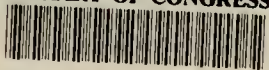


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THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA AND THE LANDFALL OF COLUMBUS

THE LAST RESTING PLACE OF COLUMBUS

Two Monographs, based on Personal Investigations

by *Rudolf Cronau*

With Reproductions of Maps, Inscriptions and
Autographs, and of Original Drawings by the Author.



PUBLISHED BY R. CRONAU
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1921

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Rudolf Cronau



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AND THE LANDFALL OF COLUMBUS**

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By **RUDOLF CRONAU**



THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA AND THE LANDFALL OF COLUMBUS



HISTORIC splendour surrounds the name of that island where inhabitants of the old world for the first time met aborigines of the new. Yet we must confess with shame that so far it has been impossible to point out conclusively the particular island on whose shore this memorable event took place."

These were the words, with which in 1890, when all humanity began to prepare for the celebration of the four-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus, an eminent scholar characterized the "*Guanahani - Question*," perhaps the most interesting problem in all history. Indeed, no other question has been so baffling and caused such controversy. Numerous ingenious students have tried to solve it, but the sole agreement reached by their arduous investigations was that the landfall of Columbus took place at one of those many islands, which stretch from the south-eastern coast of Florida toward Hayti, and are known as the Lucayos or Bahamas. Everything beyond this meagre result remained doubtful, and the opinions as to which of these islands might be identical with Guanahani, differed widely.

This unsatisfactory state of affairs has been caused by several peculiar circumstances.

1. The original log-book or journal, kept by Columbus during his memorable voyage, has disappeared. Also all charts he made of his discoveries. The only source, scholars could rely upon, in the pursuit of their investigations, were extracts of the journal, furnished by Bishop Las Casas, the famous contemporary of Columbus. When Las Casas was engaged in writing his "*Historia de las Indias*," which covers the period from 1492 to 1520, he had before him the original

log-book of Columbus, and from this document he excerpted the words of the admiral literally from October 12th, the time of the landfall at Guanahani, to October 29th. Inestimable as these extracts are they lack, however, just those statements, which would make the identification of Guanahani very easy: the *astronomic observations* Columbus had made about the position of those islands discovered by him during his journey. That such statements were included in the original log-book, we must assume as a matter of fact. But unfortunately Las Casas omitted to include them in his extracts, probably in the belief that they would not interest the general public.

2. The Bahama archipelago, containing no gold or other riches, was very rarely visited by the Spaniards during the 16th century. After having carried off the natives, who were compelled to work in the gold mines of Espanola, the Spanish conquerers paid no attention thereafter to these out-of-the-way islands. As a result not only did the melodious names used by the natives for the different islands vanish from memory, but also the names which Columbus had given to those places discovered by him. Likewise on the maps the outlines and positions of the numerous islands became in time very vague and incorrect. The confusion grew when, during the 17th and 18th centuries, the Bahamas became the lurking places of English pirates. These rough buccaneers, out for prey and plunder only, bestowed upon many of the islands those names which are still in use to-day, but have no relation to the past.

3. To the many difficulties caused by the aforesaid circumstances has to be added the fact that the Bahama archipelago consists of no less than 29 large islands, 661 islets or cays, and 2387 rocks and reefs. As their formation is everywhere the same, namely calcareous rocks of coral and shell hardened into limestone, so they are in general character and appearance very much alike.

4. Special maps showing all the details of the many islands of the Bahama archipelago do not exist. Even the charts published by the British Admiralty are in many respects insufficient, as they consider the demands of the mariner only.

In view of all these circumstances no one can be surprised at the widely differing views and results obtained by scholars in their various attempts to solve the Guanahani-Question.

A brief enumeration of these attempts may follow here.

It was in 1731 that Catesby in his "Natural History of Carolina" expressed the opinion, that Guanahani and *Cat Island* might be identical. Knox, editor of "The New Collection of Voyages and Travels" (1767), advanced a similar view. So did De la Roquette in his French version of Navarrete's "Coleccion de los Viages y descubrimientos" (1828). And he was followed by Baron de Montlezum in the "Nouvelles annales des voyages" (1828-1829).

When Washington Irving planned his biography of Columbus, he asked Alexander S. Mackenzie, an officer of the U. S. Navy, to make a study of the Guanahani-Question. The results of his investigations were accepted by Irving and with his book found world-wide circulation. And when Alexander von Humboldt in "Kritische Untersuchungen" also became an advocate for Cat Island the weight of Humboldt's name was the real cause for naming Cat Island San Salvador on the majority of the maps of the 19th century.

In contrast with those views M. F. de Navarrete, the author of "Coleccion de los Viages y Descubrimientos" (Madrid 1825)' advanced arguments in favor of *Grand Turk*, an island belonging to the Caicos group. Samuel Kettle in "Personal narrative of the first voyage of Columbus" (Boston 1827) and George Gibbs in the "Proceedings of the New York Historical Society" of 1846, and in the "Historical Magazine" of June 1858, argued for the same island. So did R. H. Major in the first edition of "Select letters of Columbus" (1847).

Several years later, however, in the summer of 1864, F. A. de Varnhagen published in Santiago de Chile a treatise "La verdadera Guanahani," in which he expressed his belief that the island *Mariguana* might be entitled to the name Guanahani.

The American captain Gustavus V. Fox, author of the monograph: "An attempt to solve the problem of the first landing place of Columbus in the New World," came to the conclusion, that *Samana* might be the scene of the landfall. His investigations appeared in 1880 as a U. S. Coast Survey Report.

Also *Watling's Island* has been suggested; first by J. P. Munoz in his "Historia del Nuevo Mundo" (Madrid 1793); then by A. B. Becher in his book "The Landfall of Columbus" (London 1856); furthermore by O. Peschel in "Geschichte des Zeitalters der Entdeckungen" (Stuttgart 1858); also by R. H. Major in the "Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of 1871; by J. B. Murdock in the monograph published in the "Proceedings of the U. S. Naval Institute" of 1884; and, finally by R. Pietschmann in "Zeitschrift fuer wissenschaftliche Geographie," 1880.

It must be emphasized here, that with the exception of the U. S. captain J. V. Fox, none of the above mentioned writers ever had an opportunity to visit the Bahama Islands and to study the Guanahani-Question on the spot. All had been compelled to rely on Las Casas' extracts of the journal of Columbus and on such maps, as they were able to obtain. But as even the sea charts of to-day are in many respects insufficient, the widely differing views obtained in the many attempts to identify Guanahani cannot surprise us.

So the Guanahani-Question remained in doubt. All that Justin Winsor, the American historian, felt justified in saying in his well known book on Columbus was that "the opinion of scholars has been drifting towards a belief that the landfall was on Watling's Island."

Such was the situation when in 1890 the author of this essay, for many years deeply interested in American affairs, became engaged in writing a history of the discovery of the New World.*)

*) R. Cronau, "Amerika, die Geschichte seiner Entdeckung." 2 vols. with 37 maps and 545 illustrations. Leipzig, 1892.

R. Cronau, "America, Historia de su descubrimiento." 3 vols. Barcelona, 1892.

Stimulated by the desire to make this work as authentic and valuable as possible, I decided to visit the more important of those places in the West Indies, Mexico and other parts of America, that during the centuries of discovery had gained historical interest. Besides, I cherished the hope that perhaps it might be given to me to solve the vexing Guanahani-problem. In the pursuit of this object I made extensive journeys through the Bahama archipelago, exploring all the different islands that possibly might come into consideration.

I began my voyage determined not to be influenced by the views of any former investigators, but to be guided solely by such notes and descriptions as are contained in the extracts Las Casas furnished from the original log-book of Columbus. The difficult task for me was to find in the wide Bahama archipelago those places which in their aspect as well as in their relation to other islands would answer the descriptions given by Columbus, and which in their succession would be in strict accord with the notes Columbus had made in his log-book about his sailings.



THE DESCRIPTION OF GUANAHANI, AS GIVEN
BY COLUMBUS.

Of these notes none are of such paramount importance as those which Columbus gave of Guanahani. They appear under date of October 13th, 1492, in the following words:

"This island is quite large and very level, and covered with beautiful green trees. It has much water, and a large lake in the centre. It is without any mountain, and the vegetation is so luxuriant that it is a pleasure to behold it."

On October the 14th Columbus wrote: "At daybreak I had the boat of the ship and the boats of the caravels made ready and went along the island in a north-northeasterly direction in order to see the other side or the eastern part, and also the villages; and soon I saw two or three, and the inhabitants, coming to the shore, calling us. They beseeched us to land there, but I was afraid of a reef of rocks which entirely surrounds the island. But within this belt is a harbor of such size, that there would be ample room for all the vessels of Christendom; but the entrance is very narrow. True, there are some rocks within this harbor, but the water is as calm and motionless as that of a well. I decided to investigate all these things this morning, in order that I should be able to give to your Highnesses (the King and Queen of Spain) a thorough report of everything. I also wanted to find out the best location for a fort. And I discovered a piece of land, resembling an island, although it is not one, with six huts on it. This piece of land could easily be cut through within two days, thereby converting it into an island."

While this is all that Columbus said with reference to Guanahani itself, it is important to mention also that Bishop Las Casas in the first chapter of his "Apologetica Historia" says: "The first land discovered was one of the group of islands which are known as the Lucayos. The aforesaid island bears resemblance in shape to a bean."

Scant as these remarks are, together with the notes Las Casas gave about the sailing directions of Columbus during the progress of his journey and of the distance from one island to the other, they furnished to the writer of this essay the first means for ascertaining the true location of Guanahani. After the most careful consideration of these notes and after thorough investigations on the spot, I came to the conclusion that no other place but *Watling's Island* could be identical with Guanahani, and that the landing place of Columbus was on the west side of that island.

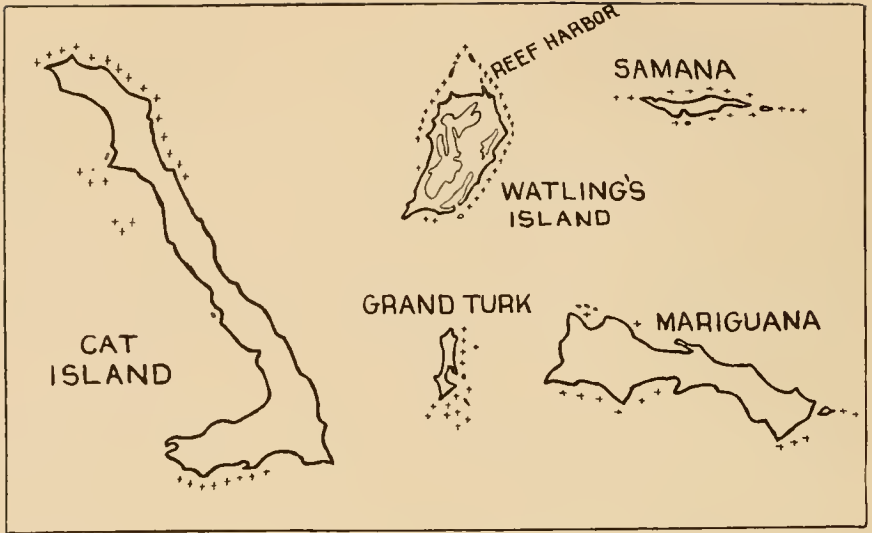
To substantiate these views, I wish to state first, that Watling's Island, with a length of twelve miles from north to south and a breadth of five to seven miles from east to west, has just the size to permit the expressions of Las Casas and Columbus in speaking of Guanahani at one time as of "una isleta" (a small island), and at another time as "bien grande" (moderately large).

Watling's Island, seen from the ocean, appears also as very level and without any elevations. The few thickly wooded ridges, which divide the several lagoons, rise to 100 or 140 feet only.

Columbus dwells with great delight on the beautiful vegetation of Guanahani. In spite of the fact, that during the 18th and 19th centuries all the larger trees have been cut down and carried off by lumbermen, the island still enjoys to-day such luxurious vegetation that it has been distinguished with the epithet "the garden of the Bahamas."

Columbus mentions that the island has much water and a large lake in the center ("*y muchas aguas, y una laguna en medio muy grande*"). As our map shows, Watling's Island has not only a number of smaller lagoons, but in its middle also a large sheet of water. The present inhabitants of the island call it "the great lake."

As none of the islands proposed by the other writers have such a topographical distinguishing mark, its existence on Watling's Island is a feature sufficient in itself to identify it with Guanahani.



The above outlines of the various islands, suggested as being identical with Guanahani, prove that none, except Watling's Island, has the shape of a bean. Also none, except Watling's Island, has in its center a lake, and none, except Watling's Island, has a great reef harbor.

If we consider the existence of this lake in the center of the island as a deciding factor, we find that Cat Island has to be eliminated from competition at once. As this island is 42 miles long but only 3 to 4 miles wide, there is no spot that might properly be called its "center." Besides, the whole island is, as I can state by personal investigation, nothing but one continuous ridge, varying from 200 to 400 feet in height and excluding all possibility of a "large lake." Water is not abundant but is so scarce that the inhabitants must subsist, as on many other Bahama Islands, on rainwater.

Samana or Atwood Cay, favored by Captain Fox, contains no lake either. Nine miles long from east to west and $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles broad from north to south, it has in its center no lake, but a hill one hundred feet high.

At Mariguana, advocated by Varnhagen, we also look in vain for a lake. The island is 24 miles long from east to west and from 2 to 6 miles wide from north to south. In its midst rises Centre Hill, 110 feet high.

Grand Turk, proposed by Navarrete and Gibbs, has several salt ponds, but none of such size as to be called "a large lake."

The statement of Las Casas, that Guanahani in *its outline resembles a bean*, is also well worth considering. One glance at the outlines of Cat Island as well as of Samana, Mariguana and Grand Turk, must convince everyone that none of these islands permits such comparison, while the outlines of Watling's Island answer in the most striking manner.

But now let us see if the other notes found in the journal of Columbus about his stay on Guanahani are in accord with our assumption that Guanahani and Watling's Island are identical.



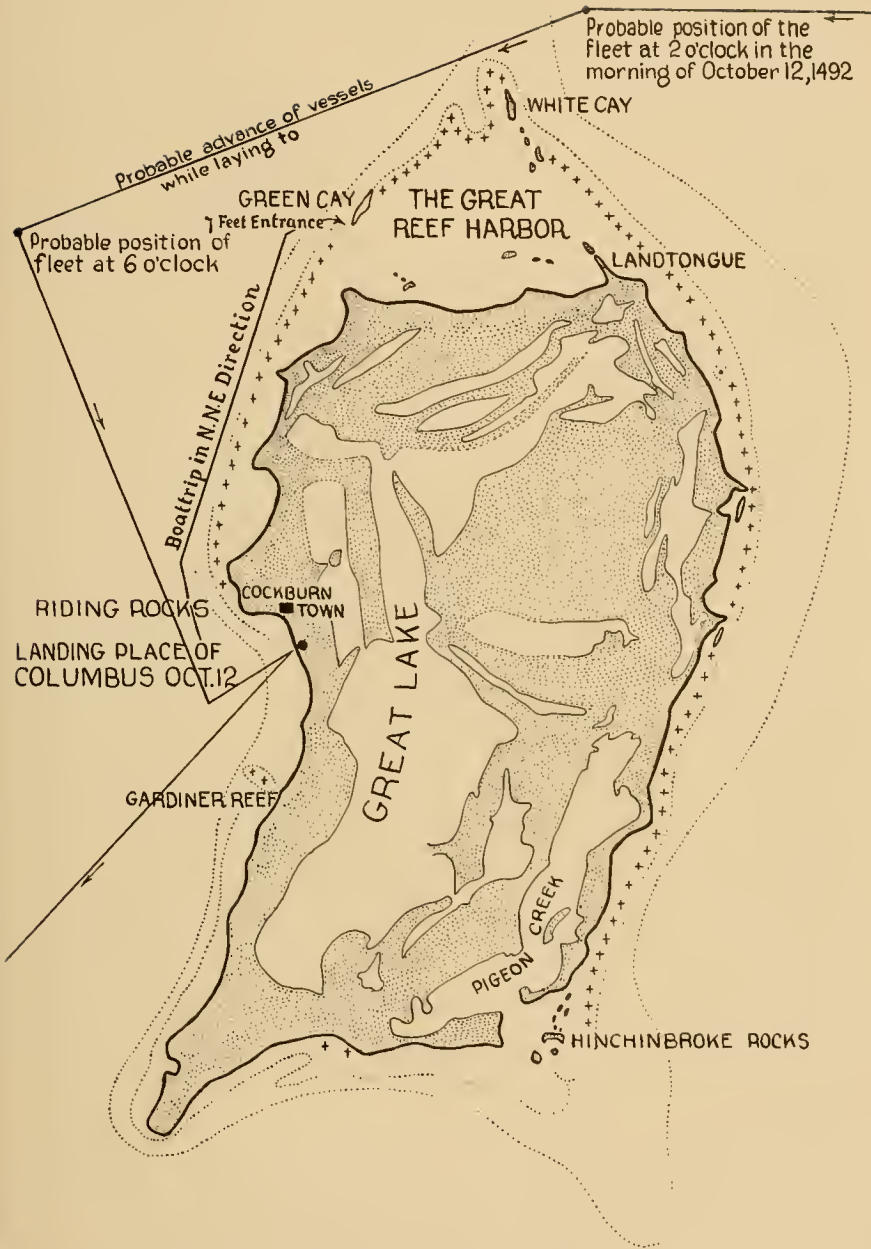
THE LANDING PLACE OF COLUMBUS AT GUANAHANI.

As the journal of Columbus omits to indicate on what part of Guanahani he went ashore on the morning of October 12th, 1492, any attempt to solve this question seems almost audacious. However, the journal contains a few remarks written during the time from October 11th to 14th which induce us to grapple with this difficult question. By studying the journal we learn that the little fleet of Columbus from October 7th to 11th had sailed in the direction west-southwest, but that after sunset of the last named date the vessels followed again the original course to the west.

At ten o'clock on the night of October the 11th the Admiral, standing on the castle of the poop, believed he saw "a light, but it was so indistinct that he did not dare to affirm it as a sign of land. Yet he called the attention of Pedro Gutierrez, a keeper of the King's wardroom, to it and told him that it seemed to be a light, asking him to look, and he did so and saw it. He did the same with Rodrigo Sanchez de Segovia, whom the King and Queen had sent with the fleet as supervisor and purveyor. But he, not being in a good position saw nothing. After the Admiral said this, it was seen once or twice, and it was like a small wax candle that was hoisted and raised, which would seem to few to be an indication of land."

Whether there was really such a light or not is of no great value, as the journal says nothing about the direction in which the vision was seen. If there was a light, it may have been on an Indian canoe, whose crew was engaged on a trading trip. Such assumption would best explain the unsteady character of the light.

Two hours after midnight land was seen two leagues off, whereupon all sails were lowered with the exception of a storm square-sail. Then the vessels "lay to, standing off and on until Friday morning." The statement that the vessels "lay to"



Map of Guanahani or Watling's Island, showing the track of Columbus.

after the sails had been taken in, is of greatest importance for the determination of the question as to what part of Guanahani the fleet of Columbus anchored in. Columbus states that on Thursday October 11th "the vessels encountered a heavier sea than they had met at any time before during the voyage." Furthermore, that "in the course of twenty hours the vessels made the remarkable run of fifty-nine leagues, running at times ten miles an hour, at others twelve, at others seven. In the evening of the 11th, from sunset till two hours after midnight, the average rate was twelve miles an hour."

These statements indicate unmistakably that the heavy sea was caused by a strong wind, coming from the east, for by no other means could the vessels make such rapid progress. Now every sailor on the Atlantic knows that the Bahamas are in the track of the east-northeastern trade winds, which blow at that time of the year regularly, sweeping over the whole West Indies. From the rapid movement of the fleet it appears that these winds were exceptionally strong on October 11th. Under such conditions no sailor would attempt a landing on the *weather side* of an island, which is exposed to the turbulence of a heavy surf caused by a rough sea. Besides, the whole eastern coast of Watling's Island is buttressed by a continuous and dangerous line of rocks. Regarding this the "West Indies Pilot," published by the British Admiralty, says: "The eastern coast of Watling's Island is fringed by a reef, which sweeps around the northern end of the island at a distance of three miles from that shore." As even in calm weather a landing on a coast like this is extremely hazardous, such an attempt was certainly not made under the conditions prevailing during the night and morning of October the 12th, 1492. This fact is clearly indicated by the statement that the vessels, after the sails had been taken in "lay to until the morning." As the land had been seen two hours after midnight, we may assume that the vessels were "laying to" for about four hours.

Now, small vessels such as the caravels of Columbus do not, while laying to, remain at the same spot, especially when the wind and the movement of the sea are strong, as was the

ease. Under such conditions vessels during four hours are carried away by the wind and the current for several miles, probably as many as ten or fifteen, or some miles beyond Watling's Island, which is only six to seven miles broad. In the morning, whether the vessel passed the island on the north or on the south, *the only natural course was to turn about and approach the island from the west and seek an anchorage on the lee or protected side.* ✓

While searching here for a safe landing place the attention of the sailors must have been attracted by the same small but convenient beach in which all vessels cast anchor, that call at Watling's Island today. The "West Indies Pilot" says: *"There is anchorage with the usual winds in depths of about 8 fathoms, off Cockburn Town, the principal settlement southward of Riding Rock Point, and northward of Gardiner Reef; the soundings are from 5 to 8 fathoms on the edge of the bank, which is very steep, and a vessel should anchor immediately they are obtained."* ✓

Cockburn Town occupies without doubt the site of a former Indian village, whose inhabitants must have appreciated this beach as the most convenient landing place for their canoes just as the people of Cockburn Town do today.

If we assume, that this beach was also the landing place of Columbus on October 12th, 1492, the many obstacles which present themselves in every other theory and that have embarrassed all the other investigators, completely disappear. In constant accord with the log-book, we enjoy smooth sailing from Guanahani to Cuba.





The Beach under Riding Rock Point, Watling's Island, the place of Columbus' Landfall.
After a drawing by Rudolf Cronau.

THE BOAT TRIP OF COLUMBUS ON OCTOBER
THE 14TH AND THE DISCOVERY OF
THE GREAT REEF HARBOR.

“At dawn”, so Columbus states in his journal under the date of October 14th, “I ordered the boat of the ship and the boats of the caravels to be made ready and I went along the island in a north-northeasterly direction, to explore the other part of the island, namely that which lies to the east.” During this journey a number of natives appeared at the coast, beseeching Columbus to come ashore. “But” so the Admiral continues, “I was afraid to do this on account of a great reef of rocks, which entirely surrounded the island, although there is, within, a harbor ample deep and wide enough to shelter all the vessels of Christendom; but the entrance is very narrow. True, there are some rocks within this harbor, but the water is there as smooth as a pond. I went to see all this this morning in order that I might be able to give an account of everything to your Highnesses; and also to find out where a fort could be built. I discovered a piece of land which looks like an island, although it is not one. Six dwellings were located thereon. In two days it could easily be cut off and converted into an island.”

These are the sentences, which for the further identification of Guanabani and the landing place are of greatest importance. Therefore, we must consider them line by line.

When in the first sentence Columbus states, that he set out “to explore the other part of the island, namely that which lies to the east,” we have again a clear confirmation, *that his vessels were not at the east side of the island, but most probably at the opposite or west coast.* Besides, if we would accept a landing at the east coast of Watling’s Island, then a boat trip undertaken in a north-northeasterly direction would have taken the Admiral into the open ocean.

The English geographer R. H. Major was inclined to seek the landing place of Columbus at the southeastern point of

Watling's, believing that one of the two tongues of land to be found there might answer for the one described by the Admiral, and that the sheet of water enclosed by these land tongues, might be the marvellous reef harbor, able to hold all the vessels of Christendom. Close investigations prove, however, that these theories can not stand. First, the inlet between the tongues, known as Pigeon Creek, is no reef harbor. Secondly, the entrance to this sheet of water is not, as that described by Columbus, "very narrow" but very wide. Thirdly, both land-tongues are much too broad to permit cutting them through within two days. Fourthly, the theory that the Admiral might have landed on the southern coast of Watling's seems improbable, as indicated by the following note written by Columbus on October, 13th: "Through signs, made by the aborigines, I was able to understand that by going to the south or going around the island to southward, there was a king who has large gold vessels and gold in abundance." "If Columbus had been at the south coast, then he would have had no reason to say "by going around the island to the southward."

Supposing, however, that Columbus had gone ashore on the beach at Riding Rock Point, it is easy to identify every spot described by the great discoverer. *A boat trip, undertaken from Riding Rock Point in north-northeasterly direction leads along a great reef of rocks, the same which made Columbus afraid to land.* Everywhere hammered by the surf caused by the swelling of the sea, its aspect is forbidding enough to discourage any attempt to pass over these rocks in a row-boat in order to reach the shore.

By passing along this reef in a north-northeastern direction we reach the northwestern or Barkers Point of Watling's Island and soon arrive at a small islet, called Green Cay. *At its south end is a narrow channel 7 feet deep leading into an enormous reef harbor, which answers in every respect the description given by Columbus.*

The "West Indies Pilot" furnishes the following comment on this harbor: "There is no safe anchorage on Watling's Island except at the northend, where there is a reef harbor for

coasters." About its entrance the same handbook says: "Around the southend of Green Cay is the channel with 7 feet water, leading into the anchorage for coasters."

While these remarks are meagre, the drawings on the English and American sea charts are even still more deficient. Not one of these maps contains details about this reef harbor, a fact which proves that the knowledge of these regions, which are outside of the main lanes of travel for steamers, remain to this day vague and imperfect. *In fact this harbor is the most unique and most remarkable in the whole Bahama group*, and when Columbus stated that it "was amply wide enough to shelter all the vessels of Christendom" he had not made himself guilty of exaggeration. ✓

The "West Indies Pilot" and the "U. S. Nautical Handbook about the Caribbean Seas" contain nothing about the size of the harbor. According to our own estimate its extent from the entrance at Green Cay to its eastern limits may be three and a half to four miles. The extent from south to north may be about the same. That within such a large space the fleets of mediaeval Europe might be easily assembled is obvious. ✓

It was on the 21st of November 1890 that I investigated the western coast of Watling's Island, in order to identify the place described by Columbus. After a tedious walk along the sandy shores from Cockburn Town to the northwest point I reached the spot where, if my theory should prove correct, the great reef harbor must come in sight. Here, after climbing a rocky ridge, my efforts were repaid by one of the most astounding sights I have ever had in my life. There the immense harbor stretched before my eyes, reaching to the far horizon, its limits everywhere distinguishable by the white surf, thrown by the waves of the ocean against the line of reefs. And lo! while outside the reefs the ocean was in motion, the waters within the harbor were just as described by Columbus, "as calm and smooth as a pond."

In his description of the harbor Columbus does not forget to mention some rocks within this harbor. Their dark heads rise here and there above the bright greenish-blue sheet of water.

But where was the "*piece of land, resembling an island, although it is not one?*" O wonder! I beheld it in the distance running out from the northeastern point of Watling's Island, and answering exactly to the description as given by the Admiral: "*Resembling an island although it is not one.*" By close investigation I found that this tongue of land is about half a mile long and on an average 200 to 300 steps wide. Just where it runs out from the main land are two places, only 30 to 40 steps wide, which according to the statement of Columbus, might be cut through within two days, easily. For a fortification, such as the Spaniards used to construct in the West Indies during the 16th and 17th centuries, this piece of land is admirably adapted. While there is ample room for a citadel like those of Puerto Plata and Santo Domingo, the sides of the tongue are very steep, rising abruptly from the ocean as well as from the reef harbor. That the excellent strategic value of this piece of land was perceived by later visitors also, is indicated by the presence of a heavy iron cannon, which still resting on its original carriage, stands hidden in the thick brush that covers this remarkable peninsula. Pointed exactly to the narrow entrance of the reef harbor at the south end of Green Cay, this gun is without doubt a relic of those times when the Spanish and the English buccaneers battled for the possession of the Bahama Islands. Most probably the harbor served as a hiding place for Watling, Blackbeard, and other notorious pirates, who infested the Bahamas during the 17th and 18th centuries.

It is not impossible that in those bygone days an attempt was made to convert the most extreme part of this land-tongue into a fortified retreat. There exists a cut, about 180 to 200 feet wide and 45 feet deep, navigable for row-boats at high tide. Whether it was made by men or by the ocean is difficult to decide.—

As a confirmation of my statements, I add here a description of the reef harbor and the land-tongue, as given by Walter Wellman, a well-known writer, who visited Watling's Island in June 1891, seven months subsequent to my visit. In the "Chicago Herald" of July 4th, 1891, he writes as follows: "It



Tongue of land at the northeastern end of Wathing's Island, seen from west to east.
After a drawing by Rudolf Cronau.

is a remarkable fact that the piece of land like an island, which Columbus mentions, which could be easily cut off and converted into an island, and which is conclusive evidence, does not appear in any map or chart of Watling's which we have seen. Little was known of the harbor, but apparently nothing whatever was known of the piece of land like an island. We have searched charts and maps in vain for it and finally settled down to the fear that the absence of such a headland might be found a weak point in the Watlings' theory. No one whom we met knew anything of such a headland and we feared no such headland existed. Imagine our surprise that bright morning on which we started into Graham's Harbor, to see a long neck of land projecting a quarter of a mile into the sea from the northeast point of the island and through it, about midway from land to its outermost point, a cut through which the green water of the sea was pouring. With one accord all on board exclaimed: 'There is the piece of land like an island, and yet not an island, but which could easily be made an island, as Columbus described! And so it was. For centuries the sea, running in strongly at times through the reefs, has been wearing away at that cut. When Columbus saw it no doubt it was still connected above the sea level with the mainland. Now four hundred years later it is an open cut, across which one may pick his way with dry feet at low tide. The headland is quite wide in places and must contain at least fifteen or twenty acres of ground. This tongue of land is proof almost as strong as holy writ of the identity of Watling's Island with the San Salvador of the great discoverer. It is conceivable that at many places in the Bahama Islands there may be similar necks of land, more or less cut off from the mainland by the action of the sea; it is also conceivable that there may be other harbors in the Bahamas similar to the one which Columbus here saw and described. But it is far beyond the range of the probable, that at any other point there exists, one besides the other, such a harbor and such a headland, meeting in every particular both as to themselves and as to their relative positions in an island which also fully meets every requirement of Columbus' description of his San Salvador.'—



Tongue of Land at the northeastern end of Watling's Island.
Seen from Southeast toward Northwest.

Of great interest is also the following letter by Lieutenant J. B. Murdock, U. S. Navy, the author of the memoir "The Cruise of Columbus in the Bahamas" (No. 30 of the Proceedings of the U. S. Naval Institute). Of all the investigators of the Guanahani-Question it was he who came nearest to the solution, as his theory was that Columbus might have landed on the west side of Watling's Island a little north of the southwest point. But relying on unaccurate maps only and not having visited the island personally, Murdock was unable to give any account about the reef harbor and "the piece of land like an island and yet not an island."

When in 1894 I became for the first time acquainted with Murdock's memoir, I addressed a letter to this officer, informing him of the results of my investigations on the island. In response came the following letter:

U. S. Ship Minneapolis,
Navy Yard, League Id. Pa.
Dec. 22 1894.

Mr. Rudolph Cronau,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir!

I have received your letter of the 17th inst. and was much interested therein. I think that the views I advanced in my article written for the U. S. Naval Institute in 1884 in relation

to the cruise of Columbus in the Bahamas in 1492 has been quite favorably received by persons well qualified to judge, but I am especially gratified by the fact that after independent and careful investigations on the spot you were led to the conclusion in accordance with mine before you knew the latter. The close agreement between us tends under these circumstances to confirm my results.

I am greatly obliged for your writing me and for the information you give as to the harbor at the north end of Watling's Island. I suspected the existence of something of that kind from the charts I examined but they were rather indefinite and I could reach no positive conclusion. The result of your own personal investigations is therefore of great interest to me.

Thanking you again for your letter. I remain, dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

S. B. Murdock,
Lieut. U. S. Navy.



A relic of bygone days.
Old cannon, found on the tongue of land on Watling's Island.

THE ENIGMA OF THE "MANY ISLANDS."

"After I had investigated all the harbor," so continues Columbus in his journal under the date of October 14th, *"I returned to the ships and set sail. Soon I saw so many islands that I was perplexed to which one I should go first. The natives I had taken (from Guanahani) indicated by signs that there were so many islands that they could not be counted, and they named more than one hundred of them. I concluded therefore to look for the largest one and to this I intend to go."*

It was this passage which proved to be to all scholars interested in the Guanahani-Question an unsurmountable obstacle. As there is no place within the entire Bahama archipelago where "many islands" can be seen at one and the same time, no one was able to give a satisfactory explanation. Becher, Fox, Varnhagen and Murdock racked their brains in vain for a solution of this enigma. Murdock tried to escape the embarrassing question with the following words: *"It is hard to imagine that Columbus was deceived or that he construed clouds or indications of land into islands; but his language indicates the existence of an archipelago such as we cannot find anywhere on our maps of today near the border of the Bahamas, except in the vicinity of the Caycos, and this cluster of islands is so situated that no track can be followed from them that agrees with any of the subsequent records. It seems better to admit that this passage cannot be understood, rather than to attempt any forced reconciliation. Columbus may have been deceived, or some error may have crept into the log later. As it stands it is irreconcilable with modern charts."**

And yet this puzzling question is easily solved, when we consider the physical conditions of the many islands constituting the Bahama archipelago. Like the coral islands of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, the Bahama islands are very low and without mountains. They have no other elevations but a number of hills and ridges, which rise generally not above

*) Murdock, "The Cruise of Columbus in the Bahamas." p. 485.

100 to 200 feet. Now, when a vessel cruising in these regions comes in sight of such islands the *tops of these hills and ridges emerge first above the horizon and appear as so many separate islands. Not until the vessel approaches considerably closer, do the connecting lowlands come into view.*

When on November 19th, 1890, I cruised on board the schooner "Richmond" between the islands Conception and Rum Cay, the former appeared sometimes like three, at other times like four, five and even like six separate islands, no connections being visible between them. The same illusion forced itself upon me in regard to Rum Cay. Alternately, according to the distance between the island and the schooner, which, tacking against the trade wind, was bound for Watling's, the hills of Rum Cay appeared like five or six separate islands. These with every dip of the vessel disappeared below the horizon, but came into view again as soon as the schooner was lifted by a wave.

Profile of Rum Cay, from N-N-E to S-S-W. Dist. 10 miles

Profile of Rum Cay, from NE to SW. Dist. 9 miles

Profile of Conception, from N to S. Dist. 9 miles

As Columbus recites in his journal, the natives of Guanahani had given him to understand that if he would find a country rich with gold he must sail toward the south and southwest. Assuming that he followed this advice, and assuming that by the strong current of the Aequatorial stream, coming from the southeast and running to the northwest, his vessels were carried somewhat in the latter direction, *they may have been at a point where the hills of both Conception and Rum Cay were in view at the same time, appearing like so many separate islands, just as they appeared to the writer on November 20th, 1890.* That Conception was then in view, seems most probable not only from the recorded determination of Columbus to steer

toward the largest of the islands, but also from the famous map by Juan de la Cosa. On this map, which La Cosa made in 1500, he indicated west of Guanahani and northwest of the second island visited by Columbus, an islet which can be identified only with the present Concepcion.* (See map of La Cosa.)

The belief of Columbus that there were "many" islands, is not surprising as he met here a type of islands *the physical character and appearance of which was entirely new to him*. He knew the islands of the Mediterranean Sea, the Azores, the Canary and Cape Verde Islands, all of which are mountainous and visible at great distances. Coral islands, however, he had never seen before. So it was easy to fall into error as to their number, especially when we consider that the natives of Guanahani had made him understand that the islands of their archipelago were far too numerous to be counted.



* On many reproductions of this famous map this islet is omitted.

SANTA MARIA DE LA CONCEPCION, THE RUM CAY OF TODAY.

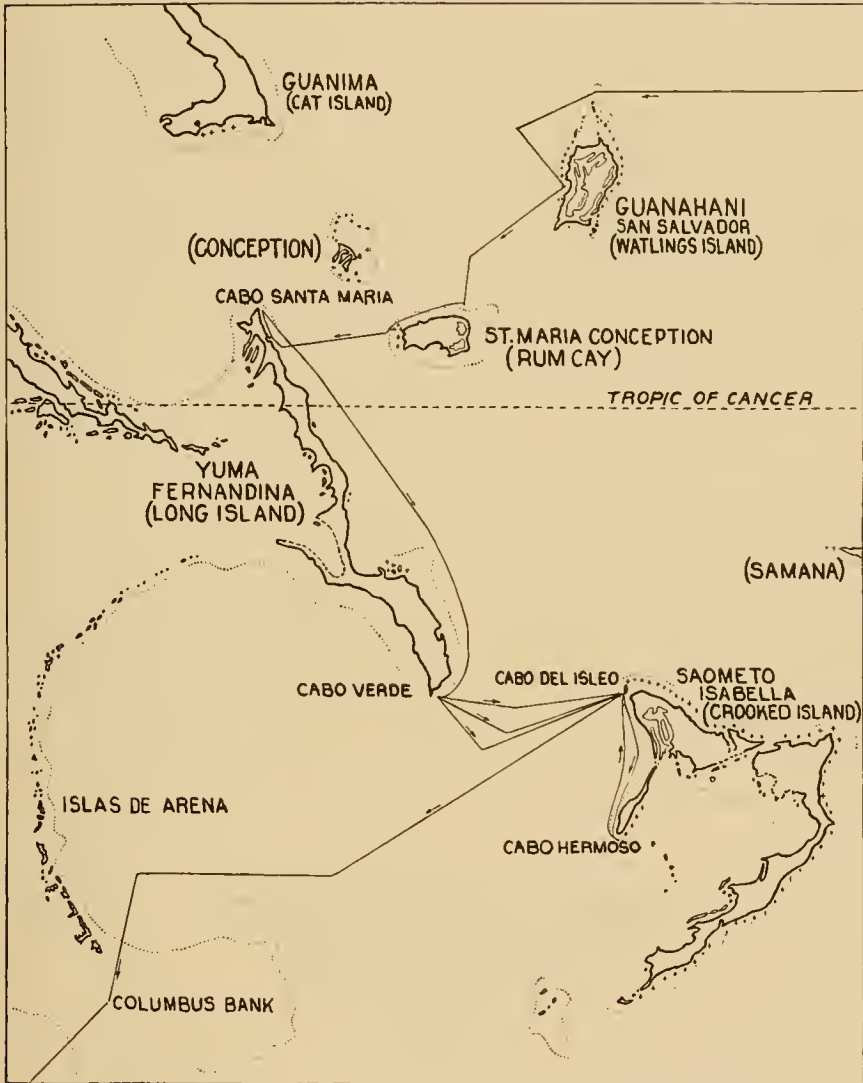
While Columbus was still in the belief that "many islands" were in view he decided to start for the largest one. Having sailed from Guanahani in a southwestern direction, the island known today as Rum Cay was nearest and must have appeared as the largest, as in fact it surpasses that little island which today is called Conception, though it does not bear this name rightfully.

"It seems probable," so Columbus writes in his journal under the date of October the 14th, "that this island is distant five leagues from San Salvador." But in his notes of the following day he says: "I had been standing off and on during this night, as I feared to approach the island before morning, not knowing whether the coast was free from rocks or shallow places. I hoped to clew up at dawn, but as the island was over five leagues distant, rather seven, and as the tide detained me,*) it was about noon when I reached the island."

Now, it is necessary to state here that the exact length of the old Spanish league is not known to us but it is a matter of conjecture. Some scholars, as for instance the Austrian Hydrographer Gelcich, after careful investigations came to the conclusion, that the league was equal to 2.3 nautical miles. Scott believed that it was equal to 2.34, while Lieutenant Fox of the U. S. Navy computed it to be 3 nautical miles. Taking 2.75 miles as an average of these various estimates, our belief, that the second island visited by Columbus, was *Rum Cay*, is well sustained as the distance from the Southwest point of Watling's Island to the nearest part of Rum Cay is 19 nautical miles or 7 leagues.

Columbus gave to this island the name of *Santa Maria de la Concepcion*.

*) This detainment was undoubtedly due to the Equatorial Current which comes from Africa, and presses along the coast of Cuba and between the Bahama islands. Its velocity is estimated to be between 18 to 30 miles per day.



The Track of Columbus in the Bahama Archipelago.

In his journal he says about it: "I found that the side toward the island of San Salvador (Guanahani) runs from north to south and is five leagues in length. And the other side, which I followed, runs from east to west and measures more than ten leagues."

While the directions of the coast-lines of Rum Cay correspond exactly with those noted by Columbus, his estimate of the length of these coasts is excessive. It must be stated here, that the sailors of the 15th century measured all distances without the aid of optical instruments, *by the eye only*. For measuring time, they had no other means than the hour-glass. Thus handicapped, errors were inevitable. Murdock, a mariner himself, in his monograph about the cruise of Columbus states that "experienced seamen differ widely in their estimates of the distance of land when they have nothing but their judgement to rely upon" (p. 480). Furthermore, it must be pointed out that Columbus's estimate in regard to the length of the east coast was a guess only, as he did not follow this coast but the other one running from east to west. That he should have overestimated the length of the latter seems to be due to the fact that the vessels met with calm weather, as appears from the words "I clewed up the sails, for I had proceeded throughout the whole day until night without having been able to reach the western point of the island. About sunset I anchored near said western point."



FERNANDINA—THE LONG ISLAND OF TODAY.

As the little fleet slowly proceeded along the northern coast of Santa Maria de la Concepcion another island of large size came into view in the west. Setting his course toward it on the morning of October the 15th, Columbus states as follows: "I left at about ten o'clock, with a southeast wind, inclining to the south for the other island, a very large one . . . The distance from the island of Santa Maria to this other one is nine leagues in the direction from east to west. *The entire coast line of the large island runs from northwest toward southeast, and its length appears to be more than twenty-eight leagues. The island is like San Salvador and Santa Maria level and without mountains. The shores are free from reefs, except some sunken rocks which demand great care of the navigator when seeking an anchorage.*"

As on their way from Santa Maria to this new island the vessels again met with calm weather ("y navegué toda equel dia con calmeria"), Columbus again overestimates the distance between the two islands, which is from the most western point of Santa Maria or Rum Cay to Long Island 19 nautical miles, while Columbus believed it to be 9 leagues or about 24 miles. That he himself deemed his estimate in need of revision, is shown by a later notation under date of October 16th, where he says "this island lies at a distance from that of Santa Maria of eight leagues from east to west."

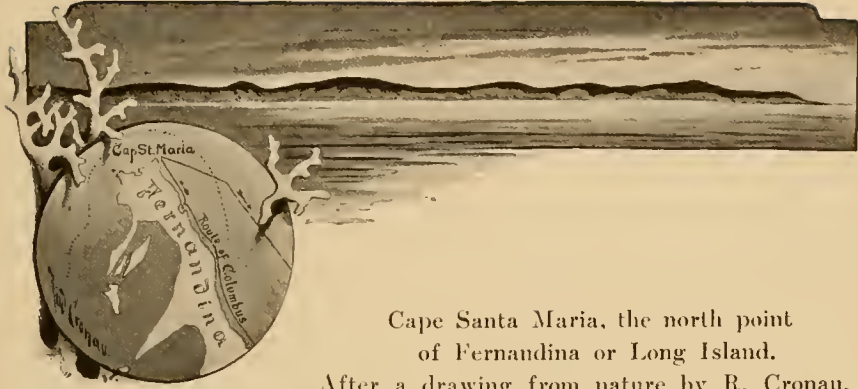
In honor of King Ferdinand of Spain Columbus baptized this island *Fernandina*. Among the natives it was known as Yuma.

While describing this island Columbus gives some characteristic which apply only to the present Long Island and in no manner to any other part of the Bahamas. Not only is Long Island plainly visible from Santa Maria or Rum Cay, but the long chain of its low ridges gird almost the whole western horizon and leave no doubt as to its extensive size. Note what the Admiral states about this size. While seeing it from

Santa Maria he writes: "It seems to me that the side facing us is more than twenty-eight leagues in length." On the following day he says: 'The whole coast runs from north-northwest toward the south-southeast. I saw about twenty leagues of it, without having been able to see the end.'

According to the "West Indies Pilot" Long Island has a length of 57 miles. Its position answers exactly that given by Columbus, viz. north-northwest to south-southeast. The island is also very level and on its eastern coast free of reefs with the exception of a few rocks, which tallies with the statements of the discoverer.

Under date of October 17th the journal of Columbus contains the following passage: "At noon (here is meant noon of October 16th) I left the place where I had anchored and taken in water, in order to sail around this island of Fernandina. The wind came from the southwest and west. I intended to follow the coast toward the southeast, as this island runs from north-northwest to south-southeast. I desired to take this route because the Indians I have on board indicated by signs that in that direction I would find an island which they call Samoet, where there is gold. Martin Alonso Pinzon, however, the Captain of the caravel Pinta, to whom I had sent three of these Indians, came to me and said, that one of them had very positively given him to understand that I would round the island much the quickest by a north-northwest course. As the wind was not favorable for my intended course, but was to the other, I sailed to the north-northwest. *When I was near the end of the island, about two leagues off, I discovered a very remarkable port with an entrance, or rather it may be said that there are two entrances, because there is a rocky islet in the middle. Both entrances are very narrow, but within there would be ample room for one hundred ships, if the harbor would have sufficient depth of water and was clear, and had also an entrance deep enough. I thought it worth while to investigate and to take soundings; and so anchored outside and went in with all the boats of the ships. I saw, however, that there was not enough depth of water.*"



Cape Santa Maria, the north point
of Fernandina or Long Island.
After a drawing from nature by R. Cronau.

Now, where is this remarkable inlet? This question again offered many difficulties. Becher dismissed it with scarcely a notice; Irving sought it on Great Exuma Island; Fox believed it identical with Clarence Harbor on Long Island. But this harbor is not "near the end of the island, about two leagues off," but about 43 miles southeast of the northern point. Besides it does not at all answer the description by Columbus.

But there is just about 2 or 3 miles southeast from the most northern point of Long Island an inlet not indicated on modern sea maps. I passed it on the morning of November 19th, 1890, on board the schooner "Richmond." But unfortunately there was a very strong wind from the east, causing a heavy surf that would have made any attempt of landing very dangerous. As also the captain did not wish to lose time, an investigation of this inlet was impossible. But with the help of a telescope I made out an entrance divided into two channels by a huge rock leaning over somewhat toward the north. Several members of the Negro crew of the "Richmond," all native Bahamites and well acquainted with the coast of Long Island, asserted that at that point a small inlet exists.

Further confirmation of this fact was given to the writer by Reverend Chrysostom Schreiner, formerly connected with the St. Anselm's priory in the Bronx, New York City. Since 1891 engaged in missionary work among the 600 Negroes that now are the inhabitants of Watling's Island, this priest, after reading my book "Amerika," became deeply interested in the

voyages of Columbus. He not only explored Watling's Island, but visited also several other islands of the Bahama archipelago. In a letter, dated July 13, 1921, Reverend Schreiner says: "I am quite familiar with your book "Amerika" and recognize you as the first to have pointed out Riding Rock as the landfall." He also informed the writer, that he explored the inlet near the northern point of Long Island, but found that it has only six feet of water.

Having investigated this inlet, Columbus continued to sail to the northwest until he had "all that part of the island as far as the point where the coast turns from the east to a western direction." Undoubtedly Columbus had reached that point of Long Island known today as Cape Santa Maria, where the coast turns sharp toward the west. But here the aborigines, Columbus had on board of his flagship, advised him that to reach the island Samoet it would be well to go back, as thus he would reach Samoet sooner. The journal, continuing, says: "The wind ceased, but after a while sprung up from west-northwest, which was contrary to our course. And so I turned and sailed all the night to the east-southeast and sometimes wholly east and sometimes to the southeast. This I did in order to keep off the land, for the atmosphere was very misty and the weather threatening. After midnight it rained very hard until almost daybreak. It is still cloudy and threatening to rain. We are now at the southeast cape of the island, where I hope to anchor until it gets clear, in order to see the other island where I intend to go."

From this narrative it appears that during the night of October 17th to 18th the route of Columbus lay from the most northern point of Fernandina to the most southern cape thereof, known today as Cape Verde.

THE ROCKY ISLET AND SAOMETTO.

A short entry in the journal, dated Thursday, October 18th, says: "After it had cleared up I followed the wind and went around the island as far as I could, and I anchored when it was no longer possible to sail. But I did not go on shore, and at dawn I set sail again."

The next note, dated Friday, October 19th, reads as follows: "At dawn I had the anchors lifted; then I sent the caravel *Pinta* to the east and southeast; and the caravel *Niña* to the south-southeast; and I with the ship went to the south-east, having given orders that they should keep this course until midday, but that both caravels should then change their course and return to me. Before we had gone three hours we saw an *island in the east*, to which we directed our course, and all three vessels reached it before noon *at its northern point where is a rocky islet, outside of which is a reef turning to the north*. Another reef is between it and the large island which the men of San Salvador, that I took with me, called Saometo, and to which I gave the name of la Isabela. The wind came from the north, and said islet lies from the island Fernandina, whence I had come from the west, in an *easterly direction*."

It is easy to recognize in this rocky islet the so-called Bird Rock of today, situated at the northwest point of Crooked Island. Only ten feet high, 600 to 700 steps long and 300 steps wide, it has been selected in modern days as the site for a lighthouse, whose flashes guide those vessels trading between points of the eastcoast of North America and Cuba and Hayti. Corresponding closely to the description given by Columbus, a reef runs from Bird Rock toward the north, turning thence toward the east and girding the whole northern coast of Crooked Island. There are also some cliffs between Bird Rock and the main island. The "West Indies Pilot" furnishes the following statements about Bird Rock: "A dangerous reef extends of N.W. 2 miles from the northwest point of Crooked Island; it then bends round gradually to the East and E.S.E.

and skirts the northern shore at a distance of about a mile. A small eay, called Bird Rock, about ten feet high, lies N.N.W. about a mile from the northwest point of Crooked Island, and close to the southward of it there is a narrow intricate opening in the reef, leading into a small well sheltered basin within, named Portland harbor, in which there are $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 fathoms of water."



Returning again to the journal of Columbus, an entry dated October 19th, reads as follows: "*The west coast of Saometo extends about twelve leagues as far as a cape, which I called Cabo Hermoso (Cape Beautiful), because it is so beautiful and round; and (the water) is very deep and free from shoals at the outside. At first it is rocky and not of great*

hight; farther in it becomes a sandy beach, like most of these coasts. It is here that I am tonight, Friday, anchoring until morning."

"This coast and all that part of the island I saw form almost one beach, and the island is the most enchanting thing I have seen. If the others were lovely, this is still more so. It has many trees, which are very green and large. The land is higher than that of the other islands, although it cannot be called mountainous; yet some gentle hills enhance with their contrast the beauty of the plains."

Easy as it was to recognize in Bird Rock the "rocky islet," just so easy it is to recognize in the southern point of Fortune Island the Cabo Hermiosa or Cape Beautiful. Passing by very closely, aboard the Lighthouse schooner "Richmond," I found it corresponding exactly to the description by the Admiral. It is a rounded plateau of rocks, rising about 15 to 20 feet above the water, which at the outside of the cape has a depth of 6 to 8 fathoms. Further in, on the east side of the cape, the rocks disappear and give place to a sandy beach.

Equally faithful is the description Columbus gave of the island in general. By comparing its entire western coast with one grand beach, he characterizes the locality in the best possible manner, since the shores of Crooked and Fortune Island form together indeed one enormous bay. Likewise the Admiral's remarks about the physical appearance of the island or rather of the two islands are appropriate, as Crooked Island possesses such elevations as Stopper Hill and the Blue Hills (200 feet), while Fortune Island has the Fortune Hill, all of which are conspicuous to the eye as they rise from perfectly level plains.

One more sentence in the journal helps to identify the location. In closing his notes under date "Friday, October 19th," Columbus says: "I believe that this Cabo Hermoso is an island separated from Saometo, and that there is even another small one midway between; but I do not care to examine everything in detail, because I could not do it in fifty years."

A glance at our map teaches us that this supposition of Columbus was correct, as Saometo or the Crooked Island of today and Cabo Hermoso or Fortune Island are in fact separated by the narrow channel, which is dotted with two or three very little islets, which, however, can be made out only by approaching more closely.—

According to the entry in his journal under date of October 20th, Columbus intended to visit also the northeastern and eastern parts of Saometo. But the water was so shallow that he could make no progress. An attempt to go around the island in a southwestern direction failed also. He therefore returned to the rocky islet (Bird Rock) and decided to sail for another very large island, of which the Indians had told him and which they called Colba or Cuba.



FROM SAOMETO TO CUBA.

From the descriptions the Indians gave of the size and riches of Cuba, Columbus inferred that this large island might be identical with Cipango, the great mysterious island of Eastern Asia. Under the date of Wednesday, October 24th, he writes as follows: "At midnight I weighed anchor and left the island of Isabela and the cape of the rocky islet, which is on the northern side where I was lying, in order to go to the island of Cuba, which I heard from these people is very large, having much trade, and that there is gold and spices, and large ships and merchants. And they told me that I should go to it by sailing in *west-southwest direction*. From everything what the Indians of these islands and those whom I had on board indicated by signs—because I do not understand their language—I believe it is the island of Cipango, of which marvellous things are related. According to the globes and the maps of the world which I have seen it must be in this region, and thus I sailed until daybreak toward west-southwest. At dawn the wind calmed, and it rained, as it had done all night. With little wind I remained until after midday; then the wind began to blow very lovely, and I carried all the sails of the ship, the mainsail, two bonnets, the foresail and spritsail, and the boat astern; thus I continued my course until nightfall. *Then Cape Verde which is on the south of the island of Fernandina somewhat toward the west, was in northwesterly direction from me, in a distance of seven leagues.* Then the wind was blowing hard, and as I did not know how far off the island of Cuba was, and in order not to approach it at night, because all the water round these islands is so deep that no bottom can be found save at two lombard shots, I determined to lower all sails, except the foresail. Suddenly the wind grew very strong and I made much headway of which I was doubtful; besides, it was very misty and it rained. I had the foresail taken in and we did not go this night two leagues."—

Up to this point Bishop Las Casas has given us the log-book of Columbus verbatim and unabridged, except the en-

tries about the astronomical observations Columbus must have made. Beginning with the entry under date Thursday, October 25th, however, Las Casas does not continue in this verbatim reproduction of the journal, but limits himself to a recital of subsequent events as narrated by the discoverer. So he writes: "He afterwards sailed from sunrise until nine o'clock in *west-southwestern direction*, making about five leagues. Thereafter he changed his course to *the west*, going eight miles an hour until one o'clock in the afternoon, and thence until three o'clock in the afternoon, and they made about forty-four miles. At that time they *saw seven or eight islands, all extending from north to south*, in a distance of five leagues."

From the entry under date of Friday, October 26th, it appears that Columbus anchored some distance south of those islands, which he called *Las Islas de Arena or Sand Islands* on account of the shallow bottom they had. The Indians he had with him told the Admiral that to reach Cuba with their canoes from these islands would take them a day and a half.

According to the entry under date of Saturday, October 27th, the vessels set sail again at sunrise and ran in a *south-southwestern direction* at the rate of eight miles an hour until one o'clock in the afternoon, making about forty miles. Up to nightfall they made about twenty-eight miles on the same course, and before night they saw land, *Cuba*. On Sunday morning October 28th Columbus entered the mouth of a very beautiful river, the banks of which were covered with trees rich with flowers and fruits and alive with many birds which sang very sweetly. There were many palms, different from those Columbus had seen in Spain and Guinea. In the distance lofty mountain chains were in view. Enchanted by this magnificent scenery, the Admiral called the river and the port in which his vessels anchored, *San Salvador*.



A part of the map of Juan de la Cosa, the Pilot of Columbus.

WHAT OLD MAPS AND JOURNALS PROVE.

In the attempt to identify the true Guanahani, no question seems more natural than if this might be possible by consulting maps made by Columbus himself or by such persons who were his companions. That Columbus made charts of the track followed by his fleet and of his discoveries, must be accepted as a matter of course. This is proved also by various references of his contemporaries. The Spanish historiographer Navarrete states that Queen Isabella, on September 5th, 1493, addressed a letter to the Admiral, asking him to send her the marine chart he had made*) and that Columbus complied with this request. We know also that when Alonso de Ojeda in May, 1499, set out for his voyage of discovery, he was provided with a copy of the track-chart sent home by Columbus. That copies of the same chart were also used by several other Spanish explorers, is known from the testimonials in the famous law suit brought by the Fiscal Real against the heirs of the Ad-

*) "Forward us immediately the map which we asked you to send us before your departure complete and write thereon the names," was the request. "If you don't wish us to show the map to any one you should write so."—

miral. Unfortunately, of maps drawn by Columbus with his own hand or under his supervision, nothing has come down to us.

But there exists *the famous map by Juau de la Cosa*, who was a companion of Columbus and master and part owner of the flagship "Santa Maria." He took part also in the second trip of Columbus. In May 1499, La Cosa also accompanied Alonso de Ojeda on his exploring expedition to Venezuela. Having returned in June 1500, he set out again in October of the same year with Rodrigo de Bastidas. The intervening time between these two expeditions he spent in the harbor of Santa Maria. It was here that he made a map of the then known parts of the New World. Drawn on an ox-hide 5'9" long and 3'2" wide, it bears the legend: "Juan de la Cosa la fiza en puerto de Sta. Maria en año de 1500." ("Juan de la Cosa made this in the harbor of Santa Maria in the year 1500.")

This chart, now preserved in the Marine Museum at Madrid, has been reproduced more or less accurately many times. In spite of some grave errors, as for instance the placing of the Tropic of Cancer south of Cuba and Española, it is of great value for the identification of Guanahani. The outlines of Cuba and Española are fairly correct. North of these two large islands we see a group of smaller ones, the nearest to Cuba bearing the name Someto. By its position as well as by its name we recognize it at once as the island Saometo, of which Columbus speaks in his journal under the dates of October 19th and 20th.

Another island close by, bearing the name Yumay, is undoubtedly identical with the present Long Island, or the Ferdinandina of Columbus, which by the aborigines was called Yuma. East of Yuma we note an unnamed island, answering to the Santa Maria de la Concepcion of Columbus or Rinn Cay of today. East of this another island bears the name Guanahani, answering to Watling's Island, situated, as indicated on La Cosa's map, north of Samana.

Thus while La Cosa's map is an important piece of evidence for the identification of Guanahani, the weight of evidence increases when we compare this map with charts and notes of later dates.

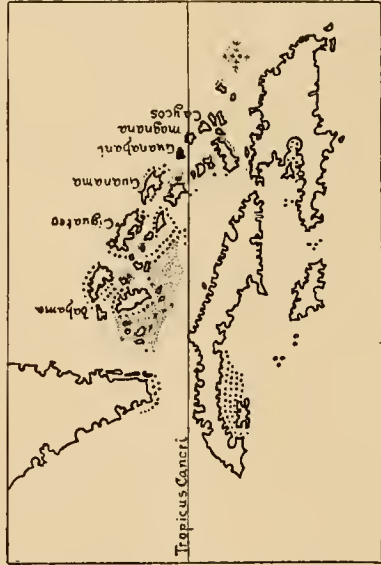
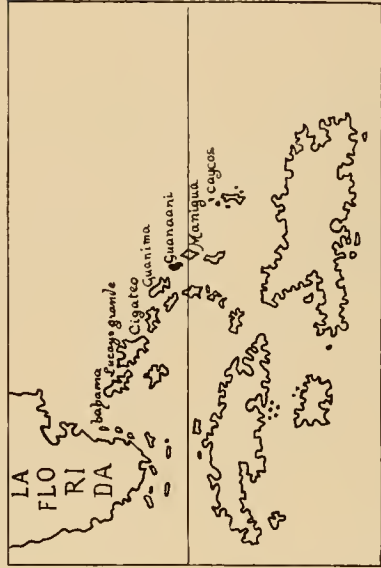
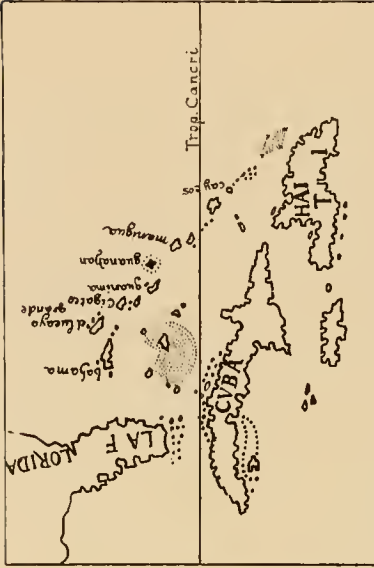
An old description of the Spanish Colonies (reproduced in "Coleccion de documentos ineditos relativos al descubrimiento," XV. p. 431) contains for instance the following sentence: "*Guanami* (Guanahani) *is an islet in the neighborhood of Guanimo*. It is the first part of the Indies discovered by Columbus and named by him San Salvador." It is easy to point out on the maps of the 16th and 17th century that Guanimo is identical with the Cat Island of today. As neither Columbus nor La Cosa ever saw this island, it consequently does not appear on La Cosa's map. But we find it frequently on maps of later dates, as for instance on the so-called Turin map of 1523, on the map of Diego Ribero of the year 1529, on the map of Pierre Desceliers from 1546; on the maps of Thomas Hood, 1592, Antonio de Herrera, 1601, on the West Indian Paskaert of Antony Jacobsz, 1621, and many others, some of which are here reproduced. Where its name and that of Guanahani are given, the latter islet is always placed to the *southeast* of Guanimo. Its name appears on these maps in the variations Guanahani, Guanihani, Guanahani, Guanaani and Guanihana. ✓

A point of greatest importance is that on all these later maps Guanimo as well as Guanahani are placed correctly *NORTH* of the *Tropic of Cancer*, with *Guanahani* nearest to that line. This fact eliminates the islands *Samana*, *Mariguana* and *Grand Turk* from competition, as all these islands are *SOUTH* of the *Tropic of Cancer*.

There is still another important proof in favor of the identity of Guanahani and Watling's Island. Herrera, the official historiographer of the Indies, who had access to all documents in the Royal Archives, states that Ponce de Leon, when in 1513 he set out in search of Bimini, started from the port of San German in Porto Rico.

Map of Diego Ribero, 1529.

Map in the Atlas of Batista Agnese. Second part of XVI century.



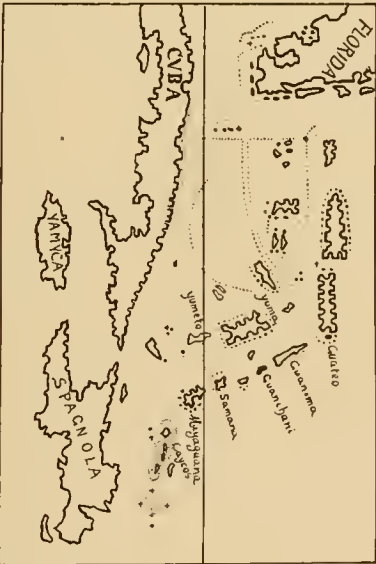
Map in the Royal Library of Turin (about 1523).

Map of Pierre Desceliers de Arques, 1546.

Maps of the 16th century, showing the location of Guanahani north of the Tropic of Cancer and southeast of Guanima.

Map of Antonio de Herrera,
1601.

Portuguesian map in the Biblio-
theka Riccardina, Florence.



West Indian Paskaert of Anto-
ny Jacobsz, 1621.

Map in the Cartas de Indias.
Second part of the XVI
century.

Maps of the 16th and 17th centuries, showing the location of Guanahani north of the Tropic of Cancer and southeast of Guanima.

“After five days.” so Herrera states, “they reached the island El Viego, the position of which Antonio de Alaminos, the pilot of the expedition, gave as under $22^{\circ} 30'$ northern latitude. The next day the fleet arrived at one of the Lucayos, called Caycos. On the eighth day the vessels anchored at another island called Yaguna in 24° . Then they proceeded to the island Manegua in $24^{\circ} 30'$. At the eleventh day they reached Guanahani, which is in $25^{\circ} 40'$. This island Guanahani was the first discovered by Columbus on his first voyage and which he called San Salvador.”



Part of the map of Thomas Hood, 1592. showing the location of Guanahani north of the Tropic of Cancer and southeast of Guanima.

Alexander von Humboldt, who investigated these statements, found that Antonio de Alaminos, the pilot, placed in his astronomic calculations the positions of all these islands for about $1^{\circ} 15'$ to $1^{\circ} 30'$ too far north. If these errors are taken into account, we find that El Viego would be identical with Grand Turk, while Caycos would be one of the Caicos Islands. Yaguna would be identical with Mariguana, Manegua with Samana, while the name Guanahani remains for

Watling's Island, the true position of which is $24^{\circ} 6'$ northern latitude.*)

So the statements made by Herrera about the voyage of Ponce de Leon point also toward the identity of Guanahani with Watling's Island. There can be no doubt that in 1513, when Ponce de Leon started on his journey, the position of Guanahani was still well known. The perplexing confusion in regard to proper names and location of the many islands set in much later, after the Spaniards had carried off all the aborigines and when the islands had no longer any valuables left. Utterly neglected by the Spaniards, the Archipelago now became the hiding-place for numerous buccaneers who preyed on the silver fleets that brought the treasures of Mexico, Costa Rica, New Granada and Panama to Spain. These pirates, mostly Englishmen, did not know the beautiful names the aborigines and the Spaniards had given to the different islands. After their own fashion they gave to many of the islands and cays

*) The Bulletin of the American Geographical Society, vol. XLV., 1913, has on pages 721 to 735 an article by L. D. Scisco on the track of Ponce de Leon in 1513. The author quotes Herrera in the following words: "Juan Ponce de Leon finding himself without office, determined to do something with which to gain honor and increase estate; and as he had news that lands were found to the northward he resolved to go to explore toward that part; for which he equipped three vessels, well supplied with provisions, people and seamen, which for the purpose of exploring are most necessary. He sailed from the island on Thursday, in the afternoon, on the 3rd of March, setting out from the harbor of San German. He went to Aguada in order to take his course from there. The night following he sailed to sea, to northwest a quarter by north, and the vessels proceeded eight leagues of a day's run until the sun rose. They went on sailing until on Tuesday, the 8th of the said month, they came to anchor at the banks of Babueca at an island that they call El Viejo, which is in $22^{\circ} 30'$. Next day they anchored in an islet of the Lucayos called Caycos. Presently they anchored in another called La Yaguna in 24° . On the 11th of the same month they reached another island called Amaguayo and there they were at stop for repairs. They passed on to the island called Managua which is in $24^{\circ} 30'$. On the 14th reached Guanahani which is $25^{\circ} 40'$ where they prepared one vessel for crossing the weatherward gulf of this island of the Lucayos. This island Guanahani was the first that the Admiral Don Christobal Colon discovered and where, in his first voyage he went on land and named it San Salvador."—

Investigating the track Scisco says: "The term "bascos de Babueca" in the earlier years was applied to the series of shoals extending from Grand Turk Island easterly to Navidad Bank. In later years the term became restricted to the Mouchior Carre Bank and finally became disused. El Viejo = Old Man, of Ponce de Leon's voyage, was Grand Turk, the only island on these banks suitable

those names which we read on the maps of today. Saometo, the Isabela of Columbus, received the less poetical name Crooked Island; Yuma or Fernandina became known as Long Island; Santa Maria de la Concepcion was called Rum Cay, a name suggesting that the buccaneers had here a depot of that intoxicating beverage. Guanima also changed its name and became known as the Cat Island; and Guanahani, the San Salvador of Columbus, was named after George Watling, a daring privateer who after a rough life settled down there.

* *

Our investigations as to the true location of Guanahani are herewith closed. The results are as follows:

1. *The description of Guanahani, as given by Columbus and Las Casas, apply to Watling's Island, and to this island only.*
2. If the beach under Riding Rock Point on the west coast is accepted as the landfall of Columbus, and if from that

for anchorage. Maps of later times now and then applied the name to one of the small islets lying south from Grand Turk. In early maps the modern Caicos group is easily recognizable by its quadruplet of islands lying in chain. Which one of this group was the Caycos of Ponce de Leon it would be somewhat rash to say but the Ribero map and some others seem to attach the name more especially to the modern North Caicos. The next islands reached by the explorers, La Yaguna and Amaguayo, will be sought in vain in the more familiar Spanish maps of the time. These went out of use among Spaniards very early. The Silvati map, however, seems to identify them as Mariguana and Plana Cays respectively. The next island, Managua, is easily traced. It is modern Samana. The island Guanahani, made famous by Columbus, is identified with Watling's island by modern students of the Columbian voyages, and the evidence of early Spanish maps bears out the conclusion. The foregoing identifications show that Ponce de Leon skirted the eastern side of the Bahamas."

In regard to Herrera's statements about the latitude of the different islands Seisco says: "In Herrera's text it will be noted that El Viego is given latitude 22° 30' and Guanahani 25° 40'. The true latitudes of these islands are otherwise on modern charts, however. The center of Grand Turk is at 21° 28' and that of Watling's at 24° 2'. Seemingly the record of latitudes made by Ponce de Leon gave him an excess reading of about one degree in latitude 21° 30' and an excess of about 1° 40' in latitude 24°. Assuming that this error increased toward the north in regular ratio it becomes possible to construct a tentative scale of corrected latitudes wherewith to check the ten statements of latitude that Herrera offers. By this scale Grand Turk assumes its true position at 21° 28'; Plana Cays take a tentative location of 22° 41'; as against true latitude 22° 36'; Samana takes the tentative location of 23° 5' which is also its true latitude; Watling's assumes its true position of 24° 2', and the Florida landfall takes tentative latitude 27° 40'.

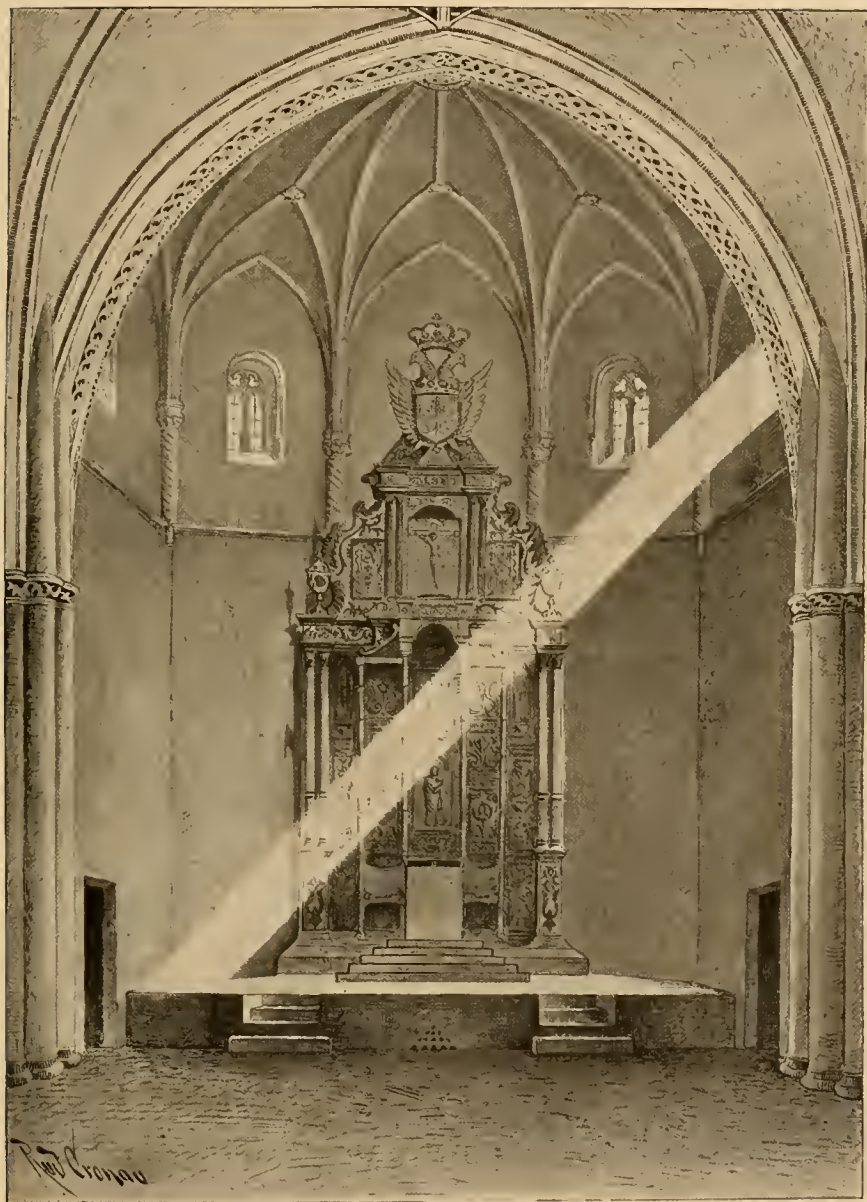
place we follow the track of the Admiral through the Bahamas to Cuba, the log-book of Columbus has no such contradictions or inexplicable passages as confronted all other scholars who tried to solve the Guanahani-Question. These difficulties were but natural, as it was impossible that the statements of the log-book could fit if the landing place was sought at a false spot. *The absolute conformity of the descriptions, as given by Columbus, with the still existing conditions and facts, proves that the Admiral in making the entries in his journal not only observed great care, but very often went into details.*

3. Close investigations of the map made by Juan de la Cosa and of other maps of the 16th and 17th century, together with the notes given by Herrera about the expedition of Ponce de Leon to Bimini also prove *that Guanahani and Watling's Island are identical.*



THE LAST RESTING PLACE OF COLUMBUS

THE LAST RESTING PLACE OF COLUMBUS



THE SANCTUARY OF THE CATHEDRAL AT SANTO DOMINGO

After a drawing by Rudolf Cronau.

The location of Columbus's Vault is indicated by the beam of sunlight.

THE LAST RESTING PLACE OF COLUMBUS



O the many mysteries that surround the life of Christopher Columbus and have perplexed his biographers, a caprice of accident added during the former century another one, the question: "*Where are the remains of Columbus?*"

While not less than sixteen Italian towns have claimed the honor of being the birthplace of the great discoverer, the magnificent cathedrals of two widely separated cities strenuously claimed to possess his ashes. The discussion of this question had not only resulted in hot disputes, but at times became an international affair. Determined to investigate this burning question, and, if possible, to remove it from the domain of doubt, I went in December of 1890 to Santo Domingo.

* * *

It was on the 20th day of May, 1506, that Columbus, the discoverer of a New World, passed away. His death occurred at Valladolid in Spain. A few days before his departure Columbus had expressed the desire to be buried in Española, the island he loved most. Before this wish could be fulfilled many years passed by. Santo Domingo, the capital of Española, had no place where the precious ashes could be deposited safely. The cathedral, planned for that city, had not yet been begun and it was not finished till 1540.

So the body of the great discoverer was interred in the Church of St. Francis in Valladolid. Later on, in 1509 or 1513, it was removed to the Carthusian Monastery of Las Cuevas near Seville.

When Diego, the son of Columbus, died, in 1526, the remains were also deposited there, to be transferred later, together with those of his father, to Santo Domingo, as Emperor Charles V had granted permission that the great chapel of the cathedral be used for the sepulchre of the Columbus family.

Royal provisions relating to the removal of the bodies to Santo Domingo, bearing dates of June 2, 1537, August 22, 1539, and November 5, 1540, are still existing.

At what time the removal of the remains of the great Admiral and his son took place, we do not know. As the cathedral at Santo Domingo was consecrated in 1541 it may be that the transfer occurred in the same year or a little later. As in the meantime the corpses as well as the original coffins, that were perhaps of wood, may have been decayed, it was most probably then that the remaining bones were collected in two small leaden caskets, which after their arrival in Santo Domingo were deposited in the cathedral. Evidence that this removal had been accomplished before the year 1549, we have in a statement of the first Archbishop of Santo Domingo, who in that year wrote: "The tomb of Don Cristobal Colon, which contains his bones, is much venerated in this cathedral." In later documents we hear that when in 1655 the English attacked the city, the Archbishop Francisco Pio, to prevent the profanation of the tombs, ordered that they should be covered with earth and that every sign that might betray their location should be obliterated, "especially at the tomb of the old Admiral, which is on the gospel side of my church and chapel."

Again, a small printed volume, entitled: "Synodo Diocesana del Arzobispado de Santo Domingo," printed in 1683, states: "The bones of C. Colon are there in a leaden case in the Presbytery, beside the wall of the High Altar, together with those of Don Luis, which are on the opposite side, *according to the traditions of the oldest inhabitants* of the island." This last sentence indicates undoubtedly that since the attack of the English in 1655, the site of the Admiral's resting place had no mark whatever and was known *only by tradition*.

This fact is proved also by the following statement of the famous French historian Moreau de St. Méry, who in 1783, and again in 1787, visited the city and endeavored in vain to determine the exact location of Columbus's tomb. Finding that it was a matter of absolute doubt and uncertainty, he expressed his disappointment in those eloquent words: "What a

subject for the reflection of the philosopher! Scarcely are three hundred years past since the discovery of the New World and already we hardly know what has become of the precious remains of the sagacious, enterprising and intrepid discoverer. We see him expressing an anxious solicitude that his ashes may repose in the capital of the immense island which first established the truth of the existence of a western hemisphere; they are transported hither posterior to the construction of the principal edifice, the cathedral, and yet—O supine indifference for all that is truly noble!—*not a mausoleum, not a monument, not even an inscription* to tell where they lie!”—



WHOSE REMAINS WERE THEY?

A few years after the French historian's visit Spain was compelled by the Treaty of Basle to cede the island of Española to France. The treaty, concluded in 1795, provided that Spain might remove from Santo Domingo such property as she might desire. The Duke of Veraguas, a descendent of the Columbus family, now remembered that the ashes of his great ancestor were still in Santo Domingo. Arguing that it would be unworthy of Spain that the bones of its greatest Admiral should rest under a foreign flag, he requested the removal of the remains to the cathedral at Havana. As he offered to bear all expenses of such transference, the Spanish Lieutenant-General of the Royal Armada, Gabriel de Aristizabal was commissioned to receive the remains.

As has been described extensively by Washington Irving in Appendix No. 1 to his book on Columbus, the Spanish Lieutenant-General appeared on December 20th, 1795, in the Cathedral with a group of distinguished Spaniards, among them the Archbishop, to exhume the remains of Columbus. But as there were no exterior signs at what place his tomb was situated, they were guided wholly *by the tradition, that the Admiral was interred at the right side of the Altar*. There a small vault was found. The official document, written on the same day by Hidalgo, the secretary of the proceedings, states as follows:

“On December 20th, 1795, a vault was opened, located in the sanctuary on the right or gospel side, near the main wall and in the platform before the high altar. The capacity of the vault was about one cubic yard. Therein were found some thin sheets of lead about eleven inches long, which had evidently been parts of a box or case of that metal; also some bones of legs and arms and various other parts of some deceased person. These were collected in a large tray together with all the dust, which, from the fragments of some small bones and its color

were recognized as the remains of the same corpse. The whole was placed in a gilded leaden coffin, with an iron lock; this was locked, and the key was delivered to the most illustrious Archbishop."

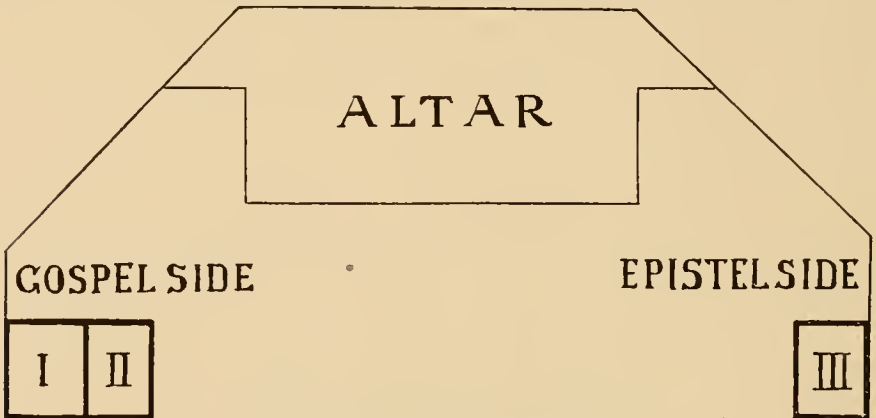
After a solemn High Mass had been performed, these remains were borne with military honors to Havana and deposited in a niche prepared in the wall of the presbytery of the cathedral. Later this niche was closed with a slab of marble, showing an entirely imaginary portrait of Columbus, and beneath the inscription in Spanish:

"O remains and image of the great Columbus, for a thousand ages rest secured in this urn, and in the remembrance of our nation."



AN IMPORTANT FIND, THAT CAUSED HOT DISPUTES.

Eighty-one years passed by. Then the conviction that the remains of Columbus were at rest in Havana, was suddenly shaken. When in 1877 the Cathedral at Santo Domingo sadly needed repair, the Apostolic Delegate to Santo Domingo, Haiti and Venezuela, Bishop Rocco Cocchia, who later became Archbishop of Chieti, Italy, took special interest in the work of restoration. So did Rev. Francis Xavier Billini, the Vicar of the Cathedral. Both the priests were Italians. These two employed Señor José Maria Castilla, a Spanish civil engineer from Cuba, as director of the actual work, which was begun in



Original Plan of the Sanctuary.

- I. Vault, discovered Sept. 10, 1877, supposed to have contained the remains of Christopher Columbus.
- II. Vault, emptied on Dec. 26, 1795, supposed to have contained the remains of Diego Colon.
- III. Vault, of Don Luis Colon, discovered May 14, 1877.

April 1877. During the process of restoration the workmen discovered on May 14th on the left or Epistle side of the Sanctuary a small vault, containing the fragments of a leaden ease together with human bones. An inscription on the lid of the case was deciphered as follows:

*El Almirante Don Luis Colon, Duque de Varaguas
y Marques de*

the last word illegible from erosion. This find was the first indication that Don Luis Colon, the grandson of Christopher Columbus, born 1520 in Santo Domingo and died 1572 in Oran, had been buried in the cathedral also.

On this discovery the authorities of the church were invited to extend their investigations over the whole ground of the sanctuary, in order to see if other distinguished persons might have been buried there. But as the Bishop Rocco Cocchia was absent in the interior of the island, the matter was delayed till his return. Then the work of investigation was taken up again. On September 9th at the right or presbytery side the vault was found which in 1795 had been emptied by the Spaniards. On the day following, Monday, September 10th, in the presence of Vicar Billini and the engineer Castilla, the workmen sounded the space between that empty vault and the wall of the cathedral. The result was the discovery of a somewhat larger vault, separated from the empty vault by a six-inch wall and covered by a large rough stone slab. After breaking away a piece of that slab an object like a box could be seen in the vault.

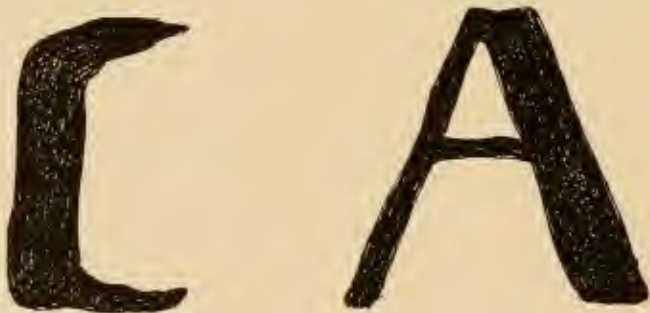
At this stage Bishop Rocco Cocchia was notified at once, also the Spanish consul José Manuel Echeverri and the Italian consul Luigi Cambiaso. All reached the Cathedral at the same time. The vault was at that time only partially opened. The bishop ordered the aperture widened, so that a better inspection of the vault and its contents might be obtained. By introducing his arm into the opening, he discovered that the object in the vault was a leaden case, the upper side of which was incrustated with lime. After breaking off a part of this crust, the bishop noticed an inscription and was able to read the letters *Per Ate*, which all persons around the vault with one voice interpreted as "Primero Almirante," "the first Admiral." As only Columbus had held this title, the letters were regarded as a strong indication that the leaden case might contain his remains. Not allowing anyone to go further with the work, the bishop ordered that all should leave the cathedral, the doors of which were closed and locked. On request the government at once sent a number of sentinels, who surrounded

the cathedral. In the meantime the Bishop by special letters invited the President and the Cabinet of the Dominican Republic, as well as the principal ecclesiastical, civil and military authorities and furthermore all foreign consuls, to be present at four and a half o'clock that same afternoon, when the vault and its contents would be publicly and carefully examined.

In the presence of this high assemblage the stone slab was removed, the box taken out and carefully investigated. As it had rested in the absolutely dry vault upon two bricks, it proved to be in a state of fair preservation, but dull in color and covered by a coating of oxide, the unmistakable indications of old age. The closed box was 21 centimeters or 9 inches high, 42 cm. or 16 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches long and 21 cm. or 9 inches wide. Its hinged and overlapping cover had on its top the abbreviations:

D. de la A. per. Ate.

which has been interpreted to mean "Descubridor de la America. Primer Almirante" that is "Discoverer of America, first Admiral." Further investigations disclosed, that on the left side, and also on the front side of the box the letter C was rudely engraved, while on the right side the letter A was found.



Letters engraved on the sides of the coffin. Exact size.

These letters are believed as standing for the initials of the words:

"Cristoval Colon, Almirante."

After lifting the hinged cover another abbreviated inscription, in German Gothic letters, was discovered on the inside of the lid:

*Illtre y Esdo Varon
Dn. Criztoval Colon*

This inscription has been interpreted as:

“Illustre y Esclarceido Varon Don Cristoval Colon.”

“Illnstrious and famous Baron Christopher Columbus.” 5

An examination of the contents of the box revealed human remains, with the exception of a few parts reduced to dust. Among this dust and mold two small iron screws and a bullet of lead were found. An explanation of their being there no one was able to give at that time.

At the end of these investigations a public declaration was made, in the presence of all the foreign consuls, that the real resting place of the Admiral's body had been found and positively identified. The Spanish Consul, Señor José M. de Echeverri, who was present, found no reason for suspecting the good faith of the examination, nor the genuineness of the grave and remains. On the contrary, he manifested his belief in that which he had seen by at once raising the claim in the name of his government for the delivery of the remains of the Admiral, which in 1795, as now was evident, were not transferred to Cuba as intended.

The news of the discovery, reported by the different consuls to their governments and made known by Bishop Roeco Cocchia in a pastoral letter (“Desenbrimiento de las verdaderos restos de Cristobal Colon: Carte pastoral, Santo Domingo, 1877.”) spread rapidly and caused everywhere the greatest interest. But what was regarded as glad tidings by all inhabitants of the Dominican Republic, was received with deep anger and indignation by the ecclesiastic authorities of the Cathedral of Havana and the Spanish government. Finding that their claim to the true relics of Columbus was endangered, they at once accused the Bishop Cocchia and the other dignitaries of the Cathedral at Santo Domingo of being the authors of a bold fraud, charging them with having manufactured the leaden box, filling it with bones, scratching the inscriptions thereon, digging the vault and preparing a dramatic resurrection tableau, at which the foreign consuls assisted either as dupes or as conscious principals in the deception.

To uncover this trickery, consul Echeverri was ordered, in January 1878, to procure and forward to Spain the following items of information:

- First. A legalized copy of the act of examination of the human remains.
- Second. Photographic reproductions of the leaden coffin, of its four sides and of the cover.
- Third. A certificate from the scientific faculty, giving the state of preservation in which the said coffin was found.
- Fourth. A detailed and sufficient report, showing, if at any time the pavement of the Cathedral at Santo Domingo had been removed.

In compliance with this order, Consul Echeverri requested a second investigation of the portentous case and its contents. This investigation was made on January 2d, 1878, by the Señores Don Pedro M. Pineyro, Don Mariano Soearrez and Don Manuel Duran, Doctors of Medicine and Surgery. During the process of this most thorough examination the above named gentlemen, on removing the dust of the bones, which lay in the box, found at the bottom of the case a small plate of silver of quadrangular form, eighty-seven millimeters long and thirty-two millimeters wide. This plate had two circular holes, which coincided with two others which were to be seen in the back of the leaden box. Now an explanation for the existence of the two little screws, which had been found among the mold during the first examination, was easy. Fitting exactly to all the holes, these screws indicated that the little silver plate had originally been affixed inside of the case, but had become loosened therefrom in time and slipped among the human dust.

This little silver plate contains on each side inscriptions, which are reproduced here in full size. The shorter one has been interpreted as "Urna Cristoval Colon," while the longer one, the most significant and important of all inscriptions, has been interpreted to mean: "Ultima parte de los restos del primer Almirante, Don Cristoval Colon, Descubridor." "Last

parts of the remains of the first Admiral, Don Christopher Columbus, the Discoverer."

In spite of this additional evidence the Spanish Government, however, made great efforts to uphold the claim of the Cathedral at Havana as the depository of the remains of Columbus, and Señor Antonio Lopez Prieto, a historian living in Havana, was commissioned to pen in defense of these relics an elaborate report, that appeared under the title: "Los restos de Colon, Exámen histórico-critico" (Havana 1879). Addressed to the Captain-General of Cuba, it resorts to able and astute ingenuity to prove the remains, transferred to Havana in 1795, to have been the genuine remains of the Admiral. Señor Manuel Colmeiro supplemented these arguments with a report to the Royal Academy of History of Madrid, which later on was presented to the King and published by the Government. Not yet satisfied, the Spanish Government indicated her resolution to insist on her claims, by recalling in disgrace her representative in Santo Domingo, Don José Manuel de Echeverri, who had been present at the investigation of the tomb at Santo Domingo and had reported favorably about the discovery.

Of course the many direct and indirect attacks on the veracity and good faith of Bishop Rocco Cocchia, representing him as an audacious impostor, were rejected with great heat. Firmly maintaining that a mistake had been made in 1795 by Aristizabal, the bishop insisted that only those remains newly discovered were the true relics of Christopher Columbus. The result was a hot controversy which lasted for years and produced a flood of pamphlets and bulletins, in which each side tried its best to hold its claims aloft.

The most notable of these tracts are the following: *Rocco Cocchia*, "Los restos de Colon" (Santo Domingo, 1879); *Emiliano Tejera*, "Los restos de Colon en Santo Domingo" (Santo Domingo, 1878); "Los dos restos de Cristobal Colon exhumados de la Catedral de Santo Domingo en 1795 i 1877" (Santo Domingo, 1879); *Lopez Prieto*, "Los restos de Colon, exámen histórico critico" (Havana, 1879); "Informe sobre los restos de Colon." (Havana, 1879); *Mannel Colmeiro*, "Los

restos de Colon: informe de la Real Academia de la Historia o Madrid" (Madrid, 1879); *J. de Armas*, "Las cenizas de Cristobal Colon: suplantades en la catedral de Santo Domingo" (Caracas, 1881); *Travers Twiss*, "Christopher Columbus, a monograph of his true burial place" (London, 1879); *Juan Asensio*, "Los restos de Cristoval Colon: estan en la Habana" (Sevilla, 1881); *José Manuel de Echeverri*, "Do existen depositas las cenizas de Cristobal Colon?" (Santander, 1878); *Henry Harrisse*, "Los restos de Don Cristóval Colon" (Sevilla, 1878); "Les sepultures de Christophe Colomb" (Paris, 1879); *Tommaso Belgrano*, "Sulla recense delle casa di Colombo" (Genoa, 1878). To these publications *Rocco Cocchia*, who in the meantime had been made Archbishop of Chieti, Italy, added in 1892 another book, bearing the title "Cristoforo Colombo e le sue ceneri." Printed in Chieti, it is perhaps the most exhaustive and important of all the publications, as here the principal witness in this question gives a full statement of his case.

Besides these publications there appeared numerous articles in magazines, newspapers and scientific periodicals.



THE AUTHOR'S INVESTIGATION IN JANUARY
1891.

Such was the situation, when in December 1890 I arrived in the city of Santo Domingo.

Being the bearer of high credentials from the German Government, I found, when I expressed my desire to investigate the much disputed remains of Columbus, a smooth way. The ecclesiastical authorities, as well as the national and municipal government of Santo Domingo, consented gladly that a foreign and therefore absolutely disinterested scholar, whose only goal was to find the truth, might have an opportunity to judge their case. Since the discovery of the remains and the second investigation on January 2, 1878, no other investigation had taken place nor had been permitted. To prevent any undueness, the remains, together with the leaden casket, had been placed in a glass case, sealed up and deposited in a cell behind the first side chapel at the left of the great altar. Utmost care had also been taken to guard the precious relics. The doors leading into the cell were locked with three different keys, one of which was kept by the archbishop, while the other two were deposited with the municipal and national authorities. Strict regulations required that the room should be opened only in the presence of one official connected with the church and two delegates of the municipal and national government. Permission to view the remains was granted very rarely, and a record was kept of all visitors. It was on the morning of Sunday, January 11, 1891, when the ecclesiastical authorities, the Secretary of the Interior and several other officers of the national and municipal government assembled in the cathedral to be witnesses of my investigations. There were also all the consuls of those foreign governments having representatives in Santo Domingo. Besides, several prominent citizens were present, among them Emiliano Tejera, the author of the tract "Los restos de Colon."

After the door to the cell in which the precious relics were kept, had been opened, I perceived in the centre of the room a rather large chest, containing the disputed coffin. Like the door this chest also was opened by several different keys. And now the leaden casket became visible. I found it enclosed in an octagonal case of glass, the slabs of which were held together by strong strips of satin-wood. The case was ornamented with silver handles. This glass-case was in its turn secured with three different locks, to be opened by means of several keys. For further protection against being opened, a broad white satin ribbon had in 1878 been wound several times around the glass-case, and sealed with the official seals of the Government and the Church, as well as of all the Consulates of Spain, Italy, Germany, England, France, Holland and the United States.

In the presence of the witnesses enumerated above, the glass-case and its contents were now lifted out and placed on a brocade-covered table, in the side nave of the church, where there was full daylight and everyone had a chance to follow the proceedings. Beginning my investigations, I observed that the lead coffin was open; its lid having been turned back and fastened to the cover of the glass-case, so that the human remains lying inside were plainly visible. A number of vertebrae of the neck and back, and parts of the arm and leg bones proved well preserved. A small vessel of glass contained the dust, which had been collected at the bottom of the coffin. Furthermore, one could see the little silver plate covered with inscriptions, also the round bullet, the latter placed outside of the leaden coffin.

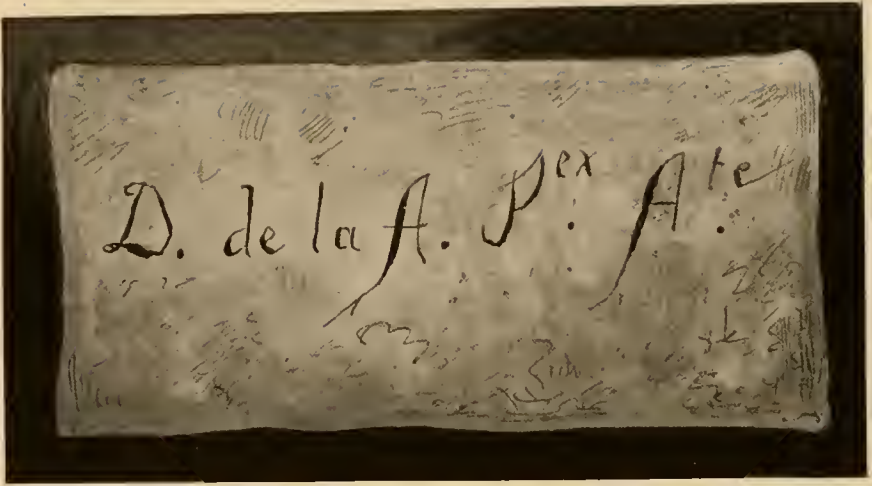
Upon the request of the Secretary of the Interior, all the consuls of the foreign governments inspected the different seals placed upon the silk ribbon wound about the glass-case. After having found all seals intact, they were broken, the ribbon loosened, the glass-case opened by means of three keys, and the lead coffin lifted out. Now the examination could be carried on in the most careful way. I found the coffin itself dull gray in color and very much oxidized; some parts were dented,



The coffin of Christopher Columbus.
 After the drawing made by R. Cronau on January 11, 1891,
 in the Cathedral of Santo Domingo.

as if sunk in by its own weight. In other respects it was fairly well preserved. A few fragments of lead which had broken off in time I found carefully wrapped in a piece of paper. The impression I gained from the appearance of the easket was that of old age. It reminded me strongly of similar coffins I had seen in vaults in Germany, Austria and other countries.



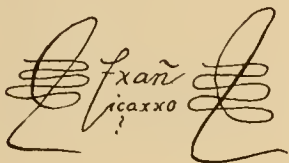


THE INSCRIPTIONS ON THE CASKET.

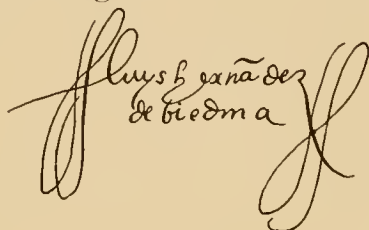
As the question of the authenticity of the remains rests chiefly on the integrity of the inscriptions found on the casket and on the little silver plate, and as the Spanish authorities had made their attacks mainly on the ground that the character of these inscriptions would not show them to be contemporaneous with the time of the removal of the remains from Spain to Española, but "quite modern and therefore unmistakable proof of imposture," it seemed to me most important to obtain absolutely correct copies of these inscriptions.

This was most essential, as numerous writers had formed their opinions not on the original inscriptions but on very inexact copies, inserted in some of those books that had been published about the remains of Columbus. Having these prints at hand, and comparing them with the original inscriptions, I found them differing very much from the originals and quite modernized in character. Therefore I made with most scrupulous care those copies, reproductions of which for the first time were published in my book "Amerika, die Geschichte seiner Entdeckung," vol. I, p. 333, and which are presented with this essay.

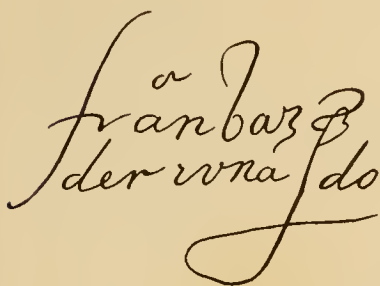
Beginning with the inscription on the lid of the coffin, the question now arises: do the letters of this inscription resemble the letters in autographs of the first half of the sixteenth century, the time when the casket and its inscriptions are supposed to have been made? By reproducing here a number of



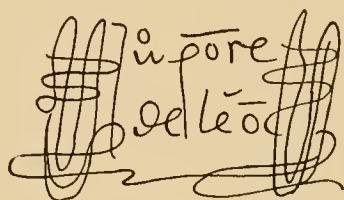
Francisco Pizarro



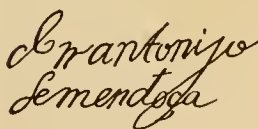
Luys Hernandez de Biedma



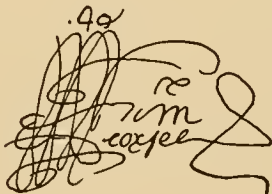
Francisco Vasquez de Coronado



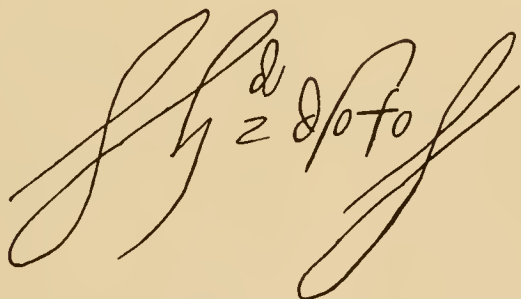
Juan Ponce de Leon



Antonio de Mendoza



Hernando Cortes



Hernando de Soto

Spanish autographs of the 16th century.

Francisco Pizarro.

Luys Hernandez de Biedma.

Francisco Vasquez de Coronado.

Juan Ponce de Leon.

Antonio de Mendoza.

Hernando Cortes.

Hernando de Soto.

autographs of famous Spaniards, who lived during the first half of the sixteenth century, I enable the reader to judge this question for himself. It will be easy for him to point out every single letter of the casket's inscriptions also in these autographs. I wish to call attention especially to the peculiar shape the letter *r* has in the inscription upon the top of the casket. It resembles a modern *x*. We find the same character standing for the letter *r* in the autographs of Francisco Pizarro and Hernandez de Biedma. It appears also in autographs of Hernando Cortes, King Ferdinand and many other prominent Spaniards of the 16th century.

As has been noticed before, the inscription upon the lower side of the lid is in *German Gothic letters*. Spanish authorities claimed that during the first half of the sixteenth century in Spain no Gothic but only Roman letters had been in use and that therefore these German Gothic letters be regarded as another proof of fraud. This assertion is absolutely false. As is generally known, the art of printing with movable types was invented by Johannes Gutenberg at Mayence in Germany. From that city it was carried by German printers to almost all other parts of Europe. As Conrad Schweinsheim (Sweynheim) and Arnold Pannarts in 1467 introduced printing in Italy, so it was brought by German printers to Spain. Many volumes of the last quarter of the 15th and the first half of the 16th centuries, now preserved in the library of the "Hispanic Society of America" at New York, prove by their printer's marks, that Peter Braun and Nicholas Spindler ("Petro Bruno a Nicholas Spindelero Germanice natois") ran in 1478 a printing office in Barcelona. The book-marks "Fredericú basiliensem Germanice nationis" and "Henrico aleman" disclose that Friedrich von Basel and Heinrich der Deutsche at the same time have published books in Burgos. The names "Paulus de Colonia Alemanus" (Paulus of Cologne), "Johanes pegniezer de Nuréberga" (Johannes Pegnitzner from Nurnberg), Magnus and Thomas Alemanos, and Meinardus Ungut are to be found frequently in books printed at the end of the 15th century in Seville. At the beginning of the 16th century we find in Zaragoza Georg Koch ("Georgius Coci theuto-

D. de la f. p. ex. A fe

Inscription on the outside of the lid. Actual size 12 inches.

M. de la f. p. ex. A fe
M. de la f. p. ex. A fe
M. de la f. p. ex. A fe

Inscription on the inside of the lid. Actual size.

Copied by R. Cronau on January 11, 1891.

nic"); Paul Hurus from Constanz ("Pauli hurus, Cóstanciens. Germanice nacionis"); Leonard Huetz ("Leonardú hutz"); Wolf Appentegger ("Lupum appétegger Germaniee nationis") and Johann Giesser ("Joanné gysser alemanú de Silgenstat"). Toledo had become the home in 1500 of Peter Hagenbach ("Pedro Hagenbach"); in Valencia printing offices were run by Christopher Kaufman ("Cristobal Cofman) and Johann Rosenbach "Alamany". Almost all the volumes, produced by these men are in *German Gothic types*. It may be mentioned here that also several editions of the famous letter, in which Columbus in 1493, after his return from his first voyage, announced his discoveries, are printed in *Gothic types*. The very first one, most probably printed in Barcelona, may have been printed by Peter Braum or Nicholas Spindeler.

While during the 16th century the use of Roman types became more and more preponderant in Spain, Gothic types nevertheless remained in use. Just as to-day they were frequently used in composing the title pages of books, as for instance of Oviedo's "Natural Historia de las Indias," printed in 1526 at Toledo; or of "Coronica del muy esforeado y invencible cavallero el Cid," printed in the same year at the same place. Volumes published in Spain during the 16th century and set throughout in Gothic types are the "Cronica d'Aragon" (Valencia, 1524), the "Cronica del Rey Don Rodrigo" (Seville, 1520) and others. Editions of the Cid, and of the works of Juan Boscán and Garcilasso de la Vega, printed at Medina del Campo in 1544 and at Granada in 1561, have also title-pages in Gothic types. Copies of these books are preserved in the Museum of the "Hispanic Society of America."

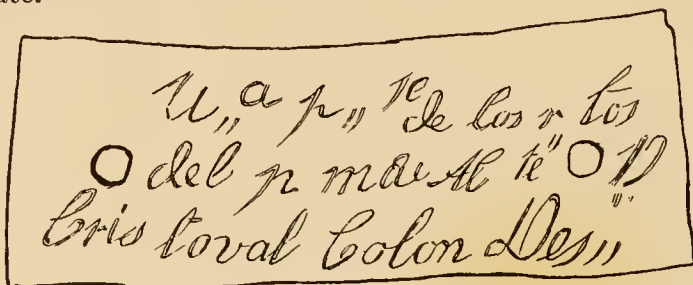
The strongest point in the objections of the Spanish historians against the authenticity of the remains in Santo Domingo is that the lettering "D. de la A." upon the top of the remains implies a use of the word "America." They argue that in 1540, the time when the remains of Columbus are supposed to have been transferred to Santo Domingo, this term was not recognized in Spain, the term "the Indias" being universally used.

Now, it is an open question, if the above letters were really intended to express the words "Descubridor de la America." J. C. Brevoort in his essay "Where are the remains of Columbus?" (*Magazine of American History*, vol. II, 1878, p. 161) says: "The *Diario de la Marina* suggests that the letters "D. de la A." may signify "Descubridor de la America," although the name had not been given to this continent. It is probable that they signify "*Dignidad de la Almirantazgo*," connected as they were with the next words of "*Primer Almirante*." This title was prized by Columbus most highly, and the last words would at the time have been unmeaning without the letters preceding it."

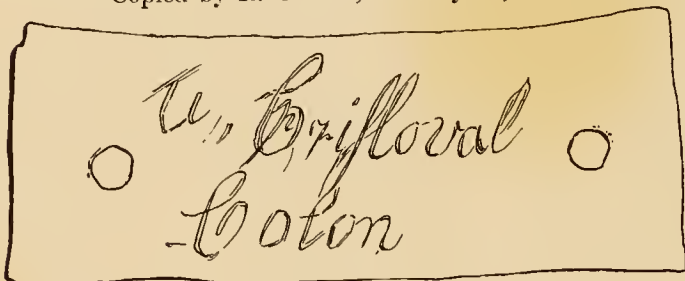
While quoting this explanation, I wish to state, however, that the name "America," first proposed in 1507 by the German cosmographer Waldseemüller in his "*Cosmographiæ Introductio*," and first placed on his map of the world, had been accepted during the first quarter of the 16th century by many European scholars. Schoener inscribed it in 1515 on a globe he had made. Joachim Watt, or Vadianus, used the name America in the same year also. Stobnicza in Craecovia did the same in 1519 in his "*Introductio in Ptolemei Cosmographia*." Apianus inscribed it in 1520 on his "*Mappa Mondo*." So did Laurentius Frisius in an edition of "*Ptolemy Cosmographia*" of 1522; also Mercator in 1541. Phrysius in his work "*De principiis astronomiæ*," published in 1530 at Antwerp, devoted a whole chapter to "America." We find the name also in Münster's "*Novus Orbis*" of 1532, and in Honter's "*Rudimentorum cosmographiæ libri*" of 1534. As there was a constant interchange of thoughts and observations among the cosmographers of Germany, Holland, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy, and as especially the editions of Ptolemy found distribution over all Europe, we must assume that the name "America" was in 1541 known and used by Spanish scholars and writers also. Indeed, the "*Primera Parte de las Difereneias de Libros que ay en el Universo*" of Alexio Vanegas de Busto, printed at Toledo in 1546, designate the new parts as "America."

THE LITTLE SILVER PLATE.

Of especial interest to me was the little silver plate found, like the two small screws, among the mold at the bottom of the coffin. These screws correspond exactly with the two holes in the plate as well as in the back wall of the coffin. There can be no doubt that the little plate was originally fastened on the inside of the coffin. But in time the oxidizing of the lead caused the screws to become loose and to fall down, together with the plate.



Inscription on front of the little silver plate. Exact size.
Copied by R. Cronau, January 11, 1891.



Inscription on back of the little silver plate. Exact size.
Copied by R. Cronau, January 11, 1891.

Very curiously, this plate has inscriptions on either side. As already stated, the short inscription has been read by some as: "Urna Cristoval Colon"—("Coffin of Christopher Columbus"). The longer inscription has been interpreted by some as meaning: "*Urna perteneciente de los restos del primer Almirante Don Cristoval Colon.*" Others have suggested the translation: "*Ultima parte de los restos del primer Almirante Cristoval Colon, Descubridor*" ("The last parts of the remains of the first Admiral Christopher Columbus, the Discoverer").

While I found no reason to object to the interpretation suggested for the last inscription, I can not agree to the translation of the shorter inscription as meaning "Urna Cristoval Colon." I am much more inclined to believe that the engraver originally intended to express in the short inscription the same idea as he has expressed in the longer one, namely "Ultima parte." But he may have found his first attempt unsatisfactory because it did not seem intelligible enough on account of its too great brevity. Accordingly he engraved the more elaborate inscription on the other side to make sure that the reading would be more easily understood in later centuries. Indeed, it would seem senseless to write on both sides of a plate, one side of which was always invisible because turned toward the wall of the coffin.

That this explanation may be correct, seems to be proven by the fact that in the short inscription a small p is to be seen enclosed within the capital letter C of "Cristobal." Probably this letter was intended to stand for the word "parte." Objection has been also raised that the letter s in the name "Cristoval" in the short inscription of the silver plate is not of the kind in vogue during the sixteenth century, and hence the inscription must be spurious. That this view is erroneous also has been proved by Frederick A. Ober, who as a special commissioner was sent in 1891 by the directors of the World's Columbian Exposition to the West Indies, to collect material related to the time of discovery. In his book "In the Wake of Columbus" Ober reproduces on page 378 a page of a book of baptisms in the cathedral of Santo Domingo, bearing date 1591. On this page the same form of s is used in the name Cristoval Rodriguez as well as in other names.

Another objection has been raised by Spanish historians to the spelling of the name Cristoval, which, it is insisted, should be Christoval, having the letter h. This objection is rejected by Archbishop Rocco Coechia in his book "Cristoforo Colombo e le sue eeneri," where he states that during the 16th century the name Cristoval appears in many various spellings, as for instance: Cristoval, Cristoual, Cristobal, Christoval, Christoual, Christobal, xpval, xpbal, xpoul, xpoval, xpoual, xptoval, xptoual, xptobal and xperristoval.

John Boyd Thacher in his great work on Columbus (vol. III, p. 606) hints "*that the inscriptions on the coffin were perhaps not made by a Spaniard or by the direction of a Spaniard.*" Such a possibility must be admitted, when we remember the many German printers living in Spain during the 15th and 16th centuries, as I have shown. Seville had several of them. Consequently we may assume that there were living in Seville also German craftsmen able to cut types, which they supplied to these printers. It may be that one of those German craftsmen was commissioned by the heirs of Columbus to engrave the inscriptions on the coffin and on the little silver plate.

A few words may be said about the inscriptions in general. The removal of the remains of Christopher Columbus and his son Diego from Spain to Santo Domingo took place, as may be judged from the last royal provision of November 1540, some time after that date. As at that time the original coffins may have been already in delapidated condition, it became advisable to collect that which remained of the two bodies for convenience sake into two small leaden cases which could be stored easily into the ship's hold. These cases were probably of the same size. Now, can it be imagined that the case of such an illustrious man as the discoverer of the New World should have been left without any visible marks or inscriptions by means of which an identification might be possible and mistakes avoided? This thought must be strongly rejected. It is only natural that the case in which the ashes of the great Admiral were placed was distinguished by some fitting inscriptions which might enable easy identification not only after their arrival in Santo Domingo but also in later centuries. As the official document set up in 1795, when the Spaniards emptied the vault in the Cathedral at Santo Domingo, does not mention any mark or inscriptions on the leaden plates taken from that tomb, it must therefore be regarded as the strongest proof that this vault never enclosed the ashes of America's discoverer, but those of his son Diego, whose remains had been transferred to Santo Domingo at the same time.

THE BULLET IN THE CASE.

Mention should be made also of the bullet that had been found among the human remains. While several authors have ignored its existence entirely, it seems to me that it may be regarded as an important piece of evidence in this peculiar case.

Describing in a letter of July 7, 1503, the awful hardships of his fourth and last voyage, Columbus writes: "While all men of the crew in their extreme exhaustion longed to die to be released of their sufferings, my wound opened again, (*quini se me rinfresco del mate la piago*), and for nine days all hope was gone to keep me alive."

These words evidently show that Columbus during some former period of his life had been wounded. As he was not wounded during one of his voyages to the New World, we must assume that this happened during the times when he was closely allied to the Columbi, two corsairs which during the second half of the 15th century were the terror of the European seas. Venetian State papers of the years 1468 to 1485 refer quite often to these pirates, especially to Colombo the younger, who under the name *Nicolo Griego* became the most daring of sea-robbers. In 1485 he engaged, off Cape St. Vincent, four great Venetian galleys. The dreadful contest raged for twenty-four hours and ended with a complete victory for the pirates. Ferdinand Columbus, to whom we owe a biography of his father, the discoverer, boasts of his father's share in this engagement. For how many years Christopher Columbus took part in such affairs of his relatives, we do not know. But I am inclined to believe that during one of those adventurous trips he may have received a gunshot, and that the ball remained in his body till his end. Firearms, guns and pistols were well known in the middle of the 15th century all over Europe, especially in France and Italy.*) That gun-balls very

*) It may be not out of order to mention here that the date and circumstances of the introduction of portable firearms are involved in obscurity. While in Germany the invention of gunpowder is ascribed to a monk, Bertholdus Schwartz, about 1320, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in its article about gun-powder says:

often remain in the bodies of wounded persons through their whole lifetime, and that wounds made by such bullets tend to break out again sometimes, is also well known. Therefore it is not impossible that the ball found in the case of the Admiral had remained in his body, caused fresh breaking out of his wound in 1504 and became free later after Columbus had died and his corpse fell into decay.

If fraud was committed by Bishop Rocco Cocchia, as the Spanish authorities would have us believe, what reasons could have induced him to place in the casket a ball that to my knowledge was never brought in any connection with the above mentioned part of the letter Columbus wrote to the king during his fourth voyage?

To sum up, all evidences point most strongly to the probability, that Lieutenant-General Aristizabal, in 1795, while searching for the remains of Christopher Columbus, opened not the vault of the Admiral but that of his son Diego, buried only a few inches apart from his father. This mistake happened, as he was ignorant of the fact that there were two vaults close together, and furthermore that, as Moreau de St. Méry had stated only a few years before, "not a mausoleum, nor a monument, not even an inscription," indicated where the true resting place of Christopher Columbus was.

"There is a treatise on gun-powder in the library of the Escorial, written about 1250, which appears to describe both rockets and shells. The Arabians are, from this and other authorities, supposed to have enclosed combustible or explosive compositions in hollow globes of iron, which were discharged upon the foe either by hand, like the modern grenade, or from the warlike machines then in use. It has also been stated that toward the close of the 13th century they projected small balls from tubes carried in the hand, or attached to the end of a lance, and only used at close quarters being in fact hand-guns." Petrarch, about the year 1344 in his dialogues "De remediis utriusque fortunæ" also speaks of "brazen globes cast forth by the force of flame with a horrible sound of thunder."

In England guns and gun-powder were known in 1346. In "Archæologia," published by the Society of Antiquaries, vol. XXXII, page 379, there is an article which cites payments by King Edward III to William de Slanes for salpêtre and sulphur supplied by him to Thomas de Roldeston "for the King's use for his guns." And the Encycl. Brit. states that in 1375 men armed with "gunnes" made an attack on a Yorkshire manor house.

After my investigations in the Cathedral at Santo Domingo were concluded, the authorities, who during my work had remained present, replaced the casket and its contents in the glass box. This was wound about with a new ribbon in the colors of the Dominican Republic, red, white and blue. After this ribbon had again been put under the seals of the Government, the Church and the several Consuls, the case was returned to the cell from which it had been taken. Notaries who had been called read the report they had made. After it had been properly signed, the assemblage departed.

The results of my investigations, together with all copies of the inscriptions on the coffin were in 1892 published in my book "Amerika, die Geschichte seiner Entdeckung" as well as in the Spanish edition "America, historia de su descubrimiento." The latter edition appeared in Barcelona. It seems, however, that the Spanish authorities utterly ignored this publication, for, in January, 1899, when Cuba had become a republic, they once more with great pomp removed the supposed remains of Columbus from the Cathedral of Havana, this time taking them to Spain, where they were given sepulchre in the magnificent cathedral of Seville. An elaborate monument, showing four ministrant boys in full life size, carrying a magnificent sarcophagus, marks the place where rest those remnants which the Spaniards still claim to be the genuine ones of Christopher Columbus.



WHAT TWO AMERICAN JURISTS SAY.

It may not be out of place here, to reproduce the views of two able American jurists, who became interested in this peculiar question, studied the same and published their findings. *John Gilmary Shea* in the "Magazine of American History" for January 1883, has criticised the methods of the Spanish writers to uphold the claim of Havana and to impeach the discovery made in Santo Domingo in 1877 by assailing the character of Bishop Rocco Coechia and presenting him as an impostor. He says: "These advocates on the Spanish side adopt a system which we, at a distance, and with nothing to bias us in favor of either side, cannot recognize as just or sound, for at the great bar of historical criticism both sides must be held to the same rule of evidence. But they insist on everything being taken for granted in regard to the excavation of 1785, and they not only impeach all the evidence of that of 1877, but they even assail the good faith of all concerned, and fail to produce even presumptive proof. The vault found in 1795 must, according to them, be regarded as unquestionable ancient; but that found in 1877 requires proof of its age, Señor Prieto stating "my opinion is that it has not the antiquity supposed." There was no inscription of any kind with the remains taken up in 1795, but they must be conceded to be those of Christopher Columbus, while those found in 1877 are false because they have an inscription. Those concerned in the examination in 1795, we are required to believe, acted in perfect faith, free from all pious fraud, and imbued with unerring accuracy, while they insist on our regarding all concerned in the affair of 1877 as impostors and authors of a pious fraud. This course cannot be admitted. What one side is required to prove, the other is under equal obligation to support by evidence. A charge of fraud must be sustained by evidence or such a train of circumstances as to admit of no other alternative. There cannot be a discrimination made between the two parties."

The second American jurist interested in this case is *Dr. Richard H. Clarke*. He contributed to "Donahoe's Magazine"

of June 1893 an article "Where is Columbus buried?" From this article I quote the following:

"In behalf of the Spanish claim it was necessary, in the face of the facts, to take bold and high ground. Hence they attack the veracity and good faith of Archbishop Cocchia, representing him as an impostor, the perpetrator of an audacious fraud, and allege that under the pious pretext of contributing to the canonization of Columbus, he and his confederates were "the authors and accomplices of a pious fraud." While Archbishop Cocchia must be here regarded as the chief witness of certain facts, he is certainly entitled to that measure of credibility which, upon well-known principles of human nature and of moral philosophy, as well as upon the laws of evidence familiar in every court of justice, is extended to every witness. It is not sufficient to assail the testimony of a dignified gentleman of unquestionable character and of high personal and official worth. It is necessary to adduce competent evidence to sustain such assertions. I must say that the reports, documents and general literature before me give no such proofs. Nor can I find anything to sustain the charge itself that the remains exhumed in 1877 were lacking in antiquity. The official and solemn declaration of all the distinguished persons present, setting forth the facts, establish the contrary.

With absolute impartiality I have examined the testimony and voluminous writings on both sides of this controversy, and the facts and arguments. The question is really narrowed down by the established laws of evidence. The historical fact is well established, and it is conceded by the Spanish advocates of Havana, that the remains of Columbus had been deposited in the Sanctuary of the Cathedral of San Domingo, on the right or Gospel side of the altar. By the rules of evidence, a state of facts or conditions of things once established or admitted, is legally presumed to continue until a different one is proved or admitted. Hence it follows that the remains of Columbus are presumed still to repose in the Cathedral of San Domingo, unless the advocates of the Cathedral of Havana can prove incontestably their subsequent removal to Havana. Now what proof is there of such a removal? The contents of a grave, containing human remains, were certainly removed in 1795. But there was no leaden case, only fragments of lead showing there

may have been one formerly. There was no plate bearing a name or an inscription, and the grave was unmarked. There was nothing to show whose remains they were. Even the official act or document made on the occasion pointedly and significantly refrains from mentioning whose remains they were.

The remains of the great Admiral were transported about the year 1541 to the New World he had discovered, and buried on the right hand or gospel side of the grand altar of the Cathedral of San Domingo, and there they reposed unquestioned until 1795, when the Spanish Government and the Duke of Veragua immediately and hastily, on the conclusion of the Treaty of Basle, and to avoid the complications of leaving them on other than Spanish soil, undertook their removal. In the haste of the removal no other grave in that sanctuary was thought of but that of Columbus, and the first grave found on the Gospel side was taken to be his, and the remains were immediately removed to Havana. There was no inscription by which to identify the remains, and yet should other graves be afterward found under the sanctuary, or should another grave be found on the Gospel side and especially under the bishop's chair, what authenticity could attach to the remains removed to Havana? But—still stronger—what if another grave should be found thus located, bearing equal evidences of antiquity, and containing five separate and distinct inscriptions stating in unmistakable language that they were the remains of Christopher Columbus? Yet all these were found in 1877. Mr. Greenleaf, in his great work on the laws of evidence, states that the evidence derived from ancient tombs and the inscriptions thereon stands in the very first rank of proof in the court of justice. But see the corroborating circumstances: first, its location just where Columbus had been buried; second, the finding of the grave of Luis Columbus on the Epistle side, just where it had been buried; third, the finding of the empty grave of Diego Columbus, just where it had been located; thus completing the identification of the grave of the three Columbuses; fourth, the remnants of corroded leaden plates in the grave of Diego, showing that there had also been an inscription there, while the other two graves are clearly identified by appropriate inscrip-

tions of Columbus and Luis Columbus; fifth, the high and unimpeachable character of the archbishop and other officials making the discovery and certifying it to the world; sixth, the witnesses called, in the persons of the consuls of foreign nations, to see and certify to the whole proceeding; seventh, the absence of all proof or identification of the remains removed in 1795 as those of Columbus; eighth, the judgment of learned historians and experts in favor of San Domingo; ninth the current and living acquiescence of the world, as manifested by the fact that, when antiquarians, students, officials, historians or tourists start out to visit and pay homage to the illustrious man who discovered America, they go directly to San Domingo, and there only."

Fully agreeing with the views of these two jurists, I wish to express herewith my conviction, that if humanity will pay homage to the remains of the discoverer of America, the only place to do so is the Cathedral at Santo Domingo.

* *

Some time after my visit the Junta Nacional Columbiana, a committee of leading citizens of the Dominican republic, took steps to erect a worthy mausoleum for the discoverer of America. Forty-five feet high, and richly decorated with bas reliefs, statues, historical groups, this mausoleum is placed in an ingeniously and artistically constructed crypt under the old cathedral, a monument of befitting magnificence. The central figure is the Indian personification of the island Santo Domingo, Quisqueya, guarding the ashes of Columbus.



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WERT
BOOKBINDING
Cranville Pa.
May June 1988

