffered from the Genoese, but planned revenge; and as soon as he was firmly established, prepared a large and powerful fleet against his hated enemy. Genoa, too weak to stand against him, and torn, besides, by parties and factions, unable to get any succor from the other Italian powers, did not await the attack of her implacable enemy, but gave herself to Charles VII, king of France. The French king sent at once to her aid a fine body of troops, under Jean of Anjou, the son of René, who, out of regard for the obligation of his charge, and hereditary hatred of Aragon, with singular zeal and promptness, fortified the city and put it in a state of defence. But just as Alfonso was on the point of setting out for the war, he was struck down with a fever, and died, leaving the kingdom of Aragon, with Sicily, to his brother Juan, and Naples to his son Ferdinand.

The death of Alfonso, and the ensuing partition of his states, relieved the Genoese from all fear; but Jean of Anjou, drawing hope from the weakness of the new king of Naples of restoring the fallen fortunes of his father, determined to resume the war on his own account, and asked aid of France and of Genoa.

The bitter hatred of the Genoese for Aragon, and their interest in having Naples in the hands of a friendly power, caused them to receive the request of Jean with such favor that not only the government declared its readiness to assist him, but private individuals, without waiting to be asked, freely offered loans of money for the undertaking.* In a short time a fleet was equipped and sent to spread among the Neapolitan shipping the same terror the Neapolitans had before caused that of Genoa. That was in 1459, when Christopher Columbus was about in his twenty-fourth year. The expedition against Naples did not last more than four years, the Angevins again getting worsted, but, as usual, the war was kept up for some time longer by an occasional chase and battle on the sea. Christopher Columbus, in one of his letters, incidentally speaks of

* Uberto Foglietta, *Storia di Genova*, lib. xi.

one such chase committed to him. "King René," he says, "happened to send me to Tunis to capture the galley Fernandina; and arriving at the head of the island of San Pietro in Sardinia, I learned that there were two ships and a carrac with the galley. At this my crew were so troubled that they determined to proceed no further, but to return to Marseilles for another vessel and more men. Seeing that I had no other means of forcing them, I pretended to yield to their wishes, and altered the point of the compass, and spread sail, it being then evening. The next morning, at sunrise, we found ourselves off Carthage, while all were firmly convinced we were sailing towards Marseilles."*

We know nothing further of this bold deed; but this is enough to show the full development in the youthful captain of the qualities he afterwards displayed in his voyages of discovery, boldness in danger, resolution and perseverance in his undertakings, and readiness of mind in finding a contrivance in every necessity. The expedient here used of altering the compass to induce his unwilling companions to do his will, is similar to the stratagem of altering the reckoning to which he had recourse in his first voyage of discovery.†

The few other indications we possess, are so vague that we can determine nothing from them; but they afford good grounds for the belief that all the time of his youth was spent on the Mediterranean, and especially in the Levant, now in commercial voyages, and now in warlike contests of the Italian states, and again in expeditions against the Mussulmans.

We find here and there in the memoirs of those times two captains mentioned, as bold leaders, who were named Colombo. They were, apparently, uncle and nephew, and the second was called Colombo the Younger to distinguish him from the first. Fernando Columbus embroiders a fine account of these two captains, says they were of his family, that his father accompanied the younger for many years, and that in consequence of a fierce engagement they had with four Venetian ships, he repaired to Lisbon, where he first conceived

* Fernando Colombo, cap. iv.

† Irving's *Columbus*, book i., ch. ii. This is the best work we have so far had on Christopher Columbus. I have made much use of it, and more than once have merely followed in its steps. I have before me the first Italian edition published in Genoa by the Brothers Pagano in 1828

the undertaking which led to the discovery of the New World. But Fernando's account is such a medley of falsehood and inaccuracy that it is impossible to make any thing out of it. He cites the authority of Sabellico in support of his tale of that encounter; and that historian does, indeed, relate the fact, but places it in the year 1485, when Christopher Columbus had left Portugal and been in Spain for a year. Fernando says the account of Sabellico is in the eighth book of the tenth decade of his history, whereas it is in the third book of the fourth decade: he says that one of the Venetian ships and that on which Columbus was, were fastened together, and both were enveloped in flames during the battle, and Columbus throwing himself into the sea, and seizing by chance an oar, by its aid succeeded in swimming the short distance that separated him from the shore, and proceeded to Lisbon, which was near by. Sabellico, on the other hand, says that all the vessels fell into the enemy's hands, and makes not the slightest mention of any conflagration.* For these reasons, Fernando's account has been rejected and he stigmatized as a lying boaster.†

If we say that Fernando has shamelessly lied in this matter, where can we believe him? On the other hand, it is a curious way to try to gain credit for a lie, to indicate in support of it the very authority that denies it. It does not require the talent of Fernando, —and he had great talent, and it was well cultivated; a little common sense suffices to show how foolish and stupid it is to act in this way. I am, therefore, of the opinion that Christopher Columbus actually followed the banner of Colombo the Younger: the thing is very likely, as Genoa was at the time allied with France, and that captain, as we shall see, was a Frenchman. I believe he was actually in some encounter with Venetian ships off the coast of Portugal; and that after the loss of his ship he gained the shore with difficulty by swimming. These contests were of such frequent occurrence that I see nothing improbable or unlikely about it. Fernando must have heard it spoken of in his childhood, and been impressed by it, and afterwards have read in the history of Sabellico the account of the bloody encounter of Colombo the Younger with the four Venetian ships. Coming, then, a man grown, to write the

* Marco Antonio Cocceio, surnamed Sabellico, *Storia di Venezia*, dec. iv, lib. iii.

† Spotorno, *Della Origine e della Patria di Cristoforo Colombo*, lib. ii, cap. iii.

history of his father, the two events were confounded in his mind, and he thought them only one, and without consulting the Venetian historian, trusting to his memory, he related the story he heard in his childhood, supporting it with the authority of Sabellico. The error in the citation from the eighth book of the tenth decade instead of the third book of the fourth decade, shows clearly that he relied on his memory in writing; for what other reason can be imagined for making such mistake?

Captain Colombo the Elder, was a Frenchman, named Guillaume de Caseneuve, surnamed, we know not why, *Coulomp*, which surname was, with singular freedom, rendered in Latin *Columbus*, as may be seen in Sabellico.* The nephew retained the surname of his uncle, and this made Fernando believe that those two captains belonged to his family; and, as we are easily persuaded of what we wish to believe, without further investigation he gave the fact as history. If Caseneuve was of Genoese origin, as Desimoni† suspects, and as is not at all improbable, Fernando must have known of this origin, probably not far removed, and then we can still better understand how, deceived by the similarity of names, he claimed them as of his family.

To this same ambiguity of claiming Caseneuve in his family, I refer the words which Fernando reports as contained in one of his father's letters to the governess of Don Juan of Castile: "I am not the first admiral in my family. Let them give me what name they will, for, in fine, David, the wise king, was a shepherd and became king of Jerusalem; and I serve the same Lord who raised him to such high estate."‡ Might not Christopher also, deceived by the surname *Coulomp* (*Columbus*), have honestly believed that the two French admirals belonged to his kindred? True, the words are "of my family;" but in a translation all bristling with errors, like the one we have of Fernando's history, who would think of questioning the propriety of a single word? That these words are not found in the letter we possess of Christopher Columbus to that gentlewoman, does not seem to me to furnish grounds for any charge. It is not proved that that was the only letter he wrote to her.§

* Spotorno, l. c.

† *Giornale Ligustico* of Archæology, History, and the Fine Arts. II year, page 178-180.

‡ Cap. ii.

§ The American Henry Harrisse, a most accurate and learned investigator of

Others, rejecting Fernando's statement altogether, explain Christopher Columbus's going to Portugal, by the attraction which that country then exercised by the fame of its voyages and discoveries, for all sea-faring men of warm heart and imagination. The explanation has every mark of probability. But, considering that Fernando puts it forth as indubitable, and that it is too unlikely that in a matter of so great importance in the life of his father, he would venture so absolute an assertion without any basis of truth, I am inclined to believe that the occasion of his father's going to Portugal was some battle, as he relates, and the cause of his remaining there was his finding so many of his countrymen there already, and the hopes growing out of the voyages and discoveries of the Portuguese.

But whatever was the case, supposing he went of his own choice in search of fortune and glory, certain it is, that the navigations and discoveries of the Portuguese gave occasion and impulse to the conception and maturing of his projected undertaking. Let us pause, then, awhile, to consider the discoveries so far made, the better to judge of the triumphant career to which they were brought by Christopher Columbus.

all that relates to Christopher Columbus, from this and many other inaccuracies in the history of Christopher Columbus, which passes under the name of his son Fernando, with abundance of arguments and minutest criticism tried to prove that it is not genuine. M. d'Avezac, Member of the Institute of France, replied with equal learning and love of truth. I had already written what is contained in the text before I learnt of the discussion between them ; but as it related to a matter of so great importance to my work, I read, and weighed with the utmost impartiality, the arguments on both sides ; and while recognizing the force of the American's blows, my conviction is firm that the Frenchman has generally rebutted them, and when he has not, he has so weakened their force, that he brings off Fernando, badly used up, but still alive ; and I am sure he would have doue still more if death had not prevented his entering the lists again. I have, consequently, changed no syllable of what I had written. For the rest, even admitting HARRISSE'S theory that the work was written, not by Fernando, but by his secretary, Perez de Oliva, "probablement sous les yeux de Fernand, et avec des documents fournis par lui, documents authentiques, aujourd'hui en partie perdus." Even admitting this theory, so far as the truth of the history is concerned, the matter remains substantially the same, since Fernando would have inspected his secretary's work. Those who are unable to read the discussion in the French (*Bulletin de la Société Géographique de Paris*, 1872, 1873, 1875), may satisfy themselves with the full review contained in the *Giornale Ligustico*, III year. pp. 377-379, and the journal *Il Buonarroti*, ii series, vol ix, pp. 3-15.

CHAPTER III.

Attempts at discovery in the Atlantic from the end of the xiii to the beginning of the xv century.—Prince Henry of Portugal.—Regular direction given by him to discovery.—The results obtained at the time of his death.

THE constant warfare of the middle ages had isolated people to such an extent that brothers in the same country hardly knew each other by name ; but the dawn of a new era had scarce pierced the thick darkness of that sky, before they began here and there to go out of the little circle of their own land and seek new horizons. Suspicious and careful at first, as they grew more confident and bold, they gradually enlarged the field of their excursion, till no longer in frail barks swift to escape from the first sign of danger, but with great ships and entire fleets, they coursed the sea, beating down the barriers on every side raised and maintained for a long time between nations by fear and religious hatred. The work was so complete and so speedy that by the middle of the xiii century there was not only no longer a corner of our own seas to which the ships of Venice and Genoa had not penetrated, nor any of the adjacent lands to which the enterprise of their merchants had not gained entry ; but the confines of the world as known to the ancients were too limited for their activity, and the eager eyes of the merchant, and the zeal of the messenger of the Gospel, looked with love on the furthest East, whence, with gold, spices, and precious stones, came the rumor of unimaginable wealth and innumerable population. The path pursued by our merchants, missionaries, explorers, towards those regions, across the interminable extent of Asia, does not come within the limits of my narrative. Let us send a greeting to the memory of those brave hearts, and especially of the great Venetian who was, as it were, the Columbus of those new discoveries, and turn towards the West, where the great deeds, that furnish the matter of my story, were to be unfolded and carried on to completion.

From remotest time, as far back as the memory of man, Africa

presents a perpetual problem, to perplex the mind of the geographer. The greatest knowledge of that continent, attained to by the Romans, did not extend, eastward, beyond the shore of the Red Sea, on the Atlantic it stopped at Cape Non, and towards the interior it went no further than the region watered by the Mediterranean. Beyond those limits all was shrouded in mystery. The first belief—an opinion that dates from the most remote antiquity—was that it was a peninsula, not large and triangular as it is, but rounded in the southern part, with an immense coast-line, and wholly in the northern hemisphere, much above the Equator. All beyond was sea, extending from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, which had been sailed over by three expeditions in ancient times. The first expedition, by Phœnician sailors, was sent by Necho, king of Egypt; the second, led by Eudoxus of Cyzicus, was said to have circumnavigated the African Continent from the Red Sea to the Strait of Gibraltar; the third, under Hanno, the Carthaginian, sailed in the opposite direction, from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Arabian coast on the Red Sea. But the memory of those explorations was so uncertain and vague that they never were regarded as any more than probable; many writers rejecting them as altogether fictitious.*

The opinion that Africa was a peninsula was held down to the time of Hipparchus, a celebrated Greek geographer, who lived about 150 years before our era. He was of the opinion that Africa extended, on the east, in a great curve till it joined Asia beyond the Ganges, enclosing the whole Indian Ocean. Marinus of Tyre and Ptolemy, the two principal geographic authorities among the ancients, accepted this opinion, and maintained that Africa extended, on the south, to the Antarctic pole; and on their word, all the schools swore that Africa had no limit on the south. If a voice was sometimes heard recalling the ancient opinion, it was quickly silenced by the general chorus of the others rehearsing the words of Hipparchus.

But the Arabs from the shores of the Red Sea trading along the coast of Africa, whether from their own discovery or from the reports of the African populations they traded with, learned as far back as the viii century that there was an ocean south of Africa. This information reaching the Genoese merchants trafficking with the

* Bodwell, *Geographiæ veteris Scriptores Græci Minores*.

Arabs, and brought to Genoa by them, soon aroused the thought of trying that unknown path and opening a new road for their commerce. Two brothers, Ugolino and Guido Vivaldi, aided by Tedisio Doria in the expense of their armament, freighted two good ships furnished with every thing they thought was needed on the unknown path, and in 1291 weighed anchor at Genoa, passed the Strait of Gibraltar, and boldly turned towards the south to see if it was possible to live under the Equator, and whether or not there was a southern passage around Africa, and, if there was, to try to sail by that way to the city of Arim in India. The boldness of the undertaking, says the annalist Doria, a relative of Tedisio Doria, seems marvellous, not only to witness, but even to read of. After proceeding a long distance, one of the vessels sprung a bad leak, and was so unserviceable that it had to be sent back; the other continued the voyage alone, the courage of the crew increasing with the danger. The country's curiosity and anxiety followed it for many long years, ever hoping for some news; but it was ever after buried in silence. One hundred and sixty-four years later, another young Genoese, Antoniotto Usodimare, sailing along the western coast of Africa, seventy leagues north of the River Gambia, found a descendant of those intrepid navigators, and learnt their fate. The ship had reached the River Gihon, but at the city of Mena it fell into the hands of the inhabitants, who made prisoners of all on board.* The silence which had so long shrouded the fate of that bold expedition caused Usodimare's account to be disbelieved, and the Vivaldis remained forgotten, until recently, when the story of Usodimare gained credit, on the discovery of various contemporary documents; and the matter being cleared up and confirmed, the heads of the Vivaldis and their companions have been decorated with the halo of merited glory.

About the same time, and probably in the beginning of the xiv century, Genoa sent out to explore the Atlantic another fleet, so far as appears, armed at public expense, and not like that of the Vivaldis, at private cost. It was commanded by Zanzarotto Malusello, brief, but brilliant, traces of whose name are found here and there in the memoirs of the time. Nothing is known of the voyage beyond the fact, proved by incontestable documents, that it discovered

* D'Avezac thinks Gihon corresponds to the modern Senegal, and that Mena was not far from its mouth.

the Canaries, and took official possession of those islands in the name of the Genoese Government.*

Less than half a century after the discovery of the Canaries, in the year 1341, we find another expedition on the Atlantic, for the purpose of exploring those islands and taking possession of them. The leaders of the expedition were Italians—Niccoloso di Recco, of Genoa, and Angiolo del Toghghia, of Florence; the greater part of the crew was Italian, but the ships were not. Genoa, exhausted by party hatred and civil strife, had abandoned the conquests made, and left to others the field of discovery, till even the memory of its former triumphs was lost: and the names of Malusello and the Vivaldis would have remained in oblivion but for the historical and critical investigations of our times. Another power, till then unknown in the history of navigation, assumed the position Genoa could no longer maintain. This power was Portugal, favorably situated on the Atlantic, which, while it was a great incentive to enter on that new road to wealth and glory, gave it greater facility for boldly following it than any other power enjoyed. Recognizing its inexperience and poverty in matters of the sea, it had recourse to Genoa for aid and instruction; and even in the latter part of the xii century we hear of Genoese workmen and officers called thither to build ships and lead them, in defence of the coast, against the constant inroads of the Saracens. In the beginning of the xiv century the demands of Portugal on Genoa for the creation of a Portuguese navy, assumed the nature of a regular service, under Dom Diniz.

In 1317 that king invited the Genoese Emanuele Pessagno by large offers, created for him and his descendants the hereditary office of High Admiral of the Kingdom, requiring him to have always on hand a staff of twenty Genoese officers. Niccoloso di Recco and Angiolo del Toghghia were members of that staff when Affonso IV sent them, with two ships, to examine the Canaries and see if they were worth conquering. All that is known of their voyage is that they brought with them to Europe many slaves, cattle, and other objects from the Canaries.

* Opinions concerning Malusello and other discoverers of that date, are various and disputed. It is beyond my plan to go into these arguments, which would weary the reader, strive as I might to be brief. I have examined the matter, and chosen among the various opinions that which seemed to me the nearest to the truth, and have given it in my narrative.



Whilst the Portuguese were trying their first steps on the Atlantic, others were pushing boldly along the coast of Africa. The first traveller we catch a glimpse of there in the darkness of those times, is a humble friar mendicant from Spain, whose name is not even known, but who twice sailed with the Moors along the western coast of Africa, beyond Cape Non, and the second time went as far as the Rio d'Oro.

In these first attempts at Atlantic discovery much credit is due the inhabitants of the Island of Majorca ; but, for want of materials, I am restricted to the mere mention of their honorable share in that wearisome career. I shall only mention the name of Jayme Ferrer, who sailed for the Rio d'Oro on the coast of Africa in 1346 ; but neither he nor his vessel was heard of afterwards. For the same reason, I can only mention the name of Dieppe, which carried on a considerable trade with the coast of Guinea in the second half of the xiv century ; but in the beginning of the next century, whether the profit was too small, or whatever the reason may have been, had discontinued its relations with those distant countries. But some knowledge had now been acquired of them by navigators, and the Catalan map of 1375 has a very correct drawing of the western coast of Africa, and shows the route to the Rio d'Oro, the place for which the Majorcan, Jayme Ferrer, sailed, as we have seen.

Towards the end of this century we find discoveries also beginning to be made, by the Venetians, towards the north, and by the end of the next century they had skimmed over it all. Somewhere between 1394 and 1405, Nicolò Zeno, sailing in the Flemish trade, was cast, by a storm, on an island, which he called Frisland, which many of the learned think was one of the Faroe group, called by the natives Faroisland, or Ferruysland. He was well received by the lord of the island, who placed him in charge of his fleet. He sent for his brother Antonio, and they remained together for four years, during which period they sailed as far north as Greenland. After the death of Nicolò, Antonio continued to course those seas alone, till, on information received from a fisherman, he attempted the discovery of land to the west, which was probably the island of Newfoundland and the neighboring coast of America, south of that island. But a storm drove him back, and in returning he passed near an island called Icaria, which corresponds to none of the islands now known, and revisited the coast of Greenland. But his

lord was too feeble to derive any advantage from his discoveries, and Venice was too far out of the way to attach any importance to the efforts of its citizen. Thus his voyage, and the information he acquired of new countries, remained forgotten in Italian tradition until after the discovery of Christopher Columbus.

Towards the south, on the Atlantic, whether along the coast of Africa or on the Ocean, the tradition of voyages and discovery remained unbroken, and, at more or less distant intervals, these were renewed and continued.

The next to enter the field was a Frenchman. In the year 1402 Jean de Bethencourt sailed from La Rochelle for the Canaries, which the Portuguese had not acquired final possession of, in the hope of conquering them and converting them to the Christian faith. But adverse winds drove him to the shores of Spain; and a quarrel breaking out between his Norman sailors and the Gascon adventurers in his fleet, his force was reduced to not more than 80 men; and when he again put to sea, to continue his voyage, he found only 53 ready to follow him. But not disheartened, he boldly took his way across the sea to the Canaries. Returning to Europe, in 1405, he made a descent on the coast of Africa, south of Cape Bojador, and took much booty.*

But this taking and leaving, this following, almost with the glory of a new discoverer, on the path marked out and tried by others, if it helped to continue the chain, did not gain from the voyages and discoveries that fruit they ought to have yielded, and that ought to have been expected from them. They were isolated facts, making more or less noise in the place where they originated; but their echo extended over a very small tract of country, and even in the place of their origin, their fame soon died away. A man was wanted who should gather all those scattered threads, put them in order, unite them, give them motion, and direct them to a determinate purpose. Such a man was Prince Henry of Portugal.

It is related that Prince Henry, third son of John I, king of

*D'Avezac, *Notice de Descouvertes au Moyen Age*. Paris, 1845.—Id. *Note sur la Première Expédition aux Canaries*. Paris, 1846.—Canale, *Storia del Commercio degli Italiani*. Genova, 1866.—Desimoni, *Sugli Scopritori Genovesi del medio evo*, in the *Giornale Ligustico*. Year I.—*Studi Bibliografici e Biografici*, &c. Roma, Tipografia Elzeviriana, 1875.—Zurla, *Di Marco Polo e degli altri Viaggiatori più illustri Veneziani*. Venezia, 1818, vol. ii, p. 24.

Portugal, having accompanied his father on the coast of Africa at the siege of Ceuta, the most powerful of the Moorish works in those parts, was greatly struck by the information he gathered from Moorish prisoners, of the great multitudes of people dwelling in the interior of Africa; and, burning with patriotic affection and religious zeal, he determined to dedicate his life to the discovery and conquest of that country, by which his native land would gain incalculable profit, and the Christian religion innumerable people redeemed by the salvation of the Gospel. This thought left him no peace while the siege lasted, it accompanied him on his return, and occupied his mind ever after at home.

The sources of the greatest commercial wealth of Europe were at that time in Asia, and, most of all, in India, whence were brought spices, precious stones, and all the costliest articles of luxury. That commerce had for a long time passed through the interior of Asia to the Black Sea, or the Mediterranean, whence it was distributed to the principal cities of Europe. It was a difficult and dangerous route; with long circuits around places that had no roads, across deep rivers and high mountains, amid barbarous and warlike tribes, paying them toll every little while, and suffering a thousand frauds and oppressions; and often a part, or even the whole, of the merchandise was scattered and lost along the road. The little, consequently, that arrived at the journey's end brought exorbitant prices. Later on, when the Sultan of Egypt had overcome the Arabs, the commerce of Asia resumed the ancient and natural road by the Red Sea, to the great saving of time and safety in transportation. But there was not the same saving in the expense; for, on arrival at the shore of the Red Sea, the wares had to be reloaded on the backs of camels, for conveyance to the Nile, and there reshipped for the descent to the Mediterranean, where they had to be again loaded and conveyed to the different ports of Europe. These loadings and reloadings and various methods of transportation, and, still more, the sums charged by the Sultan for permitting and securing passage through his dominions, kept the price of the goods very high. The trade had been for years in the hands of Venetians and Genoese, who had vast emporiums on the Mediterranean and Black Seas, where they collected every thing precious from the East, and whence their ships and merchants distributed all over Europe silks, gums, perfumes, precious stones, and every other object of luxury that Egypt

and Southern Asia yielded. They had their agencies even in Norway and Muscovy. These two republics, with all Europe tributary to their monopoly, drew immense wealth into their treasuries : their merchants rivalled princes in magnificence, and their fleets, unequalled in numbers and importance, sailed respected and feared in every sea.

This wealth and this power were a constant thorn in the heart of the young Henry. If he could succeed in opening a passage by sea to the south of Africa, the commerce of the East would take that more direct and easy route, and then the wealth that was flowing into Venice and Genoa, would be wholly or partially diverted to Portugal, and with the wealth, the power also and glory. What an immense benefit to that country ! His mind, at the same time, calculated the difficulty and danger of the undertaking, and the shame of failure, when, one fine morning, after a night made restless by these thoughts, he called before him two of his young gentlemen, and, as if to relieve his back from a troublesome burden, he suddenly ordered them to put to sea and discover new lands along the Barbary coast.* That memorable date was 1418, and the two gentlemen were João Gonçalves Varco and Tristão Vaz Texeira.

We have seen what progress had been made on the Atlantic by men from Majorca, Dieppe, and Genoa ; but Portugal had no outside aid in its first step, and, therefore, to venture alone on the ocean was as if it had never before been tried. All its experience of the sea was limited to sailing along the coast ; no Portuguese had ever risked himself on the broad sea, because he believed it impossible to regain the shore after once losing sight of land.† And this timidity, which the Portuguese always felt along their own coast, rendered them still more timid and wary, on the rare occasions when, leaving the well-known paths, they ventured a short distance along the shore of Africa. But when they arrived at the promontory jutting out from the Atlas Mountains,—a place of bad repute, on account of the rush of water and the banks of sand,—not even the closeness to land could reassure them ; but, as if they had encountered a barrier established by nature or God, and further advance was denied by divine command, they turned quickly back and returned to harbor, their minds full

* *Histoire Générale des Voyages*, par Prevost d'Exiles, liv. i, ch. i.

† João de Barros, *Asia Portuguesa*, dec. i, lib. i, cap. ii.

of their escape from the dangers of a portentous voyage.* Wherefore the place was called, by mariners, by the rough name of Cape Non, and the meaning of the name was shown by the proverb—"He that goes to Cape Non, will return or not (non);" or, "Whoever arrives at that promontory, is safe if he turns back, but will perish if he rashly tries to pass it."† That proverb froze the ardor of the pilot, and none was found to venture near that point bristling with rocks, beaten constantly by the winds and furious waves, which seemed as though they would no sooner receive a ship within their jaws than they would cast it into the vortex of the abyss. The two young gentlemen, however, whom Prince Henry charged with the execution of his plan, animated with the thoughts and ardor of their prince, boldly passed the dreaded Cape Non. They had sailed more than sixty leagues beyond it, when they came in sight of Cape Bojador, and here their courage and their breath failed them. The chain of rocks extending out in the sea around it, the furious current which breaks there, swelling, and boiling, and raging in a manner to fill the stoutest heart with fear, and the thick clouds usually covering the shore, seem a sign and an obstacle placed there by provident nature to warn the imprudent and unwary to go no further, or they are lost. And they turned about and went back to Portugal.

For a first attempt, Prince Henry was not displeased with the work of his two captains, and, with praises for their boldness, he sent them again the same year to continue the work they had so well begun, and gave them for a companion an Italian captain, Bartolomeo Perestrello, from the city of Piacenza. The three expected to pass boldly beyond the fearful Cape Bojador; but overtaken by a frightful storm, they held it for a miracle of God that they found an islet in the middle of the Ocean, to which they could betake themselves for safety. It was the islet of Porto Santo, of the Madeira group, long known to our navigators, and distinctly marked in the Medicean Port-book as far back as 1351; but, deserted in the middle of the Ocean, it was like a new discovery for the Portuguese, and, in fact, the three navigators claimed the honor of discovering it.‡

* Maffei Giampietro, *Storia delle Indie Occidentali*, lib. i.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. x.

‡ They retained that honor until recently. But their calling the island by the same name which the Italian navigators had given it, shows clearly that

The profit was little enough, but, as a first fruit, the prince was very happy over it, and to encourage them to greater efforts, he gave the discoverers three ships, with abundant supply of seeds and animals, and sent them back to cultivate the new island, of which he gave them the ownership. The next year they passed to the largest island of the group, which the Genoese had named Timber Island, from the extraordinary extent of its woods, and they continued the name, translating it into the Portuguese Madeira (timber).

Henry continued his munificence, giving them the ownership of this island also. They then divided the property among themselves, Perestrello taking the island of Porto Santo, and the other two Madeira, in equal moieties. But the Italian discoverer was most unfortunate, for among other animals he carried with him to propagate the species on the island, were a pair of rabbits, which multiplied so rapidly that every plant and blade of grass was destroyed by their insatiable voracity, and, as they were too numerous to exterminate, that fertile island soon became a desert.

From this time on, Prince Henry devoted to the African problem his whole activity and talent, all his power and wealth—his entire existence; and to do this without interruption, he abandoned courts and cities, and withdrew to a lonely country-house near Cape Sages, in full view of the Ocean. In that quiet retreat, he gathered around him men of eminent learning, and, in their company, he went deeply into mathematics, astronomy, and all the other sciences which bear on navigation; he learned all that the Arabs knew; and his house became a sort of naval school, in which he founded a council of hydrography, presided over by Jayme de Majorca, the most learned and famous cosmographer of the time.*

But the results of these explorations were ever a scant return for Prince Henry's labor and expense; for more than twelve years the only reward of his zeal was the unimportant discovery of Porto Santo and Madeira, and all he won by his many expeditions was the trifling booty captured by his inroads into Moorish lands.

The obstacle to further progress was always Cape Bojador, at sight of which every pilot turned back in fear. Henry doubled his expense and his promises; as each expedition failed he sent another;

they were aware that they had not discovered any thing new, but had merely had the courage to go where no Portuguese vessel had gone before.

* Maffei Giampietro, l. c.

but arriving at that point, they all lost heart, and turned about. The nation was growing more and more averse from his attempts. Exaggerating the tales of sailors, they said the land the prince was in search of was a sandy spot like the Libyan desert; that princes who held the empire of the world in their hands had not attempted such enterprises; that the men who reached those strange countries,—if in truth any reached them,—changed their color, and from white became black; that the king, Dom John, the prince's father, invited foreigners into his kingdom, with promises and rewards, to get hands for agriculture, and the prince withdrew the men from Portugal, sending them to be devoured amongst savages; that, in fine, those lands were not inhabitable by men, but only created for the dens of wild beasts; and this was clearly shown by the curse of those two rabbits of Porto Santo, which in a very short time had made a desert of an island a little before rich in the most luxuriant vegetation.

This increasing aversion, and the continual lack of results from his explorations, gave Prince Henry not a little trouble. At last, in the year 1432, Gil-eanez overcame the fear of Cape Bojador, and Portugal was so astounded at his daring that contemporary writers place his deed above the labors of Hercules. That obstacle surmounted, and the fearful images which the excited fancy had figured to itself as beyond the cape, vanishing with it, the way of discovery was free and open. The same Gil-eanez soon after proceeded fifty leagues beyond Cape Bojador, and in 1436, Affonso Gonçalvez Baldaya reached the Cape da Gallee, 170 leagues beyond, at a place afterwards called Rio d'Oro (Gold River), in memory of the first gold dust obtained by the Portuguese from the Moors, in exchange for the prisoners brought back in the expedition of 1442.*

The Ocean and Africa being now open, we shall hasten our pace, and merely mention those expeditions which mark the points of real importance in the progress of discovery.

The fame of these voyages spread over Europe, and adventurers and sailors, moved by hope of wealth, or love of glory, hastened to share the labor and danger of these enterprises.† They came from Italy, and especially from Genoa, and Prince Henry, well aware of the skill of our seamen, overflowed with kindness to win and keep them. In fact, the principal progress now made in Portuguese discovery was the work of Italians. Antonio Usodimare, of Genoa,

* Barros, *Asia Portuguesa*, dec. i, lib. i, cap. viii.

† *Histoire Générale des Voyages*, lib. i, ch. ii.

and Luigi Cadamosto, of Venice, head the glorious list. Usodimare leaving his country at the age of thirty-nine years, on account of failure in business, withdrew to Portugal, intending to take part in the new expeditions along the coast of Africa, in the hope of repairing the loss of fortune he had suffered at home. His first voyage was in 1455. Cadamosto was a young man of twenty-two years, and had already sailed over the Mediterranean and made one voyage to Flanders; when on a second voyage to that country, he was constrained by contrary winds to stop at Cape St. Vincent. There he was induced, by Prince Henry's reception of him and the profit to be derived from the Guinea trade, to place himself at the service of Portugal for the African expeditions. Taking command of a caravel, he sailed on the 22nd of March, 1455, passed the Senegal, and cast anchor twelve leagues beyond that river. At the instant of making sail to continue the voyage, he discovered two other Portuguese vessels, one commanded by Usodimare, and the other by one of Prince Henry's gentlemen, whose name has not reached us. They continued the voyage together and proceeded as far as the River Gambia, where they had to fight the natives. Thence they returned to Portugal. The next year, 1456, the two Italians started, in company, on another voyage, but on passing Cape Blanco, they encountered a head-wind, and after struggling for many days against it, they were finally compelled to turn westward. The deviation was fortunate, for it brought them to the discovery of the Cape Verde Islands. Four years later, another Genoese, Antonio da Noli, was sent to examine the islands of Cape Verde, which Cadamosto and Usodimare had discovered, but had not been able to visit or determine the number of, and, as usual, he was charged with their colonization, and retained the government of them till his death.

This expedition closes the glorious series of enterprises promoted by Prince Henry.* The fruits gathered by him in forty-four years of labor and struggle to overcome the difficulties and the fears of the Ocean, were scant, in proportion to his sacrifices and his great strength of will; but matters were so far advanced, that, with his mind's eye, he could see the day, not far off, when his ships would freely sail to the last triumph to which he had directed them. And his name, like that of all truly great men, remains the glory, not alone of the country where he was born, but of universal humanity.

* He died in his country-house near Cape Sagres, in 1463, at the age of 69 years.

CHAPTER IV.

Sojourn of Christopher Columbus at Lisbon.—His marriage to Felipa, daughter of the navigator Bartolomeo Moñis de Perestrello.—Birth of his son Diego.—He makes and sells geographical maps.—He visits his aged father and shares with him his scanty gains.—The state of navigation and of Portuguese discoveries on his arrival at Lisbon.—A few words on different islands of the Ocean.

FROM a passage in Las Casas, it would seem that the arrival of Christopher Columbus in Lisbon should be placed about 1470, in the full vigor of his manhood, when he was about thirty-five years of age.* His son, Fernando, Las Casas, and others of his contemporaries, have left us minute descriptions of his person and habits.† He was tall of stature, well and strongly proportioned, with a noble and dignified bearing. His face was long, neither fat nor thin; his complexion was fresh, tending to red, with some ruddy spots; his nose was aquiline, his eyes light, and his jaws projected slightly. He was exceedingly plain and moderate in his diet and apparel. He was affable in conversation with strangers, and mild with servants; but preserved always a certain gravity with both. He was naturally inclined to anger, but overcame this defect by the strength of his will; and no injurious words against others ever passed his lips. He was so strict in his religious practices that it might be said that in fasting and reciting the whole canonical office he was more regular than a professed religious: he began every thing he wrote with *Jesus cum Maria sit nobis in via*. His life, as well as the testimony of Herrera, shows that he had a special devotion to Our Lady and to the holy mendicant of Assisi.‡

One of the religious exercises which he never omitted, when he could help it, was hearing Mass daily; and while at Lisbon he at-

* Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, lib. i, cap. xxviii; lib. ii, cap. xxxvii.—Muñoz, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*, lib. ii, § xxi.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. ii.—Las Casas, lib. i, cap. ii.

‡ Herrera, dec. i, lib. vi, cap. xv.

tended Mass at the church of the convent of All Saints. A number of young ladies of the world were living in the convent, for the purpose of education ; and with one of these, named Felipa Moñis de Perestrello, Columbus formed an acquaintance and friendship, perhaps owing to her Italian descent. Their friendship soon grew to mutual affection, and they became husband and wife. She was the daughter of the same Perestrello who with Vareo and Vaz made the first discovery for Prince Henry.* Perestrello had little to leave his daughter besides his glorious name, for the plague of those rabbits had turned all his property of Porto Santo to a desert.

Felipa's father being dead, Columbus fixed his residence at Lisbon, his mother-in-law making one of the family. He moved soon after, with his wife, to Porto Santo, a share in which constituted Felipa's whole dowry, and here a son was born to them, whom they called Diego.† This is all we know of his union with Felipa. We are wholly in the dark as to when he became a widower, and as to their companionship previously. The few other notices of him at this time represent him as occupied, besides his studies in navigation, in constructing maps and geographical charts, which he sold to supply the growing wants of his new family. There is reason to suppose he found this work very profitable, because there were very few charts free from errors, and, with the enthusiasm for voyages and discovery that had spread all over Portugal, there must have been great demand for correct charts, not only for the use of those going to sea, but also for the great number who, for study, curiosity, or amusement, followed the course of those bold navigators. Christopher Columbus was well fitted to excel in this work ; for, besides a deep knowledge of geography and cosmography, he had a perfect hand for calligraphy and drawing ; so much so, that his son, Fernando, and Las Casas, who knew and had handled his writings, both assure us that

Fernando Colombo is mistaken in saying Perestrello's name was Pietro, as there is no doubt that he was called Bartolomeo.—Bartolomeo Perestrello was a son of Filippo Pallestrelli, a gentleman of Piacenza, who went to Portugal towards 1385. There the surname Pallestrelli underwent a change, and became Perestrello, or, as some write it, Pelestrello. It is not known how Perestrello acquired the additional surname of Moñis ; probably it was by some inheritance.—*Cf. Atti della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Provincie Modenesi*, vol. vi, p. 33.

† Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, cap. iv

he could have made a living out of those two arts.* But whether from sickness in his family, or misfortune, or, in course of time, his mind all bent on the great problem he was occupied with, he was careless about his affairs, he found himself at last very pinched for means. Yet in his least prosperous state he never forgot his father's family, and, whether little or much, he kept on always sending them some help.†

For some time his aged father had been poorly enough off. Of his four sons, Christopher and Bartholomew were away at sea; the third, Giovan Pellegrino, always sickly, was a constant expense and trouble to his parents; James was still an infant; and his hands alone were not able to support the family. Hoping for an improvement in his trade from a change of place, he removed to Savona.‡ But things got worse instead of better, and he was forced to part with a little piece of land, which was all he had. But the relief this gave him must have been scanty and precarious, for we find him making new loans and debts. We gather from two notarial instruments of 1472 and 1473, that Christopher Columbus was at Savona with his father in August of both those years. By the first of those instruments, dated the 26th of August, he assumes a debt of his father's, amounting to 140 lire, to be paid by a certain quantity of woolen within six months; by the other, dated August 7th, he and his brother Giovan Pellegrino—Bartholomew being absent, and James still an infant—give their consent and authorize their mother to make sale of a little land, which formed part of her dower.§

One author supposes that he remained with his father the whole period, from the execution of the first instrument to that of the second;|| but as he had a fixed residence at Lisbon both prior to 1472 and subsequent to 1473, there is no sufficient reason for supposing a year's interruption of his long residence there. The more natural conclusion to draw from those two instruments is that he was accus-

* Fernando Colombo, cap. iii.—Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, cap. iii.

† Muñoz, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*, lib. ii, cap. ii.

‡ This seems to have been towards 1470, the same year that his son Christopher went to Lisbon.

§ Note of different documents of the archives of Genoa and Savona relating to the family of Christopher Columbus.

|| Roselly de Lorgues, *Hist. Chr. Col.*, liv. i, ch. ii, §. iv.

tomed, from time to time, perhaps every year in the pleasant season, to return and embrace his aged parents, and that his coming in one way or another, always brought them comfort and aid in their need.

That Columbus had acquired a certain name and reputation in Lisbon, is inferred with certainty from a conference which he is related to have held with Affonso V, king of Portugal. Fernando, his son, and Herrera, the historian, referring to the signs on which he relied to sustain his view that it was possible to reach the Indies by sailing westward, relate that, talking, one day, with that monarch about the objects foreign to our soil and climate which are found from time to time on the Ocean, the king showed him some reeds, of very great size, which the tide had cast on the coast of the Azores.* Whatever was the occasion that brought him into the presence of Affonso, he must have enjoyed a certain reputation for the king to converse with him so freely.

When Christopher Columbus arrived in Lisbon, the Portuguese had been wearying themselves in voyages of discovery for forty years, but had only just begun to reap the fruits of their expense and labor. They had shortly before induced some of the most powerful princes of those barbarous lands to enter into treaties of friendship and commercial intercourse with them; the products of those new regions were just beginning to be sought after with increasing favor in the markets of Europe; and, most important of all, a gold mine had been discovered in Guinea, from which such great expectations were conceived that it went by the simple name of *The Mine*. As always happens with any thing new, opposition and incredulity meet it on every side; but if it turns out better than expected, it is greeted with favor, in proportion to the former coldness, and most often the loudest in its praise are the very persons who were the bitterest in its denunciation. So it was with these enterprises; and, after all the difficulty and opposition Prince Henry had met with in the attempt to make people believe in the usefulness of those discoveries, now, at sight of the new products brought from those regions, the profit which began to be drawn from them, the gold that they hoped would be poured into Portugal—all over the country there was the greatest zeal for discovery; in every place, at every meeting, with all classes, the most usual subject of discourse was always the voyagers,

* Fernando Colombo, cap. ix.—Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. i.

their adventures, the wonderful riches and customs they were discovering, and the splendid future that was preparing for Portugal. And every time that a new expedition sailed or returned, the whole city of Lisbon was in commotion; and every new strip of land discovered, every new horde of savages found on the coast of Africa, in the excited fancy of the people, became a great empire and a powerful nation. Above all, the Ocean, with its mysterious immensity, occasioned the strangest illusions and the most incredible tales. A short notice of these is here given, not so much for the purpose of showing the excitement which existed in the popular mind as of throwing light on what is to follow.

Plato relates, in the *Timæus*, that an Egyptian priest told how he had found in the sacred writings in his temple, that once there was an island in the Atlantic, opposite to the Straits of Gibraltar, larger than Asia and Africa, together; that there was a passage from this island to several others further on, and beyond these islands was an immense continent. First Neptune ruled that island, and then Atlas, his son, from whom it was called Atlantis. In the course of time, the inhabitants of Atlantis, becoming numerous and powerful, invaded Europe and Africa as far as Asia Minor and Egypt, when they were overcome by the Athenians and forced to abandon their conquests and return to their island. Soon afterwards there was a fearful earthquake; the Ocean rose to an unheard-of altitude, the prodigy lasting a day and a night. During that time, the island of Atlantis disappeared, engulfed in the subterranean pits laid open by the earthquake, and the sea which covered its former position was called from it the Atlantic.

On this foundation fancy peopled with islands the unknown spaces of the Ocean. It was believed that the great cataclysm mentioned by Plato had not entirely submerged the great Atlantis, but that, split in fragments, some had been drawn to the bottom of the sea, while others remained as islands and rocks, larger or smaller, scattered here and there over the vast surface of the Ocean. The Canaries and the Azores were thought to be some of the fragments. But fairer and richer islands were believed to exist further off in the sea, and with special longing they remembered the island of Antilla mentioned by Aristotle. This author repeats the tale that Carthaginian merchants, in remote times, discovered in the Atlantic an island several days' sail from the main land, that surpassed every

known region in richness and fertility, but the Carthaginian senate wished it abandoned and lost sight of, in the strange fear that, falling into the power of some other nation, it might become a rival or an enemy of Carthage and of its freedom.* There was also a story extensively believed of the discovery, at the time of the Moorish invasion, of what was called the *Island of the Seven Cities*, but of which all trace was subsequently lost. They made this out to be the same as that discovered by the Carthaginian merchants, and, in the time of Christopher Columbus, it was laid down on maps by the name of Antilla. The legend was that when Spain and Portugal fell under dominion of the Moors, and the inhabitants fled in every direction to escape from slavery, seven bishops, with a number of followers, went aboard some ships, as their only refuge, and put to sea, abandoning themselves to Providence. After being blown about by the winds for several days, they were thrown on an unknown island in the middle of the Ocean, and on landing they set fire to the ships, for fear that the people might change their mind and, abandoning them, try to get back to Spain. There they built as many cities as there were bishops, and so the place was called the Island of the Seven Cities. Many Portuguese pilots were said to have visited the island at different times, but had been retained by the successors of the bishops, for fear of being attacked and reduced to subjection if the place of their habitation should become known in Spain. How, if such was the case, the matter became known all over Portugal, I cannot tell.

Strange and incredible as the story seems, it gained belief on the part of so many that a number of seamen tried to build on it a little story of their own. They went together to Prince Henry, and related that in the course of their voyage they came to the Island of the Seven Cities, and a part of them landed and visited the island. The description they gave of it was in thorough accord with the legend. They said the inhabitants importuned them all to land, but afraid of being held by force, as soon as their companions returned to the ships, they quickly cast loose and left. They had invented the story in the hope of reward from Prince Henry, who remunerated richly every successful discoverer, but, instead, he rebuked them severely for their want of courage, and ordered them to return and collect more certain and fuller information about the island. Disap-

* Aristot., *De Mirab. Auscult.*, cap. lxxxi

pointed in their hope, and fearful of the discovery of their falsehood, they withdrew, and it is not known who they were, nor what became of them.

But the strangest fact, and one that shows best the excited state of men's minds at that time in the matter of discoveries, is the geographical illusion known by the name of St. Brandan's Island. The inhabitants of the Canaries all asserted, with one voice, that they had seen to the west a large island about 80 leagues in length, crowned with high mountains—and not on a dark day, but in the limpid clearness of the finest days in the tropical climate, when distant objects can be discerned with the greatest exactness in the pure and transparent atmosphere. Still it was seen only at intervals, and there were days when no vestige of it was apparent, though the weather was calm and clear. Some saw it at a hundred leagues' distance, some at forty, and others only at fifteen or eighteen. But when it was visible, it was so clear and certain, that every one looking in that direction was sure to see it; and it was always in the same place, and with the same shape. The people of the Canaries were so intimately persuaded of its existence that they asked the king of Portugal for permission to discover and take possession of it; and, in fact, many expeditions were sent in that direction; but when they had gone a short distance, they could see nothing more of it, look and turn as they might. Often and often the attempt was repeated; but always with the same result of finding nothing and seeing nothing. On the other hand, after remaining hidden for a time, the island always reappeared; persons of undoubted veracity testified to having seen it often; the whole people saw it, and all accounts agreed fully as to its position and shape; so that it seemed impossible to doubt its existence, and it began to be projected on maps, at about 200 leagues to the west of the Canaries: and attributing the failure to discover it to the imperfection of the means hitherto employed, every little while the attempt was repeated, with hope of a better result. In the next centuries the marvellous apparition was renewed with the same distinctness, and as late as 1721, there is mention of an expedition on a large scale, undertaken with every care and precaution possible for the purpose of reaching it, with the same result as before.* Don Diego de Viera y Clavijo, in

* Feyjoo, *Teatro Critico*, t. iv, dec. x, § 29.

his history of the Canary Islands, writes that he knows of no paradox or problem in geography more difficult of solution; because to maintain the existence of the island was to renounce criticism, sense, and reason, and to deny it was to destroy all faith in tradition and experience and to suppose that so many trustworthy persons were out of their mind.* The progress of physical science has eliminated the marvel of the strange phenomenon, showing how it results from an atmospheric illusion, numerous instances of which are found in various places, notably in the African deserts, and one at the Strait of Messina, well known by the name of *fata Morgana*. But in former times the only explanation was by recourse to the supernatural, and the island was believed to be inaccessible to man through divine Providence or devilish magic. It was called after St. Brandan, a Scotch monk, who was said to have visited it in the vi century, and concerning whom various legends were invented, each one more extravagant than the rest.

Now, if this strange illusion could control the imagination for more than two centuries after Christopher Columbus, when every part of the Ocean had been gone over and was known, what effect must it not have had in the xv century, when every thing about the Ocean was mysterious and awful?

Christopher Columbus was one of the best geographers and cosmographers of the age, and accustomed to the sea from his infancy; and coming at this time to Portugal, he found himself in his natural element, and his delight is easily imagined.

To these favorable circumstances of time and place was added the advantage of his marriage with the daughter of the cavalier Perestrello, whose memory and example must have exerted a powerful influence on his mind, especially as the widow lived with his family in Perestrello's house. It is clear, from Fernando's account, that matters connected with navigation and discovery were often talked of in the house with great interest. Perestrello's other daughter was married to a navigator of much renown at that time, Pedro Correa,† who had succeeded his father-in-law as Governor of Porto Santo. All the surroundings of Columbus spoke of voyages and discoveries. His mother-in-law, remarking the interest he took in

* Viera, *Histoire des Iles Canaries*, t. i, ch. xxviii.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. ix.—Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, cap. iv.

such matters, gave him all the manuscripts and charts which her husband had used ; “ Whereby,” says Fernando, “ he became much better informed concerning the different voyages which the Portuguese were then making to La Mina and Guinea, and he took great pleasure in conversing with those who had sailed to those parts.”* Add to all this his own voyages to some of the places recently discovered, and the strong impression he received from every side, and we may imagine the state of his feelings in the midst of the universal enthusiasm for voyages of discovery.

CHAPTER V.

Grounds on which Christopher Columbus founded his plan of reaching the Indies by sailing westward.—Stories of a pilot dying in his house.—Recent attempts to rob him of the glory of having discovered the New World, to give it to Martin Behaim.—Landing of Normans on the North American coast in the x century.

REFLECTING on the great movement for navigation and discovery which he saw going on in Portugal, Christopher Columbus came to the conclusion “ of reaching the east by the west, and of passing by way of the west to the land where spices grow.”† He had conceived the idea as long ago as 1474, but, as we shall see, a long time elapsed before it was matured.

His son Fernando has drawn from his writings a brief abstract of the reasons with which he worked out and strengthened this opinion ; and although the argument furnished is of small account in comparison with the great work which must have been done in the mind of Christopher Columbus in planning such a grand structure, still, as “ it throws some light upon the process of thought which led to so great an event, it is of the highest interest, and remains one of the most

* Fernando Colombo, cap. v.

† Navarrete, *Coleccion de Viajes . . . que hicieron los Españoles*. Madrid, 1825-27, t. i, p. 79.

interesting documents in the history of the human mind.”* “As one thing depends on another,” writes Fernando, “and one suggests another, he, being in Portugal, began to conjecture that as the Portuguese travelled so far southward, in like manner, they might travel westward, and land might be found in that direction. To verify and confirm this, he began again to look over the authors on cosmography he had previously read, and to consider the astronomical grounds that would strengthen his view; and, consequently, he observed all the signs of which he had heard sailors and other persons speak, and from which he thought he might receive some assistance. He knew so well how to avail himself of all these things, that he came to believe without doubt that to the west of the Canary and Cape Verde Islands there were many lands, which it was possible to reach and discover by navigation.”†

Fernando reduces these grounds to three heads: 1. Physical Reasons; 2. Authority of Writers; and 3. Evidence of Navigators.

As to the first head, he considered, and set it down as a fundamental principle of his reasoning, that all the seas and continents of the earth constitute a sphere, which might be travelled around in any direction; and that there must be antipodes. Next, on the authority of ancient writers, he proved that most of that sphere had already been sailed and travelled over, and there only remained to discover the part lying between the eastern limits of India and the western limits of Europe and Africa, and that this part still remaining unknown, could not exceed a third part of the whole sphere. Ptolemy, who was at that time an authority in matters of geography, from whom there was no appeal, divided the circumference of the terrestrial globe into twenty-four hours, of fifteen degrees each, making three hundred and sixty degrees in all. Now, comparing this division with the map of the ancient cosmographer Marinus of Tyre, he proved that fifteen hours had been known to the ancients, extending from the Strait of Gibraltar to the city of Thinaë* in Asia, regarded as the eastern limit of the known world. In recent times the Portuguese discoveries had carried the western frontier to the Azores and Cape Verde Islands, or one hour further. There remained, therefore, only eight hours to discover, that is to say, one-

* Irving, *Columbus*, book i, ch. v.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. v.

‡ Thinaë is thought to be the modern Nankiu in China.

third of the earth's circumference. As the eastern limit set by Marinus was merely the point to which his knowledge extended, and not the extreme limit of the east itself, it must be supposed that other lands extended beyond his fifteenth hour. This opinion found support, or rather confirmation, in the testimony of several authors. Pliny, in the xvii chapter of his vi book, makes India one-third part of the whole earth; and Strabo, in the xv book of his cosmography, asserts that no one ever reached the eastern confines, which confines, according to Ctesias, were as extensive as all the rest of Asia; and Nearchus makes the distance across its plains a four months' journey.* Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville, the two travellers who had proceeded furthest towards the eastern confines of Asia, both went far beyond the limit assigned by Marinus; and neither of them reached the eastern extremity of Asia. It was, therefore, reasonable to suppose that those regions extended so far, and approached so near, to the western shores of Europe and Africa, as to leave very little distance between them and the lands discovered in the Atlantic. If Alfergany† was right,—and Columbus inclined to his opinion,—that the circumference of the earth was much less than the other cosmographers made it, that distance would be still more diminished; because, if the whole sphere is smaller, the third part of the sphere, which Marinus represented as unknown, would necessarily be smaller also. Therefore, the supposition that it was possible to sail from the western limits of Europe and Africa in a western direction till reaching the eastern shores of Asia, was put forth and believed by many ancient and modern authors.

Aristotle had said it was possible to go from Cadiz to India in a few days, and Averrhœs, his commentator, confirms that opinion. Seneca says a ship, with favorable winds, could make the passage in a few days; and Strabo says, the Ocean entirely surrounds the

* Of Ptolemy, Strabo, and Pliny it is not necessary to say any thing, as they are known to every one.—Marinus of Tyre lived in the second century of our era, and was one of the founders of ancient mathematical geography.—Ctesias, a Greek physician and historian, lived in the v century B. C., at the court of Persia, and wrote the history of that vast empire as well as that of India.—Nearchus lived in the second half of the iv century B. C., accompanied Alexander the Great on his expedition to India, was the first to visit the Indian and Erythræan seas, and left an account of his voyages.

† Alfergany was a celebrated Arabian astronomer, who flourished in the first half of the ix century of our era.

Earth, bathing India on the east, and Spain and Mauritania on the west, and if the Atlantic were not too broad, it would be possible to sail from one place to the other on the same parallel. Pliny and Solinus* say that it takes forty days to sail over the Atlantic from the Gorgon Islands to the Hesperides; the Gorgon Islands are supposed to be the Cape Verde Islands; and by the Hesperides Columbus understood the islands east of India.

Cardinal d'Ailly, a cosmographer of the highest authority at that time, and whom Columbus esteemed and trusted above all others, and Julius Capitolinus, repeated that India was not very far from Spain by the west, and thought it possible, with favorable winds, to make the distance in a few days. To these authorities, and many others which he collected from long study of all the best authors on geography and cosmography, was added that of Paolo Toscanelli, the most celebrated cosmographer then living, with whom, as we shall see, Columbus put himself in direct communication by letter, and from whom he received approval, advice, and encouragement.

Finally, he was influenced by the belief that the space between Spain and India was not all sea, but that some land or island must be found to stop at and rest, before continuing his main design. This belief he supported by the authority of many philosophers, who held it for certain that the greater part of the terraqueous sphere or globe was dry land; but most of all, by an apocryphal book, regarded then as a part of the Holy Bible, called by the Greeks *The Apocalypse of Esdras*, and which said, that dividing our globe into seven parts, six were land, and only the seventh was covered with water.† Therefore, from the calculation he made of the earth's circumference, it followed, as a necessary consequence, that the unknown third part between Spain and the confines of India could not be all sea.

This belief was further confirmed by what he had heard related by different persons that traded to the islands and seas west of Madeira and the Azores, and whose accounts he carefully collected and made notes of, on account of the many proofs they afforded in favor of his design. The pilot, Martin Vicente, related that being once 450

* Solinus was a compiler, who left a compendium of geography, under the title of *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*. He is supposed to have flourished in the iii century.

† *Letter of Christopher Columbus to their Majesties*, dated Jamaica, July 7th, 1503.

leagues to the west of Cape St. Vincent, he picked up at sea a piece of wood, ingeniously carved, but not with iron, and as westerly winds had been blowing for many days, he knew it must have come from some place to the west. His brother-in-law, Pedro Correa, told him he had seen on the island of Porto Santo a similar piece of carved wood that had drifted with westerly winds, and that reeds had been cast on the island so large that between two knots they held nine carastas of wine.* Alfonso V, king of Portugal, one day, when they were speaking of this subject, showed him similar reeds, which he said had been cast by the tide on the coast of the Azores.† There being no place on our continent where reeds grow to such size, it was certain that the wind had drifted them hither from some far island in the Ocean, or even from India, since Ptolemy affirms that similar reeds grow in the eastern parts of those regions. Still more important was what he learnt from the inhabitants of the Azores. They reported that after the wind had blown from the west for a long time, the sea washed ashore some pines, such as every one knew did not grow there; and on the island of Flores (one of the Azores) the tide cast on the shore the bodies of two dead men, in no wise resembling in color or features the men of Europe or of Africa. There must, therefore, exist in the west some land where those plants had their natural seat, and where the inhabitants differed from those of our continent. He carefully collected the rumors also of lands seen here and there on the Ocean, not only those universally known of, like the islands of St. Brandan, of the Seven Cities, and of Antilla, but also all those that had been seen, from time to time, a long way off, in the immensity of the Ocean, by some vessel driven to the west out of its course by the violence of the wind. Although he regarded such discoveries as unfounded, and as illusions produced by the sight of some rock, or floating island, or something of that sort—illusions most natural in the enthusiasm for discoveries that then existed; still in his anxiety to omit nothing that might be useful for his plan, he collected every thing, made notes of every thing, as if to strengthen even by the general opinion, the arguments that militated in favor of his project.

It is clear, from the examination of all the foregoing reasons, tha

* The carasta was a kind of measure then used in Portugal.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. viii.—Herrera, dec. i, lib. i, cap. ii.

the basis on which Columbus raised the structure of his great project was what was contained under the first head ; that is, that the most easterly part of Asia known to the ancients, could not be further from the Azores than a third of the earth's circumference ; that this third must be occupied, in great part, by the rest of Asia not yet known ; and, therefore, the circumference of the whole earth being very small, perhaps even smaller than was commonly believed, whoever sailed to the west must come to the coast of Asia before he had sailed very far. Experience and the progress of science have shown us how greatly Columbus erred in this. His error, as we have seen, was not peculiar to him, but common to the wisest and profoundest philosophers—those who, at that time, enjoyed the greatest reputation, and on whose authority he based his arguments. But it was a blessed error ; for, by lessening the distance, it not only facilitated, but also made possible, the fulfilment of his gigantic undertaking ; and, in truth, if he encountered such difficulty and obstacles to his project, when he represented the result as so easy and quick, what would have happened if he had put forward, as it really is, the immense extent of the Ocean from the western limits of Europe to the eastern borders of Asia ?

As to the idea of finding land by sailing directly to the west, it is at present so familiar to our minds, as in some measure to diminish the merits of the first conception, and the hardihood of the first attempt.* But in those days the circumference of the earth was yet unknown ; no one could tell whether the Ocean were not of immense extent, impossible to be traversed ; nor were the laws of specific gravity and of central attraction ascertained, by which, granting the rotundity of the earth, the possibility of making the tour of it would be manifest.† How new was the conception of Columbus, and how hardy, is shown by the struggles we shall see him sustaining with all that Spain could boast of genius and learning, to get his attempt admitted as possible, and by the labors, distresses, and humiliations we shall see him suffering, before he could find any one with enough confidence to aid him in carrying it out.

When the New World was discovered, men appeared on every

* Irving, *Columbus*, bk. i, ch. v.

† Malte-Brun, *Géographie Universelle*, tom. xiv. Note sur la Découverte de l'Amérique.

side, who claimed they had foreshown it. When Columbus, writes Humboldt, promised a new hemisphere, all maintained that its existence was an impossibility; when he had discovered it, all said it had been known long before.* It is the usual warfare waged by the malice of those who feel humbled before the might of genius, and endeavor to exalt their own littleness by lowering the greatness of others. In the case of Christopher Columbus, they were not satisfied with trying to lessen his merits; they attempted to strip from his brow the glorious halo of discoverer, and brand him with a stigma of imposture and infamy. The greatest effort attempted against him aimed to show that all the merit of his discovery was due to chance, and that Columbus was a mean impostor and robber. But the effort resulted, on the contrary, to the glory of Christopher Columbus, by showing that his undertaking appeared, to the general opinion, so new and extraordinary a conception, that they could not be induced to believe it the spontaneous birth of a human mind. I shall stop to relate at some length, the origin and progress of that effort, because it was the greatest of all attempted against the merits of Columbus, and the reader may argue from this the value of the rest.

It was said, then, that a pilot, whose name and country were unknown, as well as the direction of his voyage and the name of his vessel, had been driven, by easterly winds, during a furious storm, to an immense distance out on the Ocean, where he found a new land never seen before. There were seventeen men on board, but twelve perished, from the enormous fatigue of the voyage out and back, and the five survivors, reaching our shores more dead than alive, were received into the house of Columbus, where they died, one after another, last of all, the pilot, who informed Columbus of their discovery, and gave him the log-book and charts of their voyage, with all the needful instruction for making the same journey. Columbus kept the secret from every one, till, having studied and thoroughly understood the course to follow, while pretending to be occupied with his study and calculations, he came forth and proposed the great novelty of reaching the east by sailing to the west.

The story crawled along the ground, no writer in the life-time of Columbus, or for many years after his death, making the slightest

* A. v. Humboldt, *Hist. de la Géographie*, &c., vol. i, pp. 254, 255. Paris, par Théod. Morgand

mention of it, and it would never have survived the talk of gossips and idlers, which gave it birth, if Oviedo had not given it a place in his history. This was in 1535, 29 years after the death of Christopher Columbus. He gives it as a rumor without any proof, and says that for his own part *he regards it as false*.^{*} But as he never lets an occasion pass of venting his ill-will towards Columbus, I am far from believing that the publication of the story was entirely innocent.† But whether it was out of ill-will or poor judgment, the principal blame falls on himself, because, by recording it in his history, he brought it to the knowledge of all, he took it out of the mire, and introduced it to the homes and the conversation of the select portion of the nation; and calumny, so long as it is spoken of, even from its contradiction, draws material for new vitality. And, in fact, seventeen years later the report appears again, in Gomera's history, not now as a vague and uncertain rumor of idle gossip, but as undoubted history; but the name of the pilot, his country, and the direction of his voyage are in great dispute and uncertainty. one makes him an Andalusian, another, a Biscayan, and still another, a Portuguese; some say he sailed between Madeira and the Canaries, and others, to La Mina in Guinea; in one thing only they all agree, and that is that he died in Columbus's house, and that his charts inspired Columbus with the idea of undertaking his voyage to those new countries.‡ I open here a parenthesis to remark that Gomera was so exact and truthful a historian that the Supreme Senate of the Indies prohibited his history, because it was stuffed with falsehoods and

* See the matter treated, at great length, by Prospero Peragallo in *Cristoforo Colombo in Portogallo*. Genova, 1882, tip. Sordomuti, p. 125-174.

† Here are some opinions of Oviedo's truthfulness about Columbus: "Oviéde . . . qui cherche tout ce qui peut diminuer la gloire de Colomb." (A. v. Humboldt, *Cosmos*, ii, page 258, n. xvii.)—"On ne doit pas beaucoup se fier à Oviéde pour tout ce qui regarde Colomb. A cet egard il tombe dans de graves écarts, parce qu'il s'est trop rapporté aux récits d'un pilote nommé Herman Perez Matheo dévoué aux Pinzon, et conséquemment ennemi de l'Amiral." (*Nouv. Bigr. Génér. Art. Colomb*. Paris, 1855.)—"Refiere candorosamente y con poca crítica cuanto oyó à personas que abusaron de su credúlidad, ò halló adoptado por las tradiciones populares." (Navarrete, *Coleccion de los Viajes y Descubrimientos, &c.*, vol. i, p. 78. Madrid, 1858.)—And Las Casas writes in one of his letters: "La que mas perjúdica . . . es allegar y traer por autor irrefragable à Oviedo en su falsissima . . . historia." (V. *Las Obras del Obispo D. Fray Bartholomé de Las Casas, &c.* Octava Replica, fol. ci. Barcelona, 1646.)

‡ Fernando Lopez de Gomera, *Hist. de las Indias*, cap. xiv.

lies.* The memory of this decree is sufficient, without mentioning any of the historians and other authors that have passed judgment on his history : the least severe call it a romance.

It seems that with Gomera the story reached the extreme of audacity ; for, of the historians immediately following, some give it clearly on Gomera's authority, some reject it with scorn, and the rest do not condescend to mention it. But it was enough for the calumny to be recorded at all ; it went on its way, gaining all the while new ground.

And behold ! more than a century and a quarter after the pretended fact, a historian comes forth and announces that he has had the rare fortune not only of assuring himself of the event beyond all doubt, but even knows exactly, word for word, every attending circumstance. He knows that the unfortunate pilot was named Alonzo Sanchez, that he was from Huelva, and was sailing from the Canaries to Madeira, and the unknown land on which he was driven by the storm, was the same that was afterwards called Hispaniola. The pilot, he says, calculated the latitude of the place, and wrote an account of all he had seen, and of all that happened to him, during the voyage, and then taking in supplies of wood and water, set sail on his return to the Old World. He reached land at the Island of Terceira (one of the Azores) ; but his voyage was so long, and he had encountered such furious storms, that of seventeen men at starting, only five ever saw our seas again, the other twelve having died on the way, from fatigue and hunger. Christopher Columbus, who was then at Terceira, received those five with courteous hospitality into his house ; but they were so exhausted that they could not recover from the effects of their sufferings, and they all died, one after another. The last to yield was the pilot, whose charts, falling into the hands of Columbus, revealed to him the secret of their discovery, the place, and the course to reach there. Columbus kept the revelation secret from every one, with the greatest care, and, feigning to be studying, calculating, and reasoning, when the time seemed fit, proposed his undertaking to the Spanish government, and, by the course traced out by the pilot's charts, sailed to Hispaniola, and usurped the honor of having conjectured and discovered the New World.

* P. Peragallo, *Cristoforo Colombo in Portogallo*, p. 144.

The happy historian who could read the secrets of so many fine things, was Garcilaso de la Vega, a native of Cuzco in Peru, who made his discovery known to the world in a work which he published in 1609, under the title of *Commentaries on the Incas*.

If, as he himself tells us, Columbus kept the secret hidden from every one, how could Garcilaso rend the veil Columbus had so carefully drawn over it, and rend it in such manner as to see it under all its minute circumstances? He says he knew it, because, when a child, he often heard his father relate it in this manner to his friends. From whom did his father learn of it? Garcilaso does not know, nor care to know; it is enough for him to record that Gomera had spoken of the fact in his history. And so, unintentionally, he brings us back at once to the right source to recognize the falseness of the story. Best of all, in his anxiety to confirm the story with every desirable detail, he has given the date also, which, he says, was the year 1484. But, as we shall see, Toscanelli's letters prove that as early as 1474 Columbus had conceived and set forth his project; therefore, according to Garcilaso's account, Columbus must have acquired from that pilot's death the first idea of an undertaking over which he had already spent more than ten years of study and labor.

Nor is it to be wondered at that a rumor, so vague and uncertain at its birth, should grow into so exact and detailed an account as that which Garcilaso heard from his father; for this is always the way with calumnies, which have no other basis or limit than the unbridled fancy of the multitude. No one knows how they are born; and, left to themselves, they soon waste away and die; but when any one has an interest in keeping them alive, the longer they run, the more strength and vitality they acquire. At their first unfolding, worked on by so many hands, with such different tastes, by the want of conformity which results in their various parts, it is easy to recognize them for what they are; but add a little to-day, lop off a little to-morrow, patch and mend, and by degrees they will turn out a regular figure, which might easily be mistaken for truth.

In the case of Columbus, besides the ease with which people always accept every calumny, and spread and exaggerate it, and the tendency we all have to think and believe evil rather than good of others, there was the additional fact that this story flattered the self-love

of the nation, by transferring to one of its sons the glory of discovering the New World, and freeing the nation from owing to a stranger the immense benefit of so many provinces and so much wealth as they had derived from the discovery ; and, therefore, it must not only have been listened to with pleasure, but also supported and propagated with patriotic zeal.

It has also been asserted that Columbus was preceded, in his discovery, by his contemporary, Martin Behaim, the famous cosmographer. I have thought best to speak at some length of this, in order to give a specimen of the other assaults on the merits of Columbus. Behaim was born in Nuremberg, and towards 1481 went to Portugal, attracted, without doubt, by the fame of the voyages and discoveries the Portuguese were making. His learning soon brought him renown at court, where John II appointed him on the council charged with the improvement of navigation ; and some authors attribute to him the principal glory of introducing there the use of the astrolabe. In 1484 King John sent him, as cosmographer, with an expedition under the command of Diego Cam, or Cano, to continue the discoveries on the African coast. They passed the equinoctial line, discovered the coast of Congo, and proceeded as far as $22^{\circ} 45'$ south latitude. In the chronicle of Hartman Schedel, a contemporary writer, this voyage is referred to in the following words, which I translate literally from the original Latin : " These two, Diego Cam or Cano, and Martin Behaim, sailing in the Southern Ocean, not going far from the coast, after they had passed the equinoctial line, came into another world, where, as they faced the east, their shadows fell to the south and to their right. They opened, therefore, by their work, another world, unknown to us till then, and which the Genoese alone, though unsuccessfully, had attempted to discover."* An argument was drawn from these words to give Behaim the glory that all had believed due to Christopher Columbus.

The words quoted are part of a passage which it is believed is interpolated by a different hand in the original manuscript of Schedel ; and De Murr, who made accurate researches regarding Behaim's life, assures us they are not to be found in the old German translation of Schedel's chronicle, which was finished the 5th of October, 1493. The passage was also interpolated in the work *De*

* Irving, *Columbus*, Appendix, No. xiii.

Europa of Æneas Silvius Piccolomini, afterwards Pope Pius II, who died in 1464, long before the voyage in question; and this is another proof that it is an interpolation in Schedel's chronicle. But even if the words were found there, they prove nothing, because they relate evidently to the southern hemisphere, previously unknown, and which appeared like a new world, as it had been regarded as impossible to cross the equator. It is also impossible to reconcile the discovery of Brazil and of the Straits of Magellan with the words "not going far from the coast." The Genoese alluded to are Antonio di Noli, Bartolomeo his brother, and Raffaele his nephew, who, driven from their country by civil strife, entered the Portuguese service, and sailing along the coast of Africa, extended their discoveries to the Bissago Islands, and explored the coast as far as the Rio Grande.* Is it possible, if Behaim had made the discovery of the New World, that he would not have laid claim to the glory that would have been rightfully his? Even supposing—what is not likely—that he had cared nothing about it at the time, does any one believe he would have remained silent when he beheld the glory and fame Columbus acquired by his discovery, if he himself had been the first to visit those lands, the finding of which was now the wonder of civilized Europe? The argument is so strong and so apt that the error soon died, abandoned by all.

But in 1786 a Frenchman, by the name of Otto, residing in New York, revives the dead question, and tries to prove the title of Behaim to the discovery of the New World. The main proof he put forward was a globe of the Earth made by Behaim, at Nuremberg, in 1492, the very year that Columbus set out on his voyage of discovery. This globe, said Otto, is still preserved in the library of Nuremberg, and on it are marked all Behaim's discoveries, which are so situated that they can be no other than Brazil and Magellan's Straits. If this proof had been solidly founded, the dispute would have been ended, and the cause of Columbus for ever lost. But unluckily for Otto, who was unable to examine Behaim's globe with his own eyes, he had to depend on a correspondent, who, out of carelessness or incompetency, gave him as the work of Behaim a globe, which is to be seen in the library of Nuremberg, made by Johan Schoener, a professor of mathematics, in 1520, long after the discov-

* Barros, dec. i, lib. ii, cap. i.

eries and death of Columbus and Behaim. The deception exposed, Otto's whole structure collapsed. The real globe of Behaim does not contain any of the islands or shores of the New World, and thus proves that he was totally unacquainted with them.

A much more serious danger threatened the glory of Columbus, when, in the wonderful activity and nice sagacity of our century, in turning over the memoirs of the past and searching among them for the most hidden events, undoubted traces were found that the Normans, cruising about in their northern seas, as long ago as the tenth century, had visited Greenland, then blessed with a habitable climate, but, at present from causes not yet explained, rendered inhospitable by acute cold and perpetual frost.

The Normans were not themselves aware they had discovered any new land, believing they had merely passed from one of their islands to another, and left no hint of such passage; and but for the minute investigation of recent historical criticism, which in the smallest sign finds materials for reconstructing the past, no one would ever have known that the coasts of Greenland had been visited by Norman ships. When any thing has been wholly lost to the memory of men, it is for them as though it had never existed. And the learned and indefatigable discoverer of these memoirs himself declares, "that the discovery of these facts in nowise detracts from the great merits of the immortal Christopher Columbus.*" Further inquiry seems rather to prove that white men had reached the shores of the New World before the Normans, and they were the Irish priests, who went to preach the Gospel. We may even go back further. Historical criticism believes it can trace in Mexican antiquities signs of very ancient, even prehistorical, immigrations. If this, too, should be proved, would the fact, in the judgment of sensible persons, tend in any manner to lessen the glory of Christopher Columbus?†

* Ch. Rafn, secretary of the Danish Society of Northern Antiquaries.

† *Giornale Ligustico*. Anno II, pp. 312-318.

CHAPTER VI.

Correspondence of Columbus with Toscanelli (1474).

LET us turn now to the correspondence that Christopher Columbus had with Paolo Toscanelli, which, on account of its importance, deserves to be considered at some length ; for Fernando assures us it was the cause of his father's proceeding more confidently on his voyage.* From that correspondence we learn, what we have already hinted at, that as early as 1474, Columbus had conceived the plan of seeking a western passage to the Indies, although it was a project not yet matured in his mind. Toscanelli was a physician and mathematician, of European reputation, and it was to him that, by order of Affonso V, king of Portugal, a certain Fernando Martinez, a canon of Lisbon, applied for an opinion concerning the voyages the Portuguese were then making to Guinea, and the possibility of others to the west. Columbus heard of this correspondence, and, being greatly interested in such matters, at once, through the medium of Lorenzo Girardi, a Florentine, then in Lisbon, wrote on the subject to Master Paolo, and sent him a small globe explaining his views. Toscanelli replied under date of Florence, the 25th of June, 1474, as follows :

“ To Christopher Columbus, Paolo the Physician, Health : †

“ Seeing your great and noble desire to pass to where the spices grow, I send, in answer to your letter, a copy of one which I wrote, some days since, to one of my friends in the service of the Most Serene King of Portugal, before the war with Castile, in reply to one he wrote me on the same subject, by order of his Highness ; and send you a sailing chart similar to the one I sent him, which will answer your request. The copy of the letter is this :

* Fernando Colombo, cap. vii.

† Physician was the term by which Doctors of Medicine were designated at the time, to distinguish them from Surgeons, who were often barbers, as well as from many others who practised mechanically some part of the art of healing.

“To Fernando Martinez, Canon of Lisbon, Paolo the Physician, Health :

“I am highly pleased to hear of the favor and familiarity you enjoy with our most generous and magnificent Prince. Having heretofore talked with you about a course by water to where the spices grow, shorter than that which you make by way of Guinea, now this Most Serene King asks me for some explanation, or rather, for some representation that may be put before the eyes, so that even the moderately learned may understand and follow that course. Although I know this can be shown with the form of a sphere, which is that of the world, still, I have concluded to show this course by a chart like those used for navigation, as both easier to understand and easier to execute. I send, therefore, to his Majesty, a chart made by myself, on which your shores are drawn, and the islands from which you must start, still sailing westward, and the places to which you must come, and how much you must deviate from the pole and from the equinoctial line, and how much space, or how many miles, you must sail over to reach the lands most fruitful in every kind of spices and gems.

“Do not wonder at my calling the regions where the spices are found, west, whilst they are commonly called east; for any one sailing to the west will reach them by a subterranean course; but travelling by land and over the earth, they are found to the east.* The straight lines lengthwise of the chart show the distance from east to west, while the transverse lines show the distance from south to north. I have also marked on the chart different places to which you may come, for the better instruction of the navigators, in case contrary winds or other causes should bring them to a different place than they expected, and also partly to enable them to show the inhabitants of such places that they had some knowledge of their country, which cannot but be agreeable to them. They should not stop at the islands, unless the merchants see good profit, because in those regions there are so many persons sailing with their wares, that there are not so many in all the rest of the world as in the noble port, called Taiton, alone. For it is said that a hundred large ships laden with pepper, arrive there annually, without counting the ves-

* Quia navigantibus ad occidentem semper illæ partes inveniuntur per subterraneas navigationes. Si enim per terram et per superiora itinera, ad orientem semper reperiuntur.

sels carrying other spices. That country is most populous, with a multitude of provinces, and kingdoms, and cities without end, under a prince called the Great Khan, which means King of Kings, residing generally in Cathay. His predecessors desired intercourse and commerce with Christians, and 200 years ago sent ambassadors to the Pope, and asked for teachers to instruct them in matters of faith ; but those that were sent met such difficulties on the way, that they came back.* Another ambassador was sent to Pope Eugenius,† and who testified to the good will of those princes and people towards Christians ; and I talked a long time with him about various things,—of the grandeur of the royal buildings, and the size of the rivers, not less wonderful for the length of the stream than for the breadth of the channel, and of the many cities built on the banks of the rivers, so numerous that on the banks of one river alone there are about two hundred ; and there are marble bridges, of great length and breadth, with ornamental columns on every side. That country is well worth the Latins' seeking, not only for the great advantages of its gold and silver, and all kinds of gems and spices, some of which have never been brought hither ; but also on account of their learned philosophers, expert astrologers,‡ and other wise men, by whose wisdom and skill that powerful and magnificent country is governed, and even its wars conducted. This may satisfy to some extent your demand, so far as the shortness of the time and my occupations have permitted me, and I am ready hereafter to satisfy his royal Majesty further, as he may desire.

“ From the city of Lisbon, due west, there are marked on the chart twenty-six spaces, of 250 miles each, to the grand and noble city of Quinsay, which is 100 miles around, and has ten bridges ; its name means city of heaven, and many wonderful things are told of its multitude of artisans, and its enormous revenues. This space

* Of the two embassies here mentioned by Toscanelli, without doubt the first is that related by Marco Polo (*Il. Milione* di Marco Polo, cap. ii and iii) under Khublai Khan, which failed, on account of the illness of Coghotal the ambassador. Nothing is known of the other. Humboldt thinks it a mystification of some impostor pretending to be the representative of some eastern prince ; examples of which are found in countries much nearer to Europe. (*Examen Critique*, &c., § ii, p. 223.)

† Eugenius IV sat from 1431 to 1447.

‡ *Astrologer* in those days corresponded to our *astronomer*.

is nearly a third of the whole sphere. This city lies in the province of Mangi, i. e., next to the province of Cathay, where the seat of government is. But from the island of Antilia, which is known to you, to the noble island of Cipango, there are ten spaces : that island abounds with gold, pearls, and gems, and the temples and royal dwellings are roofed with plates of gold. The unknown part of the sea to be crossed is, therefore, not very considerable. Perhaps, many things could have been explained more distinctly, but from what has been said, a careful observer will easily find the rest. Farewell, beloved.”*

Christopher Columbus wrote a second letter to Toscanelli, which, like the first, is lost : but we have the Florentine philosopher’s answer.

“To Christopher Columbus, Paolo the Physician, Health :

“I have received your letter, with the things you sent me, which I regard as a great favor, and I appreciate your grand and noble desire to sail from the east to the west, according to the chart that I sent you, and as will be better shown by a round sphere. I am glad you understood it, and that the voyage is not only possible, but certain ; the honor and profit will be beyond calculation, and the reputation great amongst all Christians. You can only learn this perfectly from experience and by practice, as I have had the fullest and surest information from illustrious and learned men who came from those parts to the court of Rome here, and from other merchants,—persons of good authority,—who traded for a long time in those lands. When that voyage is made, it will be to powerful kingdoms, and noble cities, and provinces abounding with every thing we need ; with every kind of spices and great plenty of jewels. It will also be to kings and princes most desirous of intercourse with Christians of our land, as well because many of them are Christians, as because they are anxious to meet and converse with the men of our country, who are wise and learned not only in religion, but in all the other sciences, on account of the great reputation of our governments. For which reason, and for many others that I might name, I am not surprised at the courage of your heart, or that the whole Portuguese

* I have given the translation of this letter from the original text, discovered and published by HARRISSE, instead of the version in FERNANDO COLUMBUS’S History.

nation, always distinguished in every enterprise, should be full of enthusiasm for the voyage."

The date of this letter is wanting, but it must have been soon after the other. Fernando says, "it made the Admiral still hotter for his discovery."*

Toscanelli, as is evident from his letter, had talked with Martinez of the voyages that the Portuguese were making in search of an easier and shorter way to the Indies; the place of this meeting was probably Rome, whither Toscanelli often repaired to the Papal Court, and Martinez may have been drawn thither by devotion to the Holy See, and to the tombs of the Apostles, as many are at present, and still more were in those days. On his return to Lisbon, Martinez reported to King Affonso the opinion of Toscanelli, and the king made him write at once to Toscanelli, to ask him *for some explanation, or rather, for some representation that may be put before the eyes*, of the things they had talked about.

It was very fortunate for Columbus that a man like Toscanelli should agree with his ideas, and by the weight of his learning confirm him in the error of believing the calculations of Marinus of Tyre correct. And Toscanelli has the great honor and merit of giving a powerful impulse to the mind of Columbus, and encouraging him to increased zeal and unwearied activity in carrying out the great undertaking that was to alter the face of the earth. What value Columbus attached to his learning and authority, is shown by the fact that eighteen years later, when sailing to discover the New World, he used the chart sent him by the learned philosopher.† Toscanelli had then been dead ten years, and could not witness the great work, to which he had so greatly contributed; but history, in the just distribution of fame, has joined his name with that of the discoverer of the New World.

The brilliant description Toscanelli makes, in his letter to Columbus, of the power, greatness, and wealth of the eastern lands he was to sail to, is only a brief extract from Marco Polo's narrative. This celebrated Venetian traveller, in 1271, visited the furthest countries of the east, the names of which were scarce known in Europe, and remained there seventeen years, employed by the prince in embassies, government of provinces, and other honorable

* Fernando Colombo, cap. viiif.

† Las Casas, lib. i, cap. xii.

offices of great importance. On his return to Europe, he related what he had seen himself and heard from others ; and his narrative, soon translated into nearly all the languages of Europe, telling of such multitudes of people, such inexhaustible wealth, and such wonders of nature and of art,—excited in churchmen, merchants, and scholars the liveliest desire to open communication with those distant lands, to spread the light of the Gospel on those countries buried in the darkness of idolatry, to draw from them the immense treasures that were neglected or unknown, and to enrich science with new and useful knowledge.

He related how, in the distant regions of Asia, he had found the flourishing empire of the Tartars, immense in extent, wealth, and the number of nations subject to it ; and that those countries were the extreme limit of the east, extending to the Ocean. This empire was divided into two parts, Cathay, to the north, and Mangi, to the south, which were formerly two great empires, independent of each other, not long before united in one by the Tartars. The prince who ruled this vast region bore the title of Khan, which in the Tartar language means *lord* ; and because there were subject and tributary to him other princes or khans ruling other countries of Asia, as head and supreme lord of all these, the title of Grand Khan was given him. The seat of government was Cambalu, the capital of Cathay ; but the city which greatly surpassed every other in size, population, and wealth, was Quinsay, the capital of Mangi. Further to the east were numberless islands, the largest of which, called Cipango, was fifteen hundred miles from the coast of Cathay.

Such marvels of power, wealth, and magnificence were never told of any prince or country as Polo related of the Grand Khan and the countries of the extreme east. Gold, gems, precious stones, and every other rare product of nature to please the luxury or satisfy the greed of man, were found in abundance in those fortunate regions ; and with all these, armies and navies without number, flourishing commerce, immense cities, industry, art, science—every thing was beyond comparison with what is found in the richest and most powerful nations of Europe.

Cathay and Mangi correspond to the northern and southern divisions of the modern empire of China ; Cambalu is the present Peking, and Quinsay is now called Hong-chow-foo ; and the extent,

power, wealth, and civilization of the empire of the Grand Khan, then so wondered at, and so little believed, are partly confirmed by what is known of the extent, power, wealth, and civilization of the Chinese empire of to-day.

The account of Polo had the greatest influence on the mind of Columbus, but he had no immediate knowledge of it; and even supposing he had seen it, which is very unlikely, it could only have been after the idea of seeking the east by way of the west was rooted and ripened in his mind. The information he possessed of the wonderful wealth and power found in the furthest regions of Asia, he received at second hand from Toscanelli's letters and from his books on geography.* But the fact is that he had present to his imagination a bright picture of the far east as related and described by Marco Polo; and without the previous knowledge of what the Venetian traveller relates, it is impossible to explain the hopes and the illusions that directed Columbus on his path; whilst, on the other hand, with Polo's account as a guide, we can almost always find the direction of the thought and the source of the illusions of Columbus.

CHAPTER VII.

First steps of Columbus to find some government willing to assume his undertaking.—Application of the astrolabe to navigation.—Experience of Columbus in navigation when he put forth his project.—He presents it to John, king of Portugal.—Treacherous attempts against him.—His anger, and departure from Portugal (1484)

SEVERAL years passed after his correspondence with Toscanelli, before Columbus made an earnest attempt to carry his plan into execution. We know not the cause of the long delay in carrying out his project; but the difficulty of finding, in the condition of the times, some one to take up his undertaking, must certainly be regarded as the first, if not the only, cause. It was not an undertaking such as is commonly carried on by individuals, or private associations; it

* Humboldt, *Cosmos*, ii, p. 220. Ed. Milano, Turati, 1850-53.

aimed at the discovery of vast countries of pagans, subject to no legitimate government; and could be assumed only by some government capable of taking possession of the territory as it was discovered, either to defend it from every other power, or to reward the discoverer in proportion to his extraordinary service. There is a tradition that he offered his undertaking, by letter, to Genoa, his native country, but was refused. This tradition is proved by no document; but it has all the marks of probability, on account of its antiquity, and because it harmonizes perfectly with the sentiments of affection that Columbus felt for his native land, and it was suited to the naval supremacy of Genoa and its commercial and adventurous spirit. The first to pick up the tradition was Ramusio, whose youth was contemporary with the old age of Columbus; it is repeated and believed by Benzoni, who wrote not long after Ramusio, and who travelled through America when the reminiscences of Columbus were still fresh; by Herrera, the first royal Spanish historian of the affairs of the New World, who wrote in the same century, and whose carefulness and impartiality have already been mentioned; and by nearly all the historians since then. But the best days of Genoa were past. Weakened by violent wars from within and without, impoverished in its commerce, its treasury, and its power, its old vigor lost, it was reduced to imploring foreign protection, and almost bartering its freedom for defence against its enemies, and the enjoyment of a little peace.* It is not then to be wondered at that it refused the generous offer of Columbus.

A Venetian magistrate, member of the Council of Ten, towards the close of the last century, related to the historians Bossi and Marin that he had seen and read in the archives of the council a memorial presented by Columbus to the republic of Venice to induce it to assume the burden of his project, but the memorial was not received with the favor he had hoped for. Whilst I do not doubt the magistrate's good faith, until his account receives further support, I regard the proposal of Columbus to Venice as wholly unfounded.†

The first state after Genoa to which Columbus would naturally offer

* Unable to defend itself against its domestic and foreign enemies, Genoa repeatedly in those years called to its aid the lords of France and Milan.

† Luigi Bossi, *Vita di C. Colombo*. Milano, Ferrario, 1818.—Marin, *Storia Civile e Politica del Commercio dei Veneziani*. Venezia, 1798-1800, tom. vii, p. 236.

his undertaking, was Portugal, which had become his second country, and was already on the road of discovery and in search of a shorter passage to India ; but the condition of the country was at that time any thing but favorable for his project. War had broken out in Castile, between the two princesses Juana and Isabella, contending for the throne ; and Affonso V, king of Portugal, having taken up the cause of his niece and his betrothed, Juana, Portugal found itself involved in a long and expensive contest, which absorbed all the revenues of the government, and, on account of the national honor and interest, engrossed the thoughts of all. And when the war ended, with Affonso's defeat, Portugal was so broken and impoverished that even the voyages along the African coast, carried on before with such alacrity, had now to be greatly neglected. Under these circumstances there was no hope that Portugal would accept the burden of an undertaking so difficult, expensive, and doubtful as that proposed by Columbus ; and there was no other nation after Genoa and Portugal, to which the offer could be made with any probability of its acceptance. Columbus was, therefore, forced to wait the arrival of better times for his desires. They came when John II mounted the throne of his father, Affonso, in 1481. The glorious age of Prince Henry seemed revived, such were the diligence, activity, and zeal of the new king in carrying on and completing the work of his great-souled uncle. Impatient of the slowness with which his discoveries advanced along the coast of Africa, and of the impediments which every cape and promontory presented to nautical enterprise, he called in the aid of science to devise some means by which greater scope and certainty might be given to navigation.* So far, discoveries had advanced very slowly, and gained ground step by step, the mariners not daring to venture far, because once they lost sight of the stars they were familiar with, they no longer had any way of telling under what part of the heavens, or how remote from our world, they might be. Wishing to provide for such a case, John charged his physicians, Rorigo and Jozé, the most able astronomers and cosmographers of his kingdom, and the celebrated Martin Behaim, to consult together and find some way of guiding the course of ships even in unknown waters, and under whatever part of the heavens they may be sailing. The three wise men, after much consultation and

* Irving, *Columbus*, book i, ch. vi.

study, finally transferred to navigation the use of the astrolabe, which had before that been used only by astronomers, enabling the seaman, by the altitude of the sun, to ascertain his distance from the equator.* This invention gave an entirely new direction to navigation, delivering it from the necessity of keeping always near the shore, and setting it free amidst the immensity of the sea ; so that, where before a ship that had lost its path, had to grope its way back by the uncertain guidance of the stars, now, by aid of compass and astrolabe, was always sure of being able to retrace its course. For the enterprise which Columbus was meditating, this discovery was truly providential ; for, by insuring his return in case of failure, it removed the greatest and most dreaded difficulty in his way. The time was, therefore, most seasonable for the plans of Columbus, and he presented himself to King John to offer him his project.

When Columbus came forth with his plan for opening new seas to navigation, he had sailed over those then known in every direction, to the furthest limits reached by any ship. In a letter to their Catholic Majesties, written in 1501, he speaks of his studies and experience in nautical affairs in these words : “ From a very tender age I began sailing the sea, and have continued till now. It is an art which leads every one that pursues it to wish to know the secrets of this world ; and it is now going on forty years that I have been visiting all the places that navigation has yet reached, and my conversation and dealing have been with men of learning, as well ecclesiastics as laymen, with Latins and Greeks, Jews and Moors, and many others of other sects. And I have found our Lord most favorable to my wish, and, therefore, I received from him the spirit of understanding. He gave me great knowledge of navigation, as much astrology as I needed, and also geometry and arithmetic ; he endowed me with an ingenious mind, and hands skilful in designing the sphere, with the cities, rivers, islands, and harbors, all in their proper position. During this time I have seen, or tried to see, all the works of cosmography, history, and philosophy, and other sciences, so that our Lord opened my mind with a hand that I could feel, in order that I might sail from here to the Indies, and made me most desirous of putting it in execution.”†

* Giampiero Maffei, *Stor. Ind.*, lib. xi.—Barros, *Asia Portuguesa*, dec. iv, cap. ii.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. iv.—Navarrete, *Col. de Viages*, t. ii, p. 262

And elsewhere he wrote : " I have been on the sea for twenty-three years, without any interruption worth counting. I have seen the whole east, and all the west that is passed in going to the north, that is, to England, and I have been through Guinea." And in another place he tells of " the frequent voyages he had made from Lisbon to Guinea." Besides these general expressions, there are many details to be gathered here and there in his writings, showing the great extent of his navigation. From a memorial of his in which he proved, by the experience of his own voyages, that the five zones were all inhabitable, Fernando reports these words : " In the month of February, in the year 1447, I sailed one hundred leagues beyond the island of Tyle, the southern portion of which is seventy-three degrees from the equinoctial, and not sixty-three, as some pretend ; and it is not situated within the line that includes the west of Ptolemy, but is much further west. The English, especially those of Bristol, carry their merchandise to this island, which is as large as England. At the time that I was there, the sea was not frozen, and the tides were so great that the water rose in some places twenty-six fathoms and fell as many. Still, it is true that the Tyle which Ptolemy speaks of, lies where he says, and it is called Frisland by the moderns." And speaking of the equator, he says : " I was in the king of Portugal's fort of St. George at La Mina, which lies under the equinoctial ; and therefore, am a good witness that it is not uninhabitable, as some claim."*

The Tyle of Columbus corresponds to the Thule of the ancients, which was always considered the most distant part of the known world ; and such is the sense of the word itself, the Gothic *tiel* or *tiule* meaning " remotest land."† But what land should be understood by Frisland, geographers have been unable to decide, because the indications given by Columbus do not correspond to any of the islands now known ; because, as Zurla remarks, he could not then have possessed the ability he afterwards acquired of determining the position of any place. Of the various opinions that have been proposed in the matter, considering that a Frisland is also mentioned in the voyages of Antonio Zeno, I am inclined to that which makes the Frisland of Columbus the same with that of Zeno, which, as we

* Fernando Colombo, cap. iv.

Bevan, *Man. di Geogr. Ant.* Firenze, Barbera, 1876, p. 686, n. iiii.

have already seen, is identified by most writers with the Faroë group, on account of its indigenous name.* The absence of ice in the month of February in lands so far north, is something so strange that it has caused many to doubt the reality of this voyage. But the learned Danye Finn Magnussen has fully confirmed the account of Columbus. He has found it recorded in very ancient documents that the winter of 1447 was so mild that in the month of March there was no snow in the north of the island, and the harbors in the south were clear of ice in the month of February.

In the voyages to the last islands discovered by the Portuguese in the Ocean, to Guinea, and to Iceland, we have the three furthest points to the north, west, and south to which navigation had then reached. As to the east, it is sufficient to remember the extent of the commerce of Genoa in that direction, to know that he crossed those seas in every direction the whole time he was on the ships of his own country. But here again we have especial mention in the diary of his first voyage of discovery, where, speaking of the mastic-tree and the resin drawn from it, he incidentally mentions those which he had seen in Scio, an island of the Archipelago.† We have, therefore, positive information that before he set out to discover new seas, he had navigated the whole extent of those already known. We should not omit all mention of that voyage a hundred leagues beyond Iceland, which shows us the impatient ardor which drove him to leap the boundaries of the Old World and throw himself into the unknown regions of the Ocean.‡

Let us now return to his offer of his enterprise to the king of Portugal. According to the account given by Fernando,§ King John lent great attention to the words of Columbus, but showed himself very cold in accepting his offer, on account of the great cost and trouble already sustained in exploring the western coast of Africa, without any happy result so far, or being able to reach its extreme southern limit; and, consequently, he was very little inclined to spend more money in discoveries. The new arguments, however, which Columbus went on explaining, in order to prove the possi-

* Ante, ch. iii. p. .—Cf. Zurla, *Di Marco Polo e degli altri Viaggiatori più illustri Veneziani*. Venezia, 1819, vol. ii, p. 24.—Desimoni, *Archivio Storico Italiano*, serie iv, p. 389.

† *Journal*, 12 Nov.

‡ Irving, *Columbus*, bk. i, ch. vi.

§ Fernando Colombo, cap. xii.

bility of his undertaking, and the great glory and profit which he and his kingdom would derive from conducting so great an enterprise, commenced gradually to change his heart and his mind, till they overcame his hesitation entirely, and put him in such a favorable disposition that his acceptance of the offer depended altogether on the conditions and terms Columbus demanded as the reward of his labor. Here they could not agree, "because the admiral, being a man of noble and lofty sentiments, demanded high and honorable titles and rewards, so that he might leave behind him a name and family worthy of his deeds and merits."* John, on the contrary, wanted him to accept of the usual reward given to those who discovered lands or islands on the African coast: that is to say, the government of the place found, certain privileges on its commerce, and, where the importance of the discovery warranted it, some privilege of nobility. To this Columbus replied that his undertaking was not in any wise to be compared with simply advancing on a path already known, and discovering some new country or islet on the way; but his plan was totally different from any that had been carried out previously, and, therefore, the reward should be different, and proportioned to the fruits that should be derived from it.

Barros, on the otherhand, relates that King John only favored the enterprise in appearance, in order to get rid of Columbus and be freed from his importunities; that, in fact, he considered him a vain and ambitious man, fond of displaying his abilities, easily led by chimerical fancies, such as that respecting the island of Cipango.† This different account was first put forth by Portuguese historians, long after the discovery of the New World, and apparently for the purpose of lessening the blame of their glorious king for the refusal. But the subsequent conduct of John destroys their assertions completely. The reasoning of Columbus left a deep impression on his mind, and he was greatly agitated between accepting and refusing the offer de-

* Fernando Colombo, l. c.

† Barros, *Da Asia*, dec. i, lib. iii, cap. ii.

‡ Las Casas expresses the opinion of Barros, "that he labors to depreciate Christopher Columbus all he can." (*Hist. Ind.*, cap. xxvii.) Humboldt says: Le grand historien Portugais laissant un libre cours à la haine nationale, et au chagrin de voir passer tant de trésors entre les mains des Espagnoles, le peint comme un homme *fallador e glorioso em mostrar sus habilidades* . . . Il est remarquable que Barros . . . ne parle dans aucune partie de son bel ouvrage de Colomb comme d'un homme de quelque importance." (*Hist. de la Geogr.*, vol. iv, pp. 26, 27. Paris, par. Théod. Morgand)

finitively—afraid, on one hand, of the enormous cost it would involve, and attracted, on the other, by the great results promised. In this painful struggle, in order to decide, he asked the opinion of the board that had charge of all matters relating to maritime discoveries. This board was composed of the two famous geographers and astronomers Rorigo and Jozé, the same two who with Martin Behaim had applied the use of the astrolabe to navigation, and Don Diogo Ortiz de Calzadilla, bishop of Ceuta. The board declared the project of Columbus altogether extravagant and visionary. But the more John II reflected on the arguments Columbus had urged in its support, the clearer seemed the possibility of its execution, and the stronger grew his desire of undertaking it; but he was much tortured in his mind by the uncertainty, and especially, by the low condition of his treasury. In this state, he was desirous that others should urge him to undertake it, so that he might be protected in case the result should be disappointing. For this purpose he ordered a new inquiry and referred the matter to his privy council, in the hope that they would report more in accordance with his wish; and he proposed to them this question, “Whether the new way pointed out by Christopher Columbus was a better passage to India than the old one along the African coast?”* But the council not only rejected the project of Columbus, but manifested a strong spirit of opposition to all further discoveries. Calzadilla, who had great weight, on account of his learning, his rank as bishop, and as the king’s confessor, spoke for the opposition, and, in a cold and well-arranged discourse, after discussing the project of Columbus, and showing its unreasonableness, and repeating the objections made by the board of maritime discoveries, he took a broader view, and speaking of discoveries in general, showed that the result had not been in proportion to the expense; that great dangers threatened the future of Portugal, if it continued spending its money and strength in such distant expeditions; and if the king wished to find a vent for the valor and activity of the kingdom, it was wiser and more glorious to turn them against the Moors of Barbary, an enemy close at hand, and always dangerous to Portugal.

Dom Pedro de Meneses, count of Villa Real, replied to this discourse with patriotic warmth, refuting the cold and weak arguments

* Vasconcellos, *Vida del Rey Don Juan II*, lib. iv

of Calzadilla ; and the fire of his words so revived the ardor and enthusiasm of the king and council for the continuance of the glorious work of Prince Henry, that at the conclusion his speech was loudly applauded.* One historian says that Villa Real also supported the proposition of Columbus, but that seems a mistake ; and even if he spoke favorably of it at all, he could only have done so incidentally, for the whole force of his speech was directed to the defence and support of the work begun by Prince Henry. The vote of the council was that they should continue in the old way, and take no notice of the new proposed by Christopher Columbus. King John had expected a decision favorable to his wishes, and took in very bad part the conduct of Calzadilla. The bishop, perceiving this, and being more affected by the king's favor than by justice and honesty, in order to correct his blunder and regain his sovereign's favor, suggested the following base stratagem : Columbus should be induced to surrender all the charts and drawings of his project, under the pretext that they wished to study them to see if his plan was practicable ; and then quickly fitting out a caravel, and giving out that it was to be sent to Guinea, they should send it, instead, in the direction indicated by the Italian. If the trial turned out badly, the crown would then suffer no loss of prestige ; and if successful, all the profit and glory of the discovery would accrue to the king, without the payment of the great rewards claimed by Columbus. King John, blinded by passion, belied the loyalty and greatness of his character, and accepted the shameful suggestion.

When Columbus was asked for his charts, and drawings, and the proofs he had in support of his proposal, his heart swelled with delight, feeling sure that the examination of those charts would dissipate all doubt and uncertainty, and that, persuaded of the solidity of his proposal, they would furnish the means to carry it into execution.

While he was indulging these pleasant hopes, they quickly fitted out a caravel in all secrecy, and pretending to send it with supplies to the vessels that were at the Cape Verde Islands, they sent it in the direction and by the way traced on his charts. But the knowledge and constancy of Columbus were wanting, and, after wandering many days at sea, at the first muttering and roaring of the Ocean, they

* Vasconcellos, lib. iv.—La Clède, *Hist. Portugal*, lib. xiii, cap. iii.

turned back to the Cape Verde Islands, ridiculing the project of Columbus as the dream of a feeble mind that saw land where there was and could be only water.*

A secret entrusted to so many was soon discovered, and Columbus was not long in learning their infamous treatment of him. He was grieved to the soul and so indignant, that,—his wife's death, which had occurred some time previously, having dissolved the domestic ties which bound him to Portugal,—he determined to abandon a country where he had been treated so badly, and seek elsewhere for aid in his undertaking.†

With this intention, towards the end of 1484, he secretly quit Lisbon, taking his little son Diego with him. The reason which he gave for leaving Portugal in this furtive manner, was his fear that the king might oppose his departure ; because, when King John learnt that the caravel he had sent out had, for want of courage, turned back long before reaching the point where Columbus had marked on his charts that land ought to be found, he had manifested a wish to renew negotiations with him, and Columbus had proudly refused to have any further dealings with one who had attempted such base treachery against him.‡ It is supposed, however, and with very good reason, that there was another motive, which, from a natural feeling of shame, he wished to conceal. While he was wholly occupied with the great problem, the solution of which was to benefit mankind, his own affairs had fallen into disorder, and there was danger that on attempting to leave Portugal he would be imprisoned for debt. This surmise is founded on a letter which King John afterwards wrote, inviting him to return to Portugal, in which he assures him he shall be in no wise molested, whatever may be the demands against him, whether civil or criminal.§

Far about a year from this time the life of Columbus is involved in obscurity, and we can follow his steps only by conjectures more or less probable. Historians are agreed that, from Lisbon Columbus proceeded to Genoa, to visit his aged father,—his mother being dead,—and that after providing for all that good old man's wants, he departed in search of some state that would be willing to assume his

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xi.—Herrera, dec. i, lib. i, cap. vii.—Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, cap. xxvii.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. xi.

‡ Id. cap. xii.

§ Navarrete, *Colec.*, tom ii, cap. iii.



COLUMBUS AT THE GATE
OF THE
CONVENT OF LARABIDA

enterprise. While with his father at Genoa, he is said to have offered it in person to the government as he had formerly done by letter, and that he met with a second humiliating refusal.* It must, however, be remarked, says Irving, that many of the facts which filled the interval between his departure from Portugal and the time when we find him in Spain, are mere conjectures. What seems incontestable is, that during that interval he had a hard struggle with poverty, a striking proof of which we have in the miserable condition in which we first behold him in Spain : and it is not one of the least interesting circumstances in his eventful life, that he had, in a manner, to beg his way from court to court to offer to princes the discovery of a world.†

Here ends the first part of the life of Columbus, which may be called the period of preparation ; for in the whole course of it, every event and circumstance, by the hidden order of Providence, seemed to prepare him for the great work, which he undertook and completed in the second part of his life.

CHAPTER VIII.

Columbus's first arrival in Spain.—Father Juan Perez of Marchena.—Political state of Spain.—Isabella.—Her marriage with Ferdinand of Aragon.—Basis of agreement between Castile and Aragon.—The Moors in Spain.—Preparations for war against them (1486).

THE first trace we find of Christopher Columbus in Spain is in the deposition many years after his death made by Fernandez Garcia, a physician of Palos, in the celebrated case between Diego Columbus, the son of Christopher, and the Spanish crown.‡ Palos was at that time a small port on the Atlantic, at the mouth of the Tinto, and near the city of Moguer, in Andalusia. The energy and industry of its inhabitants had gained for it a reputation quite beyond proportion to its small size, but later it has been buried under the deposits from the river, and now the country around is deserted. About half a league off, on the top of a mountain of no great height,

* Muñoz, *Hist. del Nuevo Mundo*, lib. ii, § xxi.—Humboldt, *Hist. de la Géographie*, tom. i, p. 19.

† Irving, *Columbus*, bk. i, ch. vi.

‡ Id. bk. ii, ch. i.

and half hidden in a thick forest of pines, was a monastery of Franciscan friars, known as the Santa Maria de la Rabida. Fernandez Garcia related that a stranger, on foot, accompanied by a boy of about twelve years, presented himself at the monastery gate, and asked the brother porter for a little bread and water for the young child. While father and son were refreshing themselves with the simple fare, the father guardian happened to pass, and discovering, from his accent, that he was a foreigner, and, from his aspect and bearing, concluding he was a man much superior to his present state, out of curiosity and pity entered into conversation with him.*

That stranger was Christopher Columbus, and the boy, his son Diego. It is not known whence he came; but his mode of travel tells plainly enough the condition to which his misfortunes had reduced him. He was on his way to the neighboring city of Huelva, to a certain Muliar, his brother-in-law by his marriage to a sister of Felipa Moñiz, the deceased wife of Columbus. It is thought he wished to entrust him with the young Diego, while he was engaged in offering his project to the Spanish court. But arriving at Palos, he must have wanted all means of subsistence, and, to appease the hunger and thirst of his boy, went out of his road and ascended the steep mountain to have recourse to the charity of the monks.†

The mysterious ordering of events which we have hitherto encountered in the life of Columbus, and of which we have already spoken, is here more plainly marked, and claims our attention. Want and hunger drive Columbus to knock at a gate for the alms of a little bread, and the opening of the gate puts him on the road to the final accomplishment of his desires,—the crossing of the Ocean, and the discovery of a New World. Philosophers may find here ample matter for meditation on the strange vicissitudes to which man's life is subjected; but the believer bows his head and adores, recognizing the hand of God, which, by unknown ways, beyond all human counsel, reaches the end established in his inscrutable decrees.

* Navarrete, *Sup. I. á la Col. Dipl.*, n. lxix.

† Diego's age must have been less than Garcia said, but he judged by looks, and related the fact when he was an old man, many years after its occurrence. This, it seems to me, is a sufficient answer to the objections proposed by D'Avezac, in the *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de Paris*, sixième série, t. iv, p. 48, n. viii.

The guardian of that humble monastery was Father Juan Perez of Marchena, a religious of deep piety, well versed in profane as well as sacred science, especially in cosmography, which was his favorite study.* Queen Isabella, moved by the fame of that friar's learning and sanctity, had summoned him to court and made him her confessor; but the sound of feasting and bustle of the city were ill suited to his disposition and his love of study and prayer, and, therefore, quitting the court, and despising the prospect of future honor and greatness, he returned to his humble duties as guardian of the little monastery of Santa Maria de la Rabida. There, in view of the Ocean, extending, in front, as far as the eye could reach, the pious and learned religious continued his study of cosmography in the quiet of his cell, and as his mind travelled over the distant regions the Portuguese were discovering, he welcomed with delight the progress of science, and was all on fire at the thought of the triumphs in store for the Gospel among the infidels who inhabited those new countries. Such was the modest friar, who, by the order of Providence, happened to be passing through the gate of his monastery as Christopher Columbus was receiving his little alms.

Encouraged by the friar's friendly courtesy, Columbus told him of the great project in his mind, and of his design of proposing it at court. It seemed as though the words of Columbus had opened a new horizon to the friar's eyes, so great was his attention and interest. He claimed him as a guest in his monastery, and sending for his friend Fernandez Garcia, the same who left us these important details, and who was likewise a lover of geography and cosmography, all three took up the subject, and the project of Columbus was discussed in that peaceful monastery with an attention such as it does not seem to have obtained amidst the showy pretensions of the court. Some indications gathered from the words of old mariners of Palos, of which no account was made at the time, but now recalled to mind and carefully examined, appeared to confirm the theories and inductions of Columbus. One old pilot, named Pedro Velasco, amongst others, asserted that once when he was at sea some forty years before, they had been driven by the wind to the west of Cape Clear in Ireland, and there the sea

* Oviedo, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. ii, cap. v.—Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. i, cap. vii.—Al. Geraldini, *Itinerarium*, lib. xiv.

was perfectly smooth, though the wind was high, which they thought could only result from some land sheltering them on the west ; but as it was well on in August, they were afraid of the approach of winter, and did not dare to proceed further to see if their conjectures were well founded.* Father Perez then entered fully into the conception of Columbus, and became animated, as a Spaniard and a churchman, over the incalculable advantage to his country and religion, which he saw must result, and, offering his aid and mediation at court, urged him to proceed thither at once, and make his proposals. He kept with him the little Diego, and supplying Columbus with money for the journey, made him start at once, giving him a letter of warm recommendation to his friend the father prior of the monastery of El Prado, who was the queen's confessor, and a person of great influence, whose support would be of the greatest importance to Columbus.†

Blessing Providence for such unexpected help, Columbus consigned his son to the good friar, and starting on his journey in the spring of 1486, proceeded to Cordova, where the court then was.

To make clearer what follows, and to place in their proper light the personages who now become a part of the life of Christopher Columbus, it is necessary to review at some length the great events taking place in Spain for a few years past.

Spain was at this time divided into four states independent of one another: Castile, Aragon, and Navarre, all three national and Christian kingdoms, and the kingdom of Granada, to which the foreign power of the Moors, once formidable rulers of nearly all Spain, but now diminished in number and audacity, was reduced. After a reign of nearly half a century, John II of Castile died in 1454, and was succeeded by Henry IV, his only son by his first marriage. The affairs of the kingdom were in frightful disorder ; for, intent only on pleasure, John had left the government in the hands of the all-powerful minister of his vices, Don Alvaro de Luna, and the despotism of this favorite, with the oppression and immunity of his creatures, had excited on all sides discontent, hatred, vengeance, and finally, civil war. Henry, far from repairing his father's errors, followed the same course, placing himself under the yoke of his

* Fernando Colombo, cap. ix.

† Salinas, *Crónica Franciscana de Peru*, lib. i, cap. xiv.—Melendez, *Tesoros Verdaderos de las Indias*, lib. i, cap. i.

favorite, Juan Pacheco, marquess of Villena, and formerly page to Alvaro de Luna, and the affairs of the kingdom, which were going badly enough before, began to rush to complete ruin. The new king's first act was to confine in the convent of Arevalo his father's second wife and her two children, Isabella, scarce four years old, and Alfonso, still in swathing-bands. The poor widow, humiliated and despondent, could not bear that blow, and her reason gave way. Isabella grew up in the saddest neglect and sorrow, dividing her little cares between her crazy mother and her infant brother. In 1462, under pretext of watching the education of the two infants, Henry sent for Isabella and Alfonso to come to court; but the truth was that his sister was now of an age to be married, and he wished to marry her according to his own views. In the midst of a thousand dangers, watched, spied, hated, and ill-treated by the king and queen, and the crowd of courtiers and flatterers, surrounded by the luxury and vices and scandals that to a great extent ruled in that court, she conducted herself with such prudence and good sense, that she was a constant example of modesty and wisdom, and made herself respected and loved by those very persons who were looking for something to blame in her. The throne and court went on becoming more and more shameful, the treasury was empty, the people exhausted, the public administration destroyed, and every thing under control of shameless ministers and their overbearing friends and followers.

The whole civil and moral order was in such danger that the great feudatories determined to oppose the public evils, and meeting, in the province of Avila, with the Archbishop of Toledo, who, by the extent of his territories, his great revenues, and his rank as primate of all Spain, was the foremost in power and authority, at their head, declared the crown forfeited by the vicious and impotent Henry. They refused to recognize the infanta Juana as his daughter, public opinion openly proclaiming her illegitimacy, and hailed as king the young Alfonso,—about twelve years of age,—whom, by consummate art, they had gained possession of from the king. At the first news of the rebellion, the king and queen fled in fear to Salamanca, not knowing how far the unexpected flames might spread, and took with them the infanta Isabella. The majority of the nobles, however, rose in their defence, and the hopes of the rebels received a sudden check. But Henry, with his usual imbecility, left

them time to recover their breath, and they rose again with increased power and hatred, and he found himself in a worse position than at first.

Seeing the sad state to which his king was reduced, the aged Don Pedro Giron, grand master of Calatrava,* thought he saw a chance to satisfy his ambition, and offered him sixty thousand pieces of gold and three thousand knights at his own expense, in exchange for the hand of the infanta Isabella. And the king accepted the unworthy offer. When the young princess learnt of the base bargain by which her brother had sold her heart and her rank, she resisted, wept, and prayed to escape from the shame of such a marriage; but, an orphan and alone, she must surely have yielded in the end to the tyrannical policy which required her sacrifice, had not the timely death of the ambitious old man freed her from the impending danger. Subsequently, she was able to elude the watchfulness of her guards, and joined the insurgents, and was safe with her brother Alfonso. At his death she shut herself up in a convent in Toledo, where she was visited by a deputation of the rebels, with the Archbishop of Toledo at their head, hailing her as queen. Abhorring a fratricidal war, she refused their offer, and prudently waited till she could ascend the throne without stain of infamy. A second deputation insisted and begged, but she was immovable. King Henry was touched by her unexpected loyalty, and became reconciled to her. The rebels having no longer any one around whom they could rally, sought to make peace with Henry, and he, more yielding than was suited to the royal dignity, not only received them into favor, but appointed their chief, Villena, his prime minister. Isabella's noble conduct could not win for her the right of disposing of her heart and hand according to her inclinations. There were four suitors for marriage with her: Alfonso V of Portugal and Ferdinand of Aragon, for themselves, and Louis XI of France and Edward IV of England, for their respective brothers. The king of Portugal was a brother of Queen Juana, wife of King Henry, and with this pretext of relationship, Villena, the all-powerful minister and favorite, seconding the queen's wishes, labored with all his energy to overcome Isabella, and make her accept Alfonso. But there was

* Calatrava is a small city near the Guadiana, and head-quarters of a military order of knights founded about 1158 for service against the Moors.

under this another and a stronger motive which caused the queen and her followers to desire the marriage at any cost, and the king, who was a docile instrument in the hands of his wife and ministers, permitted himself to be bent to the side they wished. We have seen that public opinion openly denied Henry's paternity of Queen Juana's only child; and Villena himself, when he was at the head of the rebels, had set out in a solemn instrument a declaration of the child's illegitimacy. The infanta Isabella had rejected the rebels' offers, and refused to become queen against her brother Henry; but there was reason to fear that her sentiments might be different when upon his death the queen's daughter Juana, believed, or suspected, by all not to be his child, should be called to succeed him on the throne. Political foresight and maternal affection counselled the queen to provide in time against future danger; and the best provision seemed to be the marriage of Isabella with Affonso, as it might be hoped that he would not rise against his sister's child; whilst another husband, not so restrained, would find it for his interest and his honor to defend his wife's rights. Villena, hoping by excess of present zeal to cause his past felony to be forgotten, aided the queen with all his strength; but Isabella clearly saw their aim in that marriage, and opposed it so firmly that all their seductions and artifices to bend her young mind were fruitless. She had chosen, instead, in her own heart, her royal cousin Ferdinand of Aragon, and, through trusty messengers, was secretly in correspondence with him on the subject. When the queen and Villena, foiled in all their attempts and hopes, discovered the nature of this underhand treating with Ferdinand of Aragon, they saw the danger, and determined to use force as their only means of bringing the obstinate girl to yield to their wishes. They secretly sent a body of troops to snatch her from her retreat and secure her person under careful guard. But a thousand eyes guarded the persecuted princess, and watched every word and step of the hated queen and the traitor Villena; and the troops had hardly set out before the Archbishop of Toledo and the Admiral of Castile, at the head of three hundred cavaliers, took her away and bore her triumphantly to Valladolid. Here the main difficulty was in the meeting of Ferdinand and Isabella to celebrate their marriage, because numerous guards had been stationed all along the frontier with strict orders to arrest the prince of Aragon if he attempted to cross. Ferdinand was, therefore, obliged to conceal his rank, and with-



out parade or attendants, stealthily, alone, and at night, to cross those provinces as if in a hostile country, passing for the servant of two of his officers disguised as merchants. After he had passed the most dangerous places, he was provided with a small escort, with which he presented himself at Valladolid to his betrothed, and the marriage was celebrated in that city the 19th of October, 1469. The time which other newly married persons pass in careless enjoyment, was for them full of anxiety and trouble. Isabella, a persecuted fugitive, had brought her husband no other dowry than a claim to the future succession to the throne of Castile; and Ferdinand, coming in disguise, without the necessary means of subsistence, at a distance from his states, with public credit shaken and suspected, amid the uncertain changes of factions and wars, was obliged to apply to the greediness of money-lenders for the means of supporting himself and his bride with their little retinue, or else to accept from his wealthy followers an assistance which savored greatly of alms, and was always a humiliation for his proud disposition. And to make matters worse, the future seemed dark to them, for without money to sustain and strengthen their party, instead of gaining ground they were steadily losing, and even Valladolid, which had received them with affectionate hospitality, and celebrated their union with feasts and rejoicings, fell into the hands of Henry, and they were forced to take refuge in the little town of Dueñas. In the midst of these fears, the king went to Segovia, and Beatrice de Bobadilla, who had been the companion of Isabella in her infancy, at the time of her confinement in Arevalo, and was now married to Cabrera, the commandant of the fortress of Segovia, distressed at the sorrows of her fugitive friend, took advantage of the marquess of Villena's absence, and boldly presenting herself before Henry, with all the eloquence of a feeling heart, spoke of the wrongs and sufferings of his unhappy sister. Henry, who was not bad at bottom, and almost always followed the right course when left to the impulses of his own heart, was greatly affected by the sad picture painted by the marchioness. Isabella was at hand, but concealed during the interview, and at the moment her brother seemed the most affected in her favor, she came forward, accompanied by the Archbishop of Toledo, and threw herself, in tears, at Henry's feet, supplicating him to forgive her if she had not been able to still the voice of her heart, and had chosen for her husband the man in whom all her affections centred.

Her brother embraced and forgave her. A few months after this second reconciliation Villena died, and the monarch, who had been a docile instrument in his hands, was not long in following him to the grave.

Upon the death of Henry, the name of Isabella was again called on, and this time she accepted the offer, and the greater part of the kingdom proclaimed and acknowledged her as Queen of Castile. But her assumption of the crown was very near bringing about an irreparable rupture of the good understanding that had previously existed between her and Ferdinand; and it was mainly due to the good sense and prudence of Isabella that this calamity was averted, which we know, from subsequent events, would have produced the most disastrous effects, not only for Spain, but for the world. Ferdinand, relying on his own claim to the crown of Castile, and the custom of the court of Aragon, where females were excluded from the throne, wished to govern the kingdom alone and in his own name, whilst Isabella maintained her own title and the contrary custom of the court of Castile. The counsellors and courtiers of the two kingdoms, each for his own side, begged and insisted that they should remain firm, and not sacrifice the honor and interest of the crown to the other's ambition; and minds became embittered, passions enkindled, and the dispute grew more and more bitter. Seeing no possibility of coming to an amicable settlement, as neither side could be moved from its claims, it was decided to submit the matter to arbitration, and Cardinal Mendoza and the Archbishop of Toledo were appointed to the delicate office. The decision was rendered in presence of the grandees of both kingdoms, and was in favor of Isabella. Ferdinand, whose pride was seriously offended by the decision of the arbitrators, spoke of abandoning the queen and returning to his paternal states; but Isabella, drawing close to him and lovingly pressing his hand, with words full of affection showed him what an injury the rupture would be to them both and to their subjects, and, on the other hand, what an advantage it would be to all, if, each ruling his own states, they should mutually aid each other, uniting two names, two crowns, two sceptres, in a single will. The king, says the ingenuous chronicler who relates the event, marvelling at the queen's prudence, greatly lauded her words, and ended by

telling her that she deserved to reign not over Spain alone, but over the whole world.*

Ferdinand, by those words, paid his wife a compliment ; but unwittingly expressed a judgment, which history has fully confirmed, of the merits of that great woman.

The arrangement proposed by Isabella was that each should continue to govern his own dominions, in complete independence of the other, but in both kingdoms judicial sentences should be rendered in the name of both ; every public act should be signed by both, the royal seal should bear the joint arms of Castile and Aragon ; coins should be stamped with the effigies of both, and proceeding thus, as one mind and one will in every thing, they should take the common title of Kings of Spain. For the rest, each reserving to himself full administration and political freedom, they should proceed by mutual agreement, as two faithful allies whose interests were closely bound together,—whose wants, tendencies, and aspirations were the same.

The harmony of this agreement, through the mutual respect and deference which the two kings always manifested towards each other, continued unchanged until death, through the long period of thirty years, and their reign was the most glorious period of Spanish history. Completely freeing their country from foreign domination, and uniting in one national body provinces divided for ages, they promptly provided remedies for the sad heritage of evil and shame which divisions and slavery had left, and raised Spain to be the first nation of the world. Each had a large share in this work, and deserves great credit ; but, beyond question, the chief honor is due to Isabella.

Deep penetrations, clear views, strong judgment, were the mental endowments of Ferdinand. His temper was always even, his piety fervent, and so indefatigable was he in business, that it was said he rested himself by working. A nice observer and an accurate judge of men, he was unequalled in the science of the cabinet. Such is the picture given of him by the Spanish historians of his time. Nevertheless, it has been well remarked that he had more of bigotry than religion ; that his ambition was craving rather than magnanimous ; that he made war less for glory than for mere dominion ; and

* Valles, *Sumaria Adicion*, cap. v.—Introduction to the chronicles of Fernando del Pulgar.

that his policy was cold, selfish, and artful. He was called the wise and prudent in Spain ; in Italy, the pious ; in France and England, the ambitious and perfidious.*

The picture, on the other hand, which contemporary authors have left of Isabella, although it breathes throughout the enthusiasm of the writers, has been fully confirmed by time. Without losing any of the softer graces of her sex, she had as much firmness and activity as any man ; and not only took part in councils where wars and battles were discussed and planned, but, dressed in armor, she rode on horseback and followed the camp ; and in the fatigue of the march, or the danger of battle, the main spur and encouragement to the soldiers' heart was the sight of their beloved queen in their midst. Often in the uncertainties and doubts of war and battle, it was she that by her energy and the firmness of her measures, decided the successful issue of events. At the same time, with a truer sense of glory, by the elevation of her mind and by her conscientious truthfulness, she modified the too subtle and interested policy of Ferdinand. Her character shines still brighter in civil history. An affectionate mother to her subjects, her first thought was to reform the laws, and heal the wounds made by the long intestine wars ; and ever intent on the happiness of her people, although she was the soul of the war against the Moors, and aimed with all her might to purge her kingdom of the infidels ; still, with maternal tenderness, she sought to mitigate, as much as possible, the rigorous measures which had to be taken against those of her subjects who refused to obey the law of the Gospel ; and the Moors and Jews had no better advocate in the royal council than the queen herself. In moments of freedom from business, she gathered round her persons of the greatest learning, and consulted them as to the most suitable means of advancing science and literature ; and it was through her protection that Salamanca won a place among the most famous universities of that age. She invited to her court, by rewards and favors, men of literature and science, not only from Spain, but from other nations ; and the mass of books, original and translated, published under her reign, some by ladies of the highest nobility, attest the impulse she gave to study, and the honor in which she held learning.

* Irving, *Columbus*, bk. ii, ch. i.—Voltaire, *Essai sur les Mœurs et l'Esprit des Nations*.

Isabella was one of the purest and most beautiful characters in the pages of history, says Irving ; and Montalembert calls her the noblest woman that ever reigned over men.*

Accepting the agreement proposed by Isabella, Ferdinand at once applied himself with vigor to assist his wife in subjecting those parts of Castile which had not acknowledged her as queen, but had declared for the infanta Juana. The details of that war are wholly foreign to our story, and it is only necessary to mention that Affonso V, king of Portugal, Isabella's rejected suitor, but afterwards betrothed to the infanta Juana, took the field with 20,000 men to support the claim of his niece and promised bride, and a French army invaded Aragon on the side of the Pyrenees. But Ferdinand displayed such activity in that war ; and Isabella, riding through the principal cities dressed as a warrior, and putting herself at the head of her troops, by her example aroused on all sides such courage and enthusiasm ; and the people, nobility, and clergy showed such zeal in her cause, that after many changes fortune inclined in her favor,—the Portuguese met a terrible rout at Toro, Juana shut herself up in a convent to pay the penalty of a fault not her own, and France concluded an honorable peace.

Free from the thought of enemies, Isabella devoted herself entirely to repair the evils produced in the kingdom by the sad rule of her father and brother. She reorganized the government and army, replenished the treasury, restored discipline and morals among the clergy, and, by her inflexible justice, spread such fear among evil-doers of high and low degree that, in three months alone, more than fifteen hundred criminals quit the country, for fear of falling into her hands, and being called to account for their misdeeds. When she beheld every thing proceeding in regular order, she turned to the great national and religious war against the Moors, which had always held the first place in her heart and her mind ; so much so, that she had it inserted in her marriage contract with Ferdinand, as a duty they were to perform at the first opportunity.

In the eighth century after Christ, the African Moors, like a river overflowing its banks, issued from their frontiers and threw themselves on the neighboring coast of Spain ; and, owing partly to their

* Irving, *Columbus*, book ii, ch. ii.—Lucius Marineus Siculus, *De Rebus Hispaniæ Memorabilibus*, lib. xxi.—Fernando del Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*.—Cura de Los Palacios, cap. cc.—Peter Martyr, *Let.* vi, 287.

valor, and partly to the discord of the Spaniards, they were so successful in the war that in a few years nearly all Spain fell under their sway, and only the mountain rocks of the Asturias saw displayed the opposing banners of Christ. That little edge of land held out against all their assaults, till the worm of discord entering among the Moors, the Christians came out from their fastnesses, and from field to field, from castle to castle, through a thousand battles and a thousand slaughters, incessantly repelling the invaders, they fought a glorious war of eight centuries, and forced the whole power of the Moors in Spain to shut itself up in the little kingdom of Granada.

During the reigns of Isabella's father and brother, the old hatred of the Moors had become softened, and a certain intercourse between the two peoples had gradually grown up, and especially the young people, more free and open, began to fraternize in their studies, their sports, and loves, with the descendants of those against whose fathers their fathers had sucked in with their mother's milk an undying hatred, and whom they had thought it their highest glory and greatest duty to fight and die in exterminating ; and Moors had even been accepted as soldiers and officers in the Christian armies. In the enthusiasm of her patriotism and religion, Isabella wished to revive former times, to complete the work of her ancestors, and, freeing that last border of Spain from the hated dominion of the foreigner, restore complete independence to the country, and plant on the proud Alhambra the victorious standard of Christ.

She made her preparations gradually, patiently, and carefully, and when the time was ripe, and she uttered her war-cry, Spain answered with a general rush, and every class and rank, men and women, young and old, according to their ability, contended in zeal and activity in their country's redemption and the final triumph of the Cross in Spain over the detested standard of Mahomet.

The city of Cordova was appointed for the meeting-place of the Christian armies. The arrival of Columbus in that city to present his project to the Catholic kings, was just at this time, when the flower of the Spanish armies with the court, was gathered there for the decisive battle against the last bulwark of the Crescent. The moment could not have been less suitable ; for, when every heart and every mind was bent on finishing the work of eight centuries of heroism and sacrifice, there was little prospect of the favorable re-

ception of a novel enterprise that to most men seemed ridiculous and foolish.

By an entry of Columbus in the journal of his first voyage, it would appear that he arrived in Cordova on the 20th of January.*

CHAPTER IX.

Columbus proposes his enterprise to the court of Castile.—He is made to wait a long time, on account of the war.—His wretched life at Cordova.—Birth of his son Fernando.—Audience of the kings (1486).

THE city of Cordova at that time had the double aspect of a great military camp on the eve of a battle, and of a populous capital where the seat of government and the residence of the head of the state had attracted all the interests, the wealth, the luxury, and the life of the nation. There were the two kings with their two courts, the flower of the nobility of the two kingdoms, the choicest portion of the Spanish clergy; thousands and thousands of brave young men burning to lay hands on the hated Mussulmans; arms, and chariots, and horses, and all the innumerable accompaniments of an army at war; and an infinite variety and richness in the fashion, the color, and the luxury of their garments, in conformity to the chivalrous taste of the times, and the custom of Spaniards at all times fond of the display of rich dress and bright colors. Lost in such a multitude and such extravagance, Columbus, poorly dressed and unnoticed, set out to seek Father Talavera. Fra Fernando de Talavera, of the congregation of the Hierosolymites, and prior of the monastery of Prado in Valladolid, in his character of the queen's confessor, took an important part also in the councils of the crown, according to the custom of the times; and we may, therefore, well imagine that on the eve of the final struggle against the Crescent, his heart and thoughts were wholly intent on matters of war, especially so as the interests

* *Journal of the First Voyage*, Jan. 14, 1493.

of religion were no less concerned in the result than those of the state. He was learned enough, but only in sacred science; in matters of geography and cosmography he had not gone beyond the usual opinions that reigned supreme in the schools. It is easy to imagine the effect that would be produced on such a man under such circumstances, by the visit of a poor, unknown foreigner with a project clashing with and destroying opinions which his learned mind had held to be indestructible and indisputable! He thought him wild and half beside himself, and, under pretext of the press of business occupying their Highnesses at that time, tried to get rid of the trouble, and sent Columbus away.*

Columbus was not discouraged, but patiently waited for a more fitting time, losing, meanwhile, no opportunity of making himself known and of finding some way to the accomplishment of his plan. "But," says Oviedo, "because he was a foreigner, plainly dressed, and with letters of recommendation only from a friar, no one believed him, or rather, no one listened to him; and this refusal to listen was the greatest grief his soul endured."†

Early in the spring, the king left to lay siege to the city of Loxa, and the queen remaining at Cordova, had the whole burden of providing for the exigencies of the war. On the 12th of June, she also left for the field, and joined her husband at the siege of Moclin; after which they repaired to the Vega of Granada, prosecuting the war with unremitting vigor. They had barely returned to Cordova, to celebrate their victories by public rejoicings, when they were obliged to set out for Galicia to suppress a rebellion excited by the count of Lemos. Thence they repaired to Salamanca for the winter.

Columbus remained at Cordova, waiting, with resignation and confidence, till time and his own persistent efforts should gain him friends and protectors; and in the mean time, to secure a livelihood, he took to making geographical charts and globes, and copying manuscripts.‡ But his labor was so ill rewarded that he came to want even the necessaries of life; § and but for the generosity of Alonzo de Quintanilla, who gave him food, he would have perished by star-

* Salazar, *Crónica del Gran Cardenal*, lib. i, cap. vi.

† Oviedo y Valdes, *La Historia General y Natural de las Indias Occidentales*, lib. ii, cap. v.

‡ Curato de Los Palacios, cap. xviii.

§ Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, cap. xxx.

vation before the arrival of a more fitting time for considering his proposal.*

While at Cordova, his second son, Fernando, was born, of Beatriz Enriquez, a lady of that city, of a noble, but reduced, family. In his will he thus speaks of her: "I direct and command my son Don Diego . . . recommending to him Beatriz Enriquez, mother of my son Don Fernando, that he furnish her with a decent livelihood, as a person to whom I am under a great burden; this is to be done to ease my conscience, for it weighs heavy on my soul. The reason why, may not be recorded here."† What is the mystery concealed under these words? The thought occurs at once of an irregular relation between Christopher Columbus and Beatriz, the memory of which tormented the conscience of the poor old man on his death-bed. Spotorno, Humboldt, Navarrete, Irving, the historians generally, have so interpreted them. But Count Roselly de Lorgues, with copious arguments, maintains that those words have quite a different meaning. In reply to him the old charge has been repeated. And so, with replies and counter-replies, the supporters of each opinion growing in numbers, a fierce battle has been carried on over the matter, in which passion has too often usurped the place of strength, and self-love of the love of truth. For my part, no question met with in the life of Christopher Columbus has occupied me so much as this; in none have I more industriously weighed the arguments on both sides; nor has it happened to me on any other occasion after repeated study, to find myself so uncertain and perplexed what judgment to give. Therefore, as I am constrained to come to some decision, I feel that the weight of the arguments and inductions brought forward by Roselly and his adherents, fails to outweigh those obscure words. This fact is certainly a most unpleasant disturbance of the harmony of the blameless life of Christopher Columbus. But whoever remembers the unbridled licence of the times in matters of morals, and the shamelessness of the example set by every class and condition of persons, especially by those most conspicuous by rank and dignity, will not raise too much scandal if even a virtuous and religious man was for a time defiled with that pitch. For it was certainly of short duration. The constant running after the court at a

* Herrera, dec. i, cap. vii.—Oviedo, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. ii, cap. iv.

† Navarrete, *Col. Dipl.* Suplem. prim., n. lxii.

distance from Cordova, the voyages and discoveries which subsequently kept Columbus occupied in the New World, the increasing fervor of his religious sentiments, the relations of Fernando with society and the court, all show that the cause was not continued nor the criminal relation prolonged.*

The foolish and ignorant, but conceited, multitude spoke of Columbus and his fantastical project with sarcastic jeers; but the dignity of his manners and the earnest sincerity of his language, gradually won for him friends among the more intelligent and influential persons in the city. Of these, on account of their position and the important part they afterwards took in support of his undertaking, history makes honorable mention of Alonzo de Quintanilla, the minister of the treasury of Castile, Mgre. Antonio Geraldini, the Pope's nuncio, and his brother Alessandro, preceptor to the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella.† Their influence obtained for him an audience of the great *Cardinal of Spain*, as D. Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, was called. He was a man skilled in every sort of affairs, and so powerful at court that Peter Martyr facetiously calls him "the third king of Spain;" and no measure of importance was decided on in peace or war without first consulting him. To his great experience in affairs, Mendoza joined vast and profound learning, but like nearly all the learned men of his time, he knew but little of geography and cosmography; and when the theory of Columbus was first stated to him, he took umbrage at once, suspecting that it involved heterodox opinions, incompatible with the form of the earth as described in the Sacred Scriptures, but, with his sense and acuteness, a few explanations of Columbus were enough to satisfy him. After that, he was all attention, and his broad and deep mind, accustomed to penetrate at a glance the most difficult and intricate questions, easily entered into his ideas, and saw the immense benefits religion and Spain might derive from the undertaking. From that moment he became a kind and valu-

* Cf. Roselly de Lorgues, *Histoire de la Vie et des Voyages de C. Colomb*; *Le Satan*; *L'Ambassadeur de Dieu*, &c.—G. A. Dondero, *L. Onestà di C. Colombo*.—For the other side, see A. Sanguinetti, *Vita di C. Colombo*; *La Canonizzazione di C. Colombo*; *Intorno alla seconda edizione della Storia di C. Colombo pel Conte Roselly de Lorgues. Lettera*, &c.—Many others have taken part in the discussion, but to give all their names and the works they wrote, would exceed the limits of a note.

† Salazar, *Crón. del Gr. Cardenal*, lib. i, cap. lxii.

able friend, and using at once for his benefit, his great influence at court, he obtained for him the long-desired audience of the Spanish sovereigns.*

Columbus appeared in the presence of the two sovereigns with modest, but open, demeanor, as became one who believed himself, as he expresses it, "ambassador of the Most High, chosen by his infinite goodness, to announce the enterprise of the Indies, to the most potent princes of Christendom, laboring unceasingly for the propagation of the Faith."† Invited to speak of his project, he explained the physical grounds which proved it certain; he told the signs he had collected, and the authors that concurred in his opinion; he described the lands that would be found, the multitudes of people dwelling there, and the glory and power that their acquisition would bring to Spain; and, finally, with religious fervor, showed how many souls now in darkness, and ignorant of the true faith, would be won for God, if the truth of the Gospel could be carried to them. It was a noble and holy undertaking to free Spain from the Moors, and plant the Cross of Christ over all the land; but here, the infidels were some hundreds of thousands—there, hundreds of millions; here, a small kingdom, and there, unbounded empires. Such a work had not been seen within the memory of man; what glory, then, would not Ferdinand and Isabella acquire among men, and what merit in heaven, if they should venture to carry it to execution? And to venture was all that was needed; for as to the result, there could be no doubt.

The words of Columbus could not fail to make a deep impression on the hearts of the sovereigns. Isabella was naturally inclined to every thing noble and beautiful that was for the glory and benefit of the country and of religion. Ferdinand was greedy, and ambitious to increase his power and wealth, and to enlarge the numbers of his people and the limits of his kingdom. Both found in the proposal of Columbus enough to create the greatest interest. But Ferdinand, with his usual cold circumspection, would not pronounce judgment himself, however solid seemed to him the scientific basis of the reasoning of Columbus; but determined to submit the matter to the examination of competent judges, and then govern himself by their reply.

* Oviedo, lib. ii, cap. iv.—Salazar, lib. i, cap. lxii.

† Commencement of the Letter of Columbus to the Catholic kings from Trinidad, July 7, 1503.

He, accordingly, commissioned Father Talavera to convene a board of the best cosmographers and astronomers of the kingdom, to be presided over by him, which, after listening to Columbus, should examine and discuss his proposal, and report their judgment on it to the king.*

CHAPTER X.

Columbus before the Council of Salamanca.—The Dominican friar Deza, his protector (1487).

THE conference for the examination of the project of Columbus was held at Salamanca (where the court was passing the winter), the seat of the largest and most flourishing university in all Spain.†

Columbus, who had been laughed at by the ignorant multitude, both noble and plebeian, and pointed at as a visionary, because his undertaking was too far beyond the short reach of their minds, heard with delight that he was to set forth his project in a learned assembly, and waited with confidence his appearance before them; for he supposed that, accustomed to lengthy study and profound meditation, they would be able to follow the thread of his reasoning, and as the matter was clearly evident to him, he had no doubt of producing the same conviction in the minds of others. But mindful of the scurvy trick they had played him in Portugal, and fearful of similar treatment in Spain, he determined not to lay himself too open, but to say only so much as was necessary to show that the undertaking was possible and easy.‡ But matters turned out, through the fault of the times, very differently from what he expected.

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xii.

† It is supposed that the conference took place in the winter of 1487-88, because the siege of Malaga ended August 18th, 1487, and the conference occurred during the residence of the Catholic sovereigns in Salamanca the following winter.

‡ Fernando Colombo, cap. xii.—Las Casas, vol. i, cap. xxix.—Herrera, dec. i, lib. i, cap. vii.

Geographical and cosmographical studies were even more backward in Spain than in other countries, because there had been no special occasion to make their want felt, or to create an interest in the great movement which these studies, as we have seen, had received in that age; and also because the thoughts of all Spaniards were concentrated on the national war against the Moors still within their country. The number of those who had cultivated these sciences was, consequently, limited, and those few were mere superficial repeaters of the opinions of the ancients, whose authority took the place for them, of argument. As Talavera was, therefore, unable to fill his board with geographers and cosmographers, he called in the most celebrated professors of the other sciences. This was a serious injury to Columbus, for the worst judge possible is a learned and scientific man attempting to decide a matter of which he has only a mere smattering; because, carrying into his decision the same certainty and authority which he knows he is entitled to in his own science, he supplies the defect of argument by the weight of his authority. "Columbus, too," says Irving, "appeared in a most unfavorable light before a select assembly: an obscure navigator, a member of no learned institution, destitute of all the trappings and circumstances which sometimes give oracular authority to dulness, and depending on the mere force of natural genius. Some of the junto entertained the popular notion that he was an adventurer, or at best, a visionary; and others had that morbid impatience which any innovation upon established doctrine is apt to produce in systematic minds."* And we may imagine the doctoral gravity with which they examined from head to foot that obscure foreign sailor, who had the vanity to believe he had discovered what profound geographers and cosmographers, with all their genius and study, had never thought of.

The conference was held in the Dominican monastery of St. Stephen's, where, it seems, Columbus was kindly and hospitably entertained.†

What a striking spectacle, exclaims the author just quoted, must the hall of the old convent have presented at this memorable con-

* Irving, *Columbus*, ii, ch. iii.

† Remesal, *Hist. de Ohiapa*, lib. ii, cap. vii.—Muñoz, *Hist. del N. Mundo*, t. i, l. ii, cap. xxvi.

ference ! A simple mariner standing forth in the midst of an imposing array of professors, friars, and dignitaries of the church, maintaining his theory with natural eloquence, and, as it were, pleading the cause of the New World !* “ We are told that when Columbus began to state the grounds of his system, explaining the physical and mathematical arguments on which it was founded, only the Dominicans paid any attention, because, accustomed to apply their minds to the abstract theological truths they taught, they found no great difficulty in following his subtile reasoning ;† the rest, finding it fatiguing to follow him through the labyrinth of figures and calculations, let him go on as he pleased, remaining intrenched behind this argument, that after the study of so many profound philosophers and learned cosmographers concerning the earth’s form, and after so many bold and expert navigators, for thousands of years, had traversed it in every direction, it was absurd and ridiculous to suppose it was reserved for an obscure mariner to reform the language of science and the experience of so many centuries. With that they shut their ears to his arguments, and only waited for the moment to give their vote for condemning his proposal as foolish and not to be entertained.

History has preserved some of the arguments used against Columbus ; but they are so silly and ridiculous that one would like to believe they were preserved on this account ; for it seems impossible that an assembly containing the flower of the wisdom of Spain could put forward nothing better than ridiculous vulgarities. They began by denying the basis of Columbus’s argument, that the earth is spherical in form. To his mathematical proofs of his thesis, they replied by quoting from the Bible passages which they thought contradictory of his doctrine ; and confirmed their opinion by the authority of saints and ecclesiastical commentators who had given these texts the same interpretation. It was enough for a mathematical proof of Columbus to appear in the slightest degree opposed to a text of Scripture or the commentary of one of the fathers of the church, to make them retire behind an impregnable wall, crying : Impossible, Impossible ! Thus, for example, David had said, *Extendens cœlum sicut pellem*—Thou stretchest the heaven like a hide,‡ that is, as the commentators explain it, like a

* Irving, *Columbus*, l. c.

† *Hist de Chiapa*, c. vii.

‡ Psalm ciii. 3.

curtain or tent-cover, which the ancient pastoral peoples constructed out of hides of animals ; and they concluded that if the heaven was stretched like a hide, the earth must be flat, and not spherical.

There was still stronger opposition to admitting the existence of antipodes—a stumbling-block for some, matter of ridicule for others. The two authorities they brought against this opinion were Lactantius and St. Augustine. The former, forgetting for a moment the gravity belonging to a learned and profound writer, has left this low tirade against the existence of antipodes : “ Is any one so foolish as to believe that there are men who walk with their feet higher than their heads ? or that things that with us lie down, there hang inverted ? that vegetation and trees grow downwards ? and that rain, snow, and hail fall upwards to the earth ? The origin of this error is clear to us. For they [false philosophers] are always deceived in this way. For when they take a false principle, misled by its semblance of truth, they necessarily fall into all the errors that follow from it. They thus fall into many absurdities, for those things must necessarily be false which harmonize with falsehood. After accepting the first principles, they do not examine the conclusions, but defend them in every way ; whereas, they ought to judge the truth or falseness of the principles by the consequences that follow from them. . . . Thus, the rotundity of the earth led to those pendulous antipodes.”* This trifling method of combatting the opinions of others, was well suited to many of these judges ; for when reason and argument fail, there is no stronger weapon than ridicule, to win the victory even in the most serious and holy matters. But the objections founded on St. Augustine’s authority were more serious, because they seemed to imply a suspicion in matters of faith. He had declared—“ As to the fable that there are antipodes, that is to say, men on the opposite side of the earth, where the sun rises when it sets to us—men who walk with their feet opposite to ours, that is on no ground credible. And, indeed, it is not affirmed that this has been learned by historical knowledge, but by scientific conjecture, on the ground that the earth is suspended within the concavity of the sky, and that it has as much room on the one side of it as on the other ; hence, they say that the part which is beneath must also be inhabited. But they do not re-

* Firmiani Lactantiæ, *Divin. Instit.*, lib. iii, cap. xxiv.

mark that although it be supposed or scientifically demonstrated that the world is of a round and spherical form, yet it does not follow that the other side of the earth is bare of water; nor even, though it be bare, does it immediately follow that it is peopled. For Scripture, which proves the truth of its historical statements by the accomplishment of its prophecies, gives no false information; and it is too absurd to say, that some men might have taken ship and traversed the whole wide ocean, and crossed from this side of the world to the other, and that thus even the inhabitants of that distant region are descended from that one first man."* Nicholas de Lyra had also expressed himself to the same effect. The opinion of the holy doctor was like a bomb thrown into the meeting, and the more timid among them, astounded at the ideas of the bold innovator, began to murmur the name of the Inquisition.

Perhaps we should have had the spectacle of Christopher Columbus before the terrible Torquemada, if Mgre. Alessandro Geraldini, of Amelia in Perugia, a man of learning and piety, but reasonable and prudent, who was present at these sittings, had not overheard their menacing expressions against Columbus, and, seeing the danger he was in from their blind fanaticism, run to report to the great Cardinal the condition of things, and, by interposing that great man's authority, persuaded those over-zealous persons, that though St. Augustine was a wonderful saint and doctor, still, he had never been made authority in geography and cosmography.†

Others who went into the cosmographical argument, said that the world was of such immense size that it was not credible that three years of navigation would suffice to reach the eastern limits to which he proposed to sail; and in support of their opinion they adduced the authority of Seneca the rhetorician, who, in his *Suasoriarum Liber*, sets forth that many wise men differ as to whether the Ocean is infinite or not, and are in doubt whether it is possible to sail over the whole of it; and if it is navigable, whether inhabitable lands would be found on the other side, and whether it would be possible to reach them. Others, again, admitted the spherical form of the earth, and the possibility of a habitable hemisphere diametrically opposite to ours, but they brought up the chimera of the ancients, and main-

* St. August., *De Civitate Dei*, lib. xvi, c. ix.

† Geraldini himself relates the fact in his *Itinerarium*, lib. xiv.

tained that it would be impossible to arrive there, in consequence of the insupportable heat of the torrid zone. They added, on the authority of Epicurus, that this globe of ours was only inhabitable in the northern hemisphere, the only part that was covered by the heavens, the other half being a chaos, an abyss, a boundless ocean. Still others went so far as to admit the spherical form of the earth, that even the lower hemisphere was inhabitable, and that it was not impossible to reach it by navigation ; but how, they asked, could a vessel get back ? What wind would be strong enough to force it upwards over that sort of a mountain which the rotundity of the earth must present to one desirous of coming in sight of the stars of our heavens ?* To answer and refute these follies and the other arguments brought against him, was no trouble to a man like Columbus, who for years and years had applied his best mind almost exclusively to this question, and there was not a corner, so to speak, in geographical study which he had not examined into ; and in reply to an extravagant opinion of some rhetorician or philosopher, he had his own experience, and the studies and calculations of the most renowned mathematicians, geographers, and cosmographers, from the most ancient times down to his own. Nor less vast was the field which was opened to him in answering and refuting the objections drawn from the Bible and the holy fathers, showing that most frequently the sacred writers were not to be understood literally, but figuratively, in a language suited to every intellect ; that the decisions of saints and commentators, how great soever their learning and sanctity, must be taken as the expression of their personal opinion, but could not claim the authority of dogma, especially in matters of fact like navigation and geography. He had, besides, a lively and ardent faith, as we shall more fully show hereafter, that his undertaking, so far from being in opposition to the Bible, was foretold in its prophecies, and that he had been sent from God to complete this great work. His heart and mind full of this conviction, his discourse, by degrees, warmed into enthusiasm. "What must have been the majesty and force of his words," says Irving, "as, casting aside his maps and charts, and discarding for a time his practical and scientific lore, his visionary spirit took fire at the doctrinal objec-

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xii.—Giuseppe Acosta, *Storia Naturale e Morale delle Indie*, lib. i, cap. i



FATHER DIEGO DE ZEZA
PROTECTOR OF COLUMBUS
AT SALAMANCA

tions of his opponents, and he met them upon their own ground, pouring forth those magnificent texts of Scripture, and those mysterious predictions of the prophets, which, in his enthusiastic moments, he considered as types and annunciations of the sublime discovery which he proposed.”*

But vain were all his efforts against the ignorance and superstition too deeply rooted in the examiners' minds, the pedantic pride of many of whom made it seem like a humiliation for them, who had passed their life in study and were esteemed the lights of Spanish learning and science, to yield to an obscure mariner without even the recommendation of an academic title. “Before Columbus,” says Las Casas, “could make them comprehend his theory and arguments, he had to remove from the minds of his audience the erroneous principles on which their objections were founded,—a more difficult task than that of teaching the doctrine.”

But his words were not altogether without effect, and the character of the few whom he won to his side, partly compensated for the number of those who obstinately persisted in their superstition and ignorance. We have said that from the beginning only the Dominican fathers, professors of theology, from their habit of concentrating their minds on the profound abstractions of their science, paid attention to, and followed, his calculations and argument. One of these was Father Diego Deza, young in years, but already the highest professor of theology, and preceptor to the infanta, heiress to the throne, and who afterwards, step by step, rose to be Archbishop of Toledo, primate of all Spain. He entered at once, in the first session, into the reasoning of Columbus, and not only listened with attention, but took up his cause, and, with the help of the other friars, labored earnestly to calm the noisiest of his colleagues, and to persuade them that propriety and justice demanded that they should listen to the reasoning with serious attention. Some of the principal members of the learned assembly agreeing with him, the discussion was afterwards continued in a proper manner.†

“Occasional conferences took place, but without producing any decision. The ignorant, or what is worse, the prejudiced, remained obstinate in their opposition, with the dogged perseverance

* Irving, *Columbus*, bk. ii, ch. iii.

† Remesal, *Hist. de Chiapa*, lib. ii, cap. vii.

of dull men ; the more liberal and intelligent felt little interest in discussions wearisome in themselves and foreign to their ordinary pursuits ; even those who listened with approbation to the plan, regarded it as only a delightful vision, but one which could never be realized. Fernando de Talavera, to whom the matter was especially entrusted, had too little esteem for it, and was too much occupied with the stir and bustle of public concerns, to press it to a conclusion ; and thus, the inquiry experienced continual procrastination and neglect.”*

CHAPTER XI.

Further applications at the court of Castile.—Columbus follows the court in its campaigns.—He takes part in the siege of Baza.—Is invited to return to Portugal.—His attempts with the dukes of Medina-Sidonia and Medina-Celi.—He determines to quit Spain.—Father Juan Perez of Marchena prevents him, and visits the queen in his behalf (1487-92).

EARLY in the spring of 1487, the two sovereigns again took the field against the Moors, and laid siege to Malaga ; and, as usual, Father Talavera accompanied them. The departure of the president suspended the sittings of the board before it had reached any decision. The conferences were not wholly without profit to Columbus. They served to display his genius and erudition, and to prove even to those who looked upon him as a dreamer, that he possessed a wonderful depth of thought, science, and learning, not only for an obscure sailor, but for any one whomsoever ; and the two sovereigns, thereafter, treated him with increased respect. In his trouble and uncertainty, he kept always near the court, in the hope of a definite decision ; and, in fact, often when military movements permitted a little leisure, it was resolved to take up the further consideration of his proposal ; but it seemed fated that whenever the court showed a willingness to consider it, the hurry and bustle were renewed, and

* Irving, *Columbus*, bk. ii, ch. iii.

his affair swept aside. He was treated with great consideration by the court, when invited to follow it in order to take part in the promised conferences; lodgings were provided him, and a sufficient allowance for his expenses. Entries of the amounts so paid are still preserved in the account-books of Francisco Gonzales of Seville, one of the royal treasurers. These entries help us in following the movements of Columbus while accompanying that warlike court-errant.

The first, dated May 5th, 1487, is in these words: "Paid to Christopher Columbus, foreigner, 300 maravedis, on account of their Highnesses' service."* A like sum for the same purpose appears under date of the 3rd of July following. But the pressing duties of the siege of Malaga left no leisure to attend to him. At last, on the 18th of August, of the same year, after a long and obstinate resistance, that strong bulwark of the Moorish power fell into the hands of the Christians, and nine days later 4000 maravedis were paid to Christopher Columbus, by order of their Highnesses, to enable him to repair to the court.† After the fall of Malaga, the sovereigns returned to Cordová, but had scarce arrived before the pestilence broke out in the city, and they suddenly moved to Saragossa. Columbus joined them there, as is proved by an entry, in the margin of the book referred to, of another sum of 4000 maravedis paid him in that city, October 15th, 1487; but his hopes were not realized, the king and queen being too busy with public affairs of the greatest importance; and his matter was put off to another time, until all that winter had passed, and the war was renewed in the spring of 1488, and the court left for the field. In the beginning of autumn, military operations being suspended, as usual, the court retired to Valladolid, and remained there till the end of winter. We have no proof that Columbus accompanied the court in these successive movements; though an entry of 3000 maravedis in June, 1488, makes it seem likely.

In the following February, 1489, Isabella and Ferdinand went from Valladolid to Medina del Campo, where they received an embassy from Henry VII of England, and concluded an alliance with him, and in May returned to Cordova. Here, at last, it seemed as though the case of Columbus, so long held in suspense, would be taken up in earnest.

* Navarrete, *Col. Doc. Dipl.*, n. xi.

† L. c.

Diego Ortiz de Zuñiga, in his *Annals of Seville*, relates that their Majesties wrote to the city of Cordova, ordering lodgings to be prepared for Christopher Columbus, who was coming to join the court there for an important conference. There still exists a royal order, under date of Cordova, the 12th of May, 1489, which is perhaps the letter meant by Ortiz, directed to the magistrates of all the cities, commanding them to furnish Christopher Columbus and his attendants with free lodgings, as he was employed in the service of their Majesties.* The city of Cordova, says the annalist, complied with the order, but the intended conference was postponed, being interrupted by the fresh campaign against the Moors, "in which the same Christopher Columbus took a glorious part, giving proof of the great valor which accompanied his wisdom and profound conceptions."† The campaign referred to by Ortiz was the famous siege of the strong city of Baza, which was almost the last blow struck at the Moorish power before attacking it directly in its capital. The siege lasted six months, and was one of the most glorious, on both sides, of all the events of that glorious war. The principal merit of the final victory of the Christians over the Moors, is commonly attributed, by historians, to the energy of Isabella.

The insignificant advantage gained in the frequent encounters with the Moors, the great scarcity of food, and, above all, the diseases produced in the army by the continual rain, had discouraged the Christians, and their leaders urged King Ferdinand to raise the siege and wait for a more favorable season to renew it. The king was on the point of complying, but before deciding so important a matter, he wrote to his wife, who was then at Jaen. Isabella replied that it was not to be thought of, and promised to send reinforcements, munitions, food, money,—every thing that was necessary. Carrying out her promise, she pledged all her jewels and her gold and silver plate to the cities of Barcelona and Valencia, and as no one durst undertake to transport the supplies to the army, on account of the wretched condition of the roads, and the constant danger from Moorish ambuscades, she took the whole management on herself. She hired six thousand pioneers to level the roads, open passages, and build bridges; she took fourteen thousand sumpter mules, organized

* Navarrete, lib. ii, doc. n. iv.

† Diego Ortiz de Zuñiga, *Ann. de Sevilla*, lib. xii, an. 1489.

a regular transport service, and thus revived the hopes and courage of all. Inasmuch as there was some want of union among the leaders, and the army had not that unity of command and exactness of discipline, which are the first and most necessary conditions of success in warfare, the siege was drawn to a great length, and there was nothing to augur an immediate change. Isabella, to remedy this, appeared in the field in person, and by her presence and energy soon changed the face of things. Bad feelings were stifled, jealousies silenced, and every one remained at his post, and all strove, by zeal in performing their duties, to be recognized and distinguished by their adored queen. The siege thus took a regular direction, and such force and activity were displayed on every side that the enemy lost all hope of holding out long against so tenacious and unwearied an adversary, and foreseeing the evils of a forced surrender, without waiting to be reduced to extremity, came to terms, and on the 22nd of December, 1490, Muley Boabdil, the elder of the rival kings of Granada, surrendered in person to Ferdinand and Isabella all his remaining possessions and all his right to the crown.*

There was great rejoicing throughout Spain over this victory, and solemn feasts were prepared in Seville, where their Majesties were expected on their return from the captured city. They entered Seville in February, 1491, in such triumph as is seldom recorded in history. The bustle and turmoil of the war, and the subsequent rejoicings, equally hindered attention to the concerns of Columbus; and when the feasting was over, and quiet restored, preparations were begun for the marriage of the eldest daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella,—who bore her mother's name,—with the prince Dom Affonso, heir apparent of Portugal. Then came the nuptials, celebrated, with unusual splendor, in April of the same year, and between festivity and war, one obstacle was removed only to make room for another.

We have no means of telling whether the subsidies to Columbus were continued from the treasury all this time, though it is likely they were. But these subsidies supplied his need only at intervals, when he was summoned to follow the court; at other times, although he always helped himself by making maps and charts, he was often reduced to great straits and was obliged to apply to the generosity of

* Fernando del Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, parte iii, cap. cxxi.

others for assistance. The worthy Father Deza and Alonzo de Quintanilla, in whose house he was entertained for a time, are particularly mentioned as assisting him, and subsequently, the wealthy duke of Medina-Celi. "This nobleman," says Las Casas, "knowing that Columbus was in want of ordinary food, ordered that he should have what was necessary. *To such distress had he come!*" But it was not material want that tormented him the most; his greatest suffering was in his mind. It was at this time that he had to bear the sarcasm and insult which he complained of many years afterwards. The light and ignorant treated him as a madman; the ill-disposed called him an adventurer; and the very children pointed him out with their fingers, and touched their foreheads, to indicate that he was not right there.*

This succession of hopes and disappointments continued till the winter of 1491, when all Spain prepared with increased energy for the campaign of the next spring, when the Christian armies would attack Granada and complete the liberation of Spain from the detested Moors, by the capture of their capital. The Moors, foreseeing that the next campaign would be for them a question of life or death, were not less active in their preparations for the great struggle than the Christians; their co-religionists of Africa talked of passing the strait to their aid; and every thing was done to inflame the religious and race hatred of the fanatic Mussulmans against the Christians.

Considering the times and the political condition of both parties, there could be no doubt of the ultimate triumph of the Christian arms; but who could tell how long the Moslem fury and desperate love for their fire-ides would dispute the victory with the Spaniards? Columbus knew that it was vain to expect their Majesties to pay any attention to him when once they were engaged in the campaign, and saw that his matters would be interminably postponed if he waited till the end of the final struggle; he, therefore, made a last attempt, and set all his friends to work to obtain a decisive answer from Ferdinand and Isabella before the campaign opened. Their efforts, this time, were successful. The board was reconvened, and it decided that the project of Columbus was vain and impossible, and that it did not become such great princes to engage in an enter-

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, cap. xxx.

prise which had no other foundation than the few weak arguments of the man that proposed it.* The decision was made by the majority of the board ; but, as we have seen, some of the more learned members had sided with Columbus, and all these, Father Deza in particular, while the decision was pending, had exerted all their influence with the sovereigns in his favor. Between the two opinions, that of the majority and that of the more select portion of the board, Ferdinand and Isabella found themselves in great uncertainty and were perplexed with which to decide. They determined to leave a way open for a different course in the future, and ordered Father Talavera to reply to Columbus, who was then at Cordova, that the constant cares and enormous expenses of the war prevented their engaging for the present in any new enterprises ; but in time a better opportunity would be found for examining his proposal at more leisure.†

Knowing that Talavera had always been averse to his project, Columbus was not satisfied with the friar's answer, but went in person to Seville to hear his sentence from their Majesties' own mouths ; but it only differed in being a little more kind and gentle.

It was certainly cruel, after making him run back and forth through Spain, and holding him for five years in constant expectation and promise of an answer, finally yielding to his urgent prayers, to tell him that the best they could say was that he should wait indefinitely !

During that long period of expectation and hope, Columbus had received invitations from the kings of France, England, and Portugal, to visit their courts for the purpose of treating with them about his undertaking. The king of Portugal's letter is dated the 20th of March, 1488, and in it John II, while inviting him to return, gives him assurance of protection against any civil or criminal action pending against him,—which doubtless has reference to debts Columbus had left in Portugal on his departure, and to the claims his creditors had made in court against him. The letter was addressed : “ To Christopher Columbus, our especial friend.”‡ Of the offers of France and England we know only the bare fact, but

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xii.

† Id. cap. xii.

‡ The original of this letter is preserved in the archives of the dukes of Veragua, descendants of Christopher Columbus.

none of the details. But Columbus now regarded Spain as his new country, and it was painful to him that another nation should gain the benefit of his undertaking.

It was his desire, says his son Fernando, to give this undertaking to Spain because he had been there so long, waiting for the acceptance of his proposal, and there his sons were born, that he now considered himself a true subject of that country. That is why he rejected the offers made by other princes, as he says in one of his letters to their Highnesses: "To serve Your Highnesses, I have refused to be involved with France, England, or Portugal, letters from the princes of which nations, Your Highnesses have seen by the hands of Doctor Villalano."*

Persuaded that he had nothing to hope for from the court, and at the same time unwilling to deprive Spain of the advantages of his undertaking, before accepting the hand held out to him from other countries, he determined to try to engage in his enterprise one of the wealthy and powerful feudatories of the nation.

There were many grandees in Spain, who, in respect of their vast territories and great revenues, were more like petty sovereigns than vassals. Foremost among them were the dukes of Medina-Sidonia and Medina-Celi, whose estates were like principalities, lying along the sea-coast, with good harbors and fleets. They served the crown more as allied princes than as vassals, furnishing armies on land and fleets on the sea, which they led in person, or by captains of their own appointment, and they always jealously maintained their right to dispose of their own forces. As a sample of what they could do, it is sufficient to say, that at the siege of Malaga, the duke of Medina-Sidonia, besides furnishing a large body of knights, sent 20,000 gold pistoles,—which in our present money would amount to more than 100,000 dollars,—and also a hundred ships with men and provisions. Their households equalled in magnificence that of the sovereigns themselves; squadrons of vessels of every sort met in their harbors; and their palaces were constantly filled with persons of merit and young cavaliers of noble birth, to be reared under their auspices, in the exercise of arts and arms.†

Columbus applied first to the duke of Medina-Sidonia, and had fre-

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xii.—Zuñiga, *Ann. de Sevilla*, lib. xiv.

† Irving, *Columbus*, bk. ii, ch. ix.

quent interviews with him ; the duke seemed much pleased with the splendid prospects held out, but their very splendor aroused his fears, and, suspicious of being involved in a visionary's dreams, he drew off, and the fine expectations of Christopher Columbus again came to nothing.* Then Columbus applied to the duke of Medina-Celi, and every thing looked favorable ; the duke entered fully into the views of Columbus, accepted his proposal, and was on the point of granting him three or four caravels, when suddenly he became afraid that so great an undertaking, and one so important in its results, might offend the sovereigns, and in this doubt he changed his mind, saying it was too important for any but a sovereign power. At the same time, he counselled Columbus not to desist in his application to the king and queen, offering to exert all his own influence in his favor.† But Columbus had no heart to run again after the court, and, judging the future by the unhappy past, he finally determined to quit Spain. He resolved to seek the king of France, to whom he had already written on the subject, and if not favorably received by him, to go to England to find his brother Bartholomew, whom he had sent thither for this purpose years before, and from whom he had received no tidings for a long time.‡

With a saddened heart and a soul distrustful of the future, he set out for the monastery of Santa Maria de la Rabida, to thank the worthy Father Perez of Marchena for his kindness, and to take his son Diego to Cordova, where his other son was. How was he to provide for their support and education ? God never abandons any one, and he placed his hopes in him ; but the father's heart was ready to burst.

Father Perez gave him the best reception one friend can give another ; he sympathized with him in the humiliations he had suffered and the obstacles he had met with, but encouraged him to hope for better things, since it was impossible that his undertaking should not have a glorious end.

But the fact that so learned a board, after such long examination, had declared it vain and impossible, set the good friar to thinking

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xii.—Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. i, cap. viii.—Gomera, *Hist. Ind.*, cap. xv.

† *Letter of Medina-Celi to the Great Cardinal*.—Navarrete, tom. ii, doc. xiv.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xi, xii.

‡ Fernando Colombo, cap. xi, xii.

whether he had not, perhaps, been mistaken in his judgment in the matter. Sending for his friend Garcia Fernandez, and for Martin Alonzo Pinzon, a sea-captain of great authority, whose name was known not only in Palos, his home, but throughout Spain, he resumed with them the discussion of the project of Columbus more attentively and carefully than before; and the deeper he went into it, the more he was persuaded that the undertaking was most likely, indeed certain, to succeed, and that every effort should consequently be made to prevent its glory from passing to another nation.

Then Father Perez, doing violence to his habitual reserve, resolved to apply directly to the queen. He, accordingly, wrote her a letter, urgently calling her attention to the great loss it would be to Spain, if Columbus should carry the benefit of his undertaking to some other country, and sent it to her by one Sebastian Rodriguez, a pilot of Lepi, a very shrewd and intelligent person; and in the meanwhile Columbus was invited to remain in the monastery of La Rabida to await the result. Isabella was at this time at Santa Fé, a city which her genius and zeal had improvised for her country's glory and that of religion.*

Rodriguez started at once for Santa Fé, and managed to reach the queen and present the letter, and within a fortnight he returned with her answer to La Rabida. The queen thanked Father Perez for his confidence in her, and his concern for the glory and prosperity of Spain and of religion, and invited him to come to her at once at Santa Fé, and in the mean time dissuade Columbus from leaving the country until he received further answer.

This letter reached the monastery of La Rabida towards night-fall. Who can imagine the delight of Columbus and Father Perez? Columbus went out immediately to look for a mule for the father guardian, and as soon as he had procured one, the good Perez lost no time in mounting it, and, leaving his monastery a little before

* Isabella was encamped with her army before Granada, the Moorish capital, pressing the siege of that last refuge of the infidels, when, one night, the tents suddenly caught fire, and the whole Christian camp was destroyed. The Moors were emboldened by the accident, and the Christians much disheartened; but Isabella, to show both what her intentions were, instead of pitching new tents, had the soldiers build a substantial walled city; for that was to be her residence until Granada was taken. Her people wished to call it by her name, *Isabella*, but she said, "No, call it *Holy Faith*."

midnight, travelled alone through a country lately conquered from the Moors, and still dangerous, and only halting when a short rest was strictly necessary, he soon arrived at Santa Fé.*

The relation of Father Perez to the queen still retained something of the confidential friendship of the confessor towards the penitent, although the good friar had long since resigned that office ; and Isabella retained for him the respect which a truly religious person always feels for the director of his conscience, especially, when to the dignity of the office are joined such holiness of life and reputation for learning as Father Perez possessed. The good friar was, consequently, free to express his thoughts with the earnestness inspired by science, patriotism, and religion. He spoke of the profound knowledge of Columbus, his long experience in matters relating to the sea, of the study he had made of the proposed undertaking, and of the reasons which made its success not only probable, but certain. He discoursed enthusiastically of its advantages to Spain and of the glory it would cast on all generations to come ; and his words seemed those of an inspired prophet, when he reminded her of the souls in those distant regions falling into perdition from ignorance of the faith, and with ardent fancy counted the conquests which the Church of Christ would make amongst the millions living in the darkness of idolatry.

The marchioness of Moya, the queen's favorite, seconded the friar's words with all the ardor and vivacity of her sex.†

It was probably the first time that Isabella had heard that project supported with so much zeal and eloquence. She felt the force of the friar's arguments, and, warm and generous as she was, embracing in her greatness of heart the grand hopes which he had caused to glitter before her mind, she requested that Columbus should be sent again to her, and as he must be poorly enough off for money and raiment, she directed the friar to get from her treasurer 20,000 maravedis, which he was to remit to Columbus so that he might provide a mule for the journey, and decent apparel for his appearance at court.‡

* From the deposition of Juan Rodriguez Cabezudo, the man who lent the mule to Columbus.—Navarrete, Col. Dipl. supl. prim. *Pleyto, Pregunta primera.*

† *Retrato del Buen Vasallo*, lib. ii, cap. xvi.

‡ Most of these details are taken from the deposition of Garcia Fernandez,

Father Perez drew the amount from the treasurer, and forwarded it to the physician Garcia, for safer delivery. Columbus scarcely took the time to purchase the necessary clothing before starting on his journey.

CHAPTER XII.

More disagreements.—The knight of Santangel renews negotiations by his noble pleading.—Definitive agreement.—Treaty of Santa Fé. Preparations in the port of Palos for the expedition.—Fear of the sailors at the idea of a voyage in the Dark Sea.—The example of Pinzon overcomes their resistance.—Character of the ships and crews (1492).

WHEN Columbus reached the court, the queen, with exquisite delicacy, placed him in the hospitable charge of Alonzo de Quintanilla, knowing their friendship for each other; but she could not at that time grant him an audience or attend to his business, because her whole attention was directed to the great event then at hand. The city of Granada, the last stronghold of the Moors, after a long and formidable siege and a desperate defence, battered by the army of the Christians without, and torn by discord and civil slaughter within, opened its gates to the Spanish monarchs, and beheld its last king abandon the proud Alhambra, and depart, sad and disheartened, on his way to exile. The power of the Moors, enduring for 778 years, disputed for so many generations, conquered in so many wars, and always terrible in Spain, then fell for ever, never to rise again. The event was awaited with great anxiety for several days, and the most illustrious of the nobility and clergy hastened from every part of Spain to attend the two monarchs in this last and decisive triumph of a war, which had lasted nearly 800 years,

made many years afterwards in the suit between the crown and Don Diego, the son of Christopher Columbus.

for their country and their religion. When the news was brought to the camp that Granada had fallen, there was a general outburst of clapping of hands, cries of joy, songs, hymns, and thanksgiving to God ; and many bronzed and scarred faces were bathed in tears at that crowning triumph of the labors and struggles of so many generations of heroes and martyrs.

On the 2nd of January, 1492, the Moorish king, Boabdil el Chico, with downcast head and humble bearing, yielded up the keys of his capital, and Father Talavera, in the joy of the victory created Archbishop of Granada, was the first to enter the conquered city in the name of religion, and raise the victorious standard of Christ on the proud Alhambra. Ferdinand and Isabella made their solemn entry on the 6th, the feast of the Epiphany. All eyes were turned to them, all regarded them as more than human, and it seemed as though Heaven had sent them for the salvation and building up of Spain.*

In this state of things and of men's thoughts, Columbus could not expect attention ; it was proper for him to wait till the excitement passed and matters resumed their regular course. This time the event fulfilled the promise, for the two sovereigns were hardly free from the distractions of those rejoicings before they gave their first attention to him and his project ; and it being now settled that his proposal should be accepted, a commission was appointed to treat with him as to the price to be paid for his discovery. Talavera was also president of this commission. At the very outset insuperable difficulties arose. Columbus, whose mind was filled with the grandeur of his enterprise, demanded terms corresponding with the importance of what he was offering to Spain ; and the others, who looked at the matter from an entirely different point of view, considered his demands not merely exorbitant, but even impudent.

He demanded the rank and title of admiral over the whole Ocean, with all the powers and privileges enjoyed by the admirals of Castile in their districts, and of viceroy and governor of all the islands and continents discovered, with the same authority and jurisdiction as was granted to the admirals of Castile and Leon, with power to make and to revoke at his pleasure all the executive and judiciary appointments ; that the governors of the provinces and cities should be selected from the three persons he should nominate for each ; and

* Mariana, *Hist. de España*, lib. xxv, cap. xlviij.

that in whatever part of Spain the affairs of the Indies he discovered should be treated of, or trade carried on with them, he should appoint judges to decide all controversies in reference to that commerce and those affairs. In addition to the pay and emoluments of the said offices of admiral, viceroy, and governor, he claimed one-tenth of every thing found, bought, exchanged, won, or existing within the boundaries of his admiralty, only deducting the costs of acquisition ; and that all these titles, privileges, and prerogatives should be hereditary in his family, according to seniority.*

These demands excited the indignation and contempt of the entire commission for the impudent adventurer, whose pride had risen so high. They had seen him the day before waiting hour after hour in halls and stairways, begging for a hearing, living almost like a beggar, accepting help from any that would bestow it ; and now he had the audacity to ask for offices and honors which would not only place him above all the nobility of Spain, but bring him so near the throne that he would almost rival the king in greatness and power. One member of the commission told him, with a sneer, that his requests showed great prudence, for, whatever might happen, he would be sure of enjoying the honor of a great command, and would lose nothing if his enterprise was a total failure. To this malicious insinuation, Columbus hastily replied that he was willing to furnish one-eighth of the expense, on condition that he should have one-eighth of the profits.

It is unnecessary to say that Father Talavera carefully reported to the two sovereigns the indignation and contempt of the commission for the impudent demands of Columbus, and labored to impress his own opinion on the mind of Isabella. Supposing that it was all true that Columbus fancied, and that it was possible to reach those pretended kingdoms of the West, the rights and privileges which he demanded were rather suited to place him on a level with their Highnesses, than to reward him for his labors, and make him their representative in those distant regions ; and if those islands and lands should be found to have no existence except in his fancy, to what ridicule would not their Highnesses be exposed for such costly credulity

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xiii.—In 1405 Henry III had appointed his uncle Don Alfonso Enrico admiral of Castile, with the most honorable and lucrative privileges ever granted by a king to a vassal. Columbus demanded that similar privileges should be attached to his position as admiral of the Ocean.

in the dreams of an adventurer ! And this, too, after the undertaking had been declared vain and impossible by a board composed of the most learned men of the nation !

Isabella was greatly perplexed between these arguments of her present, and the splendid discourse of her former, confessor, but either way the demands of Columbus seemed to her exorbitant. As she was inclined, however, to carry out the undertaking, she caused other conditions, more moderate, but still very honorable and profitable, to be offered to Columbus, but he was firm in their rejection. And so the negotiations were broken off.

A great cry has been raised against Columbus, charging him with putting his undertaking in endless jeopardy for the poor ambition of exalting his family. He certainly would merit reproach if for so unworthy a motive he had imperilled so grand a work. Eighteen years had now passed since his correspondence with Toscanelli, and in that time, what obstacles had he not had to overcome, adversaries to conquer, humiliations and anxieties to endure, before he found any one disposed to aid him in his project ! And now, when fortune opens to him the door leading to the triumph of his labors and his genius, he himself shuts it, in anger at not finding sufficient food for his ambition and his avarice. And that, too, when his years were on the decline, and there was less hope of time. But very different from the considerations of interest and ambition, was the motive of his firmness in insisting on his demands. We shall consider at greater length, in a future chapter,* to what grand ideal the mind of Columbus rose, and how the undertaking which he now proposed, was, in his thought, only a preparation for another, to carry on which successfully, would require the greatest revenues that could be derived from this present one. Then the proper answer will be given to this charge, and we shall see whence he derived such strength to start anew on the long and painful road he had travelled till now ; we shall see his lively, certain confidence that despite every thing and everybody, he should succeed in the great work to which he felt called by Heaven. True, he also aimed at creating a position for his sons ; but this was a secondary consideration, entirely subordinated to the other, which ruled all his desires and his whole conduct. Instead, therefore, of there being here any ground for a

* Book iv, ch. iii.

charge against him, there is a singular proof of unshaken firmness, a sublime trait of self-denial, sacrificing himself and all that he had, to what his conscience told him it was his duty to fulfil.

Determined, therefore, to attempt and suffer every thing rather than, by accepting unworthy terms, to compromise the great end which he felt in his conscience was annexed to his discovery, he took leave of his friends, and, early in February, 1492, left Santa Fé, to proceed to Cordova to see his children, and from there to journey directly to France.*

The few real friends Columbus had at court, who had thought all was won when he was recalled by Isabella and asked to name his conditions, hearing now that the negotiations were completely broken off, and that he was taking leave of them, perhaps never to meet again, were exceedingly grieved at this unexpected turn of affairs. Among them was the same Luis de Santangel, receiver of the ecclesiastical revenues of Aragon, whom we have already mentioned as among the first who befriended Columbus on his coming to Cordova. Considering the great loss Spain would suffer if Columbus was allowed to depart, he hastened to the queen, and obtained admission to her presence. The gravity of the case, and his zeal, gave him courage and eloquence, and, with a frankness not usual in a courtier, partly beseeching, partly lamenting and respectfully blaming, he said: "that he was greatly astonished that her Highness, who had always shown the greatness of her mind in every important affair, should now fail to undertake one where the risk was so small, and the service of God, the exaltation of the church, and the gain of glory to the kingdom and people of Spain were so great. And here was Christopher Columbus going to offer his undertaking elsewhere, and other princes would enjoy the glory and advantages which the sovereigns of Spain rejected. What a sorrow would it not be to her, what a mortification, to have refused the demands of Christopher Columbus, when she should hear his name resounding through all Europe for his wonderful discovery! How justly would her people complain that she had deprived them of such glory and benefits, and left other nations to enjoy this good fortune! They laid the blame of the disagreement on the pride and immoderate greed of Columbus; but what had he asked for that

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xiii.



should excite such wonder, and complaint of the boldness and impudence of his demands? He asked to be paid for his labor, if he succeeded in fulfilling what he had promised; and he promised to bestow on Spain islands, kingdoms, seas, treasures, and nations, without number; if his undertaking came to nothing, he asked nothing; and he not only risked his life in the dangers of the voyage, but he also offered to share the expense of carrying it out. And this was called unbounded pretension! this was impudence! this was regarding only his own pride and ambition! Some of those learned men said that enterprise was impossible, but the convincing arguments brought forward by Columbus proved quite the reverse; and this was proved, too, by his readiness to make the voyage, and his liberality in bearing a part of the cost; and a man of so much study and experience of the sea was not influenced by appearances and the seductions of imaginary suppositions; but had his thoughts firmly grounded in scientific reasons. Even admitting that the voyage resulted in nothing, that would be no shame to the crown, as some pretended; but rather the direct contrary; for, if other princes had been highly lauded for merely attempting a step or two in the road of discovery, what glory would not their Highnesses gain if they boldly pursued the discovery of one of the greatest secrets of the universe? Nor should it be said that it was too uncertain, for in matters of so great importance, even a doubt ought to be cleared up; and to ascertain the truth of such doubt, any sum was well spent. And the sum asked by Columbus to procure and fit out a few ships was so trifling that any wealthy individual could bear it without inconvenience. Let her Highness, then, silence every other consideration, and listen only to her magnanimity, and not suffer posterity to think that the glorious Isabella, on the point of undertaking the greatest work ever imagined on earth, was withheld by the fear of risking the loss of a small sum of money.*"

Santangel's eloquent effort won a complete victory. Isabella was enkindled again by his words, and more determined than ever on the undertaking; and, casting aside all uncertainty and hesitation, gave her absolute promise that she would carry it out, accepting any conditions Columbus should impose; but she was forced to delay its execution for a while, until she had somewhat recovered from the

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xiv.

expenses of the late wars ; as soon, however, as she could, she would proceed with it.

King Ferdinand was very ill pleased with his wife's determination, and endeavored to cool her ardor and bring her back to the former counsel, by pleading the exhaustion of the public treasury, and the imprudence of incurring additional expense when the state was in such great need ; but she was now quite warm with the thought of that discovery, and fully resolved to attempt it. "Very well," she answered, "I will assume the whole burden of the cost, as queen of Castile ; and if it is believed that further delay may jeopardize the undertaking, I will pledge my jewels to raise the necessary funds."

The knight of Santangel availing himself of that generous outburst, said, "it was not necessary for her Highness to pledge her diamonds ; that he would take it on himself to find the sum necessary for proceeding at once with the undertaking." His offer was accepted, and, by Isabella's order, a captain of the guards started in all haste to overtake Columbus and bring him back to court. He overtook him at the bridge of Pinos, two leagues from Granada, as he was sadly and thoughtfully continuing his way. Columbus hesitated for a while whether to return or not, having learnt by too long experience how easily fresh delays and difficulties arise, but assured by the messenger of the queen's resolve and of her determined will, turned his mule towards Santa Fé, giving thanks to God.*

The queen saw him at once on his arrival, and her gracious reception and free and open countenance dissipated all his doubt and uncertainty. The king, through deference for his wife, and at the instance of many persons, among others, of his favorite, the grand chamberlain, Juan Cabrero, abstained from all further opposition and gave his consent to the undertaking. His consent, however, extended no further than affixing his signature to the contract, as required by the fundamental pact regulating the relations of the two kingdoms of Castile and Aragon ; in other respects he was firm in refusing to meddle with the matter, and when the knight of Santangel wanted to borrow from the coffers of Aragon the money needed by Isabella for this purpose, he consented only on receipt

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xiv.—*Retrato del Buen Vasallo*, lib. ii, cap. xviii.
—Muñoz, *Hist. del Nuevo Mundo*, lib. ii, § xxx.

of a regular contract for reimbursement. In fact, the first gold brought by Columbus from the New World was used to repay the loan of Ferdinand to his wife, and he employed it in gilding the vaults and ceilings of his royal palace at Saragossa.* And, therefore, as long as Castile and Aragon retained their separate administration and government, only Castilians were allowed to live or trade in the New World, which was the exclusive property of Castile.†

All difficulties smoothed, the rights, privileges, and honors Columbus was to enjoy, being settled, his relations with their Highnesses took on a new phase; not only Isabella, but Ferdinand also, treated him with the respect due to the high office conferred on him. Encouraged by their amiability and confidence, he opened his heart to them freely, and spoke with ingenuous pleasure of his hopes and his plans, and, especially, of the great project he was revolving in his mind, that of renewing the gigantic contest abandoned after more than two centuries of fruitless effort on the part of Europe against the Crescent, to restore to Christendom the holy places where the mysteries of the world's redemption were accomplished; to which enterprise the discovery of a new way to the Indies was destined in his mind to serve as a preparation, by furnishing the means necessary to carry it out.‡

On the 17th of April, 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella, at Santa Fé, signed articles of agreement with Christopher Columbus, granting all his demands, as we have stated them. In accordance with his offer, an article was added by which he reserved the right to contribute an eighth part of the expense of that expedition and of any other he might thereafter undertake; and in consideration thereof he should be entitled to one-eighth of all profits therefrom. On the 30th of the same month, letters patent were made out and published in the form required by the customs of Spain, conferring on him, and solemnly confirming, the titles and privileges granted in the treaty, declaring the office of viceroy and governor hereditary in his family, and bestowing on him and his heirs the title of *Don*,§ which was equivalent to admission into the nobility of Spain.

* Argensola, *Anales de Aragon*, lib. i, cap. x.

† Oviedo, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. iii, cap. vii.—Charlevoix, *Hist. de Saint-Domingue*, livre i.

‡ Christopher Columbus, *Journal of his first voyage*. Introduction, and 26 December.

§ It should be understood that the title of Don, like the offices of admiral, vice-

Columbus was given a sort of credential or letter commendatory, to present to the Grand Khan, Prester John, or other Eastern potentate, in whose territories he might arrive. It was in these words :

“ Ferdinand and Isabella to the King

“ The Spanish Sovereigns have heard that You and Your subjects have a great affection for Them and for Spain. They are further aware that You and Your subjects are very desirous of information concerning Spain ; They accordingly send their Admiral, Christopher Columbus, who will tell You that They are in good health and perfect prosperity.

“ Granada, April 30, 1492.”*

From the time of drawing up the articles signed at Santa Fé on the 17th of April, official Spanish documents always use the form Colon, instead of the full surname Colombo, and that form afterwards became general throughout Spain. Prior to that time, and even for some time subsequently, the three forms, Colon, Colom, and Colomo, were used indiscriminately. The original form was very likely Colom, but as the ending in *m* was harsh, it was changed into *n*, for greater ease and softness of pronunciation. The form Colomo I believe to be an error of pronunciation and writing. Fernando relates that his father curtailed his surname in that fashion out of conformity to the country where he had gone to live and to found a new estate, and that thereby he distinguished his descendants from collaterals.† I can comprehend the second reason, but cannot see what conformity with Spain there is in Colon or Colom, which in Spanish have either no meaning, or one very different from that of Colombo.

The place selected for the assembling of the ships intended for the expedition, by a strange coincidence, was the little port of Palos, close to the monastery of La Rabida, where we first met Columbus after his arrival in Spain, and where he received his first encourage-

roy, and governor, was to take effect when the discovery was accomplished. In the royal note of June 20, 1492, Columbus is mentioned as *nuestro Capitan*. But he was himself so sure of what he promised, that on the very day of sailing, in the prologue to his journal of the voyage, he thanked the sovereigns for the grant of nobility, as something that had already taken effect.

* “ It must be confessed that to pretend that an unknown prince is concerned for the well-being of the Spanish sovereigns, is a curious piece of diplomatic affectation.” (Helps, *Life of Christopher Columbus*, ch. iii. Florence, Barbera.)

† Fernando Colombo, cap. i.

ment and aid in carrying out his intention. The reason of this preference given to Palos, rather than to one of the larger and richer ports of Spain, was because its inhabitants, on account of some disturbance that had taken place among them, had been condemned to keep at their own expense two caravels, with their crews and arms, at the service of the state for one year, and ready for sea on receipt of orders. Under date of April 30th, 1492, their Highnesses ordered the authorities at Palos to see that the two caravels were ready to sail in ten days, and to hold the vessels and crews at the disposal of Columbus. As, however, he had declared at least three vessels to be necessary, he was given full power to procure another.

Orders were also sent to all the authorities of Andalusia, commanding them to furnish all necessary supplies for the vessels, exempting from all imposts and duties whatever was bought for that purpose, and threatening severe penalties to all who should refuse to obey the orders of their Highnesses. The wages of the crews were fixed at the same rate as on ships of war, with four months' pay in advance, and all civil and criminal actions against such as should take part in the voyage were suspended during the expedition and for two months after their return. The crews were to obey Columbus as the lawful representative of the royal authority, and sail in any direction he commanded; only, he was forbidden to approach St. George da Mina in Guinea, or any of the lately discovered possessions of Portugal on the western coast of Africa and in the Atlantic. The admiral's certificate of good conduct, on their return, would be a valid discharge of their obligations to the crown and of the remainder of the sentence.*

Four days before Columbus left, to return to Palos to make preparations for his expedition, the queen wished to give him a special proof of the affection and care she would thereafter have for him and his, and, by a decree, executed on the 10th of May, she appointed Diego, his son, page to the infante Don Juan, heir apparent of the crown, with an allowance of 9400 maravedis for his support,—an office of great honor besides the rich allowance accompanying it, and to which only the sons of the most distinguished families were appointed.†

On the 12th of May Columbus took leave of the king and queen,

* Navarrete, *Coleccion de Viajes*, t. ii, doc. vi, viii, ix. † Id. t. ii, doc. xi.

and went to Palos to prepare for his departure. The monastery of La Rabida again extended hospitality to him, and his arrival was a great festival for all the religious there, who loved him as one of their own members, and since the part their guardian had taken in his concerns, regarded his triumph as their own.* The friendship of Father Perez was again of the greatest benefit to him on this occasion; for that excellent friar enjoyed a high reputation and authority, not only in the little town of Palos, but in all the places around, and it is unnecessary to say that he exerted all his energy in favor of his friend; and it added greatly to the esteem in which Columbus was held by the inhabitants, to know that he was supported and protected by the learned and holy guardian of La Rabida. On the 23d of May Columbus and his zealous friend went to the church of St. George in Palos, and a royal notary, with all the customary formalities, in the presence of the alcalde and magistrates and a great multitude of people, read the order of the sovereign, commanding the city to fit out two caravels and place them at the disposal of Columbus; and the magistrates declared their readiness to obey. A like publication was made in the neighboring city of Moguer.†

But when the nature of the expedition for which the vessels and crews were intended came to be understood, there was universal terror and weeping, every one regarding the men and ships that should venture on the *Dark Sea*‡ as inevitably lost. Frightful stories about that sea were current with the most famous geographers as well as the common sailors. Its water was said to be blackish, throwing up monsters of horrid appearance and ferocious nature, a single one of which was enough to drag any vessel into the deepest gulfs. Other monsters, not less frightful, flitted in the dark regions of that atmosphere, the greatest and most terrible of which was the *Roch*—a monster in the shape of a bird, so strong that, falling unexpectedly on even the largest vessels, by the mere strength of its beak it carried them aloft with their crews and freight, and there, in the region of clouds, crushed them in its talons, and human limbs, fragments of tables and victuals and armor fell in a confused shower, and the monsters of the *Dark Sea*,

* Oviedo, lib. ii, cap. v. † Navarrete, *Col. Doc. Dipl.*, n. vii; Supl. n. viii.

‡ That was the name given on the geographical charts to those portions of the Ocean extending indefinitely to the west.

with open jaws, received into their enormous mouths the palpitating members of the mangled wretches. Therefore, on geographical charts where the Dark Sea was laid down, there were the strangest pictures of birds and fishes, to represent the fearful danger of navigation in those parts. The Arabs, forbidden by the Koran to produce the image of any animal, put a black hand crooked, which, rising out of the depths of the Ocean, was bent towards the sea in the act of seizing a ship and dragging it down into the dark abyss. Hence the great terror which all felt when they learnt they must furnish men and ships for the expedition to that sea. Some trembled for themselves; others, for a father, brother, husband, friend; fear invaded the whole population of Palos, and its neighborhood. In vain the good Father Perez went down from his monastery almost every day, and, by preaching publicly, and privately exhorting first one and then another, tried to raise their spirits and convince them that the enterprise of Columbus was plain and easy, and that all those stories about the Ocean were fables and the result of heated imagination. It was time and breath wasted, for their fear was greater than their veneration for him.*

Nothing can be a stronger evidence of the boldness of this undertaking of Christopher Columbus, than the extreme dread of it in a maritime city like Palos, where all the inhabitants, as soon as they were old enough, took to the sea, and which boasted among its citizens some of the most adventurous navigators of the age.†

The royal order to fit out the two caravels was made on the 30th of April, and all should have been ready within ten days; and now June was half over and not a thing done. On receiving information of this state of things, the king and queen issued a decree, dated the 20th of that month, enjoining on all the authorities of Andalusia to seize forcibly any Spanish vessel they thought suited to the voyage of Columbus, and compel the officers and crews to sail with Columbus wherever he chose to go. Juan de Peñasola, an officer of the royal household, and a man of energy, was charged with the execution of this order, and allowed two hundred maravedis a day, which sum, besides the other penalties specified in the decree, was

* Fr. Pedro Simon, *Noticias de las Conquistas de Tierra Firme*, n. iii, cap. xiv — Navarrete, *Col. Doc. Dipl.*, Supl. prim. *Pleyto*, Pregunta xv.

† Irving, *Columbus*, book ii, ch. viii

to be paid by such as should prove obstinate. Columbus tried to avail himself of this order in Palos and in the neighboring city of Moguer, but his attempts were no more fortunate than before. There was nothing but dissension, strife, and complaint. The whole effect of Peñasola's extraordinary powers was reduced to the seizure of the caravel *Pinta*, belonging to Gomez Rascon and Cristobal Quintero, citizens of Palos. And matters might have continued, no one can say how long, without any better result, had not Martin Alonso Pinzon, a sea-captain, and one of the wealthiest and most influential persons, not only of Palos, but of all the country around, come forward and offered to take part in the expedition. Why Martin Alonso suddenly presented himself in this way, and on what terms between him and Columbus, his aid was proffered, we cannot tell. In the famous suit many years afterwards, between Don Diego, son and successor of Christopher Columbus, and the Spanish crown, we have many depositions of witnesses who try to clear up this fact, but there are many reasons why we should distrust their testimony. They testified concerning matters which happened in the infancy of most of them : they were persons like the son of Martin Alonso, his relatives, and friends,—and it was for their interest to lower the merits of Columbus, in order to help the reputation of Martin Alonso, seriously damaged by his sad ending, as we shall see ; they are in constant disagreement among themselves ; and much of the testimony is not only inexact, but plainly false. How are we to sift out what there may be of truth ? I will mention only the testimony of Ariaz Perez, Martin Alonso's son. He deposes that there was shown to his father, in Rome, by a librarian of the Pope's, a manuscript containing a passage of an historian of the time of Solomon, which said that the rich and extensive country of Cingango would be reached by sailing ninety-five degrees to the westward ; that his father brought home a copy of the book, intending some time to sail to those places ; and when Columbus came to Palos with his project of discovery, he showed it to him ; and Columbus was greatly encouraged by it in his design. Without recalling the interest that Ariaz had in putting his father's name in a good light, that historian of Solomon's time is enough to show what ground there was for his story ! Still, there must be some truth in his testimony, and reducing the matter to its probable limits, it seems to me that we are not far astray if we admit the following

supposition :—In a small place like Palos there is no doubt that Martin Alonzo learnt immediately of the project of Columbus, whether he was there on his arrival and first conference with Father Perez, or returned soon after ; for there is no knowing how often he was present and took part in the discussion of the project at the monastery of La Rabida. His name and experience would naturally indicate him as one to be called in to those learned discussions ; and Father Perez, who wished for the company and assistance of the physician Garcia, who was not a geographical scholar, could not do less than consult one who besides theoretical science carried such weight of practical knowledge. It becomes still more natural when we know that Martin Alonzo was most friendly with the physician Garcia. It is very likely that on one of his voyages, being in Rome and discussing questions of geography with that librarian, he mentioned the project which Columbus had put forth, of sailing westward to the island of Cipango ; and the librarian, in support of the project of Columbus, showed him the *Milione* of Marco Polo, who said of Cipango and the lands adjacent just what Columbus did. And if in connection with Marco Polo's book, they added conjectures on Ophir and Tarshis, and the voyages made by order of Solomon, Ariaz, relating things heard in his infancy, after such lapse of time, might be confused and speak of an historian of the time of Solomon. Martin Alonzo, who was an expert seaman, but not much of a student, would naturally be strongly impressed at finding such close coincidence with the idea of Columbus in an old book in the papal library, together with the librarian's support of it with his learning and authority. Returning to Palos, with the impression fresh in his mind, just as Columbus was laboring to get together his expedition, he threw himself into it with the boldness of a sailor, and unexpectedly became an anchor of safety for Columbus. The too seasonable apparition of Martin Alonzo presents no difficulty ; for the history of Columbus presents many others equally so,—and one of the most surprising peculiarities of his life is this sudden and unexpected appearance of the means of escape just when his condition is most desperate.

But however that may have been, the fact is, that Martin Alonzo's coöperation was really providential for Columbus, and a number of witnesses summoned in that suit, agreed that without Martin Alonzo it would have been impossible to fit out the vessels.

The family of Pinzon had risen by maritime commerce, the greatest part of its wealth was on the sea, and its name was respected and feared along the entire coast. It consisted of three brothers, Martin Alonzo, the eldest, Francisco Martin, and Vicente Yañez; all three had followed the sea, and had acquired the reputation of bold and expert navigators. Martin Alonzo was looked upon as an authority in all matters concerning the sea, and his judgment was held as a sort of oracle. His simply joining the expedition of Columbus had more effect than all the orders, threats, and penalties of the government. Martin Alonzo brought his brothers over to his view, and all three gave their names to Columbus; and as he and his brother Vicente Yañez had vessels and crews at their disposal, and exercised great authority in Palos, Moguer, and the neighborhood, their example was wonderful in its effect. Many of their friends and relatives followed them, and after that, those who were wanted for the ships, from a new-born courage, or resignation, or shame of appearing timid, ceased their opposition, and consented willingly, or with resignation, to leave. Nor is this all the benefit the Pinzons rendered Columbus. It is believed they supplied him with the money to pay the eighth part of the expense which, in a moment of noble indignation, he had offered to assume; and Vicente Yañez, the youngest of the three brothers, furnished one of the three vessels required for the voyage.*

But the more obstinate and timid, in spite of the authority and example of the Pinzons and their followers, continued to excite quarrels and disturbances, doing every thing to escape the necessity of the dreaded voyage. Their friends and relatives encouraged and helped them to hold out, and to study new means and tricks to delay their departure, to interrupt, and prevent in some way, the fearful undertaking. It was necessary to be all eyes to guard against them. One day Columbus came suddenly upon the caulkers at work on the caravel *Pinta*, which had been seized from Rascon and Quintero, and found them fixing the rudder in a way to appear perfectly secure, but sure to be shipped at the least jerk. They calculated by this means to secure their friends' safety, being certain that Columbus would be obliged to send that vessel back before they had sailed many miles. Columbus ordered them to do it over

* Herrera, dec. i, lib. i, cap. ix.

again, and rather than do so, they all absconded.* By using force when persuasion failed, and by a rigorous exercise of the extraordinary powers granted by the sovereigns, he gradually overcame the general prejudice and opposition ; so that finally, in the beginning of August, the three vessels were ready to sail, and only waited for a favorable wind.

The three vessels were ready ; but what vessels for such a voyage ! Only the Gallego—provided by the city of Palos—had a deck with fore-castle and cabin ; the others had only a small bridge fore and aft, and the rest was open, and the Niña carried only fore and aft sails ! Yet they were to cross the greatest distance on the ocean that any ship had ever sailed ; they were to venture on the unknown immensity of an ocean suspected and feared even by the mariner sailing close in to the shore ; they were to face unknown labors, chances, dangers ! What seamen would venture on a long voyage in such boats even now when the way on the ocean is so well known ? It is easy to explain why he risked his great undertaking with such wretched means. The difficulties of every sort and opposition he had met with during so many years, driving him to put up with any kind of a vessel for his attempt, bitter experience had taught him to reduce his demands to the lowest limits, and confine himself to what was strictly necessary, in order to facilitate the obtaining of his demand by the smallness of what he asked. And it is marvellous how perfectly the result corresponded with his foresight ; for, when he was offered two ships, he insisted that three were absolutely necessary ; and, in fact, of the three caravels with which he sailed, only one returned with him to Europe to bring the tidings of his discovery. And the difficulties he met with in finding those three vessels and manning them, show plainly enough how necessary it was for him to be contented with them, even if they did not answer all the needs of his voyage.

Columbus hoisted his admiral's flag on the Gallego, which he placed under the special protection of the Mother of God, and, changing its name, called the Santa Maria. The banner displayed the image of Christ crucified.†

The principal officers of the fleet embarked on the flag-ship.

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xvi.—Las Casas, lib. i, cap. lxxvii.

† Gio. Battista Ramusio, *Delle Navigazioni e Viaggi, Raccolta*, vol. iii, fol. i.

These were Diego de Arana, high constable, and a relative of Beatriz Enriquez, the mother of Fernando Columbus; Pedro Gutierrez, chief accountant; Roderigo Sanchez of Segovia, comptroller; Roderigo de Escovedo, royal notary; Bernadino de Tapia, historiographer of the expedition; and Luis de Torres, a converted Jew, skilled in many languages, and intended as interpreter with the nations they might discover. Of the others, the most notable, for the name they afterwards made themselves, were the mates, or pilots, as they were then called, Pedro Alonzo Niño, Bartolomé Roldan, Sancho Ruiz, and Juan de la Cosa; and Diego Mendez, Francisco Ximenes Roldan, and Diego de Salcedo, serving as squires to the admiral. The men in the Santa Maria numbered in all sixty-six persons, mostly from Seville or the province of Huelva, with two Genoese, one Englishman, one Irishman, two Portuguese, and one Majorcan; not one from Palos.

The Pinta, on the contrary, was wholly manned by inhabitants of Palos and Moguer, nearly all relatives and friends of the Pinzon family. It was commanded by Martin Alonzo Pinzon, and his pilots were Francisco Martin, his brother, Juan of Hungary, his cousin, and Cristobal Garcia Xalmiento. The surgeon of the Pinta was Fernandez Garcia, the friend of the father guardian of La Rabida, who, after working hard in favor of Columbus, wished to share in his enterprise, and went out with his old friend Martin Alonzo Pinzon. Gomez Rascon and Cristobal Quintero, owners of the Pinta, were obliged to go with their vessel, and made part of the crew. Officers and sailors were not more than thirty, all told.

On the Niña, likewise, all were from Palos and its neighborhood, friends and acquaintances of the Pinzons. It was commanded by Vicente Yañez Pinzon, the youngest of the three brothers, who had already won the reputation of being a bold pilot, which he increased in future voyages to the New World. The whole crew numbered twenty-four. The entire expedition consisted of one hundred and twenty persons.*

Before sailing, Columbus took his son Diego from the monastery of La Rabida, and entrusted him to Juan Rodriguez Cabezudo and the priest Martin Sanchez, both of Moguer, to be somewhat instructed

* Charlevoix, *Hist. de St.-Domingue*, liv. i.— Muñoz, lib. ii.



FATHER PETER BLESSED
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS
BEFORE HE EMBARKED
3 AM. FRIDAY AUGUST 3, 1492

in the duties which he was to perform at court as page to the heir apparent of Spain.*

Every thing being thus settled, he made his confession to his friend Father Perez, and strengthened his soul by Holy Communion for the fresh battles he was to engage in. All the officers and men followed his example, seeking strength and courage in religion for the frightful voyage they were undertaking, and the pious ceremony filled all hearts with sorrow and anguish, for it seemed like the preparation for the last journey from this world to the other life.†

CHAPTER XIII.

Departure of Columbus on his first voyage.—Adventures in the early part of the voyage.—First observation of the variation of the magnetic needle (1492).

THE memorable day of sailing was Friday, the 3rd of August, 1492. Before sunrise Columbus gave the order to proceed in the name of Christ,‡ silently descended the still waters of the Odiel, and waited behind the little island of Saltes for the morning breeze. At 8 in the morning they entered the open sea and steered for the Canaries, whence Columbus had determined to sail directly westward. From that time he was careful to write in his journal every detail of what happened on the voyage, the direction of the wind, the distance made with each wind and with what sail, the currents, and every thing he saw on the way,—birds, fishes, and other like signs.¶ Bartholomew Las Casas, who handled many papers written by Columbus, and used them in compiling his *History of the Indies*, made a compendium of this journal of his first voyage,

* Testimony of Juan Rodríguez Cabezedo in the suit between Diego Columbus and the Spanish crown.

† Oviedo, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. ii, cap. v, fol. vi.—Robertson, *Hist. of America*, book ii, § xvii.

‡ Oviedo, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. ii, cap. v, § vi.

§ Saltes is an island formed by two branches of the Odiel.

¶ Fernando Colombo, cap. xv.

giving us the whole prologue, or letter addressed to the king and queen, and occasionally some words marked with inverted commas ; and this compendium is all that remains of the journal. It is much to be deplored that, instead of an extract, he did not give us the journal just as Columbus wrote it ; but, considering that Las Casas was a person of good judgment and information, and that besides the papers of Columbus, which he had in his possession, he learnt many circumstances of this first voyage directly from his lips, we may be sure that his compendium gives us the substance of the account,—and this partly atones for the loss of the rest

The prologue is this :

“ In nomine D. N. Jesu Christi.

“ Most high, most Christian, most excellent, and most powerful princes, our lord the King, and our sovereign the Queen, of the Spains and of the islands of the sea, this present year, 1492 :

As soon as Your Highnesses^{*} had ended the war against the Moors ruling in Europe, which was terminated at the great city of Granada, where, on the 12th of January, in this year, I saw the royal standards of Your Highnesses, by force of arms, hung on the towers of the Alhambra, the castle of that city, and I saw the Moorish king, at the gates of the city, kiss the hands of Your Highnesses and of my lord the prince hereditary ; presently, in the same month, in consequence of the information I had given to Your Highnesses respecting the lands of India and of a prince called *Grand Khan*,—which name in our language means King of Kings,—and how he (or, at least, his predecessors,) had many times sent to Rome to ask for doctors of our holy faith, who might teach it to him, and how the Holy Father had never provided him with any, and that so many people were lost by believing in idolatries and accepting their sects of perdition : Your Highnesses, as Catholic Christians, and as princes, friends and promoters of the holy Christian faith, and enemies of the sect of Mahomet, and of all idolatries and heresies, thought of sending me, Christopher Columbus, to the aforesaid countries of India, to visit the said princes and peoples, and to observe their disposition and the means and method that could be used there for their conversion to our

* The monarchs of Spain at this time took the title of Highness, and only later (I believe under Charles V) assumed that of Majesty. Reading over my work, I find I have not paid enough attention to this, and have often used the two titles indiscriminately.

holy faith ; you directed me not to go by land to the east, as has hitherto been done, but to take, on the contrary, the way of the west, by which we have no positive knowledge that any one has ever passed until now. Therefore, after expelling all the Jews from your kingdoms and dominions, Your Highnesses, in the same month of January, directed me to sail with a sufficient fleet to the said countries of India.* For this purpose you bestowed many favors and conferred nobility on me, by which I was thereafter to be called *Don*, and I became grand admiral of the Ocean sea, and perpetual viceroy and governor of the islands and continents I should discover and conquer, and likewise of such as others should thereafter discover and conquer in the said Ocean sea, and decreed that my eldest son should be my successor, and so on from generation to generation for ever. I left the city of Granada, on Saturday, the 12th of May, of the same year, 1492, and came to Palos, which is a seaport, where I armed three vessels well adapted for such service, and spread sail from that port, well supplied with provisions and pilots, on Friday, the 3rd of August, of the same year, half an hour before sunrise, and followed the course of the Canary Islands, which belong to Your Highnesses and are situated in the said Ocean sea, to sail from there until I should reach the Indies, and there discharge the embassy of Your Highnesses with those princes, and accomplish all Your Highnesses had charged me with.

“ I purpose, in like manner, to describe this voyage most carefully, and to record day by day all I shall do and see and that shall happen to me, as we shall see further on. Also, great Prince and great Princess, besides purposing to write down every night all that happens during the day, and every day what occurs in the night, I intend making a new marine chart, on which I shall set down all the waters and lands of the Ocean sea in their proper places, with their bearings and positions ; and I mean to compose a book in which I shall represent the whole as in a picture, by latitude from the equinoctial line, and longitude from the west.

“ Above all, it is of the utmost importance that I should shun

* The decree expelling the Jews from Spain was not issued till the 30th of March of that year, but Columbus gives as a fact what every one knew had been determined on in the royal council. The same remark applies to the order for his departure ; for the agreement was not closed until April, but the intention to close it was manifested immediately after the fall of Granada.

sleep, and study my navigation perseveringly, to fulfil all the duties laid on me, which will be a great labor."

The emphasis which is perceptible in this whole prologue, indicates, to some extent, the excitement in which Columbus must have been the day he sailed. Surely, after so many years of study and struggle, it must have been for him a moment of inexpressible excitement, when he saw his vessels finally driven by a strong wind on the new course his genius and perseverance had pointed out.

For his direction on the way, he had made a chart on the plan of the one sent by Paolo Toscanelli, but much improved. Neither of these charts is extant; but the globe or planisphere of Martin Behaim, which was finished the same year that Columbus made his first voyage of discovery, and which contains the maximum of the exactness and extent of the geographic and cosmographic information of the time, may give us an idea of what the chart of Columbus must have been. On that are seen the coasts of Europe and Africa, from the north of Ireland to the southern limits of Guinea, and over against them, on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, the extremity of Asia, or, as it was then called, of India. In the middle is placed the island of Cipango (Japan), which Marco Polo, as was said, put at five hundred leagues from the coast of Asia. Columbus, in his calculations, put it nearly in the meridian where the Florida peninsula was afterwards found.

But a secret care was gnawing at the heart of Columbus on starting, and by its bitter poison prevented his enjoying all the pleasure of that moment. The most of his men were either taken by force, or had suffered themselves to be dragged away from inability to resist any longer; and until Europe was left a long way behind, there was always danger of their fears getting control of them. If it should happen that in a moment of great discouragement they should all agree together and insist on turning back, what would become of him and his undertaking? When and where could he hope to set out again for that voyage? He had not gone far before ominous signs confirmed and increased his suspicions. Monday, the 6th of August, the third day out, the caravel *Pinta* signalled that her rudder was broken or unhung. The reader will remember the fraud discovered in fitting out this vessel, in connection with the rudder, for the purpose of rendering her unserviceable for the voyage for which she had been forcibly taken. It was plain that this was another

criminal attempt of Gomez Rascon and Cristóbal Quintero, her owners, to create a reason or pretext for turning back. But for Columbus it was a very dangerous affair, and threw him into the greatest consternation, because, in the state of uncertainty and fear the sailors were in, the slightest obstacle might be fatal to him. He was about to give orders to go to her assistance at once, but the wind was blowing violently, and the attempt to get alongside would endanger his own vessel ; and so he kept off, waiting in mortal agony the result of the captain's courage and experience. Martin Alonzo did not fail in this apparently slight, but really serious, case ; for, by the severity of his aspect, he checked all desire to make remarks, and his quickness and boldness of contrivance destroyed all hope of succeeding in their plan by means of that disaster. He secured the rudder the best he could, with lines, and kept on his course. The next day the lines were broken by the increased violence of the sea, and it became necessary to devise some other scheme. But, what was worse, the vessel began to leak, and the other two had to shorten sail to keep with her. This forced Columbus to stop at the Canaries to look for another vessel to replace the *Pinta*.

He felt sure he was not far from those islands, although the pilots of the three caravels thought differently ; but the event showed how certain he was in his reckonings. They came in sight of the Great Canary, at daylight, on the 9th, but with first a head-wind and then no wind at all. Neither that day nor the two succeeding days was it possible for them to reach it, though they were close to it. Then the admiral, to save time, left the *Pinta*, which could hardly sail, behind, ordering Martin Alonzo to proceed to the Great Canary, as fast as he could, and look for a vessel to replace his, whilst he, with the other two, made for Gomera to make the same search there, in case nothing was found at the Great Canary. He reached Gomera the evening of the 12th of August, and, to his comfort, learnt that they were daily expecting a fine vessel that was then at the Great Canary, and was just suited for his purpose. He determined to await her arrival, but afterwards finding it was taking too much time, on the 23rd of that month he changed his mind and went, instead, to look for her at the Great Canary.

He arrived there on Saturday, the 25th of August, and found that Martin Alonzo had reached there only the day before, and with the greatest difficulty. He learnt from him that the vessel which he was

looking for under such difficulty and inconvenience, had sailed the Monday previous. This was a cause of grief to all the others, but he, always conforming his will to whatever happened, and taking every thing for the best, consoled himself with the thought that God had probably arranged it for his good ; and without looking further, he went to work to repair the damage to the Pinta. Working diligently, they soon provided a new rudder, and with the necessary patching and caulking, they put her in condition to continue the voyage with safety. At the same time, they changed the lateen, or triangular sails, of the Niña to square sails, to enable her to sail faster and more safely.* The three vessels left there on Sunday, the 2nd of September, for Gomera, to take on board the provisions which the men whom Columbus had left there got ready for them. Returning from Gomera to the Great Canary, they passed under the Peak of Teneriffe, in full eruption. The companions of Columbus had never seen such a sight ; and, on beholding the clouds of smoke which the mountain vomited towards the sky, with the flames constantly darting through the smoke, and the streams of fire slowly running down the mountain's side ; at the deep rumbling underground, with frequent bursts of thunder as of an earthquake rending the bowels of the earth,—they were terrified beyond expression, and, between the ignorance and superstition of their minds and the terrors they had heard told of the Ocean, they lost what little courage they had left, and their idea of turning back to Spain became stronger than ever. But Columbus was able to calm their apprehensions, by explaining that what appeared to them so strange and frightful was a very common natural phenomenon, and by relating what happened at Etna in Sicily and at other volcanoes.

While they were taking in wood, water, fresh meat, and other necessaries for the voyage, at Gomera, a caravel coming from the island of Ferro reported that three Portuguese ships were cruising in the neighborhood, waiting for Columbus to come out with his caravels, to capture them. This was doubtless by order of John III, who, offended by the refusal of Columbus to return to his court, and undertake the navigation to the western Indies for the account of Portugal, wanted to prevent by force the glory and profit of that new voyage inuring to Spain.

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xvi.—*Journal of Col.*, 8-9 Aug.

The danger was serious, for Columbus could not hope to make any defence against an attack by the Portuguese, on account of the smallness and weakness of his vessels, but still more on account of the character of the men he had on board. He stopped taking in provisions, and made sail at once, before the Portuguese could discover where he was anchored. This was Thursday, the 6th of September; but a calm overtook them soon after, lasting till 3 o'clock of the next Saturday morning. At that time, a wind sprang up, but on their quarter, so that they made only nine leagues all that day and night, and Sunday morning, at daybreak, he discovered that the force of the waves had driven him close in to the island of Ferro, just where the three Portuguese ships in pursuit of him had been seen. He had fallen right into the wolf's mouth. But at sunrise the wind changed, and carried him nineteen leagues during the day and thirty that night, leaving them directly astern.* He thus lost sight of all land, and, to his great delight, found himself launched on the boundless expanse of the Ocean. The sailors, on the contrary, were in despair. As long as they could see the least trace of land on the horizon, they seemed to feel themselves still bound to the Old World; but when that vanished and they were surrounded on every side by new seas and new skies, their terrified fancy magnified its phantoms, and old sailors, who had often fought storms and death, were seen to weep.† They would a thousand times rather have encountered the fury of the sea, face to face with death; but the mystery that prevailed during the voyage had taken away all their strength. Where and how would they die? Amid what slaughter would their last hours come, and what new monsters would gather them into their herd to make a meal for their cruel bellies? There is nothing so horrid or dreadful, however incredible it may be, that the human imagination cannot figure to itself as true and real, when under the control of fear; and here, the frightful tales of the Ocean, which from childhood had filled the minds of the seamen with astonishment and terror, came to the aid of imagination. To their apprehension of the fate awaiting them, was added the thought of the dear ones left be-

* Columbus reckoned by Italian miles, which are shorter than the Spanish; three of the latter or four of the former making a Spanish league. (Navarrete.)

† Fernando Colombo, cap. xvii

hind,—the wives, mothers, and children,—whom they would certainly never see again.

This mental distress led to great carelessness in steering the vessel, and Columbus was repeatedly obliged to correct and reprove them.* But prudently accompanying the severity of his reproof with words of comfort, he tried by every means to restore their courage, and his own calmness helped to reassure them. He dispelled their foolish phantasms by explaining to them the nature and form of the world. Then, in the glow of his fancy, he told of the new lands he would find, and taking for facts his own bright hopes, he described the magnificent countries to which he was about to conduct them,—the islands of the Indian seas, teeming with gold and precious stones, the kingdoms of Mangi and Cathay, with their princes and cities of unrivalled wealth and splendor. They would return loaded with riches and glory, and the hardships of the voyage would be forgotten in their ease and abundance after their return, and the reputation of their name and their courage would fill the world.

He then gave instructions to the commanders of the other vessels, that in case they should be separated by any accident, they should sail due west for the distance of seven hundred leagues. After that they should sail only in the day-time, and lay to at night ; † because at about that distance he confidently expected to find land. But as it was still possible they might have to sail much further before they found it, and there was danger of the seamen losing what little courage they had left, if the voyage turned out too long, he resorted to this expedient. In his journal—which he kept concealed from every one—he marked correctly the distance sailed each day and night ; and in the public register, open to the inspection of all, he reduced the distance. ‡

The 11th of September, when 150 leagues from Ferro, they saw a large fragment of a mast-head, which they judged to have belonged to a vessel of about 120 tons' burden, which they supposed must have been wrecked somewhere in the middle of the Ocean, and its sight was a fresh terror for the seamen, each of whom thought he read in that wreck the fate probably in store for their vessels ; and they went to their work more sad and silent than usual.

* *Journal of Columbus*, Sunday, Sept. 9.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. xxi

‡ *Journal of Columbus*, Sept. 9.

On the 13th, at 200 leagues or less from Ferro, at night-fall, Columbus noticed that the magnetic needle, instead of pointing, as it always had, to the north star, varied about half a point, or from five to six degrees, to the north-west, and the next morning the variation was still greater. He watched the phenomenon for several days, and found that the variation increased as they proceeded. It was a phenomenon entirely new to science, and he was much struck by it, but kept the matter to himself, knowing how easily the suspicion and alarm of his men were excited.

On the 14th, the seamen's hopes rose on beholding a tern and a wagtail hovering about the ships, because those birds never fly far from land, and they were already nearly 200 leagues from the Old World, so that any land in the vicinity must be to the westward. Saturday, at night-fall, an unexpected apparition dispelled their anticipations, and threw them into consternation. The sea was calm, the air still, and the sky bright with stars, when, at a distance of four or five leagues, a streak of fire suddenly darted from the sky and fell into the sea. It is supposed that this phenomenon was merely one of those meteors known as *falling-stars*, common enough in warm climates, particularly in the tropics, where they often leave a luminous streak lasting twelve or fifteen seconds, and may very well be compared to a flame, as Columbus calls it. Such a phenomenon under our sky would excite no remark; but seen there in the transparent atmosphere of a clear night, against the pure azure of the sky, amid the sparkling twinkle of myriads of stars, it is no wonder it made an impression on minds prepared to be alarmed at every thing. But as nothing occurred, their terror died away in a short time. On the evening of the 17th, the pilots noticed that the magnetic needle was not pointing to the polar star, and the rumor spreading among the crews, they were all in a state of consternation. What could it mean? Had they entered a new world, where the very laws and influences of nature were different from those governing the old? And if the compass was losing its mysterious power, what would become of them without a guide on the boundless Ocean, with no mark or trace to direct them on their return?

But Columbus, with wonderful promptness of mind, answered their doubts, inventing, for the occasion, a new theory for the explanation of the dreadful phenomenon. He said that the magnetic needle always points, not to the polar star, but to a point invisible

to us ; and that the polar star, like every other celestial body, has its changes and revolutions by which it revolves around that point ; and, therefore, as the needle turns always to the same point, it cannot be always in the direction of the polar star. The pilots knew not what answer to make, and, recognizing in Columbus a superior knowledge of astronomy and cosmography, acquiesced in his reply, and laid aside their fear on this point.* As yet, the solar system of Copernicus was unknown ; the explanation of Columbus was, therefore, plausible and ingenious, and it shows the vivacity of his mind, ever ready to meet the emergency of the moment. The theory may at first have been advanced merely to satisfy the minds of others, but Columbus appears, subsequently, to have remained satisfied with it himself. The phenomenon has now become familiar to us, but we still continue ignorant of its cause.†

Quieted as to the phenomenon of the magnetic needle, mariners and pilots directed all their attention to watching for signs of the vicinity of land. The temperature of the air had become delightfully mild. Columbus mentions the delicious temperature often in his journal, and compares the pure and balmy mornings they enjoyed, to those of April in Andalusia, and adds that they wanted only the song of the nightingale to complete the illusion. "He had reason to say so," observes Las Casas, who had had personal experience of the fact, "for the sweetness experienced when half way to the Indies is incredible ; and the nearer the ships approach the land, the more they perceive the mild temperature of the air, the clearness of the sky, and the balmy odor sent forth by the groves and forests. It is certainly something more than the month of April in Andalusia."‡ On the 16th of September, they began to notice here and there on the sea, patches of very green grass, increasing in quantity as they advanced,—some dried and yellow, and some green and fresh as though just washed from the land ; from which they inferred the vicinity of some island from which it had been carried by the force of the waves.§

* *Journal of Columbus*, 17 September.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xix.

† Irving, *Columbus*, book iii, ch. iii.—For a long time it was believed that Sebastian Cabot was the first to notice the variation of the needle, but the publication of the *Journal of Columbus* has restored this honor to him.

‡ Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, cap. xxxvi.

§ Such inference was not unfounded, for shoals near the surface were discovered not far from there in 1802. (Navarrete.)

Monday, the 17th, they found on one of those patches a live crab, and they knew that none are ever found more than 80 leagues from shore ; they saw also a number of tunny-fish playing around the vessels, and a wagtail—a bird that never sleeps at sea ; and the seawater was less salty than at the Canaries, and the air warmer. All this caused great rejoicing among the crews, and each vessel strove to get in advance and be the first to discover land.

The favorable wind tended to increase their delight, for they had fallen in with the trades, which, following the sun's course, blow steadily from east to west between the tropics, and even a few degrees beyond them. The sea was as calm and smooth as the Guadalquivir at Seville,—to use the expression of Columbus,—and a warm, steady breeze kept the sails full ; so that the ships flew with great velocity, and for many days it was not necessary to change a sail. Still, the admiral kept up his practice of docking daily a few leagues from his reckoning. The water of the sea seemed to grow fresher as they advanced, which Columbus attributed to the greater sweetness and purity of the air.*

Tuesday, the 18th of September, Martín Alonzo Pinzon, with the Pinta, which was a fast sailer, came close to the admiral's ship, and called to him that he wanted to go ahead, because he had seen a great flight of birds pass to the west, and he hoped, by following in the same direction, to discover land that very night. In fact, the northern horizon was quite dark, which is always a sign of land.† But Columbus, who knew, by his reckonings, that it could not be the main land, refused. The next day they had further proof of the neighborhood of land, in the flight of two pelicans towards the vessels ; for these birds never fly more than 25 leagues from land. Then there were frequent fogs without wind, which is also a sure sign of the nearness of land.

Columbus was persuaded he was passing between islands lying to the north and south, but, contrary to the wishes of all, he would not stop to look for them, saying he was unwilling to lose the benefit of the present favorable wind, but, if it pleased God, they would see them all on their return.‡ He had also another reason for his

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, cap. xxxvi.

† The cause of all these false expectations was the shoals we have mentioned, twenty leagues off. (Navarrete.)

‡ *Journal*, 19 September.

refusal; for he had confidently asserted that they would find land by sailing due west, and his whole undertaking was based on this theory, and to show any uncertainty and run around to every point of the compass, would be risking his reputation and authority in their eyes.*

CHAPTER XIV

The voyage continued.—The weedy sea.—General discouragement of the seamen.—Conspiracy.—Joy at the supposed discovery of land.—Attempts at rebellion.—Columbus announces that land will be discovered the following night.—The excitement and suspense.—Discovery of the New World (1492).

NOTWITHSTANDING his precautions to keep his people ignorant of the distance they had sailed, they were now growing extremely uneasy at the length of the voyage. They had advanced beyond the reach of succor in case of need, and they continued daily to leave vast tracts of Ocean behind them, and to press onward into that apparently boundless abyss.† Every day they saw greater indications of land, but not the land itself. The constant straining of their minds, and the excitement and disappointment of their hopes, ended in irritation, weariness, and loss of confidence. Their fears returned, and every thing became a source of evil presage; the very things that had before given them hope and comfort, were now the occasion of despair and apprehension. The fresh weeds on the surface of the water, which they had welcomed at first as a sure sign of the vicinity of land, were now growing thicker and hindering their progress, so much so that they had to force a passage through them as though the sea was encrusted with ice.‡ On the 22nd, they were surrounded by these weeds for 30 leagues, and, as far as the eye could reach, it looked like an immense floating meadow. The

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xvii.

† Irving, *Columbus*, bk. iii, ch. iii.

‡ *Journal of Columbus*, 19 September.

movement of the waters of the Ocean tears up from the bottom the sea-weed and other plants, and the currents drive them together, where they form a bank extending over a space nearly seven times as great as the area of France.* This spot was afterwards named the *weedy sea*.† Navigators now unhesitatingly plough through those waters with their ships, but the companions of Columbus, who had never seen or heard of such a thing, felt great apprehension. They had heard of vessels being caught in a sea of ice without being able to get out of it, and fearing a like disaster, they tried as far as possible to avoid those floating masses.‡ Others thought of the dire monsters believed to dwell in the deep gulfs of the Ocean, momentarily expecting to see the enormous claws of some cetacean rising through the weeds, and, seizing the ship, draw into its belly the rich food passing near. The less timid and more reasonable considered these weeds as proof that the sea was growing shallower, and talked of lurking rocks, and shoals, and treacherous quicksands, and the danger of running aground in the midst of the Ocean, far out of the track of any aid, and without any shore where the crews might take refuge.

To dispel these fears, the admiral made frequent soundings, and by showing that even a line of 200 fathoms failed to touch bottom, he tried to raise their courage. But nothing could now calm the diseased imagination of the seamen: they saw cause of alarm in every thing and harassed their commander by incessant murmurs. Even the favorable breeze, which seemed sent by Providence to waft them gently to the New World, was an object of fear. They saw that it blew steadily from the east, or, if it changed its direction, it became so light as not to ruffle the surface of the sea. And just at the time of their greatest discouragement, this condition of the wind became most manifest. The 17th and 18th, it blew from the east with such force that the ships with their sails full had made 50 leagues the first day, and 55 the second; and the next three days it blew so light from the south-west and west that the water was as quiet as a lake, and the surface of the Ocean was as smooth as a looking-glass. They feared that contrary winds would prevent their return, and

* Humboldt, *Cosmos*, pt. ii, p. 285.

† In geography it is known as the *Mar de Sargasso* or the *great Fucus Bank*.

‡ Fernando Colombo, cap. xviii.

they might die of famine, becalmed in the midst of those boundless waters.*

Alive to the danger of this growing dejection, Columbus exerted himself to find new arguments to animate their courage ; but their fears were now too powerful to be reasoned with, and the signs precursory of a great storm were steadily increasing. The sailors were seen to gather in little knots of two or three, carefully withdrawing to argue and discuss in an animated manner. Their arguments and discussions always related to the same matter,—the great danger they were in, and the greater danger if they kept on. In this way they fomented each other's discontent, and excited one another to resistance and rebellion against the admiral. Their provisions, they said, were growing scarce, and what was left was beginning to spoil. What would become of them when all was gone ? Their ships, badly used up by the long voyage they had already made, would hardly hold out for their return. What would happen if they went still further, continually adding to the frightful distance that separated them from land ? How could they ever return without any port where they could victual and refit ? And to what end ? For an adventurer's whim ? They were fools to suffer themselves to be led on board and made to sail, when they ought to have known how it would be ! Where now are the promised lands, the conquered provinces, the mountains of gold ? Water, water, and only water ! Every bird that cleaves the air, every fish that glides through the water, is to him a sign that land is near ; but the story has been told too often, and if at first they had been taken in by his deceitful words, it was time now to open their eyes and look out for themselves. Were they going to suffer themselves to die of hunger, or perhaps something worse, for a foreigner's foolish caprice ? Who ever believed in his utopias ? A few intriguing friars had succeeded in deluding the queen's good faith, but the university of Salamanca, the true seat of all the wisdom of Spain, had said from the first it was foolishness. Who would blame them if at last they determined to throw off a yoke they had imprudently suffered to be fastened on their neck ? They could not be accused of timidity or cowardice, for they had gone further than any went before ; rather would their courage be admired, in having dared to cross so many seas, face so many dan-

* *Journal of Columbus*, 22 September.—Fernande Colombo, cap. xviii.

gers, and go where even the natural laws seemed changed. To go further was not courage, but rashness and folly. Let them decide, then, once for all, and carry into deed, the thought that was in every mind. If they were all in accord, what had they to fear? The king's anger at their want of discipline, and rebellion against his commands? But it was not rebellion to refuse to follow a foreigner, who, without any benefit to Spain or the king, would lead Spanish soldiers to their death to gratify his caprice and folly. That Genoese, thrown on Spain a ragged beggar, wanted to make his fortune, at the cost of their lives, and having nothing to lose, had desperately set out to find new lands, where he might become rich and powerful, or cast away a life that was a burden. But they had wives, parents, children, for whom their life was necessary, and it would be criminal not to guard against the danger that threatened, whilst there was still time. Then, again, they were many, and all agreed to accuse him of ignorance and bad government; they were Spanish citizens; they had relatives and friends to stand by them; and he was alone to accuse them and defend himself, a foreigner, and in bad odor with those who had influence at court.

Others went still further, and, to escape all danger of being called to account for their mutiny, proposed, if the admiral could not be persuaded by fair words to turn back, to throw him into the sea. They could say that whilst he was watching the stars through his instruments, he had inadvertently fallen overboard,—and no one would think of investigating the truth of the story,—and that this was the real cause of their return.*

In this way their murmurs and complaints went on increasing from day to day, till the admiral began to suspect their inconstancy and evil intentions towards him. Still, at times, with gentle words, and at others, with his mind ready even for death, warning them of the punishment they must expect if they hindered the voyage, he checked their fears and their plottings, to some extent; and to confirm the hope he had given them, he reminded them of the signs and appearances related above, assuring them that in a very short time they would see land.† But his words had lost their power, and,

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xix.—Gir. Benzoni, *Stor. Nuovo Mondo*, lib. i, fol. xiv.

† Fernando Colombo, l. c.

unable any longer to restrain themselves, they were on the point of breaking out in open violence, when a strong wind came up from the west, on the 22nd, and, although it was unfavorable for the direction in which they were sailing, the men were greatly relieved, as they saw a contradiction in fact of their fear that they would have no wind with which to return. The next day, while the wind, which had shifted back to the east, was only ruffling the water, the air was quiet, and the sky clear, the Ocean, on a sudden, became agitated, with no apparent cause, and so fierce a tempest burst forth that they were all in dismay. The devout mind of Columbus, ever turning towards God, for whose greater glory and the propagation of his faith that laborious voyage was carried on, regarded this sudden fury, the cause of which he could not explain, as a miracle of Heaven, and in his pious gratitude he wrote in his diary these words: "Thus the rough sea was most necessary for me; and a similar miracle had not happened since the time of the Hebrews, when the Egyptians left Egypt to pursue Moses, who was freeing the Hebrew nation from slavery." This commotion of the sea rising into a tempest without any wind, has been frequently observed, and is attributed to the agitation which the winds produce in the water at a great distance off, but which is easily spread to an enormous distance all around, on account of the surface of the sea being calm and smooth as a looking-glass.

Their main fear of having no wind for the return voyage, being relieved by that strong breeze from the west, and the tempest, the crews again concentrated their anxiety on the signs, which became more frequent, of the nearness of land, and they were so intent on this that every hour seemed to them a year.

Tuesday, the 25th, a dead calm, and then the usual breeze from the east. The ships, with sails full, kept near each other, and Columbus conversed in a loud voice with Martin Alonzo Pinzon, about a chart which the former had sent three days before to the latter, and on which were marked the lands and islands it was expected to find in the western regions of the Ocean. "It was the chart," says Las Casas, "which Toscanelli sent to Columbus, and which I have in my hands with other objects and writings of the admiral."* It is not clear whether Columbus had himself marked on Toscanelli's

* Las Casas, lib. i, cap. xii and cap. xxxvii.—Humboldt, *Cosmos*, ii, p. 261, n.

chart the lands and islands he expected to find on the eastern coast of Asia, or they had been marked there by the Florentine astronomer. There is, however, no doubt that Columbus used the chart more as a help than as a guide on his voyage; indeed, if he had followed strictly Toscanelli's suggestions, he would have kept more to the north and sailed on the parallel of Lisbon, but instead of this he steered half the way in the latitude of Gomera, and he, subsequently, kept still more to the south.* Pinzon thought they had now arrived at the place where the admiral had marked the island of Cipango and the other lands; and the admiral replied that he, too, thought so, but as those islands were not yet in sight, it was likely that the vessels had been borne to the north-east by the currents, or else they had not come so far as the pilots had reckoned; and desired that the chart might be returned for him to study it further.

The chart being thrown by a cord, Columbus, with his pilot and a few of his most experienced men, began to point it, in order better to compute on it the distance they had sailed. It was a little after sunset. The admiral and the others were intent on their calculations on the chart, when their attention was all at once drawn by a loud cry of joy repeated by Martin Alonzo Pinzon, hailing the admiral from the Pinta, and screaming: "Land, Land!" At this cry, Columbus, unable to utter a word, fell on his knees, and his eyes, raised to heaven and filled with tears, told his emotion and thankfulness. Martin Alonzo and his crew were singing the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, and the crew of the admiral's vessel joined in the hymn, whilst the crew of the Niña, scrambling up the masts and rigging, called out that they, too, saw land. It was judged to be about 25 leagues off. Columbus, in the midst of the general enthusiasm, ordered the course changed from the west, in which direction they had been steering, to the south-west, where they had seen the land. The sea was very calm, and many of the sailors, in the intoxication of joy, jumped in to swim.† But at sunrise the vision had disappeared, and nothing could be seen on any side but water.

The deception was caused by clouds gathered on the horizon, which in the tropics, especially to one looking from the sea at sunrise or sunset, present a very strange appearance, and the eye, with

* Humboldt, *Cosmos*, ii, p. 262.

† *Journal of Columbus*, 25 September.

the aid of the imagination, easily transforms them into continents and islands rising above the surface of the sea.

Their disappointment was profound, in proportion to the height of their joy and enthusiasm before, and, pale and silent, they obeyed the admiral's order to resume their course to the west.

The following days they were partially encouraged by the signs of the vicinity of land all the time growing more frequent and certain. Every day birds of the same species were seen to return in greater numbers,—which proved that they were not lost wanderers, but all came from the same place, which could not be far off; great shoals of fishes began to glide around the vessels; the currents were no longer so strong and regular; and the thick meadows of weeds were steadily becoming rarer.

They sailed thus with some hope until Monday, October 1st. At break of day, the admiral's pilot announced, with accents of the greatest distress, that from the island of Ferro, the last land they left, to where they now were they had come 520 leagues. And he didn't know how far short of the truth his reckoning was! The admiral's reckoning was 707 leagues!* The pilot's terror was a warning to the admiral; for it showed that even the oldest sailors and those least accustomed to fear danger at sea, were now disheartened.

Still they kept on, and the signs of land became more frequent,—many kinds of fishes which are never accustomed to go far from the coast; fresh stalks, with the fruit still clinging, which showed that they had not been long torn from the soil; birds came and went, that were too small for a long flight. Every thing indicated that they were in the vicinity of islands, and even the admiral thought they had left behind the islands marked on his chart, passing between without seeing them; but in spite of the prayers of the crew that he would tack and look for them, he was resolved not to stop on any account, because his sole aim was to reach the Indies, and to lose time on the way would be a want of prudence and discretion.† The murmurs of the crews increased, and their ill-humor towards him. Still, day and night, with mind and heart intent on the new land, they searched in every direction, and their anxiety became so great that every distant cloud that was a little dark, assumed in their eyes the appearance of land; and as the Spanish government had

* *Journal*, 1st October.

† *Ib.* 3rd October

promised a pension of 10,000 maravedis annually* to the first who should discover land, there was a general scramble to be the first to announce it and gain the reward, and every little while, first from one vessel and then from another, was heard the joyful cry of *Land, Land!* To put a stop to these false announcements, which occasioned continual disorder, Columbus declared that if any one should give that notice and land not be discovered for three days afterwards, he should forfeit all claim to the pension, even though he should thereafter be the first really to discover land.†

Thursday, the 4th October, besides various other birds, there were forty petrels in one flock, that came so close to the boats that a boy on board hit one with a stone. Many more petrels were seen the next day, and a number of flying-fish fell on the admiral's ship. These continued proofs of the nearness of land, without any actual sight of it, created in every one a suspicion that they were on the wrong course; and the evening of the 6th October, Martin Alonzo Pinzon showed that even he had the same suspicion, and proposed veering a little to the south-west. Columbus believed that Martin Alonzo made that proposition with the intention of making the island of Cipango, which they supposed was in that latitude, a little to the south-west, and as it was his wish to reach the continent first, and then look around for the islands in those seas, he answered even this proposition in the negative, and kept straight on.

On the morning of Sunday, the 7th of October, at sunrise, there was an appearance of land in the west, but so indistinct that no one ventured to claim the discovery, for fear of being laughed at and losing the reward which the king and queen had promised.‡ Each of the three caravels, therefore, strove to be first in the discovery.§ The Niña, being a good sailer, took the lead, and, confident that the black point on the horizon was really land, hoisted a flag at her masthead, and discharged a gun,—the preconcerted signals for land. They sailed and sailed, but the land was not visible, and towards evening the appearance vanished altogether, and their excitement ended again in dejection and despair.|| Soon after this, they saw large flights of birds, of various kinds, going towards the south-west;

* *Journal*, 11th October.

† *Id* cap. xx.

‡ Fernando Colombo, cap. xx.—*Journal*, 7 October.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. xx.

§ *Journal*, 7 October.

some of them were plainly land birds, too small to fly a great distance. There was, then, no doubt that land was near, and the most probable theory was that the birds were hurrying to get there to pass the night.

The ships had now made 750 leagues, at which distance Columbus counted on finding the island of Cipango. But seeing no sign of it in any direction, he began to suspect that he had made some mistake in the latitude. Knowing what importance the Portuguese navigators attached to the flight of birds, by following which they had discovered most of their islands, he determined that same evening of the 7th of October, to follow their direction also, and to continue it for two days; and he gave as a reason that the direction of the birds' flight was no great deviation from his main course.*

The crews rejoiced at the change, and their joy increased with the increasing signs of land. Monday the sea was again as placid as the Guadalquivir at Seville; tunny-fish, in great quantities, sported on its smooth surface; the air was as mild as at Seville in April, and so fragrant that it was a pleasure to breathe it; the floating weeds were fresh and green as though just torn from the earth. Flocks of small birds, of various colors, came flying about the ships, and then continued to the south-west, and one of them they caught. They saw also rooks, wild ducks, a heron, and a pelican.† The night from Tuesday to Wednesday there was a continual passing of birds. But they saw nothing of the land the first day, nothing the second, nothing the third.

The anxiety of the sailors grew to a paroxysm of burning fever, they could no longer restrain themselves; they lost all trust in those signs, and the storm that had been threatening, finally burst.

The vessels had orders from the admiral to close together at sunrise and sunset, because at those times there was less vapor in the atmosphere, and it was easier to see a great distance if there should

* When Columbus, on that evening of the 7th of October, deviated from his course and began to steer to the south-west, he was sailing, according to recent calculations, in the 26th degree of north latitude, nearly due west, which would have brought him to the middle of the Lucayos, or Bahamas, or, with the influence of the Gulf Stream, to the eastern coast of Florida. In that way the course of Spanish discovery might have extended along the coast of North America, and Spanish colonies occupied the present territory of the United States. (Irving, *Columbus*, bk. iii, ch. 4, note.)

† *Journal*, 8 October.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xx.



THE
MUTINY
AT SEA

be any thing to discover.* When they were thus together as usual, on the evening of Wednesday, the 10th of October, the crew of the admiral's vessel suddenly mutinied, and, with loud cries and clamor, demanded that he should turn the bows towards Europe. The crews of the other vessels joined in the cries, and all, with curses and blasphemies, required he should stop running madly to destruction, and return to Spain, and with loud threats they made known their fierce intentions, if the admiral refused to yield to their just demands.

Columbus, going among the mutineers, tried, by gentle words, to calm their minds and raise their spirits, and, by the many signs of the nearness of land, to renew their hope of soon seeing the end and reward of their labors. But his words and promises were of no avail : they laughed at both, and ever repeated that they would go no further, but would turn back. Then, perceiving that mild persuasion and encouragement only increased their clamor, with a resolute look, he said, "that their complaints were useless ; happen what might, the Catholic sovereigns had sent them to find the Indies, and they must accomplish the undertaking."† And with unruffled calmness, he ordered the voyage continued towards the south-west.

Some historians have asserted that a day or two previous to the discovery of the New World, Columbus capitulated with his mutinous crew, promising to abandon the voyage if they did not see land within three days. There is no indication of it in the history of his son Fernando, or in that of Las Casas, who both had the admiral's papers before them. There is no mention of it in the extracts from his journal, made by Las Casas, nor in the histories of Peter Martyr or the Curate of Los Palacios, his friends and contemporaries ; and there can be no doubt they would have mentioned so important a fact, if it had been true. It rests solely on the authority of Oviedo ;‡ and we know how careless he was, and how unfriendly to Columbus, and he was grossly misled as to many details of this voyage, by a pilot named Pedro Mateos, who was hostile to Columbus.

* *Journal*, 7 October. † *Journal*, 10 October.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xx.

‡ Lib ii, cap. v.

§ One of the reasons why this pilot was inimical to Columbus was because the latter " had taken from him a book of notes he had made on the position of the mountains and rivers of the coast of Veragua." (See this matter related

The too modest conciseness of Columbus in what concerned himself, had caused him to omit every detail of this mutiny. He who noted in his journal the slightest occurrences on board, even the killing of a bird with a stone by a boy on the bows of the *Santa Maria*, hardly gives a hint of the mutiny and his authority in suppressing it.

His calm and determined will, then, produced in minds habituated to discipline and obedience, an effect which gentle persuasion and encouragement failed to obtain, and they returned to their usual duties, and, angry and murmuring, permitted the voyage to continue a little longer.

The night that followed that dreadful evening, the sea rose fearfully ; never during all that voyage had they combatted such fury of the waves ; it seemed as though the wrath of the sea made common cause with his crews to frighten the intrepid Genoese from his project, and drive him back to the ill-abandoned shores of the Old World. But this was the last trial to which God subjected the patience and courage of Columbus before enabling him to discover the desired land. The next day, Thursday, the 11th of October, the signs of the approaching end of the voyage were so apparent that the sullen sailors soon found the rage that devoured them giving way to sanguine expectation. Those on the admiral's ship, besides many birds, saw passing close to the vessel, a green rush, and a large green fish of a kind which always keeps about rocks ; the crew of the *Pinta* discovered a reed and a staff, and picked up a weed such as grows only on land, and a small staff which appeared to have been cut with iron ; the people of the *Niña* saw a branch of thorn with fresh berries on it.

Columbus was now certain of the near discovery of land ; and in the evening, after the usual singing of the *Salve Regina*, he gathered around him the officers and sailors of his ship, and made them a feeling address. He reminded them of the graces and favors received from our Lord,—with what visible Providence he had led them on that new voyage, with winds always favorable, the sea always calm, and the many ways in which he had sustained

further on, in book ii, ch. xxii.) The calumnies of Mateos, contradicted by the depositions of his companions, and by all the facts and circumstances of this wonderful voyage, are given in the celebrated lawsuit between the Spanish government and the heirs of Columbus.

and strengthened their courage. He then spoke of the orders he had given each of the three caravels when they left the Canaries, that after sailing westward 700 leagues they should slacken sail from midnight to morning, because, most probably, they would then be very near land. They had made the 700 leagues, and all appearances indicated that land was not distant, and he had the strongest hopes of discovering it that very night; and, therefore, every one should be of good will, and keep a vigilant look-out, for besides the rewards offered by their Highnesses to whoever should be the first to discover land, he would add, on his own account, a velvet jerkin. Then he ordered the course changed from south-west to west.*

Not an eye was closed that night, every one being anxiously intent on discovering land. The admiral took his stand on the after cabin, and, with restless eyes, sought to penetrate the darkness. Who can imagine the agitation of his heart in those moments? Two hours before midnight, a far-off light struck his eyes: he durst not cry *Land!* He distrusted himself and his eyes; and calling Pedro Gutierrez, a gentleman of the royal bedchamber, inquired if he saw a light in that direction. The light appeared and vanished at short and irregular intervals, and Gutierrez saw it also. But Columbus was not yet quite sure, and he called the naval commissary, Rodrigo Sanchez of Segovia, of whom he made the same inquiry. But while Sanchez was mounting on the cabin, the light disappeared; it was seen again once or twice moving quickly on the horizon, as if it had been in a fisherman's boat rising and falling with the waves; or as if carried by some one on shore, and giving more or less light as he hastened or slackened his pace. That light had been so fugitive and transient that the companions of Columbus had not noticed it; but he looked upon it as a sure sign of land that was near and inhabited.

The sea had become calm again, as usual, the wind swelled the sails, and the vessels were running twelve miles an hour. The anxiety of every one was at its height, the deepest silence reigned on the three ships, nothing was heard but the rippling of the waves as they were broken by the keels. At two in the morning a sudden discharge of a gun aroused their attention and converted their anxiety into delight. The *Pinta*, which, as usual, kept ahead of the others,

Fernando Colombo, cap. xxi.—*Journal*, Thursday, 11 October.

was giving notice that land was found. The first to discover it was Rodrigo de Triana, a seaman ; but the reward, as we shall see, was afterwards adjudged by the Catholic king to Columbus himself, because he was aware of it four hours before Triana, when he observed the appearance and disappearance of that little light. The sails were quickly lowered, and the ships lay to, and while waiting for day they were all busy getting ready and furbishing their arms.*

It would be necessary to endure what they endured, to suffer their incredulousness, their hopes so often raised and so often disappointed, the fears and anguish felt before starting and during the long voyage,—to imagine the joy of the seamen and their impatience for dawn. And who can tell what Columbus felt in his heart that memorable night ? Was the land before him the delightful Cipango, the queen of the Eastern islands, or some islet lost on the surface of the ocean ? Would he behold the rising sun shining on the luxury and splendor of Oriental civilization,—on hanging gardens, gilded temples, and populous cities,—or on some rock, and the wretched huts of a few savages ? How long that night must have seemed to him ! What a fever of anxiety must he have felt while waiting for the dawn that was to bring the light !

What a loss and pity that Las Casas did not think of giving us the very words of Columbus, which would undoubtedly have been a faithful mirror of his soul, and of the tumult of discordant feelings that must have filled his heart on that memorable night !

CHAPTER XV.

First landing of Columbus in the New World.—The first savages.—The impression of Columbus at sight of the first land and first inhabitants of the New World (1492).

THE following morning, Friday, the 12th of October, at the dawning of the day, the land imperfectly seen through the darkness of the night, began slowly to grow distinct on the horizon. It was a little island, hardly fifteen leagues in length, about two leagues dis-

* *Journal*, 11 October.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xx.

PRESENTED
BY
FR. J. ALYONS



DISCOVERY
OF LAND
FRIDAY OCT. 12, 1492

tant, quite level, and interspersed with many trees, like a continual garden. Through the limpid atmosphere, with the blue back-ground of the boundless water, the sight of the island seemed the work of enchantment, when gilded with the first rays of the rising sun.

When the sun was up, Columbus gave the signal to cast anchor, and to lower and arm the boats. He entered his own boat, dressed in a rich costume of scarlet, and bearing the standard of the expedition, on which, as we said, was the image of Christ crucified. The other captains, Martin Alonzo Pinzon and Vicente Yañez, entered their boats at the same time, each carrying the banner of his vessel, on which was a green cross, with the king and queen's initials, *F* and *I*, on the sides, and above them the royal crown.

The few savages dwelling on the island were perfectly naked, and simple in their habits and customs. Many of them had appeared on the shore from the first hours of the morning, and all were lost in astonishment on beholding the ships. They thought them huge monsters risen in the night from the deep gulfs of the sea, and stood watching their movements with fear and anxiety. When they saw the boats nearing the land, and those strange people that were in them stepped on shore, they vanished like lightning, all running to hide in the forests near by.

Columbus was the first to land, and as soon as he touched that blessed ground, he threw himself on his knees and kissed it three times, with tears of joy, and returned thanks to our Lord for the immense favor granted to him. All the rest followed his example, and for a few moments they were too affected for words.* In the *Chronological Tables* of Father Claudio Clemente, there is a form of prayer said to have been used by Columbus on this occasion, and which Cortes, Balboa, and Pizarro afterwards used officially, by order of the king, in taking possession of new lands.† It is this: "O Lord, eternal and almighty God, who by thy holy word didst create the heavens, the land, and the sea, hallowed and glorified be thy name, praised be thy majesty, which has vouchsafed to suffer thy holy name, by the work of thy humble servant, to be made known and proclaimed in this new part of the world." And, as a mark of gratitude

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xxii.—Ramusio, *Delle Navigazioni e Viaggi*, ecc., vol. iii, fol. i.—Robertson, *Hist. America*, book ii, § xxiv.

† *Tablas cronológicas de los descubrimientos*, dec. i. Valencia, 1689.

to the Providence which had guided him so far, he gave to the first land that he discovered, the name of the Redeemer of the world, and called it San Salvador.

Then, rising up, the admiral drew his sword, and holding in his hand the royal standard of the fleet, and the commanders of the *Pinta* and *Niña* holding the standards of their respective vessels, possession was solemnly taken of that land in the name of their Catholic Majesties, according to the prescribed forms and ceremonies, and the crown notary, Rodrigo de Escobedo, drew up the report of their proceedings in legal form. When this was done, Columbus ordered all that were there present to take an oath of obedience to him, as admiral and viceroy, representing their Majesties. After these ceremonies were completed, a most affecting scene took place around him. The crews, who, a few days previously, had believed themselves victims of his ambition and folly, now looked upon themselves as favorites of fortune through his work, and, wild with joy, wished to prove their gratitude towards him, whom they had so lately reviled, with the most extravagant demonstrations. They pressed about him to kiss his hands and garments, begging him, with tears in their eyes, to pardon the injuries they had done him through fear and fickleness; and those, who, during the voyage, had been the most disrespectful and turbulent, were now the most repentant and swore the blindest submission to him in the future.* In the mean time, the savages, seeing that no one pursued them, somewhat recovered from their first fear, came cautiously back and watched the movements of these strange people from between the trees. Their beautiful complexion, the novelty and splendor of their garments, their shining armor, and their affectionate kissing and embracing, convinced the natives that these were not monsters of the sea, nor men, but superhuman beings, inhabitants of heaven, miraculously descended to that land. Some believed the ships that brought them had come out of the crystal firmament that enclosed their horizon, and others believed them descended direct from heaven; and the sails, swollen by the wind, they said were the wings on which they had governed their long flight.† Their curiosity led them to come

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xxii. — Oviedo, lib. i, cap. vi. — Las Casas, lib. i, cap. xl.

† This opinion that the white men had descended from heaven was at first.



TAIVING POSSESSION
OF THE NEW WORLD

closer, to get a better view of so strange a novelty ; reverence and fear kept them from presenting themselves to beings so far above them. After a long contest, curiosity got the upper hand, and they began to come out from their hiding-places. As the Spaniards did not seem to heed them, they took courage, and, little by little, stepping cautiously, their eyes fixed all the time on the Spaniards, ever ready to turn and fly, the boldest kept coming nearer. The Spaniards, to increase their courage and give no cause for suspicion, were intent on their own doings and appeared to take no notice of them. When they had reached, in this way, the place where the Spaniards were, they surrounded Columbus, whom they had already recognized as the head of these strange people, by his tall stature, his rich dress, and the respect which all paid him ; and they gazed at him with a mingled feeling of admiration, reverence, and fear. As no one moved, either to do or to say any thing to them, they began to approach and regard them more boldly, and admired the whiteness of their skin, the beauty of their clothes, and their beard, for they had not a sign of hair on their own faces. Still doubtful whether what they beheld was real or only a vision, to make sure that they were really bodies and not mere apparitions, they touched the garments, the beards, and the hands of the Spaniards. When Columbus saw them so reassured, he began to look kindly at them, and to one he gave a little bell, to another, a colored cap, and to another, a glass bead, or some other trifle ; and they were delighted in hanging the ornaments about their person, or listening to the tinkle of the little bells. The Spaniards wondered no less at the strange figures they saw before them, differing from all that had hitherto been known. Here is what Columbus wrote in his *Journal* : “ Men and women go perfectly nude, as when they came from their mothers’ womb, although one of the women was quite young : and among the men I saw, not one was over thirty years of age. They were well proportioned, had fine bodies and comely faces ; their hair was coarse like the hair of horses’ tails, short, and falling on the brows ; but they left a long tuft behind, which they never cut. Some were painted nearly black ; but their natural tint was the same as that of the natives of

general among all the natives of the New World. When the Spaniards, in the course of their discoveries, were conversing with the cacique of Nicaragua, he inquired how they came down from heaven,—by flying, or on the clouds. (Herrera, dec. iii, lib. iv, cap. v.)

the Canaries,—neither black nor white; among them were some painted white, others, red, or whatever color they pleased; some painted the face only, others, the entire body; some the eyes, others, the nose. They carried no arms, nor knew the use of them, for I showed them some sabres, and they took hold of the blade, not knowing any better, and cut themselves. They have no iron: their lances are staves without iron, some of which had at the point a fish-tooth, and others, any hard substance. They are generally of a fine stature, well made, and graceful in their movements. I saw some who had various scars on the body, and asked them, by signs, what was the cause; and they made me understand that bands of the natives of neighboring islands came to their island to take them prisoners, and they defended themselves; I believed, and am still of the opinion, that those enemies came from the continent to capture and make slaves of them.”*

As Columbus supposed he had landed on an island at the extremity of India, he called the natives of this little island by the general name of Indians.† That name was universally adopted, and extended to all the inhabitants of the lands discovered by him, which were called West Indies, to distinguish them from the lands of India already known towards the east, till further discoveries had shown that it was not India, but a wholly new and distinct part of the terrestrial globe.

When the ceremony of taking possession was over, Columbus caused two large pieces of wood to be cut, and making a rude cross, raised it on the same spot where the royal banner had been placed, “to leave a sign that possession had been taken of that land in the name of Christ.” He did the same ever after in every land he discovered, whether large or small, leaving everywhere the sign of Redemption, as in a place that had come under the dominion of the Christian Religion.‡

The Spaniards remained on shore all day, refreshing themselves, after the voyage, among the delicious groves of the island; and only returned to the vessels late in the evening, full of wonder at what they had seen.

The ingenuous simplicity of Columbus’s narrative has a local col-

* *Journal*, 12 October.

† Fernando Colombo, cap vi.

‡ *Journal*, 16 November.

oring that invites us to repeat it, word for word, as given by Las Casas in this place: "On the following morning, at break of day, we saw many of these men come to the shore, all young, as we have said, and of very tall stature. And they are truly a most beautiful race of men. They have generally very straight legs, and their belly is not too large, and is well shaped. They came to my vessel in canoes made all of one piece, out of trunks of trees, like long lances, and wonderfully made for this country; some so long that they held even forty and forty-five men, and others smaller; there were some of them so short that they held only one man. They rowed with an oar similar to a baker's stick, by means of which their barks travelled wonderfully; and if one of them is capsized, they all take to swimming and turn it up while swimming, and bail out the water with gourds they have with them. They brought us little balls of cotton thread, parrots, spears, and other small articles, which it would be tedious to mention in detail; and they gave all for any little trifle which they might receive in exchange.

"I examined those savages carefully, and wanted to know if they possessed any gold. I saw that some had a little piece of it run through a hole made in the nose, and I succeeded, by signs, in learning that going around their island, and sailing to the south, I should find a country where the king had many golden vessels, and a great quantity of this metal. I immediately tried to induce them to guide me to that country, but quickly understood their refusal; so I resolved to wait till the next day, and start, after dinner, in a south-west direction, where, according to the indications many of them gave me, there is land both to the south and to the north-west, and the inhabitants of the country situated in the latter direction, often come to attack them, and they also go to the south-west in search of gold and precious pearls.

"This island is very large and level, clad with the freshest trees; there is much water on it, a vast lake in the middle, and there are no mountains. But it is so green that it is a pleasure to look at it, and the inhabitants are most docile. Eager for the articles we possess, and persuaded that they will receive nothing from us if they have nothing to give in exchange, they steal, if they get the opportunity, and quickly swim off. But all they have they give for the smallest thing that is offered them; in exchange, they take even pieces of porringers and bits of glass, and I have seen them give six-

teen balls of cotton for three Portuguese ceutos,* worth about one Castilian blanca,† and these sixteen balls of cotton might make about twenty-five or thirty pounds of cotton thread. . . . At the approach of night, all seek their canoes to return to land.”‡

This liberality and willingness to give all they had for a mere thing, did not proceed from the value they set on the articles given them by the Spaniards, but from the persuasion that they came from heaven ; and, therefore, every thing belonging to them was regarded as a sacred relic.§

As gold was a branch of commerce exclusively reserved for the crown in all voyages of discovery, Columbus, on the very first day, forbade trafficking in it without his permission ; and he made the same prohibition for cotton, reserving its monopoly for their Majesties, whenever it was found in any abundance.

As to the interpretation which Columbus gave to the signs those savages made concerning the surrounding countries and their inhabitants, it is clear that the greater part had no other ground than his imagination, which shaped and colored every object in accordance with the impressions he had received from the narrative of Marco Polo.|| Polo tells of innumerable islands scattered over the sea in front of Cathay ; and it seemed to Columbus that the place where he then was answered perfectly to the description of those islands. In this way the enemies that the natives said came from the north-west must, without any doubt, be the people of the continent of Asia, subjects of the Grand Khan of Tartary, who were in the habit, according to Polo, of making raids on the neighboring islands, and carrying off the inhabitants for slaves. The country of the west, where there was gold in great quantity, could only be the great Cipango ; and the king, who was served in vessels of gold, was doubtless the monarch whose magnificent city and splendid palace, all covered with plates of gold, had so greatly excited the admiration of Marco Polo.¶

The next morning the admiral started, at daybreak, with his boats

* A *ceuto* or *cepto* was an old coin of Ceuta, current in Portugal.

† The *blanca*, or *white*, was a coin of small value, so called from its color, because it contained more silver, in opposition to a coin of still less value, called, also from its color, the *negra*, or the *black*.

‡ *Journal*, 13 October.

§ Fernando Colombo, cap. xxiii.

|| See ch. vi, towards the end.

¶ Cf. M. Polo, lib. ii, cap. lxxiii, lxxvii.

to the north-west to examine the other side of the island ; and as soon as he came near a village, the inhabitants, men and women, ran in crowds to the shore, calling to the others, with all their lungs, to come and see the men descended from heaven, throwing themselves on the ground, or lifting their hands as if to worship and thank them for coming. Running after them along the shore, they cried to them to stop, and offered water, food, and every thing ; and when the Spaniards showed no sign of landing, some followed them in canoes, some swam after them, inquiring, by signs, if they had come from heaven. Columbus received them with his wonted kindness and affability, and sent them back happy with the present of a bit of glass, a needle, or some such trifle.*

The gardens of Castile in May had not richer or fairer vegetation than was seen in every part of the island in October ; but as this was not the land he was looking for, and there was no reason for staying there any longer, and his men were too tired to row further, he gave orders to return to the ships, taking along seven of those savages, to learn Spanish, in order to act as interpreters on the rest of the voyage.† Taking in fresh supplies of wood and water, they made sail that same night, and continued on their way.

The Indian name of this island was Guanahani. It is part of that long stretch of islands extending from the coast of Florida to Hayti, forming a sort of hedge in front of the northern coast of Cuba. Tradition has constantly pointed to *San Salvador el Grande*, of the Bahama group, as the land that first received the discoverer of the New World, and this tradition is supported by the authority of the great Humboldt. Navarrete would substitute the Grande Salina, of the Turk Islands ; Muñoz, the island of Watling ; Varnhagen, Marignana ; Tox, the island of Samana ; and others, other islands. The opinion of Muñoz is in most favor at present. The diversity of opinion seems to me a strong argument for maintaining in favor of San Salvador the honor which tradition claims for it.‡

* *Journal*, 14 October.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxiv.

† *Id.* xxiv.

‡ Irving, *Columbus*, App. xvi.—Humboldt, *Examen Critique de la Géographie au xvme Siècle*, sec. ii, p. 104, et seq.—Roquette, in Marmocchi, *Raccolta di Viaggi*, t. i, 387.—*Giornale Ligustico di Archeologia Storia e Belle Arti*, pp. 321-2.

CHAPTER XVI.

Cruise among the Bahamas.—Discovery of Cuba.—Embassy to a supposed Prince of the East (1492).

ON leaving San Salvador, Columbus was at a loss which direction to take, as a great number of beautiful green islands, all level like the first, scattered here and there on the sea, seemed to invite him ; and the Indians on board intimated, by signs, that there were so many that they could not be counted, repeating the names of more than a hundred of them, and added that they were at war with one another.

He decided for the one that seemed the largest, and which was a little less than seven leagues distant. It being now nearly night, he gave orders to lie to, because it was not safe to venture in the dark among so many islands so close together in unknown waters. In the morning he made sail again, but had to struggle hard with the currents, and did not reach the island before noon. He coasted along the shore a great distance, and towards sunset anchored to see if there was any gold to be had ; as his seven Indians had indicated that it was the custom there to wear large bands of the precious metal on the arms and legs. But he did not trust them too far ; for, although those poor savages were full of admiration and even of worship for those beings descended from heaven, they showed great uneasiness at being carried off by them ; and the admiral suspected that they alluded to the abundance of gold on that island, in order to land there and escape.* Landing on the morning of the 16th of October, they found the same beauty and richness of vegetation as they had seen at San Salvador, and the same wonder and joyful reception by the inhabitants. These were naked, gentle, and simple in their nature, and unprovided with wealth of any kind. Either the admiral had misinterpreted the Indians' signs, or else, as he suspected, they had only sought a chance for flight, and that same night

* *Journal*, 15 October.

one of them plunged into the sea, and escaped by favor of the darkness.

Taking possession of this second island, Columbus, out of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, gave it the name of *Santa Maria de la Concepcion*,* and as there was no motive for staying any longer, he returned on board the same evening, to sail for a larger island, which had been seen to the west. While preparing to get under way, another savage who was on board of the *Niña* suddenly threw himself into the sea, and, gliding like a fish, reached a canoe full of Indians, which was passing not far from there, and escaped in it. The Spaniards quickly lowered a boat and pursued the canoe, rowing with all their speed; but their efforts were in vain, for it flew over the water, and it had hardly reached the shore when the frightened savages made a leap for the land, and vanished into the woods, leaving their canoe in the hands of the pursuers. Soon afterwards a small canoe appeared from another part of the coast, with a single Indian in it, who, knowing nothing of what had occurred, was calmly approaching the *Niña* with his ball of cotton, to offer in exchange for some trifle. He was invited to come aboard, and as he would not, some of the sailors jumped quickly into the water and caught him. Columbus was very anxious to dissipate the feeling of distrust and fear which the pursuit of the canoe, and the account of the two fugitives, would certainly spread over that island and those around,—not only by reason of his natural goodness and his wish to conciliate the good will of the natives, but also in the interest of navigators who should come there afterwards. He, therefore, ordered the Indian whose capture he had witnessed from the stern of his vessel, to be brought before him. The poor savage approached all in a tremble, offering his cotton ball. The admiral, looking at him with a kind expression, placed a red cap on his head, pearls of green glass on his arm, and two little bells in his ears. Then ordering his canoe to be restored, he dismissed him, without accepting his ball of cotton, which the poor Indian endeavored to make him take. He then watched what should happen on his reaching the shore, and, as he had expected, he saw all the rest surround him, and, as far as could

* This would seem to be what is now called the North Caico, although, under the name of *Santa Maria de la Concepcion*, Columbus included all the immediate islands called the Caicos, as we shall see in the account of the 16th of October. (Navarrete.)



be concluded from the Indian's gestures, he was telling, with great emphasis, the goodness and kindness of those beings descended from heaven.

They then sailed for that larger island they saw to the west, where the Indians on board intimated there were great quantities of gold, and the inhabitants wore it as bracelets, rings, or little chains, on the arms, legs, ears, nose, and around the neck. On the way Columbus had a fresh opportunity to inspire and confirm in the indigenes a favorable opinion of the white men. Midway between the islands they found an Indian making the same voyage in his little canoe. His entire store consisted of a little cassava bread,* the size of a man's fist, a gourd full of water, a piece of red earth, powdered and made into a paste, for coloring the body when he landed, and a few dried leaves, which seemed to be valued highly, as they offered some as a gift to the admiral at San Salvador. He had also, in a small osier basket, some glass beads and two small Castilian coins; from which they judged he came from San Salvador and was probably going around to tell of the coming of the men from heaven, carrying as proof of his words, some of the presents they had distributed. It seemed scarce credible that he should undertake a voyage of so many leagues in so small and frail a bit of wood. As he approached the admiral's vessel he made signs as though wishing to come aboard. He was quickly taken up, with his canoe, and given bread, honey, and something to drink; and when they arrived at Fernandina, in the evening, they let him go with all his effects.† They then lay to, waiting till morning to land; because, two cannon-shots off, the sea was too deep for anchoring, and nearer the shore it was all sown with rocks rising almost to the surface; and although it was easy to avoid them in the day-time, as the water was so transparent that they could see the bottom, it was highly dangerous for one who was not sure of the way, to go amongst them in the dark. Meanwhile, the Indian related on the island the great wonders of their arrival, and the fine things they brought; and canoes loaded with Indians soon commenced to come and go, all night long, bringing to the admiral's ship the few poor articles they had to of-

* Cassava is a kind of a flour made from the ground root of cassavi—a shrub indigenous to Southern America. As we shall see, it was the ordinary food of the West Indians.

† *Journal*, 15 October.

fer. He gave them in exchange the usual glass beads, little kettle-drums, and some agates ; all which were received with infinite delight, and held as priceless treasures. Those who came on board were also given a little water to drink, with sugar and honey in it, for which they showed themselves most greedily. Consequently, the next morning, when some of the Spaniards went ashore after water, as soon as the natives understood what they wanted, they not only pointed out the springs, but seizing the casks, ran to fill them, and enjoyed carrying them on their shoulders. These Indians all resembled in complexion, figure, and costume, those they had seen before, but seemed more wary and crafty, for in their barter with the Spaniards they cared more for their own interests. They were nude, like the others, but their married women and some girls of eighteen and upwards wore a small strip of cotton cloth hanging from the waist.* Their dwellings, in the shape of a pavilion, or circular tent, were constructed of boughs, reeds, or palm-leaves ; and in the few articles of furniture there was displayed a certain neatness unknown to the savages they had seen previously. For beds they used nets of cotton, shaped like slings, and hung at the ends from the posts of their houses, and they lay down in them lengthwise : they called them hammocks. Both the thing and the name are now in common use on board of vessels.

This third island was named by Columbus Fernandina, in honor of King Ferdinand, and is the same as now known by the name of Little Inagua. They remained there till the morning of the 19th of October, going over nearly the whole island ; and in every part they found a variety and richness of nature in the trees, fruits, herbs, stones, fishes,—in every thing,—that was a constant wonder and charm for people unused to such sights. The luxuriant richness of the trees, and their density, caused their branches to interlace and mingle, so that the same trunk seemed to have on one branch one kind of leaves, and on another, a different kind. This led Columbus at first to believe that in this country of wonders, the trees varied their products capriciously, and, under the 16th of October, he relates that he was surprised to see “ many trees which were very different from ours, and many of them have branches of different appearance, although all springing from the same trunk ; and they are so strange

* *Journal*, 17 October

that this diversity of form is the greatest wonder in the world. For example, one branch had leaves like the cane, and another branch like the lentisk, and on a single tree there were five or six different kinds, and even those of the same kind were not all alike ; and these trees are not grafted ; if they were, the surprising diversity might be attributed to the scion ; but this is impossible to suppose, because these trees are found on the mountains and in the forests, and the inhabitants take no care of them." And of the fishes he said, " they are so different from ours that it is a marvel to behold them : some are like cocks, and have most brilliant colors ; some are grey, yellow, red, and of every color ; others are speckled, and they are colored so perfectly that no one can look at them without wonder and delight."

The knowledge we have now of all parts of the New World, and the naturalization among us of nearly every species of those animals and plants, are the reason why our wonder and curiosity are not excited by the description of those rare species. But let us forget, for a moment, what we know from our own experience, or the account of others, concerning the rare products of those lands, and transport ourselves in imagination to the days when they were first revealed to the eyes of Europeans ; let us place ourselves, if we can, in the condition of mind in which Columbus must have been, when, by his genius, his study, and his labor, he had discovered such rich treasures never before dreamt of by any one,—and we may form some conception of what his feelings were at the sight of such wonders. A living and speaking protrait of his impressions is his journal, although too little of it has come down to us in his own language ; but in the few instances where Las Casas, instead of abridging, transcribes,—whether it is because I have become, by long study, as it were, identified with this subject, or owing to the wonderful force of truth which the ingenuous simplicity of his narrative presents,—I feel myself carried away, and accompany in imagination those first discoverers : I behold their astonishment ; I see the wonder of the simple Indians ; I see and feel the surprise, the joy, and the enthusiasm of Columbus. And I confess that I have to do violence to myself not to be too often enticed into taking his words and inserting them in my narrative ; and the kind reader will pardon me for the frequent occasions when I have yielded to this temptation.

On the morning of the 19th of October, they weighed anchor at

Fernandina, and steered to the south-east, towards another island, which the Indians called Saomet, where, as far as could be gathered from their signs, there was a mine of gold, and a king who lived in a large city, and possessed great treasures, and wore rich clothing and gold ornaments; and he was the sovereign of all the surrounding islands. "But I do not place much reliance on their story," wrote Columbus, "because I do not understand them very well, and because I see that they have very little gold in their own country; so that however little that king may have, it would seem much to them."* And, in fact, he did not find the city, nor the king, nor the mine. The Spaniards continued to wander around the island for five days, always in the hope of yet finding something to correspond, in part at least, to the promises of the interpreters; but they found everywhere the same poverty and nakedness. But they could not regret the loss of time and the trouble, for it seemed as though they had passed through the earthly paradise. The islands previously visited had been uniformly flat; here, for the first time, they saw hills, and in the magnificence, richness, and variety of its vegetation, it was vastly superior to the other islands.

"If the other islands which I had already seen," says the admiral,† "were beautiful, verdant, and fertile, this is much more so; since it is full of large green forests, and has large lakes, in and around which are found superb spots, which, here, as on the rest of the island, are extremely verdant; and then the grass here is like that of Andalusia in April.

"There are flocks of parrots so numerous that they hide the sun, and other birds of many different species, which, in the shape of the body, the color of the plumage, and in their song, are entirely different from any seen in Europe; and there is the same diversity in the trees, and in the fruits they bear, and in the odors which embalm the air: so that all these objects fill me with astonishment and admiration, and seem as though they ought to retain in this abode every man who has once seen them."‡

He thought that many of the herbs and trees would be highly prized in Spain for dyes, medicines, and perfumes; and he regretted his ignorance of them; but took specimens of all, to be examined in Europe.§ Tidings had not yet reached here of the arrival of the

* *Journal*, 19 October. † *Ib.* 21 October. ‡ *Ib.* 21 October. § *Ib.* 19 October.

Men from Heaven, and, consequently, their first appearance was a source of great terror to the inhabitants ; and when they came near a village, all the inhabitants took to flight, carrying with them into the mountains what little property they could pick up in the hurry of their escape. The admiral would suffer nothing to be taken, not so much as the value of a pin ; and in this way these Indians became tame and repeated the demonstrations of kindness witnessed on the other islands.

Columbus gave to this new island the name of his royal patroness,—Isabella.*

But much as Columbus went, as it were, into ecstasies over the spectacle which the nature of the New World displayed before him, his heart could not rest there : he needed gold, he wished for gold, he sought always and before all, for gold. We have already mentioned how his mind was controlled by the thought of another enterprise, to which this of the Indies was but the preparatory step, furnishing the means necessary for its success. This was the cause of his care and anxiety in looking for gold, which he manifested on first landing in the New World, and which never left him till the very last, not even in the saddest and gloomiest days of his troubled life. Landing at San Salvador, his first thought was of gold. “I examined them carefully, and wanted to know if they possessed any gold.”† At Santa Maria de la Concepcion, he went ashore “to see if there was any gold there ;” he would not stop at the surrounding islands, although sure that there were many things to be found there, because he wanted to have time to visit and examine those where gold was found ; and returning to the subject of the gold so ardently longed for, he added : “I cannot fail, with the help of our Lord, to find it in the places where they hide it.”‡ And so in all his intercourse with the savages, his first aim is to learn where there is gold, and in every country he came to, all his inquiries were to ascertain if there was gold there.

With this view, although he greatly doubted the information given by the savages, and the interpretation put upon their signs, he

* Navarrete thinks it was the island now known under the name of Great Inagua, while Washington Irving believes it to be what is called at present Isla Larga and Exumeta. The question is of little importance, and besides, it is impossible to decide with certainty.

† *Journal*, 13 October

‡ *Ib.* 15 October

still continued, for five days, searching the whole island of Isabella to find some trace of that imaginary monarch. At last, when there was no longer any doubt that it was all a mistake, towards midnight of the 24th of October, he weighed anchor and left. But this illusion was not wholly dispelled before another succeeded. To the manifold inquiries as to gold, and the places where it could be found in abundance, the natives were all agreed in indicating a country to the south, which they called Cuba.

But in all these inquiries and replies, they were groping in the dark, and too often their wishes and imagination made them find in the answers of the savages a meaning that they did not have. Hence, a constant succession of illusions, and an untiring pursuit of persons and places that had no existence outside of the heated fancy of Columbus. And now again, when the Indians indicated Cuba as a vast, populous, and rich country, he thought he had sure information that it was an island of great extent, abounding in gold, pearls, and spices; that it traded in those precious articles, and great ships came to traffic with the inhabitants. Comparing those imaginary descriptions with the chart he had drawn of the Asiatic coast after Marco Polo's report, he was convinced that Cuba was the famous Cipango, and the merchant ships trading there were those of the Grand Khan, whose commerce was extensive in those seas. He resolved, therefore, to sail at once for that island, examine its ports, its cities, and its products, and establish commercial relations with them. After that, he would visit another large island, not far from Cuba, of which the natives gave marvellous accounts. On the way, he would take in the intervening islands, his movements depending on the quantity of gold and spices they might possess. Then he intended to sail directly to the continent and proceed to the *heavenly city* Quinsay, according to Marco Polo, the largest, most beautiful, and most magnificent capital in the world. He would deliver, in person, to the Grand Khan the letter of the king and queen of Castile, and after receiving his reply, by which document he would have successfully accomplished the great object of his voyage, he would return in triumph to the Old World.*

Calms and head-winds prevented their departure from Isabella till the night of the 24th of October. The weather was then unfa-

* *Journal*, 21, 22, 23, 24 October.

avorable for their voyage, and it was not until Sunday, the 28th of October, after four days of varied sailing, that their eyes at last enjoyed a sight of the longed-for Cipango. They could recognize it at a distance, by its high mountains,—a charming prospect after the uniform flatness and little hills hitherto found on the islands,—and as they advanced, they saw, with delight, the coasts extending as far as the eye could reach. They arrived in the evening and anchored a musket-shot from shore, at the mouth of a beautiful river opening on the north side of the island. Two canoes were seen on their arrival, but fled at sight of them. Columbus could hardly wait till the anchors were dropped, to let down the boat and hasten to land. He took his way towards two cabins a little distance from the shore, but here again all fled in fear on his approach. In one of the cabins they found a dog of a dumb breed, and in both they saw nets made of fibres of the palm or of cord, harpoons and hooks of horn and bone, and other fishing implements. There were a number of fire-places, which indicated that more than a single family lived in one cabin, and Columbus gave orders that nothing should be disturbed. Returning to the boat, he ascended the river a considerable distance, wrapt in inexpressible delight at finding himself at last in his Cipango, in the famous island which for so many years had been his dream, the wish of his life. On both banks of the river, through its whole length, were thick, tall trees, beautiful and green, very different from ours; one, loaded with flowers, another, with fruit, and another, with both at once, presenting an aspect of wonderful and constantly renewed fertility. There was a great quantity of palms, quite different from those of the Old World, with leaves so large that the natives used them to cover their cabins; and the grass was thick and green and as high as it would have been in Andalusia in April or May. The more they explored those places and rivers the following days, the greater was their admiration for their beauty. It was a sight to rouse any one's enthusiasm; what, then, must its effects have been on Columbus, who beheld in these marvels the fruit of his labors, the reward of his struggles, the glory of his genius?

The American, Washington Irving, who judged by the testimony of his own eyes, of the beauty of those scenes, follows the narrative and description of them given here by Columbus, with these remarks:—

“The continual eulogies,” he says, “made by Columbus on the

beauty of the country, were warranted by the kind of scenery he was beholding. There is a wonderful splendor, variety, and luxuriance in the vegetation of those quick and ardent climates. The verdure of the groves, and the colors of the flowers and blossoms, derive a vividness from the transparent purity of the air and the deep serenity of the azure heavens. The forests, too, are full of life, swarming with birds of brilliant plumage. Painted varieties of parrots and woodpeckers create a glitter amid the verdure of the grove, and humming-birds rove from flower to flower, resembling, as has well been said, animated particles of a rainbow. The scarlet flamingoes, too, seen sometimes through an opening of a forest in a distant savanna, have the appearance of soldiers drawn up in battalion, with an advanced scout on the alert, to give notice of approaching danger. Nor is the least beautiful part of animated nature the various tribes of insects peopling every plant, and displaying brilliant coats of mail, which sparkle like precious gems.*

“Such is the splendor of animal and vegetable creation in these tropical climates, where an ardent sun imparts its own lustre to every object, and quickens nature into exuberant fecundity. The birds, in general, are not remarkable for their notes, for it has been observed that in the feathered race sweetness of song rarely accompanies brilliancy of plumage. Columbus remarks, however, that there were various kinds which sang sweetly among the trees, and he frequently deceived himself in fancying that he heard the voice of the nightingale, a bird unknown in these countries. He was, in fact, in a mood to see every thing through a favoring medium. His heart was full to overflowing, for he was enjoying the fulfilment of his hopes, and the hard-earned but glorious reward of his toils and perils. Every thing around him was beheld with the enamored and exulting eye of a discoverer, where triumph mingles with admiration; and it is difficult to conceive the rapturous state of his feelings while thus exploring the charms of a virgin world won by his enterprise and valor.”†

A sweet air, perfumed with a thousand mingled odors, and a temperature, even at night, as mild as May in Spain, complete the picture; and this was all the more delightful and surprising, be-

* “The ladies of Havana, of gala occasions, wear in their hair numbers of those insects, which have a brilliancy equal to rubies, sapphires, or diamonds.”

† Irving, *Columbus*, bk. iv, ch. iii.

cause, in sailing through the other islands, and from them to this, they had suffered much from the cold. Even the sea seemed to share in this mildness of the land and the sky, for the grass grew to the water's edge; from which Columbus argued that it must be always free from the fury of angry waves. And, in the ecstasy of his joy, he exclaimed: "That this island is the fairest human eye has beheld. That he could not leave these places without a longing to return. That he would never tire of praising them."*

To the first river and harbor that Columbus found in his Cipango, he gave the same name as he had given to the first land discovered, and called them San Salvador.† Monday, the 29th of October, he left the river and sailed westward, in the direction in which, as the signs of his interpreter seemed to him to indicate, was situated the magnificent city of the monarch. Towards evening they came to a large river, which they called Rio de los Mares,‡ near which they found many beautiful villages. Columbus sent two boats to one of them for information, and with the Spaniards he sent one of the Indian interpreters to assure the people that the Christians would do them no harm. But this was of no avail: men, women, and children, at their approach, all took to flight, abandoning their houses and all they possessed. Here, also, it was forbidden to touch any thing. The houses, covered with splendid branches of palm, were much more beautiful than any seen before, pavilion-shaped, very large, and, like the tents of a camp, placed here and there, without any regularity, but neat and clean inside, full of furniture wrought and ornamented with care and not without taste. Every thing indicated a beginning of civilization, and Columbus hoped to find clearer proofs of it as he advanced towards the continent. From finding in every cabin fishing implements, he concluded that the coast was inhabited only by fishermen, who sold their fish in the cities in the interior of the island.

Continuing along the coast, they came, on Tuesday, the 30th of October, to a great headland, which they named the Cape of Palms, from the great quantity of palms covering its sides.§ Three Indians

* *Journal*, 28, 29 October.

† They are now known by the name of the harbor or bay of Nipe, six leagues south-south-west from Punta de la Mula. (Navarrete.)

‡ It must be the same now called *Las Nuevitas del Principe*. (Navarrete.)

§ It is now called the Heights of John Dauve. (Navarrete.)

who were on the *Pinta* told Martin Alonzo Pinzon that beyond that headland he would find a river by which it was only four days' sail to Cuba Nacau. *Nacau*, in the Indian tongue, means *centre, middle*, and by the name of Cuba Nacau the Indians may have indicated a province in the centre, abounding in the precious metal the white men were in search of. Martin Alonzo had carefully studied Toscanelli's chart, and his head was filled with Columbus's notions about the regions of Asia. When, therefore, he heard the word Cuba Nacau, he suspected that the Indians meant Khublai Khan, described by Marco Polo as the most powerful prince in the whole East; and as it is easy for one who has preconceived ideas on a subject, to assimilate the most discrepant notions with those ideas, so it was in his case; and quickly passing from suspicion to certainty, he felt sure that Cuba was not an island, but a tract of the main land, extending far to the north, and that its king was at war with the Great Khan of Cathay; and he hastened to make known his discovery to the admiral. Columbus accepted the idea; and the pleasing delusion that he was in Cipango gave place to another, more attractive still,—that he was already arrived at the continent of Asia. He was, accordingly, persuaded that he had landed in a country not far from Mangi and Cathay, the final destination of his voyage, and that the prince of the countries about him was some great Eastern potentate. In this persuasion, he resolved to find the river indicated by the Indians, and send that monarch a present with the letter of the king and queen, and after visiting his states, to repair to the capital of Cathay, where the Grand Khan resided.*

But neither behind the Cape of Palms, nor further on, did they find the great river promised by the Indians; cape succeeded cape, and they did not find even a good spot for anchoring. Meanwhile, the wind became adverse and the sky threatening, and, therefore, on Wednesday, the 31st of October, they turned about and went back and anchored in the River de los Mares.

The next day, the admiral sent the boats ashore towards the neighboring villages, but, as usual, the inhabitants fled at once. Columbus believed their fear arose from mistaking them for one of the fearful squadrons that the Grand Khan sent around to make prisoners and slaves. He, therefore, recalled the boats, and, later on, sent only one

* *Journal*, 30 October.—Las Casas, lib. i, cap. xlv.

on shore, with one of the San Salvador Indians, charged with reassuring the frightened people. The interpreter called from a distance to the first savage he saw, that they had nothing to fear, but should stay where they were ; that the visitors were not soldiers of the Grand Khan, but Christians, who would injure no one, but bestowed gifts and presents wherever they went. Having said this, the Indian threw himself into the water, and swam to the shore. The other stood still, amazed at seeing one with the same features, and color, and the same language as his own, in the midst of those strange people ; and two other Indians concealed close by, encouraged by the sight, came out from their hiding-place, and going up to the interpreter, they took him by the arm and led him to one of their cabins. There he succeeded so well in allaying their fear, that before night more than sixteen canoes came around the ships, bringing cotton thread and many small articles to trade with. The admiral ordered them to accept in exchange nothing but gold, hoping, by this means, to force them to show the true wealth of their country ; but the fact was, the poor creatures had not a sign of gold ; and the only valuable article found among them was a little piece of wrought silver, which one of them wore hanging to his nose. They asked the usual questions, which the savages could not comprehend, and their answers, as usual, were not understood by the Spaniards ; and taking their fancy and wishes for the truth, Columbus and the others thought they said their king resided four days' journey further in the interior, that they had sent messengers to announce the arrival of Columbus to him and to all the country around, and that within three days they would see many merchants coming to buy the articles they had brought. He compared these answers with Toscanelli's chart, and with the calculations he made during the voyage ; all which tended to confirm him in the belief that he was on the main land of Asia and in front of Zayton and Quinsay, the two great cities of Cathay, at about one hundred leagues' distance from each.* Impatient to arrive quickly in the presence of the Grand Khan, he decided, in order to save time, not to await the arrival of the messengers and merchants apparently announced by the savages, but ordered the immediate departure of two of his men on an embassy to the monarch of that country. For this mission he chose Rodrigo

* *Journal*, 1 November.

de Jerez, and Luis de Torres, a converted Jew, who knew Hebrew and Chaldaic and even a little Arabic, of which languages it was hoped that one, at least, would be known at that prince's court. The ambassadors set out at once, taking with them necklaces of colored beads and other gewgaws for the wants of the voyage, and they were allowed six days for their return. Two Indians went along as interpreters, one being from Guanahani, where they were at anchor. They were to inform the monarch that Christopher Columbus had been sent by the king and queen of Castile to establish friendly relations between the two powers, and brought letters and presents to be delivered in person. They were also instructed to obtain information as to the position and distance of certain provinces and rivers which the admiral pointed out to them according to the description he had of the coast of Asia. Finally, they were charged to ascertain whether the country produced drugs and spices, and for that purpose took with them the necessary samples for comparison.*

CHAPTER XVII.

Return of the embassy.—Discovery of tobacco and potatoes.—Search after the supposed Island of Babeque.—Desertion of the Pinta 1492).

THE River de los Mares formed at its mouth a large lake, which made an excellent harbor, perfectly free from rocks, with well-wooded shores on either side, suitable for hauling the ships out of water. Therefore, while awaiting the return of the two ambassadors, the admiral gave orders to repair and clean the ships after the injuries sustained on the voyage, one at a time, for greater security, although he was sure, from the quiet docility of the natives, that he could safely draw them all on the bank at once. While some were guarding and repairing the ships, the rest went about collecting information as to the situation, the wealth and products of the country,

* *Journal*, 2 November.

and the benefit to be derived from their discovery. They always made these inquiries on landing in any place ; and, incited by the words and example of the admiral, and by the rewards he promised to whoever should be fortunate enough to make any useful discovery, they vied with each other in running in every direction over the fields and through the woods, and bringing back to the admiral the proofs of their labor and careful exploration. He placed in the ships specimens of every thing he believed might be an object of commerce or profit for Spain, and noted in his journal whatever was useful to know of the conditions of the place, the animals, products, rivers, and the sea ; accompanied with observations on the character of the country, the fertility of the soil, the good harbors he found there, and the measures for introducing and promoting a large trade. His reports and observations are not always perfectly exact, but if we take into account the very superficial examination he was compelled to make, and the number and variety of things he observed and made notes of, instead of wondering that he sometimes fell into error, we should rather admire the breadth and acumen of his mind, which saw and embraced so many different matters, and was so rarely at fault.

After gold and precious stones, Columbus's next care was to find spices, which were a most profitable branch of the oriental trade of Asia with Europe ; and he was persuaded that they must surely find some in the vicinity of where they were then anchored, for the air from the neighboring woods was unusually fragrant. A great search was accordingly made, and he was informed that they had found cinnamon, nutmeg, and rhubarb, but on examination he found that they had been deceived. But, on the other hand, the seamen who were working about the ships, judged from the odor of the wood they burnt to get resin, that there must be great quantities of lentisks in the woods ; a special search was made, and they found them in wonderful abundance, so that Columbus hoped to gather no less than 1,000 quintals of mastic annually, and to establish a larger trade in it than was now carried on with Chio and the other islands of the Archipelago.*

In the course of these researches in the vegetable kingdom, to discover articles of luxury, the Spaniards found the potato, a humble plant, little esteemed then, but which afterwards acquired the im-

* *Journal*, 5 November.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxvi.

portance which every one knows, and has been of very different service to mankind from the spices of the East. The savages cultivated it extensively, making it their principal article of food.*

On the night of the 5th to the 6th of November, the two ambassadors returned, and every one crowded around them to hear their account of the interior of the country, of the prince, and of the capital they had visited. They reported that after travelling twelve leagues they had found a village of fifty houses, each large enough to hold a thousand persons, several families living together; these houses resembled large army tents. The rumor of their coming had preceded them, and when they arrived, all the inhabitants, men and women, came out to meet them. The most important men of the village wanted to lift them on their shoulders, and in this manner they were carried on their arms to the principal house of the place, amid universal acclamations. Here they were placed on seats made of single pieces of wood, cut in the shape of a quadruped, and which must have been their seats of honor. The four paws of the beast were the feet of the chair, its back formed the level to sit on, and the tail, as wide as the seat, and rising high, gave a comfortable support for the back. In front of the seat a queer figure of a head represented the animal's muzzle, and there were small pieces of gold in the place of eyes and ears.† The Indians squatted on the bare ground around them.

The ambassador Luis de Torres, finding his Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Arabic out of place with these people, left the burden of talking to the Indian from San Salvador, who had been taken along as interpreter. The poor savage spoke with much warmth, after the Indian manner: he extolled the power, the wealth, and the magnificence of the white men, and how they left wonderful gifts wherever they went. When he had finished his harangue, all the Indians, convinced that the white men had come down from heaven, went, one by one, to kiss with reverence their hands and feet; then they presented them some cooked roots to eat, and earnestly prayed that they would remain always there with them, or, at least, that they would rest themselves there for five or six days.

After this the men went out and the women came in. They arranged themselves in the same manner as the men; they also kissed

* *Journal*, 4 November.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. xxvii.

with reverence the hands and feet of the two Spaniards, and made offering of the poor things they had ; and then, with feminine curiosity, felt them all over, to make sure they were flesh and bone like themselves ; and they renewed, with the same cordiality and earnestness, the prayer that they would remain some days. They were also nude, like the men, except that they had a small piece of cotton hanging from their waist in front.

As to the condition of the country, they reported finding many villages along the way, but none with more than five houses. The land was fertile with a richness and variety of vegetables and fruit much superior to what they had observed along the coast. Of cotton, especially, there was a wonderful abundance, not sown, but growing spontaneously, and ready to pick at any season ; for, on the same plant were seen balls fully opened, others opening, and others in blossom. In a single house they had seen as much as 12,500 pounds spun and rolled in balls, and they received a large basket-full in exchange for a few inches of ribbon ; for it was little valued and used only for hammocks and for women's aprons. But of gold, pearls, and spices, they saw no sign anywhere ; and the natives could only say, that they were found in great plenty in a country very far away to the south-west. Different from the islands first discovered, where the most perfect equality seemed to reign, here there was a certain distinction of ranks and orders of society, and a chieftain among them of some authority. In other respects, there was everywhere the same poverty, simplicity, and extreme astonishment at seeing white men.*

When they were about to leave, at least 500 persons wished to follow them, to go with them to heaven, and they had all they could do to persuade the Indians to remain. But they could not refuse the company of one of the principal men of the village and his son, who, attended by a slave, came to do reverence to the chief of the white men.

Columbus's stay at the River de los Mares is memorable for the discovery of the potato ; another discovery, of quite another kind, but which has also come, in time, to be of great importance, was made on the journey of the two ambassadors to the supposed capital of the Oriental monarch.† I give the words of Las Casas, because, in ad-

* *Journal*, 6 November.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxvii.

† *Journal*, 6 November.—F. Colombo, l. c.

dition to the fact, they give us the impressions produced in those first days of the discovery, and the reader may be amused in comparing them with his own :—“ These two Christians,” he says, “ saw, on the way, many people, men and women, returning to their cabins ; the men always carried in their hand a burning coal, and certain weeds for inhaling their smoke. These were dry weeds rolled up in a leaf, which was dry also, shaped like the paper-muskets the boys make on the feast of Pentecost, and lighting one end of it, they suck the other, and absorb or inhale the smoke, whereby they are put to sleep and made almost drunk, and in this way they do not feel fatigue.

“ These fire-crackers, or whatever name we may give them, they call *tabacos*. I have known some Spaniards in Hispaniola, who became accustomed to their use, and when blamed, and told that it was injurious, replied that they could not give up the habit ; I do not know what benefit or good they derived from it.”*

Such was the origin of our cigars. “ Who would have then believed,” asks Navarrete, “ that its use would become so common and general, and that one of the principal revenues of the state would be derived from this strange luxury ?”

After entering notes of these discoveries in his journal, Columbus addressed to the king and queen this fervent appeal :

—“ I am convinced, most serene Princes, that as soon as devout and religious persons shall understand their language, these people will all become Christians. I hope that, by God’s grace, Your Highnesses will promptly send such persons to unite so many people with the church, and convert them to the faith, in the same way that you have destroyed those who would not acknowledge the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; and that when you shall terminate your earthly career (for we all are mortal), the greatest tranquillity will reign in your states, freed from heresies and false doctrines, and your souls will be admitted to the vision of the Supreme Being, whom, however, I beg to grant you a long life, and to add yet greater kingdoms and dominions to your states, and to give you the desire and the disposition of augmenting the Holy Christian Religion, as you have hitherto done. Amen.—Now that my vessel is afloat again, I am getting ready to leave on Thursday, in God’s name,

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, cap. lxxvi

for the south-west, where I am going to look for gold and spices, and to discover lands.”*

While in this place, Columbus learnt positively, from his many conversations with the natives, that Cuba was an island, as he had first supposed, and not a part of the mainland, as he had later on been led to believe.†

The illusions as to the king of these places, and his capital, had vanished ; but he was soon comforted for its loss, for some words gathered from the savages gave birth to still greater hopes ; and the attraction of the new illusions allayed his regret for those which were dissipated. The Indians, to the questions of the Spaniards and the specimens of gold shown them, replied, that a land existed to the east where the inhabitants collected gold at night, by the light of torches, along the banks of a river, and then wrought it into bars with hammers, and made great rings out of it, which they wore in their ears, around their neck, and on their arms and legs ; and that there were many ships there and much merchandise : and in designating this country they repeated the words *Bohio* and *Babeque*.‡ What was the meaning of these two words ? Some believed that by them the Indians meant the shore of the continent ; others pretend that *Bohio* means a house, and that the Indians applied this term to any populous island ; that in the present instance they applied it to Hispaniola. Whatever may have been the meaning of the two words, Columbus was sure that the names indicated the place where gold was found ; he was in doubt only as to whether they designated two different places, or only one place with different names. He had no doubt that the place or places were subject to the Grand Khan, or that the ships and merchandise belonged to the empire of Cathay. This discovery happened most opportunely, for now there was no doubt that what he was in search of was not to be had in that neighborhood ; and it was not prudent to extend his search further northward, as the air had already begun to be cooler, and every thing indicated the near approach of the winter

* *Journal*, Tuesday, 6 November.

† See Christopher Columbus's letter to Luis de Santangel, Royal Superintendent, under date of 4 March, 1493 ; and another to Rafael Sanchez, of the 14th of the same month,—in the *Raccolta di Viaggi*, of F. C. Marmocchi. Prato, 1840.

‡ *Journal of Columbus*, 12 November.

season. He, therefore, decided to go back and sail in search of Bohio and Babeque.*

Before leaving, he gave orders to carry off quietly one of the natives, as it was his intention to take one from every place, to be carried to Castile, for instruction in the Spanish language and in our religion, so as to serve as interpreters and apostles among their brothers. He took one of each sex, knowing, from the accounts of the Portuguese travellers, that the men were more contented on the voyage, and more useful on their return, if accompanied by their women. The first to be captured were five young men who had come aboard his ship for the usual bargains; then, from a house near by, they took seven women and three children. Soon after, in the night-time, a canoe approached the ships, with an Indian in it, about forty-five years of age, who, informing them that he was the husband of one of the women, and father of the three little ones, earnestly begged to be taken along with them. They gladly consented to his wishes. The venerable Las Casas severely condemns this act of the admiral, and asserts that the capture was a serious violation of the law of nature and the law of nations; that it was treachery to those who came on board his ship in good faith, and who had treated him with the most cordial hospitality. To carry off by violence, after that, women who had their own husbands, to subject them to the pleasure of other men, he calls *a detestable act*. †

I endorse the strong language of the holy bishop; for, however good the end proposed by Columbus, it does not justify the means. The precept of St. Paul, that we must not do evil that good may come, ‡ is right at all times, under all circumstances, and for all persons.

In his religious zeal, Columbus anticipated great facility in the conversion of the natives, as it seemed to him that their notions of religion were limited to a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being, dwelling in heaven; and as there was no obstacle to their conversion caused by a different belief, he argued, from their docility and the innocence of their life, that they would easily yield to the salutary influence of the Gospel; and it was a great consolation to him that they carefully and respectfully watched the religious ceremonies of

* *Journal*, 12 November.

† *Rom.*, iii,

‡ Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, t. i, cap. xxxi.

the Spaniards, soon learned to repeat the short prayers taught them, and made the sign of the cross with exemplary devotion.

Their departure was fixed for Thursday, the 7th of November, but contrary winds detained them for five days longer. Finally, on Monday, the 12th, the ships were able to move out and turn their prows to the east-south-east, following the coast in a direction contrary to that previously taken.

This change in the direction of his voyage had a decisive influence on the subsequent discoveries of Columbus. He had penetrated far into the straits between Cuba and the Bahamas, and, in two or three days more, he might have had intimations of the vicinity of the continent, and have stood for the coast of Florida, or have been carried thither by the Gulf Stream ; or, continuing along Cuba where it bends to the south-west, might have struck over to the opposite coast of Yucatan, and have realized his most sanguine anticipations, in becoming the discoverer of Mexico.*

For two days he kept along the coast, looking for a city, but, seeing only the same cabins and naked inhabitants, on the third day he struck out to the east for Bolio or Babeque.† But they were soon forced, by head-winds and heavy seas, to return. Looking for a shelter from the increasing fury of the storm, they found a large, deep bay, where they were perfectly safe. It was so studded with little islands that they spent days in going around in the boats merely to admire them ; to count them was impossible. None was more than a quarter of a league from the others, and some were only a musket-shot distant. They all rose in high mountains, their sides covered with gigantic trees of different kinds, but mostly palms. The channels between the islands were extremely deep, and free from rocks, and it was a pleasure to glide among them in the boats. Looking up from those narrow passages to the tops of the mountains, in that pure, transparent atmosphere, they seemed to touch the stars ; and the contrast of the thick green forests, extending to their very peaks, made one of the most beautiful and attractive sights that can be imagined. Columbus named the place where they were anchored, Puerto Principe, and the bay, Our Lady's Sea.‡ In telling of this bay, he says so much concerning the fertility, beauty, and

* Irving, *Columbus*, book iv, ch. v.

† *Journal of Columbus*, 12, 13 November.—Fernando Colombo, cap xxvii.

‡ *Journal*, 14 November

height of the islands, that he begs the king and queen not to wonder that he praises them so highly, assuring them he has not said the hundredth part of what they deserve.*

Sunday, the 18th, the admiral lauded with the most of the crews, and they celebrated, with extraordinary solemnity, the usual ceremony of raising a cross on the new discovery.

Whilst the attention of the Spaniards was occupied in admiring the beauty of the new spectacle presented by these islands, two of the young savages captured at the River de los Mares, quietly dropped from the ships into the water, and disappeared in the windings of the channels.

Sunday the sea was calm again, but as it was the invariable custom of Columbus never to begin any business on a holiday unless compelled by necessity, he put off starting until the next morning. Monday, the 19th, at daylight, the ships put to sea with the weather quite calm, but towards noon the wind became unfavorable, so that at sunset they were not more than seven leagues from Puerto Principe. But they saw a land due east, which the Indians indicated was the wished-for Babeque. They kept on all night making what way they could ; but Tuesday morning the wind began to blow right from the island of Babeque, rendering vain every attempt to advance, and the sea becoming all the time rougher, Columbus determined to put back into Puerto Principe, from which they were twenty-five leagues distant, and signalled the two caravels to follow. He might, with the greatest ease, and in less time, have made the little island of Isabella, which was not more than twelve leagues distant, but he was unwilling to do so, for fear that his Indian interpreters from Guanahani, which is only eight leagues from Isabella, might take to escape on finding themselves so near their home ; and, in fact, those wretched savages kept their eyes always turned in that direction.‡

The Niña obeyed the signal to put about, but the Pinta, which, being the best sailer, was far ahead of the others, kept on. The admiral repeated the signal, but it was not heeded. Night coming on, Columbus shortened sail, and hung lights from the main-top, still believing that Martin Alonzo Pinzon would join him ; and he could easily have done so, because, in returning, he would have the wind

* *Journal*, 16 November. † *Ib.* 16, 18 November. ‡ *Ib.* 17 November. § *Ib.* 20 November.

dead astern ; but, when daylight came, the *Pinta* was not in sight. There was then no further doubt that he had deserted the admiral.*

Martin Alonzo Pinzon remembered too well how much Columbus was indebted to him for getting that little fleet together ; and this thought, coupled with his habit of holding always the first rank at sea, and having his opinion accepted almost as an oracle in marine affairs, made it hard for him to endure the secondary position he held, and to obey the absolute authority of the admiral. But what most excited his ambition, and made his subjection to Columbus so bitter, were the great marvels they were discovering in the New World, and the illusions which all had formed to themselves of soon finding exhaustless treasures of every kind. He, who had borne so great a share in the expense and fitting out of the expedition, would get but little of the glory and profit of the discovery ; and Columbus, merely for being at the head of the fleet, would become rich and famous throughout the world. These thoughts had greatly embittered his mind and gradually converted his former friendship and respect for the admiral into spitefulness and animosity ; more than once he had been unable to restrain himself, and his relations with the admiral had grown quite crabbed. While sailing towards Babeque, one of the Indians on board of his ship had been telling him wonderful stories of the great quantities of gold to be found there. The thought of all this gold was a fresh torture to Martin Alonzo, who beheld in it mainly additional glory and reward for the admiral ; avarice joined with ambition in stinging him, and so, without further resistance, he decided to take the final step in the evil way on which he had entered, breaking away entirely from his superior, and deserting him. His crew was wholly from Palos and its neighborhood, long accustomed to be led by his authority, and he could rely on the entire submission and obedience of them all. Being the first to discover Babeque, he hoped to be able to turn to his own profit all, or at least, most of, the benefits that would otherwise have fallen to the admiral ; he could not have a better opportunity, for his ship was a good sailer ; even with a head-wind, with a little trouble and skill, he could make some way whilst the others were absolutely forced to recede. Heedless, therefore, of the admiral's signal to return, he hastened forward.

* Las Casas, *Hist. Gen. Ind.*, tom. i, cap. xxvii.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxix.—*Journal*, 21 November.

Columbus was greatly distressed by the occurrence ; not so much on account of the dangerous example of disobedience to the others, as of the suspicion he entertained of Pinzon's intentions. Did he mean, by assuming a separate command, to secure his own profit, or was it his intention to hasten back to Spain to claim the honor of the discovery ? What, in that case, would be the result of his audacity, backed by his wealth, the influence of his name, and, most of all, by his being a Spaniard, against one who was poor and a foreigner ? But there was no way in which he could provide against the danger with his inferior ship. All he could do was to go back and seek shelter on the coast of Cuba. He ends the sad record of this desertion in his journal, with these words : " Pinzon always acted and spoke to me very differently."* Who knows what bitter sorrow was concealed under the veil of these words.

The wind was continually changing for the next few days, and they crept along the coast, little by little, as well as they could, sending the boats from time to time to explore the large rivers, the gulfs and bays, which are very numerous in that part of Cuba. Columbus was constantly tempted to land, and had to do violence to himself in order not to delay his voyage and the attaining of his principal object ; and he regretted that whenever the wind forced him to stop, he could not help staying longer than was necessary, seduced by the pleasure of admiring the fresh beauty of the country. Not to stop too often to repeat the same things concerning this beauty and the impression it made on Columbus, it will suffice to give as a sample what he wrote of one of the rivers flowing into the bay of Puerto Santo : † " The pleasant freshness of this river, and the clearness of the water, through which the sand at the bottom may be seen eight fathoms below, as well as the multitude of palm-trees of various forms, the tallest and most beautiful that I have yet seen, and an infinity of other trees, tall and green, and the birds, and the verdure of the fields, counsel me to think of remaining here for ever. This country, most serene Princes, is so wonderfully fair, and surpasses every other in beauty and delightfulness, as much as the day does the night in splendor. On which account, I have often said to my companions that, much as I have tried to give a complete account of it to Your Highnesses, my tongue cannot express the whole

* *Journal*, 21 November. † Now called the Port of Baracoa. (Navarrete.)

truth, nor my hand write it. It is certain that I have been wholly overcome at the sight of so much beauty, and I am unable to describe it, for I have written of other regions, their trees and fruits, their plants, their harbors, and every other particular deserving mention, as much as I could, not as much as I should, write, for all say it is impossible there should be any more beautiful; but now I am silent, wishing that others may see it and write a description of it, to prove how little more fortunate they will be in describing it, than I have been.”*

And of that whole region, he said: “I can assure Your Highnesses that it seems to me that no country under the sun can be more fertile, more agreeable and regular in its temperature, or better supplied with clear water of a good and wholesome quality, very different, in this respect, from that of the rivers in Guinea, which produce only disease and infection; for, thanks be to God our Lord, none of my crew has so far had so much as a head-ache, and one who had the stone and had suffered from it all his life, was cured after we had been two days in this region.” As a proof of the extraordinary vegetation of those countries, he adduces their canoes, which, as we are aware, are formed of a single trunk of a tree, and are capable of holding one hundred and fifty persons. And after mentioning the great advantage and the multitude of most useful articles which might be obtained there, he concludes with the following prayer, to judge which rightly, with the restraint therein advocated, we must divest ourselves entirely of the ideas and customs of the present day, and assume those of that age: “I pray Your Highnesses to suffer no stranger to put a foot into this land, or have any communication with it, unless he is a Christian and a Catholic; for this has been the object of the discoveries which I have made by order of Your Highnesses, and I have undertaken these voyages only for the purpose of aiding in the propagation and glory of the Christian religion.”†

The 5th of December, he came to the eastern extremity of Cuba, to which he gave the name of Alpha, as much as to say “commencement.”‡

* *Journal*, 27 November. † *Ib.* 27 November. ‡ *Ib.* 5 December.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Discovery of Hispaniola.—Voyage along the coast.—Wreck of the admiral's ship (1492).

FINDING that the coast of Cuba trended to the south-west, Columbus was strongly tempted to follow it, certain that he would in that direction arrive at the long-sought dominions of the Grand Khan ; but he wished first to visit Babeque, which the Indians represented as lying to the north-west, and of which they never ceased giving the most wonderful accounts. But as the wind was against him in the direction of Babeque, and very favorable for reaching the land he descried to the south-east, he determined to explore, in the mean time, this new land with its high mountains towering above the horizon, giving promise of an island of great extent. The Indians, on beholding it, exclaimed *Bohio, Bohio*, and when they saw the ships steering in that direction, they were seized with a fear that was pitiful to witness. Pale, trembling, and scarce able to articulate, they pressed around the admiral, and with the greatest earnestness implored him not to take them thither, struggling to make him understand the cruelty of the inhabitants, and the danger in which he was placing himself. The natives of Cuba and of the other islands, in speaking of *Bohio*, had always manifested a great fear and horror of its inhabitants. They intimated that it was a very great land, belonging to the race of *Cauniba*,* or Cannibals, monsters with muzzles like a dog's, and a single eye in the middle of the head, going always armed, and making war upon other men, drinking the blood of all that fell into their hands, and eating their flesh still warm and palpitating. In giving this account, they exhibited such signs of fear as to make one really believe these peaceful savages had suffered some great wrong from the Cannibals. As the savages had also shown great fear on first seeing the Christians, Columbus, hearing that the inhabitants of this new land bore arms and possessed many vessels, concluded that

* This is the origin of the word Cannibal, a synonym of man-eater.

they must be a people of some degree of civilization, by which they had succeeded in making themselves so powerful and formidable among their unwarlike neighbors, and that they took prisoners the inhabitants who fell into their hands, and made slaves of them ; and seeing that the prisoners never came back, the others, in their simple imagination, fancied that they had been devoured by the robbers, and in their terror exaggerating the danger and the harm, had figured the robbers with the face of monsters corresponding to their ferocity. And to this he attributed all their houses and villages being so far from the shore, so as to be less exposed to the incursions of these robbers. And finding in canniba or cannibal the word *Can* [Khan], he was of the opinion that these pretended man-eaters were in reality merely subjects of the great Khan of Cathay, who for a long time had been scouring those seas in search for slaves.*

They came near the new land in the evening, and kept tacking all night, not venturing on an unknown coast in the dark. At their first approach, they saw on every side, as far as the eye could reach, a great number of fires, and these lasted through the night and all the next day, which they wondered at, not knowing how to account for the strange novelty. They afterwards learnt that they were signals, by which the inhabitants gave warning of the approach of an enemy. This vigilance they were obliged to maintain continually, because savage robbers often came down hunting them.† The next day, at vespers, the two ships entered a larger harbor than any seen before, to which they gave the name of St. Nicholas, by which it is still called, from the saint whose feast the Catholic Church celebrated that day. At the head of the harbor was a superb plain, with the usual rich vegetation, watered by a clear river running through it. Of inhabitants they saw not a living soul in any direction. But there was no doubt that it was well peopled, as they found in the port a great number of canoes, most of them as large

* *Journal*, 4, 23, 26 November, and 5, 11 December.

† The same custom of lighting fires at night as a sign of an enemy, was found among the savages of Central Africa. The dragoman who accompanied Captain Romolo Gessi on his exploration of the Nile from Dubli to Luta Nzighé, who understood the signals, explained to him that one fire meant the proximity of the enemy ; two fires at a distance from each other, gave warning to put themselves in security ; three, to assemble for battle ; four, that the enemy was advancing ; and so on. (Cf. the journal *L'Esploratore*. Anno I, n. iv.)

as a galley of fifteen benches.* It was evident that they had all fled into the interior at sight of the ships.

As they could get no information in that port on the nature of the place and the inhabitants, they left it on the morning of the 7th, and coasted along the island to the north-east, to see if they could find some inhabitants to question, and at the same time continuing their course towards the longed-for Babeque. Meanwhile, the Indians on board of the two ships showed themselves more suspicious and anxious as they saw the Christians, instead of sailing in the direction of their home, going further from it every day.

A little after noon, the course of the ships was arrested by threats of an impending storm, and they took shelter in a large bay, to which they gave the name of Port Conception, from the feast which the church celebrated that day in honor of Our Lady. They were kept there by the weather till the 14th of December, and spent that time in examining the country around. They found many of the birds flying about, and some of the plants, like those of Castile. And, one day, when the admiral had gone in his boat to fish, as the coast abounded in fish, after catching a great number, he found that several kinds were similar to those in Spain, and on the way back to the ship, a mullet exactly like a Spanish mullet slid into the boat. This resemblance to things in their own country, now seen for the first time in the New World, stirred the heart of every one with pleasure; and, with a joy they had not felt before, they wandered over that land imagining themselves in the groves of far-off Andalusia. On account of this resemblance to Spain, Columbus named the island *Isla Hispaniola*.†

On the 12th of December, Columbus raised a cross, with great solemnity, on a height at the entrance of the harbor, after which three seamen, going into a forest near by to examine the trees and plants, discovered there a great number of natives. They went towards them and called to them, but the Indians fled at sight of them. The sailors, pursuing them, caught a young and beautiful savage, and carried their captive in triumph before the admiral. She was perfectly naked, which led them to augur ill of the civilization of the island;

* *Journal*, 6 December.

† *Journal*, 6, 7 December.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxx.—This became simply *Hispaniola*, and afterwards the name of *Hayti* (mountainous), given it by the indigenes, was used.

but an ornament of gold which she wore run through her nose, gave hope that the precious metal was abundant there. She trembled with fright, but was reassured on seeing other Indians in the ships, and conversed with them. The admiral had her clothed, and gave her some glass beads, a little bell, and brass rings. He then sent her back, accompanied by three of the Spaniards and three of the Indians on board, for the purpose of communicating with the inhabitants.

The novelty of seeing herself thus clothed, and the fine presents that were given her, and the gentleness of manner towards her, produced such a change in the young woman, that when she saw they were putting her ashore to send her back to her people, she was unwilling to get into the boat, but earnestly begged to be left on board with the other Indian women. At three o'clock in the morning the sailors who had been sent with the woman, returned to the ships without having visited the village of the Indians, whether because they thought it was too far, or that they were really afraid.

Columbus was very anxious to open relations with the inhabitants, to learn what were the products of the island, trusting that the woman's story would have great effect. He, therefore, sent nine men ashore the next day, well armed, with an Indian for interpreter.

About four miles and a half from the coast, the explorers came to a delightful plain, through which ran a large and limpid river. On the bank of the river was a village of a thousand houses, each capable of holding more than 3,000 persons. At their first appearance the inhabitants all took to flight, and the Spaniards sent the Indian interpreter after them to reassure them. The poor savage ran after them, calling out that they had nothing to fear, that they were Christians, not Cannibals; that Christians never harmed any one; that they were persons come down from heaven, and gave beautiful things to all they met. At these words they began to slacken their flight; then taking courage, and reassured, they came back to meet the Christians, to the number of more than 2,000. When they had reached them they placed their hands on their head in sign of friendship and respect; but they still trembled, and it required many assurances of the interpreter and friendly signals of the Spaniards to dissipate their fears.

When they were fully reassured, they ran eagerly to their houses

to get bread, potatoes, fish, and whatever else they had to eat, and offered them to the Spaniards; and whatever they thought would please, they offered with such frankness and persistence as proved their delight in giving it; and they refused every thing that was offered them in return, however precious and pleasing it was in their eyes. They begged the Christians to remain with them that night, and they would fetch them various things they had on the mountain.

While the Spaniards were the object of such concern on the part of these Indians, a multitude of other Indians came in great glee from another direction, led by the husband of the one the admiral had treated so well. They came to thank the Christians for the honor and presents given to one of their women, carrying her in triumph on their shoulders, adorned with all the things that had been bestowed on her.

On their return, the explorers reported that the inhabitants were more graceful and tractable, and of better complexion, than those they had seen on the other islands (and Columbus noted in his journal that he could not understand how it was possible for them to be more gentle than the others, after such gentleness as he had found in the inhabitants of the other islands); that for beauty, both of the men and the women, these people were beyond comparison with those of the other islands; that their complexion was much lighter, and two of the women, in particular, were so white as to stand comparison with any in Spain. And for beauty and fertility, the country was as much superior to Castile as day was to night.

But as the wonders which the explorers reported concerning the nature of that region and its inhabitants, are repeated and magnified in other parts of the island which they visited later, rather than put the same things with slight change in each place, I believe it better, and pleasanter for the reader, to collect here all the different descriptions that have been left us, and give a complete picture of that celebrated island, which has been called the Garden of the West Indies, as it was sketched by those that first visited it. It seems like reading a poetical description of the fabulous golden age sung by the ancient poets, rather than an historical narrative of a real country and people:—

The land was most fertile, covered everywhere with the richest and most varied vegetation that can be conceived; the trees bent their branches under the weight of the beautiful ripe fruit hanging

from them ; the air was alive with thousands of birds, presenting, in the richness of their brightly colored plumage, the appearance of enchantment ; the streams and rivers bore fishes of every kind, fine, large, delicious ; the temperature was most mild ; the sea and sky were clear as crystal. This favored land was the home of a happy population, ignorant of want, for they had no wish or thought beyond what nature supplied. Their thirst was satisfied at the fountains, their hunger, by the fruit of the trees, and with little care they consigned to the earth the seeds and roots, which increased and multiplied, in a short time, in wonderful quantities. The cold had no rigors from which to seek shelter ; the simplicity of their habits no vices to oppose ; and all, respected and respecting others, roamed over the virgin prairies and through the forests, as mother nature had created them. They knew not arms, nor needed to know them ; for, free from the vices and wants which are the incentive of quarrel and war, they lived in peace, and the authority of the old men and chiefs, whom they called caciques, sufficed to keep in check the few ill-humors that occasionally showed themselves in that quiet population. The only thought that caused any anxiety was the fear of the people of Canniba ; but watchful guards spied their coming, and frequent fires on the heights warned all of the imminent danger, and by flight and concealment on the mountains or in the woods, their liberty was sufficiently defended. There was no mine nor thine ; what the earth gave was for all, for its production had been a care and a labor to none. Of the few poor things in their cabins, they were most liberal towards each other, and they gave with the ease with which they took. The Spaniards witnessed it in the effort of those innocent children of the woods to make them accept their poor gifts. And but for the authority of Columbus, who absolutely insisted on their taking something in exchange, the poor Indians would have stripped themselves of every thing, happy and contented if their offerings were accepted.

The imagination has very likely embellished the picture to some extent ; but its accuracy, in the main, is borne witness to by the historians of the time. They all unite in representing these islanders as living under the mild and patriarchal rule of their caciques, free from pride, with few wants, in a most fertile country, under a temperate climate, and with a natural disposition to enjoy the pleasures of life, as though actually living in the golden age of the poets.*

* Irving, *Columbus*, book iv, ch. vi.

But with all the riches so prodigally lavished by nature on this land, the explorers had found no trace of gold. As soon, therefore, as they returned, Columbus, without waiting for the weather to improve, on the 14th of December put to sea to try again to reach Babeque. But, after several attempts, they were unable to overcome the violence of the wind, which blew in the direction contrary to their voyage, and for some days they were driven into one place or another on the coast of Hispaniola, or of the Tortugas, a small island a short distance in front of Port Conception, so named from the quantity of tortoises in its neighborhood. Sunday, the 16th of December, in the gulf separating the islands, they met a canoe with a single Indian, and it was a wonder to all how so frail a boat could keep afloat in so high a wind. They took the Indian and his canoe on board, and after loading him with kindness and presents of glass beads, little bells, and rings of brass, they put him ashore at a place subsequently known as Puerto de Paz, about sixteen miles from his village. The Indian ran home to carry news of the Christians, and to tell of their liberality ; but not many words were needed, as information had already reached there by land, that men from heaven were visiting the country. Therefore, at the first intimation of the admiral's arrival, more than 500 hastened to the shore, and soon afterwards the cacique also appeared. He was a youth of not more than twenty or twenty-one years, and had by his side an aged tutor and two other counsellors, who accompanied him, advised him, and answered for him ; for he uttered only a few brief words. He was entirely naked, like his subjects, but his high dignity was easily recognized by the submission and reverence shown him by the rest, and from the nobility of his bearing and his looks, which were truly wonderful for a savage. Columbus sent him a present, which he received with great ceremony, and conversed, through one of the Indian interpreters, with the messenger that brought it, and told him they should ask for any thing they wanted in his country, and he would give it to them willingly. Further information concerning the island of Babeque was obtained from him and his counsellors, and they described it as rich in gold, and not far distant. This is the last time Columbus makes mention of this island, and he does not seem to have made any further attempts to seek it. No such island exists in the ancient charts, and it is probable that this was one of the numerous misinterpretations of Indian words,

which led the first discoverers into so many fruitless researches.*

In the course of the evening, the cacique came on board of the admiral's vessel, where he was received with all the honors due to his rank, and it was explained to him that the admiral was in the service of the king and queen of Castile, the most powerful princes in the world. But neither the Indians who acted as interpreters, nor the cacique, believed it, for they were convinced that the Christians came from heaven, and that the dominions of the Castilian sovereigns were in heaven, not on earth.†

At break of day on the 18th, joining in mind and heart in the joys of their distant home, they decorated the caravels, and fired volleys of musketry, in honor of the feast of Our Lady of the O, under which title there is a sanctuary greatly venerated in Spain.‡ During the day they were again visited by the cacique. He was accompanied by more than two hundred men, and was carried on a kind of a chair, by four robust savages. "Certainly," Columbus writes to the Spanish sovereigns, "Your Highnesses would have been satisfied with the grandeur of this train, and the respect paid the king and his court by all the others. When the Cacique came on board of my vessel, I was sitting at table in the after cabin; he came straight towards me, seated himself at my side, and would not permit me to move or rise from the table until I had finished my meal. . . . Before coming into the cabin, he waved all his followers back, and they obeyed at once with signs of the greatest respect, and went and sat on the deck, with the exception of two men of advanced age, one of whom I took to be his counsellor, and the other his tutor, who came and sat near his feet. Presuming that he would like to taste our food, I ordered some brought to him: he took just enough to comply with my invitation and to taste it; the rest he sent to his people, who all ate some of it. He did the same with the wines, just wet his lips, and gave the rest to his retinue; and all this he did with a remarkable air of dignity. He spoke very little, but the few words he uttered were, as far as I could perceive, judicious and well chosen. The two persons at his feet watched the motion of his lips and spoke for him; they also conversed with him, but always with the greatest respect.

* Irving, *Columbus*, book iv, ch. vii. † *Journal of Columbus*, 16 December.
 ‡ It is situated on a high mountain near Segovia, and receives its name from the oval arrangement of the rocks surrounding the church, which form an O.

“After dinner, a sort of squire brought a belt, shaped precisely like those worn in Castile, but of different workmanship. The king took it and presented it to me with two pieces of very fine wrought gold.

“I noticed that he admired my bed-trimmings, and I gave them to him, with a number of fine amber beads, which I wore around my neck, some colored shoes, and a flask of orange-flower water. He was so pleased with these things that it was a sight to look at him. The only thing that displeased him, and his counsellors also, was their inability to comprehend what I said; still I understood him when he said that if there was any thing in the place that would give me pleasure, the whole island was at my order.”*

Towards evening, the cacique wishing to go, the admiral sent him ashore in his launch, saluting him with a volley of musketry. On landing, he settled himself in his chair, and left with the same gravity with which he came, and all the articles Columbus had given him were borne, with great dignity, by the most respectable of his followers. His child was carried, in arms, after him, with a train little inferior to the father’s.

After the cacique, one of his brothers visited the admiral, followed also by a great retinue, but, like them, he was on foot, only, by way of distinction, he leaned on the arms of two respectable savages.

Before leaving the place, Columbus planted a large cross in the middle of the village square; and on seeing how earnestly the Indians helped to raise it, and the recollected manner in which they knelt before it, after the example of the Christians, his thoughts ran with enthusiasm through times to come, when the light of the Gospel should shine over all those woods.†

The night of the 19th, they resumed their voyage, but, the wind changing again, they were obliged, towards evening of the 20th, to take shelter in a fine harbor, which they called St. Thomas (from the name of the saint whose feast they were celebrating), and which seems to correspond to what, at present, is called the Bay of Acul. Here the savages who ran to see them from the neighboring villages, were so numerous that they covered all the shore.‡ Men, women, and children, all ran to see the great sight of men come from

* *Journal of Columbus*, 18 December.

† *Ib.* 18 December.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxi

‡ *Journal*, 21 December.

heaven, and they made a thousand signs and gestures to express their wonder and joy : many ran to get their simple articles of food to offer to the Christians ; others eagerly brought fresh water in their gourds for them to drink ; and they neither asked nor showed any desire to receive any thing in exchange for this or any thing else they might offer. But, by the positive order of the admiral, they were always recompensed by some small gift.

In their belief that the white men had come from heaven, every thing they gave in return for the offerings of the Indians, however trifling and valueless, acquired in the eyes of those ingenuous savages an inestimable value. A piece of rusty iron, a strip of leather, the head of a nail, a bit of a cup, plate, or glass, every thing had for them a secret and superhuman value, every thing had a flavor of *turey*. This word, in their language, meant *heaven* ;* and they kept repeating it as they gazed on, and admired, any object belonging to the strangers. One day, on the coast of Cuba, the sailors killed a tortoise, and had broken its shell ; and they gave a piece the size of a finger-nail to the Indians ; and these gave them in exchange a bundle of darts.† But Columbus forbade these mean bargains of the seamen as a dishonest trading on the simplicity and good faith of those innocent savages, and he often made them presents without accepting any thing in exchange.‡

The news that the men from heaven had arrived in that place, spread quickly through the country around, and there was a general concourse from all sides to see them ; and many caciques invited the admiral to visit their villages before quitting the country. As these places were not distant, and the wind did not permit him to leave the harbor, he accepted several invitations ; he found the caciques everywhere surrounded by a multitude of people who expected him, and were provided with various articles of food, which they offered him. When he left to return to the ships, men, women, and children, all manifested their sorrow by cries and lamentations, in the hope of inducing him to stay a little longer with them. Returning to the ships, they found still more persons visiting them out of curiosity, and messengers sent with an invitation from one of the caciques.

On Saturday, the 22nd, a large canoe full of Indians came on a

* *Journal*, 3 December,

† *Ib*, 3 December.

‡ *Letter of Columbus* to Luis Santangel, Superintendent of the Treasury of Castile, and to Rafael Sanchez (4 and 14 March, 1493).

mission from the cacique Guacanagari, who ruled over all that part of the island ; for, as we shall see further on, there was one cacique who was supreme chief and lord over other inferior caciques who governed petty districts. One of the principal counsellors of Guacanagari accompanied them, and brought as a gift from his master for the admiral, a belt with a mask hanging from it, which represented the face of a monster, with eyes, nose, and tongue of beaten gold. He came to beg that the vessels might come in front of his residence, which was situated on the coast a little further to the east, because he wanted to offer Columbus all that he possessed. Columbus, on account of the importance which he placed on the friendship of this supreme lord of the country, determined to visit him the next day, although it was his pious custom never to set sail on a holiday ; but this time, he said, he would make an exception, because, from the good disposition they manifested, he hoped that all the inhabitants would become Christians.*

As it was impossible to accept every invitation, he sent some of his people, in his name, to many of the inferior caciques, and they were everywhere received with signs of the greatest pleasure and respect, and always returned loaded with gifts. On this day alone, more than 120 canoes filled with Indians visited the ships, all bringing something, generally bread, fish, and fresh water.

On Sunday, there was not enough wind for the vessels to sail to the residence of Guacanagari, and so Columbus sent the boats with the fleet notary and a number of the crew, and remained himself for the purpose of dispatching details to visit the places in the neighborhood, and of receiving the numerous visits that were made him. When those innocent savages were half a bow-shot from the ships, they stood up in their canoes, and showing what they had in their hands, cried : *Take, Take*. And as the canoes could not hold them all, more than 500 swam to the ships, although they were anchored more than a league from shore.

The men who had gone to visit the supreme cacique of the country, returned during the night. They reported that they had met on the way many canoes full of men coming to satisfy their curiosity by looking at the Christians, but, on seeing them, flew back to the village to announce their coming. On their arrival,

* *Journal*, 21 December.

the cacique came out to meet them, and the entire population, of more than 2,000, assembled in a great square, which seemed to have been freshly swept. Every honor was paid them : they were given food, presented with cotton, parrots, pieces of gold, domestic utensils, every thing the savages had to give ; and these were made happy by any trifle they received in exchange. When the seamen left in the evening, the Indians attended them as far as the boats, carrying all their presents for them, and vying with each other in waiting on them.

To complete the joy of Columbus at the reception he met with on every side, he, at last, obtained some information where gold could be got. All, from whatever place they came, agreed in designating by the same name a place in the interior of the island, towards the east, where gold was found in such abundance that it was regarded as of no account. That what they said was true at bottom, in spite of the usual exaggerations and misinterpretations of the Indians' answers, was proved by the little rings and plates of gold the Indians wore for ornament in every place they had visited, and on which the hopes and searches of Columbus were especially based ; for, while they had seen but few of them, and those very small, on the Indians elsewhere, here they were a common ornament, and of good size, a certain sign that he was coming nearer to the place where the precious metal was found. They called that place by the name of Cibao, and Columbus, falling again into his illusion about Cipango, felt sure that this was a corruption of the real name, which should be Cipango.*

All his thoughts and hopes now centred in the search for Cibao. The better and sooner to get there, he induced, by great kindness, to stay on board, and guide him to the mines, one of the Indians from Port St. Thomas, who had shown himself more attached to the Christians than the rest, and was a ready and easy talker.†

Columbus left Port St. Thomas, before sunrise, on the 24th of December, and sailed to the east, intending to stop in front of the village of the cacique Guacanagari. The wind was from the shore, but so light as hardly to fill the sails, and the vessels made very slow progress. At eleven o'clock at night, they were off a point which they named Punta Santa, and which is now called Point St. Hon-

* *Journal*, 24 December.

† *Ib.* 24 December

oratus, a little more than a league from the cacique's residence. The air was tranquil, the night calm, and the sea smooth as a mirror. Columbus, who till then had been on deck, finding the air and sea calm, and the ship almost motionless, retired to lie down a while, for he had been two days and a night without sleep. On his voyages along the coast, he was usually on the watch, passing whole nights on deck, not trusting any one else when there was any apprehension of difficulty and danger. Now there was no such apprehension, not only on account of the stillness of the sea and the air, but the men sent to Guacanagari had examined the whole coast for at least three leagues and a half further, which had never been the case before, and they had reported that they found no shoals or rocks. He had always forbidden leaving the helm in the hands of boys, whether the wind blew or not; but the faithless pilot, knowing that the admiral had retired and the sea was calm, yielded to the desire to sleep, and towards midnight, gave the helm to one of the boys and went to bed. The other sailors of the watch, following his example, took advantage of the admiral's unusual absence, and quietly went to sleep also, leaving the safety of all in charge of that boy alone.

While all on board felt so secure, the rapid currents that set in along that coast were forcing them on a sand-bank. The careless boy paid no attention to the noise of the waves breaking on the bank, though they could be heard more than a league off. The ship touched the ground so gently that it could hardly be felt; but when the boy felt the helm caught, and the roaring of the waves, as they broke around the ship, told him the danger they were in, he began to cry out for help. Columbus, whose anxious thoughts never permitted him to sleep soundly, was the first to hear his cries, and was on deck before any one was aware of the accident. The faithless pilot came next, in great fright, followed by all the rest of the officers and crew. The admiral ordered them to get out the after launch and take an anchor and drop it astern in the direction of deep water; and the pilot, with a number of the crew, got into the launch and put off. The admiral supposed they were carrying out his orders, but they, still half-asleep, and confused by the furious crying and running in every direction, were seized with sudden fright, and, thinking only of saving themselves, rowed desperately out to the *Niña*, which was about half-a-league to the windward.

But when, on reaching the caravel, they told in what condition they had left their ship, the captain refused to let them come on board, and, severely rebuking them for their desertion, sprang into his launch and hurried with some of his crew to the admiral's aid. The latter, in the mean time, finding himself deserted by a part of his crew, with the tide ebbing, and the ship beginning to lie on her side, took the desperate remedy of cutting away the main-mast to lighten her, if possible, so as to float and be hauled off. But the water had fallen so low at the ebb of the tide, and the ship was so far on one side, that every effort to float her was useless. It was very fortunate for them that the sea was so calm and the wind so quiet, that the ship settled slowly and without other injury than the opening of her seams, and filling her lower part with water; otherwise, the vessel would have gone to pieces and all on board perished.*

The admiral transferred himself and his crew on board of the *Niña*, and as a light wind had sprung up from the land and it was long before daylight, and he was ignorant of the precise extent of the banks, he gave orders to lay to till dawn, at the first break of which he returned on board of his ship, entering from the side of the bank.

In the mean time, he had sent on shore a boat with Diego de Arano, the chief judge of the armament, and Pedro Gutierrez, the king's butler, to make known to Guacanagari the visit which the admiral had intended to make him, and the accident that had happened. It is said that the good cacique wept on hearing the sad news, and immediately sent to the scene of the disaster all the men he had at hand capable of helping, with large canoes to unload the vessel; and, coming himself soon after with his brothers and relatives, he went from the shore to the ship, and from the ship to the shore, to see and superintend in person, and stimulate and encourage his savages to work with order and speed; but that was not necessary, for all the Indians vied with each other, in zeal and courage, in helping the men who had come from heaven. While they were unloading the vessel, and securing the cargo on shore, Guacanagari, from time to time, sent one of his brothers to console the admiral. He had the articles brought from the vessel placed temporarily in some

* *Journal*, 25 December.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxii.—Herrera, dec. i, lib. i, cap. xviii.

houses that were convenient for the purpose, while they were emptying others better fitted for storing the goods, and an armed guard stood around and watched them all night. This precaution was useless, for not one of the savages assembled there showed any desire to profit by the strangers' misfortune. Although they saw thrown in a jumble on the shore no end of things which seemed to their eyes treasures beyond price, and most of these things had passed through their hands on the way to the shore, there was not missed, says Columbus, so much as a pin. On the contrary, they showed, by their looks and acts, the liveliest sympathy, as though the disaster had befallen themselves. He wanted words to praise them as they deserved, to the king and queen. "I assure Your Highnesses," he wrote, "there is not in the whole world a better people or a better country than this. They love their neighbor as themselves. They have a way of expressing their thoughts the sweetest and most affable ever known, always speaking with a pleasant smile. It is, indeed, true that men and women go naked as they were put into the world by their mothers, but still, Your Highnesses may rest assured that they have excellent habits *

CHAPTER XIX.

Guacanagari's hospitality.—Construction of Fort Nativity.—Departure for Spain (1492-93)

ON the 26th, at sunrise, Guacanagari came on board of the Niña, to which the admiral had returned, and seeing him so dejected, the cacique almost wept, and conjured the admiral not to lose heart, for he would give him every thing he possessed that he wanted; he said he had given the Christians on shore two very large houses, and would let them have more if they needed them.

While they were conversing together, a canoe appeared from another direction with other Indians, come to offer pieces of gold in

* *Journal*, 25 December.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxii.—Las Casas, lib. i. cap. ix.

exchange for bells. As soon as they were within hailing distance, they held out their pieces of gold and shouted *Chug, Chug*, to signify the little bells they wanted in exchange. Other Indians coming from still another direction, who knew nothing about these precious bargains, regretted their ignorance, and begged to see a *chug*, and showing, by their looks, their great anxiety to possess one, promised to return the next day with pieces of gold as large as their hand. These bells were the most precious thing in the world to those Indians. Their dearest and commonest amusement was dancing, which they practised immoderately, accompanying it with certain rude airs and songs; and the music was represented by the sound of a sort of drum made out of a hollow piece of wood, or by beating two hollow pieces of wood together. Happy was he who possessed a bell to hang about him in dancing. To hear that clear and silvery sound responding to the movements of the dance, was the greatest pleasure that could be imagined. They were beside themselves with joy at its tinkling, and danced with delight and played a thousand antics. One day, an Indian gave half-a-handful of gold-dust for the smallest bell, and as quick as he had it in his hands, fled, with all his speed, into the forest near by, afraid the Spaniards were following him, repenting having given so valuable an article for so small a price.

The admiral was still entertaining Guacanagari when some sailors, returning from the shore, reported that it was wonderful to see the pieces of gold which the Christians received in exchange for almost nothing; that they got pieces worth more than two castillanos for a bit of twine, and every thing indicated that this was nothing to what it would be within a month. At this information, the sad countenance of Columbus brightened, and the observing cacique, seeing the change produced by the words of the sailors, inquired what it was. When he was told, and learnt that the admiral desired above every thing to find gold, he explained, by signs, that he knew of a place in the mountains not far off, where gold was to be had in such quantity that they set no value on it; that the admiral should be at ease and happy, and he would bring him as much as he wanted. In fact, the place he referred to, by the name of Cibao, and where the Spaniards afterwards discovered rich gold-mines, was in the mountains, and not far from there.

The cacique took dinner on board of the caravel with the ad-

miral, and then invited him on shore to visit his residence. Columbus went, and besides the honors paid him, he found a collation set out. It consisted of two or three kinds of potatoes, some utias, fish, roots, and bread made of cassava,—the richest and most sumptuous repast that the poverty of those forests could afford. The meal lasted long, and Columbus admired the cacique's neatness and decorum in eating. After the repast, some herbs were brought to Guacanagari to clean his hands; but water was served to Columbus, as they had seen practised on ship-board.

Guacanagari next led Columbus through the pleasant groves surrounding his residence, and more than a thousand persons, men and women, perfectly naked, followed them. But now it was not the admiral and his Christians who were the object of curiosity and wonder on the part of the poor savages, but rather their own cacique; for Columbus had presented him with a shirt and a pair of gloves, and *he made more account of them than of any thing else,** and at once began to exhibit himself in them to his subjects in the presence of the giver. Here we should speak of the affection, or rather veneration, which the savages felt for their caciques; but so many instances of it occur in the course of our story, that any particular account of it becomes superfluous. For the present, it is enough to say that no father was ever more loved by his children, than a cacique by his subjects. In truth, with their simple habits, with no burden weighing on the mass, with few wants, and these bountifully supplied by the inexhaustible fertility of the soil, the office of cacique had less of princely dignity than of fatherly care, a symbol of the union and love which bound the whole tribe together as a single family. A few laws, originating in custom, regulated their society, and where they fell short, the will of the cacique, who possessed absolute power over all and every thing, supplied the want; but, by custom and the character of the population, the government of the prince was always accompanied with mildness, and the obedience yielded was, almost instinctively, voluntary and prompt.

The cacique's authority was hereditary, but upon his death without issue, he was succeeded by the son of his sister, not of his brother, that the authority might be kept in the same family and blood. Columbus asserts of Guacanagari that his high lineage was evident

* *Journal*, 26 December.

from a certain natural dignity accompanying every act of his, and, even naked as he was, caused him to be recognized at once and distinguished from all the rest.

The cacique, in turn, gave Columbus a large mask with great pieces of gold in the ears, eyes, and many other parts; he hung about his neck a sort of crown made likewise of pieces of gold, and placed another on his head; and he forgot none of his attendants, to every one of whom he gave something.

Guacanagari made known to Columbus their dread of the race of Canniba, or cannibals, who came down armed on their coast and spread havoc and death all around. Columbus replied that the Castilian sovereigns would order that fierce race to be destroyed, and he would carry them all in fetters before the sovereigns. To show how irresistible was the power of the Christians, when he came to the shore, whither Guacanagari and a great number of Indians had accompanied him on his return, he sent to the ships for a Moorish bow and bunch of arrows, and selected one of the seamen who was expert in their use. Guacanagari, who, by reason of his unwarlike nature and the peaceful disposition of his people, was little acquainted with the use of arms (and those which they used were coarsely made and incapable of hitting a mark near by), was astonished beyond measure at the precision with which the seaman hit a small target at a great distance. Columbus afterwards caused an arquebus and an *espingarda** to be discharged. At the flash and report of the discharge, the Indians fell to the ground as if struck by lightning; but when they found they were not hurt, and that all this power was to be used against their enemies, the cannibals, their joy was beyond bounds, and they regarded themselves as under the protection of the sons of heaven, who had come down armed with thunder and lightning.†

Meanwhile, the crew of the wrecked vessel, wandering idly over the country, everywhere feasted, and almost worshipped, began to make unfavorable contrasts of their life with that which the poor savages led. Wherever they went, the life of the Indians appeared a perpetual idyl of enjoyment and happiness; but they had never had an opportunity for a close view of that life, still less to try it, as

* The *espingarda* was a small piece of ordnance.

† *Journal*, 26 December.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxii.

they were now doing, and of all the populations, this of Guacanagari's, as it was the most meek and quiet by nature and habit, appeared also the happiest. "Exempted, by their simplicity," writes Washington Irving,* "from the cares and toils which civilized man inflicts upon himself by his many artificial wants, the existence of these islanders seemed to the Spaniards like a pleasant dream. They disquieted themselves about nothing. A few fields, cultivated almost without labor, furnished the roots and vegetables which formed a great part of their diet. Their rivers and coasts abounded with fish; their trees were laden with fruit of a golden or blushing hue, and heightened by a tropical sun to delicious flavor and fragrance. Softened by the indulgence of nature, and by a voluptuous climate, a great part of their day was passed in indolent repose, and in the evenings they danced in their fragrant groves, to their national songs, or the sound of their sylvan drums.

"Such was the indolent and holiday life of these simple people; which, if it had not the great scope of enjoyment, nor the high-seasoned poignancy of pleasure, which attend civilization, was certainly destitute of most of its artificial miseries. The venerable Las Casas, speaking of their perfect nakedness, observes, it seemed almost as if they were existing in the state of primeval innocence of our first parents, before their fall brought sin into the world. He might have added, that they seemed exempt, likewise, from the penalty inflicted on the children of Adam, that they should eat their bread by the sweat of their brow.

"When the Spanish mariners looked back upon their own toilsome and painful life, and reflected upon the cares and hardships that must still be their lot if they returned to Europe, it is no wonder if they regarded with a wistful eye the easy and idle existence of these Indians. Wherever they went they met with caressing hospitality. They saw gold glittering around them, to be had without labor, and every enjoyment to be procured without cost."

Many of the sailors yielded to these allurements and desired to remain. Concealing their wish under the pretext of the common advantage, they went to the admiral and represented to him how dangerous it was to unite the crews of both caravels on the Niña alone, and return with a double load on a vessel already unseawor-

* *Columbus*, bk. iv, ch. ix.

thy. They hoped, therefore, he would allow them to remain on the island for the general good.*

Their demand was most acceptable to Columbus, not only because what they said of the Niña, and the danger of piling them all in her on their return, was very true, but also because their demand suggested to him the idea of establishing a colony on that coast. The pieces of the wreck would furnish abundant materials for the construction of a fort, and he would leave provisions for their food, and ordnance for their defence; not that those naked, inoffensive, and timid inhabitants needed restraint; but this show of power on the part of the Spaniards would cause them to submit with greater love and fear to the government of their Highnesses. The place did not, indeed, seem very well chosen for founding a colony; but the gentle and peaceful character of the inhabitants and their affection for the white men, compensated for many defects. With the dispositions shown by the inhabitants, those who stayed behind would have every facility for exploring the island in search of gold-mines, and other sources of wealth, and would be able to collect by traffic a large quantity of gold, and by learning their language would become familiar with their manners and habits, so as to be very useful in their future intercourse with them. In the mean time, Columbus would return to Spain, to report the result of his expedition, and to obtain reinforcements of men and materials to extend his discoveries, and make a suitable opening for further colonies. Putting his plan into effect, he commenced at once on the work. The wrecked vessel was broken up, and carried ashore piece by piece, to the place selected, and preparations were made for the erection of a fort.

When Guacanagari was informed that the admiral would leave a part of his men to defend the island against the cannibals, till he came back with a large force from his country, he showed every sign of delight, and his Indians were overjoyed to be protected from their enemy, but still more at the thought of the little bells and other precious articles from *turey*, which the white men would bring when they came back. They all aided the Spaniards with eager activity in the construction of the fort.

On Thursday, the 27th of December, just as they were setting

* *Journal*, 26 December.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxiii.

about the work, some Indians reported seeing another ship with white men, in a river at the eastern end of the island. If this were true, it could only be the *Pinta*. The good Guacanagari sent a canoe with a number of Indians to make sure, and the admiral dispatched with them one of the most trusty of the sailors, with a letter to Martin Alonzo, in which, without referring to his desertion, he requested him to join the *Niña* as quickly as possible. But, at the end of four days, the canoe returned, after following along the coast for twenty leagues, and reported seeing and hearing nothing of the *Pinta*. Like rumors were repeated several times, but the admiral no longer credited them.

The desertion of that vessel was a constant thorn in his heart, and obliged him to alter the whole plan of his voyage. If the *Pinta* had been with him, he said he could have collected a barrel of gold, for he could then have ventured to explore the coasts of those islands; but with only one vessel, and that one the smallest and weakest, he was constrained to hasten his departure, for fear that some accident might occur to prevent his return to Castile to give an account of his discovery to the king and queen. He was also worried by the thought that Pinzon would not fail to excuse his own conduct by calumnious imputations, which would seriously embarrass any future expeditions, and he might even have his claim to the discovery disputed. On this account, he devoted himself wholly to the construction of the fort, so as to start as soon as possible to prevent or meet the dangers which threatened him.*

Whilst the fort was building, Columbus often went on shore to push on the work and to make the necessary arrangements for those who were to remain there; and each time he received fresh proofs of Guacanagari's cordial friendship. The largest house in the city was prepared for his reception, carpeted with palm-leaves, and furnished with a sort of low stools made of polished black wood; and the cacique, whenever he saw him, hung around his neck some ornament of gold, or made him some present of that metal. The evening of the 29th, Guacanagari sent him a large mask, with the nose, ears, eyes, and other parts, of gold, as usual, and asked for a pitcher and basin for washing his hands, which the admiral at once

* *Journal*, 31 December, 1492; 3,4 January, 1493.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxiii.

gave. The next day, as Columbus was landing, Guacanagari met him, attended by five tributary caciques, and each one bore a gold crown. Offering his arm, he led him with great ceremony to the house already mentioned, where, seating him on one of the stools, he placed his own crown on his head, and each of the other caciques advanced and offered his. Columbus, in return, took from his neck a collar of bright-colored beads, and hung it on the neck of the cacique; he took off his own mantle of fine scarlet, and threw it over the cacique's shoulders, sent for a pair of colored boots, which he made him put on, and placed on his finger a large silver ring, as he knew that Guacanagari had made several attempts to get a ring of that metal from a seaman. Guacanagari could not have been more delighted; and as neither he nor his Indians had any more gold to give the admiral, he sent a number of canoes in search of it, so as to make him a fine present before sailing.*

Besides gold, Columbus seems to have obtained a great quantity of spices, mastic, and rhubarb, which confirmed his opinion that he was in the famous Cipango.† These riches not only consoled him in his misfortune, but led him to look upon his shipwreck as an act of Providence to detain him in that spot. Without that apparent disaster, he would not have stayed long enough to discover the riches hidden on the island; for he had intended to push on his discoveries and never stop more than a day in any place, unless compelled by contrary winds. He mentions, as a proof that his shipwreck bore the evident mark of Providence, the fact that it occurred in a perfect calm, and the desertion of the pilot and men sent to carry the anchor astern; for if they had executed his orders, the vessel would have been hauled off, and he would have continued the voyage, and the treasures of the island would have remained undiscovered. And also when he decided to leave some of the men behind, he would not have been able to furnish them the necessary materials for constructing the fort. Considering all this, he said that his shipwreck could not be looked upon as a disaster, but rather as a piece of good fortune. He hoped, on his return from Castile, to find a barrel of gold, collected in traffic by the Christians who were left behind; for by that time they would have discovered the gold-mine and spices, and all in such quantities that the king and queen might within

* *Journal*, 3 January, 1493.

† *Ib.* 4 January

three years get ready and undertake the conquest of the *Holy House*. "For," he adds, "it was to carry out this enterprise that I explained to Your Highnesses my wish that all the profit of my discoveries should be employed in regaining Jerusalem. Your Highnesses smiled at that, and said that the project pleased them, and that even without my discoveries they would have wished to undertake it."*

"But how vain," exclaims Irving, "are our attempts to interpret the inscrutable decrees of Providence! The shipwreck, which Columbus considered an act of divine favor to reveal to him the secrets of the land, shackled and limited all his after-discoveries. It linked his fortunes, for the remainder of his life, to this island, which was doomed to be to him a source of cares and troubles, to involve him in a thousand perplexities, and to becloud his declining years with humiliation and disappointment."†

The work on the fort proceeded so rapidly that in ten days it was completed. It was constructed entirely out of the timbers of the wrecked vessel. It rose in the form of a tower, and was protected on every side by a broad and deep ditch. Within was placed more than a year's supply of bread and wine, seed for sowing, several pieces of artillery, the vessel's small-boat for the garrison's use, and all the articles brought from Spain to exchange with the natives for gold.

The admiral left behind a garrison of twenty-nine men : among them, a gunner, a ship-carpenter, a caulker, a cooper, a tailor, a carpenter, and a physician. He placed Diego Arana in command, with all the powers conferred on himself by their Majesties. In case of the death of Arana, he was to be succeeded by Pedro Gutierrez, and after him, by Rodrigo de Escobedo. As they arrived in that place and suffered shipwreck on Christmas eve, he named the harbor and the fort, *Navidad*,—Nativity.

Collecting around him those who were to remain, Columbus addressed them with the affection of a father and the authority of an admiral, admonishing them of their duties, and reminding them of what they owed to their country and religion. He charged them, in the first place, to preserve strict discipline and obedience to Arana and the others who represented the person and authority of their

* *Journal*, 26 December.

† *Columbus*, book iv, ch. x.

Highnesses in these distant regions ; they should remember how much Guacanagari and his people had done for them, and never forget to repay their kindness by the greatest respect for the cacique, and the most delicate regard for his people, treating all with sweetness and amiability, and not only refrain from wronging any one, but even from doing any thing that might seem unjust or dishonest ; and, above all, they should be reserved with the women, who were always the cause of most of the troubles and disasters in intercourse with savages. They should always bear in mind that on the first impressions they made on the inhabitants would depend, to a great extent, the benefit to be gained from the discovery. They should keep always together, because all the strength of their small number was in their union and harmony among themselves ; and they were never to stray beyond the friendly territory of Guacanagari. He left further orders and counsels for exploring the island and learning the situation of the rivers ; for examining the coast to find a better place for a settlement, that where they then were being unsuitable, on account of the rocks and sand-banks barring the entrance of the harbor. They should learn the language and customs of the inhabitants ; and also look for spices, and collect as much gold as possible by way of traffic.*

After completing the fort and choosing the garrison and supplying the *Niña* with wood and water, on the 2nd of January, Columbus went on shore to take his leave of Guacanagari, as he wished to start on his voyage the following day.

The good cacique was unusually friendly : he entertained Columbus and those with him, at dinner, was prodigal of his caresses, and showed great concern at their departure. The admiral recommended to his kindness the garrison he was leaving in the fort, particularly the three chief persons, Arana, Gutierrez, and Escobedo, promising to return in a short time from Castile with a quantity of presents, finer and more precious than they had yet seen. Meanwhile, he left him one of his shirts as a keepsake. The conversation turning on the inroads of the cannibals, and the fear they caused these innocent inhabitants, to satisfy them that they had nothing to dread as long as the Christians were with them, and, at the same time, to confirm the opinion that the cacique and his Indians had formed of the Christians' power, Columbus caused a sham-battle to be executed by

* *Journal*, 2 January.

the armed portion of the crews. The savages were astonished at the swiftness and dexterity with which the men from heaven wielded their shining weapons, striking and parrying, assaulting and retreating, with a skill and valor which seemed miraculous; and more than all, at the quick flash and report of their artillery. Their wonder was changed to deadly stupor when one of the largest guns of the fort was pointed at the stranded vessel, and the ball pierced its thick side and was seen to strike a long way off on the water.*

CHAPTER XX.

Further navigation along the coast of Hispaniola.—Meeting with the Pinta.—First contest with natives of the New World (1493).

THE sea was too rough for them to leave on the day set; but the following day, Friday, the 4th of January, at sunrise, it became calm again. The vessel was towed past the shoals which surrounded the harbor, and then, with all sail set, it moved slowly eastward, towards a lofty promontory shaped like a tent, and looking, from a distance, like an island, being joined to Hispaniola by a low neck of land. They gave it the name of Monte Christi, which it still retains. The wind was too light to make much progress, and at night, when they anchored, they still wanted six leagues of reaching Monte Christi. The next day, with more wind, they passed the promontory and sailed along the coast to the east of it; but, owing to the sands and shoals, they advanced slowly. The 6th, about noon, the wind was blowing strong from the east, and a sailor, sent to the main-top to look out for rocks and shoals, discovered the Pinta sailing towards them with the wind directly astern. The increasing violence of the wind rendering their course difficult and dangerous, Columbus put about and went back ten leagues towards Monte Christi, to a broad bay, which was the nearest place of refuge along that coast.

Soon after they entered the bay, the *Pinta* also sailed in. Martin Alonzo immediately got into his boat and came on board of the *Niña*, presenting himself before the admiral. He expressed great sorrow at his separation from the other vessels, which was purely accidental, and said that as soon as he was aware of it, he had been seeking them in every direction, and it was only by great fortune that he had now found them and hastened to rejoin them; and he brought forward proofs of his assertions. Although Columbus well knew they were all lies, and had too many evidences of Pinzon's bad faith, and of his arrogance and insubordination, still he restrained his anger, and pretended to accept his excuses, because Martin Alonzo had a strong party in the fleet, and most of the sailors were his townsmen, many were his relatives, and the captain of the *Niña* was his brother.

The brothers, Martin Alonzo and Vicente Yañez Pinzon, says the compendium of his journal, whom he had appointed captains of the two caravels, and many whom pride or cupidity had drawn to their side, persuaded that every thing should be for them, and unmindful of the honor acquired by the admiral, not only refused to obey his orders, but did and said many improper things against him. There was a strong party ready to support the admiral in punishing their arrogance; but he prudently thought it best to be as patient as possible, in order, he says, to defeat the attempts of Satan, who wanted to hinder the voyage, as he had done from the beginning.* But he did not think the time had come for freeing himself from such dishonest company, and was forced to tolerate their continual insubordination without punishing the guilty; although his authority would have been supported by many of the better class.† And, therefore, notwithstanding his wish to explore further the coast of Hispaniola, and his expectation of collecting an abundance of gold and spices, and that the *Pinta's* return had taken away his principal motive for hastening his departure, he still persevered in his resolution to return at once to Europe.

He was not long in discovering, from the remarks of the sailors about Martin Alonzo, that he had been right in not believing his excuses. Pinzon, seduced, as they said, by the description given by

* *Journal*, 6, 8 January.

† *Ib.* 8 January.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxiv.

one of his Indians of the great quantity of gold found on the island of Babeque, yielded to the temptation to go alone in search of it, and, separating from the admiral, sailed to the east, in the direction in which the Indians had placed that imaginary island. He came to a group of islands, supposed to be the Caicos, and lost some time in fruitless searches; then, at the suggestion of other Indians, he proceeded to the shore of Hispaniola, where they promised an abundance of gold. He arrived there twenty days before its discovery by Columbus, and, after wandering here and there on the coast, he landed at the mouth of a beautiful river. This shows that the reports of Guacanagari's savages, that there was another ship with white men, in the eastern part of the island, were perfectly accurate. Here, trading with the Indians, he collected a quantity of gold, one-half of which he retained, and the other half he divided among his crew, to preserve their good will and fidelity; just the opposite of what Columbus did, who was scrupulously exact in preserving what belonged to the crown. While carrying on their lucrative traffic, he was informed of the vicinity of the admiral, and as he could not avoid him, he made a virtue of necessity, and joined him.

The evening of the 9th of January, they again set sail, and the next day came to the river where Martin Alonzo had anchored. Columbus called it Rio de Gracia; but, for a long time, it kept the name of its first discoverer, and was known as the River of Martin Alonzo. It has now lost both names. Here the admiral found further evidence of Martin Alonzo's falseness. The latter said he had been there six days, and had heard nothing of the admiral's mishap; and it turned out that he had been there sixteen days, and had exacted a promise from his men to support him in his falsehood; and also, that he heard of the admiral's arrival and shipwreck at Navidad, but, without concern for the danger, in which his companions were, went on collecting gold, and it was only when the Indians had no more left, that he weighed anchor and decided to depart.

Columbus continued to dissemble, intent on hastening to Castile with the news of his voyage, and getting rid of the company of these brigands, as he calls them. "In a little while," he says, "I shall not have to endure the wrongs of men without breeding or virtue, who have the insolence to set up their own will against one who has done them so much honor." The only exercise of his authority over Martin Alonzo was to require him to set free the four men and two

girls, whom he had violently seized on leaving the river, intending to carry them to Spain and sell them for slaves. Columbus made them presents and sent them back to their cabins.*

On the morning of the 10th, they left the Rio de Gracia, and coasted along the island till the 12th, when they came to a gulf so broad and deep that, at first, they supposed it to be an arm of the sea, separating Hispaniola from some other land, and anchored for the purpose of ascertaining if it were so.

Sending a boat to the shore, they found the men of a ferocious aspect, armed with bows and arrows, and sword-shaped clubs. Their bows were as long as those used in France or England, the arrows were made of cane-reeds, with tips of sharp wood or fish-tooth or bone; their clubs or swords were of palm-wood, as tough and heavy as iron, not sharp, but broad and nearly an inch and a half thick, and capable, with one blow, of cleaving through a helmet to the head.† They were naked, like the other savages, but their faces were very ugly, made more repulsive by the custom, prevalent in all those countries, of painting the face and body in various colors. They wore their hair long, gathered in a bunch and tied behind in a sort of bag made of parrots' feathers. At sight of the Spaniards, they showed astonishment and some apprehension, but remained where they were, and, putting themselves in an attitude of defence, waited to see what the strange people that had landed on their shores would do. The Spaniards advanced, and offered to exchange some of their articles for the weapons of the savages. The latter sold two of their bows to them, and a number of arrows. Encouraged at this, the Spaniards proposed that one of them should go in the boat to visit their commander. At first, the savages held back, and then one, bolder than the rest, accepted the invitation and went into the boat. The admiral, on beholding his ferocious aspect, and the weapons now seen by him for the first time in the New World, supposed they were the race of Cannibals, or Caribs, as he had heard the name likewise called, and inquired if that was the island of Carib. The savage made a sign that it was not, and pointing to the east, said it was not far from there. Columbus then asked if there was any gold there, and the Indian, pointing to the stern of the caravel, said there were pieces as large as that. They asked many further questions, but could not always un-

* *Journal*, 8, 9, 10 January.

† Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, cap. lxxvii.

derstand his replies, and even the Indian interpreters often had difficulty in understanding him, as his language was very different from theirs. Among other things, they thought he said there was another island near Carib, called Mantinino, where all the inhabitants were females, as in Carib there were only males. The two islands were united by bonds of affection, but the men of Carib visited the women of Mantinino only once a year; the female children who were born therefrom, were left with their mothers to continue the population of the island; and the males, after infancy, were taken to Carib to be brought up for war and ferocity like their fathers.

Columbus refers repeatedly, in his journal, to this peculiarity of the two islands, and it is another of his self-delusions, to be explained by Marco Polo's book. That famous traveller relates having heard that among the islands beyond Cathay there is one inhabited only by men, and called *Mascola*; and another only by women, and called *Femmina*. The inhabitants of *Mascola* go and dwell with those of *Femmina* three months of each year, March, April, and May; the female offspring remain for life with the other women, and the males stay in their mother's care till fourteen years of age, and then follow the fortunes of their fathers.* The same story is told by nearly all the old travellers who visited those regions.† Marsden very plausibly supposes that there was an island in those seas, which obtained its principal food by fishing, and that, as fish enough for all its inhabitants could not be had in the immediate vicinity, all the males suited for the work went in their boats to some other island or desert rock, where they spent some months in making provision for the rest of the year, and that the women remained at home with the children, and that this was the origin of the strange story. Columbus, believing he was in those seas, and wandering among those islands, with his mind ever bent on identifying the islands he discovered with those described by the Venetian traveller, easily fell into the delusion that the Indians referred to an island exclusively of males, and another of females. That there were, in fact, many islands east of Hispaniola, was soon discovered, and the

* *Milione*, cap. xxxiii, p. 77.

† Among others, I may mention the Mussulman whose narrative is published by Renandot, and Nicholas Conti, and Barbosa, whose travels form a part of Ramusio's collection

largest of the group, Portorico, was known among the Indians by the name of the island of Carib.

Having given the savage something to eat, and some presents, which he highly prized, the admiral sent him on shore, in hopes of opening communication through him with the natives, and obtaining gold from them. As the boat approached the land, the sailors saw some fifty armed Indians hiding behind trees. The savage who was in the boat, jumped ashore, ran to his companions, and said a few words, after which they laid down their arms, and came peacefully to meet the Spaniards. The latter endeavored to get some of their weapons to carry to Spain as curiosities, and they already had two of their bows, when suddenly the Indians rushed to the place where they had left their weapons, which they seized, and soon returned with fierce aspect, carrying cords to bind the Christians. What was the reason? Was it a sudden distrust of the white men, or, seeing them so few, were they unable to resist the desire of taking them prisoners? The Spaniards pursued them, and struck one of them with a sword on the bare buttock, and wounded another with an arrow; and this was enough; for, frightened at the bravery of the Spaniards, and still more at the splendor and sharpness of their arms, they took to flight, throwing down their bows and arrows. The sailors wanted to pursue them, but the pilot in command refused, and made them get into the boat at once and return to the caravel. This was the first skirmish with the Indians, and the first blood of the natives of the New World shed by white men.

Columbus was afflicted at the failure of his attempt to establish friendly relations, but he comforted himself with the thought, that if these were the Caribs or warlike Indians of the borders, it was well that they should learn the difference between their arms and those borne by the white men, so that if the boat left at La Navidad should come into this neighborhood, they would be afraid to attempt any injury.*

These Indians belonged to the fierce and hardy tribe of Ciguay, a mountainous district, extending twenty-five leagues along the coast, and many leagues into the interior. They differed in language, look, and manners from the other natives of the island, and had the rude, but independent and vigorous, character of mountaineers.† We shall

* *Journal*, 13 January.

† Irving, *Columbus*, bk. v, ch. i.

see more of them in the course of our history ; in the mean time, we have a specimen of their bold and frank character in their conduct on the day following the fray. A little after sunrise, great numbers of them were seen on the shore, and the admiral sent a well-armed party in the boat to find out their intentions. As soon as the boat touched the land, they all approached quietly, and the man who had been on board of the caravel the day before, presented some clubs as peace-tokens from his cacique, who was present. The cacique then signified his wish to visit the admiral, and as freely and confidently as though the peace had been unbroken between them, entered the boat, with only three companions. Columbus appreciated this act of frank confidence, and received the bold cacique with honor, offered him a plentiful collation of biscuit and honey, which the Indians ate with great relish, presented him with a scarlet cap, a piece of cloth of the same color, and some glass beads ; and he also made suitable presents to his followers. All four went away delighted, and the next day the cacique sent the admiral a crown of gold in return. Columbus had made up his mind to attack the Indians at night, in their dwellings, and capture some of them, supposing they were cannibals ; but after this mark of friendship, he abandoned the intention. Many more came afterwards, bringing cotton, bread, and various fruits, which they offered to the Spaniards quietly and confidently, but still showing their warlike character by going always armed with bows and arrows. After bartering every thing, four of the young men went on board of the caravel, and as they seemed to be able to give good account of all the islands to the east, on the way which Columbus wished to follow, he resolved to take them with him to Castile.

They sailed out of the bay before dawn on the 16th of January, with a favorable wind. In memory of the skirmish with the Indians, Columbus called it the Gulf of Arrows ; but its aboriginal name of Gulf of Samana was subsequently restored.

At first, they sailed to the north-east, where the young Indians assured them they would find the islands of Carib and Mantinino, as the admiral wished to take some of the natives of those islands also, to present to the king and queen. But after sailing sixteen leagues, his guides changed their opinion, and pointed to the south-east, and he altered his course to that direction, in which he would soon have reached Portorico, which was the island that the Indians

called Carib. But he had hardly gone two leagues, before a favorable breeze sprang up for returning to Spain, and he noticed that the sailors began to show ill-humor at his deviation from the direct course homeward. Considering how little dependence he could place on their obedience and loyalty, and the wretched condition of the vessels, which were leaking badly, he yielded to the force of necessity, and again changing the sails, to the men's delight, steered directly for Spain.*

CHAPTER XXI.

The return.—Violent storms.—Separation of the Pinta.—The crew make vows to God for their safety.—Expedient of Columbus to make his discovery known in Europe, in case they should be lost.—Arrival at the Azores (1493).

THE strong breeze which filled their swelling sails as they turned towards home, and created in every one a strong desire soon to see his native land, lasted hardly two days. After that, the wind was continually veering during the rest of January; and even when it was aft, they were unable to take much advantage of it, because the Pinta's foremast was so injured that she could carry very little sail. Pinzon might have easily replaced it, the admiral says, with so

* *Journal*, 16 January.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxvi.—Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, cap. lxxvii.—The islands discovered by Columbus on this voyage, as well as later in the same sea, were all included under the general name of *Antilles*, clearly borrowed from the famous *Antilla* of Aristotle, which was believed to exist somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean. It is a mistake to suppose that Columbus called them by that name, for the word in the plural number is nowhere found in any writing of his. It is found for the first time in Peter Martyr's history, in the first book of the first decade, which book was completed in November, 1493, two months after Columbus's return from discovering the New World. His words are: "In Hispaniola Ophiram insulam sese reperisse refert (Colonus), sed cosmographicorum tractu diligenter considerato, *Antiliae insulae sunt illae et adjacentes aliae.*" Even Amerigo Vespucci, in his narrative of his voyage with Ojedo, calls Hispaniola by the name of Antilia: "Venimus ad Antiliae insulam quam paucis nuper ab annis Christophorus Columbus discooperuit." (Edit. Lat. of 1507.) Bartholomew Las Casas says, "that it was the Portuguese who first applied to Hispaniola the name of Antilla." (Humboldt, *Examen Critique*, &c., sect. i, pp. 196-7. Paris, 1836-9.

many fine trees in the Indies, if he had not been so engrossed by his search for gold. The sea was often so calm that the Indians plunged into the water and swam about the ships.*

On the 25th, they caught a tunny-fish and a large shark, which was a great relief, as they were beginning to want provisions, having nothing left but bread, wine, and red peppers, which last they had learnt to eat from the Indians.

The frequent changes of direction, to get the benefit of the wind, greatly confused the reckoning of the masters and pilots, and no two of them agreed together.

On the 10th of February, Vicente Yañez Pinzon, the master of the *Niña*, and the pilots, Sancho Ruiz, Pedro Alonzo Nino, and Bartolomé Roldan, compared their reckonings to determine as nearly as possible where they were, and concluded they were in the latitude of Madeira, and at least one hundred and fifty leagues nearer to Spain than Columbus calculated. He knew very well that they were in the direction of the Azores, but left them in their error, and even added to their perplexity, in order that they might retain only a confused notion of the voyage, and he alone have a clear idea of the way leading to the newly-discovered countries.† He was sure of the accuracy of his calculation, and he had certain proofs of it in the notes, which he had carefully made every day, of the simplest indications of the sea, the air, and the sky. Coming from Spain, he had observed where the great fields of weeds floating on the Ocean began, and where they ended, so that when he had passed those movable fields on his return, he judged he must be about as far east as he was when he came to them on the voyage out; that is to say, about two hundred and seventy-three leagues from the island of Ferro.‡ “His safety,” says Irving, “and that of his ships in the unknown regions which he traversed, often depended on those observations; and the sagacity at which he arrived, in deciphering the signs of the elements, was looked upon by the common seamen as something almost superhuman.”§

The first part of February, the wind was in their favor, and, with slight interruption, they were carried, day and night, directly tow-

* *Journal*, 22, 23 January.

† *Ib.* 18 February.—Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, cap. lxxvii.

‡ *Journal*, 10 February.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxvi.

§ Irving, *Columbus*, book ix, ch. ii.

ards Spain. This quick sailing, and the belief that they were now not far from Europe, had increased their longing for home, and the men were happy in the anticipation of soon seeing their native land, embracing their dear ones, and relating the events of their wonderful voyage. Whilst they were rejoicing in the thought of being so near home, the wind began to blow with violence, on the 12th of February, and the sea grew rough ; still they were able to keep their course to the eastward, though with difficulty. After sunset, the sea rose higher, and the sails were furled nearly all night. Columbus observed three flashes of lightning in the north-north-east, which he regarded as a sign of a more violent storm approaching from either that or the opposite direction.

In the course of the next day, the wind seemed as though it would go down, and then it rose higher than before, and the sea increased. At night, the wind blew more violently and the waves grew frightful. They came from opposite directions, so that the ships, laboring in a cross sea, were driven hither and thither without cease, and could neither advance nor escape. The *Niña* was in the greatest peril, because the admiral, relying on the fine weather they had while in the Indies, had neglected to take in proper ballast, intending to do so when he stopped at Mantinino. His little vessel grown lighter by the consumption of the food, wine, and water, was tossed about at the sport of the winds and waves. With his usual facility of contrivance, Columbus filled the empty casks with water from the sea to serve as ballast. This is now a common expedient in storms at sea, but there is no account of any one trying it before him. The sails were then struck, except the main-sail, which was lowered, but unfurled, to help the ship to keep above the waves. For about three hours they fought the rising wind and enormous waves, when, finding that this rather increased the danger, they gave themselves up to the force of the tempest. The admiral hung lanterns all night at the masthead as signals to the *Pinta* to follow, and keep as close as possible ; and, for some time, the *Pinta's* answering signals were visible, but grew fainter by degrees, till they disappeared entirely. It was so dark that nothing could be seen at twenty paces' distance.

Who can tell the dread they felt in the awful darkness, when they heard for the first time the furious surface of the Ocean dashing on every side ? The violence of the winds and the waves increased as the day broke. All human skill was baffled, and only a miracle

seemed able to save them. In the anguish of their agony, they turned to Heaven, and placing in a cap as many beans as there were persons on board, each one made a vow that if he drew out the bean on which a cross had been cut with a knife, he would go on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and offer a wax candle of five pounds' weight. The first to put in his hand was the admiral, and he drew the bean marked with the cross; and from that time he looked upon himself as the one bound to perform the vow to the Blessed Virgin in the name of all. They drew a second lot for a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Loreto, and the lot falling on a common seaman, the admiral promised to supply him with the money needed for the expenses of the journey. The admiral proposed that another pilgrim should watch one night at St. Clara of Moguer, and have a Mass said there; and this lot also fell on him. Then they all made a solemn vow in common, that at the first land they came to, they would all go in procession, in their shirts and barefoot, to the nearest church dedicated to Our Lady. Besides these vows in common, many others were made by each one on his own account.*

The admiral, in his intense agony, sought for comfort in reflecting how many reasons he had for hoping that God would not suffer him to become the spoil of the tempest. He called to mind the labors and humiliations endured in Castile, the opposition of the learned and the powerful, the repeated rejection of his enterprise, and his despair when he thought he was abandoned by every one, and the sudden and unlooked-for favor of the sovereigns. He ran over in his thoughts all the sufferings and tortures his men had caused him on the outward voyage, when they all, with one accord, resolved to return, and rose against him with threats: and God had strengthened and sustained him through all. He thought over all the wonders God had wrought in him and in his favor, on that voyage, and the triumph given him of discovering what he had promised. If God had been so merciful towards him thus far, could he fear that he would abandon him now that his work was nearly completed, and not enable him to return safe and sound to announce to the king and queen of Castile the great things that had been done? But his strong desire to be the bearer of the great news, and to show that every thing he had said had been confirmed, and all that he had undertaken to

* *Journal*, 14 February.

discover had been discovered,—all this tended to increase his fear that he might not be able to carry it out. He confesses that every little fly that passed before his eyes was enough to worry and excite him ; and that his anguish was uninterrupted by a single instant of calm.*

“ I could have borne this misfortune with greater resignation,” he wrote to the Catholic sovereigns, “ if my person alone had been in danger, because I know that the master of my life is the supreme Creator, and at other times I have been only one step from death. But what caused me the greatest sorrow, was the thought that, after receiving from God the strength and confidence necessary for attempting this enterprise, and after bringing it to a glorious issue, when on the point of convincing my adversaries, and of gaining immense glory and vast increase of empire for Your Highnesses, it should please the divine Majesty to defeat all by my death. Even that would have been easier to endure, if it had not been accompanied by the death of those with me, most of whom I had dragged on that enterprise, in spite of themselves, and almost by force ; and now, in their affliction, they cursed not only the moment when they allowed themselves to be carried away by me, but also their weakness in suffering themselves to be restrained by my persuasions from turning back, as they had often determined to do. But what most of all afflicted my heart, was the thought of my two sons, whom I had left at their studies in Cordova, alone, without support, in a strange land ; for, not knowing what I had done and suffered in Your Highnesses’ service, they could find no hope on their father’s memory. And although, on one hand, I was comforted by my belief that our Lord God would not permit a work of such great exaltation to the church to fail after I had brought it nearly to completion through so many troubles and contradictions ; on the other hand, reflecting on my sins, I thought that, perhaps, God, to punish me for them, might, in the inscrutable decrees of his wisdom, wish to deprive me of the glory which my work would have brought me in this world.”†

In this painful struggle between hopes and fears, an expedient suggested itself to his mind, by which, though he should perish with

* *Journal*, 14 February.

† Las Casas, lib. i, cap. xxxvi.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxv

his ships, the glory of his achievement might survive him, and the promised advantages be secured. He wrote on parchment, with the brevity the time demanded, how he had discovered the lands he had promised, in how many days, and by what course, they could be reached, and described the beauty of the country, the character of the natives, and said that he had taken possession in the name of the Catholic sovereigns. He then folded and sealed the letter, and wrote on it the direction to the king and queen of Spain, and the promise of 1,000 ducats to whosoever should deliver it unopened. This he did to make sure, by the inducement of the reward, that the information should be given to Spain, and not to any other country. He inclosed the letter in a waxed cloth, which he placed in a cake of wax, and put the whole in a wooden keg, which was well sealed and then thrown overboard. None of his companions knew what he was doing, but all imagined he was performing some act of devotion. Lest by any accident the parchment should never reach its destination, he wrote another, which he folded and secured in the same way as the first, and placed the keg on the poop, so that if the ship were engulfed in the waves, the keg would float and be carried to some shore.*

These precautions quieted his anxiety to some extent; and he was still further relieved on beholding the sky growing lighter in the west after the sun set, from which he judged that the wind would change to that quarter. It was so, in fact, and although the sea was still high, yet, as they had the wind astern, their voyage during the night was less labored and less dangerous.

The next morning, Friday, the 15th, when daylight began to pierce the thick darkness that hid the horizon all around, the sailor on watch at the masthead cried: *Land, Land!* It was the first sight they had of the Old World, and we may imagine the effect of that cry on every heart, after the mortal anxiety in which they had been since Tuesday.

The land appeared to the east-north-east, directly over the bow of the caravel. Some said it was the island of Madeira; others, the rock of Cintra, in Portugal; but Columbus judged, from his calculations on his chart, it was one of the Azores. With glad hearts they sailed towards the land, and were near enough to see it was an island, when the wind shifted again and began to blow from the east-north-

* *Journal*, 14 February.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxvi.

east, directly against them, while a heavy sea kept rolling from the west. They tacked all night, to keep as near the land as possible ; but the next morning, when they hoped to make it, they were in such a heavy fog that it was no longer visible. They saw, instead, another land eight leagues astern, but did not attempt to reach it, but remained all day on the watch for that first seen. In the evening, at the hour of reciting the *Salve Regina*, some sailors saw a light to the leeward, and thought it must be the island they had seen the day before. They redoubled their efforts, and succeeded in getting near enough to drop an anchor ; but in letting it go the cable parted, and they were obliged to put to sea again. Monday morning, they again came near, and cast anchor on the northern side of the island. Their joy on finding themselves in safety was sadly embittered by the absence of the *Pinta*. What had become of her ? Were their friends and brothers still struggling in the pangs of that endless agony, or were the monsters of the Ocean already wraugling over their limbs ?

Ever since Wednesday, Columbus had remained constantly on deck watching and directing in person the desperate conflict with the elements ; and from want of sufficient nourishment, and exposure to the cold and wet, his legs were all inflamed. Only on the night of the 17th, when the wind was blowing favorably from the west, and there was but the dashing of the waves to contend with, he yielded to the demand of nature, and lay down for a little rest and sleep.*

CHAPTER XXII.

Columbus in St. Mary's Roads.—The Portuguese governor attempts to seize him, and captures one-half of his crew.—Liberation of the men captured.—More storms.—They are forced to land in Portugal.—Their reception by King John II.—Return to Palos (1493).

ON sending a boat to land, they found that it was St. Mary's Island, the furthest south of the Azores, and a possession of the Portuguese crown. The inhabitants pointed out to them a harbor

* *Journal*, 16, 17, 18 February.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxvii

where they could anchor securely, saying that the tempest which had raged for the last fifteen days was the most frightful ever known, and they marvelled that so small a caravel could have lived through it. When they were told that that shell of a boat, so long the sport of the storm, was returning from a new world which they had discovered beyond the Ocean, they were filled with such wonder and curiosity, that they wanted three of the sailors to remain with them on shore, to relate all the particulars of their wonderful voyage.

In the evening, after sunset, three men from the island came down to the beach and hailed the caravel ; a boat being sent for them, they brought on board bread, poultry, and various refreshments from the governor of the island, John de Castanheda, who sent greetings to Columbus, with whom, he said, he was well acquainted. He excused himself for not coming at once to visit him, owing to the lateness of the hour and the distance of his residence, but he would come early the next morning, with fresh provisions, and would bring with him the three sailors who had stayed on shore, and whom he kept to *enjoy the pleasure of hearing them relate the details of their voyage.** As it was late, the three messengers remained on board all night.

The next morning, the admiral reminded his companions of the vow they had made when the storm was most furious, to go, in their shirts, in procession, to say prayers on the first land they should come to, where there was a church under the invocation of Our Lady. Having learnt that not far from there, behind a point on the sea-shore, there was a hermitage dedicated to Mary, he ordered a part of the crew to go and perform their vow, and when they returned he would go with the rest.

The three messengers were charged to find a priest at once, and send him to the hermitage to say the Mass.

The governor's frank offer, and the peace that reigned between Portugal and Castile, guaranteed the quiet performance of the pious ceremony. One-half of the crew, therefore, landed, and, with great devotion, went in procession to the hermitage. Whilst they were there, praying with great fervor and giving thanks for their safety, they were suddenly surrounded and attacked by a band of islanders,

* *Journal*, Tuesday, 18 February.

some on foot and some mounted, with the governor at their head, and all were bound and taken prisoners. A small hill hid the chapel from sight of the ship, and so Columbus knew nothing of what had happened to his companions, and remained waiting till eleven o'clock for them to come back, and let the rest, in turn, land and give thanks to the Blessed Virgin. But as the time passed and none returned, he began to fear that they were detained by the Portuguese, or that the boat had struck one of the rocks which surrounded the whole island. He hoisted sail and quickly passed around the point so as to be in sight of the hermitage and the adjacent shore, when he beheld a company of armed horsemen, who, as soon as the ship came in sight, dismounted, and entered the boat and came towards the ship. The admiral's old suspicions of the grudge of the Portuguese against him were revived, and he ordered his men to arm themselves, and to keep out of sight, but ready to obey his least sign. But the boat came only within speaking distance of the admiral. The governor himself was in the boat, and, standing up, demanded a promise from Columbus, that if he came on board of the caravel, no harm should be done him, as he came only to inquire his intentions, and by what authority he was sailing in those seas. Columbus gave his promise, intending to retain him as a hostage for the return of his men; but the Portuguese, whose conscience warned him not to expect loyalty from one with whom he had first broken it, durst not advance closer, and the colloquy was continued at that distance. The admiral asked Castanheda to what change of sentiments from those lately expressed, or to what chance, it was owing that none of his crew were in the boat. He reminded the governor that the laws of chivalry did not permit such conduct even towards an enemy; that it was an outrage not only on the crown of Castile, but also on the governor's own sovereign, whose subjects met with friendly treatment in the dominions of the Catholic sovereigns, remaining without safe-conduct with as much security as though in Lisbon itself; that the king and queen of Castile had given him letters of recommendation to all the princes, lords, and dignitaries of the world, which he would produce to the governor, if he would come on board; that if these letters secured him a friendly reception wherever he went, they should do so, above all, in the dominions of Portugal, on account of the good neighborhood and friendship existing between the kingdoms, and, especially, of his rank as admiral of the Ocean

and viceroy of the Indies, just discovered by him, and now belonging to the Castilian crown; and he renewed the offer to produce the royal letters signed by his sovereigns and attested by the seal of the kingdom. He added that the governor might approach without fear, because, on account of the peace and friendship existing between Spain and Portugal, the Spanish sovereigns had commanded the admiral to treat all Portuguese vessels with honor and courtesy. He concluded by saying that even if his men were not sent back, he should still proceed to Castile, as he had hands enough to take his ship to Seville, or even to do harm, if necessary; and the governor must blame himself for whatever harm or chastisement resulted, if he persevered in his present conduct. The governor defiantly answered that the Castilian sovereigns and their letters were neither known nor feared on that island, but they would learn what Portugal and the Portuguese amounted to. From these words the admiral was led to suspect that during his absence a rupture must have occurred between the kingdoms. Finally, on leaving, the governor called to the admiral to come into the harbor with his caravel, for all that had been done was by command of the king of Portugal. Then the admiral gave vent to his wrath, and taking all on board as witnesses, he called back to the governor and swore that he would not quit his vessel till he had taken a hundred Portuguese to carry to Castile, and had depopulated and laid waste the whole island.*

Columbus then returned to his former anchorage. The place was dangerous as the bottom was rocky, and the little caravel was continually tossed hither and thither by the increasing wind and sea, and the constant rubbing on the sharp rocks was wearing away the cables. He filled all the butts with water, to steady the ship, but to no purpose; for, the next day, as the sea became rougher, the cables parted. His only safety was in again putting to sea. They tried to make the island of St. Michael, another of the Azores, in the hope of finding a harbor of refuge; but the fog was so thick that they could see land in no direction. They lay to all night, in great distress and danger, as there were only three able seamen on board, all the rest being boys, or landsmen, or Indians. Fortunately, although the waves ran high, there were none of those cross seas which had lately prevailed; otherwise, being so short of hands, the caravel could hardly have lived through the storm.

* *Journal*, 19 February.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxviii.

After sunrise, as they saw nothing of St. Michael's, and the weather showed signs of moderating, the admiral determined to return to St. Mary's to try to recover his men, and also his boat and anchors. He reached there late in the evening, on Thursday, the 21st, and shortly after their arrival, a man was seen on a rock opposite the harbor, making signs for them to remain. After a little while, a boat put out with two priests and a notary, who, after an assurance of safety, came on board; and as it was late, they remained all night, the admiral giving them the best reception in his power. The next morning, they asked to see the letters patent of the Castilian sovereigns, to make sure that this voyage had been undertaken by their authority, in which case the governor would release his prisoners, and extend to him every courtesy. Columbus knew that they took this step to justify their previous conduct, and remove all suspicion of offence, because, failing to get possession of him and his ship, their treachery had been of no avail, and had resulted only in evil. But he was in such need of getting back his men, that he dissembled, and, seeming to accept all they said, thanked them for their offers, and showed them the papers they asked for. They expressed themselves satisfied, and returned to the land, and the prisoners and the boat were at once released. During their detention, the latter had collected information which explained Castanheda's strange conduct. The king of Portugal, fearing that the expedition of Columbus might interfere with his own discoveries, had sent orders to all the commanders of islands and distant ports to seize the admiral in whatever way they could; and Castanheda had tried to carry out those orders. At first he hoped to catch Columbus in the chapel of Our Lady; but failing in that, on seeing the caravel, they all got into the boat and made for the Niña, hoping to gain a quick and easy victory, or, at least, to meet with but slight resistance. But when they found Columbus and his men prepared for their reception, their courage fell, and they withdrew from the attempt.*

"Such," says Irving, "was the first reception of the admiral on his return to the Old World, an earnest of the crosses and troubles with which he was to be requited throughout life, for one of the greatest benefits that ever man conferred upon his fellow-beings."†

* *Journal*, 19, 20, 21, 22 February.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxviii.—Las Casas, lib. i, cap. lxxii.

† *Columbus*, book v, ch. iii.

From there, Columbus went and anchored at another part of the island, for the purpose of taking in wood and ballast ; but the sea was too rough for the boats to reach the shore. For two days he watched for a chance to land ; but, the night of the 24th, there were indications of a wind from the south, which would be dangerous where he lay. But as such wind was favorable for sailing to Spain, he gave up the thought of ballast, and, turning his bows to the east, took a direct course homewards.*

The ship moved quickly on, with swelling sails, and on the morning of the 26th, they were only 125 leagues from Cape St. Vincent, when the wind became contrary, and by night the sea was again furious. This new storm was all the more distressing from the confidence they had just felt that they were safe at last ; and Columbus bitterly lamented being driven back, as it were, from the very threshold of his home. He compared the fearful hurricanes let loose on the shores of the Old World, with the mild climate, and calm seas, and fragrant breezes, which he supposed were perpetual in the happy lands he had discovered, and wrote that the theologians and philosophers were right in placing the earthly paradise at the uttermost extremity of the east.†

The struggle continued with obstinacy for two days, after which it became less violent ; and on Friday, the 1st of March, and the day following, in spite of the heavy sea, they made good progress. The hope of a speedy arrival was renewed, when suddenly, during the night from Saturday to Sunday, they were struck by a squall, which split every sail. It was a real miracle that the little caravel was not capsized by the shock. After the squall, the wind blew over the Ocean with frightful fury, and the waves rose on every side like mountains. Then they had recourse again to Heaven, and drew lots who should make a pilgrimage, in his shirt and barefooted, to Our Lady of la Cintura at Huelva ; and again the lot fell to the admiral. Ferdinand, his son, regarded this persistence of chance in always, with a single exception, selecting the admiral to perform the vows in the name of all, as a great glory for his father. " It was, perhaps," he says, " because the God of Glory wished to show that he was better pleased with the vows of the admiral

* *Journal*, 24, February.

† *Ib.* 27 February.—Las Casas, lib. i, cap. lxxiii.

than with those of the others." Las Casas, on the contrary, saw in it an intimation of Providence to the admiral, that these storms were all sent on his account, to humble his pride, and prevent his arrogating to himself the glory of a discovery which was the work of God, and of which he was a mere instrument.* They all then made a vow to fast the first Saturday after the vessel should arrive in port.

But Heaven seemed deaf to their prayers; and the more they prayed, the more furious was the sea. Towards evening of Monday, the 4th, the storm was frightful: the waves tossed the ship from one side to another, and at each pitch they thought she would capsize; the wind seemed to lift her in the air, the water fell in torrents, the lightning rent the clouds in every direction. It was, says Columbus, a horribly fearful sight. In the thickest darkness of the night, the land they had longed, but now no more hoped, to see, was suddenly visible in the flash of the lightning, and the sight of it froze their heart. At another time, they would have wept with joy at again beholding the shores of Europe, after so great labors and dangers; but at that moment the nearness of land was their death-sentence. The violence of the wind drove the ship furiously on, and they expected every instant to be dashed against some rock, to die a horrible death at the very point which ought to mark the end of their labors. The caravel was sailing with bare poles and cordage, on account of the violence of the winds and waves, which drove her in every direction; but the greater danger from the proximity of the shore, left them no other expedient than to resort to what they had avoided with fear. They, therefore, hoisted the big main-sail, and so kept away from the coast, in mortal agony, fearing every moment to capsize and founder.†

At daybreak, the admiral recognized the land in front as the rock of Cintra, near the Tagus; and although he greatly distrusted the dispositions of the Portuguese in his regard, he still decided to enter the river, as his only means of escape from the fury of the tempest. He relates that the inhabitants spent the whole morning praying for the safety of the unfortunate men they saw making their last struggle for life, trying to reach the mouth of the river; and that when

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxix.—Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, cap. l xxiii.

† *Journal*, 4th March

they saw the ship at last threading the course of the stream, they all ran to congratulate them on their miraculous escape. And it might truly be called a miracle; for all the seamen of that place declared that, within the memory of man, there had not been so stormy a winter; that twenty-five vessels were wrecked on the coast of Flanders, and many more shut up in the harbors of that province, waiting, in vain, for four months, to get to sea.*

The thought is here suggested if, on the way to discover the New World, Columbus had met with one-tenth part of the difficulties, calamities, and dangers he encountered on his return, what would have become of his undertaking?—*The sea is calm as a river*, he repeats every little while in his journal, *the air is mild, and there could not be a more favorable wind*; and in spite of all this, we have seen how his companions were overcome by fear, and what difficulty and danger he incurred in inducing them to proceed further. What would have happened if they had then beheld the Ocean in its fury!

They ascended the Tagus as far as Rastelo, a small village near the mouth of the river, where they anchored about three o'clock in the afternoon. The admiral immediately dispatched a messenger to Spain, to make known to the king and queen his return and the great discovery he had made. He wrote also to the king of Portugal, who was then at Valparaiso, about nine leagues from Lisbon, informing him that the king and queen of Castile had instructed him to enter the harbors of His Highness for supplies, whenever necessary, and, therefore, he requested permission to proceed with his vessel to Lisbon. The rumor was already spread that the caravel was laden with gold, and on that account he thought he was not safe at the mouth of the Tagus, in the vicinity of a town like Rastelo, peopled only by adventurers and paupers. To prevent any doubt or pretext arising from the nature of his voyage, he added that he had not come from Guinea, or any other of the Portuguese possessions, but from the Indies, which he had discovered by sailing to the west.†

The next day, an officer of the Portuguese navy was sent, in an armed boat, by the commander of a large man-of-war that was on guard at Rastelo, and coming on board of the caravel, he summoned Columbus to accompany him in the boat, to give an account of him-

* *Journal*, 4 March.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxix.

† *Journal*, 4 March.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xxxix.

self to the king's ministers and the captain of the man-of-war, according to the duty and practice of all vessels arriving there. Columbus replied that he was the admiral of the king and queen of Castile; that he was not bound to render any account of the sort to those ministers and officers; and that he would not leave the vessel unless compelled by force of arms. The officer then requested him to send the master of the caravel; but the admiral replied that not even a boy should leave the vessel for such purpose, unless by force; for, authorizing any one else to go was the same as going himself, and the admirals of Castile were accustomed to give their life rather than surrender any of their men into the hands of foreigners. The officer was convinced by this bold answer that Columbus was really what he pretended, and moderated his demands to a request to see the royal letters which proved the admiral's commission, in which he was at once accommodated.

As soon as the commander of the man-of-war was assured of the rank of Columbus and of the extraordinary nature of his voyage, he proceeded to the caravel with a great retinue, to the sound of trumpets, fifes, and drums, to show him respect, and remained some time, placing himself entirely at his orders for any service that might be needed.*

To form an idea of the effect produced in Lisbon by the news of that bark anchored in the Tagus, freighted with the products and inhabitants of a newly-discovered world, it is necessary to remember for how many years Portugal had painfully pursued the path of discovery, and what hopes were directed to the completion of that enterprise. For nearly a century, the chief glory of Lisbon was based on maritime discoveries; for nearly a century it had spent money, labor, and study on opening a passage to the Indies, and had not yet succeeded; and that bark, in a few months, had found the way. It would hardly have excited greater curiosity if the vessel had returned freighted with the wonders of another planet. As soon as the news was spread through the city, on the 6th, every barge and boat that could be had, was filled with people hurrying to Rastelo to see the great novelty. It was a continual procession along the Tagus, and a furious struggle to be the first to arrive. On board there were a thousand exclamations of wonder at what they saw

* *Journal.* 5 March.—Fernando Colombo, l. c.

and heard from the sailors ; every one wanted to press the hands of those intrepid conquerors of the Ocean ; and all were mute with reverence before the wonderful man who had led them. The crowd was still greater the second day, and among them were many lords of high rank, men from the court, and royal ministers. Some were filled with generous enthusiasm at the idea of a discovery so sublime and so beneficial to mankind ; the avarice of others was inflamed by the description of wild, unappropriated regions teeming with gold, pearls, and spices ; while others repined at the incredulity of the king and his councillors, by which so important an acquisition had been for ever lost to Portugal.*

On the 8th of March, Dom Martin de Noronha arrived, bearing a royal letter, in which John II congratulated the admiral on his return, and invited him to come to court. At the same time, the king, with his usual magnificence, had given orders that whatever the admiral wanted for himself, his crew, or his vessel, should be promptly furnished without payment.

The invitation was far from agreeable to Columbus, who remembered too well the attempt to capture him on his outward voyage, by order of the same king, and also the recent treachery of the governor of the Azores ; but the violence of the storm had put him in King John's power, and, to avoid all appearance of suspicion, he left the same evening for Valparaiso, accompanied by his pilot. He slept the first night at Sacaven, where preparations had been made for his reception ; and as it rained all the next day, it was towards night when he reached Valparaiso. As he came near the royal residence, the principal officers of the court met him and conducted him to the palace with great ceremony. The king received him most graciously and honorably, made him cover himself and sit in his presence, an honor reserved for persons of the highest distinction. After many congratulations on the happy result of his undertaking, and offering to do for him and for his sovereigns every thing in his kingdom that could be of service to them, he listened attentively to the account of his voyage. But under this seeming ease he concealed a violent excitement. He could not forget that he had been offered that enterprise and had allowed it to slip from his hands. One remark which escaped him, shows what he was ruminating in

* Irving, *Columbus*, book v, ch. iv.

his mind : it was the suggestion of a doubt whether the discovery did not really inure to the Portuguese crown by virtue of the treaty of 1479, between his kingdom and that of Castile. Columbus cut the question short by saying that he knew nothing of that treaty, but could assure him that the Spanish sovereigns had expressly ordered him not to touch any of the Portuguese possessions, and this order had been published by solemn proclamation in all the ports of Andalusia ; and he had strictly conformed to all his sovereigns' orders. To this, John graciously, but evasively, added that he felt sure that there was no need of mediators between Their Highnesses and himself in order to come to an understanding in the matter.*

The following day, Sunday, the 10th of March, they were again together, and the king made minute inquiries concerning the soil, products, and inhabitants of those new countries, and the direction to be followed to get there. In answering his inquiries, Columbus took special pains to convince the king that those countries were altogether new, and had never been taken possession of by any Christian power. But the suspicion that this discovery was an invasion of the rights of Portugal, furnished the king a thread of hope that he might repair the loss he had sustained by refusing it ; and the more Columbus tried to remove his suspicion, the more firmly the king clung to it.

To make this account clearer, it is best to go back some years, and touch briefly on those rights which King John believed he had in the discovery made by Columbus.

When the Portuguese saw that their discoveries along the western coast of Africa opened up a large field of conquests and wealth, they wanted to secure it for themselves, to the exclusion of all other Christian powers. They, therefore, applied to the Pope, whose supreme authority over all the kingdoms of the earth was still generally recognized, and represented to him the labor and expense the Portuguese crown had been put to in these discoveries ; the great multitude, unknown to every one, who were living in the darkness of heathenism, or wandering in the errors of Mahomet, to whom their work had opened the way of the Gospel ; their determination to continue, regardless of cost or danger, in the enterprise they had

* Giampietro Maffei, *Storia delle Indie Occidentali*, lib. i.—P. Em. Telles de Silva, *De Rebus Gestis Joannis II, &c.*, pp. 363-366. Lisbon, 1689.

begun : for all this, in recompense for what they were spending and suffering, and as a reward of their zeal in the propagation of the Christian religion, they supplicated him, by virtue of his authority over all the kingdoms of the earth, to recognize in the crown of Portugal the right over all infidel countries and peoples they had hitherto discovered, or should thereafter discover from Cape Non to the eastern Indies inclusive.

Pope Martin V willingly acceded to the prayers of Portugal, adding many promises and spiritual rewards for all who should take part in those labors especially directed to the propagation of the Christian faith and the salvation of souls. Popes Eugenius IV and Nicholas V confirmed these privileges in their Bulls.* These rights of Portugal had been solemnly recognized by Ferdinand and Isabella in the treaty they concluded with that kingdom in the year 1479, and, therefore, in granting Columbus the expedition he asked for, they had specifically reserved all the Portuguese possessions, and had the reservation solemnly promulgated in their ports.

The question with King John was, then, whether or not the countries discovered by Columbus were within the limits assigned in the bull of Martin V; and to clear up the question, after his conversation with Columbus, he proposed the subject for examination by his councillors.

These were partly the same who had examined the undertaking of Columbus years before, and turned it into ridicule, terming him a visionary. Its success had become a source of confusion for them; its importance, a tacit rebuke; and the return of the admiral covered with glory, a deep humiliation. Incapable of conceiving of the high and noble ideas which raised Columbus above vulgar considerations, they assigned the basest motives for his acts. If in his words or looks he manifested the pure joy of his heart, they said he was displaying all the pride of his triumph; and they accused him of assuming an air of boasting and vanity in speaking of his discovery to the king, as if wishing to revenge himself for the rejection of his proposal.† They, therefore, used every en-

* Barros, dec. i, lib. i, cap. viii-xv.

† In regard to this charge against Columbus, reported by Barros, I. I. Machado de Oliveira, a Brazilian author, observes very justly : "the mere pres-

deavor to keep up the king's doubts. Some, after seeing the natives brought on the caravel, asserted that their color, their hair, and their habits, corresponded with the description of the inhabitants of the part of India assigned to the Portuguese discoveries and included in the Pope's bull. Others remarked that it was only a short distance from the Terceira Islands to those discovered by Columbus, and, therefore, the latter evidently belonged to the Portuguese crown. Some, finally, seeing the king greatly perplexed, proposed to put Columbus to death, as a means of preventing further enterprises of the kind, declaring that he was deserving of death for attempting to deceive both countries, and to sow the seeds of discord between them by his pretended discoveries. They suggested to the king that it could easily be brought about without the odium falling on him. By taking advantage, for instance, of the proud character of Columbus, his pride could be wounded, a quarrel excited, and he could be got rid of as if he were the victim of a duel fought with all the formalities.

It is hard to believe that such base counsel was given to a monarch so upright as John II; but the fact is confirmed by various historians, Portuguese as well as Spaniards, and it accords with that suggested when the undertaking of Columbus was first offered to him.* Others, in fine, proposed that Columbus should be allowed to depart freely, with honor and kindness, and that a large fleet should be got ready, and before the admiral and Spain were prepared for a second expedition, it should be sent under the guidance of two Portuguese sailors who were in the admiral's crew, to take possession of the lately-discovered land. Spain would raise a great cry and protest, but the surest title to any thing is always possession; and if they came to arms, the chances were equal for both sides, and the party standing on the defence has always the advantage over that which attacks.

The king was pleased with this crafty and bold counsel, and at once gave orders to make secret preparations for the expedition,

ence of Columbus was a sufficient rebuke to the king."—*Revista do Instit. Histor. e Geograph. do Brazil*, No. 19, 1855, serie iii, pag. 303.

* Irving, *Columbus*, book v, ch. iv.—Vasconcellos, *Vida del Rey Juan II de Portugal*, lib. vi.—Garcia de Resende, *Vida del Rey D. João o Segundo*.—Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, c. lxxiv.—Barros, *Asia Portuguesa*, dec. i, lib. iii, c. ii.—Ruy de Pina, *Cron.*, cap. lxxvi.

selecting as its leader one of the most famous captains of the age, D. Francisco de Almeyda.*

The admiral was, therefore, courteously and honorably entertained, and when he took his leave, on Monday, the 11th of March, the king sent D. Martin de Noronha to accompany him to his caravel, and ordered a number of cavaliers and courtiers to escort him a good part of the distance. The admiral went a little out of his way to pass a few hours at the monastery of St. Anthony in Villafranca, on the road to Lisbon, wherethe queen then was with a small court, as she had earnestly requested him not to depart without visiting her, and giving her an account of his wonderful voyage. His reception was most friendly, and such as usually accorded to persons of the greatest distinction. Continuing his journey, he passed the night at Flandra, and as he was leaving in the morning, a squire of King John's arrived to inform him that if he preferred returning by land to Castile, he had the king's orders to accompany him and provide lodgings and horses, and whatever else he might need. But Columbus would not abandon his caravel, and late that night he joined his men again.

The next morning, Wednesday, the 13th of March, the sea having become calmer, they resumed their voyage, and steering directly for Spain, on Friday, the 15th, the glorious caravel made its triumphant entrance into its harbor of Palos.†

Whoever wishes to waste his time and brains in looking for strange coincidences of events and dates, may take notice that Columbus left Palos on his voyage of discoveries on Friday; he first saw the land of the New World on Friday; he sailed from the New World, to bring the news of his discovery, on Friday; and, ending his voyage, he arrived in Palos on Friday.

Vasconcellos, lib. vi.

† *Journal*, 9-15 March.—F. Colombo, cap. xl-xli.—Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, c. lxxiv.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Arrival at Palos.—Their reception.—Arrival of the Pinta, and sad end of Martin Alonzo Pinzon.—Triumphant journey from Palos to Barcelona.—Reception by the sovereigns, the court, and the city.—The fame of the discovery spread through all Europe (1493)

THE voyage of Columbus for the discovery of the New World lasted seven months and twelve days. We may easily imagine the life of the inhabitants of Palos during all that time, and what fears and anxiety oppressed their hearts, if we bear in mind that the expedition was undertaken almost by main force, that the most of the sailors came from that little town, and there was hardly a family that could not count some member among them. Time is a wholesome medicine for sorrow, but now it increased the suffering; for, the longer they were without tidings, the greater was the probability and fear of some catastrophe; and the fear had almost become certainty in these last four months that the Ocean had raged with unusual fury. The greatest anxiety arose from the unknown and mysterious nature of the voyage. Of so many strange and horrible accounts which were told of the Ocean and its dangers, what were the tortures reserved for their sons? The mothers and wives, especially, were ever thinking of the boundless space of the Ocean, and fearful images continually succeeded each other in their excited fancy. Now, they beheld the ships tossed on a rock by the raging winds and furious sea, and the torn and bleeding members scattered at the sport of the waves; and then they beheld the ships driven on the sands, and the emaciated mariners slowly perishing of hunger and thirst; at another time, they froze with horror at the sight of some monster, and beheld the ships capsized, and heard the crackling of the bones of their sons and husbands in the monster's huge maw. After such desperate fears, what must have been the joy of Palos at seeing the royal standard returning to the harbor with the news of the discovery of a new world! Every one was screaming and weeping with joy; the shops

were closed, business was suspended, and all ran to the strand. The air echoed to the cries of joy, all the bells of the city were rung for the festival. I pass over the tears, the embraces, the pressing around those heroes, all struggling to salute them, to press their hands, to congratulate them. It is impossible to describe the enthusiasm of the multitude in hailing Columbus as he landed ; and wherever he went, their shouts told of his whereabouts. In this way, they all went with the admiral and the^t sailors, in procession, to the principal church to thank God for the great miracle. And seldom has a prayer of a people ascended to the throne of the Almighty so full of loving enthusiasm.*

That evening, as they were still celebrating the admiral's triumph with songs, music, and illuminations, by a singular coincidence, the Pinta sailed into the harbor. The fact has so much of the marvellous that it might almost be supposed to have been invented for effect, if the name of the authors who relate it were not a guaranty of the gravity of their narrative. After the fearful storm which forced them to part company on the night of the 14th of February, the Pinta had drifted about at the sport of the winds and waves, till, after a long struggle and a thousand perils, it reached Bayonne in the Bay of Biscay. Martin Alonzo Pinzon, finding that the Pinta, which was so much stronger built than the Niña, had, in passing through such perils, often been within a hair's breadth of yielding to the violence of the winds and waves, was almost sure that the weaker caravel of the admiral must have succumbed in the terrible struggle with the tempest, and, therefore, that he alone was left to make the great discovery known to Europe. And even if the admiral were alive, he saw the great advantage of being beforehand in the announcement, and gaining the court in his favor. He determined, accordingly, to make the attempt, and as soon as he arrived at Bayonne, wrote to the Spanish sovereigns a pompous letter, narrating, after his own fashion, the great adventures of the voyage, its labors and perils, and, finally, the delight at the great discovery which he claimed to have made ; and inquired when and where he might betake himself to Their Highnesses' throne to relate by word of mouth the fortunate events of his voyage. Then, as soon as the fury of the sea had somewhat subsided, he made sail, and proceeded to Palos,

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xli.—Robertson, *Hist. Amer.*, vol. i, bk. ii



revolving in his fancy the triumph he anticipated on returning to his native city. Tremendous must have been the blow he received when, on entering the harbor, he beheld the standard of the admiral waving in the air, the city in festivity, and heard shouts and acclamations to the name of Columbus. All his courage and pride abandoned him, and he was vanquished, humiliated. He went ashore in his boat, and, entering the town unobserved, kept himself apart and almost concealed, so long as the admiral stayed there. They say it was from dread of meeting the admiral in those days of his triumph, fearing lest Columbus, returning in secure possession of his authority and rights, might cause his arrest, and demand an account of his past conduct ; but, more likely, it was shame thrown in his face by conscience, which prevented him from appearing with a calm front amid the applause and congratulations of that triumph ; it was rage at having played a false game and lost it disgracefully.* Palos was the world to him ; he had shone there without a rival, and now it seemed as though every finger was pointed at him in scorn. A few days later, he received the reply of the king and queen, severely blaming his conduct, and saying that if he wanted to visit the court he must accompany the admiral, his superior, with whom he had sailed. This new humiliation was the last blow, and completely prostrated him. Seized with a violent fever, he took to his bed and died in a few days.

Fernando Columbus differs from the rest, in placing the return of Martin Alonzo to Palos after the admiral's departure ; but the fact remains substantially the same, as he confirms all the other circumstances of his humiliation and the bitter death that followed.†

What sad reflections are excited by the death of this man ! Setting aside his superiority in marine matters, and his great reputation in consequence, let us consider only the decisive part he took in aiding Columbus to set out on the discovery of the New World. It was his reputation, his authority and example, which prevailed over the fears, the prejudices, and the reluctance of the seamen ; he accomplished what was beyond the power of the government, with all its promises, its menaces, its force. Without him, who can say what time must have elapsed before Columbus could

* Charlevoix, *Hist. St. Domingue*, lib. ii.—Muñoz, *Hist. N. Mundo*, lib. iv, § xiv.

† C. xli.

have fitted out those three wretched ships which were requisite for his gigantic undertaking? It was through him the money was obtained to pay the eighth part of the expenses of the expedition assumed by Columbus; through him, that the Niña was added to complete the little fleet. It was his due that his name should be indissolubly united in glory with the unapproachable one of Columbus. But not satisfied with his position, he strove to mount higher, and fell,—a miserable example of the effects of unbridled ambition. “That he naturally possessed generous sentiments and an honorable ambition,” says Irving, “is evident from the poignancy with which he felt the disgrace drawn on him by his misconduct. A mean man would not have fallen a victim to self-upbraiding for having been convicted of a base action. His story shows how one lapse from duty may counterbalance the merits of a thousand services; how one moment of weakness may mar the beauty of a whole life of virtue; and how important it is for a man to be, under all circumstances, true not merely to others, but to himself.*”

The court was then at Barcelona; Columbus at first intended to sail thither at once with his caravel, but he abandoned this intention, on account of the great damage suffered by the little vessel on its long and distressing voyage. He, therefore, wrote to inform the king and queen of his arrival in Spain, and then started for Seville to await there the orders of their Majesties, taking with him seven of the ten Indians brought from the New World; of the three others, one had died on the way, and two, falling ill, had to be left at Palos.

The news of the admiral's return, and of the extraordinary tidings he brought, produced a lively excitement at court. Their minds were still flushed with the conquest of Granada, which, a few months previously, had crowned the struggle of eight centuries; and this new and extraordinary event, following so close on that glorious fact, was looked on by every one as a reward given by God to Spain for her triumph over the enemies of her religion. With this idea, in the strong religious sentiment then existing throughout Spain, the discovery of Columbus became immensely more important and valuable in all eyes; and all over Spain there was but one song of his praise, and of thanks to God. The sovereigns were dazzled by

* Irving, *Columbus*, book v, ch. v

the splendor of this vast and rich empire which had been added to their dominions in so short a time and with so little labor ; and their first thought was to secure it beyond dispute. They immediately replied to Columbus, in a letter full of courtesy and affection, in which, after congratulating him on the excellent result of his voyage, they invited him to repair, as soon as possible, to the court, to arrange a second expedition to those lands, much larger and better equipped than the former. Meanwhile, as the favorable season for navigation was well advanced, they charged him to make at once, either at Seville or elsewhere, the necessary arrangements to hasten his departure, and to inform them by return of the messenger what was required to be done on their part. The address of the letter was

“ To Don Christopher Columbus, Our Admiral of the Ocean, and Viceroy and Governor of the Islands discovered in the Indies.”

Columbus proceeded at once, with his usual activity, to carry out the orders of the sovereigns : he sent a note of the ships, the men, and the munitions needed, and made every preparation the circumstances admitted of. Then, with his Indians and the various curiosities and products he had brought from the New World, he set out for Barcelona.

The rumor of his journey preceded him everywhere, and the roads were crowded with people from all sides, eager to look on that extraordinary man, and the first-fruits of the products and natives he brought from the New World. It was a general festival of indescribable joy and triumph. This crowding of the people in his way, and the necessity of satisfying, to some extent, their curiosity, delayed him much longer than he would have wished, so that it was near the middle of April when he reached Barcelona, where the court and inhabitants anxiously awaited his coming.

By the sovereigns' order, a solemn cavalcade of young gentlemen met him on his approach to the city, and an innumerable multitude of people followed them, impatient to behold and to know the discoverer of a new world, and shouts of joy from every tongue filled the air around. The places through which he was to pass were ornamented with banners, festoons, drapery, and arches ; and the streets, squares, windows, balconies, and even the roofs, were crowded with people, anxious to behold the triumphant procession. And there was truly enough to excite the curiosity of the most solitary and



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melancholy person. The world had never before beheld a triumphal procession like this. The prisoners following the car of a Roman general, might be strange barbarians of a tribe which had never before furnished slaves to Rome ; but the barbarians were not unknown creatures. But with Columbus came beings of a new world. Now was seen the conqueror, not of man, but of nature ; not of flesh and blood, but of the awful unknown of the elements, and, what was far more, of the prejudices of ages. We may imagine the remarks that were made before his arrival.*

The royal standard came first, with a small escort of armed seamen, followed by the rest of the sailors, each bearing one or another of the samples or rarities brought from the New World,—leaves and branches of trees supposed to possess great virtue, gigantic reeds, enormous gourds, unknown plants, raw and spun cotton, fruits of various kinds,—every thing new and rare that they had found among the productions of those countries. There were animals, alive and stuffed, birds with splendid plumage, and, above all, forty parrots of different species, but all beautiful, which never tired answering, with their barbarous voices, the cries of the multitude. After these, were carried the Indian weapons, bows, arrows, lances, and their ornaments, all of gold,—rings, bracelets, girdles, masks, crowns, together with the utensils and furniture of their houses. Next came the Indians themselves, in their national costume, variously painted, with gold rings in their noses, and gaudy feathers on their heads ; and they moved confused and lost among so many people, and so many voices and noises ; before such magnificent dwellings, such luxury of furniture and clothing, so unlike their nakedness and the simplicity of their cabins and of their life. Lastly came the officers of the expedition, Columbus in the middle. All uncovered with reverence as he passed, eager to behold his visage and imprint its lineaments on their memory ; and the thunders of applauding shouts from all sides were answered by the harmonies of musical instruments and the festive sounds from every church in the city. Ferdinand and Isabella awaited Columbus in a large hall magnificently adorned for the occasion, seated on a throne under a rich canopy of cloth of gold, with the heir apparent, Don Juan, by their side, and surrounded by the high officials and dignitaries of the two courts, and the first nobles

* Helps, *Life of C. Columbus*, ch. v.

of the kingdoms. Columbus entered the hall accompanied by a brilliant train of cavaliers, amongst whom, says Las Casas, he was conspicuous for his lofty stature, the richness of his dress, and, most of all, for the majesty of his countenance, rendered still more venerable by the white hair which fell on his forehead, and gave him the august appearance of a Roman senator. A slight smile as he answered the salute of the applauding multitude, was the only sign he gave of the joy which swelled his heart at that just and well-deserved triumph.* As he approached, the sovereigns arose, and would hardly suffer him to kiss their hand as he bent his knee for that act of homage; then immediately raising him, they made him sit before them in an easy chair prepared for that purpose, a rare honor in that proud court so strict in all matters of etiquette.†

After a few details concerning the arrangements and results of his voyage, the admiral presented to the king and queen the objects and samples he had brought as a sign of the incredible fertility and wealth of those regions. From what they had found on this first voyage, in so short a time, few in number, and strangers, as they were, to the locality and the language, it was possible to conclude what treasures would be found in the sequel, when prosecuting the discovery with greater ease and better means. Those seven Indians, who stood, reverent and trembling, in the presence of their Highnesses, represented whole nations which Spain would soon number under her glorious dominion, and the church recognize as a precious part of Christ's inheritance.

The words of Columbus so moved the sovereigns that as soon as his fervent discourse was ended, they both fell on their knees, and raised their joined hands to heaven, weeping with joy, and gratitude to God. And all the ministers, high officers of the court, and grandees of the kingdom, that were present, followed their example; a lively feeling of religious thankfulness drew every thought to God, and in the general commotion, instead of profane applause and huzzas, the choir of the royal chapel entoned the *Te Deum*. Las Casas, describing the solemn enthusiasm of that thanksgiving, says: *It seemed as though each one enjoyed at that instant a foretaste of the delights of paradise.*

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, l. i, c. lxxviii.

† Las Casas, *Ib.*—Fernando Colombo, cap. xli.—Muñoz, *Hist. del Nuevo Mondo*, t. i, l. iv, § xv.

When Columbus took his leave of the sovereigns, the entire court arose and accompanied him to the place prepared for his residence. And in the same manner his whole stay at Barcelona was a succession of rejoicings and festivals in his honor. He had free access to the court at any hour; the queen often wanted his company, in order to hear further and more minute details of his voyage; and the king was glad to be seen riding through the city with him on one side and the hereditary prince on the other.

To perpetuate in the family of Columbus the glory of his discovery, the sovereigns granted him a coat of arms on which the royal arms (of Castile and Leon) were quartered with a group of islands surrounded by foaming waves, around which were written these two verses :

Por Castilla y por Leon
Nuevo Mundo halló Colon.

i. e., For Castile and Leon

A New World found Colon (Columbus).*

But these words, *A New World*, should deceive no one. Although every one felt that the achievement of Columbus left far behind all the voyages and discoveries of ancient or modern times, still none suspected its real importance, none imagined that the land he had found was a new portion of our globe, entirely unknown, in the middle of the Ocean, and wholly separate from the Old World. Every one believed those lands were the eastern limits of Asia beyond the Indies, and, therefore, they named them the West Indies, as they were reached by way of the west. But, supposing that he had touched the borders of countries of immense extent, which no traveller had visited before, and which were in the primitive state of nature, they gave them the generic name of New World.

The nobles vied with the sovereigns in the honors paid to Columbus, and they, who so often had spurned his petition with proud

* Navarrete, *Col. Dipl. Doc.*, No. xx.—The first marshalling of the escutcheon, it seems, was this : The two chief quarters bore the escutcheons of Castile and Leon; the sinister base, the new coat of arms given to Columbus; and the dexter base, the coat of arms of his family. (Navarrete, t. ii, pag. 37.) But in the draft of Oviedo, the last quarter bears instead, five anchors, indicative of the office of *admiral of the islands and continent*; and the old arms of the Columbus family are placed at the base near the point of the shield. After the heirs of Columbus took the title of Dukes of Veragua, their arms underwent further changes.

contempt, and placed obstacles in the way of his enterprise, which they called a dream, a madness, or worse, were now the most forward in honoring and applauding him. It was easy to see the anxiety to cancel by present zeal sad memories of the past. Happy the one who could remind him of a gentle word spoken in former days, of a smile even of formality or of breeding. That was now a subject of boasting, as if it had been a favor and assistance rendered him in his need. Among the festivals and honors given him by the grandees of Spain, we must make special mention of a solemn dinner which the Cardinal Mendoza gave in his honor, to which the first dignitaries of the court and the principal grandees of Spain were invited. We have elsewhere spoken of the great merits and high authority of Mendoza,* and will only repeat here that he had used his great influence in favor of Columbus at a time of need, and therefore could with good right be counted in some manner among his protectors. To this dinner is ascribed the famous anecdote of the *Egg of Columbus*, and this is why I think it should be particularly mentioned. It is said, then, that one of the guests, to whom all this laudation of Columbus seemed out of proportion to the importance and merit of his undertaking, with an air partly ironical and partly ingenuous, asked him if he did not believe that if he had not discovered the Indies, others would have been found equal to the undertaking. Columbus made no direct reply to the question, but, taking an egg, asked those at the table to try to make it stand on one end. None could succeed in doing it. Then, taking the egg, he cracked one end slightly on the table, and stood it on the end he had cracked. By this, it is said, he wished to show that, after he had opened the path to the New World, nothing was easier than to follow in his tracks.

The circumstances of the time, of the place, and the persons, all unite to prove the improbability of the story. In such great favor with the people and the sovereigns, in that sort of apotheosis in which Columbus was then held, it is not at all likely that any one should seek the satisfaction, in which there was little honor, of belittling one who was at the time admired and venerated by all. Still less likely is it that such a person would have been found at that table, where the guests were all eminent by birth and rank, and, by their educa-

* Book i, ch. ix.

tion, rendered incapable of doing such dishonor to Columbus ; the more so, as the offence would not be so much against him as against Mendoza, who had invited them in his honor. And in the presence of Mendoza, even the noblest duke held the second place. No contemporary historian makes the slightest allusion to the anecdote ; the first to raise it to historical honor, picking it up from vulgar fable and chit-chat, was Benzoni, who wrote fourscore years after the New World was discovered.*

We may add that the same anecdote is related of Filippo Brunelleschi, who lived more than half-a-century before Christopher Columbus. It is easy to see how it could have passed from the life of that celebrated architect into that of the great Genoese ; with this difference, that there it is surrounded by circumstances which render the story probable, and give it the appearance of a witty invention, wonderfully serving the purpose of Brunelleschi ; whilst in the case of Columbus, not only is it most improbable, but even, if true, it would have proved nothing to the point, and instead of a witty reply, is only a coarse trick, unsuited to the serious character of Christopher Columbus, and one to which no educated and refined person would have descended. Brunelleschi had exhibited a plan of his for raising that marvel of architectural art, the cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore ; and the Florentines were inclined to submit to the very great expense that was necessary, but were terrified at the rashness of the architect, for they could not believe it possible to shoot such a mass into the air ; and before deciding, they wanted to know how Brunelleschi intended to accomplish it. This the architect always refused to explain, lest some one else should make use of his secret, to his loss. During this time of doubt and uncertainty, Brunelleschi and some other artists, good fellows and jovial comrades like himself, were merry-making together. Between laughing and joking, the conversation, as was natural, turned on art, and, in particular, on the plan of the cupola exhibited by Brunelleschi ; and they all blamed him for his obstinacy in refusing the explanation asked for. They were then at their salad and hard-boiled eggs, and Brunelleschi, taking occasion from the egg he held in his hand, proposed to his companions the jest afterwards ascribed to Columbus, saying, that was the way with his secret ; that now every one

* Girolamo Benzoni, *Historia del Mundo Novo*. Venezia, 1565, pag. 12.

wondered how it could be done, and when it was known, all would be just as well able to do it.

Somebody must have ascribed this jest to the discovery of Columbus: the thing pleased; it became popular; and, little by little, it came to pass as genuine history. And now it has acquired such credit that it has passed into a proverb. Let this be my excuse, if I have dwelt longer on it than its importance demanded, that it was in order to show what slim basis there is for the story.

The rejoicing over the discovery of Columbus was not confined to Spain. The embassies, the correspondence of learned men, the reports of merchants, and the accounts of travellers, soon spread the news everywhere. Allegretto Allegretti, in his *Diaries of the City of Siena*, which he was at that time engaged in writing, notes the event at the month of May, and gives a short account of it, remarking that he had heard it "by many letters of our merchants in Spain, and from the lips of many persons."* Antonio Gallo, secretary of the Bank of St. George, at Genoa, also records it in his *Memoirs*, saying, the information was brought to that city by Francesco Marchesi and Giovanni Antonio Grimaldi, returning from Spain, whither they had gone as ambassadors of the Republic.† Peter Martyr, of Anghiera, an historian and Latinist of great reputation, who was then in Spain, in the service of the Catholic sovereigns, wrote earnestly of it to his friends in Rome and Milan.‡ Sebastian Cabot relates that he was in London when the wonderful news reached there, and that it made an extraordinary impression at the court of Henry VII, where the enterprise was called more divine than human.§ We have a sample of the enthusiasm of literary and scientific men, in a letter of Peter Martyr to his friend, the celebrated Pomponius Lætus: "You tell me," he wrote, "that you leaped with delight, and could hardly help weeping with joy, on reading my letter, in which I informed you of the discovery of the world of the antipodes, so long unknown. In this I recognize the truly wise man. Indeed, what more delightful food than such news could be offered to a mind hungering after knowledge? For myself, I experience real happiness

* In Muratori's collection, *Ital. Script.*, t. xxiii.

† Foglietto, *Storia di Genova*, dec. ii.

‡ Petri Martyris, *Opus. Epist.*, lib. vi, Ep. 131.

§ Hakluyt, *Collection des Voyages*, p. 7.

in conversing with persons of education returning from those lands ; it is like an increase of wealth to a miser. Our minds, soiled by vice, are improved by the contemplation of such glorious events.”*

In the midst of this unanimous reverence for the merits of Columbus, a solitary voice was raised among his sailors in his execration ; it was that of Juan Rodriguez Bermejo, the same who first shouted *Land*, on board of the *Piuta* on the night of Friday, the 12th of October, 1492. He claimed the reward of 10,000 maravedis promised to the one who should first discover land ; but the judgment of the sovereigns assigned it to Christopher Columbus, who, at ten o'clock the evening previous, had already discovered it in that small light he saw appearing and vanishing in the darkness of the night.† The sailor was so offended by this decision that, as Oviedo says, out of mad spite, he renounced his country and religion, and became a Mussulman in Africa.‡ At first sight, it would seem unworthy of the noble and generous character of Columbus to dispute the reward with the poor sailor ; but, on further reflection, it is easy to comprehend that the glory of being the first to see the new land must have been in his eyes dear and valued beyond measure. Any suspicion that he was actuated by less noble a motive, is contradicted by his whole life, which was a continual exercise of disinterestedness. As to the subsequent apostasy of the sailor from his religion and country, it can have no bearing on our story, even if it was true, as related by Oviedo, a diligent collector of every thing that could injure the good name and reputation of Christopher Columbus.

Columbus had scarce set his foot in Europe before he sent information of his return and of the result of his voyage, not only to the king and queen of Spain, but, likewise, to the few friends who before his departure, had aided and protected him in his greatest need, as a mark of grateful acknowledgment of their confidence in his undertaking, and for his own satisfaction in proving that he kept his promise. Only two of these letters or brief accounts which he sent his friends have come down to us ; but, without doubt, there were others, and he would have neglected to give this proof of gratitude to none

* Petri Martyris, *Opus Epistolarum*, lib. vii. Epist. 153.

† Fernando Colombo, c. xxi.—Navarrete *Col. Dipl.*, No. xxxii.

‡ Oviedo, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. xi, c. v

of his chief benefactors. The two letters preserved are very similar, and contain only a concise narrative of the most important events of his voyage and discovery ; and those lost must have been of the same character. The first is addressed to Luis de Santangel, Superintendent or, as we say now, Minister of Finance, of Aragon, the same who overcame Isabella's uncertainty, and decided her to take up resolutely the enterprise of Columbus. It was written on board of the *Niña*, at the meridian of the Azores, which shows that he was preparing these brief narratives during the last days of his return voyage. The other was addressed to Rafael Sanchez, Treasurer of Spain, and was evidently written at sea on the 14th of March, although dated from Lisbon, the last port where they had anchored. A copy of this second letter was sent at once to Rome, where it was translated into Latin by one Leandro Cosco, and printed by Eucharius Argenteus, forty days after it was written by Columbus, to satisfy the universal curiosity and desire to learn the details of the strange event. And this was the first printed publication we have on the discovery of the New World. The conclusion of the letter is a passage of sublime eloquence, which deserves to be given here as a mark of the great joy which at that time filled the heart of the great discoverer. "Let, then, the King and Queen, the Princes, and their happy kingdoms, unite with all Christendom in returning thanks to our Saviour Jesus Christ, for granting us such victorious success. Let them make processions, celebrate solemn festivals, and ornament the temples with palms and flowers ; and let Christ exult with joy on earth, as in heaven, at the prospect of salvation for so many nations heretofore destined only to perdition. And let us also rejoice, at the same time, not only at the exaltation of our faith, but also at the increase of temporal goods, of which Spain and Christendom will gather the fruits."

In the height of this glory and the noise of triumph, Columbus was not forgetful of his aged father, who was carrying on in obscurity his trade of wool-carder in Liguria, and one of his first thoughts, after returning to Spain, was to make known to him his great discovery. Domenico Colombo had returned to Genoa, and was residing with his son Giacomo, about twenty-six years of age, who was, like his father, a carder of wool ; but of feeble health and delicate constitution, he was late in taking up that trade, and, unequal to long and fatiguing labor, made but meagre profit from it.

There is still preserved a contract between him and one Luchino Cadamartori of Savona, whose service he entered at sixteen years of age ; and it is not out of place to recall here, by the humility of this document, the low condition from which, by the power of his genius, Christopher Columbus had raised himself to so great a height. In this contract, Giacomo bound himself to work with Cadamartori twenty-two months, in succession, promising to serve him, not to run away, nor commit any theft ; as compensation, the master bound himself to furnish lodging and food, not to discharge him, and at the end of his service, to give him a fustian robe, a pair of shoes, a pair of cloth pantaloons, and restore his shirts and clothes of wool and linen, which he was to hold, in the mean time, as security for his good conduct.*

Christopher Columbus sent for this brother, and as soon as Giacomo arrived in Spain, his Italian name was changed into the Spanish Diego, he received the title of Don, and from a plain wool-carder, was suddenly raised to the high rank of first Aid to the Admiral, the Viceroy of the Indies. So powerful, at that time, was the name of Christopher Columbus, that out of regard for him, that excessively aristocratic court, so strict in etiquette, showed no objection to the plain manners and ignorance of the poor carder. And, a little later, when the seven Indians were baptized, and the sacred ceremony was celebrated with unusual pomp and festivity, as the prelude to the general conversion, which no one doubted, of all the Indians,—with the king, the hereditary prince, and four of the highest grandees of Spain, there stood, as god-father, the lowly carder, Diego.†

Domenico, the admiral's father, continued to live in his native land ; for it was hard for a man of his years to lay aside his old habits and adapt himself to the noise and glitter of the new condition which his sons had reached ; but he was supported in comfortable old age by his glorious son. The last record we have of him is at the foot of a will in 1494, where his name appears as one of the witnesses, with evidence that he no longer practised the weaver's trade, *olim textore pannorum lance*.

* From the collection of documents relative to Christopher Columbus published by the Lawyer G. Salineo, Savona.

† Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. ii. c. xv.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Bull of Repartition.—Dispositions relative to the lands discovered.—Preparations for a second expedition.—Intrigues and plots of Portugal and Spain.—Confirmation of the treaty of Santa Fé.—Great crowds wishing to join the second expedition (1493).—The beginning of bitterness between Fonseca, General Superintendent of Affairs of the New World, and Columbus.—Father Juan Perez of Marchena goes with the second expedition, as astronomer and cosmographer (1493).

THE capital point for Spain now was to retain possession of her discovery, and all the care and solicitude of the government was directed to this end. By advice of Christopher Columbus,* application was first made to the Pope to secure those lands as he had previously done for Portugal, and they begged him to declare, by his supreme authority, the absolute dominion of Spain over all those countries, prohibiting every other power from interfering with her rights therein. True, they were supposed to be part of the territory of the Grand Khan or some other half-civilized Oriental prince; but that in no way invalidated the Spanish claim, according to the opinion of those times, that the Supreme Pontiff might freely dispose of all non-Christian lands, in favor of states that undertook to subject them to the church's authority, and to sow there the seeds of the true faith. They, therefore, sent ambassadors at once to the Roman court to announce the new discovery as a wonderful triumph of the faith, and to exalt the immense advantages and glory that would inure to the church from the propagation of Christianity throughout those vast regions. To remove any obstacle in the way of granting the Spanish demand, that might arise from the previous concession of the Holy See to Portugal, of all the lands along the coast of Africa to the Indies inclusive, the ambassadors were instructed to satisfy the

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xlii.

Pontiff that the countries discovered by Columbus were outside of the limits assigned in the papal bulls of 1438 and 1439. The chair of St. Peter had been recently filled by Alexander VI, a native of Valencia in Spain, and, consequently, a former subject of Aragon ; and as some of his acts indicated a disposition not too favorable to his former sovereign, Ferdinand, who was an able politician no less than a good Christian, permitted it to be seen at the same time that he was resolved to defend his new conquests in any event. His ambassadors were ordered to show that, according to the opinion of many learned men, their Catholic Majesties having got possession of the recently-discovered lands, the Pope's ratification of their rights was no longer necessary ; but, nevertheless, as devout princes and obedient Christians of the church, they supplicated His Holiness to publish a bull securing to the crown of Castile these lands as well as such as should be thereafter discovered.

The joy in Rome at hearing of the discovery was all the greater, it seemed to be the fulfilment of the promise made by God to his church, by the mouth of David : " I shall give Thee the gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession ;"* and the rejoicing over the event was in proportion to its importance. Spain was in high favor with the church for the war against the Moors, which was accounted as a holy crusade ; and, although she had been richly remunerated by the conquest of the kingdom of Granada, she still considered herself entitled to the gratitude of all Christendom. But what was the destruction in a Christian country of a small kingdom of Mussulmans, in comparison with opening to the light of the Gospel so many new regions ? Consequently, where Ferdinand had apprehended irresolution and obstacles, he found the most earnest desire to accept his demands, in order to give Spain a proof of the gratitude that was felt towards her. The Pope, accordingly, on the 3rd of May, 1493, issued the bull, called the *Bull of Concession*, by which he granted Spain the same rights and privileges over the recent discoveries of Columbus, as had been given to Portugal over hers, and on the same conditions of propagating the Catholic religion in the new countries. It was unusual for the Roman curia to come to so quick a decision in an affair of grave importance ; but it wished to have the matter settled before Portugal

* Ps. ii, 8.

could interfere with questions and remonstrances. To prevent all dispute that might thereafter arise between the two states, the Pontiff, by the *Bull of Repartition*, as it was called, on the following day, assigned the limits of their new possessions, drawing an imaginary line from pole to pole, one hundred leagues to the west of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands ; and decided that all discoveries then or thereafter made to the west of this line, should belong to Spain, and those to the east, to Portugal.*

Meanwhile, Spain, knowing that the best title is that of possession, showed the greatest activity and care in ordering a second expedition. In order to hasten proceedings, a commission was named for the special purpose of providing whatever might be required for the speedy departure of the fleet, and to make the proper arrangements for the first foundation of Spanish dominion in the New World. At the head of this commission, was placed Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca, Archdeacon of Seville, a man who, although an ecclesiastic, was better fitted than any one else to execute with care and ability that intricate and vexatious business ; and he had for associates Francisco Pinelo, as Treasurer, and Juan de Soria, Auditor of Accounts. The seat of the commission was fixed at Seville, but with authority and supervision at the port of Cadiz, where a custom-house was established expressly for this new branch of navigation. Such was the origin of the royal Council of the Indies, which afterwards acquired great importance and power in the affairs of the New World. It was also resolved to establish a similar one in Hispaniola, under the admiral's direction. These two councils were to send each other registers containing lists of the cargo, the crew, and the provisions, of each vessel. Those employed in the two offices were under the control of the ministers of the royal revenue, as the crown bore all the necessary expenses of the colony, and received all the profits.

The activity shown in putting the new fleet in order, was something wonderful. On May 23rd alone, the sovereigns signed seventeen ordinances, schedules, and orders, relating to the expedition ; and to obtain more quickly what was wanted, recourse was had to ex-

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xlii.—Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, l. lxxvii, c. iv.—Navarrete, *Col. Dipl.*, No. xviii.—No doubt, the idea of placing the line at that distance was suggested to the Pope by Columbus himself, who had derived it from the observation of various strange phenomena at that place, as will be shown more at length in chapter iii, of book ii.

tre measures, which, however odious, the spirit of the times permitted the absolute authority of the government to exact. It was ordered that all ships in the ports of Andalusia, their captains, pilots, and crews, should hold themselves in readiness to sail as required. Both Columbus and Fonseca were authorized to freight or purchase as many vessels as they saw fit, and, in case of refusal, to seize them by force, even though they should have been already freighted by some one else ; and it was left to them to fix the price of the vessels. They had power to seize provisions, arms, ammunition, and whatever else they needed, wherever they might find them, paying the owners therefor what they judged proper. They could press into the service of the vessels and send on the expedition, if they thought necessary, not only ordinary seamen, but officers of any rank ; and here, again, the wages of this enforced service were left to their discretion. Strict orders were also given to all civil magistrates and all persons in authority, to aid the equipment of the fleet with all their power, under pain of removal from office or confiscation of their property. Numerous requisitions were also made, in order to provide powder, fire-arms, lances, pikes, bows, and every thing else that was needed for the expedition. To meet the heavy expenses of the equipment, Pinelo was given the disposal of the revenues which the crown collected from the two-thirds of the church tithes ; which had been conceded at the time of the war with the Moors, by special authorization of the Pope ; and to these was added the proceeds of the sale of jewels and other precious objects obtained by the sequestration of the property of the unfortunate Jews banished, the year before, from all the Spanish dominions. And if all this should be insufficient, Pinelo was empowered to supply the rest by a loan.

The reason of all this activity and haste, was the fear of being forestalled in the expedition by Portugal. King John, as soon as Columbus had left, devoted all his care to the speedy equipment of a fleet for the purpose of taking possession of the newly-discovered countries, as had been determined on in his privy council ; and to remove any suspicion that might arise from the extraordinary activity that was openly visible in the arsenals, he caused it to be given out that he was preparing another and larger expedition to continue the African discoveries. To quiet Spain, he sent, at the same time, an ambassador to the Spanish court, to ask for authority to obtain in Spain some things that were needed for the new African expedition, the ex-

portation or which was prohibited by the laws of Spain. And the better to throw dust in their eyes, the ambassador was further charged to speak of the discovery of Columbus, to tell of the cordial reception given him by Portugal, and the pleasure which King John felt in the increased power and glory of Spain, which had resulted from the discovery. He was to say how satisfied the king was with the order that had been given Columbus to sail directly to the west, without touching or approaching the Portuguese discoveries, and he hoped the same order would be repeated to every other captain undertaking new voyages of discovery ; that he asked that the subjects of Spain be forbidden to fish beyond Cape Bojador, until the limits of the two powers were fixed and determined ; and if any of the lands discovered by Columbus should be found to pertain, by right, to Portugal, in virtue of the papal bulls of 1438-1439, the matter might be amicably settled between the two crowns.

By these apparently frank and friendly declarations, King John had trusted to put Spain off her guard ; but before his ambassador arrived to play his part, secret reports had given the Catholic sovereigns a suspicion of the real purpose for which John was getting his fleet ready so quickly. Therefore, without waiting for the Portuguese ambassador's arrival, they sent Don Lope de Herrera to Lisbon with two different letters and commissions, which he was to make use of according to circumstances. If the preparations going on were really for the purpose of continuing the discoveries along the coast of Africa, Don Lope was to present a letter full of affectionate expressions and thanks for the hospitality given to Columbus, declaring specifically the nature of the discoveries made by him, and requesting the king of Portugal to forbid his subjects from sailing to those countries, as Spain had prohibited hers from approaching the Portuguese possessions. He was to say the same if he found the preparations were intended for the countries discovered by Columbus, in case the preparations were not far advanced. But if he found the expedition was intended for the New World, and the preparations were well advanced, the Spanish envoy was to present the second letter, which was conceived in strong and energetic terms ; and he was to oppose strongly any undertaking of the kind.* Then began a secret and in-

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, l. ii.—Zurita, *Anales de Aragon*, lib. i, cap. xxv.

tricate diplomatic game between the two sovereigns, which it is impossible for any one to follow without knowing all the threads. Reesende, in his History of John II, says that the Portuguese monarch had, by force of intrigue and secret donations, seduced some of the most influential members of the Spanish cabinet, who informed him of the most mysterious plans of their court. The streets were filled with couriers : Ferdinand could hardly mention his designs to his ministers, before the king, his rival, was informed of their purport. Hence, it often happened that the Spanish messenger carrying fresh proposals to Lisbon, was met half-way by the Portuguese messenger galloping to Madrid, bearing the answer to the ambassador ; and sometimes when Ferdinand believed he had found a difficult point on which the Portuguese envoys needed fresh instructions from the king, their master, he was astonished and offended at receiving on the spot a decisive answer. The repetition of such occurrences would naturally create a suspicion of treachery in the Spanish cabinet ; and to turn aside this suspicion from the traitors he had bought with his gold, and cause it to fall on others, King John sent precious jewels to the Duke of Infantado and several Spanish grandees of uncorrupted virtue.* I am ignorant of the name such game bears in diplomacy ; in private life it certainly bears an ugly one.

The frank and loyal mind of John II must have revolted at this base game of duplicity and deceit ; but his councillors and ministers played it for him, and through over-anxiety to repair his loss of the New World, he left their hands free. But if they were masters of intrigue, Ferdinand of Aragon was by himself alone equal to the whole of them ; and on settling accounts, the advantage was found on his side. The court of Portugal was aware that D. Lope de Herrera had two sets of letters and a double mission, and therefore arranged things so that the Spanish ambassador had to present himself in a courteous and friendly garb, and with simple proposals and amicable requests, instead of threats. Portugal showed herself favorable to the demands of Spain, and at once named two new ambassadors to that court for the express purpose of settling the questions relative to the newly-discovered land, and giving assurance that for the next sixty days after their arrival in Barcelona, no

* Reesende, *Vida del Rey, D. João II*, p. 157.—Faria Y Souza, *Europa Portuguesa*, tomo ii, cap. iv.

Portuguese vessel would be permitted to sail on a voyage, of discovery. Meanwhile, to prevent any dispute, they were to propose drawing a line from the Canaries due west, north of which all land discovered should belong to Spain, and all south, to Portugal, and the islands already in the possession of either state, to remain in its possession as at present.*

The game suited Ferdinand's plans admirably, for he wanted to gain time; and therefore, instead of giving the ambassadors an answer, and treating with them directly, he sent D. Pedro de Ayala and D. Garcia de Lopez de Caravajal, with his answer to Lisbon, in a solemn embassy, and, for greater display, he surrounded it with unusual pomp and magnificence. To oblige the king to wait for what they had to communicate, he sent a special messenger in advance to give notice of their coming; and the ambassadors were warned to spend as much time on the journey as possible.

When at last this solemn embassy reached Lisbon, and was introduced with great state to the royal presence, its sole proposal was that the question of the boundaries should be submitted to the decision of arbitrators, or of the Roman curia.

It was too clear that Ferdinand was making sport of Portugal, and King John was on fire with anger and spite. Bluntly dismissing the ambassadors, he fired at them the insult: "It is an embassy without head or feet," alluding to the first ambassador, who was a foolish coxcomb, and the other, who was a cripple.† It is even said that in the first moments of his anger he pretended to be revolving thoughts of war in his mind, and that on the following days he was constantly reviewing his cavalry under the ambassadors' windows, and that he also, in their presence, allowed ambiguous expressions to escape him which might be taken for ill-concealed menaces.‡ But, after the first ebullition, looking at the matter more calmly, he saw the great difference between his power and Ferdinand's and the foolishness of provoking an enemy who had so much greater means at his disposal. He silenced, therefore, his anger, and placed his sole trust in the authority of the Pope, to which he had already had recourse against the discoveries of Spain, claiming the integrity of his rights, granted and confirmed by dif-

* Quirita, lib. i, cap. xxv.—Herrera, dec. i, lib. ii, cap. v.

† Vasconcellos, *Dom Joham II*, l. vi.—Barros, *Asia*, dec. i, lib. iii, cap. ii.

‡ Vasconcellos, l. c.

ferent bulls of the Popes. But the shrewd Spaniard had also been in advance of him on this road, and when the Portuguese ambassador arrived in Rome, Alexander VI had already issued his decree of division. "Such," says Irving, "was this royal game of diplomacy, where the parties were playing for a newly-discovered world."*

Meanwhile, a pontifical brief from Rome nominated a Vicar Apostolic for the Indies. The dignity was conferred on Father Bernard Boil, of the order of St. Benedict, and twelve other religious of different orders were assigned him as companions to aid in the work of converting those tribes. The devout Isabella reserved for herself the consolation of providing the sacred ornaments and vessels for the service of the first church that should be raised in the New World.

Before Columbus left Barcelona, Ferdinand and Isabella confirmed the provisional treaty of Santa Fé, with all the titles, emoluments, and prerogatives of Admiral and Viceroy and Governor of all the countries he had discovered, or should discover in future.† He was also entrusted with the royal seal, with authority to make use of it, within the limits of his jurisdiction, to grant letters patent and commissions in the name of the two sovereigns; he was authorized to nominate, at pleasure, any one he chose to act for him in case of his absence, with the privilege of transferring to his substitute all the powers granted to himself. In the treaty of Santa Fé, it was provided that the viceroy should present three names, from which the Spanish sovereigns should select the candidate for each office in the new provinces; but now, for the quicker dispatch of business, and to give Columbus a fresh proof of confidence, they left the selection and nomination entirely to him. After appointing him Captain-general of the fleet which was about to sail, they granted him full authority over the crews, as well as over the settlements and discoveries that should be made in the New World.‡

On the 28th of May, Columbus took his leave of the sovereigns. As he left the royal presence, the entire court escorted him to his place of residence, and they paid him like homage when he started from Barcelona for Seville. His arrival at Seville gave a fresh impulse to the hurry and activity of preparation. Fonseca and Soria

* Irving, *Columbus*, book v, ch. ix.

† Navarrete, *Col. Dipl.*, No. xi.

‡ Fernando Colombo, cap. xliii

arrived soon afterwards ; and through the united exertions of all three, in a very short time, there were ready to sail seventeen vessels, of various size, all provided not only with every thing needed for the prosecution and extension of the discoveries, but also with all that was requisite for a solid and extensive colonial settlement in the lands discovered. Hence, besides a rich supply of provisions, arms, and medicines, and a certain number of horses for the troops, they took out more horses, and many other animals, for the propagation of their species in the New World ; they had seed of grain, vegetables, and kitchen-herbs, of every kind ; cuttings of vines, sugar-cane, and sprouts of all the most necessary and useful trees that grew at home. There was no end of the little balls of colored glass, the mirrors, bells, and other trifles that constituted the charm and delight of the savages. So, also, besides the sailors and soldiers, there was a goodly number of artisans and workmen for the new colony ; as, masons, smiths, carpenters, farmers, and the like, with abundant supply of tools for each art and trade. Nor was there any anxiety, this time, about finding men for the expedition ; but, on the contrary, they came of their own accord, in such numbers, begging and insisting on being accepted, that it became a serious embarrassment how to escape the crowd and importunity which surrounded the admiral. The only way was to increase greatly the number first determined on ; and instead of 1,000, they made room for 1,200. But even this was not enough ; and, after they had sailed, it was found that 300 more had successfully eluded the vigilance of the guards, and hidden themselves on board. A very large number was left on shore, mortified and grieved at not having found some place in the fleet, and looking with an envious eye on the lot of those who had gone to accumulate riches in the New World.

The impression brought back from the New World by its first discoverers, was naturally affected, not only by the great novelty of the wonders they had discovered, but also by the slight taste of them that was possible on their short passage ; for thus leaving a free field for the imagination, it was believed that there was much more and better to be found back of those first-fruits they had been able to gather. If we add to this the tendency we all have, in a greater or less degree, to exaggerate when relating or describing things much out of the ordinary form and measure, almost doubting if the reader or listener can comprehend the extraordinariness of

the matter we wish to present to his mind,—if we add this, it will be easy to understand how their accounts of the wonders found in the New World must have stretched much beyond the reality and the truth. The fancy of the hearer did the rest, and the most absurd exaggerations were told and believed of the wonders of those countries. They told of rivers that ran over sands of gold ; of mountains covered with precious stones and metals ; of pearls sown along the shore : and all this wealth was without an owner, with no one to care for it. At these accounts, want and avarice were fired with desire and hope ; country, family, the perils of the Ocean, were counted as naught ; and happy was the man who in any capacity could get into the service of the admiral. Others rushed there after the noble illusions of glory ; these, for the most part, were young hidalgos, who, with the enthusiasm belonging to their time of life, had fought the last battles against the Moorish power, and, used to the noise of arms and the honorable labors of the camp, were little adapted to the monotonous rest which peace imposed. They dreamt only of wars and battles, and the discovery of the New World seemed to open to them a vast field for the satisfaction of their thirst for adventures and glory. Beyond the homes of the ingenuous savages that had been brought to Spain, were the regions of Mangi and Cathay, cities, fortresses, armies. The semi-barbarous legions of the Grand Khan would undoubtedly seek to impede their advance, and here was opened again the longed-for field of arms. To their excited fancy were presented images of lands fought for, battles gained, peoples subdued, and the standard of Christ planted in glory over the conquered cities. A new series of crusades was beginning, more important and famous than those so celebrated, which were fought around the Sepulchre of Christ. They would fill the world with the renown of their deeds, and return to Spain admired and envied, champions of their country and their faith. With these ideas, many hidalgos of high lineage, officers of the royal household, and cavaliers of Andalusia, did every thing to gain the honor of taking part in the expedition ; and many that could not succeed in their prayers or schemes to get enrolled on government account, went as simple volunteers, at their own expense.

Columbus was so intent on making full provision for all the needs of the expedition, that he easily incurred expenses, which in the end greatly exceeded the amount intended. Juan Soria, the au-

ditor of accounts, often complained and remonstrated against this prodigality, and sometimes even refused to register the expenses of the admiral. But, so far as appears, this was not from any spirit of conscientious economy, but in order to hide, with an easy morality in trifles, his dishonesty in greater matters. When they landed at Hispaniola, it was found that the horses intended for the service of the colony and for breeding, were not the same that had been submitted to the admiral's inspection at Seville; and in the memorial of his second voyage, which Columbus sent to the Catholic sovereigns, he openly charges Soria with the fraud.* On receiving this information, Isabella wrote, under date of the 4th of August, to Fonseca, directing him to treat the admiral with all courtesy, to smoothe every difficulty in his path, and to prevent any one from annoying him in any way; and she charged him to notify Soria, on her part, to conform in every thing to the wishes of the admiral. The day following, she caused a severe rebuke to be written directly to Soria. Again, on the 18th, writing to Fonseca concerning other matters, she repeats again that they should treat Columbus with the greatest consideration, and do every thing to content him. Similar orders were also sent to Soria the same day.† These repeated injunctions and commands for Soria, inserted in letters to Fonseca, create a strong suspicion that they were meant indirectly for him also, for he was likewise inclined to stretch his influence and authority too far. But the suspicion is changed to certainty by some other differences which arose soon after. Columbus had requested a certain number of lacqueys and domestics for his immediate service, to place his establishment on a footing suited to his rank as admiral and viceroy. Fonseca judged the demand superfluous, because all on board were at his orders. Ferdinand and Isabella, hearing of this fresh difficulty, sent orders to give Columbus ten squires on foot, and reminded Fonseca that they had instructed him in his relations with the admiral to omit no means of satisfying his wishes; and since the whole fleet was to be dependent on his orders, it was proper that not only he should be consulted as to every want, but also no opposition should be made to his desires.‡

This slight difference between Fonseca and Columbus was the lit-

* See Navarrete, *Col. Doc. Dipl.*, vol. i, p. 225.

† Navarrete, *Col. Dipl.*, No. 1, lii, liii, liv, lv, lvi.

‡ Navarrete, *Ib.* No. lxii, lxiii, lxiv, lxv, lxvi.

tle spark which afterwards became a fearful conflagration, investing and consuming the discoverer of the New World ; for, to the pride of Fonseca, it was a humiliation never to be forgotten, to be thus recalled to a more proper use of his power and authority ; and he swore implacable vengeance against him who had been the occasion of it ; and in his high office of superintendent of affairs of the New World, he wanted neither occasion nor means of fully satisfying the malignity of his disposition.

The queen had asked the admiral for the journal of his voyage, in order to have it copied, so that she could read at leisure all the details of his discovery. On returning the journal, on the 5th of September, she wrote him a letter in which she assured him that no one save her husband and herself had read or should read that journal ; and that the more she read it, the more she was convinced that no one had ever known as much as he knew. At the same time, she requested him to design a chart of the course he had followed, marking the degrees, the islands, rivers, &c., and every thing else that might aid her in following his wonderful journey ; promising, if he so wished, to keep it carefully hidden from every one. Finally, to lighten the labor of taking astronomical and cosmographical observations on his new voyage, she advised his taking with him a good astronomer for assistant, and for this office she put forward the name of Father Antonio Perez of Marchena, "because," she added, "he is a good astronomer, and always seemed to me in full harmony of sentiment with you ;"* but she left him full freedom of selection ; and to shorten the delays arising from sending requests and orders back and forward, she enclosed in the same letter an order executed for the appointment of such astronomer, leaving a blank for the name of the person who should be selected for that learned office.

There is no doubt but this Father Perez of Marchena was the pious and learned guardian of Santa Maria de la Rabida.† True, his name was Juan, not Antonio, but the mistake is easily explained by the practice of nearly always registering the surname, and very rarely the Christian name, of persons of consideration, so that a mistake was very likely when both were to be written. The chronicles and memoirs of his order clearly mention this office which he held in the

* Navarrete, *Col. Dipl.*, No. lxxi
 Cf. Humboldt, *Cosmos*, ii, p. 255, note xiv.

second expedition of Columbus.* Neither would it be easy to tell what other Perez of Marchena the queen could say *was in full harmony of sentiment with Columbus*, except the father guardian of La Rabida, since Columbus had very few close friends, and those he had, he often mentions, and no other Perez of Marchena than Father Juan is spoken of.

It was an act of exquisite courtesy to propose to Columbus as a companion on his voyage, his best and dearest friend; at the same time, it was a pure act of justice that the first person sent to the New World in a scientific capacity, should be the first learned Spaniard that had comprehended the idea of Columbus, the first that had labored for the acceptance of his proposition by the Spanish government, and who finally, when all negotiations had been definitively broken off, had again renewed them, and thus prevented the advantage and glory of that discovery being transferred to some other power. It was a thought truly worthy of Queen Isabella's delicacy of nature and rectitude of mind. Nor could that excellent religious have received a more pleasing or handsome reward than this, of being called, without his asking, to accompany on his triumph the man he had received and protected as a poor, unknown foreigner, and to devote his studies and his talents to the New World, for the discovery of which he had labored with so much zeal and effect.

This is the last time the name of Father Juan Perez of Marchena appears in the history of Christopher Columbus. The first historians that treated of the affairs of the New World, who found plenty of room for superfluous records and useless anecdotes, have not a word to memorize the name of the humble friar, whose work had so greatly contributed to render possible the discovery of the New World by Columbus. On account of his singular merit, and the gratitude we all owe him in consequence, I have stopped to speak a word concerning him, and feel sure that the reader will be pleased at being able to greet once more the name of the father guardian of La Rabida.

All the vessels that were to take part in the new expedition, were assembled in the harbor of Cadiz, but not yet ready to sail, when it was learnt that a Portuguese vessel had sailed west from Madeira. It was at once suspected she was bound for the newly-discovered lands, and Columbus wrote immediately to court, proposing to pur-

* See Roselly de Lorgues, *Hist. de C. Colombé*, lib. i, ch. xii, § ii.

sue her with a part of his fleet. Ferdinand and Isabella approved of his proposal, but nothing further was done in the matter ; they sent, instead, to Lisbon, to complain to King John. He answered that the ship had left without his knowledge, and that he would send three caravels to follow her and bring her back. Worse and worse ! In Spain this answer was regarded as a stratagem to hide the tricks of Portuguese craft, and they believed that the three caravels, under pretext of going after that ship, would join company with her, and all four sail together for the New World. Most pressing orders were therefore sent to Columbus to start immediately, and to keep away from Cape St. Vincent and every other Portuguese possession ; and if in the seas first explored by him, he should come across any vessel, he should take possession of it at once, and inflict rigorous chastisement on all on board. Fonseca was at the same time ordered to be on the watch, and as soon as he heard of any expedition leaving Portugal, to pursue at once with double the number of ships.

Whether the three ships sailed from Portugal, or whether the intention of sending them was good or bad, has never been known. It is certain that Columbus never saw or heard of them in the new seas he had discovered.

CHAPTER XXV.

Sailing of the second expedition.—Discovery of the Caribbee Islands.—Guadaloupe.—Disposition and habits of the Caribs.—Alonzo de Ojeda.—His eccentric character.—The first dangerous enterprise in the New World is entrusted to him.—Origin of the Caribs (1493).

THE fleet of the expedition, consisting of three large vessels and fourteen caravels, sailed from Cadiz harbor an hour before sunrise on the morning of the 26th of November. In spite of the early hour, a great crowd of people came down to the strand to take leave of the mariners. How different the sight from that a year before in Palos ! There was now no lamentation, no sobbing, no despair ; but gay leave-taking, joyful hand-shaking, glad congratulation. . . Then,

those who went and those who stayed had before them the fear of the unknown ; now, to leave was an envied good fortune ; to be obliged to remain, a deplorable mischance. The vessels were gay with flags ; trumpets and other musical instruments were sounding ; fire-arms were discharged ; the air echoed the clapping of hands, the shouts, the songs. There accidentally arrived in the harbor a fleet of large Venetian ships, bound, as usual, on the commerce of the northern seas, and they, too, from a brotherly spirit, and as a duty of hospitality, joined in the festivity, and, with banners, songs, shouts, and discharge of fire-arms, celebrated the departure, wishing them a prosperous voyage and a happy return. And well did that voyage deserve that the whole civilized world should join in the festivity ; but those ships unwittingly initiated the funeral song over the dead commerce of Venice.*

The admiral's two sons, objects of the wondering curiosity of the crowd, accompanied their father as far as his ship.† Don Diego, younger brother of Columbus, sailed with him. The Indians who had been brought to Spain, instructed in our religion, and baptized, were taken on board to be returned to their forests, where, it was hoped, they would greatly aid in the conversion of the rest. One, at Prince Juan's request, was left in the palace, but died soon after his companions had departed. Who can say how the wretched savage suffered and wept in his solitude and abandonment ?

In conformity with his instructions, Columbus avoided the coast

* Scillacio, § i.—Niccolò Scillacio was a Messinese physician and a professor in the University of Pavia, who wrote a narrative, in Latin, of the second voyage of Columbus, on letters received from Spain. This narrative, printed in 1494, was entirely unknown, till a copy was found in 1845, by Amadio Ronchini, the present very worthy superintendent of the state archives in the Emilia. After various vicissitudes, this single copy passed, at the cost of its weight in gold, into the hands of Mr. James Lenox of New York, a learned collector of such treasures, who published in 1860 only 150 copies of it, in the luxuriance of type, xylography, and ornamentation which only American wealth and pains can achieve. Anxious to know this narrative, and having no other means of obtaining a copy, I applied to Commendatore Amadio Ronchini, inquiring if he could give me any information. With courtesy, as unexpected as exquisite, he sent me the manuscript copy he had had made when the only copy was still in Italy. For which courtesy I wish here publicly to express my acknowledgment. For further notice of Scillacio and his narrative, see *Atti e Memorie delle Deputazioni Storiche di Parma e Modena*, serie i, vol. viii, p. 195,—and *Giornale Litustico di Archeologia, Storie e Belle Arti*. Anno 1875, p. 416.

† Fernando Colombo, cap xlv.

and islands of Portugal, and sailed south-west, towards the Canaries. The first of October they anchored at the Great Canary, and remained there all that day, stopping a large leak in one of the vessels. This pressing work ended, they sailed, towards midnight, for Gomera, which they reached on the 5th, and with all diligence took in a supply of water and wood for the voyage. They also procured calves, goats, sheep, and poultry, for reproduction in Hispaniola, and eight hogs, costing four francs and a half each, from which sprang, as Las Casas says, the immense number of swine which were afterwards found in the Spanish colonies of the New World.* They also collected there various species of birds, a large assortment of seeds, and different kinds of fruit, which, acclimated in the new country, multiplied with wonderful ease and abundance.†

At the moment of making sail, on the 7th, Columbus transmitted to the captain of each vessel a sealed letter explaining the course to be followed to reach Port Nativity, with orders not to break the seals unless separated from him by stress of weather. His object was to keep the course leading to his recent discovery as secret as possible.‡ Leaving Gomera, they were detained by a calm for six days among the Canaries. But a fresh breeze from the east springing up on the 13th, they sped swiftly on their way. The admiral directed their course more to the south-west, than on the first voyage, hoping to make directly for the Caribbee Islands, of which he had heard such wonders from the Indians. The wind blew gently, for several days directly aft; the air was mild, the sea smooth as a mirror, and the ships flew over the unruffled water; so that on the 24th they were 400 leagues west of Gomera, and would have been much further if the admiral's vessel had been as good a sailer as the others, which were often obliged to lower different sails in order not to leave her too far behind.§ No sign was anywhere seen of the marine herbs which they had met on the first voyage at 250 leagues from Gomera, and which had greatly helped to sustain their courage in prosecuting their perilous undertaking.

But now no one stood in need of such encouragement; all were

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, l. i, c. lxxxiii

† *Letter of Dr. Chanca*, in the *Raccolta di Viaggi*, published by F. C. Marmocchi. Prato, 1840.

‡ Las Casas, l. c.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xlv.—Scillacio, § ii.

§ *Letter of Dr. Chanca*.

full of confidence and ardor ; and the absence of those immense fields of floating weeds was an advantage, since they could only have retarded the progress of the vessels. On the 24th and the next two days, a swallow was seen hovering about the ships, which every one thought a sign that land was near by, and anxious looks were thrown along the far horizon in the hopes of discovering it. Continuing in this way their pleasant voyage, they were suddenly overtaken, at midnight of the 27th to the 28th, by a violent tempest, lasting four hours, with heavy rain and frightful bursts of thunder and flashes of lightning. This sudden tempest after such a prolonged calm, filled every one with apprehension at every moment of the raging fury of the Ocean.

But the sudden appearance of a phenomenon, on which a very old superstition of the sailors was founded, restored calm to every mind ; and in the midst of the very danger, turned their apprehensions into shouts of joy. In the worst of the storm, when the lightning and thunder were most terrific, "St. Elmo was seen," I give the words of Fernando Columbus, "at the masthead, surrounded by seven lit tapers. I mean to say, they saw those fires which mariners assert are the body of St. Elmo ; they quickly began to sing the litany and recite other prayers, holding it for certain that when he appears amid the storm, no one is in danger. Be that as it may," adds the good Fernando, somewhat doubtful, but not too much so, of the truth of the matter, "if we are to believe Pliny, similar fires were sometimes seen by Roman navigators in storms at sea, and they called them Castor and Pollux ; Seneca also speaks of them."* The reader has perceived that he refers to the *ignes fatui*, or jack-a-lanterns, often seen on ships beaten by a storm, when the atmosphere is highly charged with electricity. In every age, and with every people, ignorance and fear have regarded this phenomenon as miraculous, each in accordance with its own religion ; and as the Greeks and Romans transformed it into two sea-gods, our people have drawn from it a patron saint of navigators.

Saturday evening, November 7th, the admiral concluded they were near land, from the change which he observed in the sky and the wind, the different coloring of the sea, and the fine rain, which had been very rare before, but now became very frequent and almost con-

* Fernando Colombo, c. xlv.

stant. He, therefore, ordered sail shortened and a watch kept up all night. His usual sagacity had not misled him, for that same night, towards dawn, a pilot from the masthead of the admiral's ship gave the longed-for cry of "Land, Land." "The joy of the crew," says Chanca, who was one of them, "was so great that it was a marvel to hear the shouts, and see the excited movements, of the sailors at the thought of going ashore; and with good reason, too; for we had been so tired out with our long passage on the water, that we felt the greatest longing to be on land, and sighed to reach it."* It was hardly daylight when a high and mountainous island was seen on the horizon, and Columbus hailed it by the name of *Dominica* (Sunday), because it was on Sunday morning it was discovered. As they advanced, seven others presented themselves, in succession, to their view, issuing, as it were, from the bosom of the tranquil Ocean, all covered with forests; and numerous flights of parrots and other birds, their wings sparkling with the brightest colors, clove the air in their rapid passage from one island to another. The crews assembled on the decks and joined in the *Salve Regina* and many other devout prayers, in thanksgiving to God, who, in only twenty days from their leaving *Gomera*, had brought them so prosperously to land. This custom of religiously celebrating every discovery he made, was not peculiar to Columbus, but common to all the Spanish and Portuguese navigators. It was certainly one of the most solemn and imposing spectacles that can be offered to the imagination, the breaking of the monotonous silence of the Ocean, by the mariners' strong voices, bearing to heaven the tribute of their gratitude, thanking Providence for showing them the land, the object of all their desires.

They had arrived in the midst of the superb group of islands, which, under the name of *Little Antilles*, extend nearly in a semi-circle, from the eastern extremity of *Porto Rico* to the coast of *Paria*, forming a sort of barrier between the Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Not finding any suitable anchorage on the *Dominican* coast, they turned towards the second islet on their right, which the admiral called after his ship, the *Maria Galante*. His devotion to the *Virgin Mary* was fervent,† and we have seen how, in the moment of extreme danger, he called on her for help and safety. He named his

* *Letter of Dr. Chanca*.—Fernando Colombo, c. xlv.—Scillacio, § iv.

† *Herrera, Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, l. ii, c. xv

admiral's ship on his first voyage, after her, and called it *Santa Maria*; and on this second voyage he baptized his flag-ship in her name, calling it the *Maria Galante*, or the *Gracious Mary*. The admiral landed with a number of his followers, and, with the usual formalities, took possession of *Maria Galante* and all the neighboring islands, in the name of the Spanish sovereigns. Finding the place very rich with the luxurious vegetation of tropical climes, but without trace of a living soul, they returned to the ships, and sailed to another island, much larger, a little distance to the north. The natives called it *Turuqira*, but Columbus named it *Guadaloupe*, after a celebrated sanctuary in Spain, dedicated to the Virgin, whither he had gone to fulfil, in the name of all, one of the vows taken in the storm which had caught them on returning from the New World. On that occasion, the friars who officiated there, had asked him to give the name of their sanctuary to one of the first discoveries he should make, and he had given them his promise to do so.* On the morning of the 4th, a detachment landed to visit a village that was seen near the shore; but at the first appearance of the Europeans all the inhabitants fled precipitously; and so great was their terror that in the confusion and hurry many parents forgot their children. Columbus loaded the little lads with caresses, placing small bells around their arms, and giving them other trifles, to win their parents' good will. This village, like those of all the other islands in those seas, consisted of some thirty houses, built around an open square. These were huts made of trunks of trees joined together by branches and reeds, and covered with large palm-leaves, in the same way as in Cuba and Hispaniola. But their shape was square, and not round, as on the other islands, and all had a sort of portico, or shed, as a shelter from the sun. At the door of one of these huts was seen a wooden serpent, very well carved for that region. The furniture was precisely the same as in the huts at Hispaniola. They found there a quantity of raw and spun cotton, and some woven into cloth of good texture, and many bows and arrows tipped with a sharp bone. There were tame geese like those in Europe, and parrots of a wonderfully rich color and much larger than they had previously seen, and great quantities of fruit, among which they discovered and tasted for the first time the delicious anana or pineapple. But what caused

* *Letter of Dr. Chanca*.—Peter Martyr, dec. i, l. iii.—Fernando Colombo, c. xlvi.—Scillacio, § v.

them the greatest wonder, was a sort of pan, or some utensil, of iron, for they had seen no trace of this metal in any place they had visited on the first expedition, and had supposed it was unknown in those regions. Fernando Columbus, remarking that down to his time no iron had been found, supposes that the Spaniards were misled by their hasty examination, and that it was not iron, but a certain very hard stone which is found in those islands, and which takes the appearance of iron when subjected to fire; or, if it was really iron, that it had been stolen from the Christians left at Nativity, on one of the frequent raids which the Caribs made to the neighboring islands. Another great surprise was the sight of a piece of a ship, which they found in one of the huts. Whence could it have come? Some thought it had belonged to the caravel that was wrecked on the coast of Hispaniola on the admiral's first voyage, which these inhabitants must have obtained likewise on one of their raids; others were of the opinion that it was a fragment of some European vessel, which, floating on the Ocean, had been carried to these shores. This latter supposition seemed more probable, as the current runs from the western coast of Africa towards the Antilles. And who shall tell how often relics of ships wrecked in European seas may have reached these banks, and the simple natives run in wonder to the shore to gaze on the strange objects! But what most drew their attention and filled them with horror, was the sight of a heap of human bones on the ground. This led them all to suspect that this was the land of the fierce cannibals, or Caribs, eaters of human flesh, and that those bones were the remains of their horrid repasts.

When the little detachment had returned on board, they continued their way a couple of leagues further, when, towards evening, they found a good place to cast anchor. The island seemed, on this side, to extend at least twenty-five leagues, and offered to the eye a succession of high mountains and vast plains. There were some small villages along the shore, but the inhabitants fled at the first sight of the vessels. That night the admiral determined to send a number of men ashore at daybreak, to ascertain what kind of people these islanders were; for, as they were naked like those seen on the first voyage, it was uncertain, in spite of indications and suspicions, whether they were really cannibals.* Several detachments, with their re-

* *Letter of Dr. Chanva.*

spective captains, landed accordingly at dawn, and explored the island in different directions. They returned in the course of the day, bringing with them a boy and a number of women ; some, natives of the island, and others, prisoners. From them it was learnt that the inhabitants of this and the two nearest islands were gathered together for a war on the rest. When thus armed for war, they went in crowds in their canoes as far as 150 leagues, and falling unexpectedly on the villages, destroyed every thing they found there. The enemies killed in the struggle, they ate fresh in the moment of victory ; the rest they carried away as slaves, to be eaten as they were wanted, saying there was no food on earth more delicious than human flesh. The flesh of women and children, however, they said, tasted bad, and, therefore, they kept the women solely for slaves and for reproduction ; the boys they fed till they were grown up and their flesh became tasty ; and, to prepare a more abundant and delicious feast, they emasculated and fattened them till they came to puberty, when they made a sumptuous banquet for some festive occasion. To the same end were brought also the sons they begot of their prisoners. And those wretched women, dragged from their homes, after seeing their fathers and brothers killed, cooked, and eaten, had to bear, suckle, nurse, and bring up their sons to behold them, when robust youths, full of health and life, cooked and eaten by the very fathers who begat them.

The reader may imagine the anguish of the Spaniards that night, when Diego Marquez, captain of one of the caravels, who had gone ashore in the morning with eight men, without permission, failed to return. The thoughts of all naturally turned to the Caribs, and their savage repasts. With increasing anxiety they waited that night and all the next day, but no one appeared. They had been seen to enter a thick wood, but it was not to be supposed they had lost their way, for some of them were experienced mariners, who could easily have found their way back by observing the stars. Detachments were sent in every direction to search for them, and they were accompanied by trumpets for the purpose of recalling them. At the same time, they began to discharge small arms with an occasional cannon from the ships, to guide them to the fleet, if astray ; but all in vain. The detachments returned tired of hunting and calling, and instead of any indication of hope, their apprehensions were increased by fresh proofs of the wildness of the population. Every

hut they had entered contained its refuse-heap of human bones, whilst the skulls were hung on the walls for use as cups. They had found huts where human members were hanging on the beams to dry ; others, where they were roasting on spits over burning coals. In one, they were horrified on beholding the head of a youth still bleeding, whilst one portion of his members was boiling in a sort of pot, together with pieces of goose and parrot, and the other portion was roasting before the fire. During the day, a number of savages had been seen on the banks, wondering at the Spanish ships ; but as soon as the small-boats approached the shore, they ran and hid themselves. Many women, some alone, and some with their children, slaves of those savages, and kept alive for their pleasure or to provide more human flesh for their food, took refuge with the Spaniards, horror and disgust for their masters overcoming their fear of entrusting themselves to a strange people never seen before. Columbus had little bells placed on the arms of all these women, and collars of beads around their necks, and ordered them to be taken ashore. But they resisted, clung to the masts, hugged the knees of the sailors, with strange cries, weeping, and begging not to be put on land. But they were forced ashore, in the hope that they would be the means of attracting some inhabitants of the place. Soon afterwards, they returned, without the ornaments, which their savage masters had seized, and with earnestness prayed to be taken on board of the ships. They were taken aboard, and from them it was ascertained that the greater part of the men of the island were absent, 300 having left on ten canoes, in company with the cacique, on the usual hunt for human flesh. Meanwhile, the women, with the few men remaining on the island, guarded the coast against the danger of invasion. These women were not less fierce than the men, terrible in drawing the bow, full of strength and vigor, and ignorant of fear.*

Columbus was in the most cruel uncertainty. To wait longer—and perhaps uselessly—was to lose precious time ; and his comrades left at Fort Nativity, weighed on his heart ; and yet, he saw not how he could return to them. To go away now, and leave those nine unfortunate men, who might be still alive, and might be saved if they

* *Letter of Dr. Chanca.*—Fernando Colombo, c. xlvi.—Peter Martyr, letter 148 to Pom. Lætus, dec. i, l. ii, and dec. iii, l. ix.—Scillacio, § v.

could reach the lost vessels, would be cruel. While he was in this mood, Alonzo de Ojeda came to him and offered to scour the country and the woods in search of their lost companions, and asked a detail of forty men for the purpose.

The strange things we shall have to relate of this new personage, who now appears for the first time in our story, require a further account of him. Of all the adventurers who followed Columbus to the New World in those first years, the oddest and most singular figure is that of Alonzo de Ojeda. His life presents a series of adventures and oddities so various, new, heroic, foolish, ridiculous, and doleful, that if contemporary historians had not unanimously asserted their truth, they would be regarded as the extravagant invention of the romancer's heated fancy.

Ojeda was born of a good family, was trained to arms under the spices of the Duke of Medina-Celi, and took part in the war against the Moors. He was short of stature, but well proportioned, and of a strong constitution ; second to none in strength and agility, and without an equal in the use of arms. His complexion was dark, but handsome ; his face and look were full of fire. A noble heart, a frank spirit, and a hand always open to help a friend or comrade. He was untired in combat, ready to fire up, and not less prompt to cool down, and forget an offence. Always even-tempered in peace or in war, he was inordinately fond of risky enterprises and unusual dangers, a gay and jovial cavalier, not less desired in the society of ladies than loved and admired by soldiers on the battle-field. Introducing him on the great scene of history, Las Casas relates an anecdote of him, which would not be worth repeating, did it not show clearly the character of our hero. One day, when Queen Isabella, with a number of ladies and cavaliers, was on the Giralda Tower of the Seville cathedral, Ojeda, to amuse the queen and show his courage and agility, mounted on a beam that jutted out at least twenty feet. With light and easy step, as if walking in his own chamber, he advanced on the beam till he came to its extremity, when he lifted one leg in the air, and stood for a while with his body balanced on one foot. Then turning rapidly, he walked back to the tower with the same carelessness ; and when close to it, and all were watching his foolish hardihood almost breathless and pale with horror, he calmly placed one foot against the wall of the tower, and with all his might threw an orange in the air. The loss of his equilibrium but a hair's breadth, would

have precipitated him from the immense height. Such was Alonzo de Ojeda, always first in enterprises of risk, who sought danger for its own sake, and seemed to fight rather for pleasure than for glory. A strange superstition, quite worthy of his volcanic head, increased the force and fire of his character. In the war against the Moors, with his usual impetuosity and rashness, he had been innumerable times in mortal danger both in ordinary battles and in single combats, and had always come off without the slightest wound ; and as he carried on his person a little image of the Virgin Mary, he attributed his good fortune to her especial protection, and acquired the foolish idea that through this protection, he was invulnerable. Consequently, he never was without that blessed image, and often turned to it in fervent prayer. In garrison, he hung it in his room ; in the field, it was on his tent-wall ; and travelling, he carried it in his bosom. In his excursions through the forests of the New World, he was often seen to take it carefully from his pocket, stand it up against a tree, and recite his prayers before it. His oaths were always in the Virgin's name ; he invoked her alike in the fury of the fray and in the heat of debate, and secure of her protection, he rushed blindly into any adventure.*

In perfect keeping with such character, he came forward and claimed the first rash and dangerous enterprise that was offered in the New World. Columbus, knowing the man, gladly accepted his offer, charging him, at the same time, to examine the nature and products of the island. Whilst awaiting the result of this last attempt, he ordered the ships to take in fresh supplies of wood and water, and part of the crew landed to do their washing and to amuse themselves.

Ojeda searched eagerly in every direction : he entered and explored the inextricable forests, hunted through the clefts of the mountains, climbed their sides, shouting, blowing trumpets, discharging fire-locks ; but echo alone answered, or the cry of birds flying away in alarm. As to the nature of the island and its products, Ojeda reported marvels. I shall not stop to relate the wonders of this vegetation, the perfume of the air, the rich plumage of the birds ; for all these had been seen and admired in the other islands discov-

* Las Casas, lib. i.—Pizarro, *Varones Ilustres*, cap. viii.—Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, l. ii, c. v ; l. viii, c. iv

ered the year before. But Ojeda saw them for the first time, and we may imagine the impression they made on his ardent and imaginative mind. As one of the great wonders, he reported that in only six leagues of the way he had crossed twenty-six rivers, some so deep that the water reached his sides. He never suspected that in the labyrinth of the forest he had crossed the same river several times over. Ojeda's return put an end to all hope of recovering their comrades. Many days had passed since their loss, and there could be no doubt but they would certainly have been found, if alive, after so much searching, or would have made their way to the coast. The admiral was giving orders to make sail and depart, when, to the unutterable joy of all, Marquez and his companions were seen signalling from the shore. Emaciated and thin, their eyes sunken, they were hardly recognizable. They reported that after entering the forest, owing to the thickness of the woods, they had lost the way by which they had come, and, terrified at their danger, they had diligently sought an outlet; but the more they sought, the more involved they were in the inextricable mazes of the woods. In this state of indescribable anguish, they were overtaken by night; some climbed trees to examine the stars and learn from them something of their course; but the foliage was so dense that they tried in vain to catch a glimpse of the sky. Day and night, hither and thither, without truce or repose, they wearied themselves in trying to find some trace of a path. The fear of being abandoned by their companions, of falling into the hands of the cannibals, and serving for food at their repasts, had nearly driven them out of their mind. They had kept on unceasingly wandering around all those days, but their weakness began to get the better of their will, and they were on the point of giving up in despair, when, unexpectedly, they found themselves in sight of the sea. With fearful anxiety of heart lest they might be too late, and find the fleet gone, they had redoubled their exertions, and, as well as they could, followed along the coast, and finally found themselves in front of the ships and their companions. Their joy was such that they could hardly speak, to tell of their frightful adventure.

Fortunately for them, the island was at that time deserted by the greater part of its savage warriors, who had gone, as was said, with their king on a distant expedition. Otherwise, they might have been forced to take another direction than that of the ships. In fact,

they reported that in their long wandering they had not seen the shadow of a man, but only women and children, ten of whom they captured and brought to the ships.

In spite of the sufferings they had undergone, and the joy that followed their return, the admiral deemed it important on so dangerous an expedition to punish every breach of discipline, however slight. Accordingly, he put the captain in irons, and punished the rest in their rations.*

As soon as their comrades were restored, they sailed, on the 10th of November, directing their course to the north-west, along the coast of Guadalupe, in which direction the admiral, according to his own calculations and the information received from the Indians, judged Hispaniola must lie. The women on board spoke of other islands to the south, and said the main land was not far in that direction, as was afterwards found to be the fact; but his impatience to reach Port Nativity overcame, for the moment, all thought of extending his conquests. Hastening, therefore, on his way, he merely named the islands he came to, without stopping to examine them. The first he came to he named Montserrat, from a famous sanctuary in Spain, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. This island, according to the Indian women, was wholly unpeopled, because the Caribs had eaten all the inhabitants. The second he called Santa Maria la Redonda, because it was so round and smooth that it could not be scaled without ladders. The third he named Santa Maria la Antigua; and the next, San Martin. Many other islands were seen to the north-west and south-west, all high and mountainous, and covered with magnificent forests; but the anxiety to relieve the men at Hispaniola prevented his approaching any of them. But on Thursday, the 14th, as the weather was threatening, he interrupted his voyage, and anchored near a new island, which he called Santa Cruz. Profiting by the forced delay, he sent his launch with twenty-five men, well armed, to learn what kind of people dwelt there, and to obtain information as to his course. They found a village, but no living soul, every inhabitant having taken to flight and concealed himself on their first approach. They came across five or six women and a number of children, mostly slaves, for this island also belonged to the Caribs. On their return, they had a proof of the boldness

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xlvi, xlvii.—*Letter of Dr. Chanca.*

of this fierce race. Whilst the launch was still at the shore, a canoe with four Caribs, two women, and a child, put out from a point close to the fleet and found themselves unexpectedly in full view of the Spanish ships. At this sight, says Doctor Chanca, the savages were so overcome that they remained motionless for more than an hour, about twice a musket-shot distance from the ship, in full view of the entire fleet. Meantime, the launch was returning and gradually approaching them in a way to cut off their retreat to the shore, and they were in such ecstasy of wonder that they took no notice of the Europeans till the latter were close upon them. Suddenly aroused, and seeing their danger, they at once seized the oars to fly, but the launch was in front of them, and they could not escape. Their ferocity would not yield, and since escape was impossible, although disproportionate in number, and their enemies seemed formidable, they began to defend themselves desperately with their bows and arrows. They shot with such force and skill that one of the women sent an arrow clean through the shield of one of the Spaniards, and in the first discharge, although the Christians were protected by shields and wore a sort of cuirass, two of them fell wounded, one with two arrows in his breast, and the other shot in the side. The Spaniards were greatly alarmed at this, knowing that the Caribs poisoned the points of their arrows. To cut short the contest, therefore, which might cost many lives, no matter how short a time it might last, they determined to run the launch against the canoe, to upset it and throw the Caribs into the water, where they would find it no longer possible to combat. They did so ; but the Indians, while swimming, resisted the attempt of the Spaniards to capture them, and wherever they found a footing, they fought with the same firmness as if on land. But the disparity of numbers was too great, and, one after another, they were all captured. Two of them were wounded, one so seriously that he expired almost as soon as carried aboard. Of the Spaniards wounded, one recovered ; but the other, who had been pierced by a poisoned arrow, died a few days later, in horrid pain.

From the respectful manner in which the rest addressed one of the women, it was presumed she must be the wife of a chief, and perhaps this influenced them in their desperate defence.

Peter Martyr frequently saw them all after they were taken to Spain, and narrates that, though in captivity and chains, they re-

tained in their aspect something so horrible and revolting, that he, like many others, could not bear their sight. The son, especially, of the one they suspected to be the wife of an Indian chief, in his athletic form and fierce, threatening look, resembled some wild animal more than a human being. But, though they were not aware of it, this feeling of horror was certainly caused, in great part, by knowing them to be devourers of human flesh. The Caribs wore their hair long and tangled, and, whether for ornament or to make them more formidable-looking to their enemies, they painted their eyes and eyebrows black. A beauty much admired and sought after by men and women, was to have large calves to the legs; and to this end, they corrected and aided nature by wearing on each leg two tight bands of woven cotton, one at the knee, and the other at the ankle-bone, by which pressure at the two extremities the flesh was enlarged in the middle.*

Continuing the voyage after a short delay of six or seven hours, they soon came in sight of a group of little islands, some with the usual wealth of forests and luxuriant vegetation, but the greater part bare and sterile, with wild and rocky headlands. They counted as many as fifty, very close to each other; and Columbus named the largest St. Ursula, and the rest he called, in general, her 11,000 companions. They then came to another island, much larger and fairer than any they had been discovering, all covered with forests, and with large and convenient landings. The Indians called it *Boriquen*, and Columbus gave it the name of St. John the Baptist, patron of Genoa; but at the present day both names are forgotten, and it is known as Porto Rico. It was the home of nearly all those poor female slaves, who, in seeking to escape the Caribs, had taken refuge on the Spanish ships. They reported the inhabitants as good and peaceable people, unused to the sea, injuring no one, and only taking up arms to defend themselves from the Carib invasion, and revenging their atrocities with like atrocities, devouring also the enemies they succeeded in making prisoners.

The Spaniards coasted all day along this fair island, and cast anchor, at its western extremity, in a bay abounding in fish. On landing, they found a large village, similar in all its arrangements to

* *Letter of Dr. Chanca*.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xlvi. — Peter Martyr, dec. i, lib. ii.—Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, cap. lxxxv.

those previously visited, but more beautiful than any. It was joined to the sea by a broad road with a beautiful hedge of interwoven canes, inclosing rich gardens of fruit-trees extending along both its sides, and terminating in a sort of terrace at the shore. The whole was arranged with a taste and symmetry quite new to European eyes in Indian residences. The Spaniards concluded from this that it must be the dwelling-place of some chief of importance. But on every side was silence and solitude, the inhabitants having fled and concealed themselves at the first view of the fleet. After waiting two days without catching sight of one of the inhabitants, they resumed their voyage, and leaving the sea of the Caribs, made straight for Hispaniola.

Beneath the atrocities related of these fierce and bloodthirsty savages, it is easy to discover the story of a bold and powerful race that had grown formidable to the ingenuous and timid inhabitants of the neighboring lands. From the few indications that have reached us of this warlike race, it seems probable that they came from the remote valleys in the Appalachian Mountains, whence passing from one country to another, with weapons always in their hands, in constant warfare, they reached the extremity of Florida. Thence passing to the Lucayos Islands, and from one to another of the long chain of little islands extending from the end of Florida to the coast of Paria, they are believed to have landed on the southern continent of the New World. The archipelago extending from Porto Rico to Tobago, was their stronghold, and the island of Guadaloupe, their citadel. But a large number of them went further and spread through the southern continent. Traces of them are found in various places, in the lands watered by the Orinoco, on the shores of many streams in Guiana, and in the country irrigated by the Cayenne. They seem to have reached the shores of the Southern Ocean, where, among the aborigines of Brazil, some were found who were called Caribs and were distinguished from the rest by their hardihood, boldness, and subtlety.*

The Caribs were drilled to combat from their very infancy. The first play-things mothers put into the babies' hands were bows and arrows, and they hardly took their first steps before they began to shoot at a mark for sport; and whilst mere boys, they boldly followed their

* Irving, *Columbus*, book vi, ch. iii.—Rochefort, *Hist. Nat. des Antilles*. Rotterdam, 1645.

intrepid fathers. Their long excursions on the sea made them careful observers and developed their intelligence ; and the Spaniards remarked the superiority of their dwellings, utensils, and furniture, over what they had seen in Cuba and Hispaniola. Fernando Columbus gives us this proof of their superiority over the other Indians, that while the natives of the other islands knew no other division of time than day and night, the sun and moon, the Caribs had some notion of the stars, and could calculate the weather and seasons, saying, for example, "When the Great Bear, or such a star, is ascending, it is time to do this or that."*

The island of Guadaloupe was their principal stronghold, from which they made excursions over all the neighboring seas, to very great distances, carrying desolation wherever they went ; and there can be no doubt but the horrors attributed to them were, in great part, exaggerations, as it was natural that the other Indians, in their hatred and fear, should greatly exaggerate the cruelty of an enemy from whom their liberty and lives were constantly in jeopardy. Neither can the Spaniards be considered as unimpassioned judges, prejudiced as they were by the tales of other Indians, especially as they had only a flying view, and the times were greatly given to belief in the strangest and most incredible reports. In such disposition, seeing and admiring the ingenuous and childlike timidity of some, they might easily believe they found in the fierce and indomitable courage of the others a proof and confirmation of the savage disposition that had been attributed to them. But even allowing for a large share of exaggeration, the whole facts indicate but too plainly that there was under all a fearful foundation of truth. Washington Irving throws doubt on the monstrous descriptions given of the Caribs, and after referring to the pious custom of many tribes in the New World, of preserving the remains of their lost friends and relatives,—at one time, the entire corpse ; at another, only the head ; now, the limbs dried at the fire ; and again, only the bones,—he adds : "These, when found in the dwellings of the natives of Hispaniola, against whom no prejudice of the kind existed, were correctly regarded as relics of the deceased, preserved through affection or reverence ; but any remains of the kind found among the Caribs were looked upon with horror, as proofs of cannibalism."†

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lxi.iii.

† Columbus, book vi, ch. iii.

Certainly there is no reason for denying this pious practice even with the bold race of Caribs ; but *that great quantity of human bones*, according to the expression of Dr. Chanca, an eye-witness, hardly corresponds to the few relics that would be kept of dead friends and relatives ; and would not easily explain how the still bleeding members of a young man were put on the fire in a pot with the flesh of geese and parrots, in order to dry and preserve them afterwards for pious veneration. And how explain the castration of all the sons of those poor slave-women ? These facts, which confirm their story with fearful exactness in these particulars, assure us of the truth of the rest.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Arrival at Hispaniola.—Ruin of Fort Nativity, and slaughter of the garrison.—Guacanagari's equivocal behavior (1493).

THEY reached Hispaniola on Friday, the 22nd of November, and the thought that they were at the end of their voyage, excited the liveliest joy in all the crews. Those who had been there the year before, remembered with pleasure the delightful days spent under the shade of the dear groves ; the fresh-comers were impatient to see the places and customs of which they had heard such marvellous accounts.

Just as the vessels were so joyfully sailing along the coast of Hispaniola, one of the two who were wounded in the brief battle fought with the seven Caribs at the island of Santa Cruz, expired. The arrow shot by one of the women, was poisoned, and the poor youth succumbed in most violent torture to the strength of the poison. He was a Biscayan sailor. A boat carried the corpse to the land, and two of the caravels steered close to the shore, to protect the sorrowing sailors who laid their companion to rest under the shade of a pleasant grove. Whilst they were performing the sad ceremony, great numbers of Indians came to the boat, asking to be taken on

board ; but the sailors refused them, not having the admiral's permission. Two of them, then, seeing that they could not overcome the refusal, jumped into a small caoué and transferred themselves to one of the two caravels, where they were well received and taken to the admiral's ship. They came in their cacique's name, to beg the Christians to land, promising gold in large quantities, and provisions. The admiral gave them a shirt, a cap, and other trifles, telling them to thank the cacique for his kind invitation, and giving them hope that on some other occasion he would not fail to visit them, but now he must hasten his arrival at the country of Guacanagari.* This pressing insistence of the first islanders they saw to offer spontaneous hospitality and treasure, restored their spirits embittered by the thought that their first approach to the island had been caused by a death.

Continuing on their way, when they were in the Gulf of Arrows, as Columbus had named it, or of Samana, as it is now called by its original name, and where the year before the first skirmish with the savages occurred,† they sent ashore a young Indian from that part, who had been taken to Spain and had become a convert to Christianity. They returned him to his native forests, dressed in gaudy clothes, and loaded with ornaments of every kind, in the hope that his appearance, and the accounts he would give, would have an effect on his savage companions. He made the amplest promises to carry out their wishes, but after he was set ashore he was never again seen or heard of.‡ What became of him? were his nakedness and the savage liberty of his forests dearer to him than the fine clothes and presents of the Spaniards? or did the gaudy things he carried on his back excite the envy of his companions, and he fall a victim to their greed? The Indians who sailed from Spain with the Christians, to return to the New World and serve as interpreters, were seven at first, but five died on the way, and the other two were at the point of death from sickness. One of these was the Indian put ashore in this place; the other, named *Diego Columbus*, after the admiral's brother, who was his sponsor in baptism, preserved always friendship and affection for the Christians, and surpassed their hopes of his intelligence and loyalty.§ They arrived at Monte

* *Letter of Dr. Chanca.*

† See ch. xx.

‡ Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. ii, cap. ix.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xviii.

§ *Letter of Dr. Chanca.*

Christi on the 25th, and stopped there, with the intention of selecting a site for the future colony in the vicinity of the river which on the first voyage they had called the *River of Gold*, because, as far as they could judge from the short stay they made there the year before, no more beautiful or convenient position could be wished for; but now, on further inspection, it was found to be marshy and unhealthy.*

As some of the sailors were strolling about examining the place, they found, in an out-of-the-way place, hidden under the thick grass, two corpses, one with a cord around one foot, and the other with a noose around the neck, and the wrists tied to two pieces of wood arranged in the form of a cross; but they were so wasted and decayed that it was impossible to tell whether they were Indians or Europeans. But the cord was of Spanish make, and that excited sad thoughts in every one, for Monte Christi is only seven leagues from Nativity. Continuing their examination of the place, the next day, they found two more corpses near the others, and one of them had a beard. Their suspicions and fears increased, there being no longer any doubt that this was the corpse of a Spaniard, as Indians had never been seen with beards. The tales they had heard of the ferocity of many inhabitants of those islands, recurred to every one's mind, and all feared some disaster. Still the Indians, in great numbers, approached them in a most friendly and frank manner to talk with them, and, touching them on the doublet and shirt, would say *Doublet, shirt*, to show that they knew the names of those objects. Their anxiety was partially allayed by this; for, if these Indians had done any act of violence against any white man, they would not have dared to approach his companions so fearlessly.† In this struggle between hope and fear, they hastened to the port of Nativity.

It was night before they reached there, and the remembrance of the shipwreck a year before on the sand-bars, of which the place was full, overcame their impatience to enter, and they stopped a little less than a league from shore, waiting till morning to take soundings. But they fired a gun, supposing the garrison would answer with a like discharge. The shores and mountains sent back a deep and distant echo, but no sound came from the fort. They fired again, and again the echo was their only answer. They peered anxiously into the dark,

* *Letter of Dr. Chanca.*

† *Fernando Colombo, cap. xlvi*

to catch a glimpse of some lantern's light ; but nothing could be seen. They stood with listening ears, almost holding their breath, for the sound of a trumpet or drum, but nothing could be heard. All was dark, and silent as death. Their anxiety was terrible, and the admiral's, greatest of all ; every hour till morning seemed an age. Soon after their arrival, a canoe with five or six Indians was seen making rapidly towards the Christians' ships, but when within a musket-shot, they stopped to examine them, and then, without further communication, returned to the shore. After midnight, the canoe appeared again, and approaching the nearest caravel, inquired for the admiral. They were directed to the vessel on which Columbus was, but would not go on board until they heard his voice and, by the light of a torch, recognized his face. Then two Indians freely ascended the ship's side. One was a cousin of Guacanagari, and had met Columbus and conversed with him the year previous. He said he came on the part of the cacique to congratulate the admiral on his return, and to bring two gold masks, one for him, and the other for the captain who had accompanied him on his first voyage. Columbus at once inquired after the Christians ; the cacique's cousin replied that they were well, but that some had died of sickness, and some, in consequence of quarrels among themselves ; and the rest had gone to other parts of the island, with four or five women apiece. He added that Caonabo, lord of the gold mountains of Cibao, and another cacique, had made war on Guacanagari, and laid his village in ashes ; and in the fight against those two fierce caciques, Guacanagari had been wounded, and was now lying sick in a cabin. This would explain his not coming immediately to pay his respects to the admiral, but he would come in the morning.*

The news was sad enough, but the death-like silence after they discharged the guns had made them suspect worse, and they were therefore somewhat relieved. And it was no small comfort, particularly for Columbus, to be assured that the hospitality and innocence of those natives had not, when fear of him was removed, turned to horrid perfidy towards the little garrison. The survivors would not be long in learning of the admiral's return, and would soon join him. Even the vagabond life they had been leading would

* *Letter of Dr. Chanca.*—Fernando Colombo, cap. xlix.—Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. ii, cap. ix.—Scillacio, § vii.

not be without profit, in the information they would have gathered concerning the products and wealth of the places where they had been. But the other Indian confided in great secrecy to Diego Columbus, the interpreter, that in truth the Christians were all dead, and the honest Diego so informed the Spaniards on the spot; but as Guacanagari's cousin spoke so positively, and assured them that Guacanagari himself would come the next morning, they concluded the interpreter had been mistaken, and they passed the night in the comfort of believing the smaller evil.

At daybreak, all waited impatiently for Guacanagari's arrival; but the morning passed without his appearing; noon came, and still no word from him; the sun was sinking in the west, and not a living soul was seen. The memory of their reception the year before,—the surging crowds on the shore, and canoes and swimmers in the sea; the cries, the wonderment, and all the feasting on their first arrival,—all came back in fearful contrast, freezing every heart at the present solitude and silence.

After waiting most of the day, Columbus sent a boat ashore to learn the condition of things. The sailors went at once to the spot where the fort had been built, and found there only a pile of ruins and ashes,—here and there, broken chests, spoilt provisions, torn and shattered remnants of European skulls,—fearful evidences of a fearful disaster. They penetrated into the country, and everywhere was the same solitude, the same silence. They discovered two or three Indians watching behind trees, but as soon as they found they were seen, they fled quickly away. They went as far as the village where Guacanagari had his residence, but here, too, they found only a heap of ruins and ashes.

They went back and told the sad story to the admiral. Who could tell the anguish of Columbus at such news? Before night, he brought the whole fleet into the harbor, and the next day he went ashore. He ordered frequent discharges of artillery, to give notice to any one who might have escaped the massacre and be living hidden in the neighboring rocks, and to encourage him to come out of his hiding-place; but no one appeared. The Spaniards were divided in opinion: the most of them recognized Guacanagari's hand in that massacre; the others regarded the burning and destruction of the village where he resided, as a proof that he was the unfortunate victim, and not the bloodthirsty author, of the great catastrophe. The

admiral was one of the latter, but how explain the pressing announcement of the cacique's visit at their first appearance, and the solitude and silence that followed? Columbus was the most unwilling of all to look upon his Guacanagari as a traitor, but in the multitude of suspicions and conjectures which presented themselves to his mind, he found not one which satisfactorily explained the dire event.

He had left orders with Arana to bury every thing they found of value, and in case of sudden danger, to throw it in the well of the fort.* He, therefore, commanded them to dig down and clear out the well. While this was going on, he explored the neighborhood with some of the boats, to look for a more suitable site for a new fort, and see if none of his unfortunate companions would make their appearance. A league off they found a village, but all the inhabitants had fled. On searching the huts, they found several articles belonging to the Spaniards,—hose, and pieces of cloth, an anchor of the wrecked caravel, and a beautiful Moorish mantle just as it came from Spain.† It was evident that this cloak had not been given to the Indians in trade; it must have been obtained by some crime. The suspicions of Guacanagari became more serious. Meanwhile, the Spaniards had excavated in several places in the fort, and cleared out the well, but their researches had proved fruitless. During these operations, some Indians had been seen now and then, posted behind trees, but at a good distance, and apparently in great fear. By many demonstrations of friendliness, and showing the glittering presents brought for them, they succeeded, at last, in reassuring them till they gradually came closer; and when Columbus returned from his investigation, he found them in friendly conversation with his men.

They were evidently persons who had been sent to find out the intention of the white men. One of them was a relative of Guacanagari; they all knew some words of Spanish, and the names of the members of the garrison. When confidence was restored, they took courage to speak, and they related what had occurred in the garrison. Those whom Columbus had left in the New World, says Oviedo, except the commandant, Arana, and perhaps one or two

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xlix.

† *Letter of Dr. Chanca.*—Cura de Los Palacios, cap. cxx.

besides, were not persons to follow the advice of so prudent a chief, or understand or care for the serious duties entrusted to them. They were mostly of the lowest class, or rather, sailors, who, once on shore, no longer knew reserve or discretion in their behavior.* And, in fact, after the admiral had gone, and almost before his ship was out of their sight, they forgot his advice and his orders, and thought only of satisfying their appetites and passions. They laughed at the notion of collecting gold for the benefit of the government, and every one searched for it on his own account; and in their greed to accumulate as much as possible, they were in continual quarrels and disputes among themselves. Wandering over the country, they never thought of returning the inexhaustible liberality of the ingenuous savages with the present of any trifle, but roughly seized with open violence every thing that aroused their insatiable voracity. They joined dissoluteness to rapine, and committed every enormity.

Guacanagari vainly hoped to mitigate the pest of their dissoluteness by giving them two or three women apiece: they were the dread of all the women, whether married or young girls. The simple savages beheld with astonishment these people they had adored as coming from heaven, following their unbridled rapacity and lust, tearing one another to pieces, worse than wild animals. Diego Arana, a good, honest knight, did his best to reclaim them, reminding them of the admiral's words, warning them of the serious danger they incurred, and tried to exert his authority amidst their riots and quarrels; but all in vain; they detested him and the discipline he tried to enforce. Pedro Gutierrez and Rodrigo de Escobedo, who had been assigned as his assistants, and in case of his death, as his successors, impatient for command, instead of supporting him, blew the fire to increase the blaze, knowing that his loss was their gain, and determined to have a share of his authority, if they could not usurp it all.† Things came to such a pass that, one day, in the fort, a quarrel arose, in which one man was killed. The greater part of the garrison adhered to Arana, and the two ambitious lieutenants withdrew from the fort, with nine of their associates, every one taking his women with him.

Consulting as to their future movements, those wretches determined to proceed to Cibao, the famous province, where, according to the

* Oviedo, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. ii, cap. xii.

† Oviedo, *Ib.* lib. ii, cap. xii

Indians, they had only to gather up the sands of the streams to amass gold. The bad example of this open rebellion against Arana infected the rest who stayed in the fort ; and many, snapping in two the slight thread that still bound them to the authority of the commandant, taking their arms and baggage, dispersed themselves over the country, to enjoy entire freedom and independence, singly, or by twos and threes, as caprice dictated, or the hope of better satiating their greed or lust. The ruin and total extermination of the garrison followed, as a matter of course. For, so long as they kept together, in spite of their bad behavior and want of discipline and harmony, they excited such fear that no one would have thought of rising against them ; but when they separated and scattered in little bands over the country, far from each other, the Indians conceived a hope of conquering them, and the hope grew into the will and the courage to attempt it.*

The province of Cibao was in the interior of the island, and possessed, in fact, many gold-mines of extraordinary richness, but the imagination of the Spaniards had run far beyond the truth. Caonabo was the cacique of the country, by birth a Carib, and bore the surname of *Lord of the House of Gold*. A few years before, he had come to that province, as a mere adventurer, with a band of bold companions, and in a short time had, by his courage and craftiness, got control of the government. His rule was such as to cause his violent conquest to be soon forgotten, and to win for him the affection of his subjects ; and, what is more, he roused them from their indolence and timidity, inspired their pacific hearts with some of his own ardor, and succeeded in making good soldiers out of them. He thereby became the most powerful cacique of the island, his name spread terror through all Hispaniola, and his warlike deeds were celebrated on every side. The arrival of the white men in Guacañagari's country, the immense machines on which they sailed, and the fearful effect of their arms, were soon known to him ; and he quickly perceived that their coming marked the termination of his power, that his fearless hatred was of no avail against those more powerful enemies. He was consumed with jealousy and rage, when told that some of those white men had unguardedly entered on his territory. Fortune threw the ball to him, and he did not hesi-

* Oviedo, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. ii, cap. xii.

tate to take it up. Quickly and silently, with the pick of his men, he fell on Gutierrez and Escobedo, and, much more easily than he had believed, put them to death with all their companions. The ease with which this victory was won, emboldened him for a grander attempt; and bringing over to his purpose, partly by argument and partly by fear, the cacique of Marien, through whose territory it was necessary to pass, they joined their forces, and quietly scaled the mountains, crossed the forests, forded the rivers, and arrived at night before Fort Nativity, without a living soul being aware of their approach. Some had gone to Cibao, many were scattered over the country, and some were dead from the malaria of the place and other diseases, so that there remained with Arana in the fort only ten who were faithful to duty and discipline; and these relying on Guacanagari's friendship and the weakness of his Indians, had gone to sleep, leaving the fort unguarded. Caonabo entered cautiously, and when he saw he was sure of his prey, with all his followers, uttered a fierce yell, and the Christians were no sooner awake than dead. The wild Carib then proceeded to the country to hunt the rest of the Christians, sleeping in huts here and there, and set fire to every place where they were known to be. At the sudden alarm, eight of the Christians succeeded in escaping to the fort, but found it in flames; pursued and surrounded by Caonabo's braves, they threw themselves into the sea, and as long as their breath held out, sustained themselves by swimming, in the hope of some succor, till, overcome with fatigue, they sank and were drowned.

Guacanagari rose without delay, in defence of the Christians, and attacked Caonabo with all his force; but it was a battle of lambs against the wolf; they were quickly routed and dispersed, and their village soon became a heap of ashes. Guacanagari and his best and trustiest warriors received many wounds in trying to defend their ungrateful friends.*

Such was the account the Indians gave; though it was not altogether certain that their account had been correctly interpreted, for the only Indian interpreter remaining with the Christians was from Guanahani, where the language was somewhat different from that spoken in Hispaniola.

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. ii, cap. ix.—*Letter of Dr. Chanca*.—Peter Martyr, dec. i, lib. ii.—Fernando Colombo, cap. xlix.—Cura de Los Palacios, cap. cxx.—Muñoz, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*, lib. iv

All hope of recovering any of their men being abandoned, they turned their attention to looking for a more suitable place for the seat of a new colony. Two parties started out to explore the coast; one, led by Columbus, examined it to the west, and another, under Melchior Maldonado, one of the captains of the fleet, to the east. Maldonado had not gone more than three leagues, when he saw a canoe dart out from the land and take the direction of his caravel. It contained two Indians, one of whom said he was Guacanagari's brother, and was recognized as such by the pilot, who had been there the year before. On the part of Guacanagari, and in his name, he begged the Christian captain to land and visit him at his residence, as he was wounded and unable to rise from bed. Maldonado consented, and, with some of the officers, went to the village, which consisted of some fifty huts, where they found Guacanagari extended on the bed, with seven of his women around him. The cacique expressed great regret at his inability to visit the admiral, whom he longed to see again. He touched upon the disaster to the garrison, and the efforts he had made in its defence, and exhibited his leg, still bandaged with cotton. His story agreed with what they had learnt from the other Indians. He treated the Spaniards with his former respect and benevolence, and on their departure presented them with some gold ornaments; and as his condition did not permit him to be moved, he begged they would request the admiral to come to visit him.

Besides the invitation given through Maldonado, Guacanagari sent his brother expressly to Columbus, requesting him to come, as he much desired to see and embrace him again. The admiral accepted the invitation, and to give him and his savages a new and higher idea of his power, he went to the poor cabin accompanied by all his staff and the captains of the seventeen ships, in full uniform. They numbered a hundred of the highest officers and the pick of the hidalgos, and were preceded by drums and trumpets.* Chanca, who took part in the solemn parade, says that the assembling of so many officers in such rich dress, and such splendid armor, was a sight that would attract the people even in a large city. What, then, must its effect have been on Guacanagari and his naked savages?

At the entrance of Columbus, Guacanagari showed the greatest

* Scillacio, § viii.

satisfaction on seeing him again, and came at once to the subject of the killing of the Spaniards. He wept in telling of their sad end, and insisted especially on his fidelity in defending them, pointing out several of his warriors then present, who had been wounded in the fight. Their wounds were found, on examination, to have been caused by Indian weapons. Columbus was more than ever convinced of the innocence of Guacanagari. Remembering the countless proofs of his affection and fidelity when they were wrecked the year before, it was not possible to believe him capable of an act of consummate perfidy. He, therefore, gave the cacique the presents he had brought for him. Guacanagari had his gifts also ready, and gave the admiral 800 sea-shells speckled with the brightest colors, 100 grains of gold, a crown of gold, and three small gourds filled with gold-dust. But his presents seemed to him of small value compared with the admiral's gifts of little glass beads, bells, knives, pins, needles, a few small mirrors, and some ornaments of copper. The Indians valued this last metal especially, as it was wholly unknown to them.

Dr. Chanca, the chief medical officer of the fleet, and a surgeon being present, Columbus told the cacique to show his wound to these two, whose profession was to heal; he consented readily, saying it had been hit by a stone. The two doctors examined the spot carefully, but found no trace of wound or cicatrix, though they scarcely touched it before he trembled and complained of great pain.* Some of those who had already suspected Guacanagari's insincerity, now became certain; and Fr. Boil, severe, hard, vindictive, and used to political trickery, suggested to the admiral to seize the cacique and execute summary justice upon him, as an example to the rest. But Columbus would not give way to the precipitate fury of the friar, and although this fact had raised strong doubts in his own mind also, he had no intention of letting Guacanagari perceive it, still less, of punishing him or taking revenge. It was not impossible that every sign of the bruise of the stone might have disappeared and the pain of the contusion still last internally; and even admitting that the wound was a fiction, it did not follow that Guacanagari was guilty. The entire destruction of his village was true, the scars of his warriors were real and palpable, and clearly produced by Indian weap-

* *Letter of Dr. Chanca.*—Cura de Los Palacios, cap. cxx.

ons ; there was no doubt, then, that there had been a fight. It might be that the cacique, in his simplicity, and fear of the Spaniards, had believed he could best persuade them of his share in what was done in their favor, by giving himself out as wounded also. In any case, there was time enough to punish ; for the present, it was better to cultivate their friendship, even if feigned, and thus keep him in suspense and make him useful to the Spaniards ; and his example would make the caciques of the other places less unwilling to approach the Spaniards and be friendly with them : whilst violent measures might spread a panic fear over the island, and interfere with all their plans. The greater part of the officers agreed with this advice, and it was resolved, in spite of the vicar apostolic's earnest remonstrance, to take the story of the Indians for true, and to go on treating them with kindness.

Going out of the tent, the admiral sat down near the cacique, and told him, through the Indian interpreter, how the Spaniards had come to these regions to instruct them, make them more meek, and to bring these islands under the rule of the powerful sovereigns of Spain ; but above all, they prized and longed for the friendship of Guacanagari. At these words, the cacique suddenly arose, struck the ground with his foot, raised his eyes towards heaven, and uttered a loud cry, which was answered by one still louder from all his men, numbering about 600. Most of the Spaniards laid their hands on their swords in suspicion and fear ; but it was only a sign made by Guacanagari to show his satisfaction at the preference shown for himself by the Spaniards.*

Although suffering greatly from his wound, Guacanagari would accompany the admiral on his return, and was carried on the shoulders of his men as far as the fleet. On board of the admiral's ship, Columbus himself took him around and pointed out to him all its parts and construction, and showed him all the articles brought from Europe for the use of the colony. The cacique was delighted to see the plants and fruit-trees to be transplanted in his country ; the utensils for domestic use, agriculture, and the arts ; and the oxen, sheep, goats, asses, swine, and other animals on the ships, for propagation there. But what most astonished him were the horses. The largest quadrupeds on these islands were the little mute dogs which the Span-

* Scillacio, § viii.

iards found in some of the huts, as we have mentioned before. We may imagine, then, the impression made on the cacique by those immense animals. His wonder was not greater than his dread of the fiery look, the neighing, the foaming of the mouth ; and he could hardly trust his eyes on beholding the white men passing among them with perfect security, patting, scolding, and even striking them, and controlling them by mere word of mouth.*

Another proof of the white men's invincible power was the sight of the Carib prisoners. Such was the fear these fierce savages inspired in the timid inhabitants of Hispaniola, that even though they were in chains, Guacanagari and his Indians turned their faces away, unable to bear their threatening look.† That the admiral should have dared to face those monsters, attack them even in their impenetrable recesses, fight them, conquer them, and take them with him in chains,—to the mind of an inhabitant of Hayti, was the greatest proof of valor that it was possible to imagine. The fear and disgust produced by the sight of the Caribs were equalled by the compassion felt at the sight of the women and children who had been their slaves, and had been freed by the Christians. The cacique went at once to them, and for some time conversed with them with great affability and kindness. Those unfortunates, who had been in the clutches of the Caribs and regained their freedom, must have seemed to him living miracles. One young woman amongst them, in her shape, her proportions, her features, and, especially, in the fire of her eyes, was a real beauty for a savage. This fair daughter of the forests had also attracted the notice of the Spaniards, who called her Catalina. The cacique paid her special attention, and no one was astonished at the preference shown for her beauty.

After the visit, a good collation was served up. Columbus tried to restore the friendly confidence of last year, and treating the cacique very affectionately, said he wished to stay with him in his present residence and construct houses in the vicinity ; at which Guacanagari expressed great satisfaction, but remarked that the place was unhealthy. This was true ; but he did not think of making such remark the year before, and we may be sure that in advancing this objection his main thought was the hope of escaping the danger of

* Fernando Colombo, cap. xlix.—*Letter of Dr. Chanca.*

† Peter Martyr, *CLIII Letter to Pomponius Lætus.*

having another company of white men in his neighborhood. He met with the same goodness in the admiral as the year previous, but sad experience had shown him the value of some of those men that had come down from heaven. We have a most eloquent proof of the change in his opinions and sentiments in their regard, in his behavior when Columbus offered him a silver image of the Virgin Mary. The reader will remember how earnestly the natives imitated the veneration of the Christians for the cross which they raised on first landing the year before, and with what pleasure they learnt to make the sign of the cross, and to repeat the words of their prayers, from which, as was then said, Columbus had conceived great hopes of the speedy conversion of so docile a people. Now, Fernando Columbus relates that Guacanagari exhibited great joy on receiving that blessed image of Our Lady ; but when he discovered that she was an object of Christian worship, he thrust it from him, and it required all the authority and influence of the admiral to make him accept it and put it around his neck, because, says Fernando, one of those who were dead had given him false accounts of the faith, telling him that the Christian law was of no importance. But I am rather inclined to believe that some one of those unfortunate men, when remonstrated with, as must sometimes have happened, for his rapacity and villainy, told the natives, in sacrilegious jest, or as a sort of defence of his baseness, or else as a sort of argument to bring him to submission, that what he was doing was commanded by his religion. From this, those simple savages would infer that it was really the origin and cause of his disgusting conduct, and consequently conceive a sort of horror for every thing connected with the white men's religion.

Many of the Spaniards insisted that Guacanagari was a traitor ; and Fr. Boil, who was one of the most forward in his suspicions, secretly advised the admiral, now that he had him in his power, to hold him prisoner ; but Columbus rejected the base suggestion, alike opposed to sound policy and to good faith. But it is hard to conceal evil intentions which are hatched in secret ; the heart will speak and show itself even when the lips are silent. Accustomed, in all his previous relations with the Spaniards, to meet pleasant looks, the cacique quickly observed the changed expression of a great number of them. Accordingly, as soon as the collation was over, in spite of the frank and cordial manner of the admiral, he took his

leave and returned to the land.* The next day, a messenger from the cacique came to ask Columbus how long he was to remain in the harbor, and was told that they intended to leave on the following day. Towards evening, Guacanagari's brother came on board of the admiral's ship with a number of other Indians, bringing some pieces of gold for use in barter. He talked a long time with the slave-women, especially the fair Catalina; but no one thought any thing of their interview, till the events of the next night showed what had been the subject of their discourse. As far as appears, the extraordinary beauty of Catalina, aided by sympathy for her enslaved condition, excited Guacanagari's passion, and, as often happens in love's annals, gave him courage and audacity beyond his nature, and determined him, notwithstanding his awe of the Christians' power, to get possession of the beautiful savage. His brother, who had come on board under pretext of bartering gold, had been sent, instead, to arrange with her for her escape. About midnight, while the crew were sleeping soundly, the fearless Catalina awoke her companions, and proposed to them to make a desperate attempt to regain their freedom. The ship was three good miles from land, and the sea far from smooth; but those savages were accustomed from infancy to glide in the water like fishes, and regarded it, so to speak, as their natural element. They, accordingly, agreed to Catalina's proposal, and all dropping quietly from the ship into the water, swam desperately for the shore. But, in spite of their precautions, the sailors of the watch discovered them, and the alarm being given, the boats were hurriedly lowered in pursuit. A light placed on the shore to guide the fugitives, served equally well to direct the Spaniards pursuing them. But such was the vigor of those sea-nymphs, and fear so lent them breath, that the Spaniards, rowing with all their might, were well-nigh exhausted in overtaking four of them, and these they only captured as they were coming out of the water. The principal prey escaped. When the Spaniards reached the land, the fair Catalina, with five of the youngest and strongest of her companions, were hiding in the forest. At daybreak, Columbus sent word to Guacanagari to send back his fugitives without delay, and if they were not in his power, to search for them in every direction. But his

* Peter Martyr, dec. i, lib. ii.

messenger found desertion and silence on every side, and returned on board without having met a living soul. Fear of losing his fair one, and of the Spaniards' vengeance, had forced the enamored cacique to fly with all his men. After this, there seemed no longer any doubt of the truth of their suspicions of Guacanagari; and those who maintained he was the author of the slaughter of the garrison, were triumphant. But the admiral, and most of those who had known him the year before, and remembered his goodness, his meekness of disposition, and his strong affection for the Christians, shown by words and deeds,—in spite of the strong appearances against him, could not be induced to believe it; and having no other argument, tried to explain his sudden departure by the habit which the Indians had of frequently changing their abode.*

CHAPTER XXVII.

Founding of the city of Isabella.—Sickness among the Spaniards.— Expedition of Alonzo de Ojeda to explore the island.—Return of some of the ships to Europe.—Disturbances at Isabella.—Conspiracy of Bernal Diaz of Pisa.—Expedition of Columbus into the mountains of Cibao.—Wonderful fertility of the lands about Isabella.—Sickness and dissensions in the colony.—Lamentable end of most of the hidalgos.—Division of the Spanish forces in Hispaniola.—Preparations for a voyage of discovery along the southern coast of Cuba (1493-94).

THE fort of Nativity, before so dear to the memory and imagination of the Spaniards, after so many misfortunes suffered in the neighborhood, had become a name of fear and horror. There, a ship was wrecked; there, a fort was destroyed; and there, all their companions were butchered. A curse seemed to hang over the place. There was more than enough, especially in an age as superstitious as that, to

* *Letter of Dr. Chanca.*—Peter Martyr, dec. i, lib. ii.—Cura de Los Palacios, cap. cxx.

make them desert the place more readily than if it had been struck with the plague. Still, there were other reasons of greater weight to prevent the continuation of the colony there; the surrounding lands were low, wet, unhealthy, and there were no stones for building with. Columbus, accordingly, resolved to abandon the place and move to a more favorable position. Time was pressing, for the animals on board were in need of fresh air and food after such long confinement; and the same was true of the passengers, who, unaccustomed to the sea, were longing to be on land. As the weather was not favorable for using the larger vessels, all the small-boats were sent to explore the coast, and look for a suitable site in every harbor and river. On their return, they reported plenty of fine rivers and capacious harbors, but the coast everywhere low, damp, and without stones. Inhabitants were seen nowhere, or if one came in sight, he fled away at the first view of the boats. Only Captain Maldonado, who had gone to the east, on landing to examine the banks of a river, found the cacique of the place advancing threateningly at the head of his warriors, and with hostile intentions; but, by demonstrations of amity, they easily quieted him, and made a friend of him, and learnt from him that Guacanagari had retired to the mountains. But why he had done so he could not say. Another detachment found, in a wood near a village from which the inhabitants had all fled, an Indian wounded by a dart, which prevented his escaping with the rest. He said he had been wounded in the fight with Caonabo, after the burning of Guacanagari's houses; and his story of that cacique's sudden invasion, and the extermination of the Christian garrison, agreed in every respect with what they had been already told. This confirmed the opinion of those who insisted on Guacanagari's innocence, and so the Spaniards always remained in painful uncertainty as to the real authors of that fearful tragedy.* Not finding any suitable site for a colony in this direction, they determined to go back to a magnificent bay, seen the year before, and named Puerto de la Plata (Silver Bay), where they were sure of finding every convenience; and on the 7th of December they started. The weather being again unfavorable, they took refuge in another bay, ten leagues west of Monte Christi; but where they only looked for a short refuge, they found, instead, says Chanca, the best location in the world, all they could

* *Journal of Columbus*, Jan. 11, 1493.

wish for, and a harbor excellently provided with an infinite quantity of fish, which they were greatly in want of to eke out what few victuals they had left.* To all these attractions which the spot presented, was added the glad information, imparted by the Indians, that there was a village close by, and that the mountains of Cibao were only a short way off, and running nearly parallel to the harbor. And as it was the admiral's intention to build close to the gold-mines, he thought the place admirably suited for his plans in every respect. Here, therefore, he announced they would disembark and build the new city. The unlooked-for announcement was hailed with joy, for the long confinement on ship-board had become insupportable, and they longed to roam at will over the land and breathe the fresh country air. The animals, especially the horses, showed equal delight with the men at the change. The site selected for the city seemed all that could be wished for in regard to security, beauty, and convenience; for in front was a very large bay for the ships; it was well defended on all sides, partly by a broad river and a deep precipice, and partly by a thick forest, which seemed almost like a wall; and beyond the river was a vast plain, beautiful to behold, and of excellent soil for cultivation. The necessity of quickly providing a shelter for so many persons and animals, made them raise only three buildings in stone; all the rest were rather tents and cabins, than houses, built of wood, cane, sticks, and mud. Canals were dug to conduct the water from the neighboring river through the city for the service of mills, machines for sawing wood, and other uses of the population; and although the place seemed sufficiently protected by its position against any sudden attack, still, taught by sad experience to be on their guard, notwithstanding the mildness and timidity of the savages, they also surrounded the city with a wall, for greater security.

Whilst some were occupied in building the city, the rest were engaged sowing the seeds and setting out the plants brought from Europe, in the neighboring plain. The new city was named *Isabella*, in memory of the great woman who had the courage and confidence to furnish Columbus the means of discovering the New World.

For a little while, the work went on with zeal and alacrity; but

* *Letter of Dr Chanca.*—Fernando Colombo, cap. 1.

sickness soon began to produce a change. Many of the Spaniards, unused to the sea, obliged to live on mouldy bread, salted and spoilt provisions, had suffered greatly on the voyage; and now on land, whilst the city was building, they were obliged to remain day and night in the open air. The warm, damp climate, the vapors from the rivers close by, the heavy air of the thick and leafy forests, and, at the same time, the sharp, strong odor exhaled by a virgin soil, full of juice and strength, were so many deathly influences on men accustomed to living in old and well-cultivated countries. They were, consequently, forced to push forward the work, in order to procure shelter, and this increased the fatigue of the men; and so, while preparing an escape from the evil, they were opening a wider door for its entrance. To aggravate the sad condition of body, came prostration and weariness of mind. The gold mountains of Cipango and Cathay, and the glorious feats of war against the legions of the Grand Khan, had alike disappeared. They had dreamt of swimming in gold, of running from victory to victory among populous cities and against mighty armies; and here they were imprisoned on a few feet of land, shut in by impracticable forests, condemned to pour out their sweat for their material subsistence. In this dejection of mind, with no resistance in those feeble and wearied bodies, the evil daily made frightful progress. Columbus himself did not escape its influence; in fact, his physical and moral condition disposed him to it the most of all. His health was already shaken after his first voyage, owing mainly to his exhaustion and anxiety during the terrible storm that for several days kept them nearer death than life; and he was little improved by his six months' stay in Spain, occupied in hurrying the preparations of a fleet for his second voyage. It is not necessary to mention the wound in his heart caused by the massacre of his garrison, the dispelling of so many illusions and hopes, and the pitiful condition to which he saw so many of his men reduced. The thought of the future was no less tormenting than the present. He had felt sure, on returning to Nativity, of finding heaps of gold collected by the garrison—and he found only corpses and ruins; he hoped, by the return of a part of his ships, to make it known in Spain that the fountains of gold were discovered—and he had, instead, to announce the massacre of all his men. Guacana-gari, the good and loyal cacique, on whose coöperation he had based such hope, now fled from him, and was, perhaps, a traitor; the In-

dians who before were happy to approach the Christians, to touch them, to offer them presents, now, at their first appearance, fled and hid themselves. And, as though this was not enough, on hoisting the stores from the vessels, he found he had been infamously betrayed and cheated by the king's officers, who had charge of the provisions required for the voyage. At Seville, he had inspected the horses to be put on board, and they were fresh, beautiful, and full of life, and at Hispaniola he found, instead, spiritless jades. The provisions were much less than the quantity required and promised, and in quality so inferior that most of them were spoilt on the voyage. The butts, badly hooped, had let most of the wine run out, and the doctors were in despair because the dishonest purveyors had cut down their list, and the medicines furnished were not equal to the urgent demand, on account of the large number of the sick.* How was he to bear up under so many blows? But, notwithstanding all this, and although the violence of his disease kept him for weeks in bed, the pain of his body could not conquer his energy of soul, and he continued to watch over and order every thing concerning the construction of the city and all other needful matters.

When the ships were unloaded, it was necessary to send the greater part of them back to Spain; and this was a fresh source of grief to Columbus. He knew that no wonders were beyond the expectation of the sovereigns and the people; and how terrible would be the dispelling of their illusions, if the ships, on their return, brought only news of fresh disasters. Something must be done to sustain the fame of his discoveries, and to justify the glorious accounts he had himself given of them. As yet, he was entirely ignorant of the interior of the island, and on that unknown part he rested his hopes and his illusions. If this was really the island of Cipango, there must be populous cities, probably in some cultivated region behind the mountains which rose so high before them. The agreement of all the Indians in indicating by the name of Cibao the place where gold was found, seemed to leave no doubt of the correctness of their information; and the very name of Caonabo, the cacique of that region, which meant *Lord of the House of Gold*, seemed to prove its richness. This region was three or four days' journey, in a straight

* *Memoria del Almirante*, sent to the Catholic sovereigns by the hands of Torres, § xvii

line, to the interior, and Columbus resolved to send an expedition thither, before the vessels sailed. If the result should correspond with their hopes, he could send back his fleet without anxiety ; it would tell of the discovery of the gold mountains of Cibao.*

For this expedition he chose Alonzo de Ojeda, the fearless cavalier of whom we have already spoken. Ojeda accepted the duty all the more gladly, because he knew he was to enter the country of the redoubted Caonabo ; and to march to danger was the same for him as for any one else to march to a wedding. He took with him a small but brave force of fifteen cavaliers, selected from the best in camp, all panting for battle and peril, desirous of fame and glory above every thing. They set out early in January, and the first two days marched through a country wholly deserted ; for, the news of their approach preceded them, and all the inhabitants had fled. On the evening of the second day, they came to a high and steep mountain, which they ascended with difficulty, and on the summit of which they halted till morning. On the return of light, they beheld an interminable plain beyond them, with many thick forests, vast meadows of varied hue, and a broad river with its confluents winding through every part of the beautiful valley ; and the smoke rising from many places in the fields and among the forests, indicated numerous cabins and populous villages.

They joyfully descended the mountain, and boldly went into the villages ; but where they looked for a hostile reception, they met only the most cordial hospitality. Thus they journeyed for five or six days, till they came to another chain of mountains, crossing which, they found themselves in the dominions of the dreaded Caonabo. But they saw and learnt nothing of that terrible cacique ; whether he was then away on one of his bold expeditions, or, wanting courage to cope openly with the Spaniards, had retired and hid himself. They were, consequently, free to examine the country and ascertain whether report had exaggerated its richness. And they found the reality quite equal to what they had been told of it. "Ojeda," writes Chanca, "found gold in more places than I hardly dare to tell, for he found it in the beds of more than fifty streams, and on land never reached by their waters, so that it was found in plenty wher-

* Fernando Colombo, cap. 1.—Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. ii, cap. x.—Peter Martyr, dec. i, lib. ii.—*Letter of Dr. Chanca.*

ever it was looked for in that country. He brought many specimens picked up in various places, some found in the sands and mud of rivers, and he asserts that, digging in the ground, as we are skilled in doing, much larger pieces will be obtained; that the Indians are unskilled in excavating, and have no tools to get more than a few inches below the surface." And Peter Martyr affirms that he saw with his eyes a nugget of gold weighing nine ounces, which Ojeda himself had found in one of the rivers. Equally good reports were made by Gorvolan, a young cavalier sent at the same time to explore another part of the country.*

These reports seemed to revive their old hopes, and encouraged their minds; and the images their fancy pictured of a near future of delight, were, for a time, a relief and a comfort in their present distress. Chanca, writing under the influence of those reports, thus concludes his letter: "Hence, our Lords the Sovereigns may from this moment be looked upon as the most fortunate and the richest rulers in the world; for, never till our own days was any thing like it seen or heard of on earth, and certainly, in the next voyage the vessels make to these regions, they will carry to Spain such enormous quantities of gold as will excite the greatest wonder in all who behold them." To Columbus it was like a return from death to life, and he determined to proceed himself to those mountains, as soon as his health should permit, to look for a suitable site for establishing a gang of miners.†

Greatly comforted by the good report he was now able to make to Spain, on the 2nd of February, 1494, he sent back twelve caravels, under command of Antonio de Torres, retaining the other five for the use of the colony. He sent with them the specimens of gold found by Ojeda and Gorvolan, and samples of the rarest and most notable plants which had been lately discovered, and he consigned to Torres a long memorial for their Highnesses. In this he noted, with great satisfaction, that nothing had so far occurred to lessen the importance of what he had affirmed of his discoveries; and in proof, recorded the explorations of Ojeda and Gorvolan, remitting them for a more detailed account to Gorvolan himself, who was returning with the ships to Spain. He regretted that he was unable to send a

* *Chanca's Letter.—Memoria del Almirante*, sent by Antonio Torres, § i.—*Scillacio*, § x.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. 1.

greater quantity of gold at that time, but had to be satisfied with sending samples, because most of his people who could be employed in collecting it had fallen sick ; but the necessity of sending for many articles which he needed from Spain, and of taking advantage of the favorable season for navigation, prevented his longer delaying the departure of the ships. He was unable to go even for a few days to the gold region to collect a good supply for their Highnesses, for it was many leagues away, over mountains and rivers, without roads or means of transport, as they had not the necessary number of animals, and, moreover, it would not be prudent to take from Isabella all who were well, and leave the sick undefended in their poor cabins, great as was their confidence in the good dispositions of the inhabitants of that neighborhood. And besides, most of those who had been on the exploration having fallen sick on their return, from the fatigue of the march, it was unwise to begin that work until the difficulties were removed, and the necessary measures taken to secure the health and safety of his people, especially as that region was ruled by a powerful cacique, named Caonabo, regarded on all sides as a most terrible and bold man. On completing the work necessary to put the city in a state of defence against any unexpected attack, he would undertake the exploration of those mines as far as possible, with the few men who were not sick.

The sickness must be attributed to the change of air and of water, for all were alike subject to it, though few were in danger of life. The only means of retaining or recovering health was the use of European food ; and, therefore, it was absolutely necessary to have a fresh supply of provisions from Spain, until they could be supplied from what they had sown and planted, or should hereafter sow and plant, in the New World. He mentioned in detail all that occurred to him concerning the different quality of the food, the animals, and medicines, attaching to the memorial, notes signed in his own hand.

In case their Highnesses should be absent from Seville, and the distance should be likely to cause delay in the requisitions and orders, so that the provisions could not be ready in time to load them on the ships leaving Spain, before the favorable season was past for sailing to the New World, he directed Torres to deposit the gold with some merchant who would advance the sums necessary to purchase the required supplies. He sent on the fleet the women and children taken in the Caribbee Islands, requesting that all possible care be taken to

teach them the Spanish language and instruct them in our faith. The frank and resolute character of that race, their habit of voyaging over those seas, and their facility in learning the various dialects spoken in that vast archipelago, made him hope that when the precepts of the faith and the customs of civilization had reformed their habits and inclinations, they might render great service as interpreters, and, at the same time, spread among the natives the doctrines of Christianity. He, therefore, proposed to send out to hunt them and transmit them to Spain to be sold there as slaves; and this would be of great advantage to the other Indians, whose minds would be relieved from the fear of the cannibals, and it would show them that even the strongest and most dreaded population in those islands could not withstand the power of the White Men. He mentioned the various measures he had taken, as the wants of the colony seemed to him to require, and those he proposed in future, and made various suggestions in the interest of the colony and their Highnesses' service, both as regarded the providing various articles which occurred to him, and the selection and pay of the persons to be employed in the new government. He asked that more laborers and artisans might be sent out, and, above all, skilful miners and men who could melt and purify metals. In fine, he recommended to the munificence of their Highnesses different persons who had most distinguished themselves in the service of the colony by their industry, intelligence, and zeal, among whom was Chanca, writer of the letter so frequently quoted from; Coronel, who was afterwards his most faithful agent; and the Cavalier Pedro Margarita, and Juan Aguado, who both, as we shall see, repaid his generosity with the blackest ingratitude.

The fleet weighed anchor February 2nd, 1494. Although it did not bear to Spain the promised wealth, it satisfied expectations by the samples of gold, the letter of Columbus full of enthusiasm, and, especially, by the letters of Fr. Boil, Dr. Chanca, and other creditable persons, who repeated and confirmed the grand promises and hopes expressed by the admiral.

But those who had rushed to the Indies with the illusory hope of pleasure, wealth, and glorious adventure, and now found the reality so different from their dream, unable to feed their fancy on fresh illusions, like their brethren in Spain, who were aided by distance, but sadly viewing things in their true light, fell, as always happens, from extreme hope and confidence to the opposite extreme,

and grieved over the distance separating them from their homes and families, over the misery of their present condition, and the more intolerable future presented by their frightened imagination. The joyful news brought by Ojeda seemed to raise their spirits, but it was like the last drop of oil which makes an expiring lamp dart out a lively flame for an instant, only to languish again and die. Their distress increased when they beheld the greater part of the ships leaving for Spain. It seemed as though their departure burst the last band between them and the Old World; and their desire to revisit their native land became more intense, and the cruelty of their exile more bitter. They cast the blame of all their wrongs on Columbus, who by his reports had excited their imaginations and made them long for the wonders of the New World; and talking and complaining one with another, they became fired with hatred for the Genoese traitor who had been their ruin. Where were the mountains of gold that were to enrich all Spain? Where, the untold delights that were to gladden every heart? Let their faces, wan and pale from work and hunger, and the continual fevers and deaths daily lessening their number, answer. The head and life of this bitter war on Christopher Columbus, which was every day becoming fiercer, was one Bernal Diaz of Pisa, a man of some importance, who had left a good position at court to follow the admiral in the capacity of comptroller, promising himself, who can tell what profit by the change. He seems from the beginning to have had difficulties with Columbus in exercising the functions of his office. Now placing himself at the head of the malcontents, and taking advantage of Columbus being confined to his bed by sickness, he proposed to them to seize the ships and return to Spain. He assured them that, instead of requiring to defend themselves, they would be rewarded for their revolt and flight, when they explained to the government how the admiral had deceived, and was still deceiving, the sovereigns by his false reports of those new lands, and his enormous exaggerations of the slight benefit that could be derived from them. They would say that having seen and experienced the fraud, they had believed it better to return as useful citizens to Spain than to perish to no purpose in those strange countries; that whatever might happen to them, they were satisfied if, even to their own damage, they opened their sovereigns' eyes, and prevented further losses of money and men to their country. — A powerful assistant

in moving their minds and persuading them of the truth of these words, was a certain Firmin Cado, a vain, stubborn man, whose trade was assaying and purifying metals. Cado obstinately maintained that there was no gold on the island, or if there was, it was in such small quantity as not to pay the cost of extracting it. He asserted that the large nuggets of virgin gold presented by the natives had been gathered, melted, and preserved for a long time in the Indian families, the fruit of the savings of many generations, and some of the largest were not real gold. And they had a clear proof of what he said, for the natives, impoverished by the barter already made, could bring no more. His trade of assayer made them believe he must know, and so his assertions prevailed over the evidence of facts ; and a large number of the discontented were convinced that there was no gold on the island. But it was soon discovered what Cado was worth, and it was found that his ignorance was equal to his unblushing impudence, by which he had succeeded in gaining some credit and making himself of some importance.

Fortunately, the plot was discovered in season, and Columbus quickly arrested the leaders. In the investigation which followed, a sheet was found in a corner of one of the ships, written by the hand of Bernal Diaz himself, and full of invectives and calumnies against the admiral. This was the first time that Columbus, in the duty of his office, had been called on to exercise the power of punishment, and in quiet times the matter would not have appeared of any importance. But under the circumstances, in the present disposition of the Spaniards generally towards him, and because he was one of the parties, the case was exceedingly difficult and perplexing. Sensible of the difficulty, he endeavored to get over it in the most prudent and suitable manner possible. On Diaz, who was the greatest culprit, and in whose sentence it was most important for him that justice should be done, he abstained from inflicting any punishment, out of regard to his rank in the colony, but put him on board of a vessel to be sent to Spain, leaving the case in the hands of their Majesties, transmitting, at the same time, a copy of the calumnious sheet that had been discovered, and a report of the investigation that had been made on the whole matter of the conspiracy. The minor accomplices were all punished according to the degree of their guilt, and considering the sad causes which had influenced them and driven them to the false step of conspiracy, he was exceedingly mild in the

punishment inflicted. Then, to prevent further attempts of the sort, he transported all the cannon and ammunition of the four small vessels to the largest, and placed them under guard of those on whose devotion to himself and trustworthiness he could safely rely.*

But in spite of the prudence and delicacy of his conduct, those who were embittered against him saw in his measures only arbitrary power, tyranny, and the spirit of revenge; they brought up again his being a foreigner, and charged him with dislike of Spaniards. Those punished were regarded as defenceless victims of his ill-will, and intense hatred of him grew up in the minds of many, and took deep root in their hearts. This was the germ of that fierce, untiring warfare, which, gradually growing in strength and numbers, fought and persecuted him all the rest of his life; and even beyond the grave has fought and persecuted him in his reputation and his sons.

Recovering from his illness, and giving his attention to the affairs of the colony, Columbus departed for Cibao. During his absence he turned over the government of the colony to his brother Don Diego, with the assistance of capable advisers. Las Casas, who knew D. Diego personally, represents him as a prudent man, of mild and peaceful disposition, with a frank rather than subtle mind. His plain dress resembled that of an ecclesiastic, and Las Casas formed an opinion that he had a secret wish to join a religious order, which he must have carried out later, as the admiral mentions him, in his will, as an ecclesiastic.† The object of the journey of Columbus to Cibao was to make a first settlement for excavating the mines, and to build on those mountains a fort, to keep the province in subjection and awe, so that the Christians, while collecting gold, should be safe from insult or injury. He, therefore, took with him miners and laborers, with the necessary tools, arms, and ammunition. And as the first impression ever after exerts great influence, he determined, on entering the territory of the dreaded Caouabo for the first time, to make such a military parade as would not only protect them on the march, but spread over the whole country an idea of the formidable power of the White Men; so that the Indians should understand that if they should harm a Spaniard, even travelling alone in their country, there was a force behind to exact terrible vengeance. He, ac-

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. ii, cap. ii.—Fernando Colombo, cap. 1.

† Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, c. lxxxii.—*Will of Columbus*, in Navarrete, *Col. Dipl.*, No. clviii.

cordingly, mustered every man who was in a condition to bear arms, on foot or mounted, and getting together about 400, well equipped, and armed with cuirasses, helmets, arquebuses, lances, swords, and cross-bows, with enough animals to carry the victuals and every thing else required by the laborers and soldiers, on the 12th of March, he passed out of the city in fighting order, with banners displayed, trumpets sounding, and drums beating.*

A multitude of Indians from around Isabella, attracted by the spectacle of so many beautiful banners and shining weapons and armor, and beasts and horses, followed them out of curiosity, and the swarm of the curious increased as they advanced. The first day, they crossed the plain in front of Isabella, and camped at night at the foot of the mountains which shut it in, at a spot where there was a pass to the other side. But the pass was so narrow and steep that it was difficult and dangerous for the infantry, and wholly impracticable for the horse and artillery; for the Indians were satisfied with paths on which they could travel in single file. Then some young cavaliers, who had often been reduced to the necessity of making their own roads during the war against the Moors, full of ardor and zeal, took hold of the tools, and inviting and encouraging the laborers by example rather than words, to join them, set to work, and in a short time rendered the passage practicable for all. This first road opened in the New World was called *El Puerto de los Hidalgos*, or *Gentlemen's Pass*, in honor of the young cavaliers who had worked at it.†

The next day they marched over that rocky path, and reaching the summit of the mountain, believed they saw the promised land. It was the same panorama previously admired by Ojeda and his companions. But for all the marvels told by Ojeda, and though they were used to seeing wonders in the beauty and variety of the vegetation of the New World, yet, in that vast plain extending at their feet on the other side, the reality far exceeded their expectation. The superb forests presented a union of majesty and beauty which only the venerable trees of those lands favored by heaven can boast. Palms of a prodigious height, and enormous acacias, rose in pyra-

* Fernando Colombo, cap. 1.

† Id. l. c.—Hidalgo is a compound word equivalent to *Hijode Algo*, and means the son of somebody, and was a title of honor given to the sons of the wealthy and noble, to distinguish them from the sons of the poor and plebeian, whose father was not worth inquiring after.

mids above the varying foliage of the shorter trees around. The plain was not so very broad, but its length was lost in the far horizon, and throughout its extent columns of smoke rose everywhere, a certain proof of the great numbers living in that immense garden of delight. The Spaniards seemed to see the idea realized, which they had formed of the earthly paradise, and their eyes were never satiated with contemplating and admiring its beauty. Columbus named it *La Vega Real*, or the Royal Plain.*

At the foot of the mountain, the troops resumed the same order of march as on the previous day, and entered on the plain with the sound of loud martial music. What impression must have been made on those peaceful inhabitants, by the sudden issue from the mountains of such a numerous body of strange people, with arms glistening in the sun's rays, dressed in such various colors, with their standards displayed in the breeze? What must they have thought when they first heard the echo of those rocks repeating the sound of trumpets and drums, and first beheld those fiery steeds with the cavaliers on their back?

The cavalry led the march, because the sight of horses produced the greatest fear and wonder in the Indians. Las Casas relates that they supposed at first that the horse and the rider were one, and could not get over their astonishment when they saw a rider separate himself from his horse and dismount. At the approach of the troops, all fled in fear, and took refuge in their houses, and barred themselves in. The bars consisted of small canes hurriedly thrown across the door, and with this defence they felt perfectly secure. Columbus was so moved by this simplicity, that he commanded those frail defences to be respected, and that none should dare to violate the asylum of the poor savages.† But the sight of the other Indians following the Spaniards, the words spoken to them by the interpreters, and some presents given to the most courageous who came near them, soon reassured them, and they came out from their cane forts. The joy then was beyond description; there was a general rush to see the White Men; bringing whatever they possessed,—roots, peppers, cas-ava-bread, all the gold they had on them or in their cabins,—every thing was gladly passed into the Spaniards' hands, and a bit of glass, a gewgaw

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, cap. xc.

† Id. l. c.—Muñoz, *Hist. N. Mundo*, lib. v.

of any sort, repaid them a thousand times over ; a bell put them beside themselves with delight. This demonstration repeated at every village, delayed their march, for it was impossible not to gratify their affectionate curiosity. So simple were the manners of the people and so cordial their union, that the Indians who followed the troops, freely entered the houses and ate whatever they found, without exciting any anger, or even surprise, on the part of the inhabitants. The latter supposing the Spaniards had the same practice, began to take any thing they pleased, but they quickly learnt that the White Men had other customs.* But the very severe punishment for theft among the Indians,† shows clearly that even with them, the right of property was recognized and protected ; whence we must conclude that this giving and taking without objection or shame, was permitted only in the case of guests.

After marching five leagues along the plain, towards evening, they came to the bank of a broad and beautiful river, called Iaque by the Indians, and to which Columbus gave the name of Cane River, from the great number of tall canes growing on its banks. He was far from suspecting that it was the same river which empties into the sea near Monte Christi, and which on his first voyage he had named the *River of Gold*. They passed the night on its banks, and the next day continued their march, to the same wonder and delight of that innocent population. Towards evening of the second day, they reached the foot of a chain of high and steep mountains, where the Vega Real ended and the gold mountains of Cibao began. From this place Columbus sent back some mules to I-abella for further provisions of bread and wine, as the Spaniards could not yet adapt themselves to the food of the Indians, and it was not till afterwards that they discovered that it was better suited to that climate than their own.‡

The next morning, they began to ascend the mountain, by paths so steep and rough that it was with the greatest difficulty that they got through, even leading the horses ; but the thought that only a few steps separated them from the wished-for seat of gold, made this and every other labor light to the Spaniards. The region of Cibao presented a complete contrast to the beauties and delights of the

* Fernando Colombo, cap. 1.

† See book ii, ch. xiv.

‡ Fernando Colombo, cap. 1.

Vega Real. The whole country was rugged and rocky, and its very name indicated its nature ; for Cibao, in the Indian language, means a stone ; and the further they went, the more rugged they found it, and barred by high mountains, bare of trees, with scarce a pine or palm on the banks of the numerous streams and torrents that ran through it. But the Spaniards soon found another sight to rejoice their eyes, in the gold-dust sparkling through the crystal water of nearly every stream. It was not abundant, but as an indication, it excited the highest hopes.

Here, too, the natives received the Spaniards with delight, and not only cordially offered them all the food and gold they possessed, but hunted eagerly for more gold in the sands of the streams, pleased with the most trifling object in exchange for a handful of gold-dust.

The admiral, considering he was now eighteen leagues from Isabella, and it was very difficult to keep his communications open across those rocks, gave up all thought of penetrating further into the country, and looked about for a convenient site for a fort, to serve as a refuge and protection for the Christians passing to and fro, or working in the mines.* The place chosen was a small hill nearly enclosed by a pleasant stream, named Yanique, with a little plain in front, where the rich vegetation was more pleasing from its contrast with the sterility of the mountains.† On this hill they began at once to construct a small fort, strong enough to resist any attack by the Indians, and in the short interval not covered by the stream, they dug a deep trench. Columbus named it St. Thomas, on account of the incredulity of Firmin Cado and his associates, who had refused to believe that gold was found on the island, till they had seen it with their eyes and touched it with their hands.‡

The news of the White Men's arrival spread quickly, and the Indians flocked to them from every side, in the hope of receiving some presents. The admiral telling them he would give nothing except in barter for gold, many of them hurried to a river not far off and returned with a considerable quantity of gold-dust. One old man brought two nuggets weighing an ounce, and thought himself well paid on receiving a little bell. Observing that the admiral

* Fernando Colombo, cap. li.

† Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, cap. xc.

‡ Id. l. c.

seemed to wonder at their size, he treated them as of little value, intimating that in his country, a half-day's journey from there, he could find pieces of gold as big as his fist. Others offered grains of gold weighing half-a-pennyweight, assuring him that in their homes they found pieces as large as a child's head.* But those localities abounding in gold were always indicated as in the depth of some remote district, or on the banks of some inaccessible torrent, and the richest place was always the most distant, for *the land of promise is ever beyond the mountains.*†

Whilst the admiral remained on the banks of the Yanique, superintending the construction of the fort, he dispatched a young cavalier, named Juan de Luxan, at the head of a small armed force, to explore the country, which, from the Indians' reports, should be of about the size of Portugal. Luxan returned, in a few days, with the encouraging report that once out of those gorges and precipices, the land assumed a less horrid and deserted aspect, and that everywhere in the streams and brooks they found little strings of gold running in the water. The Spaniards thought he had also learnt from the Indians in what parts of the island, in what mountains, and in what streams, the greatest quantities of gold were to be found; but on this head he guarded a scrupulous silence, letting only the admiral know what discoveries he had made.‡

The fort of St. Thomas being nearly finished, Columbus gave the command of it to Pedro Margarita, the same cavalier whom he had recommended to the favor of the sovereigns; and leaving him a garrison of fifty-five men, he set out, on Friday, the 21st of March, on his return to Isabella. The streams swollen by the rains, obliged him to halt for a few days in the villages of the Vega Real; and he took advantage of the forced delay to lay out a road between the fort and the colony, and, at the same time, to accustom his people to the food of the natives.

Columbus reached Isabella on the 29th of March, and found his hopes more than realized, in the success of the seeds and plants brought from Europe, planted around the city. The small plants and kitchen vegetables had reached maturity in sixteen days, and the larger vegetables, such as melons and squashes, were fit to eat a

Peter Martyr, dec. i, lib. iii.
Peter Martyr, l. c.

† Irving, *Columbus*, book vi, ch. ix.

month after the seed was sown. The hazel-nuts came up, and the cuttings from vines sent out shoots, in seven days, and the wild vines in twenty-five. A native vine carefully pruned and trained, produced excellent grapes, the sugar-canes surpassed all expectation, and the corn promised an unheard-of yield. And the day after his arrival, a man from the farm brought him an ear from wheat sown in January.*

On the first of April, barely two days after Columbus returned to Isabella, a messenger arrived, in great haste, from Pedro Margarita, commandant of Fort St. Thomas, to say that the Indians refused all communication with the Spaniards, and were deserting their villages in mass, and that the fierce Caonabo was secretly gathering his men for an assault on the fort. But the messenger omitted to say that it was all the fault of the Spaniards that the Indians had so quickly changed their sentiments towards them, and fear and aversion had taken the place of their former good will and hospitality. The fact was, that the admiral had scarcely left, before the Spaniards, freed from the restraint of his presence, had rushed headlong, like those of Nativity before them, into rapine and the indulgence of their passions; and the poor natives had no other means than flight to save their wives and daughters. And Caonabo, on his part, seeing clearly the effect on his own position of the advent of so many White Men in his states, encouraged them to provide in time for their own protection.

Still, Columbus was not greatly disturbed at the news, as he knew the timidity of the Indians, their fear of the whites, and, above all, their dread at the sight of the horses, which they believed to be fierce animals, obeying only the Spaniards, and eating their enemies. He merely sent Margarita a small increase of force and a supply of food and ammunition, and also some sappers to open the road between the fort and the colony.

He was much more uneasy on account of the sickness which was daily increasing among his men, and their consequent discouragement and ill-temper. The very germs of heat and moisture which gave the vegetation such rapid growth, were fatal to the Spaniards, and the colony had been turned into a hospital for sufferers from malignant fever, which, when not mortal, left the patient quite enfeebled,

* Fernando Colombo, cap. li.

so that its effect was disastrous even on those who recovered. To the fear of the fever was added that of a new disease, which broke out among them as the fruit and punishment of their dissoluteness, and their alarm was worse than the pain, as they had no knowledge how to combat this unknown pest which rotted their bodies. The slight provision of medicines brought from Europe being soon exhausted by so much sickness, the poor invalids lay without hope of relief. But much worse than the want of medicines, they felt their solitude and desertion, deprived of attentive and affectionate care, which is more important for the sick than medicine, especially when disease of mind is joined to bodily sickness.

In consequence of this sort of epidemic, the public works were neglected, and it was impossible to cultivate the land, so that the harvest should meet the wants of the colony. And already there began to be a scarcity of European provisions, which were necessary until their stomachs became accustomed to Indian food, as the best safeguard against fever, to which there was great tendency. Therefore, to avoid a complete dearth, that would be disastrous to the sick as well as to the rest, the admiral saw himself compelled to reduce their rations, beginning with his own.

The terrible necessity they were in should have convinced every one of the justice and prudence of this measure; but, on the contrary, complaints and murmurs were raised on every hand; and those who from their rank and dignity should have been the first to defend the admiral, were his foremost and fiercest assailants. The most sadly famous of all in this disloyal work was Fr. Boil, the vicar apostolic. The proud friar could not endure that the admiral, in his strict impartiality, should place him on a level with the rest, and diminish his daily food like that of the last of the soldiers and laborers. Another order of Columbus increased the ill feeling, and came near forcing an open revolt. Their flour was out, and it was with great difficulty that they could grind the grain with the hand-mill; it was, consequently, necessary to construct a mill without delay. But as many of the laborers were sick, and hands were needed for the work, Columbus, considering the urgency of the case, ordered that every one, without distinction, who was in health, should take part in the common labor, regardless of his birth or rank. Many young hidalgos, proud of their noble origin, looked upon this command as an intolerable insult, and protested

that they would never submit to it. Fr. Boil, with increased ill temper towards the admiral, openly took their part, and the hidalgos were rendered more bitter and obstinate in their disobedience, by the name and authority of the vicar apostolic. Then the admiral, to subdue them, and bring them back to their duty, diminished the rations of the most riotous and violent, announcing that he would tighten his hand on them if they continued their disobedience; and the first victim of severer measures was the vicar apostolic himself. The friar was incensed, and taking advantage of his spiritual authority over the whole colony, excommunicated the admiral and put an interdict on the church. To a man profoundly pious and religious, like Christopher Columbus, this act of the vicar apostolic must have been painful beyond measure. But as his conscience justified him, he did not suffer himself to be conquered by the wrathful friar; and as the latter had gone to extremes, he took extreme measures also, and cut off all the vicar apostolic's rations till the excommunication was raised. This had the desired effect: Fr. Boil withdrew the excommunication and interdict, and the trembling hidalgos took up their spades and went to work.* The admiral must have been strongly supported in this measure by the laborers, who were pleased with his inflexible justice to every one; or else, he could not have triumphed over so many gentlemen united and supported by the dreadful thunderbolts of ecclesiastical authority.

The necessity of saving his people, as Herrera remarks, must shield Columbus from the charge of excessive rigor, or exaggerated impartiality, in resorting to the severe measures made necessary by the desperate state of the colony. But still, at the bottom of our heart, we must feel deep sympathy with those poor youths, and while we recognize the necessity and the justice of the admiral's severity, we cannot but see the reasons, and, to a certain degree, the justice, of their protest, their indignation, and their strong opposition. Cases like this occur in life, when each side is in the right, from different points of view, but necessity presses on both, and usually both fall victims to this terrible necessity. It was not the labor, but the humiliation and dishonor to their name, that the young hidalgos fought against; for, in the field, in face of the enemy, they would

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. ii, cap. xii.—Charlevoix, *Hist. St.-Domingue*, lib. ii, p. 125.

have taken double the burden on their shoulders ; but in time of peace, and for the common need, to harden their gentle hands with the pick-axes, bring the sweat from their noble brows, turn up the soil, and cart stones like the meanest peasant, was something so repulsive that their mind refused even to entertain the thought of it. And it was not in pursuit of wealth that they had flocked to the New World, but they had been led by the romantic illusions excited in them by the admiral's reports. They had left the honors, ease, and soft life they enjoyed in Spain, to be with him, and to aid him in the conquest of the great nations he said he had discovered ; and now, instead of the glorious battles and splendid victories that had been promised them, he drove them to degradation and death in his ditches and puddles.

The physical and moral effect of this act on the young men, was truly frightful. The heavy burden of the labor to which they were unused, and, still more, the desperate rage which consumed them, extenuated their delicate bodies, ill supported by their scant and unwholesome food ; they soon felt the fatal influence of the burning sun, and the air impregnated with pestilential vapor. They were struck down by violent fevers, and their case was soon seen to be beyond remedy. Stretched on miserable cots, without medicine or nurse, far from the affection of their families and their mothers, more from moral depression than real physical malady, they expired in a few days. And of so many cavaliers, full of youth and life,—bold, ambitious, proud of their nobility and their valor,—scarcely one small company returned to their home ; all the others perished in despair in that land in which they had fancied they would win the brightest crown of glory and fame the world had ever seen.

We shall see further on the terrible consequences of this unfortunate affair for Columbus in Spain ; here let it suffice to intimate that the small germ of hatred growing out of the repression of Dado's conspiracy, by the death of so many young nobles, grew to a plant full of life and vigor. Even those who before had applauded his inexorable justice and impartiality, as always happens with people who judge men and events by results, without taking all the circumstances into account, joined the others in casting on him all the blame for the wretched end of those unfortunate men, for his deceitful promises by which he drew them to the New World, and his intolerable cruelty in forcing them to a work beyond their strength

and habits. The admiration and veneration for him, already weakened by finding the New World altogether different from what they all expected, received by this occurrence a mortal blow, and his cause was irrecoverably lost.

The memory of this wretched end of so many young cavaliers was long kept alive in Hispaniola, and with it were connected superstitious fears and strange legends. In after-years, when Isabella was deserted by every one on account of the malaria, and its streets and public squares were only heaps of masonry, it became the object of such superstitious terror to the common people, that no one ventured to enter it. Those who passed near it, declared that they heard sepulchral voices by day and night, so that no one would any longer cultivate the adjoining fields. The following account, by Las Casas, shows to what point the imagination of the colonists was excited. "The story goes," he writes, "that two Spaniards, passing, one day, among the ruins of the city, saw in one of those deserted streets two rows of men, whose exterior indicated high birth, and who seemed to be cavaliers of the court. They were richly dressed, in the old Castilian fashion, with long swords hanging to their waists, and on their heads large travelling hats, such as were worn in those times. The two Spaniards were astonished at the sight of persons of such distinguished appearance, supposing that they were living in that city unknown to the inhabitants of the island, and saluting them, they inquired when and how they had come. The cavaliers, without answering, raised their hands courteously to their hats to return the salute, and on taking them off, every head remained in its hat, and they stood thus for a few minutes decapitated, then in a twinkling they vanished. The two Spaniards were so horrified that they were nearly dead, and remained for several days stupefied with fear."*

As soon as the most urgent work required by the wants of the colony was finished, Columbus determined to remove from that place of desolation and death all that were in health, except the workmen and the few strictly necessary for guarding the city and taking care of the sick, and to send them all to explore the island. In the sad state to which he was reduced, this was the best step that could

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, cap. lxxvii.—Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. ii, cap. xii.

be taken. The distractions and various occupations would restore, it might be hoped, the dejected spirits of his men, and their energy would come back ; the presence of so many White Men would impress Caonabo or any other cacique who had sinister intentions ; exact information concerning the island and its treasures would be gained ; and, most important of all, in the constantly increasing dearth of European food, the Spaniards would get accustomed to the victuals of the place, and, sure of the peace and tranquillity of the colony, he could satisfy his long-cherished wish of exploring the coast of Cuba.*

The little force of healthy men that could be got together for the expedition, consisted of 250 cross-bowmen, 110 arquebusiers, sixteen cavaliers, and twenty officers ; and they were placed under command of Pedro Margarita, commandant of Fort St. Thomas, in whom Columbus had the greatest confidence ; and Alonzo Ojeda was charged to take them to him, and replace him in command of the fort.

The admiral wrote Margarita a long letter, giving him minute instructions for his conduct in the delicate mission entrusted to his prudence and loyalty. In the first place, he recommended treating the Indians with impartial justice, protecting them from any insult, and trying to win their friendship and confidence. At the same time, he was to see that the Indians scrupulously respected every thing belonging to the White Men, and to punish severely every sort of theft. All the provisions required for the troops were to be paid for with exactness, by those whom the admiral had designated for that purpose ; in case of refusal, or if it became necessary to seize them forcibly, Margarita was charged to soften the harshness of this measure by mildness of execution, as far as possible. Sales or exchanges of gold and other precious products of the island, were to be made in the presence of the person designated by the general comptroller of the colony, all private traffic being utterly forbidden, as against the orders of the king and queen, and injurious to their own interest. He should keep always in mind that their Highnesses were much more desirous of the conversion of the natives than of all the wealth that could be got from them. He was to keep strict discipline among his men, severely punishing every breach of it ; and the sol-

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lii.

diers must not be allowed to wander in small bands away from the main body, lest they might be cut off by the natives, as these Indians were different from those of Guacanagari ; and although they appeared very timid with the Christians, they were not to be trusted, for they had shown themselves false and cruel, and rarely spared the life of an enemy who fell into their hands.*

Besides these general instructions, Margarita had secret orders to try to surprise Caonabo and his brothers, and to gain possession of their persons. To succeed in this attempt, Columbus suggested to Margarita to send to Caonabo one of his most prudent and crafty officers with ten men, under cover of an embassy. They were to get around him, flatter and caress him, try to win his friendship by present gifts and promises of greater in the future, and bring him to visit Margarita. Then they were to lay hold of him, and as in his naked state he might easily slip through their hands, they were to get him to put on a shirt, cloak, belt, or any thing that would help them to hold him securely. Under the mask of friendship, he proposed the most odious and revolting treachery. But we should not look at the affair from our point of view, in the usual relations of man with man. The warlike nature of that cacique, his astuteness, his power, and his implacable hatred for the Christians, rendered him a dangerous enemy, and so long as he was alive and at large, the Spaniards could look for neither peace nor truce. And, therefore, Columbus believed himself justified in using cunning against cunning with so bloodthirsty an enemy. Nor should we forget that for the Christians, a savage, especially if hostile and cruel, was of no more account than a wild beast ; and the same craft and deceit were lawful to entrap and destroy one as the other. I say this not for the purpose of representing the action of Columbus as right, but that it may be judged in accordance with the times.

Ojeda set out on the 29th of April. Arriving at the River of Gold in the Vega Real, he learnt that those Spaniards coming from St. Thomas to Isabella had obtained from the cacique five of his Indians, who were to carry their clothes from the other bank, but when in the water, fled with the Christians' property ; and that the cacique, instead of punishing the theft, had appropriated the stolen goods to his own use, and refused to give them up.

* Navarrete, *Col. Dipl.*, Doc. No. lxxii

Ojeda, with his natural impetuosity, rushed into the village of the five thieves, and catching one of them, cut off his ears in the public square, and seizing the cacique, with his son and his nephew, sent them all three, in chains, to the admiral. This done, he quietly resumed his march.

The prisoners arrived at Isabella in the greatest despondency. They were accompanied by the cacique of a neighboring village, who had conducted himself with great friendliness towards the Spaniards, and relying on his past services, visited the admiral, to beg pardon for his three compatriots, offering to be responsible for their future behavior. The admiral, knowing the importance of inflicting exemplary chastisement on the first thief caught who had stolen Christian property, received the good cacique with great courtesy, but was inflexible in his severity, and ordered the three prisoners to be brought into the public square with their hands tied behind them, and there publicly condemned to death, to have their heads cut off.

In the opinion of the Indians, the punishment was none too severe; for theft was regarded by them as a crime so fearful, that, to the shame of their laws, those guilty of it were impaled on the spot.* But, although Columbus wished to terrify the natives by exemplary punishment, he was far from intending to inflict so cruel a sentence for so slight a fault. It was a show of rigor, and no more. In fact, when the matter had gone far enough, and the good cacique had redoubled his prayers and tears, Columbus pretended at last to yield to the cacique's intercession, and set free the prisoners, who were nearly dead with affright.

At the same time, there arrived at the fort a cavalier, who reported that as he came by the village of the captured cacique, he met a swarm of Indians leading five Christians taken prisoners while on their way to Isabella. He spurred his horse upon them, and they all took to flight, though they numbered more than 400. After he had crossed the river, seeing them quietly going back after their prisoners, he had only to turn his horse's head for them all to flee desperately, and the five prisoners pursued their way undisturbed.†

These facts satisfied Columbus that he had nothing to fear on the part of people so timid, so long as his orders were punctually carried

* Oviedo, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. vi.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. lii

out, and relying on the disposition he had made of his force for the tranquillity of the colony and of the island, he prepared to leave and continue his discoveries. He appointed a board to manage affairs in his absence, and named as members of it, Fr. Boil, Pedro Fernandez Coronel, Alonzo Sanchez Carvajal, and Juan de Lujan, with his brother Don Diego as president. Leaving at Isabella the two largest ships, which drew too much water to be of use in exploring the coasts and rivers, he sailed with three caravels, the Niña, now called the *Sta. Clara*, the *S. Juan*, and the *Cordera*.[†]

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Columbus starts to explore the coast of Cuba.—Discovery of Jamaica.—Return to Cuba.—Laborious and perilous navigation among the islands called the Queen's Gardens.—Columbus proposes to sail around the land and return to Spain by way of the east.—The condition of the vessels and discouragement of his companions compel him to put back (1494).

COLUMBUS weighed anchor in the harbor of Isabella on the 24th of April, and sailed to the westward, intending to resume the exploration of the coast of Cuba at Cape Alpha, where he had left off the year before, and continue from there southward.

We have seen how, after the information gathered at the River de los Mares, he gave up the notion that Cuba was a continent and came back to the opinion that it was an island;‡ but there remained always a doubt in his mind, which he resolved to clear up on this voyage.‡ In any case, island or not, the direction he was taking would bring him nearer to the longed-for regions of Mangi and Cathay.

He reached Port Nativity that same day, and stopped there to

* Cura de Los Palacios, cap. cxxiii.—Fernando Colombo, cap. liii.

† See ch. xvii.

‡ Fernando Colombo, cap. liii.—Cura de los Palacios, cap. cxxiii.

have an interview with Guacanagari, who, he was aware, had gone back to his old residence. He could not be induced to believe that this good cacique was guilty of the horrible perfidy which he was charged with, and he hoped that a frank explanation would dissipate suspicion, and restore their former friendly relations. But Guacanagari sustained his suspicions, or rather increased them ; for, at the first sight of the ships, he withdrew and hid himself in the interior of the island. Many of his Indians assured the admiral that he would shortly make him a visit ; but unwilling to delay his voyage on such doubtful promises, Columbus resumed his course. Delayed by adverse winds and by calm, they only reached Cape Alpha the 30th ; sailing from there along the southern coast some twenty leagues, they anchored in a broad bay, which they called *Puerto Grande*, from its size, but is now known by its previous name of Guantnamo. The entrance was very deep, 150 paces in width, and it expanded within, like a lake, in the midst of a woody and mountainous country all covered with trees, some in blossom, and some bearing fruit. Two huts built of canes were seen close to the shore, and fires were burning here and there. The admiral landed with some of his men, well armed, and Diego Columbus, the faithful interpreter, and proceeded to the huts. But neither here nor at the fires did they see anybody ; on the contrary, they found the preparations for a plain but plentiful repast had been broken off in confusion. There was a quantity of fish, utias, and guanias, some hanging on branches of trees, and some roasting on wooden spits before the fire. It was clear from this that the natives, in sudden alarm at sight of the ships, had hastily fled, leaving every thing as it was. To the Spaniards, accustomed, of late, to slender fare, this rich dinner seemed a providence of God, and, falling upon it, they soon made away with it, except the guanias, which they looked on with disgust and would not touch, although they were aware that the Indians regarded them as the most exquisite of food.

After the repast, as the Spaniards were wandering about the neighborhood, they saw some seventy Indians on top of a rock, looking at them with fear and suspicion ; but as soon as they saw the Spaniards coming towards them, they fled precipitately. Only one, with more curiosity or courage than the rest, stood still, but with his eyes fixed on the Spaniards, ready to vanish also, if necessary. The Indian interpreter then moved a few paces in rdvance, and, in his own lan-

guage, invited him, in a friendly way, to talk with him. The terrified savage took courage on seeing one of his own figure and language coming cheerful and uninjured out of the fearful company, and they approached each other. Learning that the Spaniards harmed nobody, but gave the most beautiful presents, he ran at once to tell his companions; and in a short time a number of Indians came down from the mountain and approached the Spaniards, with signs of great reverence. They appeared to have the same mild disposition as the inhabitants of Hispaniola. They said they had been sent to the coast by their cacique to get fish for a solemn banquet he was preparing for another cacique of those parts, and they were roasting the fish so that they should not be spoilt on the road. They showed no displeasure at the consumption of their provisions by the Spaniards, saying that a single night's fishing would make it all up. But Columbus, true to his principle of justice, insisted on compensating them for their loss, and gave them a few trinkets, with which they thought themselves richly repaid.*

The next day, which was the first of May, the Spaniards left the harbor and continued coasting to the west. The news of their approach spread rapidly from village to village, and everywhere they were cordially welcomed, being supposed, as usual, to have descended from heaven; the ships were surrounded with canoes, and men and women, old and young, bringing bread, fish, water; and all was gladly given without asking any thing in return. The admiral, however, never failed to present them with some trifles, from a sense of justice, and to instil in their simple minds a good opinion of the White Men.†

Asked if they had any gold, or where it was to be found, they all answered indicating the south, where, they said, there was an island that yielded great quantities. These answers excited the imagination of every one, because, a year before, on the first voyage, when they were on the north shore of the island, they heard of a land abounding in gold, lying to the south, and some began to think it might be the famous Babeque so long sought after, but never discovered. This led the admiral to conceive a strong desire to see this new land, and the further he proceeded on his voyage, the greater was his inclination to interrupt the course he had laid out, and sail south,

* Peter Martyr, dec. i, lib. iii.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. liiii.

in the direction indicated by those savages. He yielded to this inclination, and, on the 3rd of May, turning southwards, he entered the open sea in search of the coveted island.

On the second day of this course, they began to discover the appearance of mountains in the distance, and the next day they came to an island with so many villages that, at first sight, they judged it the finest country they had yet discovered.

At their approach, about eighty canoes shot out from shore and advanced against the Spaniards as much as a league from the land. These were filled with natives, painted of various colors, decorated with feathers, and armed with sharp wooden lances, uttering frightful yells, and making threatening gestures. But the friendly words of Diego Columbus, the interpreter, and the exhibition of presents, a few of which were given to those in the nearest canoe, established peace, and the squadron was suffered to proceed quietly and anchor in a bay near the middle of the island, to which, from its great beauty, the admiral gave the name of *Santa Gloria*. It is now known as *St. Ann's Bay*.

The next day, they sailed further to the west to look for a more suitable place for caulking and repairing the *Santa Clara*, which was leaking. A few leagues on, they found what they were looking for; but as a boat went ahead to take soundings, two large canoes filled with Indians came out to prevent their landing, and arrows were shot with fury towards the Spaniards, though the distance was too great to reach them. The admiral, desirous of avoiding any act that would prevent the good relations he hoped to establish with these Indians, recalled the boat, and instead, advanced the whole fleet, trusting that the sight of those large machines would restrain the ardor of the savages. But the effect was the reverse; for, on the approach of the greater danger, they yelled desperately for help, and a number of other canoes joined them, and in an instant the beach was covered with armed Indians. They were painted different colors, chiefly black; some had a girdle of palm-leaves, all wore tufts and crowns of handsome feathers; and as they shot their arrows against the vessels, they made the shore resound with their war-cries.

Then the admiral concluded that further forbearance would look like cowardice, and increase their boldness. On the other hand,

* Cura de Los Palacios, cap. cxxv.

there was pressing need of caulking the ship, and of sending men a-hore for water ; and the savages must be so intimidated as not to disturb his men again. He, therefore, sent the small-boats close in shore, with many men well armed, who, as soon as they were within bow-shot, let fly a shower of arrows, wounding many of the Indians, and throwing them all into confusion. Springing on shore, with another discharge, they put them all to flight. A large dog had chanced to accompany them, lying in one of the boats near his master ; obeying his nature, he sprang ashore, barking fiercely, and, excited by the cries of the Spaniards, pursued the fugitives, biting with fury their naked legs.* The Indians had only one species of dogs, and those were timid, and never barked, and were only kept to fatten for eating.† They, therefore, knew nothing of the horrible beast that chased the fugitives with such fury, cutting off their escape, and, with fearful noise, inserting his teeth in their flesh. Their terror was such that they never looked back, but rushing one over another, they gave every chance to the infuriated dog to tear their naked limbs.

From this the Spaniards conceived the idea of using dogs, as powerful auxiliaries against the Indians, and they afterwards employed them extensively, with as much success as cruelty and barbarity.

They now landed and took formal possession of the island, naming it Santiago ; but their successors kept up its original Indian name, and called it Jamaica. They named the bay where they anchored, Puerto Bueno.*

During the rest of that day, no further sign of a man was visible on the shore ; but the next morning, six Indians were seen at a distance, making friendly signals. They were messengers from the cacique, come to offer peace. They were well received, and sent back with gifts for the cacique. After this peace-making, naked Indians, painted in all colors, flocked from every direction, bringing provisions of the same kind as those of the other islands, but of better quality.

These friendly communications with the natives continued during the three days that the vessels remained in the bay. These islanders were not only much superior to those of Cuba and Hayti in intelligence and courage, but they also appeared to be more industrious.

* Cura de Los Palacios, cap. cxxv.

† Peter Martyr, *Ocean*, dec. i, lib. iii.

‡ Fernando Colombo, cap. liv.

Their canoes, hollowed, like the others, from a single tree, were better constructed, and were ornamented with carving and painting ; and the caciques vied with each other which should have the largest and finest. Columbus saw one that measured ninety-six feet in length, and eight in width, hollowed from a single tree ;* something almost incredible to us, but not extraordinary in a country where the trees, never touched by the hand of man, sometimes attained a fabulous height.

Having repaired the ship, on the 9th of May, they continued along the coast to the west, keeping so close in shore that they were continually followed and surrounded by the canoes of the savages offering every thing they possessed, in exchange for the smallest articles of the Spaniards

On the 14th of May, after sailing twenty-five leagues, they reached the western extremity of Jamaica, when Columbus, finding himself deceived in the expectation of finding gold-mines on the island, as he had been promised, returned to Cuba to resume his voyage along its coast, "determined not to leave it, till he had sailed 500 or 600 leagues, to make sure whether it was an island or a continent."† Just as he was leaving Jamaica, a young Indian came to the admiral, praying to be taken along to see the Christian lands. He was followed by his parents and many others, earnestly begging him to desist from the strange notion. There were his sisters weeping bitterly, and, at one point, he showed the struggle going on within him, between affection for his own people withholding him, and the desire to see new sights urging him to leave. The latter won, and the young man, to escape the prayers and lamentations of his friends, tore himself from their arms, and hid himself in a corner of the ship, where he remained a long while in silence, till the anguish of his heart was somewhat relieved. The admiral, moved by the young man's affection, and admiring his courage, commanded him to be treated with all kindness.

Washington Irving remarks that it would be interesting to know the after-life of this savage, and the impressions which the wonders of civilization made upon him,—whether the land of the White Men equalled his expectations ; whether, as is usual with savages, he pined amid the splendors of cities for his native forests ; and whether he

* *Cura de Los Palacios*, cap. cxxiv.

† *Fernando Colombo*, cap. liv.

ever returned to the arms of his family. But the early Spanish historians seem never to have interested themselves in the feelings or fortunes of these first visitors from the New to the Old World. No further mention is made of this youthful adventurer.

On the 18th of May, they came to the southernmost point of Cuba, which they called *Cabo de la Cruz*, and, to their astonishment, they found they were eagerly expected by the natives and the cacique, who had heard of them the year before, when they sailed a short distance along the northern coast of Cuba.* Columbus tried to ascertain from them whether Cuba was an island or a continent, but was unable to reconcile their contradictory answers, as they said it was an island, but of such extent that no one had ever found the end of it.

Continuing their course westward, a few leagues further on, they found the coast suddenly bending to the north-east, and extending in this direction as far as they could see. They, accordingly, altered their course to keep along the coast, and soon afterwards were surprised by a violent storm, accompanied with such fearful thunder and lightning that it seemed the end of the world had come. Their fear was no greater than their peril; for the sea, in this place, was full of sand-bars, shoals, and small islands just rising out of the water; and if caught there in the middle of a storm, there was imminent danger of being dashed against a rock or on a bar, and inevitably lost. Fortunately, the storm was of short duration, and the sky and the sea soon became calm. As they advanced, the small islands increased in number. On the second day, they had counted 160, and many more were discovered on the following days, and, as far as they could see towards the north-east, north-west, and south-west, everywhere were rocks and islands, some bare and sandy, others covered with verdure, and some crowned with lofty forests; they varied in size from less than a league to four, and as they neared Cuba they increased in fertility and height. As it was impossible, on account of their number, to give each a separate name, the admiral comprised them all under that of the *Queen's Gardens*. Between these islands there was a continual winding of little channels, through which the ships could pass only with the greatest difficulty, feeling their way

* Cura de Los Palacios, cap. cxxvi.

by constant soundings. Sometimes they had to alter their direction twenty times in one hour, to follow the channels, and sometimes the channels were so narrow that they had to take in all the sails and tow the ships. And with all these precautions, and careful soundings of the bottom, and with men at the masthead constantly watching the sea, the vessels frequently struck on the bars, of which the place was full, and it was tiresome work to get them off.*

The same fury of the elements, which was so fearful and dangerous the first day, returned at the same hour every day afterwards. In the morning, the wind rose with the sun in the east, and following his course through the day, blew from the west at sunset. At that hour, a thick fog rose from the east among the islands, and gathering in black clouds, covered the whole heavens; and then began from every side an incessant darting of lightning and cracking of loud thunder, as if it were the day of doom; but when the moon shone out, all the clouds dissolved in rain and winds, and the sky was again as clear as before.†

Those islands seemed uninhabited, so far as they could judge from what they saw in passing; but on one somewhat larger than the others, they discovered a village. They landed there on the 22nd of May, but the inhabitants had all fled at their approach. The quantities of fish found in the dwellings, indicated that this was their principal food, and fishing their usual occupation. Further on they met some of these Indians in a canoe, fishing, and were struck by the singular method they made use of. There was a fish in those waters which had on its head and down to the middle of its back a succession of small tentacles, or sharp points, with which it clung to any fish swimming near, and it was almost impossible to detach it from its prey. Now, the Indians took these fish, and tying them by the tail with long threads, let them swim about in the water. They generally kept on the surface till they saw their prey, and then darting swiftly upon it, stuck their points into the neck of the fish, and never let go till both were drawn out of the water. The Spaniards also saw them catch in the same way a tortoise of great size; and Fernando Colombo, who relates this, says he has seen them hold on to very large fish.‡

It was something new to see the carelessness of these fishermen

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lvi

† Id. cap. lv

‡ Id. cap. lv

at the Spaniards' approach. They showed no fear or ill-will ; but quietly waited till a boat came near them, and then made signs to wait till they were through fishing. When this was over, they went to the Spaniards to see what they wanted, and were taken to the ships. The admiral spoke kindly to them, as usual, and gave them various trifles ; in return, they offered fish, nets, fish-hooks, gourds full of drinking water, and whatever they had ; but Columbus would accept only the fish. Asked for information, all they could tell was that there was no end to the number of islands over all that sea. Letting the fishermen go, the Spaniards continued on their course, without then or afterwards meeting another living soul while they were in that archipelago.

All those islands, and especially those nearest to Cuba, were inhabited by cranes red as scarlet, parrots, and many small birds of various beautiful species. There were a great number of mute dogs getting fattened, as we have said, for eating, and on the beach they saw an extraordinary quantity of tortoises of enormous size. And the air was so laden with fragrant odors that the Spaniards seemed to be amongst roses and the finest perfumes.*

On the 3rd of June, they landed in Cuba to get fresh water, but the place, thickly wooded, was without a living soul. The coast, leaving its northern direction, ran again to the west, and sailing always close to the shore, ten leagues beyond this deserted place, they found a large village, where the natives received them kindly, and eagerly supplied them with every kind of food they possessed. Being asked about the country, they said that further to the west the sea was again covered with islands, without number, and was very shallow ; as to Cuba, they agreed that it was an island, but that forty moons would not suffice to reach its extremity. They added that more extensive and accurate information could be had of the inhabitants of Mangon, the province next to theirs, and extending far to the westward. The name of Mangon made a strong impression on Columbus, who imagined it only a slight variation of Mangi, the southern portion of the empire of the Grand Khan. He made particular inquiries about this province of Mangon, and, amongst other things, he thought they answered that the natives of that region had tails like animals, and, therefore, wore clothes to conceal them.†

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lv.

† Cura de Los Palacios, cap. cxxvii.

Mandeville had related that a similar report was current among some of the extreme eastern populations of Asia, who, living in perfect nudity, ridiculed their civilized neighbors for wearing clothes, supposing they did so to hide some defect of figure.

After this, Columbus was more than ever persuaded that, by following the coast in a westerly direction, he would come to the civilized regions of Asia; and as he believed he had found the rich province of Mangi in the region of Mangou, so in the people whom the simplicity of these inhabitants represented with clothes and tails, he beheld the long-robed inhabitants of the empire of Tartary.

With this pleasing illusion of soon reaching the territory of the Grand Khan, they resumed with impatience their course to the west. They were then off that part of the southern coast of Cuba where, for nearly thirty-five leagues, the sea is open and the ships have free course of navigation. On the left, was the vast ocean, whose deep blue tint assured them of its depth; on the right, was the province of Ornofay, abounding in forest; and majestic hills, extending, like an amphitheatre, all along the shore.

The arrival of the vessels spread wonder and delight in all the villages they came to; the inhabitants had heard of their coming, and hastened to the beach to welcome, with cries of joy, the men descended from heaven. They went out to meet them in their pirogues, or swimming, carrying every thing they had in the way of food and produce of the ground, to offer them; and they regarded them with a feeling of veneration which was almost adoration. In the evening, after the rain, which fell regularly at that time, whilst a gentle breeze from the shore wafted to the ships all the perfume gathered in the dense forests and the variegated meadows of that region, they heard on every side the gradually increasing sound of the artless songs and music of the natives, who were doubtless celebrating, in their national songs and dances, the arrival of the White Men.

In the solemn stillness of the sea, the transparent clearness of the sky studded with stars, and the air full of delightful perfumes, those glad songs filled the heart of Columbus with inexpressible delight. In his usual simpleness of expression, he wrote that the night seemed to him not more than an hour long.* But not many years passed before this coast, described by Columbus as so gay and animated,

* Cura de Los Palacios, l. c.

was all a silent solitude. Its population was soon extinct under the implacable rule of those strangers, whose coming was so gladly welcomed. Alexander Humboldt, who visited, with devout reverence, the lands discovered by Columbus, also passed a night at sea off that coast ; but how different his impression ! “ I passed,” he says, “ the night on deck. What a solitude ! Not a light to indicate the hut of a fisherman. For the distance of fifty leagues, there is no longer a village, where the land was inhabited, in the time of Columbus, down to the very edge of the sea. When the ground is dug into, or the surface of the soil is ploughed by torrents, there were often found hammers of stone and vessels of copper, last relics of the island’s ancient inhabitants.”*

This land, once so smiling, is the coast extending along the Gulf of Xagua, west of the city of Trinidad.

In less than two days they crossed the Gulf of Xagua, and found themselves again in a sea filled with small islands and rocks. Soon after entering this new labyrinth, at the turn of the channel, they were in a sea as white as milk, and turbid as if it had been mixed with flour. This was caused by a very fine sand, or particles of lime, which the agitation of the waves and currents raised from the bottom ; but was alarming to them, because, shut up in those narrow channels, with so many bars and shoals, the navigation was a hundredfold more dangerous when they would not see the bottom. Proceeding with the greatest caution, they found themselves, a little further on, in a channel so narrow that it was impossible to turn, and there was no hold for their anchors on the bottom, while the wind was blowing hard, and they expected every moment to be thrown against a rock or on a sand-bar. Getting through providentially, they came, at last, to a little island, where they found anchorage and passed the night in prey to the most lively anxiety. Most of them were opposed to proceeding further, saying they could be very fortunate if they ever got back. But Columbus could not be induced to give up the attempt when he thought he was just at the end, and he did all in his power to keep up the courage of the others.

At daybreak, he sent the lightest of the caravels to examine the passage and to work its way to the shore to get fresh water, from the want of which the ships were beginning to suffer. The caravel re-

* Al. Humboldt, *Essai Pol. sur Cuba*, t. ii, p. 25.

turned and reported that there were as many rocks hidden under the water as in the *Queen's Gardens*; that the shore was bordered by deep marshes and forests of mangroves, growing far in the water, and so close together that they formed, as it were, an impenetrable wall; that the land within appeared to be fertile and mountainous, and that columns of smoke rising from various parts gave signs of numerous dwellings.*

With this caravel in the lead, Columbus ventured to take the other two to the coast, and, after incredible labor, he succeeded in getting to a place where the shore swept far to the east, forming a bay so deep that the eye could not reach its extremity. The angle on the east side of the bay was named, by the admiral, *Punta Serafina*. To the north, they saw high mountains in the distance; they turned their bows in that direction, and arriving there the next day, anchored near a beautiful grove of palms. This was the great bay of Batanabo. Some seamen landed to get wood and water, and while the rest were attending to this duty, one of them, who had a passion for hunting, had slowly moved from tree to tree, bow in hand, when suddenly he ran back screaming for help. He reported seeing through the narrow opening of the trees and bushes, a man dressed in a long white garb reaching to his feet like a friar's habit, and at first he took him for the friar chaplain of the admiral. But he saw behind him two more, and then more still, at least thirty, armed with lances and maces. They made no sign of hostility; in fact, they all remained quiet, except the first, who advanced slowly. But terrified by their number, he had screamed for help and taken to flight. At this, the detachment hurried to their boats to return and report this news to the admiral.

The admiral had no doubt they were the inhabitants of Mangon, and the next day he sent a strong force, well armed, to examine the place and the people living there, with orders to penetrate into the country as much as forty miles, as the inhabited parts might possibly be quite distant from the shore, and back of the high mountains extending along the coast. But they returned that same day, because they discovered no sign of a road or path, and the forests were so entangled with bushes and plants that they were impassable, and in the opening they found the grass up to their breasts, and so

* Cura de Los Palacios, cap. cxxviii.

thick that the labor of pushing it aside and trampling it down, completely exhausted them before going much more than a mile. The admiral then sent another detachment in another direction, but finding in the ground marks of the claws of animals which they supposed must be lions or griffins, and fearful of encountering them, they gave up the enterprise and returned to the ships.

In after-years, the island of Cuba was traversed in every direction, and nowhere were any inhabitants found that wore clothing. Consequently, these men clothed in white could only have been an illusion of that hunter, who, wandering in the silent woods, must have been thinking of the mysterious inhabitants of Mangon, when, unexpectedly, he saw perhaps a flock of cranes. These animals are in the habit of feeding in flocks, while one keeps a little distance in advance of the rest, like a sentinel. When seen in the openings of the woodlands, standing in rows along a smooth savanna, or in a glassy pool of water, their height and erectness give them, at the first glance, the semblance of human figures.*

The whole coast was marsh or forest, and they had to sail nine leagues further to the west before they discovered a hut or an inhabitant. Great was the disappointment of Columbus when he saw the inhabitants as naked as all the rest of the Indians; but his active imagination soon reconciled this fact with his previous illusion, by supposing that these were mere fishermen living on the wild shore, whilst the civilized inhabitants dwelt further inland. Their language or dialect being unintelligible to the Indian interpreter, Columbus attempted to get some information from these inhabitants by means of signs, and it seemed to him that in answer to his inquiries they said that behind the high mountains was a powerful prince ruling over numerous extensive provinces, who wore a large and long white robe, and never spoke a word, but gave his commands by signs, which were immediately obeyed, and that he was called by the name of Saint.† Las Casas says that in all Cuba there was no cacique ever known that wore clothing, or in any other respect answered to this description. That king, therefore, with the title of Saint was only the reflection of the image stamped on Columbus's

* Irving, *Columbus*, bk. vii, ch. iv.

† Cura de Los Palacios, cap. cxxviii.—Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. ii, c. xiv.—Fernando Colombo, cap. lvi

mind of the mysterious Priest Janni, or, as he is usually called, Prester John. This was said to be a great monarch in the East, both prince and priest, of whom all the travellers in those regions spoke with confidence, though none of them could even tell in what place he held his court, and no researches ever succeeded in throwing light on this obscure matter, as it always turned out to be at a great distance from where it was looked for. But this did not destroy the belief that this mysterious being was living and reigning with great power somewhere. In recent times, the question had been revived, and John II, king of Portugal, at the very commencement of his reign, had sent a deputation of friars, with letters and embassies, to search for the empire of Prester John.

As to Cuba, these inhabitants also said it was an island,* requiring at least twenty days' journey to reach its western extremity; and then they said they were not altogether sure it had any end. Columbus took one of them as a guide, and proceeded in the direction of the high mountains where they said the saint resided. But they had hardly started before they found themselves again surrounded by islands, rocks, and sand-bars, and were obliged to go through the same labor of creeping along narrow channels. On the 11th of June, they found themselves in a channel with hardly half-a-fathom of water, and had to row with all their might to get the ship over the shoal. Further on, they met such a quantity of tortoises as to cover the whole surface of the water, each six or seven feet in length; and the next day, at sunrise, a cloud of cormorants, flying towards Cuba, obscured the sun's light. The day following, they saw a new sight—myriads of brilliant butterflies fluttering about the fleet, till the usual evening rain dispersed them.†

As they gradually approached the high mountains, the land became low, till the whole shore presented the appearance of one immense marsh, beyond which rose gigantic forests, so dense that they formed an impenetrable barrier to any one trying to pass into the interior of the island. The Spaniards were all the more disappointed at this barrier, as they saw frequent columns of smoke rising on the mountains beyond the forests, and becoming more numerous as the ships advanced, until they could see them on every height. Whether they arose from huts and villages, or were lit by the Indians

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lvi.

† Id. l. c.

to give warning of the approaching danger from the sea, in either case, they were evidence that the country was well inhabited; and yet, they could see no one, communicate with no one. They sailed on in this way for several days, looking, in vain, for an opening into the interior.

At the same time, they were suffering severely for want of fresh water, being unable to find any in these marshy lands. But afterwards, they found a small spring under a palm-tree

Even to-day, no vessel but the furtive and solitary bark of the smuggler, ventures to go near that desert coast, where every step is attended with difficulty and danger.

The coast trended generally to the south-west, and Columbus, ever bent on finding resemblances in what he discovered with what he knew was told of the extreme east of Asia, remarked that this direction corresponded exactly with the description given of those distant coasts. This new argument confirmed him in the opinion that Cuba was not an island, but a continent, and he was persuaded he had now reached, by the west, the extreme eastern confines of the ancient world, as laid down by Ptolemy, and felt certain that, continuing his voyage in that direction, he would come to the point on the coast where the Golden Chersonese of the ancients, called by moderns the peninsula of Malacca, extends over ten degrees into the Ocean. It is not necessary to describe the effect produced by the thought that he had traversed the entire New World and entered again on the Old, by its most remote borders, hardly known even by name to the most learned in geographical science. But the labors and dangers overcome, did not invite his magnanimous heart to repose, but only stimulated it to further labors and dangers; and his ardent fancy was ever opening new horizons to his activity. So now, he was no sooner confirmed in the idea that he had reached the confines of the Old World, than he planned a new route by which he would return in triumph to Spain, astonishing all by the boldness of his new enterprise, hardly less than by his discovery of the New World. This was to sail beyond the Golden Chersonese, and enter the seas frequented by the ancients, and surrounded by the rich nations of the East. After crossing the Gulf of the Ganges, and sailing along the coast of Taprobana (the modern Ceylon), he thought of two courses which he could take. One was to reach the Straits of Bab el Mandeb, and, sailing through the Red Sea, cross over to Jerusalem by land, and

then sail from Jaffa by way of the Mediterranean, to Spain. The other, was to coast along the east of Africa, passing around its southern extremity, and, advancing triumphantly along the coast of Guinea, meet the Portuguese, who for more than seventy years had been slowly attempting to reach that same southern extremity of Africa, and whom he would thus have preceded ; and in this way, after making the entire circuit of the globe, furl his victorious sails at the Pillars of Hercules, the *neq plus ultra* of the ancient-world.* Whoever can carry himself back in thought to those times, to the condition of navigation, and the scantiness of geographical knowledge, will easily perceive that the boldness of this project was a fit corollary of that which had borne him on to the discovery of the New World.

The companions of Columbus, among whom were skilful and experienced navigators, all shared his opinion that they were coasting along the continent of Asia, and approaching the confines of Eastern civilization ; but so far were they from sharing his enthusiasm, and encouraging his desire, that they dreaded every further step they were compelled to take. The ships were greatly injured by the continual strain on shoals, their cables and rigging were worn, the provisions were growing scanty, and part of the biscuit was spoilt by the salt water which oozed in through many leaks. Meanwhile, the shore continued to present the same desolation, the sea was full of rocks and shoals, and no indication was seen on any side of an end of these fatigues and perils. They, therefore, joined in begging the admiral to proceed no further. Every thing showed that this was a continent, and if they went further they would, no doubt, reach the regions of civilization ; but it was greatly to be feared that before they arrived there, their stock of provisions would be completely exhausted, and the vessels unfit for navigation. Columbus felt the reasonableness and justice of this petition, and yielded to their wishes. But how sadly he felt at being obliged to renounce so many fine hopes when he was just on the point of reaching out his hand to pluck the wished-for fruit, is shown by the earnest care he took to place beyond question that he had reached the main land of Asia, and to secure effectively the glory of this deed against all envy and malice.

* Cura de Los Palacios, cap. cxxiii.—Fernando Colombo, cap. 1v.



For this purpose, he continued for four days longer along this coast, which bent always to the south-west, till all his companions were satisfied, and unanimously declared that there was not a shadow of doubt that it was a continent, as it was impossible that such extent of land should be an island. Then, on the 12th of June, he sent the notary, Fernando Perez de Luna, to each vessel, with four witnesses, to ask every one on board, one by one, from the captain down to the ship-boy, if he believed that what was before them was a continent, the beginning and end of the Indies, across which it was possible to return by land to Spain, and by following the coast of which, they would soon come to a civilized land. Whoever had the slightest doubt, was required to express it.

The officers, after examining their charts, consulting their journals, and calculating that they had sailed 335 leagues along the coast,* a greater distance than any island could extend, and as the land still continued to the southward further than they could see, and not only the direction of the land, but also its character, answered in every respect to the description given of the eastern coast of Asia,—after long and mature deliberation, unanimously declared, under oath, that no doubt remained in their minds in this regard. Soldiers, boys, every one swore to the same belief.

For fear that from caprice or malice some one of them might afterwards change his opinion so solemnly expressed, the notary announced, in the admiral's name, that any one who should retract would be punished,—if an officer, by a fine of 1,000 maravedis; if a ship-boy or other person of small account, by a hundred lashes, and by having his tongue cut out. The notary drew up a report of the whole proceeding with all the depositions and names, and the instrument is preserved in the archives of Seville.†

This singular performance took place in the deep bay called, by some, the Bay of Philipina, and by others, the Bay of Cortez.

At this very time, as has been remarked, a ship-boy, from the masthead, might have seen the group of islands to the south, and beheld the open sea beyond.‡ Two or three days' further sail would have carried Columbus round the southern extremity of Cuba; would have dispelled his illusion, and might have given an entirely

* This calculation evidently includes not only the coast, but the whole distance about it which the vessels had sailed.

† Navarrete, *Col. Dipl.*, Doc. lxxvi. ‡ Muñoz, *N. Mundo*, l. v, p. 217.

different course to his subsequent discoveries. In his present conviction, he lived and died, believing, to his last hour, that Cuba was the extremity of the Asiatic continent.*

CHAPTER XXIX.

Return voyage along the southern coast of Cuba.—Crossing to Jamaica and Hispaniola, and navigation of their southern coasts.—Columbus has an attack of lethargy, and is carried to Isabella as though dead (1494).

ON the 12th of June, giving the wished-for order to return, instead of keeping along the Cuban coast, the admiral commanded them to steer south-east, in the hope of finding a passage free from the difficulties and dangers they had encountered in coming: after a few leagues, they discovered an island of some size, where the mountains, clothed with broad forests of green pines, presented a spectacle of beauty and grandeur in the midst of the squalor of so many deserted little islands and rocks scattered over all the sea around. At the present day, it is known as Pine Island; Columbus named it Evangelista. Here they made a short stop to renew their supply of water and wood, and then continued on to the south, keeping near the island, in the hope of finding an open sea after passing its southern extremity. It was the admiral's intention to sail then straight to Hispaniola, passing along the northern coast of Jamaica; but they found their way stopped after a few leagues. They supposed they were in a channel which would let them pass to the south-east, but instead of that, they were in what is now called the Lagoon of Siguanca, which is a bay extending a great distance into

* Irving, *Columbus*, bk. viii, ch. v.—The doubt whether Cuba was an island or a continent lasted for many years, and it was only in 1508, two years after the death of Columbus, that the truth was finally known. In that year, Sebastian da Ocampo set out, by order of King Ferdinand, for the express purpose of exploring the entire coast of Cuba, and finding out its real nature. (Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. vii.)

the island. Grief and dismay were painted on every face as they found themselves nearly surrounded by land, reduced, as they were, almost to the end of their supplies. Observing this, the admiral, with a free and cheerful countenance, told them they ought rather to thank God that this had occurred in the beginning of their voyage, for if it had happened later, the vessels were so out of repair and the provisions so near exhausted that they could not have got through, whereas, now they could without difficulty. § Seeking to revive the courage of his men by these and other suitable words, he returned to their last anchoring-place. Then starting again, on Wednesday, the 25th of June, they sailed to the north-east to regain the coast of Cuba.

The fatigues and perils in returning were not less than before, and their fears were increased by fresh phenomena met with on the way. A little beyond Evangelista they entered a sea so spotted with green and white that it looked like shoals, although there were two fathoms of water, and through this they sailed for seven leagues. After that, they entered a sea white as milk, and dazzling their sight, through which they sailed four leagues ; then came a third, black as ink, and this lasted till they were close to Cuba. † Reaching, at last, the coast, they sailed close to it towards the east, with baffling winds, and always athwart channels and shoals ; during which tiresome crossing, on the 30th of June, as Columbus was writing the records of his voyage, his ship was so badly stranded that the usual methods, such as sending anchors astern and pulling on them, were ineffectual to free her, and it became necessary to haul her forwards over the shoal, which was accomplished with the greatest difficulty and great injury to the vessel.

In this injured condition, the vessels were navigated as well as the wind and shoals permitted over a sea still white and less than a fathom deep. To this hindrance was added the annoyance of periodical rains pouring down at sunset every day. And they had now been nearly two months struggling day and night against every obstacle, and in addition to their fatigue and trouble, they had always suffered from want of provisions ; for they were able to bring but little from Isabella, and on the desert and marshy shores, and the rocks among which they had been sailing, it was seldom, and only

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lvii.

† Id. l. c.

with difficulty and exhaustion, that they succeeded in hunting some scant relief; and the few provisions they had collected there, either fish or the produce of the land, never lasted more than one day, for the heat and the moisture of the climate soon spoilt them; so that the ration of each one was reduced to one pound a day of mouldy bread and a little wine.

Issuing, at last, from that labyrinth of deserted rocks and islands, they came into the Gulf of Xagua, and were again delighted with the perfumes spreading from the flowery fields and forests of the pleasant province of Ornofay. Finding there a good river, Columbus entered it on the 7th of July, and anchored to take in wood and water, and give his men a little rest, which was urgently needed, as the fatigue of the navigation and the privations they had endured, had exhausted their strength.

The cacique of the district received them with every demonstration of pleasure, and the inhabitants, as elsewhere, vied with each other in offering them the best food they had, as well as every thing else they thought would be acceptable. The next day being Sunday, Columbus, with most of his men, went ashore to hear Mass, and to plant the cross, as was his custom, and preparations were made to celebrate the holy ceremony with all the solemnity possible. The admiral had hardly reached the shore, when he was met by the cacique, a fine old man of eighty years, with a venerable appearance, and a much more noble and dignified bearing than would have been supposed possible in a savage. He held in his hand a string of a certain kind of beads, to which the Indians attached some mysterious virtue, and a gourd of particularly delicate flavor, both which he presented to the admiral, in token of friendship. Then taking his hand, accompanied him to the place prepared for the celebration of Mass. A crowd of Indians followed them, and during the sacred ceremony, they all looked on with deep attention and respect, comprehending, from the motions and tones of the priest, the lighted candles, and the devotion of the Spaniards, that the ceremony was one of a sacred and mysterious nature. When the Mass was over, the old cacique approached Columbus, and said: "What you have been doing is well; for, as I understand, it is your way of giving thanks to God. I have been told that you have lately come to these places with a strong force, and have subdued many countries, spreading great fear of you all around; but be on

your guard not to be lifted up by pride. Know that after death the souls of men have two roads before them : one leading to a foul and gloomy place, prepared for such as have wrought injustice and cruelty on their fellow-men ; the other conducting to an abode of joy and delight, prepared for those who have maintained peace upon the earth. If, therefore, you must die also, and you believe that every one will be rewarded, after death, according to the merit of his deeds, beware of wilfully injuring any one, or doing harm to any who has done none to you.”*

The admiral was much affected by the unexpected and kind sermon of the old man, and replied, through the interpreter : “ That he was glad to know his views of the future life ; for, hitherto, he had always supposed that the natives of these lands had no belief whatever on the matter ; that he was the subject of most powerful masters, who had sent him to teach those people the true religion, and to protect them against all injustice and aggression, and especially, to subjugate and punish the fierce cannibals ; and, therefore, all peaceable men who had done and were doing no wrong to anybody, should have no anxiety, but rather look to him as a friend and protector.”

The old man’s surprise was great on hearing that Columbus was a mere subject, whilst he had supposed him to be a powerful monarch ; and his wonder grew when Diego Columbus, the interpreter, told him of the wealth, the grandeur, and the magnificence of the Spanish sovereigns, and of all the marvels he had seen in Spain. Diego, finding that the whole multitude were listening to him with greedy curiosity, began a pompous description of what he had seen, and of the things which had most impressed him, and, warming up in his relation, after the Indian style, gave life and movement to his words. He told of the immense cities he had seen,—of the palaces, churches, and the high towers ; he described the activity of the people in the harbors and in the cities ; the number and size of the ships, the numerous troops, the beauty of the cavaliers, and the splendor of their arms ; the feasts and tourneys at court ; and, above all, the terrible bull-fights. All were astonished and delighted on hearing him, and the old man seemed beside himself. In youth, he had also been a

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. xi, c. xiv.—Fernando Colombo, cap. lvii.—Peter Martyr, dec. i, lib. iii.—Cura de Los Palacios, cap. cxxx.

traveller, and a great traveller, for those regions and people ; for he had visited Jamaica, Hispaniola, and the furthest parts of the island of Cuba. Now, at the animated relation of the interpreter, he felt his blood boiling in his veins, and his ardent desire to see new lands and scenes was revived, and as soon as Diego had concluded, he said, with enthusiasm, that he wanted to go too and see Spain. But his wife and children began to weep, and, pressing around him, prayed and conjured him to abandon the idea, on account of his great age ; and he reluctantly yielded. But he still kept asking further details about Spain, and whether that country was truly on this earth, or not rather up above where the sun and stars are.*

The river where they were was called Rio de la Misa, in memory of the solemn Mass celebrated on its banks. They rested there till the 16th of July, and the cacique and his subjects were sorry to have them depart. On leaving, they took with them a young native, who was afterwards sent to the king and queen of Spain. Sailing to the right of the group of islands which they had named the Queen's Gardens, the admiral kept to the south towards the open sea, until he found the way clear to sail directly to the east in the direction of Hispaniola. But they were scarcely beyond those islands when they were assailed by violent winds and heavy rains, that for several days were severe on the men and the ships, and as they neared Cape Santa Cruz, they were overtaken by so fearful a squall that the ships were on the point of being all three capsized ; and the admiral's rolled so, that the water came in on deck, and it seemed a miracle to all that she came through safe. Being the largest, she had suffered more than the others on the banks and in the narrow channels they had passed, and let in water at every seam, and the exhausted crew were unable to stop the constantly growing leaks. In this state, they reached Cape Santa Cruz with great labor, and rested there for three days, meeting with the same cordiality on the part of the natives as before.

Speaking in his journal of what he had endured and suffered on this two months' voyage, Columbus wrote to the Catholic sovereigns these words : " May our Lord grant that it may be for his holy service and that of Your Highnesses ; for, so far as I am concerned, I would not again go through such perils and fatigues, not

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lvii.—Peter Martyr, dec. i, lib. iii.

a day passing when I did not think we had all come to the end of our life.”*

After three days' rest, the wind being still unfavorable for sailing towards Hispaniola, not to lose time, the admiral, on the 22nd, Tuesday, made sail for Jamaica, to explore that coast further while waiting for a change of wind. But, as they reached the southern end of the island, the wind was still contrary, and for more than a month they kept on tacking eastward, anchoring every night, often in the very spot from which they had started in the morning.

The land was very fertile, and beautiful to see, with harbors every league, and thickly peopled. The natives now showed themselves very friendly, and followed the ships in their canoes, bringing every kind of food they had, and which the Christians found better than that in any of the other islands. On this account, the admiral was very desirous of remaining for a while to learn more about the island; but the scantiness of his European provisions, and the leaky condition of his vessels, forced him to hasten his return.†

One evening, on entering a large bay with seven small islands within it, and a large population on its banks, they were visited by the cacique, who resided on the largest and highest of the islands.‡ He came with a great retinue, and made many inquiries of the Spaniards about their ships and the country they came from. In answer, the admiral, as was his custom, spoke at length of the great power of the Spanish sovereigns, and their friendly intentions in regard to the Indians. To the answers, given in the admiral's name, Diego the interpreter added, on his own account, a report of the marvels he had seen in Spain with his own eyes, of the places they had visited and subjugated, and, above all, of their short visit to the islands of the Caribs, and how they had completely routed them and taken several prisoners. The cacique and his followers listened to this narrative with such attention and pleasure, that it was night before they left to return to their huts.

The next morning, as the ships were weighing anchor, three canoes were seen approaching swiftly from among the islands. One, very large, and ornamented by carving and painting, was a little in

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lviii.

† Id. l. c.

‡ From the description, this must be the great bay east of Portland Point at the bottom of which is Old Harbor. (Irving.)

advance of the other two, which seemed to follow it respectfully. It held the cacique of the previous evening, with his whole family,—a wife, two sons, two daughters, and five brothers. The elder daughter, seemingly about eighteen years old, was beautifully formed, with features quite delicate for a savage; the sister was a little younger; both were completely naked, but with a most modest behavior. A man in a sort of mantle of feathers of various colors, and his head adorned with gay plumes, stood at the bow and held a white banner waving in the breeze. Two Indians, with caps or helmets made of feathers of the same form and quality, and their faces painted alike, beat little drums; two others, with helmets curiously wrought of green feathers, held trumpets ingeniously carved in a fine black wood; six other persons, with large caps adorned with white feathers, seemed to be guests of the cacique.

Arrived at the admiral's ship, the cacique went on board with all his train. He was in the full dress of his rank, consisting of a great profusion of small stones of various colors, which were artistically arranged on his head as a band, at his ears as rings, and around his waist as a broad girdle. He had a gold clasp in the middle of his forehead, two plates, also of gold, hanging from the little stones at his ears, and a third large plate, in the shape of a lily, made of that inferior quality of gold which they called guanin, hung from his breast. Almost equal to his were his wife's ornaments, but she wore also a small rag or cotton apron in front, and cotton bands around her arms and legs. The younger daughter wore no ornaments; the elder, who was also the fairer, had a girdle of small stones around her waist, to which hung a cotton rag as large as an ivy-leaf, curiously embroidered with little stones of the brightest colors.

As he came on board, the cacique distributed some of the products of the island as gifts to the officers and sailors. The admiral was in his cabin at his morning prayers, and as soon as he came on deck, the cacique hastened to meet him, saying, with animated gesture and voice: "Friend, I have determined to quit my own country to go with you. I have learnt from these Indians accompanying you, the great power of your sovereigns, and what nations you have subdued in their name. Whoever refuses you obedience, is soon chastised. You have destroyed the Caribs' canoes and dwellings, put their warriors to death, led their women and children away as slaves. All the islands tremble before you, for who

can resist now that you know the secrets of the country and the weakness of its inhabitants? Rather than see my possessions torn from me, I come on board of your ships with all my family, to go and pay my homage to your king and queen, and see their wonderful kingdom, of which your Indians relate such marvels.”*

This offer was admirably suited to Columbus's plan of getting a native from every place to send to Spain to become an interpreter and an apostle of religion and civilization amongst his nation; and the free offer, the quality, and the number of the persons, promised to yield such good fruit that no better could be desired. But still, he was unwilling to take them; for it seemed a cruel deception on that cacique's innocent simplicity to carry him away in his enthusiasm for the White Men. He, therefore, replied that he received him as a new vassal, with all his people, under the protection of the Catholic sovereigns; but as he had still many other regions to visit, he could not at present grant his request; later on he would do so, before he went back to his country. Then the cacique tore himself away with demonstrations of strong affection, and returned sadly to his islands, whilst the vessels, spreading their sails, moved out of the bay to continue their voyage.†

From there the admiral, taking advantage of every favorable puff of wind, continued along the coast till he arrived off the eastern extremity of Jamaica, on the 19th of August, and then taking to the open sea, sailed direct for Hispaniola. The following day, he discovered the point of that long, narrow peninsula extending to the west from Hispaniola, now known under the name of Cape Tiburon. He called it St. Michael. He was not aware that it was part of Hispaniola till the 23rd of August, when, advancing along the coast, he was met by a cacique, who addressed him in a loud voice by his title of admiral, and spoke a few words in Spanish. The words were a comfort to every ear, for they informed them they were on the southern coast of Hispaniola.‡

Further on, by what contrary winds and sea we know not, the admiral's ship lost sight of its consorts, and, for six days, there was great consternation. Regaining them at Punta Beata, they all came in sight of a beautiful plain about a mile wide and extend-

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. ii. cap. xv.

† Cura de Los Palacios.

‡ Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. ii, cap. xv.

ing several leagues along the shore, and with so many clusters of houses that it seemed like one immense village. It is the same which is watered by the branches of the Neyva. The crowd of spectators on the shore was innumerable, and the water was covered with canoes following the ships, and offering every thing the country produced. They reported that other Christians had reached their country from the side of Isabella, and, so far as they knew, all was well. The admiral was rejoiced to learn this, and in order that the colonists might know of his return, after he had sailed a few leagues further, he dispatched eleven men by land across the island to Isabella, stopping on the way at Forts St. Thomas and Magdalen.*

At another place, much further east, their reception was quite hostile, for some of the sailors having gone ashore after a supply of water, the inhabitants of a village near by made a furious attack on them, armed with bows and arrows, and carrying cords to bind the prisoners. They were natives of Higuey, the eastern part of Hispaniola, and as the most exposed to the Carib incursions, its population was the most fierce and warlike of the whole island. It was said that they even used poisoned arrows. But their attack on the Christians was suddenly turned into demonstrations of friendship and hospitality, and whilst some lent the sailors a hand to draw water, others ran back to their village for whatever food they had, and laid it as an offering at their feet. The cause of the change was, that at first they were responding to the sudden alarm of the approach of an enemy, not knowing who it might be, and thinking of the Caribs; but when they saw the White Men, whose arrival on the island they had heard of, their feelings changed, and they asked earnestly after the admiral, whose name and power seemed to have made the greatest impression on them of all the savages.

As they proceeded, the weather, which had been for some time unsettled, became threatening. An enormous fish, nearly the size of a whale, with a shell around the neck like a tortoise's, two large fins like wings, and a tail like a tunny's, was seen lifting his head, as big as a barrel, above the surface of the water. From this and other signs, the admiral inferred that a severe storm was coming on, and looking for a shelter, he found a channel opening between Hispaniola and a small island a short distance to the east,

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lix.

which the Indians called Adamanay, but he named Saona, and here he took refuge, on the 15th of September.* That night there was an eclipse of the moon, and he tried to find the difference of longitude between Saona and Cadiz by his astronomical tables; but his calculation was incorrect, owing, without doubt, to the incorrectness of his table of eclipses.†

The admiral's vessel remained eight days weather-bound in those straits, and Columbus was in great anxiety for the fate of the other two ships, which had not been able to follow him, but remained at sea, exposed to the fury of the storm. But they came through safe, and as soon as the sea was calm, rejoined the admiral. Leaving the strait of Saona, they arrived, on the 24th of September, at the eastern extremity of Hispaniola, which Columbus named Cape San Rafael, but is now known as Cape Engaño. From this point they sailed south-east, and came to a small island now known as Mona, but called by the Indians Amona, and lying between Hispaniola and Porto Rico. It was the admiral's intention, in spite of the state of his vessels, to push on to the east, and visit all the Carib islands, spreading everywhere terror of the White Men, so that those savages should stay in their own islands, and no longer venture to roam over the seas, preying on the other Indians, until the queen should decide what step she should take with regard to them.‡ But his bodily strength was not equal to his mental energy, and nature refused to yield to his will. The incredible fatigues and sufferings of five months of difficult navigation since leaving Isabella, had broken his constitution. To encourage the rest by his example, he had subsisted on the poor ration of a pound of mouldy biscuit a day, on a level with the meanest ship-boy; but while the sailor, his work over and his tour of duty ended, left others to fight against the fury of the wind and the sea, and even when the storm was at its worst, might restore his strength by sleep, and rise prepared for another struggle,—the admiral, with the safety of all weighing on his head, could not close an eye, and with his face torn by the wind, his person dripping with water, stood on the deck, watching the sky, the sea, the ship, and every thing. All the time they were in that inextricable labyrinth of rocks and islands extending along the Cuban coast, where a fresh

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lix.—Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. ii, c. xv.

† Irving, *Columbus*, bk. vii, ch. vii.

‡ Peter Martyr, lib. iii, fol. x.—Muñoz, *Hist. N. Mundo*, lib. v, § xxii.

danger or difficulty met them at almost every step, not trusting the attention or ability of another, he remained most of the time, day and night, in charge of the ship, and for eight days in succession, when the peril was greatest and most constant, he gave his body only three hours of sleep. And when he left Isabella, he was hardly convalescing from a long illness. To these bodily sufferings were added the mental fatigue of being obliged to think of every thing and of every one, the anxiety of discovery, the thought of the future, and the sufferings of the men, which were all felt in his paternal heart. For the greater part of the voyage he was sustained and comforted by the hope of soon arriving in the civilized regions of Asia, and by his enthusiasm aroused at the thought of returning to Spain by the east, after sailing around the world. When this hope and this illusion vanished, he still felt the anxiety of watching over the safety of his fleet, and bringing it out safe from the dangers it was in; and his iron will and strong tenacity of mind sufficed to uphold his weak body and resist the laws of nature: and his men, to their utter amazement, beheld him, pale, emaciated, his eyes sunk, but yet active, the first of all to labor, and always open and frank as usual in the midst of danger and fatigue. But when he saw himself in a quiet and known sea, that forced tension of mind and body was at an end, and the laws of nature immediately reasserted their claims. The very day that they left Mona, the admiral complained of feeling ill, and taking to his bed, at once lost his sight, his memory, and all his faculties. His frightened companions believed his life at an end, and giving up all idea of continuing the voyage to the Carib islands, turned back and sailed direct to Isabella.†

* Peter Martyr, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. iii, fol. x.—Muñoz *Hist. N. Mundo*. lib. v, § xxii.—Fernando Colombo, cap. lix.

CHAPTER XXX.

Arrival of Columbus at Isabella.—Portrait of Bartholomew.—His appointment as Adelantado.—Territorial division of Hispaniola.—Religion, usages, and habits of the natives (1494).

THEY reached Isabella on the 29th of September, after five days' sail, the admiral showing no signs of recovering from his lethargy. But after a long struggle betwixt life and death, he was seen, beyond all expectation, to open his eyes, loosen his tongue, and regain his senses; but his health was not restored for five months more.* On first awaking to life again, he was overjoyed at beholding near his pillow his dear brother Bartholomew, whom he loved affectionately, and whom he had not seen for many years.

The last time we spoke of Don Bartholomew was when Christopher Columbus, on the point of quitting Portugal to seek a more propitious fortune elsewhere, and wishing to try other ways, in the fear that he might find those closed to which he was applying in person, sent him to England to propose his undertaking to Henry VII. From that time, the figure of Don Bartholomew is completely lost to view till he reappears now by the bedside of his brother. Fernando, his nephew, relates that on his way to England he fell into the hands of corsairs, who stripped him of every thing, and left him so poor that for his living he was forced to work at the art of drawing and composing geographical charts and spheres, which he had learnt to make from his brother Christopher; he then fell ill, and so a long time passed before he recovered from his misfortunes and succeeded in getting an audience of Henry VII, king of England. Las Casas relates the same story. But Las Casas says elsewhere that he found, in the margin of a book belonging to Christopher Columbus, a note in the handwriting of Don Bartholomew, giving a brief mention of the voyage of Bartholomew Diaz, and his discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, ending with the words: "I took part

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lix.

in this voyage.”* Las Casas had at hand, when writing his history, the letters of the two brothers Columbus, and, therefore, there can be no question of his correct judgment in holding the note to be in the writing of Don Bartholomew. This would seem to invalidate the other story ; but it is quite possible to reconcile the two ; or rather, the note enables us to fill up the too long gap between Don Bartholomew’s mission to England in 1484, and his return in 1493. Guessing at the course of events, we may suppose that after Don Bartholomew’s ill luck with the corsairs, thinking, as his brother’s affairs were taking a favorable turn in Spain, it was needless to seek the aid of Henry VII, he joined the expedition of Diaz. In fact, this sailed towards the end of August, 1486, just as the conference of Salamanca was meeting, and we have seen what hopes Columbus based upon that conference. The expedition of Diaz lasted seventeen months, and, perhaps, after its return, Christopher Columbus, losing hope of bringing his affairs to a successful issue in Spain, renewed the request for his brother to proceed to England. In February, 1488, Bartholomew was already in London to fulfil the charge given him by his brother, but was not able to give him an answer until the autumn of 1493. This very long delay before he could discharge his mission, taken in connection with his great frankness and energy of character, sufficiently shows what difficulties and obstacles he must have had to overcome. But we have no details ; we only know that he appeared before Henry VII with a beautiful Map of the World of his own designing, which he offered to the king, and on which he explained his brother’s proposed undertaking, showing its greatness, the possibility of its execution, and the glory and increase of power and wealth which would accrue to whoever should aid in carrying it out. King Henry appreciated the importance of the offer made to him, was rejoiced at it, and charged Bartholomew to have his brother Christopher come to him in person.†

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, c. vii.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. xv.—Fernando adds : “ On this Map of the World were written these lines, which I found among his writings, and which I give here more for their antiquity than their elegance :

“ Terrarum quicumque cupis feliciter oras
 Noscere, cuncta decens docte pictura docebit,
 Quando Strabo affirmat, Ptolomæus, Plinius atque
 Isidorus ; non una tamen sententia cuique,

Bartholomew set out at once for Spain, to inform his brother of the result of his mission ; but while at Paris, he heard the glad news that the discovery was made, and that Christopher had returned, in great triumph, to Spain, where he was honored by the sovereigns, courted by the nobles, and adored by the people. Columbus's glory already extended its rays over his family, and as soon as it was known that Bartholomew was the brother of the discoverer of the New World, he found himself the object of eager courtesy on the part of the French government ; and King Charles VIII, learning that his purse was scantily supplied, sent him 100 *écus* to provide for his needs on the way to Spain. The glad news lent wings to Bartholomew, who hastened his journey as much as possible, but arrived in Seville only after the admiral had left on his second voyage. He proceeded to the court, then at Valladolid, taking with him his two nephews, Diego and Fernando, entering the service, to which they had been appointed, as pages to the hereditary prince, Don Juan. The king and queen gave him a reception such as was considered, in the heat of enthusiasm, due to the brother of the man who had won a new world for Spain ; and knowing him to be a skilled and experienced seaman, they entrusted him with three ships, and sent him to Hispaniola, as a kindness to the admiral, and a valuable aid in his labor. But some time was necessary to get the ships ready, and so Bartholomew did not reach Isabella till after

Pigintur hic etiam nuper sulcata carinis
 Hispanis zona illa, prius incognita genti,
 Torrida, quæ tandem nunc est notissima multis.
 Pro auctore sive pictore."

and further on he said :

"Janua cui patria est, nomen cui Bartolomæus,
 Columbus de Terra rubra, opus edidit istud,
 Londoniis anno Domini 1480, atque insuper anno
 Octavo, decimaque die cum tertia mensis
 Feb. Laudes Christo cantentur abunde."

The date of these verses, 1488, coincides with the date of the letter which John II, king of Portugal, wrote to Christopher Columbus, inviting him to return to his kingdom (20 March, 1488). The two facts are probably closely related, Christopher Columbus becoming less confident of succeeding in Spain, was trying at the same time, in Portugal and England, and perhaps in France, to see if he could find any better support for his project. See ch. xi.

Christopher had sailed on his voyage to explore the southern coast of Cuba.*

Bartholomew was the second child of Domenico Colombo, and early in life took to the sea. Most of the time, he accompanied his elder brother, in whose school he became an excellent seaman, theoretical as well as practical. In depth and extent of learning he was greatly below Christopher, but had more facility in writing, as we are told by Las Casas, who had the letters and manuscripts of both brothers. He knew Latin, then the general basis of all instruction; but beyond that, his literary and scientific education was not extensive; and the most of what he knew was owing, as in his brother's case, not to teachers or a regular course of instruction, but to his own industry, and a careful and constant observation of every thing that could help to enrich his mind with further knowledge. Don Bartholomew's moral and intellectual qualities rendered him, as it were, the necessary complement of his brother Christopher; for if he lacked the same deep insight, he was more practical, and without the simplicity of heart and mind which made Christopher, in his unflinching goodness, regard every one that came near him as a man of honor. Bartholomew was very sharp in business, and, therefore, much better fitted than Christopher for administration. And as he was quick in expedients at need, he was prompt and bold in execution, whatever obstacle might stand in his way. He had in him all the material of a great man, but he wanted the spark of genius; and as he could never have risen to the sublime thoughts of Christopher, probably without him, he would never have succeeded in making himself a name among the many eminent mariners of his time. He was tall of stature, his constitution robust, his air imposing, commanding, and severe; his somewhat harsh and disagreeable manners made him enemies; while his impetuous and fiery character was in great part atoned for by his quickness in becoming pacified, and his never retaining animosity against anybody.†

His arrival at this time was a great advantage to the admiral, during whose absence the affairs of the colony had fallen into the greatest confusion, and now required a firm and strong hand and a practical and determined mind to restore order, as Columbus was worn

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lx

† Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, c. xxix.

out with troubles, and his brother Diego was too mild and gentle for so severe a case. Neither could the admiral depend on the persons about him ; for they were all strangers to him, and the treachery of some that were thought loyal and trustworthy, had made him suspicious and distrustful of the rest. Hence, the arrival of Don Bartholomew seemed truly providential, and the admiral, knowing his value, at once called him to his assistance, and, to give all the effect possible to his coöperation, conferred on him, or rather created for him, the highest position that could be held in the colony, appointing him Adelantado, which is equivalent to Lieutenant General. In the creation of this new office, he did not consider that he was exceeding the authority agreed on in the treaty made with the Spanish sovereigns ; but King Ferdinand, as we shall see, thought otherwise, and took measures in accordance with his jealousy of his royal prerogatives. Events now take us across the different provinces and peoples of Hispaniola, and, in order to follow them clearly and easily, it will be well to precede them by some information concerning the political divisions of the island, and the character and customs of the inhabitants.

At the Spaniards' arrival, Hayti was divided into five independent provinces or states, each of which was ruled by an absolute, hereditary prince, called cacique in the Indian language. Each of these caciques had under him seventy or eighty other caciques or inferior princes, governing some small part or district of his dominion ; but with no further obligation in his regard than answering his call, helping in his wars, and aiding in sowing his fields.

The five great caciques were Guarionex, Caonabo, Guacanagari, Behechio, and Cotubanama.

The first and most important division was in the middle of the Vega Real, a rich and beautiful country, partly cultivated, so far as was necessary for the very moderate wants of the inhabitants, and partly covered with dense and lofty forests. It contained numerous villages, and was irrigated by countless rivers, most of which, descending from the mountains of Cibao, which formed the western boundary, carried a quantity of gold-dust mixed with their sands. It was ruled by the cacique Guarionex, whose family was the oldest of the five that reigned on the island.

Caonabo's state, called Maguana, was a small region, almost entirely mountainous. Its importance, in the eyes of the Indians,

was derived from the name of Caonabo, its ruler, and in the eyes of the Spaniards, from the promised treasures of the mines of Cibao. It extended from the mountains of Cibao, almost in the centre of the island, as far as the southern coast.

The third division, called Marien, constituted the states of the good Guacanagari. It extended along the northern coast of the island, from Monte Christi to Cape St. Nicholas at the western extremity. It was a vast and fertile territory, and included all the northern part of the Vega Real.

The fourth state was called Xaragua, from the great lake which was included within its limits, and was the largest and most populous of all. It embraced the entire western coast, including the long peninsula of Cape Tiburon, and a large portion of the southern coast. Its inhabitants were distinguished from the other Indians by better forms and nobler air, more agreeable speech and a certain grace of manner. It was ruled by Behechio, whose sister, Anacoana, not less famous all over the island for her extraordinary beauty than as the composer of their national songs, was the favorite wife of the fierce Caonabo.

The cacique Cotubanama reigned in the eastern portion of the island, called Higüey, bounded on the north by the river Yaque, on the south by the Ozema. His subjects were the most active and warlike on the island, because, exposed to frequent invasions of the Caribs, they found it necessary to be constantly on the watch with arms in their hands, to defend themselves; it was even said that they used poisoned weapons.*

The population of the island has been placed by some as high as a million; but this number seems exaggerated; still, it is certain that they were very numerous, more than enough to have protected themselves against the handful of White Men who had invaded their homes, if they had understood their danger in season, and risen in mass to repel the strangers. Columbus's reports, after his first voyage, concerning the character and dispositions of these islanders, are generally erroneous. We must attribute this to his too short stay in the places he visited, which permitted him to make only a superficial observation of men and things; to the enthusiasm of his discovery, giving them a more dazzling aspect than they really de-

* Charlevoix, *Hist. Saint-Dominique*, liv. i, p. 63

served ; and, finally, to his having founded nearly all his judgments on his acquaintance with Guacanagari and his people, who were the mildest of all, and not a fair sample of the rest. Not all, for example, were as peaceful and ignorant of the art of war, as he had asserted ; and there was a great difference between the subjects of the meek Guacanagari and those of the fierce Caonabo, and, especially, those who were exposed to the inroads of the Caribs. But it is true that, in general, the Indians were quiet and meek, and if they sometimes quarrelled with one another, their wars were never long or bloody ; and they were hospitable and benevolent. He afterwards corrected his opinions and modified them, as the truth became better known. But intent on more important matters, it is only now and then, as occasion offers, that he touches at all on the domestic life of the Indians. More extended and accurate information is found in the homely but truthful account of Fray Roman, *the poor hermit*, as he calls himself, of the order of Hieronymites, who was one of Fr. Boil's colleagues, and resided for some time in the Vega as a missionary, and, by the admiral's order, made a special study of the uses and customs of the Indians.*

As to the creation of things, the Indians did not push their investigations very far, but contented themselves with saying and believing that their island was the most ancient of all lands ; and that the sun and moon sprang from a cave in the middle of it. This cave, which still exists, is about 160 feet deep, and of the same length, but quite narrow. It receives no light except from its entrance and from an opening in the middle of its length ; from this opening, they said, the sun and moon issued to assume their position in the heavens. The grot is so beautiful and regular that it seems more like the work of art than of nature. In Charlevoix's time (1682-1761), figures of Zemes, the Indian idols, cut in the rock, were still distinguishable, and also the remains of niches for holding statuettes.† It was a place of religious devotion, and they had painted it all over with flowers and leaves, because it was here that they worshipped the two Zemes who were supposed to control the rain. These were represented with their hands tied, rudely carved in two stone statuettes about a foot high. The Indians went in pil-

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lxi.

† Charlevoix, *Hist. Saint-Domingue*, liv. v, p. 68.

grimage to this grot, singing and dancing, and bearing their little offerings to the two idols, to make them propitious to their fields and crops.*

Men, likewise, were said to have sprung from a cave,—the larger, through a bigger opening, and the more diminutive, through a smaller one; but before they ventured in the light of day, an indefinite period elapsed; for, at first, the sun carried on a spiteful war against them, turning all he saw into stones, trees, or birds. At the beginning, they were nearly all males, and felt severely the want of females, especially as the strongest and most crafty carried off the few that there were, concealing them in distant islands.†

From this it happened that, at one time, Hispaniola was entirely deprived of women, but accident supplied the want. The men of a certain district had gone, one day, down to the river to bathe, and while they were in the water it came on to rain hard. Often when it rained, they wandered around looking for footprints of women on the soil, but they had not found any. This day they longed more than usual for the company of women, and as it began to rain they were preparing to hunt for female footprints, when they saw descending from some of the trees, letting themselves down by the branches, a certain kind of persons of no sex, but so beautiful and graceful that they were all captivated at the sight. They chased them and laid hands on them, but they slipped from their grasp like eels. They were in despair, for the charmers glided back and forth, inviting pursuit. At this juncture, they remembered some lepers in the village, whose hands had been made rough by the disease. With the help of the lepers, they succeeded in capturing four of these neutral persons, and binding their hands and feet, they tied woodpeckers to them, which, by pecking, produced sex.‡ Not less strange was their notion of the origin of the sea; but I cannot stop to relate their opinion on this subject as on the primitive state of men and things, without exceeding the limits I have proposed.

As to religion, they believed in a superior Being, dwelling in heaven; immortal, all-powerful, and invisible; born of a mother, without a father. Not thinking themselves worthy of praying to him directly, they addressed themselves to inferior divinities, called Zemes,

* Fray Roman, cap. i, vi; in Fernando Colombo, cap. lxi.

† Fray Roman, cap. xi.

‡ Id. cap. vii, viii.

which were messengers or mediators between the Supreme Being and men. Every cacique had a Zemes, whose office was to guard and protect his person and all his people; each family and each individual had its own. The image of the Zemes who watched over the whole people, was kept in a sort of public temple, where the devout worshipped him and invoked him in need. It was usually a monstrous figure, rudely carved in wood or stone, or even modelled in clay. The Zemes of the family or of the individual was represented in little images scattered all over the house, or carved on the furniture. Sometimes in battle they wore a little image of their special Zemes tied around their forehead, as a talisman against danger. There was quite a rivalry amongst them to extol the merits and power of their particular Zemes, some of whom had quite a fame as powerful divinities beyond the limits of their own province. Very often a Zemes who had gained a reputation, was stolen, as it was supposed his influence was always exercised in favor of the possessor of his image.

Dr. Chanca relates that, one day, when he inquired of them the meaning of those images all over the house, they replied that they were things of *turey* (heaven); and when he pretended he would throw them into the fire, they burst into tears.* The Zemes presided over the course of nature, each in that part and office assigned him by the Supreme Being. It depended, therefore, on the favor or ill-will of the Zemes whether the harvest, the fishing, or the hunting was satisfactory. When the Zemes were propitious, sweet breezes moved the air, and gentle rains revived the plants and herbs; but when they were angry, they sent thunder and lightning and ruinous rains. With friendly hand they guided the streams that murmured softly down the hill-side; or, full of wrath, they sent fierce torrents over the precipices to lay waste the fertile valleys.

Besides their Zemes, most of the caciques had three mysterious stones which they and their people revered and believed in. A special virtue was attributed to each; one made the corn and vegetables grow; the second enabled women to bring forth without pain; and the third gave rain or sunshine, as needed. The admiral sent three of these stones to Spain by Antonio Torres; others he carried on his person.†

The Butios, as their priests were called, had their body painted or

* Letter of Dr. Chanca.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. lxi.

tattooed all over with different sorts of Zemes, which the Spaniards looked on with horror, as so many figures of the devil ; and while the Indians venerated the Butios as saints, the Christians abominated them as sorcerers. The Butios snuffed the powder, and drank the infusion, of a certain herb that inebriated them and put them beside themselves, and gave out that in their delirium they had holy visions, talked with the Zemes, and learned from them future events, and the nature and cure of disease ; for, these priests also practised medicine. Experience had taught them the medicinal qualities of certain trees and plants, which they used for curing the sick ; but they concealed this knowledge under numerous ceremonies and strange rites, referring all to the mysterious power of the Zemes. When they were called to visit a sick person, before they started, they took a coal and blackened their face, to make them appear more venerable to the sick person by the strangeness of their countenance, and carried a little pill hid in their mouth. The first thing on his arrival, the physician sat down, and immediately all but two or three principal members of the family were sent out, in order that the work of the Butios might not be disturbed by talking. Then the sick man was placed in the middle of the room, and the Butios rising, went twice around him, singing, and holding a burning light. He then placed himself in front of the patient, and took him by the legs, feeling him from his ribs to his feet, and then pulled him hard, as if to pluck out something. After this, he opened the door wide, and said to the sick man, in a loud voice, " Get thee away to the mountain, the sea, or wherever thou wilt ;" * then going to him, sucked, as one might suck a marrow-bone, at his neck, breast, shoulders, cheeks, nipples, paunch, and all over. When this operation was done, he put one hand on the other, shut his mouth, shook as with the ague, coughed, distorted his face like one swallowing something very bitter, and spat on his hand as if trying to throw it off. And, after much effort, he was really seen to discharge something ; it was the little pill he had prepared before coming, and had kept in his mouth during all the exorcism of the sick man. He showed it to the sick man, giving him to understand it was his disease, sent most frequently by the Zemes for neglecting his prayers or his offerings, and extricated from his body with the greatest difficulty.

* Fray Roman, cap. xvi.—Oviedo, *Crónica de las Indias*, lib. v, c. i.

If, in spite of the extrication of the disease, the patient died, the blame was usually laid on the Butios, who was accused of having neglected some preparation or ceremony required for the cure; and if the deceased left powerful or bold relatives, the physician's shoulders sometimes paid for the patient's death.* When, however, the sickness was beyond all hope, if the dying man was a cacique, he was reverently strangled so as to escape the shame of dying like a common person; but if the patient was only an ordinary person, they waited till he was near his end, and then stretched him in a hammock with a little bread and water close to his head, and left him alone to die; or else brought him to the cacique, and if the cacique was kind enough to permit it, they did the patient the honor of strangling him. The bodies of the caciques were opened and dried at a fire, to preserve them; of others, only the head or some limb was kept, as a memorial. But sometimes they buried the entire body in a cave with a piece of bread and a gourd of water near by, or cremated it in its former dwelling.†

They had very vague notions of the existence of the soul after its separation from the body. They said that the departed were confined in the day-time, but roamed about at night, seeking gladly the company of the living. If they were sometimes seen in the day-time, it was almost always in lonely spots and by solitary travellers, who, molested by what they supposed to be real men, turning to attack them, found themselves striking a tree or a rock, the phantom having vanished. The Indians were, consequently, very fearful of venturing to travel at night, or to be alone in a solitary place. But they discovered that ghosts have no navel, and recognized them by its absence; and, therefore, when two strangers met, their first act was to look for a navel in the other.‡ For the rest, these dead persons often played such evil tricks, that the living were not to blame for wishing to escape their company. Such, for example, was the case of those who, meeting some dead men that they took to be living, not having noticed they had no navels, and being attacked by them, after a tiresome struggle, they got them by the neck and thought they were on the point of throwing them down, when, lo, the phantom vanished, and the poor men found themselves clinging to the branch of a tree, at a dangerous distance from the ground.

* Fr. Roman, c. xvi, xvii, xviii.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. lxi.

‡ Fray Roman, cap. xiii

After death, they said, there was prepared for the souls of the good a place of delight, where, united with all their ancestors and friends, they enjoyed, fully and uninterruptedly, all the pleasures most enjoyed here on earth, lingering delightfully in the shade of pleasant groves, in the society of charming women, eating the most savory fruits that can be imagined. This paradise was differently located, according to the difference of people, nearly all desiring to have it in some favorite spot of their own province. But they generally agreed in placing it near a lake in the western part of the island, in the beautiful province of Xaragua. Here were delightful valleys, producing great quantities of a delicate fruit called *mamey*, about as large as an apricot. The Indians imagined that the souls of the dead were hidden, during the day, on the summits of the inaccessible mountains that surrounded those valleys, and came down at night to feed on the sweet food. On this account, the living abstained from eating any of it for fear that the souls of their friends might not have enough.*

As a specimen of their religious ceremonies, we have a description of a feast celebrated in honor of the cacique's Zemes. The day fixed for the solemnity, the cacique's subjects gathered from all directions, and went in procession to the temple where the Zemes was honored; the men and the married women wearing their finest ornaments, the girls completely naked. The procession was led by the cacique, or, in his absence, by the principal man of the place, who kept beating some loud instrument, to the sound of which the procession sang songs. Coming to the door of the temple, the cacique, or his representative, sat down on the threshold, and kept on beating his drum till the whole procession had entered. The women bore baskets filled with cakes, and ornamented with flowers, to offer to the Zemes. The *Buticos* received the offerings, raising loud cries, or rather yells; the women then breaking the cakes, after presenting them to the idol, distributed them to the heads of every family, who carefully preserved them for the next year as preservatives against every misfortune. After the cakes were distributed, at the proper signal, the women came forward and sang national airs in honor of the Zemes, or in praise of the heroic deeds of former caciques. The ceremony

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lxi.—Peter Martyr, dec. i, lib. ix.—Charlevoix *Hist. Saint-Domingue*, l. i.—Fr. Roman, c. xiii.

ended with a prayer to the Zemes to guard and protect the nation.* The Butios, likewise, gave valuable aid to the caciques, in governing their subjects, craftily bringing in the will of the Zemes to support their commands. The admiral relates that some of the Christians once went unexpectedly into a cabin or little temple where the Zemes was venerated, and a great number was assembled to pray. As soon as the Christians appeared at the door, the Zemes began to cry out against them, to the great excitement and scandal of the devout assistants. The Spaniards, at once seeing through the trick, went up to the Zemes and kicked him over, when every one could see a tube passing from below into the hollow body of the Zemes, and communicating, at the other end, with a separate place, where a Butios was hid, whose words, by means of the tube, seemed to the ignorant crowd to proceed from the mouth of the Zemes. When the caciques found the people's minds opposed to their will, they had only to join with the Butios, and appeal to the wisdom of the Zemes, to have their own way.†

The dances, to which we have seen the Indians so passionately addicted, and which the Spaniards at first thought were merely a diversion, were nearly always grave and mysterious ceremonies, representing, according to the different manner in which they were performed, sometimes an event in their history, sometimes enterprises they had planned, or their hunts, or ambuscades, or fights with an enemy. The dance was accompanied by verses or ballads, called, in their language, *areytos*, which were handed down from one generation to another, and in which the deeds of their ancestors were celebrated. The singing and dancing were to the beating of an instrument called *maguey*, a sort of small drum made of the skins of certain fishes. They had also songs and ballads of love, of grief and lamentation, and others to excite courage in battle; and the air was always suited to the subject. When a cacique died, they celebrated his life, his actions, and all the good he had done, in a song. Thus, as with nearly every nation, with the indigenes of the New World also, the first records of history were related in poetry, and handed down by oral tradition to later generations.

Some ballads of a grave and sacred nature, contained the traditions and fables of their religion; but the singing of these was reserved ex-

Charlevoix, *Hist. Saint-Domingue*.

† Fernando Colombo, cap. xli.

clusively for the sons of the caciques on great festivals, in presence of the whole people.*

It would require a long chapter to describe the habits and character of the Indians ; but the things we have said here and there, as occasion offered, render it unnecessary ; and a few words will suffice to recall their life and character to the reader's memory. They were a simple people, hating work, indifferent to what others labor and suffer to gain. All their time was passed in the shade of pleasant groves, enjoying the gay warbling of the birds and the scented breeze. With no wants but those of nature, sufficiently provided for by the wonderful fertility of the land, they gave no thought to any thing more. The soil produced cotton in abundance ; but why labor to gather and work it, when a perpetual spring kept them ignorant of the rigors of winter when they might need it to cover their nakedness ? If at times the air was fresh, it was so slight and passing a change as not to be worth the trouble of undergoing every year a fatiguing labor to prevent so short and petty an inconvenience. The little food required by hunger or taste was either provided spontaneously by the earth, or got by easy cultivation of yuca, maize, and potatoes ; and in some places, as in the Vega Real, the land was so propitious to their wants, that whilst some fruits and grains were ripe, others were ripening, and still others beginning to put forth buds and blossoms. And where nature was less bountiful, they were abundantly supplied by fishing and hunting. In this way, they lived in constant idleness, the monotony of their repose broken only by their sports and the noisy enthusiasm of their dances.

* Fr. Roman, c. xiv.—Fernando Colombo, c. lxi.—Peter Martyr, dec. i, lib. ix.—Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, l. iii, c. iv.—Oviedo, l. v, c. i.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Infamous behavior of Pedro Margarita.—Connivance of Fr. Boil, the vicar apostolic.—Their flight from the New World.—Insurrection of the natives.—Caonabo besieges Fort St. Thomas.—Faithfulness of Guacananari.—The cacique Guarionex.—His character (1494).

THE prudent instructions which the admiral gave Margarita, when he entrusted him with the honorable and delicate duty of exploring the island and extending the Spanish rule over it, could not have failed, considering the character of the inhabitants, of a happy and complete success. But again the unbridled behavior of the Spaniards rendered vain the prudent care of the admiral, and brought every thing to ruin and disgrace. Margarita, putting himself at the head of the force brought by Ojeda, set out to fulfil his mission; but instead of moving at once by the mountains of Cibao to the territory of the famous Caonabo, seduced by the recollection of the pleasures of the Vega Real, he began his exploration there; and in these populous villages, regardless of honor or duty, he gave himself up to enjoyment, without a thought of his mission or the admiral's injunctions. The dissolute excesses of the chief were followed and surpassed by those under him, and the 400 Spaniards were so many famished wolves among the innocent and terrified people. For some time, the Indians continued to furnish them food with their usual cordial liberality; but as they were unused to scarcity, always finding in the fertility of the land a sufficient supply for all their wants, they were not in the habit of accumulating large stores; and so, the little they had put aside soon gave out; the more so, as the Spaniards showed no moderation in consumption, one of them sometimes eating in a single day what would have lasted an Indian a month. But the Spaniards took no concern about this, and when there was nothing to eat, compelled the savages, by threats and violence, to pro-

cure them more. They went into the huts, rummaged everywhere for what they could find, and the little gold the savages used to keep for ornament, all passed, in a few days, into the marauders' hands. But what most wounded the poor savages and caused an undying hatred of the Christians, was their abuse of the women. The complaints of the wretched Indians reached Isabella, and Diego Columbus, by the advice of the regency, wrote to Margarita, censuring his conduct, and ordering him to start immediately on the military inspection which the admiral had commanded. Margarita took fire on reading the letter, claiming that his command put him above any syndicate, and that he was not accountable for his conduct to any board. He sent back an arrogant letter, and remained in the Vega, oppressing the inhabitants worse than ever. "He was supported in his arrogant defiance of authority by the cavaliers and adventurers of noble birth, who were in the colony, and who had been deeply wounded in the proud punctilio so jealously guarded by a Spaniard. They could not forget nor forgive the stern equity exercised by the admiral in a time of emergency, in making them submit to the privations and share the labors of the vulgar. Still less could they brook the authority of his brother Diego, destitute of his high personal claims to distinction. They formed, therefore, a kind of aristocratic faction in the colony, affecting to consider Columbus and his family as mere mercenary and upstart foreigners, building up their own fortunes at the expense of the toils and sufferings of the community and the degradation of Spanish hidalgos and cavaliers."*

Margarita, encouraged by the support of this powerful faction, freely visited Isabella, often staying for hours in the sight of every one, taking no notice of Don Diego and his government, but rather affecting to despise them openly. The government felt so weak before the numbers and influence of the rebels that it pretended not to observe him. It is sad to say that even now the most impudent and active in this destructive work against lawful authority, was Father Boil, vicar apostolic, the one who, of all others, by reason of his ministry, his dignity as representative of the Supreme Pontiff, and as one of the most influential and respectable of the council, ought to have labored, for the good of Spain and of religion, to harmonize the dis-entients, and restore discipline. But in moral, as in physical, mat-

* Irving, *Columbus*, bk. viii, ch. ii.

ters, the higher one is placed, the more precipitous is his fall, if he loses his footing.

To explain the fierce hatred of the vicar apostolic against Columbus, who was deeply religious and full of respect for the clergy, we must go back a little, and tell who he was, and how fearfully he was disappointed in his hope and ambition on receiving the new dignity of vicar apostolic of the new regions discovered by Columbus.

Father Boil was a learned Benedictine, and an accomplished diplomatist, and the king and queen had repeatedly made use of his ability, employing him, with profit, in the negotiations with France for the restitution of Roussillon.* Now, when Columbus came back telling of his discovery, and every one believed he had reached the extreme eastern limits of Asia, near the empire of the Grand Khan and the states of the other powerful monarchs of the East ; as it was necessary to send some one to preside over the new church they were sure of establishing in those countries, the prudent Ferdinand set his eyes on this man as one who, at the same time that he was fulfilling the duties of his ecclesiastical dignity, would be of great use to him as an able diplomatist in his relations with those distant courts, and proposed his name to Rome. The consequence was that instead of a priest full of the spirit of the Gospel and of self-denial, fitted to sustain worthily and fruitfully the office of apostle, there was sent out to those naked savages, a friar with his head filled with subtleties, cabals, and the wisdom that rules the art of politics. There has lately been discovered, in the secret archives of the Vatican, the original bull instituting the vicariate apostolic of the new regions discovered by Columbus. The date is July 7th, 1493. But the person there named for that dignity is not Father Bernard Boil of the order of St. Benedict, but Father Bernard Boyle, Provincial of the order of St. Francis in Spain. And as it is certain that it was the Benedictine who received and executed that duty in the New World, it is suspected that the Pope had nominated the Franciscan before he had received the proposal of King Ferdinand in favor of the Benedictine monk. But when the bulls were received in Spain, finding that the person named by the Pope responded perfectly in name and surname (no account being made of the *y* instead of *i*, both being pronounced

* Muñoz lib. iv, § xxii.—Navarrete, Doc. No. xlv.

alike), the only difference being the designation of the religious order to which he belonged, it was easily believed, or pretended to be believed, that this designation was a mistake, and the bulls given effect in favor of Fr. Bernard Boil, the Benedictine.*

But, however that may be, it is certain that Fr. Boil had not expected that in the New World his talents and industry were to be spent in teaching catechism to a few naked savages. His pride was deeply hurt, and he conceived a mortal aversion for his position. To add to his discontent, the admiral did not allow him the authority in the government of the colony which he thought was due to his rank, his influence at court, and his talents and learning. He was not one to overlook or forgive an injury to his honor or his rights. This grudge against the admiral began soon after they arrived at Nativity, when he wanted summary justice executed on Guacanagari, as the author or accomplice of the massacre of the Christians, and Columbus would not yield to his persistent demands. Occasions were not wanting afterwards in which the angry and overbearing friar had to yield to the admiral's will, till the unfortunate occurrences at Isabella, when Columbus put even the vicar apostolic on reduced rations, and the latter excommunicated him, and had his food entirely cut off by the admiral.

From this time, Fr. Boil breathed only the bitterest hatred of Columbus, and seized gladly the first chance of revenging himself. He joined Margarita in body and soul, and the example and words of the vicar apostolic gave the greatest strength to the rebellious faction.

But bad as things were, they had not yet reached the point which Margarita and Boil had hoped for; and although the authority of the government was continually disregarded and laughed at, still, the better portion of the colonists, while regretting these excesses, adhered to Don Diego, and, as well as they could, tried to resist the overflow of this swelling torrent. The two leaders of the rebellion, therefore, and their principal confederates, began to feel anxiety about their fate, as the return was looked for at any moment of the admiral, who not only had quite another hand than his weak brother Diego, but came with a band devoted to him, and the authority of his name and the force of his character, were of themselves alone

* Cf. Roselly de Lorgues, *Hist. Chr. Col.*, liv. ii, ch. v.

sufficient to destroy the rebels. They, consequently, determined to provide against the evil whilst there was time, and they agreed to quit Hispaniola and go back to Europe. Both Margarita and Boil were in favor at court, and, therefore, thought it would be easy to justify their desertion, on the plea of zeal for the public welfare, that had caused their hasty return for the purpose of showing their Highnesses the disastrous state to which the tyranny and oppression of the rulers had brought the country. Having come to this decision, they made hurried and confused preparations for leaving; and suddenly seizing, by night, the ships that had been brought by Don Bartholomew from Spain, and were anchored unguarded in the harbor, they sailed for the Spanish shores with their principal followers.*

In this way, the first apostle and the first general that Christianity and civilization sent to the New World, basely abandoned their posts, beginning an unending series of outrages and crimes, which have disgraced the first years of the discovery and conquest of those regions.

Scant as was the discipline amongst Margarita's men, yet, so long as he remained in command, there was, at least, a centre of union, a name around which all could rally; but with his departure, even this slight bond was snapped asunder, and every thing went to pieces. As interest or caprice dictated, each one chose his leader, and in bands more or less numerous, each independent of the rest, they began to rove about over the island, with no other aim than daily enjoyment and snatching the gold they could find, foolishly wasting the small stock of provisions saved by the Indians, wherever they went. The consequence was that both Indians and Spaniards soon began to suffer from the scarcity of food, and for the first time, possibly, famine was known in those fertile plains. This, on one hand, increased the Spaniards' cruelty in forcing the savages to provide them food; and on the other, strengthened the Indians' reluctance to obey, and their spite and hatred at being so unjustly paid for their cordial hospitality.

Caonabo, concealed in the mountains, was all this time watching every movement of the Christians, and studying how to avoid the storm he saw impending; he even ventured secretly into the neigh-

* Fernando Colombo, cap. lx.—Charlevoix, *Hist. Saint-Domingue*, liv. ii.

borhood of Isabella to see with his own eyes the condition and strength of his enemy, and what opening there might be for his future plans. He hailed with savage joy this awakening of the Indians, and sent messengers to inflame their hatred and vengeance, showing them how easy it was to exterminate the foreigners, now that they were divided. The soil was fit, and his words bore fruit. They began by falling unexpectedly, in great numbers, on scattered individuals, on whom they slaked their thirst for vengeance. Next, they attacked the smallest and weakest bands, till, encouraged by these partial triumphs, and by their impunity, they openly fell upon the White Men wherever found. The first to give the signal of open insurrection was Guatiguana, cacique of a large town on the banks of the Yaque, who massacred ten Spaniards that had quartered themselves in his city and were committing every outrage, and then set fire to a large house where forty more were lying sick, not one of whom escaped. After this, his numbers and his courage increasing, he threw himself on a little fort called Magdalen in the Vega ; and Luis de Arriaga, who was in command of it, with his weak garrison had no other course than to shut himself up in it till help should come from Isabella. But the worst danger that threatened the Christians was on the part of Caonabo. To the special talent which this wild Carib had naturally for war, and intelligence far superior to that of the other savages, and courage and audacity in face of every danger, was added the advantage of having three brothers, not less brave than himself, and a numerous tribe at his command, trained to war.

The sharpest thorn in Caonabo's heart, and what most exasperated him, was the fort of St. Thomas, which the Christians had just erected in the very centre of his territory, and against this he determined to push his whole force. The fort was isolated, with a garrison of only fifty men. By a quick, bold stroke he hoped for the same success he had met with at Fort Nativity, and to repeat the same bloody tragedy on the White Men. Setting out, therefore, quietly with his warriors, he crossed the forests and mountains, and at night came suddenly before Fort St. Thomas. But the wily cacique had a very different enemy to fight in the commandant of St. Thomas than he found at Nativity. This was, as we said, Ojeda, a man beyond all others fitted, by his boldness and skill, to meet the cunning and ferocity of Caonabo ; for, whilst he was personally brave and despised every danger, he was a prudent and watchful pre-

server of military discipline. Consequently, with a firm and sure hand, setting the example himself, he had kept his little garrison strictly to their duty, and although surrounded by a weak and timid population, who had received and treated them as friends, he, nevertheless, had the guard mounted, sentinels posted, and the rounds made, in the same manner as in Spain when fighting the Moors. The result was that Caonabo, to his surprise and rage, was discovered as soon as he approached. An open assault was not to be thought of, as the fort was on an isolated hill, with a broad river running around a great portion of it, and the rest protected by a deep ditch, dug by the Spaniards for the purpose of cutting off approach; and although the garrison was so small, the sharp blades of the Spaniards and their fire-arms were an invincible defence against the Indians' bare breasts and feeble weapons. But not for this did the fierce Caonabo give up all hope of getting the fort, but, as he had failed to take it by surprise, and could not by force, he determined to win it by famine. For this purpose, he spread all around it his 10,000 warriors (for they say he brought that number), to cut off all food that the natives might wish to bring into the fort, and all egress for the besieged to hunt for any. Thus blockaded on all sides, and unable to replace their small stock of provisions, the Christians soon found themselves in great distress, and famine began to be felt more fearfully from day to day. In this strait, Ojeda was equal to the emergency, and used every stratagem, continually hammering at the besiegers to weary and disperse them. Falling unexpectedly with a part of his force now here, now there, always foremost himself in the fray, they furiously slashed the bare bodies of the enemy with their sabres, and before these could recover, withdrew to the fort, leaving always a horrid spectacle of gashed and gaping faces, shoulders, and breasts, which was more terrible to the Indians than the real damage. Partly from this, and partly because the Indians were not used to lengthy military expeditions, and the difficulties and privations of a siege were too opposite to their quiet and lazy habits of life,—they gradually began to quit their posts and return to their homes and forests; and after a month's siege, Caonabo was forced to abandon the attempt, and withdrew, full of admiration, savage and barbarous as he was, for the bravery and military talents of Ojeda.* The restless Caonabo was not wholly discouraged by the

* Oviedo, *Crónica de las Indias*, lib. iii, ch. 1.

ill success of this first enterprise, but planned others more bold and extensive. He knew that many of the Spaniards were suffering from disease, and that most of those able to bear arms were scattered over the island. Considering this weak condition of the enemy, he planned a general league of the caciques, joining their forces to surprise and destroy Isabella, and massacre all the White Men they should find there. The report of the infamies and cruelties of the Spaniards had spread over the whole island, and everywhere, even amongst those who had never seen or suffered from them, excited hatred and thirst for vengeance. Caonabo was able, on this account, to bring over the other caciques to his plan, notwithstanding their awe of the supernatural power of the White Men, and of their arms and horses. Only Guacanagari, though strongly urged, obstinately refused, and having some hundred sick Spaniards in his states, continued to minister to their wants with his usual friendliness. His conduct in this period of danger and difficulty proves how unjust were the suspicions which many of the Spaniards had conceived against him, and how correctly the admiral judged him when he refused to admit a shadow of treachery, and would not condemn him without sure proof.

The fierce Caonabo, after vainly trying advice, persuasion, and threats, invaded Guacanagari's states with a strong force on one side, and his brother-in-law Behechio on the other, and between them they laid waste the fields, destroyed the villages, and slaughtered the inhabitants. One of Guacanagari's wives was among the slain, and another was taken prisoner. But nothing could move that good cacique from his determination; and as his states were next to Isabella, and those of the other caciques at a distance, his opposition proved a serious obstacle to the designs of the league, and for some time hindered their execution.*

The admiral had now returned to Isabella, and as soon as Guacanagari knew it, he went to visit him, and related all the means that had been used to induce him to take up arms against the Christians, and the vengeance he had been obliged to suffer for his fidelity to their friendship. He spoke again, with tears, of the massacre of the garrison of Nativity, asserting his innocence, and remitted the defence of himself and his people to the admiral, for whose sake they were enduring so great suffering.

* Fernando Colombo, c. lx.—Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, dec. i, lib. ii, c. xvi.

Guacanagari was inseparably connected in Columbus's mind with the discovery of the New World ; he was as the prototype after whose image, in the impressions of his former voyage, he had pictured the inhabitants of the region he had discovered. The simple innocence, the mild habits, the natural goodness, hospitality, all the virtues he had found and admired in that good cacique, and in his people, had been regarded, in his fervid imagination, as qualities possessed by every Indian ; and to destroy this image was to destroy the poetical part of his discovery, and tear the most pleasant and seductive illusion from his heart. It was true that another image, quarrelsome, crafty, and treacherous, was beginning to be manifest on the island ; but it might be owing to the circumstances in which the Indians found themselves, and to the conduct of the Spaniards, whose excesses had altered the dispositions of these savages ; and in other circumstances, those causes eliminated, and the former peace and tranquillity restored, back of the black picture before him, he could still hope to find again the image of his simple, affectionate, hospitable Indian, as he first appeared. Hence, he felt more than a father's affection for Guacanagari, and his heart had always rejected the suspicions entertained by many of the Spaniards. But he had always felt a bitterness over his inexplicable conduct, and, consequently, it was the greatest comfort, in his present anxiety, to find him still good, loyal, and affectionate, as when he first knew him.

Although the league which Caonabo had instigated was now firmly established, it had never come to a general open demonstration against the Spaniards, only isolated and individual assaults and massacres having occurred. This gave the admiral a great advantage ; for, by striking promptly and vigorously any who were discovered, or by seasonable precautions where the danger was most imminent,—now, acting with mildness ; now, with severity ; at one time, with promise of reward ; at another, with open force,—it was not very difficult to restore order and quiet ; and if there was no hope of inging them back to their former good-will and affection, those savages might still be made useful and obedient subjects of the Spanish crown.

Thus, somewhat revived from the dejection in which he fell on first hearing of the disasters that in his absence had come upon the colony and the island, with his usual alacrity, he turned to the remedy, and first, to provide against the greatest and nearest danger, he

sent a small armed body to relieve Fort Magdalen, besieged by the cacique Guatiguana. As soon as the fort was relieved, the Spaniards entered the lands of that cacique, slew many of his warriors, took a number of them prisoners, and forced him to fly.*

Guatiguana, as was said, was subject to Guarionex, the general cacique of the Vega Real. The latter had, so far, made no hostile demonstration against the Spaniards, and therefore it suited the admiral very well, after terrifying one of his enemies, to make a parade of mildness towards one who had given no offence. He, therefore, invited Guarionex to visit him, giving him to understand that Margarita and his bands had violated the admiral's orders, and acted altogether contrary to his good intentions towards the natives, whom he wished to satisfy and bind to himself in every way. He assured him that the expedition against Guatiguana was an individual punishment, and not an act of hostility against his dominions; that the same rigor he used against whoever injured the Spaniards, he would employ against Spaniards who wronged Indians, and would take steps to repair the disorders and wrongs of the past, and to prevent their recurrence in the future. Guarionex was of a mild and peaceful nature, and now the admiral's return, the vengeance on Guatiguana, and Caonabo's failure at Fort St. Thomas, made him more reluctant to take up arms against the Spaniards; and, consequently, it was not difficult for Columbus to persuade him to comply with his wishes, and return to his former friendship. Seeing his good disposition, and the better to bind him to him in the future, the admiral asked him for one of his daughters, to give her in marriage to his Indian interpreter, Diego Columbus, and Guarionex consented. Then he proposed erecting a fort in the centre of his dominions, to serve as a shelter to the Spaniards; and to this, too, the easy cacique consented without hesitation.†

* Herrera, dec. i, lib. ii, c. xvi.

† Peter Martyr, dec. i, lib. iv.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Ojeda offers to seize Caonabo.—His curious stratagem.—Indomitable ferocity of that savage warrior.—The savages come down to the plains to avenge their cacique.—Arrival of Antonio de Torres in Spain.—Battle with the savages on the plains.—Dogs used in fighting the Indians.—Complete rout of the Indians (1494-95).

BUT these and whatever other arrangements were made, were useless or insufficient so long as Caonabo remained in arms ; and no way was seen of conquering him. To pursue him into the heart of his states was not to be thought of ; for the country was full of impenetrable forests and steep mountains, and against so wily and daring an enemy, the Spaniards, few in number and ignorant of the land, would be quickly exterminated by ambuscades and treachery. It was impossible to draw him out to fight in the open plains, for the cacique was too astute and knew the advantage of his position. On the other hand, while they were in this condition, they were continually exposed to secret and open attacks, and the excavation of the mines would suffer. While debating this question, and finding no solution, Ojeda presented to the admiral a foolish but daring plan, such as only he could have imagined, by which he was sure of delivering Caonabo alive into his hands. The admiral, who knew the man, and how much there was of serious even in his most foolish plans, as nothing better offered, accepted the proposal, and Ojeda, taking ten of his best comrades, fully armed, set out for Caonabo's residence, where he arrived after a journey of sixty leagues. Presenting himself to Caonabo, he told him he had come with the title of ambassador, bringing words of peace on the part of the admiral, who was *Guamiquina*, or leader of the Spaniards, with a present of inestimable value. Caonabo, like all generous and brave minds, was able to appreciate virtue and merit even in an enemy, and had conceived not only esteem, but even admiration, for Ojeda, from the proofs he gave of extraordinary valor at

Fort St. Thomas, was glad to have him as a guest in his house, and treated him with the same sincere cordiality as a friend. The cunning Spaniard manifested equal esteem and affection for Caonabo, and endeavored to increase his good feeling by frequent exhibitions of strength, agility, and dexterity, in the management of his arms and horse, both alone and with his companions. These exhibitions were as pleasing to the wild spirit of Caonabo as they were novel. When Ojeda found himself well established in favor, he began to get around Caonabo and urge him to go to Isabella, to see the admiral, and there confirm the terms of peace, assuring him he would be received with feasting and loaded with gifts. But the cacique showed himself loath to follow his new friend's advice. Then Ojeda, to tempt him more powerfully and make him consent, promised him that on going to Isabella he would be presented with the bell that was in their little church. To the savages, this bell was one of the most surprising marvels of the Christians. Observing that as soon as the first sound echoed through the air, the Spaniards, at a long distance, without one knowing of the other, all at once quit their work and started towards the church,—all the savages imagined that in that sound the bell spoke, and that the White Men hastened to obey its orders. Caonabo had, likewise, heard it, and seen the obedience which the Spaniards yielded, when he was secretly prowling about Isabella, examining the places and forces that he meant to attack, and had felt a strong desire to see it closer. Now that he was offered it as a pledge of peace, if he went to Isabella, he was pleased at the thought of placing it on one of his mountains, and seeing all his subjects gather around him from every side at its sound. The temptation was too powerful for a savage to resist, and Caonabo yielded. But when they came to start, Ojeda, to his astonishment, saw a swarm of armed savages preparing to accompany the cacique. What need, he asked him, of so many arms for a visit of peace and amity? Caonabo answered proudly: "One of my rank does not travel with a less escort than this." This answer suggested to Ojeda that, perhaps, instead of leading the other into the snare, he had fallen into it himself; and the thought occurred that the cacique meditated an assault on Fort St. Thomas, which was on their road, and that during its commandant's embassy to the enemy, discipline might be somewhat relaxed and precautions not taken against a surprise. But he concealed his thoughts from the

cacique, keeping up his usual gaiety and frankness, while studying in his mind some way to meet the danger.

The means which his odd fancy conceived for getting out of the trouble and of executing his design, has all the air of a romantic invention, founded on the strange adventures which rendered his name famous. But all contemporary historians speak of it in nearly the same way; and Las Casas, who treats it more at length, relating all the details, assures us that when he came to the island, about six years later, its memory was still fresh among the people.* And since it is in perfect keeping with Ojeda's rash and fantastical character, there seems to be no reasonable doubt of its truth. For the rest, except as to the method of putting it in execution, the treachery is precisely what the admiral himself had proposed to Margarita, to get possession of Caonabo.† Arriving on the banks of the river Yegua, where they halted for a short rest, Ojeda, opening his bag, took out a pair of steel hand-cuffs so polished that they looked like silver, and showing them to Caonabo, told him they were a royal ornament that came from the Turey of Biscay, and that the kings of Castile, his masters, wore them as ornaments in their dances and at the principal festivities of their nation. He would now make a present of them to the greatest and most powerful cacique of Hayti. He proposed to step aside, pretending they were going to bathe in the river, and then, wearing these ornaments, to mount with him on horseback, and astonish his troops by appearing before them in the guise of a Spanish monarch. Caonabo, in spite of his hatred of the Spaniards, was crazy, like all the savages, for every thing of theirs; and now, the sight of these manacles dazzled his mind, not so much by their novelty or beauty, as by the thought that they were ornaments worn only by the most powerful monarchs of the White Men. To make himself fine, and, so adorned, to appear before his followers on one of those terrible animals which they were all in awe of, allured his pride as a prince, and his fierceness as a brave warrior, and he accepted the treacherous proposal of his pretended friend. With this he followed Ojeda and his companions to the river, apprehending no

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, c. cii.—It is spoken of also by Herrera, dec. i, lib. ii, c. xvi; Fernando Pizarro, in his *Varones Ilustres del Nuevo Mundo*; Peter Martyr, and others.—Fernando Columbus speaks of the imprisonment of Caonabo, without telling how it was brought about.

† See ch. xxvii.

danger from the ten strangers, while surrounded by his whole army. There putting on the hand-cuffs, they lifted him to the crupper behind Ojeda, and tied him tight, telling him this was to keep him from falling off. Then they suddenly came out in the midst of the Indians, who clapped their hands and yelled with delight on seeing their chief so adorned and on one of those frightful animals. As if in sport, Ojeda urged his horse, now at one, and now at another, group of Indians, who fled in terror and laughter; and poor Caonabo laughed and enjoyed it more than they. Thus trotting and wheeling this way and that, the Spaniard had cleared quite an opening among the Indians, when suddenly he was off at a run and disappeared in the forest. His companions were close behind, and, with drawn swords, threatened the cacique with death if he made the least resistance or uttered a cry. Then securing him more firmly with ropes, to prevent his falling off or attempting to escape, they spurred their horses and fled through the woods with their prisoner.

To reach Isabella, Ojeda had fifty to sixty leagues to ride, and what was worse, to pass many large Indian towns. There was no fear of being overtaken by Caonabo's subjects, but strict vigilance was necessary that the prisoner did not escape during the long journey, or some of the allied caciques learn of his capture and come to his rescue. They, therefore, made long circuits to avoid the most populous parts of the country, and when forced to pass through villages, they galloped hard. They suffered greatly from hunger and fatigue, were exposed to a thousand dangers, forded or swam the numerous streams, crossing the plains, anxiously seeking the light through thick forests, and crossing steep and rocky mountains with great difficulty. But all their fatigues and anxieties seemed light by the side of the rich booty they bore; and so, victorious over every peril and labor, exhausted in strength, but joyful and proud, they entered Isabella in triumph. The haughty ferocity of Caonabo remained impassible in his misfortune, and when brought before the admiral, neither by word or act did he show the least submission to gain favor, or to lessen the vengeance which he felt he must expect from the White Men. He replied sternly and fiercely to the questions put to him, boasting of, not excusing, the faults imputed to him. "It was he that surprised and killed the White Men at Fort Nativity; and he had hoped to do as much to the others at Fort St. Thomas and in Isabella; and the better to succeed

in his design, he had come and seen with his own eyes the city of Isabella and its environs ; he had sent messengers and ambassadors in every direction, to arouse the other caciques, and encourage them to set upon the men descended from *turey* ; and if he had not done so, would do so if he could." He spoke and acted with the same imperturbable ferocity the following days, until he was sent to Spain ; and, loaded with chains and under guard, he showed in every thing defiance and contempt for the Spaniards ; and when the admiral entered his room, and all the rest rose and uncovered, he showed no sign of being aware of what was going on around him. For Ojeda, however, he had no ill-feeling, but as soon as he heard his voice, he raised his eyes to him and saluted him. When asked why he behaved in this strange fashion, the admiral being *Guamiquina*, and Ojeda his subaltern, he answered that he was the prisoner of Ojeda, who had risked his life to seek him in the very centre of his states, and he, therefore, owed him respect ; but had never had any thing to do with their *Guamiquina*, and did not know him.*

It was a custom and one of the rights of war amongst the Indians, to use any kind of deception towards an enemy ; and, therefore, Caonabo, chivalrously generous and noble in his savage fierceness, instead of fostering rancor against his lucky adversary, seemed to esteem him all the more for the masterly stroke he had made.

On learning of the capture of Caonabo, one of his brothers quickly assembled more than 7,000 of his best warriors, and secretly moved towards Fort St. Thomas, hoping to surprise and seize some Spaniards in that neighborhood, whom he might exchange for his brother. But Ojeda, making only a short stay at Isabella, in view of some action on the part of Caonabo's subjects, returned quickly to guard his fort, and being on the watch, discovered the enemy's secret movements. He determined not to be blockaded a second time, and receiving reinforcements from the adelantado, left in the fort a sufficient number for its defence, and with the rest went out to meet the savages. Caonabo's brother, on seeing the Spaniards advance, divided his army into five bodies, and boldly waited for the attack. But when Ojeda, at the head of the cavalry, charged on them at a furious gallop, the good intentions of the poor savages failed. They

* Las Casas, lib. i, c. cii.

wavered, became confused, and instead of resisting, tumbled over one another in their attempt to get out of the way of the furious animals, and suffer them to pass. When Ojeda was once among them, the work was short. The slain were few, for the flight was soon general; nor was it for the Christians' purpose to extend the slaughter. Caonabo's brother was captured, desperately fighting at his post with only a few surrounding him.*

Considering Caonabo's fame amongst the natives, the Christians had hoped that his capture would strike all the other caciques with such fear as to prevent further opposition on their part, but the effect was just the reverse. That affectionate reverence and almost adoration of the Indians for their caciques, of which we shall see brilliant proofs further on, Caonabo had won by his talents, his prowess, and the glory that surrounded him, in spite of his odious race and the violence of his conquest, and there was not an inhabitant of Maguana who was not proud of having Caonabo for his cacique. His imprisonment, therefore, was most painful to his subjects, and the little spark of warlike ardor which he had been able to inspire in them, burst out in a determination to free him. This ardor was not extinguished by the defeat of the first brother who moved in his defence; but the warriors of Maguana were warned by it that they must attack the White Men with larger and better-arranged forces.

The soul of this movement was Manicaotex, another brother of Caonabo his equal as a bold and fierce warrior, with Caonabo's favorite wife, the fair Anacoana. After the urgent solicitations Caonabo made to the other caciques, to persuade them of the danger they were all in from the White Men's arrival, and the necessity of uniting for their common safety, his sudden imprisonment brought about by treachery was a terrible confirmation of his foresight; and, consequently, not only within the limits of his own states, but in every province of the island, the news of his misfortune made a deep impression, and excited general fear and distrust. In this disposition of their mind, Manicaotex and Anacoana found it easy to renew and terminate successfully the negotiations he had started for a general league of the caciques; especially, as Behechio, the most powerful lord on the island, was the brother of Anacoana, and, urged

* Oviedo, *Crónica de las Indias*, lib. iii, c. i.—Charlevoix, *Hist. Saint-Domingue*, liv. ii.

by his sister's influence, took up the revenging on his brother-in-law with ardor, encouraging the inferior caciques by his example. And so, by the capture of Caonabo, instead of warding off the impending tempest, the Christians only hastened its bursting and increased its fury.

Whilst the savages were thus preparing for a supreme effort against their country's invaders, Antonio de Torres returned from Spain, with four ships, bringing quantities of provisions and medicines—a supply almost providential, for the number of the sick and the scarcity of food had reduced the colony to a dangerous condition, in face of the onset it was about to encounter.

The force at the admiral's disposal was too small to prevent the preparations of the Indians, and he had to confine himself to watching their movements and studying their plans. The savages were, consequently, able to assemble from all sides in the Vega Real, two days' journey from Isabella, on which they intended to march, crushing the infant colony by their numbers. But the admiral did not await their further advance, and, on the 27th of March, 1495, attacked them in their camp with the small force he could get together. Fernando Columbus and Las Casas place the number of Indians at upwards of 100,000 ;* but this number is undoubtedly an exaggeration, and in the confused and disorderly manner in which they always fought, it was not possible to make even an approximate calculation. There is no doubt, however, that they were a vast multitude, and that every man the island could furnish rushed to the decisive battle for its independence. The chief direction and command of the whole army were entrusted to Manicaotex. Against this multitude marched a little band of 200 Spanish infantry, twenty mounted men, and twenty bloodhounds. But what could the mass of savages avail against the skill, the discipline, and the weapons of this handful of Spaniards? The only arms of the Indians were clubs, wooden lances, and arrows likewise of wood, with the point scorched at the fire, or else tipped with a fish-bone; whilst the Spaniards carried cross-bows, swords, lances, and heavy fire-locks, and had excellent armor and steel shields to defend themselves against the few light blows of the savages; whilst the latter offered their naked bodies to the sharp steel and the fire of European arms; not to mention

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i, c. civ.—Fernando Colombo, c. lx.

the horses and dogs, which produced greater consternation than all the Spaniards together. The simple Indians could not count beyond ten; for greater numbers they put a grain of corn for each unit, and then judged by the eye of the quantity. When, therefore, their scouts returned to announce the approach of the Spaniards, and showed a few grains of corn in the hollow of their hand, the savages laughed to find them even fewer than they expected.*

The Indians' camp extended to the mountains separating Isabella from the Vega Real, across which the Spanish gentlemen had built the first road in the New World, called, in consequence, *the Gentlemen's Pass*.† Wholly ignorant of the art of war, the savages failed to occupy the mountains and shut up their weak enemy among the passes and precipices; or perhaps they hoped more easily to surround them in the open plain and crush them by overwhelming numbers. The Spaniards, consequently, reached the summit of the mountain without danger, where, from the number of fires visible all over the fields and in the forests, they could calculate the number of savages waiting to kill them. The admiral led the Spaniards in person, but the real commander of the little troop was Don Bartholomew, who was much more skilled in the art and stratagems of war. He divided the infantry into little groups of five or six soldiers each, posted at various points at the foot of the mountain, to advance all at once on the savages. The most open part of the plain was left to Ojeda with his horses and dogs.

Guacanagari, as he had promised, had accompanied the admiral with an army of his savages, but their only use was to show the other Indians that by becoming friends with the White Men they could gain the same good treatment.

At a given signal, the trumpets sounded, the drums beat, and at once the various groups of Spaniards, from different points, fired a volley into the savages, who, at the unexpected sound and the discharge of the arquebuses from so many points, believed each group was a whole army, and all their confidence in their numbers vanished, and a panic struck them all; at the same instant, Ojeda, with his horses and dogs, furiously charged where the crowd was thickest. The hardest point for the Indians was to sustain the shock of the horses, the sight alone of which made them tremble; but they had calculated on

* Las Casas, l. c.

† See ch. xxvii.

succeeding by putting their stoutest and bravest warriors in front, and setting up yells from every side to frighten the animals, while with a storm of arrows they tried to kill both horse and rider. But in their fear they failed to carry out their plan, and the horses, quickly breaking through the front ranks, rushed into the middle of the fight. What followed, is easily imagined. While the horses bore down and trampled on the naked savages, the riders, with untiring fury, dealt blows to the right and left; the dogs, excited by the example of their masters, and by the yells of the Indians, seized the legs of the fugitives, sprang at their faces, pulled them down, and bit and tore them. This was the first time that dogs were used in open battle against Indians; and not knowing any race of fighting quadrupeds, and seeing these animals spring at the face and bite and tear the flesh, the savages supposed they ate men alive, and momentarily expecting the horses also to devour them, the idea of being while alive the food of those fierce monsters, rendered them blind with fright; and instead of opposing them, they were thrown into confusion, rolled one over another, crying and yelling, and presenting their unprotected bodies to the fury of swords, horses, and dogs. It was a butchering, not a battle. The swarms in the rear hearing the doleful cries and yells of their companions, did not wait, but all fled desperately.

During the fight, Guacanagari, with his men, stood at his post, spectator of the combat, or rather, bloody rout, he and his men trembling, although the conquerors were their allies. The part he took in favor of the Christians on this expedition was never forgotten by the other caciques, and he returned to his dominions loaded with the hate and curses of all his fellow-Indians.

END OF VOLUME I.

ERRATA.—VOL. I.

Page III, 6th line, for Alihieri, read Allighieri.

Page 27, top line, for two, read too.

Page 80, 9th line from bottom, for penetrations, read penetration.

Page 128, 4th line from bottom, for III, read II.

Page 182, 15th line from bottom, for each, read and.

Page 278, 22nd line, for scull, read skull.

Page 324, 31st line, for could, read would.

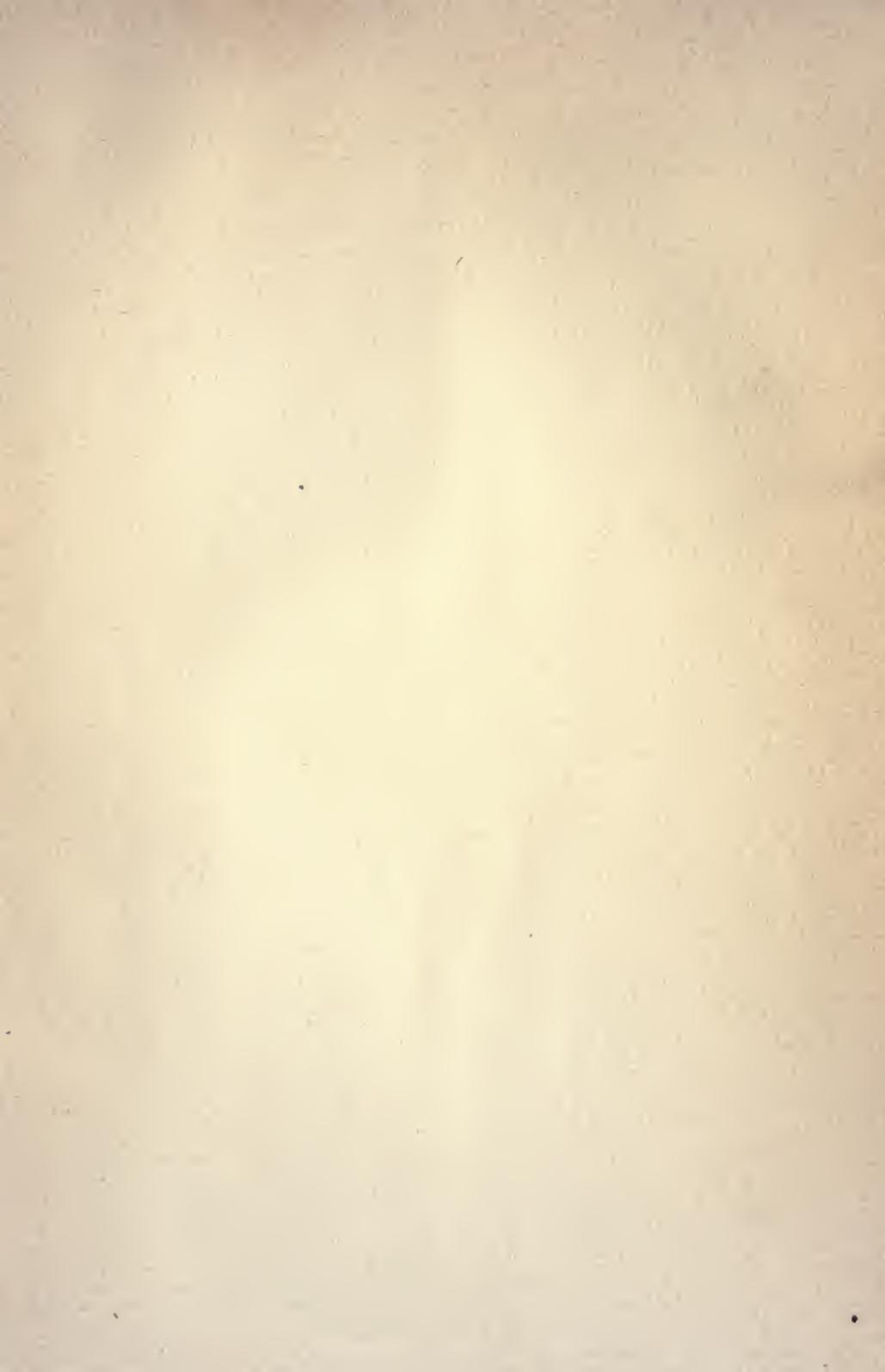
Page 344, 1st line of foot note, for pigintur, read pingitur.

Page 351, 1st line, for tattoed, read tattooed.

Page 366, 4th line, for *in*, read *from*.

Page 372, 1st line, for on, read of.





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