

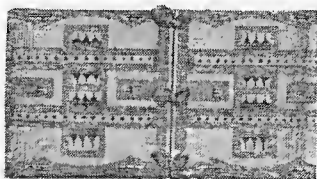
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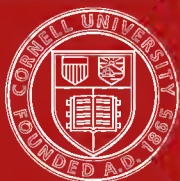


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HEROES OF
AMERICAN HISTORY

COLUMBUS



BUST OF COLUMBUS BY BOZZANO

COLUMBUS

THE DISCOVERER

BY
FREDERICK A. OBER

HEROES OF AMERICAN HISTORY



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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. SAILOR AND CORSAIR (1475)	I
II. THE MAN WITH A WORLD IN HIS GIFT (1475-1488)	15
III. FROM PALACE TO MONASTERY (1488- 1491)	29
IV. HOW COLUMBUS BECAME AN ADMIRAL (1491)	43
V. THE "GAP IN THE GLOBE" (1492) . . .	56
VI. WHERE IS SAN SALVADOR? (1492) . . .	70
VII. CUBA AND THE MYTHICAL CIPANGO (1492)	84
VIII. WHERE THE FLAG-SHIP WAS WRECKED (1492)	97
IX. THE RETURN VOYAGE TO SPAIN (1493) .	114
X. A TRIUMPHAL JOURNEY (1493)	128
XI. SECOND VOYAGE AND FIRST SETTLEMENT (1493)	142
XII. EXPEDITIONS IN SEARCH OF GOLD (1494)	159
XIII. JAMAICA DISCOVERED (1494)	176
XIV. SUBJUGATION OF THE INDIANS (1495- 1496)	189
XV. THE RULE OF DON BARTHOLOMEW (1496-1498)	206
XVI. THE THIRD VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY (1498)	220

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVII. COLUMBUS AND HIS BROTHERS IN IRONS (1500)	234
XVIII. THE LAST AND MOST DISASTROUS VOY- AGE (1502-1504)	247
XIX. SHIPWRECK AND RESCUE, COAST OF JAMAICA (1503-1504)	267
XX. THE END OF A GREAT CAREER	281

ILLUSTRATIONS

BUST OF COLUMBUS BY BOZZANO	<i>Frontispiece</i>
COLUMBUS DEMONSTRATING HIS THEORY OF THE EARTH'S ROTUNDITY	<i>Facing p.</i> 28
THE LANDING AT GUANAHANI	" 76
RETURN OF COLUMBUS FROM HIS FIRST VOYAGE	" 134
COLUMBUS NEGOTIATES A PEACE WITH ROLDAN	" 228
" THE ADELANTADO SALLIED FORTH . . . AND SWORE HE WOULD HACK THEM TO PIECES"	" 272
THE DEATH OF COLUMBUS	" 290
LEAD CASKET WHICH CONTAINED BONES OF COLUMBUS	" 294

COLUMBUS

COLUMBUS

I

SAILOR AND CORSAIR

1475

CROWNING a headland on the coast of Spain, less than thirty miles distant from the southern boundary-line of Portugal, stands the ancient monastery of La Rábida. It was founded, according to tradition, during the reign of Trajan, Roman emperor, more than eighteen hundred years ago, and for a time was occupied by the Knights Templars, after the expulsion of the Moors from Spain becoming a possession of the Franciscan monks. As its name in Arabic signifies an outpost, they called it "Santa Maria de la Rábida," or the monastery of Saint Mary of the Frontier. It is almost as lonely now as in the time of him whose fortunes we shall shortly follow, for the near-

COLUMBUS

est settlement is Palos, three miles away, while the same distance separates it from the Atlantic, the roar of whose waves may be heard here in times of storm, as they dash upon the "Arenas Gordas," or wild wastes of sands, that render this coast uninhabitable.

The headland upon which La Rábida is situated is based between two rivers, the Tinto and Domingo Rubio, the confluent waters of which form the Odiel, then flow past a sandy island and mid foaming breakers to the ocean. Down this channel, floating on the bosom of the Tinto from Palos, came the caravels of Columbus, one day in August, 1492, and, taking their departure from La Rábida, sailed out into the ocean, on that voyage which made their crews akin to the immortals. Two thousand years ago this coast was known to the Phœnicians, for those daring sailors of Tyre, who found the passage between the Pillars of Hercules, came here to mine the ores of Tarshish, which they shipped from the port of Huelva, and which can be seen from La Rábida, across an arm of the sea, shining like a silvery snow-drift against the purple of its hills. Huelva was the "copper port" of ancient Tarshish,

SAILOR AND CORSAIR

mention of which is made in the Bible, and the Rio Tinto [pronounced Teén-to, meaning colored] is said to derive its name from the beds of copper over which it flows.

Particular mention is made of La Rábida, at the outset of our voyagings with Columbus, because (strange though it may seem) it is, perhaps, the first spot with which we can positively identify the great discoverer in the early period of his wonderful career. As to the exact date of his birth, the house in which he was born, his adventures during youth and early manhood, his personal appearance even, there is "a great diversity of opinion among historians"; but the mists of obscurity dissolve away when, in the course of his wanderings, Columbus arrives at the hospitable portal of La Rábida. His experiences there will be narrated in due course; but it should be borne in mind that they were so important, and had such a bearing upon his subsequent discoveries in the "New World"—then to be revealed—that the old monastery has been aptly termed 'the corner-stone of American history.'

Christopher Columbus first arrived in Spain in the year 1484 or 1485, having come from Portugal with his son Diego. He in-

COLUMBUS

tended to leave him with his sister-in-law, then residing at Moguer, or at Huelva, which towns form, together with Palos, not far distant from either, a distinguished triad in the history of Spain. He was on his way to the court of Isabella and Ferdinand, then at Cordova, and (though some historians make no mention of this first, conjectural arrival at La Rábida) it is quite possible he came here before going farther into Andalusia. In the first place, Huelva and Palos were the nearest Spanish ports to Portugal, whence he had come; in the second, La Rábida was the most conspicuous landmark on that part of the coast, the point of arrival and departure for many a mariner, its white towers being visible many miles at sea. He was not, however, a native of Spain, nor was his first visit to that country made until he was well advanced in life; as all the world should know, and as it seems hardly necessary to remind the reader.

Despite the uncertainty attaching to the exact place of his birth—so far as village, street, and house are concerned—there can exist no doubt whatever as to his nationality. He was an Italian, and was born in Genoa,

SAILOR AND CORSAIR

as he himself testifies in his last will and testament, in the following item:

“I also enjoin Diego [his son], or any one who may inherit the estate, to have and maintain in the city of Genoa one person of our lineage to reside there with his wife, and appoint him a sufficient revenue to enable him to live decently, as a person closely connected with the family, of which he is to be the root and basis in that city; from which great good may accrue to him, *inasmuch as I was born there, and came from thence.*”

He was a native of Genoa, most assuredly; but as to the date of his birth his biographers hold various opinions, with the majority in favor of that given by Washington Irving, which is “about” the year 1435. Although he may have been of what is called “illustrious descent,” or allied to the nobility, the fact that it was not discovered until after he had become the most famous man in the world, casts a shadow of doubt upon the claim. His natural son, Ferdinand, who wrote a biography of the great “Admiral,” does not dwell upon the fact that his father was the son of Dominico Colombo, a humble wool-comber, and his wife Susanna; but he sensibly concludes that he “should derive

COLUMBUS

less dignity from any nobility of ancestry than from being the son of such a father.”

As the eldest child of a poor man, himself probably uneducated, Christopher Columbus did not obtain the benefits of an education in the schools to any great extent. He was taught, or taught himself, reading, writing, grammar, and arithmetic, was good at drawing, and had a decided taste for geographical studies. There is a tradition that he at one time attended the university of Pavia, and, though this has been denied by some historians who profess to know, he somehow and somewhere (but probably in the rough school of experience) acquired a knowledge, ample for his times, of geometry, astronomy, geography, and navigation; while as for Latin, he could both write and speak it fluently.

He had two brothers, Bartholomew and Diego, to whom he was strongly attached, and of whom we shall learn something more than their names in the course of this narrative. He also had a sister, who married a person in her own station of life, and fell into the abysm of obscurity. Like Napoleon Bonaparte, no sooner had Christopher Columbus risen to a height above the level

SAILOR AND CORSAIR

of the masses, than he stooped and raised his brothers beside him. They served him faithfully, loyally, and he requited their services to his best ability. Their devotion to each other in after life causes one to regret that we could not know more of their youthful years, and especially of the chief personage of this remarkable trio.

One thing is certain: Christopher could not have remained long at the university, even if he entered it, as at the age of fourteen he was serving as a sailor, on board a ship commanded by Captain Colombo, who is said to have been a connection of his family. He was also called a corsair, by courtesy; but, if the truth be told, it would appear that he was an out-and-out pirate, making a specialty of plundering the Mohammedan Moors, but not objecting to rich prizes of any nationality, should they fall in his way.

Under Corsair Colombo, young Christopher rapidly acquired a knowledge of navigation, as well as of warfare, that stood him in good stead later in life. He was engaged in many encounters, the traditions say, and on the coast of Africa received a bullet in his body which he carried to his dying day. At least, in the casket in Santo Domingo

COLUMBUS

which, it is alleged, contains his sacred ashes, a bullet was found large enough to have inflicted a serious wound, and which must have been very inconvenient to carry about, whether in body or limb.

A strong attachment seems to have sprung up between the corsair and his young relative, and when the veteran retired from active life, Columbus shipped for several cruises with his nephew, who was called Colombo the younger, and made himself such a terror to the Moors that the African coast of the Mediterranean was inspired with a dread of his very name. While serving under the elder Colombo, Christopher is presumed to have been on board a ship of the squadron fitted out, in 1459, by John of Anjou, Duke of Calabria, against the kingdom of Naples. During the long struggle, which lasted four years, there was opportunity for Columbus to distinguish himself; and, indeed, he is said to have improved it on at least one occasion, in the harbor of Tunis, when he cut out an enemy's galley.

After the Naples expedition the young mariner was lost to sight for several years, in the interval between 1459 and 1470, having made his way to Portugal, where he

SAILOR AND CORSAIR

made his advent (according to his son Ferdinand) in a most romantic manner. While he was with the younger Colombo, that reckless corsair attacked with his squadron four great Venetian galleys laden with rich cargoes. In the height of the conflict, and while Colombo's flag-ship was attached to one of the Venetian vessels by chains and grappling-irons, both burst into flames and were consumed to the water's edge. Their crews barely escaped by casting themselves into the sea, and among them was Columbus, who, with the help of a floating oar, swam to the shore, which was five or six miles distant. Making his way to Lisbon, he took up his abode in that city, where he resided for a fifth part of his life. The statement that he went to Portugal is true; but grave doubts are entertained as to his entering that country in the manner indicated, for it is thought he had already been a resident there several years when the encounter took place.

In whatever manner, and however impelled, Columbus was moved to take up his residence in Portugal, it cannot be doubted that it was in accord with the "eternal fitness of things." Born in a seaport city,

COLUMBUS

early taking to the seafaring life as a career, after long dwelling upon the problems presented to a thoughtful mind as to the possible extension of oceanic voyaging, it was but natural that he should seek out the foremost nation of that time in maritime discovery. Though he may have returned to Genoa afterwards (some say in 1472), he never resided there for any length of time. He became naturalized as a citizen in Portugal, and the ties he formed there were further cemented by his marriage to an estimable lady of noble birth, Doña Felipa Muñoz de Palestrello, who, like himself, came of Italian ancestry.

Religious and devotional, Columbus attended church with regularity, and it was while in the chapel of a convent at Lisbon that he first saw the lady who became his wife. Her father had been a naval officer under Prince Henry of Portugal, and was at one time governor of the island of Porto Santo, but at his death had left no great fortune to his daughter. The marriage, which quickly followed their first meeting, was one of pure attachment simply, and, though both were poor, they seem to have been happy and contented. They lived at

first with Doña Felipa's mother at Lisbon, but soon after their marriage removed to Porto Santo in the Madeira Islands, where the bride's father had left her a small estate. All the charts and manuscripts of the deceased navigator were placed at the disposal of Columbus by his mother-in-law, and it is thought that by poring over them (disclosing as they did the schemes and discoveries of the Portuguese) he became possessed of the idea, which was persistent with him ever after, of sailing westward in search of a passage to the Indies. Under the enlightened Prince Henry, son of John I. and his wife, who was a sister of Henry IV. of England, Portugal had made great strides towards the circumnavigation of Africa, and attained an advanced position in commerce and navigation. Portuguese ships had crept from cape to cape of the "Dark Continent," and the problem the prince had set himself was in process of solution at the time of his death, in 1473.

While the Spanish sovereigns were pressing their conquests on land, Portugal was advancing her banners along the coast of Africa. Until that time, however, no navi-

COLUMBUS

gators had penetrated into the Atlantic, or "Sea of Darkness," as it then was termed, farther westward from the coast than the Cape de Verde and Azores islands. Theories there had been, from times most ancient, including those of Plato and other philosophers, and there was a firm belief in the "lost Atlantis," an island far westward in the ocean voids, vestiges of which were still believed to exist. It was no new theory which began to take shape in the mind of Columbus: that beyond the farthest limits of man's voyaging into the Atlantic a land, or lands, existed, pertaining or adjacent to the Asian continent.

The idea developed slowly, but it persisted with Columbus, strengthened by what he had read, what he had observed, and by several accidental circumstances. He knew all that the ancients had written on the subject; he had thought for years along the lines they had suggested, and in his mind he had already projected himself across the waste of waters to the unknown countries of his imagination. Possessed of strong sense and a penetrating mind, although imaginative and even superstitious, it is probable that Columbus rejected the rumors respect-

ing the mythical St. Brandan's Isle; but he undoubtedly believed in Plato's Atlantis, and expected to find it somewhere in the Atlantic, between the Cape de Verdes and India.

Some writers have accepted, some rejected, the story of the shipwrecked pilot who returned to the Madeiras with a tale of new countries, and who expired in the house of Columbus, after narrating his strange experiences. It matters not whether Columbus received information from him that decided him in venturing westward in search of those lands, or made his decision from having heard of the various objects brought across the Atlantic by the waves and cast upon the shores of different islands. One of the King's pilots told him he had found at sea a piece of wood carved by some instrument not of iron, probably of stone or flint. Immense reeds, similar to those said to grow in India, and huge trunks of trees unlike any in Europe or the islands, had been cast ashore after strong westerly winds, together with the bodies of two dead men, whose features resembled those of none known to Africa or Europe.

All these things Columbus made note of, carefully treasuring every fact, every item

COLUMBUS

of information, in corroboration of his theory of a western world beyond the waste of waters. An idea held tenaciously, a purpose strongly fixed, will attract support from every side, as the magnet draws the bits of iron. The theory of Columbus was not an inspiration, but a growth, or mental process, having its inception in a vigorous mind and sustained by cumulative circumstances. The idea might have occurred to any other man, have been entertained awhile, then have been forgotten or cast aside. In the mind of Columbus this seed, or germ, found fertile soil for its development; it grew and flourished until supremely dominant.

II

THE MAN WITH A WORLD IN HIS GIFT

1475-1488

PORTO Santo was a veritable "Fortunate Isle" for Columbus. His residence there, though brief, was one of the brightest, happiest periods of his life, which after that was beset by cares innumerable. There he had come in contact with mariners from adown the coast of Africa; thence (it is a tradition) he made a voyage to the Guinea coast; there he enjoyed converse with his brother-in-law, Pedro Correa, a man versed in all the mysteries of the sea; there he learned of the strange flotsam brought by the waves of ocean to the African islands; there his son Diego was born, in 1475; and there he dwelled, with his lovely wife, in sweet content, environed by the sea.

But he was not one to remain long contented in an obscure part of the world. He had a mission to fulfil, a theory to expound,

COLUMBUS

and this mission and this theory could only be advanced and developed by the great ones of the world. So he went back to Portugal and to troubles many. In pursuance of his design, to collate from every source all known information respecting the existence of a western world, Columbus opened a correspondence with the Florentine geographer and astronomer Paolo Toscanelli, who not only approved his plans, but sent him a map on which the eastern coast of Asia was represented as opposed to the western coasts of Europe and Africa. It had been projected according to the great Ptolemy and the somewhat fanciful descriptions of the famed Venetian Marco Polo, who, combined, were responsible for many errors subsequently entertained by Columbus. We will discuss a little later the mistakes Columbus made on account of this map, merely mentioning that perhaps it was fortunate, on the whole, that by means of it the real distance separating Europe and the east coast of Asia was apparently shortened, as thereby the passage of the intervening ocean was rendered feasible.

Columbus did not remain idle when in Portugal, for he had a living to obtain, and,

THE MAN WITH A WORLD IN HIS GIFT

besides pursuing his chosen profession of map and chart making, he took at least one voyage, when, in 1477, he "navigated one hundred leagues beyond Thule," which is supposed to have been Iceland. When in that region of the world, he may have heard the Scandinavian legends relating to the voyages of the Norsemen to America in the tenth century and previous. The narrative of Leif Erik's voyage to "Vinland," and the settlement formed there, may have come to the knowledge of Columbus, and thus confirmed the impressions he had formed and added to the information he had gathered.

Some writers, in truth, assume that he derived his positive information as to the existence of America almost wholly from the Norse narrative; but in any event, it is certain that the Norsemen, and not Columbus, really "discovered" America. They were the first to visit our shores, it is true, and the honor of the discovery is theirs; but Columbus was the first to open the New World to the influences of European civilization. In the interval between the Norse voyages and those of Columbus, however, such knowledge as had been gained of the

COLUMBUS

continent now called America was lost, or hidden, and as the actual discoverers made no permanent settlement, and left no record for others to follow immediately after, nothing of value resulted from their daring ventures.

Soon after this voyage to Thule, it is believed, Columbus formulated the information he had been so many years in gathering, and, after a fruitless proposition to his native Genoa, craved an audience of King John II. of Portugal. The fortunes of Genoa, the glorious, were then on the decline, and maritime supremacy had passed to sturdy Portugal. Prince Henry, of precious memory, had opened the way by the establishment of his nautical college and the pushing forward of exploration along the coast of Africa, by which Portuguese navigators had attained that supremacy. King John himself had assembled his ablest cosmographers, astronomers, and cartographers, and the most notable result of their conferences was the perfection of the astrolabe, the primitive quadrant, so that mariners were no longer dependent upon landmarks for their voyages, but could push forward boldly into the open ocean.

THE MAN WITH A WORLD IN HIS GIFT

Surely, Portugal was the country which should have availed itself of the offer of Columbus, which was to open a way to the Indies by a shorter route than around Africa or through the Mediterranean, the Red, and Arabian seas. But Portugal lost, as she deserved to lose, the honors and emoluments which were to flow from the discovery of the New World, because she used cunning and treachery in her dealings with Columbus. The King was attracted by his scheme—even regarded it favorably—but, as the fitting out of a fleet for a voyage into the unknown waters was a matter of great moment, he referred it to a junta composed of his learned men, who reported adversely.

One, Diego Ortiz, Bishop of Ceuta, seeing that the King was inclined to the enterprise, if it could be found in anywise feasible, craftily suggested that they should obtain the charts by which Columbus intended to sail, and, while keeping him in suspense, despatch a vessel over the course he designed to pursue. This base suggestion was carried out, and a caravel sailed westward into the Atlantic for several days, departing from the Cape de Verdes. A storm coming up, and nothing presenting but the blank expanse

COLUMBUS

of turbulent sea, the master and pilot lost heart and put about for the islands, whence they sent to Lisbon a positive assertion that the project was impossible of accomplishment. Even then King John might have assented to an experimental voyage on a larger scale, but Columbus indignantly broke off negotiations and departed from the country. His experience had prepared him for perfidy in dealing with the Latin peoples; but at the same time he could not condone it in one of elevated rank like the King of Portugal.

His dear wife had died; he had no ties connecting him with Portugal. Taking with him his motherless boy, now nine years of age, he left his adopted country; but whether he went directly to Spain, to Genoa, or to Venice is a matter somewhat in doubt. It is probable, however, that he sought an asylum in the country nearest, which was Spain, after despatching his noble brother Bartholomew on a mission to England, there to place his project before King Henry VII. Thus we see Columbus (as a gifted writer has said) begging his way from court to court, and vainly offering to kings and princes the gift of a world.

THE MAN WITH A WORLD IN HIS GIFT

We have already given our reasons for assuming that Columbus landed first in Spain at La Rábida, or Huelva. At the latter place, or at Moguer, a town a few miles inland from Huelva and Palos, resided a sister of his deceased wife, Señora Muliar, with whom, probably, little Diego was left while his father pursued his quest for patrons. This assumption does not conflict with the statement that the first definite information respecting Columbus in connection with the nobility of Spain traces him to the house of the rich and powerful Duke of Medina Celli, in the province of Cadiz. The vast estates of this great vassal of the crown lay along the coast of southern Spain, and his host of retainers formed a little army by themselves. He had served the sovereigns and himself most effectually in ridding Andalusia of the Moors, and when, after entertaining Columbus a while as an honored guest, he wrote to Queen Isabella recommending his visitor to her favor, she promptly replied, requesting that he be sent to her.

The court was then at Cordova, and thither went Columbus, bearing a letter from the Duke, in which it was stated that while that

COLUMBUS

noble greatly desired to equip some of his own caravels, and send out an expedition from his port of Santa Maria, near Cadiz, he was deterred, not only by the magnitude of the enterprise, but by the consideration that such a venture pertained only to the sovereign power. Should it be sent, however, he desired to participate in furnishing the armament, and placed his services for that purpose at the Queen's disposal. He closed by recommending Columbus to their Most Gracious Majesties, and bespeaking for him the regard and attention to which he was entitled on account of his magnificent proposals.

The Genoese adventurer was graciously received—not by the sovereigns, but by Alonzo de Quintanilla, the Queen's treasurer, into whose charge he was given while awaiting an audience at court. The time of his arrival was hardly propitious in one sense, though it might have been considered so in another. The combined sovereigns were on the high-road to a conquest which was the sequel to cumulative victories over the Moors. For nearly seven centuries the Moors, who had invaded Spain from Africa, possessed the greater part of Spain. They

THE MAN WITH A WORLD IN HIS GIFT

had erected mosques and palaces, conquered provinces, founded cities, and their language had become diffused throughout the land. Their invasion had been wide-spread in its conquests; but, after centuries of power in Spain, they were compelled to retire from the land their ancestors had won by the sword. The process of expulsion was slow, but relentlessly went on, until all the towns and cities of Spain outside Andalusia were wrested from the Moors, and the only strongholds then left to them lay in that region called by the Spaniards the "Land of the Most Holy Virgin."

Wave after wave, through decades and centuries, the armies of northern Spain had beaten against the Moorish outposts, coming down from the Asturias and the Pyrenees. When, by the union of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, the forces of greater Spain became united and invincible, the Moors were driven to their last strongholds of refuge in the mountains near and along the Mediterranean.

This was the situation at the time Columbus arrived at Cordova, in the year 1485 or 1486. The Spanish armies were gathering for the purpose of delivering that final, crushing

COLUMBUS

blow. Six years were to elapse before it came; but during all that time the Spanish sovereigns relaxed not their vigilance. They and their subjects were intent upon that great achievement solely: the deliverance of their country from the hated aliens from Africa. They had no thought, no time for any other enterprise, hence it was that Columbus waited at court during the greater part of seven years. As the most fascinating occurrences of that final period of warfare took place while he was dancing attendance upon the preoccupied sovereigns, he witnessed most, or all, of them. He saw the Moorish towns and cities fall before the triumphant Spaniards: Antequera, Alhama, Illora, Loxa, Malaga, ill-fated Zahara—until at last, in 1490-1491, only Granada and the Alhambra remained untaken.

King Ferdinand was in the field continually, and even the Queen took an active part in the various sieges, though most of the time she was doing her utmost to keep the armies supplied with troops and munitions from the headquarters at Cordova, which, indeed, was "like a military camp," filled with the bustle and tumult of warlike operations. The King is said to have looked

coldly upon the schemes of the obscure "navigator in the threadbare cloak"; but the Queen was far-seeing, and, sanguine of eventual success in their great undertaking, resolved to retain Columbus in Spain until the time should come when he might be of service. After a long period of delay, she ordered a consultation to be held under Fray Fernando de Talavera, prior of the monastery of Prado. From the very first interview with Columbus, he is said to have been bitterly opposed to him and his plans, and it is not strange that he and the learned men he assembled should have made an unfavorable report. This commission met in Cordova, where Columbus was leading an idle, restless existence, supported by the court, but chafing against the chains that held him there, while a world was waiting for him beyond the ocean. He made many friends during this period of enforced leisure, among them a lady belonging to a noble family, Doña Beatrix Enriquez, who the next year became the mother of his second son and biographer, Fernando.

The following winter the court removed to Salamanca, where, through the intercession of the Archbishop of Toledo, Grand

COLUMBUS

Cardinal of Spain, the King finally granted Columbus an interview. This is declared to have been his first presentation to Spanish royalty, despite his long attendance at the court; but he bore himself with dignity, and by his cogent reasoning and fiery enthusiasm almost persuaded the phlegmatic monarch to grant his request. But Ferdinand was cold and calculating, though keen and covetous. If, perchance, he perceived an opportunity to gain a great advantage over Spain's rival, Portugal, by striking directly across the ocean to India, and capturing the vast trade of the Orient, at the same time, he reasoned, the venture would be costly. The country was already impoverished by the prolonged wars with the Moors, whose richest cities yet remained to be taken. With the spoil he hoped to obtain from them he might be able to fit out the fleet desired by Columbus; at all events, the wisest course to pursue was procrastination.

A consultation of wise men cost nothing, meanwhile, and so another was called, this time at the famous old university of Salamanca. It met in the church of the Dominican convent of San Esteban, and, while the first junta was composed mainly of crown

THE MAN WITH A WORLD IN HIS GIFT

councillors and a few geographers, the second contained pious friars and professors from the faculty of the university. The monks and religious men generally of that time in Spain were the conservators of learning, filled the professors' chairs, and directed the mind as well as the conscience of the people. They were learned in the lore of their age, but they were dogmatic, narrow-minded, illiberal, and most of those before whom Columbus appeared, regarding him as an adventurer, were intensely prejudiced against him. "Because he was a foreigner," says the historian Oviedo, "and went but in simple apparel, nor otherwise credited than by the letter of a gray friar, they believed him not, neither gave ear to his words, whereby he was greatly tormented in his imagination."

Columbus believed the world to be a sphere, and while he erred in underestimating the size of it, he was in advance of his age in his general theories respecting the globe, on a portion of which man had dwelled so many thousand years in densest ignorance of what the other half contained. The objections raised by the monks to the advanced theories of Columbus may be

COLUMBUS

summed up in their citations from a revered religious writer: "Is there any one so foolish as to believe that there are *antipodes*, with their feet opposite to ours; people who walk with their heels upward and their heads hanging down? That there is a part of the world in which all things are topsyturvy; where the trees grow with their branches downward, and where the hail, rain, and snow fall upward?"

For a man to defend the theory of the earth's rotundity, and base his premise of New-World discovery upon it, was not only the height of absurdity, but was also (in the monks' opinion) heretical, and rendered its advocate liable to correction.



COLUMBUS DEMONSTRATING HIS THEORY OF THE EARTH'S ROTUNDITY

III

FROM PALACE TO MONASTERY

1488-1491

COLUMBUS was a deeply religious man, as zealous and as bigoted as any member of the fraternity. He could match the scriptural quotations which the brothers hurled at him with others equally convincing, but he could not overcome their scruples and their ignorance. He then stood, as he may have been aware, within the shadow of the terrible Inquisition, then so firmly established in Spain, and but for his powerful friends might have paid the penalty for his "heretical sentiments" with his life. Equally trivial with the objections already mentioned were all that were brought forth, as, for example, the contention of one ecclesiastic that St. Paul compared the heavens to a tent or tabernacle, hence, he argued, the earth must surely be flat, like the bottom of a tent. Even admitting, for the sake of

COLUMBUS

argument, that the earth were round, how in the name of reason, said one, could a ship that might gain the confines of India ever get back to Spain again? The rotundity of the globe "would present a sort of mountain, up which it would be impossible for her to sail, even with the most favorable wind."

In short, while the council was to some extent infected with his enthusiasm, its members were by no means convinced of the practicability of his scheme. The majority were inflexibly opposed; but as the consultation had been called mainly for the purpose of delaying Columbus at court, and preventing him from betaking himself to some other country, which might thereby reap a benefit which Ferdinand would like to obtain without incurring the attendant expense, no immediate decision was given. In fact, nearly or quite three years elapsed before a final answer was rendered the heart-sick seeker after royal support.

One man, and he, it is worthy of note, the professor of theology at the university, became a convert to the views presented by Columbus, and was henceforth his friend. Diego de Deza, who afterwards became

Archbishop of Seville, pressed his cause with vigor, and frequently assisted him from his purse, while following in the train of that wandering court. We next find him at Malaga, on the Mediterranean coast, whither he had been summoned by the sovereigns for a conference, which was prevented by the exigencies of that stormy and stubbornly contested siege. That year, 1487, was an eventful and perilous one in the lives of the sovereigns, for in the spring Ferdinand had been surprised and nearly captured by the wary old monarch of the Moors, and, while encamped before Malaga, an attempt had been made to assassinate both the King and the Queen. The assassin had sought them in Isabella's pavilion, a tent with silken walls, and by mistake had attacked two of their attendants, one of whom, the Marchioness of Moya, became interested in the suit of Columbus, and assisted in pressing it upon the Queen whenever occasion offered.

That Ferdinand and Isabella had Columbus occasionally in mind, and were not willing he should leave the country for another court, he was frequently reminded, but could on no occasion obtain from them anything but evasive answers to his pleadings. They

COLUMBUS

were stimulated to provide for his expenses and to grant him a sum of money in the nature of a retainer, in the spring of 1488, when, in answer to a letter he had written to King John II. of Portugal, Columbus received a cordial invitation to return, with a promise of immunity from "any suits of either a civil or criminal nature" that might then be pending against him. This refers to the report current at that time, that Columbus had fled from Portugal in debt, and with a prison yawning for his reception should he ever return. Another letter reached him about this time from King Henry VII. of England (to whom he had sent his brother Bartholomew at the time of his departure from Portugal) containing much matter of an encouraging nature and an invitation to his kingdom.

These communications from royal rivals in the race for supremacy caused the Spanish sovereigns to regard their guest with greater favor; but still there was the same delay in their answers to his importunities. A year later he was summoned to attend another conference of "wise men," this time in Seville, and an order was issued for his entertainment gratis while in that "city of

the golden tower." But another campaign was about to begin that year (for one was conducted annually, every spring), and, instead of waiting the pleasure of the monks, Columbus gladly followed in the train of the court to participate in the siege of Baza. There he conducted himself with great gallantry, it is recorded, and there he met two reverend friars, brethren from the convent at the holy sepulchre in Jerusalem, who had come with an insolent message from the Sultan of Egypt. It was to the effect that unless the Spanish sovereigns should desist from their wars against the Mohammedan Moors, he would destroy the sacred sepulchre and put to death every Christian in Jerusalem. This threat caused no commotion in the breasts of the sovereigns, who were inflexibly determined to root out every vestige of the Moorish population in Spain; but it roused the pious indignation of Columbus, who resolved to devote whatever profits should accrue from his discoveries to a crusade for the delivery of the holy tomb from the hands of the infidels. That he fervently desired to do this, and that he clung to this intention all his life, is shown by a clause in his last will and testament,

COLUMBUS

written shortly before his death, in which he adjures his son and heir to create a fund for that purpose in the bank of St. George at Genoa, "and let it multiply there until such time as it may appear to him that something of consequence may be effected as respects the project for the conquest of Jerusalem."

The siege of Baza was prolonged more than six months, but eventually it fell and the keys of the walled city were surrendered, together with the person of Muley Boabdil, one of the two rival kings of Granada. It was a most important capture, and was celebrated with great rejoicings, especially in Seville, whither the court (followed by the dejected Columbus) returned, but only to begin preparations for the marriage of the sovereigns' eldest daughter, Isabella, with Prince Alonzo, heir-apparent to the crown of Portugal. The vagrant Genoese was not altogether forgotten, for he was now attached to the royal suite and a stated sum allotted for his maintenance. Neither was he ignored, for the courtiers ridiculed him, and the children were taught to tap their foreheads when he passed, in token of his being regarded as a madman.

FROM PALACE TO MONASTERY

Spring and summer passed away; the winter of 1490-1491 found the sovereigns deep in their preparations for the final campaign against the Moors, now intrenched at Granada. One by one, as Ferdinand said, he had plucked the seeds from that "pomegranate" (the province of Granada), and now he would reach forth and grasp the fruit. Columbus knew this was to be a supreme endeavor to finally extirpate the Moors, and he had a tacit promise from the Queen that when the war was over she would be at liberty to engage in his enterprise. But he was weary from waiting, all those long years given to hanging upon the promises of royalty, of repeated rebuffs, of mingling with courtiers whom he despised and court fools whom he spurned. He insisted, at last, upon a definite answer to his solicitations, and he got it nearly four years after the conference at Salamanca had convened. It took those "wise men" a long time to decide that the project of Columbus was "vain and impracticable," and that it did not "become their highnesses to have anything to do with it." Or, rather, while they had probably come to this decision four years before, they had

COLUMBUS

taken their time to deliver themselves of this embodiment of ignorance and bigotry. They were represented by Fernando de Talavera, who was commanded to communicate the decision to Columbus, which he did without delay. Unwilling to accept it from the lips of his enemy Talavera, Columbus left Cordova, where he had been residing with Doña Enriquez and their son, anxiously waiting, and hastened to Seville. There he was told, directly by or from the sovereigns, that they could not aid him then, but that if he would wait until after the war was over—provided it ended in the way they hoped and believed—they might bestow their patronage upon him.

Evasion and subterfuge could suffice to detain their heaven-sent guest no longer. Filled with sorrow, indignation, and fruitless regret for all those wasted years of a life in its prime, Columbus turned his back upon court, and King, and Queen. He was now at liberty to leave a land in which he had fared so ill, and, having received encouraging letters from the kings of England, France, and Portugal, he was not altogether without hope or recourse. Leaving his son Fernando with his mother at Cordova, he

FROM PALACE TO MONASTERY

set out for Huelva, intending, it is thought, to abandon Spain forever, and lay siege to one of the monarchs mentioned; perchance he might obtain that justice which had been denied him in Spain.

It is supposed that his elder son Diego had remained, through those eventless years, with his aunt in Moguer, as in journeying to the point at which we shall next discover Columbus, either from Seville or Cordova, he would be likely to take that town on his way. For, whether he visited La Rábida or not, when he first set foot in Spain (as mentioned in the first chapter) he certainly arrived there soon after he had come to the determination to quit the country. Moguer is about a league from La Rábida, of which historic Palos, midway the distance, was its port. The fact is that Palos itself is half a mile or more from the Rio Tinto, and, though it may have been a port in the time of Columbus, is not now entitled to that distinction. The road between the two places winds between carefully-kept vineyards, over the slopes of low-lying hills, thence passing through the straggling street of white-walled Palos, which to-day is lifeless, and, but for its historic associations with

COLUMBUS

Columbus and the first great voyage to America, would be unattractive. Soon after leaving Palos you feel the ocean breezes and gain a distant glimpse of the sea. The scenery is now sombre and sad, the fields devoid of vegetation, except for the remains of a forest adorning the summit of a hill, climbing the landward slope of which the pilgrim to this shrine of times Columbian reaches a small plateau. On the seaward verge of this plateau stands the monastery of La Rábida, with massive white walls, red-tiled roofs, and central cupola. There are two entrances to this building, but it was at the arched gateway at the right, which leads directly into the reception-hall of the monastery, that Columbus and his son Diego paused to crave refreshment, near the close of an autumn day in 1491.

More than four hundred years have passed since these two climbed the hill-path leading to the portal of La Rábida, yet what young reader of these lines would not sympathize with those weary travellers who halted here to beg a bit of bread and cup of water? Hand-in-hand, rejoined after a separation of nearly seven years, father and son had fared forth to seek a foreign land. What those

FROM PALACE TO MONASTERY

years had brought to Columbus, we know: weariness of heart, disappointed hopes; but what they had meant to the motherless lad, who had been left all that time without a father's protecting care and love, who can tell? His mother's sister may have been kind to him; but we know nothing more of her than merely her name. It is left to conjecture, in what manner the youth of Diego Columbus was passed. He only emerges from obscurity now and then, first as the companion of his father in his flight from Portugal; again as he purposes to seek another foreign shore, this time, probably, that of France. After his father's death, in 1506, he succeeded to his titles and honors (though he obtained them only after long litigation with the crown), and died while in the prime of life.

But we see them now, once more united, standing at the gateway of La Rábida, and (though they knew it not) at the parting of the ways. Columbus had come, as it were by chance, to the one man who was to secure for him his long-deferred reward. As father and son stood talking with the porter, they attracted the attention of the prior of the monastery, worthy Juan Perez

COLUMBUS

de Marchena. Despite his humble garb and air of dejection, Columbus could never be anything but noble of bearing, and, struck by his dignified appearance, the prior entered into conversation with him. Then, finding him learned and more than ordinarily interesting, he invited him in to tarry a while. A fire was kindled in the great reception-room, and, as the flames leaped up the huge chimney-throat, the stranger told his story of wearisome waiting, long-cherished hopes, and finally of crushing defeat.

Now, it happened that Juan Perez de Marchena had once been the religious adviser and close friend of the Queen. He had retired to the monastery for the purpose of leading a life more in accord with his desire for quiet and meditation than the bustle of a court afforded him. But he still retained the loving regard of Isabella the Queen, who knew his heart of gold and who highly valued his advice.

His interest was aroused, his eye kindled, his heart warmed as Columbus unfolded his story, broached his theories, and developed his schemes in all their grandeur. Knowing the sailor-folk of Palos and the coast, aware of what had been done by voyagers hitherto,

FROM PALACE TO MONASTERY

Friar Marchena was alive to all the possibilities that lay in this grand project, and he also realized what a glorious opportunity would be lost to Spain if Columbus were allowed to carry it to France or England. He sent for his physician, Garcia Fernandez, and also for an authority on matters maritime, Martin Alonzo Pinzon, and these three held a conference that lasted all night long in the great, square room that overlooks the Rio Tinto.

Reader, you may see it to-day, the "Columbus Room" of La Rábida, with its floor of earthen tiles and ceiling of cedar; may sit at the massive table around which gathered those great men who were actually sponsors for the birth of America; for it is still intact in the monastery, which has been restored, and is preserved as a sacred relic by the Spanish nation. Here, in this obscure corner of Spain, Columbus found men who could appreciate the magnitude of his ideas, who were ready to embark with him on the voyage of discovery. Supported by the views of a scientist like Doctor Fernandez, and backed by the wealthy mariner and ship-owner Martin Alonzo Pinzon, the good prior hesitated no longer in sending to Isabella a

COLUMBUS

plea for Columbus. Fourteen days later the messenger returned with the thanks of the Queen, and a request for the prior to honor her with his immediate presence. That very night Juan Perez mounted his mule and started for Granada, where the sovereigns were then encamped. His heart and soul were in this enterprise, and he prevailed upon Isabella to order the return of Columbus to her court, after an impressive interview, in which he won her completely by his eloquence.

IV

HOW COLUMBUS BECAME AN ADMIRAL

1491

DURING the absence of Prior Marchena, Columbus and his boy wandered through the cool corridors of the monastery, walked meditatively along the shore at the foot of the hill, or visited Palos and Moguer, where they found sea-folk in plenty to tell them of strange voyages. They were frequent guests of Captain Pinzon, who lived in Moguer, and whose descendants still occupy the ancestral residence. He promised to furnish a vessel, or vessels, for the voyage, and to bear a portion of the expenses, which promise Columbus had in mind when, later, he made himself responsible for an eighth part of the expedition's cost.

When the royal order came for Columbus to attend the Queen at Granada, it was accompanied by a remittance of twenty thousand *maravedis*, or about two hundred and

COLUMBUS

sixteen dollars, to defray the expenses of the journey, and for fit apparel in which to appear at court. The distance from La Rábida is nearly two hundred miles, and, as there were no railroads or stage-coaches running in those days, Columbus purchased a mule, upon which he rode all the way, arriving just in time to witness the fall of Granada.

The Spanish army of investment had arrived in the *vega*, or plain, of Granada, in April, 1491. It was fifty thousand strong, and took a strategic position on the present site of Santa Fé, a city which was practically founded by the establishment of the fortified camp. There, within sight of the great mosque of the Moslems, in Granada, and within sound of the *muezzin's* call to prayer, the Spanish sovereigns had sat down before the last refuge of the Moors in Spain.

In due time Columbus arrived in camp and stood at the entrance to Isabella's silken tent. He had left her at Seville, the year before, disgusted and disheartened, but now was back again at the instance of Isabella herself, who had yielded to the solicitations of her old confessor. But, while she was moved by the pleadings of her former adviser

HOW COLUMBUS BECAME ADMIRAL

in spiritual matters to the extent of inviting the navigator back for another conference, she was overborne by her new confessor, Talavera, Archbishop of Granada. He was offended by the exorbitant demands of this needy navigator, who had returned as persistent and as confident as ever, stipulating in advance for ships, caravels, sailors, munitions, and articles for barter. He would be made "Admiral of the Ocean Sea" and viceroy over the regions he was yet to discover. He demanded the privilege of retaining one-tenth their revenues, and that he and his posterity should be considered among the aristocracy of the proudest nation on earth.

This "castle in Spain," which he had built many years before and still inhabited, came tumbling down about his ears when Talavera made his report. In a word, it was similar to that he had made before, only in this instance he was more pronounced in his condemnation of the penniless stranger who advanced such pretensions. He treated the proposition with ridicule; Isabella sadly rejected the terms Columbus offered, and once again he departed from her presence, this time firmly resolved to abandon Spain forever.

COLUMBUS

While La Rábida may be called the "corner-stone of American history," there is a bridge about two leagues from Santa Fé which, in a sense, may be said to connect the New World with the Old. It is the "Bridge of Pines," which, with a gateway and a turret, spans a stream on two high arches. This point had been reached by Columbus, on his return journey to La Rábida, when he was overtaken by a messenger from the Queen. She had changed her mind, he was informed, and this time, if he would condescend to return, would consent even to the terms he had dictated.

This change had been wrought, it was asserted, by the entreaties, even reproaches, of the King's receiver of the revenues in Aragon, Luis de San Angel, and the Queen's comptroller, Quintanilla, who had ever been friendly to Columbus. They represented that it was absurd to hesitate at the cost of an enterprise, the gain attending which might be incalculable, and the glory, to her nation and her Church, beyond all price. Throughout these various transactions the Queen has been represented, by some historians, as generous and enthusiastic; her husband Ferdinand, on the contrary, cold,

HOW COLUMBUS BECAME ADMIRAL

calculating, distrustful, and opposed to all dealings with Columbus. At the crucial moment even, Isabella, in the first flush of her enthusiasm, is said to have exclaimed: "I undertake this enterprise for my own crown of Castile, and will pledge my jewels for the necessary funds." But the cold facts of history have long since proved that her jewels were already pledged, to aid in furnishing the "sinews of war" for the siege of Granada, and that it was Ferdinand's treasurer, and not Isabella's, who advanced the money furnished for the enterprise by the crown. Seventeen thousand florins were advanced by San Angel, on account, from the revenues of Aragon, and were reimbursed in part by the first gold brought by Columbus from America. The Queen, however, was the life of the enterprise; upon her decision turned the scale which had been so long poised in suspense, and she ever after afforded her protégé both pecuniary and moral support.

Columbus was dubious about returning to Santa Fé, even after the assurances of the messenger that there was no doubt of a full acceptance of his terms; but he finally turned about, at the Bridge of Pines, and

COLUMBUS

soon found himself in the august presence of the Queen, whose graciousness went far to atone for his years of suffering and neglect.

By arriving at Granada in January, 1492, the very month in which that city capitulated, Columbus had witnessed the surrender of unfortunate Boabdil, last King of the Moors in Spain, and was privileged to enter with the sovereigns the glorious Alhambra, that beautiful castle-palace containing the highest expression of Oriental art and architecture. It was about the beginning of February that the Queen's messenger overtook him at the bridge, and on April 17th a formal agreement with Columbus was signed by Ferdinand and Isabella, in which all the privileges he had demanded were conceded. As stated in that paper:

(1) He was appointed Admiral of the Ocean Sea, with the same rights, honors and favors as were enjoyed by the Lord Admiral of Castile. This office to be held by himself during life, and by his heirs and successors forever, "in all the lands and continents which he might discover and acquire in the ocean."

(2) He should be viceroy and governor-general over all the said lands and continents, with power to appoint all officers for their government.

(3) He should be entitled to one-tenth of

HOW COLUMBUS BECAME ADMIRAL

everything said lands produced, as gold, precious stones, spices, and of all gains from barter and trade.

(4) That by contributing one-eighth part of the expenses of the expedition, he should receive one-eighth the profits, in addition to the tenth already stipulated.

Twenty years had elapsed since he conceived the project of sailing westward in search of the Indies, and he was fifty-six years of age at the time these concessions were granted him by the crown; but at last he found himself on the road to receive his great reward. He had endured poverty, contumely, neglect, had suffered much and long; but never for a moment had he abated his pretensions a particle. Possessed of a grand idea, he had remained true to it—and to himself.

While the issue of the voyage was pending, Columbus resided awhile in the Alhambra—that glorious palace above Granada built by the ancient Moors—where he gloomily paced its corridors or gazed abstractedly upon the entrancing views outspread before him from its portals. The memorable interview between him and his sovereigns, at which the foregoing “capitulations” were signed by the high contracting parties, took

place, according to tradition, in the peerless "Hall of Justice," which bounds one side of the famous "Lions' Court," and is a dream of beauty. Here, also, he took leave of Isabella and Ferdinand, and, crowned at last with success, departed for the port of Palos, invested with the full rights and privileges which for years he had been so anxious to obtain.

In his journal, written on the voyage, he says:

"After your Highnesses had put an end to the war with the Moors who ruled in Europe, and had concluded that warfare in the great city of Granada, on the second of January of this present year (1492), I saw the royal banners of your Highnesses placed by force of arms on the towers of the Alhambra, which is the fortress of that city, and beheld the Moorish King sally forth from the gates of the city and kiss the royal hands of your Highnesses and of my lord the Prince. . . . I departed from the city of Granada on Saturday the twelfth of May, of the same year, 1492, to Palos, a seaport, where I armed three ships, well calculated for such service, and sailed from that port, well furnished with provisions and many seamen, on Friday the third of August."

A little more than two months after King Boabdil had surrendered to the Spanish

HOW COLUMBUS BECAME ADMIRAL

sovereigns, they had affixed the royal sign-manual to that paper confirming Columbus to title and interests in an undiscovered country beyond the unknown sea. The star of the hapless Moors in Spain had set forever, as that of America rose on the horizon. The year that witnessed the star of Spain in the ascendant was the birth-year of history and civilization for our continent. On the banks of the river Xenil, a commemorative chapel marks the spot made famous by the surrender of the Moorish King, and in the cathedral of Granada are the alabaster tombs of the dread sovereigns who thrust him into obscurity and at the same time sent forth Columbus on his voyage of discovery.

Having visited with Columbus the scenes identified with the dawn of discovery in America, let us now accompany him to Palos and La Rábida, whither he went about the middle of May, armed with royal orders and clothed with authority to enforce them. After passing the night at the monastery (where, we may be sure, neither he nor Fray Marchena spent much time in sleep, having so many things to talk about), he betook himself to the church of St. George, on the following morning. Here the town au-

COLUMBUS

thorities were assembled, the *alcalde* and *regidor*, together with many of the chief inhabitants, and in their presence the royal orders were read. The port of Palos had become indebted to the crown in some manner, and was condemned to serve it for a year with two armed caravels. To this extent the town was commanded to serve Columbus instead and the debt would be considered liquidated. Two caravels, or small sailing-vessels, were to be placed at his disposal within ten days, together with their crews, to go whither he desired. The authorities heard the mandate, and assented to the terms by which they were to be freed from their obligations; but when the people learned the nature of the voyage upon which they were called to serve by compulsion, the place was in an uproar instantly.

Palos, to-day, consists of a few mean houses scattered along a hill-side and one long street which wanders aimlessly from nowhere to nowhere. It has a branch leading to the Rio Tinto, where in ancient days there was a port, but this is only used by fishermen.

But Palos, in 1492, was the residence of hardy mariners who had voyaged to every

known part of the world. They were ready for any kind of sea-venture—except this one proposed by Columbus. Where any sailor had once been, there they were ready to go; but they were terrified at the thought of sailing on and on into the untraversed seas. They refused, to a man, and also their neighbors over at Moguer, so force was used—moral as well as physical—to compel these rebellious subjects of the sovereigns to sail with Columbus. For this reason—inasmuch as many of the men finally sailed in order to escape arrest for crimes they had committed, having been promised immunity by the King—the crews Columbus took along were not altogether made up of reputable citizens. Even these were obtained only through the good offices of the Pinzon brothers, the wealthy ship-owners of Moguer. Had it not been for their active co-operation, the scheme of Columbus might have fallen to the ground. They were the leading men of Moguer and of Palos, its port; they were rich, honorable, reliable, and the simple sailor-folk believed in them implicitly. As for Columbus, they looked upon him merely as a foreign adventurer who had wheedled their sovereigns into a chimerical expedition which was to

COLUMBUS

cost them little and the chief adventurer nothing but his reputation. It cost him nothing, for he had nothing. For the clothes he wore, the shoes he stood in, Columbus was indebted to the bounty of the Queen. How, then, could he promise to furnish and equip one of the caravels and bear an eighth part of the expenses? Because, in a word, he relied upon the rich and influential Martin Alonzo Pinzon, who nobly redeemed his pledge, given in their first conversation at the monastery, that he would supply whatever was lacking in equipment. He and his brothers entered with enthusiasm into the scheme of Columbus, accepting it as a risky, but possibly profitable, commercial venture. They were influential in securing the vessels, prevailed upon their neighbors and relatives to enlist in the enterprise by their own example, furnishing one caravel, and bearing one eighth the entire expenses.

Three vessels were comprised in the fleet finally assembled at Palos, the largest of which was the *Santa Maria*, of about one hundred tons burden, armed with four lombards, or small cannon, while the two smaller were merely great boats without decks amid-

HOW COLUMBUS BECAME ADMIRAL

ship, but with cabins, or "castles," in the prow and stern. They were provisioned for six months, and after the stores were aboard there was little room to spare for the ninety mariners, thirty officials and private adventurers, one hundred and twenty in all. Of the grand total, the *Santa Maria* probably carried a complement of seventy, the *Pinta*, which was next in size, thirty, and the *Niña* only twenty.

In 1892, the governments of Spain and the United States co-operated in reproducing the fleet of Columbus in facsimile, and on October 12th, that year, the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of land in the Bahamas, the three craft were gathered in the waters whence the originals sailed, August 3, 1492. There they were visited by thousands, including the Queen-regent of Spain, and in February following sailed for America over the historic course pursued by Columbus. They participated in a grand naval review at New York, and were afterwards taken to Chicago, where, anchored offshore at Jackson Park, they formed an instructive and interesting exhibit at the great World's Columbian Exposition of 1893.

V

THE "GAP IN THE GLOBE"

1492

MORE than two months elapsed before the fleet furnished Columbus was pronounced ready for sea, owing to the obstacles interposed by the owners of the two vessels that had been impressed; but finally the three craft dropped down the Tinto to the Domingo Rubio, at the foot of monastery hill, where they were careened and overhauled. Here Columbus took in the last of his sea-stores, here the tardy mariners were gathered together and embarked, and here the sorrowing crews bade final farewell to their friends and relatives, whom they never expected to meet again on earth.

The visitor to Palos may find still standing there the quaint old church of St. George, in the porch of which the royal proclamation was read, and where the register may be seen containing the names

THE "GAP IN THE GLOBE"

of the sailors who received communion just preceding their departure. This church was occasionally attended by Columbus while awaiting the outfitting of his fleet; but he oftener worshipped in the chapel at the monastery, where he passed in prayer the greater portion of the night before he sailed.

At sunrise of Friday, August 3, 1492, Columbus took his departure from the bar of Saltes, in the estuary between Huelva and La Rábida, and soon after, in the freshening breeze of early morning, the vessels were wafted along their course. Steering southwesterly, for the Canary Islands, they were not long in leaving the coast of Spain in their wake, and then the crews gave themselves up to grief and despondency. Though they had humbly and devoutly received the blessing of Fray Marchena, as he pronounced a benediction from the strand, those who had been impressed were filled with sullen anger, and all were gloomy from having set sail on a Friday. In this connection, the superstitiously inclined may be interested to note that Columbus not only sailed on a Friday, but he and the sovereigns signed their contract on Friday; he discovered land on Friday, set sail homeward on Friday, and

COLUMBUS

finally reached Palos again on that same day of ill omen!

Most of the men on board the fleet were old acquaintances and neighbors, many were related to one another, and Columbus himself was perhaps conspicuous from having no intimate friend or relative in the company. Both his sons had been left in Spain—Ferdinand with his mother, at Cordova, and Diego in care of the Queen, who had taken him as page to her son, Prince Juan. But for the fact that the enterprise had its birth in the brain of Columbus, it might well have been called a Pinzon expedition, for the *Pinta* was commanded by Martin Alonzo, who had with him as steersman his brother Francisco, and the *Niña* by another brother, Vicente Yañez, who afterwards became famous on account of discoveries he made in America. We have seen what the Pinzons did in the matter of fitting out the fleet; and as they were expert navigators, looked up to and respected by all, it is not strange that, in the estimation of the sailors, Columbus should have suffered by comparison.

Still, Christopher Columbus was Admiral of the fleet, and all were compelled to obey him, even the veteran Martin Alonzo, com-

THE "GAP IN THE GLOBE"

mander of the *Pinta*. He displayed his skill as navigator almost at the outset, when, the rudder of his caravel having broken loose (it was supposed through the connivance of the owners, who wished to prevent it from sailing on the voyage), he secured it temporarily with ropes, thus maintaining steeringway until the Canaries were reached. The rudder became unshipped on the third day out, and as the islands were not sighted until the ninth, the other vessels were compelled to shorten sail in order to keep him company.

After cruising among the Canaries for nearly three weeks, seeking in vain to replace the *Pinta* with another vessel, Columbus was obliged to cause a new rudder to be made and shipped. At the same time he changed the *Niña* from lateen to square rig, so that she might sail more steadily and swiftly. He provisioned his ships, and took in wood and water at the island of Gomera, which lies twenty miles southwest of Tenerife, and on September 6th tried to take his departure. He was stimulated to sail at once, on account of rumors reaching him of Portuguese caravels hovering in the offing, probably for the purpose of his detention or capture. Three days of calm, however, held

COLUMBUS

the impatient voyagers within sight of land, and it was not until sunset of the 9th that the last outpost of the Canaries, diminutive Ferro, sank, as it were, beneath the surface of the ocean.

And now, having seen Columbus and his little company of timorous seamen actually ventured on the Sea of Darkness, shall we not improve the occasion, while they are eventlessly voyaging, to obtain a closer acquaintance with the Admiral, as he stands on the castle of his flag-ship, the *Santa Maria*? The man himself should be interesting, as well as his aims and his equipment for the great adventure. As to his personal appearance, wrote Las Casas, who knew him well and intimately, "he was tall, rather than medium-sized. His face was long and commanding, his nose aquiline, eyes light (bluish gray), and complexion fair, tending to ruddy. The beard and hair, when he was a young man, were fair, but very soon turned white on account of his many toils. Finally, in his person and venerable aspect, he presented the appearance of one of high position and authority, worthy of all reverence." Oviedo, the historian, who also knew him, and Ferdinand Columbus, his son, give descrip-

THE "GAP IN THE GLOBE"

tions agreeing with Las Casas's in the main, so that we shall have a very fair conception of his looks from these verbal portraits, even though it cannot be affirmed that any authentic picture of him exists that was painted from life.

We know (for the matter has been thrashed out a thousand times) that Columbus started out with the preconceived idea of a "terraqeous globe," which might be traversed from east to west, and that there were antipodes. Improving somewhat upon the chart that Paolo Toscanelli had sent him, he yet made the distance separating the great continents much less than it really was, and herein lay an error fortunate for himself and for the world. He assumed that the circumference of the globe at the equator might be divided into three hundred and sixty degrees, or twenty-four hours of fifteen degrees each. Two-thirds of these "hours" were already comprised in the world then known, leaving (as he reasoned) only eight hours, or one-third the distance round the world, to be traversed. Toscanelli's map represented the earth much smaller than it really was, and carried the east coast of Asia so far over towards the

COLUMBUS

west coast of Africa that the intervening ocean seemed very easy to cross. Scattered over its surface, also, were islands conveniently placed for tarrying - places, such as Antilla and Cipango. Columbus was constantly looking for these islands, and throughout his voyages confidently expected to find the "Grand Khan" of Cathay, to whom he carried a letter from Ferdinand and Isabella, as follows:

"The Spanish sovereigns have heard that you and your subjects have great affection for them and for Spain. They are further aware that you and your subjects are desirous of information respecting Spain. They, therefore, cordially send their Grand Admiral, Christopher Columbus, who will tell you that they are in good health and perfect prosperity.

"I, the King.

"I, the Queen."

That letter was never delivered, and the Grand Khan was never discovered, though Columbus sought for him in every island he visited. Neither did he find Cipango (which is supposed to have been Japan, while Cathay was meant for China), for a continent and another ocean intervened between him and the lands of which he had dreamed so many, many years.

THE "GAP IN THE GLOBE"

There are many memorials of Columbus in Spain, including the places we have mentioned; his armor is in the royal armory, and one of his charts in the naval museum of Madrid; but the most interesting relics are to be found at Seville. In that city is the Columbian library of twenty thousand volumes, bequeathed by Ferdinand Columbus, in which are several books that once belonged to the Admiral, some with marginal notes in his own hand. Could we but have peeped into the diminutive cabin of the *Santa Maria*, we should probably have found some of these same books in the little library Columbus carried with him on that first voyage across the Atlantic. His favorite volume seems to have been Marco Polo's book of adventures, published in Latin, at Antwerp, 1485, for it has many marginal notes made by him, as also has another volume, the *Theologia*, published in Venice, 1489. A Latin edition of Ptolemy's geography, edition of 1475 (which contains a map of Greenland) was well thumbed by Columbus; and another book, called the *Imago Mundi*, or *Image of the World*, was taken with him on the first voyage and richly adorned with notes in the margins. Further, a volume

COLUMBUS

which furnished him plausible arguments to sustain his theory of a western passage to the Indies is the *Historia Rerum Ubique Gestarum*, which contains on a fly-leaf his own transcription of the letter he received from Paolo Toscanelli in 1474.

These books alone constitute a very good library for a mariner of that period, four hundred years ago, and that they were earnestly studied and thoroughly digested is shown by the notes we have referred to. They absorbed his waking hours, when he was not on deck scanning the horizon for signs of something to vary the monotony of the boundless sea.

Besides his books, the Admiral carried, of course, the crude nautical instruments of his time, a compass and an astrolabe, by which he determined his latitude; but he could only guess at his longitude, and he measured time by an hour-glass. "It has been said that he probably had no means for accurately calculating the speed of his vessels, as there is no mention of the log-and-line before 1519; and as to the telescope, it was first used nearly a century later. Having such a slight equipment, the sailors of that day of course were very timid about vent-

THE "GAP IN THE GLOBE"

uring far from land." This will account for their terror at finding themselves for the first time sailing into the immensity of watery space, until then never cleft by keel of any kind. In order to keep his men in ignorance of the distance run each day, the crafty yet simple Columbus made two reckonings, one of which, the longer, he kept secret, while the shorter alone was open to inspection by the crews. This silly stratagem deceived none but the simplest of the sailors, and did not prevent them from breaking out into frequent lamentations over the constantly increasing distance that separated them from home, from friends, and native land.

"The task that Columbus set himself, and which he was now carrying out, was simply to go to the Canary Islands, in about latitude 28° north, and sail due west until he struck land." Towards the last of the voyage he was diverted from his course somewhat by taking the advice of his pilots, and by the flights of birds to the southward, else he might have landed on the coast of our own Florida, not far south of St. Augustine, and thus have anticipated its discovery by Ponce de Leon twenty years.

COLUMBUS

It seems a simple thing, to sail westward merely, day after day, and now that the voyage has been a thousand times accomplished, the wonder is, not that Columbus ventured it, but that it had not been done centuries before. "But," said a noted writer, "when I think of Columbus in his little bark, his only instruments an imperfect compass and a rude astrolabe, sailing forth upon an unknown sea, I must award him the credit of being the boldest seaman that ever sailed the salt ocean!" It was an easy thing to do after one had shown the way, as Columbus proved to the courtier when he stood the egg on end.

After many days sailing, always with a fair wind after them, and no opposing gales or currents, the crews began to think it would not be so easy to get back again, up the incline of that "watery hill." Having seen a floating spar or mast, the relic of some wrecked vessel, after land had been lost to sight two days, their fears were greatly excited, and they were thrown into a panic, by the variation of the compass. This was the first of the discoveries Columbus made before he discovered land, and it disturbed him greatly to find, when about eight hundred miles

THE "GAP IN THE GLOBE"

from Ferro, that the needle no longer pointed directly to the north star. He tried to keep this discovery to himself, but the pilots soon noticed it, and he was forced to invent an explanation. It was a plausible and at the same time nearly accurate one; for Columbus was learned in nautical astronomy, and a little ahead of his companions, who soothed themselves with his theory, but again became agitated over the prevalence of the winds from one point of the compass. This has been called the second preliminary discovery of Columbus (though it was the third): that of the trade-winds, steadily blowing from the east and north-east, and which increased the farther the vessels went to the westward and southward.

Excepting for the slight accident to the *Pinta*, the entire voyage seems to have been a combination of fortunate and favorable events. From the time land was lost sight of at Ferro, until land was discovered in the Bahamas, nature interposed no obstacle to baffle the plans of Columbus, and he had only his wretched and timorous crews to deal with. They were enough, it is true, to tax the resources of a mind more active

COLUMBUS

than that of Columbus and incense a nature far nobler; but he bore with them patiently, in his heart believing they were assisting him to achieve immortal fame. His nature, like his ideals, was lofty; but his temper was by no means of the best, and sometimes burst forth explosively. Not often, though, and not on that first voyage, for he was supported then by his trust in a favorable outcome for his hazardous venture.

During the first four weeks at sea there were absolutely no tokens of land save a few birds. On September 14th some of the sailors saw a tropic bird (which flies swiftly and far out at sea), and on the 20th they were cheered by the arrival in the rigging of their ships of some singing-birds, which they welcomed as sure tokens that land was near. These small birds, however, were probably migrant warblers which, as we of this later day know well, are capable of performing long journeys on the wing, and which are sometimes blown hundreds of miles from land.

On, on they went, scarcely shifting sail in weeks, the very steadiness of the wind and the tranquillity of the sea causing perturba-

THE "GAP IN THE GLOBE"

tion in their bosoms, and thus voyaging they sailed into their third discovery, the sluggish waters of the great Sargasso Sea, with its weed-strewn expanse in the vortex of variable winds.

VI

WHERE IS SAN SALVADOR?

1492

ANY one who has had the misfortune to be caught on board a sailing-ship in the so-called "horse latitudes" of the North Atlantic can understand the dismay and perplexity of the first sailors who entered that region of calms and baffling winds. As it very nearly coincided with the Sargasso, or (speaking literally) the Ocean of Sea-grapes, in which their course was impeded by the vast beds of weeds torn from the bottom of the sea, they imagined the water must be shallow and reef-strewn. Columbus dispelled this illusion by sounding with a deep-sea line, and, finding no bottom, was somewhat surprised, for he had imagined they might be sailing over the vestiges of the "lost Atlantis," which, according to his chart, should have been in that region. The matted masses of sea-weed were so

WHERE IS SAN SALVADOR?

dense that the caravels were held almost immovable at times, and then the crews conjured up the spectre of perpetual imprisonment there, and again gave way to their dismal fears. As for several days the little wind that blew came from the westward, they insisted that this was their opportunity for standing about for Spain and home; for they surely had complied with every obligation, and could not be expected to sail on westward forever! They never came to open mutiny, as some historians have stated, but they reached a point most dangerously near it. The Admiral used every sort of argument he could summon to his aid, entreating some, appealing to the pride of others, and to the avarice of all. But he ever remained serene, inflexible, unmoved by argument or entreaty. It might be, as they urged, that their provisions, water, and wine, would soon become exhausted, and they would starve or perish of thirst; but westward they would continue to sail until land was discovered and the object of the voyage accomplished.

Throughout his trials at sea, Columbus was supported by the Pinzons, with whom he was in almost daily converse, the seas

COLUMBUS

were so calm and the breezes so light. They interchanged observations on the weather, their latitude and longitude, and every phenomenon they had observed. One day, September 25th, they brought their vessels near together and a chart was thrown from the *Pinta* to the *Santa Maria*, in order that Columbus might verify the surmise of Martin Alonzo that they were in the vicinity of Cipango. While he and his chief pilot were poring over the chart, they heard a glad cry from the *Pinta*: "*Tierra oho!* (land in sight!)" and, looking in the direction pointed out by Captain Pinzon, saw in the distance what seemed, indeed, to be the object of their search. That was in the evening-time, however, and by morning the supposed "land" had dissolved into a cloud-bank and vanished. Columbus felt so certain that it was Cipango which had loomed upon the horizon that he gave thanks to the Almighty, while Martin Alonzo and his crew chanted the hymn beginning, "Glory be to God on high."

This apparition having appeared in the southwest, the course of the vessels was shaped in that direction during the night, but changed again to westerly, after its true

WHERE IS SAN SALVADOR?

nature was revealed. They stood on this course nearly two weeks more, but on October 7th, after having been a month at sea, it was altered to west-southwest. Increasing signs of land were seen during the three days following, such as floating herbage, birds in full song, a green rock-fish, and a branch of thorn-bush with red berries on it. This last was an indubitable token of land's vicinity, another, absolutely unmistakable, being a piece of wood, a cane or staff, artificially carved, which was picked up as it drifted past a caravel.

Even the most despondent felt they were on the verge of a great discovery. Some great event was pending, all were sure, and on the night of October 11th very few, if any, of the crew closed their eyes in sleep. They were stimulated to wakefulness and watchfulness by a reward Columbus offered, in addition to the pension promised by the sovereigns, to him who should first discover land. The Admiral himself was the first to claim the pension, and obtain it, for that night, as he was keeping his customary vigil on the high castle of his ship, he observed a light gleam on the dim horizon. Fearful lest he might be the victim of deception, he

COLUMBUS

called a royal official, one Pedro Gutierrez, who also saw the light wavering above the waters, as if a torch borne by some one on shore, or in a canoe tossed by the waves. Another official was called, but by the time he had reached the post of observation the light had disappeared. It was seen no more; but about four hours later, or at two hours after midnight on the morning of the 12th, a gun boomed forth from the *Pinta*. As the fastest vessel of the fleet, she had forged ahead of the flag-ship, and one of her crew, a common sailor named Rodrigo de Triana, being on watch, was the favored one to first see land.

We cannot refrain in passing from pausing a moment in our narrative to make mention of the fact that, although Rodrigo was admittedly the very first to view the promised land, afterwards known as America, he reaped no advantage from it, as the reward was given to Columbus, on account of the light he claimed to have seen in the night. Poor Rodrigo felt himself cheated, mistreated and when, after the arrival in Spain on the return voyage, Columbus was not only awarded the pension, but *took* it, he renounced his religion, went over to Africa, and became a Mohammedan.

WHERE IS SAN SALVADOR?

For the time being, however, Rodrigo de Triana was the hero of the hour, and divided with the Admiral the honors of discovery. He then sank out of sight, only to reappear as an apostate, self-expatriated on account of an unworthy act of his commander.

As morning dawned, on Friday, October 12, 1492, the cry, "*Tierra oho!*" was fully verified. There it lay, a fair stretch of glistening sands, with verdurous background, and white-fanged coral reefs dividing the intervening sea. Any land is welcome and attractive to a seafarer after long voyaging, and the picture presented to the eyes of those Spanish sailors that morning, though not strikingly beautiful, was most pleasing. It is doubtful, however, if Columbus cared whether the landscape were pleasing or otherwise, so absorbed was he in speculation as to what the land contained. Was he to behold fair temples and great palaces, populous cities and teeming marts of commerce? Would he, straightway, present his credentials to the Grand Khan, and be received at court with all the honors due him as the discoverer of a new route from Europe to the Indies? Slowly passed the hours between

COLUMBUS

the moment of discovery and dawn, while the little craft, having reefed their sails and cast anchor, rolled lazily on the surface of the seas that came in from the ocean and sprayed the coral reefs with foam.

The eminently good-fortune that had attended the voyage hitherto stood by Columbus to the last, for, if he had known the coast and chosen his landfall, he could not have found a spot better favored than this. The island (as it afterwards proved to be) was reef-surrounded, but with openings affording passages for boats, while the barriers erected by the coral insects broke the force of the waves that came thundering in from the Atlantic, so that the waters within were as smooth as a pond.

Many descriptions have been written of this first landing in America, but none has been given clearer than that of Columbus himself, and this shall be our excuse for quoting it, as transcribed by Las Casas from the famous *Diary of Colon*, which was rediscovered in Spain in 1825: "Two hours after midnight the land appeared, about two leagues off. They lowered all the sails and lay to until morning, when they saw a small island of the Lucayos, called *Guanahani* by



THE LANDING AT GUANAHANI

WHERE IS SAN SALVADOR?

the natives. They soon saw people naked, and the Admiral went on shore in the armed boat, also Martin Alonzo and Vicente Yañez Pinzon, commanders of the *Pinta* and the *Niña*. The Admiral took the royal standard, and the two captains the two banners of the green cross, having an 'F' and a 'Y' [for Ferdinand and Ysabella] at each arm of said cross, surmounted by a crown. As soon as they landed, they saw trees of a brilliant green, abundance of water, and fruits of various kinds. The Admiral called the two captains and the rest, as well as the notary of the fleet, to certify that he, in the presence of them all, took possession of said island for the King and Queen, his sovereigns. Soon after large crowds of natives congregated there; and what follows is in the Admiral's own words, in his book on the first voyage and discovery of these Indies. 'I presented some of these people with red caps, strings of beads, and other trifles, by which we have got a wonderful hold on their affections. They afterwards came to the vessels, swimming, bringing us parrots, cotton thread in balls, and such things, which they bartered for glass beads and cascabels. All of them go as naked as they came into

COLUMBUS

the world; their forms are graceful; their features good; their hair as coarse as a horse's tail, cut short in front and worn long upon their shoulders. They are dark of complexion, like the Canary-Islanders, and paint themselves in various colors. They do not carry arms, and have no knowledge of them, for when I showed them our swords they took them by the edges, and through their ignorance cut themselves. Neither have they any iron, their spears consisting of staffs tipped with stone and dog-fish teeth. . . . I swear to your Majesties, there are no better people on earth; they are gentle, without knowing what evil is, neither killing nor stealing. . . . At dawn of Saturday, October 13th, many of the men came out to the ships in *canoas* [canoes, then for the first time seen by Spaniards] made out of the trunks of trees, each of one piece, and wonderfully built, some containing forty men and others but a single one. They paddle with a peel like that of a baker, and make great speed, and if a canoe capsizes all swim about and bail out the water with calabashes. I examined them closely to see if there was any gold, noticing that some of them wore small pieces in their noses, and by signs I

WHERE IS SAN SALVADOR?

was able to understand that by going around the island to the southward, I would find a king who had large golden vessels, and also gold in great abundance.'”

These are the words of Columbus himself, and is it not more interesting to receive his own impressions at first hand, rather than through transcribers who are separated from him by centuries of time? Writing at evening time of the second day, probably sitting encastled in the *Santa Maria*, with the fair prospect spread before him of shining sea and verdure-clad island, he says: “At this moment it is dark, and all have gone ashore in their canoes. I have determined to lose no time, . . . but to wait till to-morrow evening, and then sail for the southwest, . . . to try if I can find the island of Cipango.”

Columbus could not understand—in fact, he was long in learning—that he had discovered, not the confines of the Indies, but an entirely new world. He was on the eastern coast of the Indies (thus he reasoned), and so, of course, the natives must be *Indians*—by which name he called them; and “Indians” they have ever since remained. They and their canoes were two more discoveries

COLUMBUS

to be added to those already mentioned, and many more were yet to come.

The relation between the Spaniards and the first red folks they found in that island called Guanahani, was all that could be desired; but those who followed after the discoverers were not so humane. Twenty years later Spaniards from Haiti hunted them down with blood-hounds, and within fifty years they had ceased to exist. What we know of them is derived from the descriptions of Columbus and from the few remains they have left, such as the "celts," or stone implements: arrow and spear heads, war-clubs and knives, which are occasionally found in caves and clefts of the rocks.

The natives of the island have disappeared, and regarding the island itself, that first land discovered by Columbus in the New World, the same doubt exists that enshrouds his birthplace and his early life. That is, no one may positively assert that he can identify the Admiral's "landfall," or the coast he sighted, on that memorable October morn in 1492. "To the first island I found," he wrote in his journal, "I gave the name of San Salvador (or Saint Saviour), in remembrance of his High Majesty, who hath mar-

WHERE IS SAN SALVADOR?

vellously brought all these things to pass; the Indians call it *Guanahani*." But where that island lies, and just where Columbus landed, are matters of dispute to-day. Many enthusiastic investigators have tried to trace the voyagings of the Admiral, following after him with chart and compass; but whether he first landed on Cat Island, on Watling's, or on Eleuthera, the only thing we can affirm is that the island lies somewhere mid-chain of the Bahamas.

So here is a matter left over for the young explorers of the present or a coming generation; and perhaps there may be a reader of these lines who will earn the honor of rediscovering the "landfall" of Columbus! For his guidance, let us quote the words of Columbus: "This island is level, has a large lagoon in the middle, is without any mountains, and is covered with verdure most pleasing to the eye." This description applies very well to the island now known as Watling's, which lies in latitude 24° north, and, so far as it refers to the vegetation, might answer for any of the Bahamas, for it is tropical, or semitropical, throughout the chain. When Columbus landed there, doubtless, the present "scrubby"

COLUMBUS

growth was overtopped by gigantic palms, which waved their golden fronds above the native huts formed of their leaves. Here dwelled those happy, simple people, in primitive state, but perfectly contented. The Spaniard came, and the red folks' Eden was transformed into an inferno.

On Sunday, October 14th, Columbus wrote in his diary: "At dawn I ordered the boats of the ship and of the caravels to be got ready, and went along the island. I was afraid of a reef of rocks which entirely surrounds it, although there is within it depth and ample harbor for all the vessels of Christendom; but the entrance is very narrow. . . . I observed all that harbor, and afterwards I returned to the ship and set sail, and saw so many islands that I could not decide which one to visit first. . . . In consequence, I looked for the largest one, and determined to make for it, and am so doing, and it is probably five leagues distant from this of San Salvador, the others, some more, some less."

He reached that island and then sailed to another, of which he says: "If the other islands are beautiful, this is still more so, it has so many trees, very green and very

WHERE IS SAN SALVADOR?

large, while gentle hills enhance with their contrasts the beauty of the plains. I anchored here because I saw this cape so green and beautiful, as are all the things and lands of these islands, so that I know not which to go to first; nor do my eyes grow tired with looking at such beautiful verdure, so different from our own. The grass is as green as in Andalusia in April, and the songs of the little birds are such that it seems as one could never leave here at all."

VII

CUBA AND THE MYTHICAL CIPANGO

1492

THE "cape beautiful," of which Columbus was so enamored, is supposed to have been the north point of Crooked Island, and the place where he filled his water-casks was "Frenchman's Wells," not far away, on Isle of Fortune. Here the Spaniards first saw and killed an "ugly serpent," later called by them the iguana, the flesh of which was highly esteemed by the natives as food. Flocks of parrots flew screaming across the sky, the songs of mocking-birds filled the air, and so entranced was the Admiral—with fair islands beckoning him on every side—that he knew not which way to steer. At last, on October 24th, he wrote in his journal: "I weighed anchor at midnight and departed from Isabella and the cape of the rocky islet [thought to be Bird Rock, near Crooked Island], in order to go to the island

CUBA AND THE MYTHICAL CIPANGO

of Cuba, which these people tell me is very large, yielding gold and spices. By their signs I understand it to be the island of Cipango, of which marvellous things are related [by Marco Polo], and which, on the maps I have seen, is in this region. And they told me I should sail to reach it west-southwest, as now I am sailing.”

The large and beautiful island of Cuba was the fifth at which he arrived, after sailing across a shallow sea teeming with tropical fishes, and so clear that the tinted shells could be seen on the ocean bed many fathoms down. The fourth day from Isabella, or on October 28th, appeared the tops of misty mountains, then the contours of hills, and purple depths of fertile valleys, lighted by the flash of foaming waterfall or sparkle of hurrying stream. So impressed was Columbus by the grandeur of the scenery, the magnitude of the mountains, the vastness of the forests, that he felt sure he had reached, at last, the Asian continent. Indeed, he says as much in the letter he wrote to San Angel while on the voyage: “When I arrived at Juana [as he had renamed Cuba] I followed the coast to the westward, and found it so extensive that I considered it must be a

COLUMBUS

continent and a province of Cathay. After having continued many leagues, without finding signs of towns or cities and seeing that the coast took me northward, where I did not wish to go, as winter was already set in, I considered it best to follow it to the south, and therefore returned to a certain port, from whence I sent two messengers into the country, to ascertain whether there was any king there or any large city."

This reference is to the famous embassy sent by Columbus to the fugitive Grand Khan, which consisted of two Spaniards, one of whom was a converted Jew who spoke Castilian, Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Arabic. In one of these tongues, it was believed, it would be possible to converse with the Grand Khan, and so, while the fleet was anchored in the beautiful River of Palms, two Spaniards, together with an Indian of San Salvador and another of Cuba, were sent in search of the Oriental potentate. They had authority to speak in the name of the Spanish sovereigns, whose letter Columbus bore to the Grand Khan, and were given six days for the journey, going and returning.

Cuba-nacán, the Grand Khan's golden province, was said to be but a few days'

CUBA AND THE MYTHICAL CIPANGO

travel inland from the coast, and the messengers found it, after penetrating vast forests, crossing rapid rivers, and climbing mountains. They found it; but, alas! there was nothing grand or golden about it, for the vaunted city, when finally seen by the embassy, had dwindled to a straggling collection of palm-thatched huts! As for the "Grand Khan," he could hardly be distinguished from his associates, who were naked, like himself, though he bore the title of *cacique*, or chief. He was so simple and ignorant, indeed, that, in common with the natives of the Bahamas, he regarded the Spaniards as heaven-descended men. "Come and see these people from the skies," he said to his subjects, and so they gathered about, to the number of a thousand or more, and, squatting on their hams, like so many human frogs, formed a great circle around their celestial visitors, whom they regarded with awe and admiration.

Then and there was exploded the theory of a Grand Khan in Cuba, of a gold-roofed city, and a land of drugs and spices. But the embassy found several things of value and interest on that first expedition to the interior of Cuba, such, for example, as maize,

COLUMBUS

or Indian corn, tobacco, cotton hammocks, perhaps the potato, wild peppers, and the manioc. While crossing the channel between the Bahamas and Cuba, Columbus had encountered an old Indian in a canoe, who had "rolls of dried herbs," which may have been either tobacco or cascarilla; but it is certain that tobacco was found by him in Cuba in use by the natives. The Cubans also possessed the aboriginal art of making fire by friction, as an old historian says: "Each Indian carried a firebrand in his hand at night, with which to light a fire, and the fire was easily kindled, because they had a sort of wood which, if they worked one piece against another, as if they had been boring a hole, it took fire."

Until his arrival at the River of Palms, and the return of his embassy, Columbus had supported himself in the belief that these barbarians whom he found existing in such primitive state, without society, form of government, money, arts, or manufactures of any kind, were merely the veriest sentinels on the outposts of an opulent civilization, which he hoped to discover farther on. But, as day after day and week after week went by, disclosing no evi-

CUBA AND THE MYTHICAL CIPANGO

dences of that hoped-for civilization, but only the same kinds of natives, existing in the same simple manner, he began to lose faith in his theories. His great and dominant idea, that by sailing westward he should disclose a continent, or at least the outlying islands of one, had been triumphantly vindicated. That thought sustained him, as he voyaged from island to island, and found living in every one the most barbaric of peoples. Still he did not discard the theory that he was on the way to the Grand Khan's dominions, but merely laid it aside for a while, as we shall see further on in our narrative.

The first landing-place of Columbus in Cuba, like his first landfall in the Bahamas, is even now a matter of dispute. While his great biographer, Irving, lands the Admiral so far to the west on the Cuban coast as Nuevitas, it is more probable that he first struck soil at or about the port of Gibara, the relative position of which to the islands of the mid-Bahamas is such that it would be quite likely to receive his caravels as he came down from the northeast. There are, also, back of this port, four great table-topped hills, the peculiar outlines of which

COLUMBUS

make them conspicuous landmarks, said to have attracted the attention of Columbus on his approach, as stated in his journal. But, if doubt exist as to the exact site of his first landfall here, there is none respecting the harbor he had in mind when he wrote of that which he called Puerto Santo and its forest-born river: "The clearness of its water, through which the sand at the bottom may be seen; the multitude of palm-trees of various forms, the highest and most beautiful I have met with, and an infinity of other great, green trees; the birds in rich plumage, and the verdure of the fields, render this country of such marvellous beauty that it surpasses all others in charms and graces, as the day doth the night in lustre! For which reason I often say to my people that, much as I endeavor to give a complete account of it to your Majesties, my tongue cannot express the whole truth, nor my pen describe it. In sooth, I have been so overwhelmed at the sight of so much beauty that I have not known how to relate it."

The river and port referred to are found in Baracoa, around which spreads a vast and verdurous forest, apparently as fresh and virginal to-day as when it inspired the Ad-

CUBA AND THE MYTHICAL CIPANGO

miral to write in such enthusiastic terms. "Proceeding farther up the river," says the historian Herrera, "being allured by the clearness of the water, the delightsomeness of the banks, and the great variety of the birds, they saw a great canoe under a sort of arbor, capable of carrying fifty persons, yet made of one entire tree [probably a *ceiba*, or silk-cotton]; for, while the Indians had no iron tools, their instruments being merely flints, and the trees were large, their hearts were soft and spongy and easily hollowed out."

The most impressive object here, a landmark mentioned by Columbus in his writings, is the table-topped mountain known as *Yunque*, or the Anvil, from its peculiar shape. It is eighteen hundred feet in height and visible forty miles at sea, so it attracted the attention of the voyagers to the beautiful river, in which their vessels lay at anchor while the embassy went into the tropical wilderness, looking for the Khan of Cathay. Yunque Mountain has always been held sacred by the Indians, who had a tradition that when the morning sun sends its rays against its eastern cliffs the features of a once-great cacique are limned upon the rocks.

COLUMBUS

The Indians of Cuba, like those of the Bahamas, became extinct three centuries ago, and only their traditions and a few aboriginal names remain to remind us of their former presence in the island.

More than a month was passed on the north coast of Cuba, exploring inlets and rivers, collecting specimens of dye and cabinet woods, spices, herbs, and the golden grains of maize, said to have been the first ever seen by white men and taken to Europe. Columbus lingered longer than he thought prudent, even, he was so enraptured with the spicy groves and flowery meads, the sparkling beaches and the sombre forests; above all, the delightful climate. He calls it the "most beautiful island that eyes ever beheld," and declares that "one could live there forever."

It must have been an exceptional season in which those first explorers in the West Indies performed their voyage, for, not only had they been able to keep their vessels together all the way across the Atlantic, through the smoothness of the seas, but they experienced no gale or tempest among the islands, though they were there in the height of the "hurricane season." That first voy-

age was exempt from every untoward happening due to wind and weather; but about November 20th the vessels became separated through the voluntary act of Martin Alonzo Pinzon, who stood away in the *Pinta*, while they were attempting to round the eastern end of Cuba. His was the fastest vessel of the little fleet, and though Columbus signalled him repeatedly to heave to and await the rest, Captain Pinzon kept on until distance and darkness hid him from the rest.

Baffling winds compelled the *Santa Maria* and the *Niña* to put in at a small river east of Baracoa, and it was not until December 5th that they succeeded in doubling Cape Maisi, the eastern point of Cuba, which Columbus supposed to be the extremity of Asia, and named Alpha and Omega. Instead of keeping on to the southward and westward, however, and in that direction seeking—what he yet confidently expected to find—the rich and civilized parts of India, the Admiral bore away to the southward and eastward. He was perplexed at first which course to pursue, but the act of his recreant captain decided him to keep on in the direction he had taken. Both Columbus and Pinzon were impelled to this course by the

COLUMBUS

same motive, which was to seek, and if possible find, the island of Babeque, or Bohio, the reputed land of gold. No precious metal had been found in the scant soil of the Bahamas; while Cuba, though reported rich in mines of gold and copper (in the sign-language of the natives), had yielded nothing to the Spaniards' eager search. But, repeatedly and consistently, the Lucayans and Cubans had pointed to the southeast, when asked to name the land containing gold. There, in Babeque, they said, it was to be found in quantities so great that one might pick it up on the shores and glean it from the sands of every stream. Thence came the small supply possessed by the natives of the Bahamas and Cuba at the coming of Columbus, which he had secured in barter for a few beads and trinkets. He and Captain Pinzon had talked it over frequently, questioning the Indians they met on shore and those they had taken aboard ship as captives, and had come to the same conclusion: Babeque was the island of gold, and as gold was what they desired above all other things, they should seek that island without delay. It is supposed that Captain Pinzon may have derived secret information

as to the location of Babeque, from one of his captives; hence his haste to sail easterly, in the general direction indicated. Hence, also, the consuming desire of his superior officer, Columbus, to follow in his wake: from fear that Pinzon might glean it all in advance of his arrival.

Taking his departure, then, from the easterly point of Cuba (which still retains its aboriginal name of *Maysi*), the Admiral soon saw another island rise to view, more beautiful in its contours, and grander in its mountains than the one he left. It was clothed in tropical vegetation from coast to mountain peak, and seemed suspended in a magical atmosphere between sea and sky. "It is a wonderful island," wrote Columbus to his friend, San Angel, "with mountains, groves, plains, and the country generally beautiful and rich for planting, for rearing sheep and cattle of all kinds, and ready for towns and cities. The harbors must be seen to be appreciated; rivers are plentiful, large, and excellent, the greater part of them containing gold. The nightingale and a thousand kinds of birds enliven the woods with their song. There are many kinds of palms, of various elegant forms, besides other trees,

COLUMBUS

roots, and herbs, while the pines are magnificent. It has many mines of gold and a population innumerable.”

The Cubans called the island *Babeque* and *Bohio*—meaning the “great country”; but to the natives it was known as *Hái-ti*, or the Island of Mountains.” That it contained gold was made manifest almost as soon as land was reached, for all the natives had it, apparently, either in nuggets or grains. The first landing in Haiti was on December 6th, at the great natural dock known as Mole St. Nicolas, whence the north coast was skirted till, a storm coming up, the Admiral sought shelter under the lee of that rocky island known as Tortuga, or the Sea Turtle, so named by him because of its shape. It became a famous resort for buccaneers and pirates—their great stronghold in the Caribbean Sea—after the Spaniards had become numerous there; but at the time Columbus found it, Tortuga was uninhabited. Thence, after the storm was over, he sailed across the narrow channel that separated the island from Haiti, and brought to view a valley so beautiful that he named it *Val de Paraiso* (Vale of Paradise).

VIII

WHERE THE FLAG-SHIP WAS WRECKED

1492

THE first disaster to the fleet came through the agency of a boy. He was, perhaps, the first white boy in America, and the only one who went with Columbus on that memorable voyage. He is mentioned but once, and then in terms of censure; but what he did will be shown a little further on. Meanwhile, let us sail with Columbus across the sea - channel between Tortuga and the main island, thence along the coast, until we arrive at the scene of disaster referred to. When in mid-channel, the *Santa Maria* overtook an old Indian in a still older canoe, and both in danger from the heavy seas, the Admiral thought, so he took them aboard. Through the Indians from the Bahamas, who were able to speak a few Spanish words, Columbus inquired of the man in what direction lay Cipango. To his great joy, the

COLUMBUS

Indian pointed to some misty mountain peaks of the interior, and said, "Ci-ba-o, Ci-ba-o."

There was, indeed—and is to-day—a mountainous region of Haiti called by that name, which abounds in gold, and, moreover, it lay in the direction indicated by the Indian, only a few days' travel from the coast. Ci-ba-o, in the Haitian language, means the "gold-stone country," and the name of this gold-producing region was so similar to "Cipango," that Columbus was certain they were one and the same. He was confirmed in this impression by a young cacique who came to meet him at the beautiful Bay of Acul. He was borne on the shoulders of his subjects, and brought a present from his superior cacique, Guacanagari, in the shape of a cotton girdle, to which was attached a sort of mask, with face, tongue, ears, and nose of beaten gold. His men, also, were abundantly supplied with gold in grains, which they gladly bartered for trifles like beads and bells. They came by land, they came by sea—running, swimming, paddling in their frail canoes—for they had been told of these simple men who gave beads and cascabels, for gold which they could pick

THE FLAG-SHIP WRECKED

up in the streams at will, by a woman whom the Spaniards took captive at San Nicolas. They had found her in the forest, and when they took her aboard ship she was overcome by fear; but when presented with some glittering beads and jingling bells, she leaped overboard, swam ashore, and told all her neighbors of the "men who had come down from the sky." So they came to see for themselves, and though not one of them wore clothing of any kind, each man, woman, and child was provided with gold. This they desired to exchange for the *chug-chugs*, or cascabels, the tinkling music of which was new to them, and one Indian, after giving for one of these trifles a nugget of gold worth perhaps a hundred dollars, ran away as fast as his legs could carry him, lest the Spaniard should repent of his bargain and take the bell away!

At last, thought Columbus, the Spaniards had arrived at Cipango, that land of gold and spices described by Marco Polo. The cacique, Guacanagari, if not a representative of the Grand Khan, must be an allied potentate surely and an invitation to visit his court was promptly accepted. The gentle people who had welcomed them to Acul

COLUMBUS

were loath to let them go, and of the bay itself Columbus wrote: "I have now been at sea twenty-three years, with scarcely any intermission, and have seen the East and the West; but in all those parts I have never witnessed so much of perfection in harbors as in this." He and his sailors had been for four months in almost daily expectation of something dire to happen; they had dreamed of sea-serpents, submarine monsters, and mermaids; they had wailed over the continuous trade-winds, which, always blowing from the direction of Spain, would prevent them from returning home; and they were fearful that, having reached the bottom of that "watery hill," they should never get back again. But their blissful experiences on the coast of Haiti thus far had lulled their suspicions and calmed their fears. Having found the seas around those islands ever smooth and serene, the breezes gentle, and the currents favorable, they had become careless and neglectful of their duties.

On the morning of a bright and beautiful day, December 24th, the flag-ship and the caravel set their sails and coasted easterly again, over a sea of glassy smoothness, past noble headlands crowned with palms, past

THE FLAG-SHIP WRECKED

crescent-shaped beaches of snowy sands, with valleys, veritable vales of paradise, reaching back into the mountains. The distance to Guarico, the cacique's town, was not great, but as the breezes were light and baffling, interspersed with calms, the day passed by and night arrived before the bay on which it stood was sighted. As the sea was smooth and the flag-ship almost motionless, Columbus concluded to take a much-needed rest, and about midnight retired to his cabin, after cautioning the master to keep a careful watch. But the captain of the watch followed his example, and then the helmsman, tired of holding an immovable tiller, gave it to a boy, and went to sleep. Then the only wakeful person on board the flag-ship was that hapless lad, into whose hands chance had thrust the helm, at the very time the most extreme care was necessary. For, though the fragrant breezes from off shore were light and zephyr-like, and the sea shone in the moonlight like molten silver, yet there was a terrible force at work, urging the ship upon an unseen shoal. In a word, the *Santa Maria* was carried by a treacherous current upon a reef—silently, but with great violence, so that she became firmly wedged,

COLUMBUS

and her seams began to open. The alert ear of the Admiral heard the waves lapping against her sides at the instant the boy's cry of alarm rang through the ship, and he hurried on deck. Taking in the situation at a glance, he ordered a boat astern with an anchor, in order to warp the ship off the reef; but the master, to whom this was intrusted rowed off to the caravel, which was less than two miles to windward. Though the sea was calm, the heavy swell came in with great force from the open ocean, and soon it was necessary to cut away the masts. Even this extreme measure did not save her, for she began breaking up soon after, and Columbus saw that he must abandon his good ship *Santa Maria*, in which he had sailed from Spain to the New World.

As the reef on which the ship struck was only four or five miles from Guarico, the Admiral sent messengers to the cacique imploring assistance, which was rendered promptly and cheerfully by the Indian chief. He sent a fleet of canoes to the reef, in which all the wreckage of the vessel was taken ashore before day had dawned. At sunrise, Columbus and his crew were the guests of the

THE FLAG-SHIP WRECKED

cacique with the almost unpronounceable name—the generous Guacanagari.

This, the first accident of moment that happened on the first voyage to America, occurred in the early hours of Christmas morning, 1492. Preparations had probably been made for a festival that day, but, instead of rejoicing, the Spaniards all gave way to gloom and despondency. Noting the Admiral's downcast looks, and hearing him sigh deeply and frequently, the cacique did his best to cheer him, though he is said to have shed tears of sympathy when he received his honored guest at Guarico. Literally speaking, he placed all he had at his disposal, and such was the honesty and good-will of these barbarous aborigines, who for the first time then looked upon civilized man, that not even a nail or a bolt was lost from the wreckage of the flag-ship.

It was piled upon the beach, and during the week that followed a small fort was constructed from the timbers, which was defended by the lombards that, ten weeks before, had saluted the newly-discovered San Salvador. One of these cannon was fired expressly for King Guacanagari's benefit, and when, for the first time in their

COLUMBUS

peaceful lives, he and his subjects heard its thunderous roar wake the echoes of their hills, and its ponderous ball crash through the forest trees, they all fell to the ground, overcome by fear. They themselves possessed no more forceful weapons than their bows and arrows, and when a Moorish cross-bowman gave an exhibition of his skill they were filled with surprise. They recognized the potency of such allies as these *turey* men, or heaven-sent beings, in their wars with the fierce cannibals of the more southern islands; but this was not the motive that impelled them to open-handed generosity, for that was but a part of their noble nature. Nothing the Spaniards desired was withheld from them, and as for gold, it was brought to Columbus in such quantities that he really believed, as he wrote in a letter to his sovereigns, that more than a ton could be collected in a year. The cacique even doffed his golden crown, and compelled a companion chief to do the same, presenting both coronets to the Admiral; while, for such a trifle as a cascabel, the natives would gladly give a handful of gold-dust in exchange, considering themselves well paid.

Bathed as it was in a golden atmosphere,

THE FLAG-SHIP WRECKED

steeped in the suns of a perpetual summer, yielding the most delicious fruits and fragrant flowers of the tropics, this island of Haiti seemed to the Spaniards not far short of paradise. When, in the preparation for departure, it became necessary to leave a portion of the flag-ship's crew behind, more men offered to remain than wished to return to Spain. The little *Niña* could not carry all, to the number of ninety or a hundred men, so forty were told off to man the fort which had been built from the flag-ship's wreckage, and placed under command of Diego de Arana, notary and *alguacil* to the armament. There is a tradition that the boy who was at the helm when the *Santa Maria* was wrecked, formed one of the garrison of this first fort erected in America by Europeans, but no further mention is made of him. He was "only a boy," though he was sturdily doing his best when the ship was forced upon the reef, and deserved better of fate than to be thrust back into oblivion. He was unfortunate in having the helm at the time of an accident which shortened the voyage and compelled Columbus to set sail for Spain when on the threshold of discovery.

COLUMBUS

During the week between Christmas of 1492 and New Year's Day, 1493—two dates which will serve to fix these memorable events in mind—much gold was collected, and the fort was built, which was called Navidad (the Nativity), on account of the day on which the wreck occurred. In a letter written off the Canaries, on the voyage home, Columbus said: "I have taken possession of a large town, to which I gave the name of Navidad, and have built a fort there, in every respect complete. And I have left sufficient people in it to take care of it, with artillery and provisions for more than a year, also a boat and a coxswain, all in complete friendship with the king of the island, to that degree that he delighted to call me, and looked on me as, his brother. And should they fall out with these people, neither he nor his subjects know anything of weapons, and go naked, and are the most timorous people in the world. The few people left there are sufficient to conquer the country, and the island would thus remain without danger to them, they keeping order among themselves. . . .

"Hitherto I have not seen in any of these islands any monsters, as there were sup-

THE FLAG-SHIP WRECKED

posed to be, nor have heard of any, except at an island which is second in going to the Indies, and which is inhabited by a people who are considered in all the islands as ferocious, and who devour human flesh. These have many canoes, in which they scour all the islands of India and plunder all they can. They are fierce as compared with the other people, who are in general but sad cowards."

Columbus, and the men he left in Navidad, reckoned too much upon the cowardice of the Haitian people, and left out of their calculation the ferocious Caribs, who roamed the sea in their great war-canoes, with the result that when he returned to this place less than a year later not one of the garrison remained alive to greet him! Before he departed, Guacanagari spread forth a banquet, the like of which neither he nor any other white man had ever enjoyed before. Seated on the ground beneath umbrageous trees, with modest Indian maids to wait on them, and lave their hands with water in calabashes scented with fragrant herbs, the Spaniards ate their fill of native fruits and viands. They were served with *ajés*, or nutritive roots; native bread made from

COLUMBUS

cassavi, such as the island has to-day; shrimp from the streams; parrots and *utias* from the forests, with a beverage made from the palm to "wash them down;" and finally they were given Y-shaped tubes of cane, through which they were taught to inhale the fumes of a weed called tobacco. There was nothing lacking which the island could supply, and in respect to their hospitality Columbus has well said: "Where they have confidence and forget their fears, they are so open-hearted and liberal with all they possess that it is scarcely to be believed without seeing it. If anything that they have is asked of them, they never deny it; on the contrary, their generosity is so great that they would give anything, whether it is costly or not, for anything of every kind that is offered them, and be quite contented with it."

The Spaniards left these people with regret, all those who had not been detailed to garrison the fort setting sail eastward in the little *Niña*. This was on January 4th, and Guacanagari's banquet may have been given about New Year's Day. At all events, it was in the first week of the year 1493 that the Admiral bade farewell to his good

THE FLAG-SHIP WRECKED

friend, the cacique, to whom he commended his friends in the fort, and actually began the homeward voyage to Spain. The signal gun fired on board the *Pinta* was answered by a parting salute from the fort, and the departing voyagers looked their last upon their countrymen left alone in that wilderness surrounded by savages.

Having lost his largest vessel by shipwreck, and having left a year's supply of provisions with the garrison, Columbus felt compelled to hasten homeward, when, but for the accident to the *Santa Maria*, he would probably have explored the unknown interior of Haiti, which he called *Isla Española* (Spanish Island). He sailed along the north coast of the island, through three degrees of longitude, before taking his final departure, however, and only two days out from Guarico fell in with Captain Martin Alonzo, who came towards him in the *Pinta*, straight before the wind. He had been all the time trading with the natives for gold, which he had found in abundance, for he had sailed into a river which flowed down from the Cibao, or Goldstone country, guided thither by the Indians whom he had taken aboard at Cuba. A shrewd and capable

COLUMBUS

mariner was Captain Martin Alonzo, and as he commanded the larger of the two remaining vessels, it behooved Columbus to handle him cautiously, lest he sail off and leave him, with his crazy little craft now crowded to the bulwarks. So he spoke with him warily, and reproved him gently for his dereliction; but he compelled him to restore to liberty four captives he had on board, greatly to Pinzon's disgust.

In the river where Martin Alonzo had been trading, turtles and manatees (which Columbus mistook for mermaids) were seen in great numbers, and when the Spaniards went in to fill their water-casks, flakes of gold adhered to the hoops and were seen sparkling in the sands. This river was known to the natives as the Yaqui, but, on account of the auriferous character of its sands, the Admiral called it the *Rio del Oro*, or River of Gold. It is a large and beautiful river, having its source in the Cibao region of that portion of the island now known as Santo Domingo, and still retains its aboriginal name. Eastward from the Yaqui, a few leagues, the Admiral sighted a tentlike promontory, which he named Monte Cristi, and in the harbor it sheltered

THE FLAG-SHIP WRECKED

held converse with Pinzon as to the route to pursue. They concluded to hold on their course along the coast until it dipped to the south, when they would strike out into open ocean. Thus they sailed along a most picturesque coast, interweaving with the warp of its beautiful scenery the woof of historical occurrences. They passed the point where, the next year, the first New-World city was founded, sailed by a shining mountain which Columbus called La Plata—the Silver—the name of its port to-day, and at last arrived off that superb promontory Cape Cabron. The Spaniards named it *Cabo del Enamorado*, or the Lover's Cape, but for what reason no one knows. Beyond, a few leagues, they looked upon the great, granite face of Balandra Head, another promontory, draped in flowing robes of tropic tapestry, and guarding the most magnificent bay, or gulf, they had then discovered. This was the great Bay of Samana, containing on its western shores other and smaller bays, silver-sanded, forest-fringed, with tinkling streamlets sparkling beneath overhanging palms, and sea-birds flitting over waves that gently lapped the shore. As the scene was entrancing, and water was needed for the

COLUMBUS

voyage, a boat was sent ashore with an armed guard, followed by Columbus with a party intent on observation only. While the water-casks were being filled, a savage came strolling up, whose fearless manner was so sharply in contrast with the cringing nature of the people hitherto encountered, that the Admiral was led to observe him closely. He was ferocious of aspect and his face was decorated with war-paint, while his weapons were of finer make and more effective than those in use by the natives of Cuba and Haiti generally. He carried a bow of great length, his arrows were slender reeds, and his sword was of iron-wood, so heavy and so sharp that "it was capable of cleaving through a man's helmet to the very brain."

When the savage was brought to Columbus, he entered into conversation with him through the interpreters, and gained much information of a doubtful character as to the islands south and east of Babeque. There, for instance, was the "island of Amazons," Madinino, inhabited only by ferocious women warriors, who slew every man that landed on their shores; and this Amazonian island was long and vainly

THE FLAG-SHIP WRECKED

sought by Columbus in subsequent voyages. This Indian had been probably sent out as a lure, for he was a Carib, one of those fierce cannibals of whom the Admiral had heard but never seen, and led the Spaniards into an ambush. Suddenly there appeared "a body of fifty Indians, all naked, with coarse hair as long as the women wear it in Castile, the backs of their heads adorned with parrots' feathers, and in their hands big bows, arrows, javelins, and war-clubs." They assumed at first a friendly attitude, laying aside their weapons, but, suddenly changed about, seized their bows and war-clubs, and attacked the Spaniards fiercely. Though taken by surprise, the latter repelled the attack, and with their sharp swords wounded several of the Caribs, when the others fled into the forest with howls of rage and dismay. They were not followed, but the next day their cacique came down from his residence in the hills accompanied by hundreds of his warriors, and traded with the Spaniards amicably, among other things of value, presenting to Columbus a coronet of gold.

IX

THE RETURN VOYAGE TO SPAIN

1493

THE first bloodshed of the voyage, the first encounter between Europeans and Indians in America (unless we give credence to the Norsemen's tales of skirmishes with the "Skraelings"), occurred on the shore of Samana, near a little bay still known as the *Golfo de las Flechas*, or Gulf of Arrows. It was so named by Columbus on account of the multitude of arrows shot at the Spaniards by the natives, and which strewed the ground after the brief conflict was over. The Admiral regretted this encounter, fearing it might create "bad blood" between the Indians and his garrison at Navidad; but the Caribs were not incensed, for they rather respected a worthy foe, and seemed delighted as well as surprised to come in contact with people of greater prowess than themselves. They mingled with the Spaniards freely,

THE RETURN VOYAGE TO SPAIN

and four of the young warriors offered to guide the Admiral to the Amazonian island, hoping, probably, to obtain redress, through their new and invincible friends, for long-standing offences.

The Indians had pointed to the northeast as the direction in which the island of Amazons lay, and, as that was on the homeward route to Spain, Columbus accepted their offer gladly, on January 16th setting sail for the mythical Madinino. He fully believed in this island of Amazons, and in one of the letters he wrote, on this very voyage, he says, "It is the first island, in going from Spain to the Indies, in which there are no men whatever." But he also says, "There was, farther west [of Guarico], a province I did not visit called *Cibau*, the people of which are born with tails!" He also believed in dog-headed men, one-eyed monsters, mermaids, dragons, and was greatly disappointed that he found none of them in the West Indies. But he made the most of the manatees he saw in the Rio del Oro, describing them as veritable mermaids, though "not so handsome" as he had been led to believe they were. However, he left the Gulf of Arrows and went in search of the Amazons,

COLUMBUS

really expecting to find them. After proceeding fifty or sixty miles, the Indians said they were mistaken in locating the island in the northeast, as it really was in the southeast. This put a different face on the matter, and, as the wind now blew from a quarter favorable for the voyage to Spain, Amazon Island was left for another time. The unfortunate savages were taken along, perforce, and probably formed part of the procession later led by Columbus across Spain to Barcelona.

He already had a few Cubans, Lucayans or Bahamans, and Haitians or Arawaks; but these Caribs (or perhaps they were Ciguyans) would form an agreeable variety in the "ethnological congress" he purposed assembling at the court of Spain. He had collected them as curiosities merely; but, whatever his motive, he compelled the poor savages to take the voyage. They were downcast, even reduced to despair, at the prospect; but the sailors were overjoyed. They had grown tired of strange sights and peoples, foods and drinks; wearied of gazing on forest scenery, though varied and beautiful, and longed for the parched and barren plains of their own "sunny Spain." There

THE RETURN VOYAGE TO SPAIN

was, therefore, a glad shout of assent when Columbus announced his decision to proceed for home, and gave the pilots orders to hold the course for Spain.

The favorable wind did not last very long, and during the remainder of the month the breezes were either very light, or dead ahead. The trade-winds, which had helped the vessels along on the outward voyage, operated as the sailors had feared they would, and prevented progress on the return. But the weather was mild, and the seas so calm that the Indians frequently plunged into the water and swam about the vessels. The sailors amused themselves by fishing, catching a shark and some tunny fish, which proved welcome additions to their diminishing stock of provisions, as by February 1st they were reduced to bread and wine and Indian peppers.

They worked out of the trade-wind region at last, and about February 10th were enabled to steer a straight course towards Spain; but the pilots were confused in their reckoning, and Columbus alone knew approximately their position as to latitude and longitude. He may have been responsible for this, having confessedly kept a double

COLUMBUS

reckoning on the outward voyage, so that the pilots calculated they were at least one hundred and fifty leagues nearer Spain than was actually the case. The Admiral allowed them to remain in error without enlightening them as to the truth, doing all he could, in fact, to add to their perplexity, so that he only should have accurate knowledge of the route to the West Indies.

In mid-February they were in about the latitude of Andalusia, though a long distance out in the Atlantic. Just at the time they were congratulating themselves upon a prosperous termination of the voyage, a terrible storm broke upon them which lasted several days. The seas ran mountains high, it seemed to those imperilled sailors at the mercy of wind and waves. They were obliged to take in all sail and scud before the blast with "bare poles," and as it was impossible for the vessels to keep company in such stress of weather, they soon separated. The *Pinta* a second time sailed beyond the vision of Columbus; but on this occasion he knew it was owing to no dereliction of Captain Pinzon, the foremast of whose vessel was so weak that he had to scud directly before the storm.

THE RETURN VOYAGE TO SPAIN

Supposing the *Pinta* to be lost, and that his own vessel could not long survive the gale, Columbus resorted to an expedient which shows his belief in the desperate nature of their condition. Oppressed by the thought that, even after all his sufferings, his great and glorious deeds might perish, leaving behind no record, he wrote on parchment an account of what had been done, seen, and found, wrapped it in a waxed cloth, which again he enclosed in a cake of wax and placed in a barrel. This barrel was then made water-tight with pitch and thrown into the sea, while a duplicate of the manuscript was similarly enclosed in another cask, which was placed on the upper deck, in order that, if the vessel should go to pieces, it might be washed off by the waves.

Nothing further was ever heard of this message which the Admiral committed to the keeping of the waves, unless a story related by the master of a vessel in 1851 may have credence. While taking ballast, on the coast of Africa opposite Gibraltar (he reported), one of his crew picked up what appeared to be a large piece of pumice incrustated with barnacles. It was broken open, when a keg was disclosed, containing a

COLUMBUS

cocoa-nut, covered with gum or wax, within which was a manuscript in old Gothic Spanish. Upon being deciphered, in sooth, it was found to be "the veritable account written by Columbus, nearly three hundred and sixty years before, whose signature it bore in a bold, dashing hand." The finder, who was then at Gibraltar, promised to take his prize to the United States; but as no news was subsequently received from him or the manuscript, it is possible both may have been lost at sea.

The Admiral did not inform his crew as to the true purport of his act in throwing the barrel overboard, fearing they would give way to despair, but told them it was done in performance of a vow. This they could readily believe, sharing the superstition of Columbus that the storm gods might be propitiated by vows and promises. Considering themselves beyond all human aid, they sought to avert extreme disaster by solemn vows to Heaven that, if saved, they would perform various pilgrimages and penitences, for which they cast lots, by placing a number of beans in a hat, one of which was marked with a cross. This bean was drawn by Columbus two or three times in

THE RETURN VOYAGE TO SPAIN

succession, and, among other obligations, he was pledged to watch and pray during an entire night in a holy chapel of Moguer—a pledge which he faithfully redeemed.

The storm continued to rage for nearly a week thereafter, in the midst of which land was sighted. It proved to be the little island of St. Mary's, one of the Azores group, but could not be approached for two or three days more, on account of a contrary wind. When, at last, the storm-tossed mariners set foot on shore, they were roughly received by the Portuguese inhabitants of the island, led by the Governor, who had orders from his sovereign to arrest Columbus should he land in the Azores. One-half the crew were landed with great difficulty, owing to the roughness of the seas, and, in accordance with their vows on board ship, they went to a chapel, or hermitage, barefooted, and clad merely in their shirts, to offer thanksgivings for their deliverance. While engaged in these devotions, their coreligionists fell upon and made them prisoners, as if they were criminals, rather than discoverers worthy of great honor and renown. They were detained two or three days by the Governor, who sought by stratagem to

COLUMBUS

get Columbus in his power, but without success. He only released them when shown the Admiral's credentials, displaying the royal seal of Spain, and then did what he could to make amends for his baseness and perfidy. Columbus had been exposed to great peril while the men of his crew were on shore, being then short-handed, with only landsmen and Indians to assist him, and was for two days beating about at sea, unable to regain the land. After receiving his rescued seamen on board, and threatening the unworthy representative of Portugal with the vengeance of his sovereigns, he stood away from this inhospitable island on February 24th, for three days enjoying fine weather, when head winds and a turbulent sea again assailed him. The coast of Portugal was not far distant, and the nearer to land the frail caravel was driven, the rougher the reception she received. Watery mountains succeeded to profound abysses, over and into which she was forced, while rain fell in torrents, lightning flashed, and thunder roared in deafening peals. Her sails were torn to tatters by a squall of wind, and under bare poles the gallant little *Niña* plunged through the terrors of a night of

THE RETURN VOYAGE TO SPAIN

gloom, when the cry of "Land!" was raised by a seaman on the watch.

It was at the end of a weary week of storm, at daybreak of March 4th, that the rock of Cintra was sighted, near the mouth of the river Tagus. The "golden Tagus" has its birth in the mountains of Spain, and among other famous cities on its banks is grand old Toledo, but it meets the sea on the coast of Portugal. It was a sore disappointment to Columbus that the first land on his return voyage should be that pertaining to the sovereign who had by treachery endeavored to deprive him of his just deserts. But the tempest still prevailing prevented him from putting to sea again and seeking a port of Spain, so he made the best of circumstances and stood into the river. Whatever was in store for him and his crew at Lisbon, the capital, only a few miles away, the people at the mouth of the river received them with enthusiastic greetings. They had watched with anxiety the approach of the little craft, coming in at the end of a storm that had raged for more than a week, and which had caused numerous shipwrecks on their coast. They flocked aboard in such numbers, having heard a report that the

COLUMBUS

vessel was laden with gold, that Columbus was alarmed, especially in view of the fact that they bore a bad reputation. He sent a dispatch post-haste to the King, who was then at Valparaiso, requesting permission to repair to Lisbon, where he could rest in greater security. He also solicited an audience of his Majesty, though uncertain as to the nature of his reception from one who had spurned the offer of a world which he was now proceeding to lay at the feet of Portugal's rival. While awaiting answer to his communication, he was summoned on board a Portuguese man-of-war then anchored in the stream, the captain of which, Don Alonzo de Acuna, demanded an account of his doings. The commander was astonished to receive reply that, as an admiral of Spain, such a proceeding would be derogatory to his rights and dignities, and the demand was refused. Such was the still undaunted spirit of Columbus, which insisted upon the punctilios due to his station, even though in the midst of enemies and completely at their mercy. The captain was amused; but he was generous, and himself made the first visit of ceremony, going aboard the caravel in great state, and plac-

THE RETURN VOYAGE TO SPAIN

ing his services at the disposal of the great discoverer.

His reception by the King was such as was usually reserved for royalty alone; but what must have been the feelings of his host while listening to that wonderful story? Though consumed with inward rage and grief at the thought of what he had lost by his duplicity, and though (as even Portuguese historians have asserted) he was urged to deprive Columbus of his laurels and the Spanish sovereigns of their prospective empire by resort to the assassin's dagger, the King stifled his resentment, and treated Columbus with the greatest consideration. He even ordered (provided he wished to proceed to Spain by land) that the Admiral should be given horses and an escort to the frontier. During the days he was entertained at court, however, the weather had become favorable for voyaging, and so Columbus decided to proceed by sea rather than by land.

At sunrise, March 15th, after two days of pleasant sailing around the southwest coast of Portugal, the *Niña*, with her precious freightage from the New World, safely crossed the bar of Saltes, which she had left at sunrise of an August day the year before.

COLUMBUS

Sailing up the estuary to the river Tinto, she cast anchor off the port of Palos, where, the signal having been sent from La Rábida, excited throngs awaited her arrival. The little town was in a tumult, for (as we know) every inhabitant of Palos had a friend or a relative in that expedition, the smallest vessel of which had at last returned, storm-battered and alone, after an absence of nearly seven months and a half.

“Only the *Niña* [the child] has returned,” the people whispered, fearsomely. “Where are the others: the *Santa Maria* and the *Pinta*?”

The clamor and rejoicings of the crowd were hushed until, boats having put off from shore, the truth was ascertained. Then, as the sailors went ashore and mingled with their friends, cries arose of grief and of joy. Only one-third the number that sailed away had come back to Palos, and while these were welcomed as if returned from the grave—as if the ocean had given them up from its depths—there were yet fourscore more unaccounted for!

But the bells rang forth their greetings, a procession was formed, and in the church that had heard the royal proclamation read

THE RETURN VOYAGE TO SPAIN

ten months before—that knell of doom to many—thanks were given Almighty God for His mercies. Hardly had the sounds of rejoicing died away, scarcely had the clangor of bells ceased to rend the air, when, as evening of that memorable day approached, and after the throngs had dispersed, another caravel sailed slowly up the river. It was the *Pinta*, whose master, Martin Alonzo Pinzon, had hoped to outstrip Columbus on the homeward voyage; but had returned only to taste the fruit of bitter disappointment.

X

A TRIUMPHAL JOURNEY

1493

IT would be fruitless to discuss the relative merits of Pinzon and Columbus; but the unhappy ending of the former cannot but excite the sympathy of all who have followed their adventures on that great first voyage to the New World. While Captain Martin Alonzo was loyal to his sovereigns in the larger sense, and rendered invaluable services to Columbus, yet he was derelict in his duty to the latter on at least two occasions: when he sailed away from him off the coast of Cuba, and at the ending of the voyage. Having been driven by adverse winds into the Bay of Biscay, far north of his course, he made a landing at Bayonne, and thence sent an account of the discoveries to Isabella and Ferdinand, with a request to be allowed to deliver his report in person. Believing that the Ad-

A TRIUMPHAL JOURNEY

miral and all with him in his crazy caravel had perished at sea, he anticipated an enthusiastic reception at Palos, where he was so well known, and erstwhile a powerful personage. Finding, therefore, on his arrival there, that Columbus had already reaped the honors of the voyage, and being accused by his conscience of unfaithfulness to his commander, the unfortunate but noble Martin Alonzo landed without display, and quietly sought the shelter of his home in Moguer. This was his first humiliation—to find himself discredited by his townspeople; his second came when, in reply to his request for permission to appear at court, his sovereigns not only forbade him, but reproached him bitterly for his behavior. Then the great-hearted navigator took to his bed, and shortly after died, a victim to base ingratitude and jealousy.

His brother, Vicente Yañez, remained with Columbus, to whom he was loyal from beginning to end; and we should not forget that it was owing to the Pinzon family, notably to Martin Alonzo, that the voyage became an accomplished fact and was carried to a successful conclusion. Columbus himself soon forgot his indebtedness to those

COLUMBUS

stalwart aids, who supported his hands when they would have dropped from weariness, as he forgot, or ignored, his promises of rewards to others. This innate meanness of a man whose deeds should have raised him above the contemplation of petty things, will appear frequently as his career is followed to the end. That very trait of his nature, which had sustained him through all the long years of waiting upon courts and kings, and which carried him to a level with royalty, also prevented him from recognizing the worth or merits of any one except the great Christopher Columbus!

He ignored Captain Pinzon, for it was a most convenient way of cancelling the debt he owed him, and, gathering his collection of New-World products together, set out for Seville, there to await the answer to the communication he had sent the sovereigns, then in the far-distant city of Barcelona. It came as quickly as fast courier could carry it: a royal order for him to appear as soon as possible, for their Majesties were feverishly anxious to hear his story and view the curiosities he had brought from across the sea. Wherever he went, the now great and triumphant Columbus was an

A TRIUMPHAL JOURNEY

object of excessive admiration, not to say veneration, among the very people who had formerly derided him as a visionary foreigner. In Seville, where he had been ridiculed by the very beggars and children on the streets, he was held in vast esteem, and the houses of the nobility flew open before his knock, when previously he might have pleaded vainly at their gates. Nobles and courtiers flocked about him now, and especially cringed before him when at last a letter came from the King and the Queen, commanding his presence at their court. Here is the letter from his royal patrons:

“BARCELONA, *March 30, 1493.*

“The King and Queen to Don Christopher Columbus, our Admiral of the Ocean, Viceroy and Governor of the islands discovered in the Indies: We have seen your letters, and have derived much pleasure from their contents. We are rejoiced that God has granted so fortunate an issue to your enterprise, which will redound greatly to His service and to the profit of ourselves and our dominions. For these great services we hope to reward you in a manner suitable to your merits; and as it is our wish that the undertaking that has been begun by you be, with the help of God, carried on and accomplished, and as we desire to see you immediately, we request, therefore, that you will

COLUMBUS

use all possible speed in hastening to us, that all necessary preparations may be made without delay. And as the season is early and favorable for your return to the countries you have discovered, we wish you would ascertain whether measures cannot be taken at Seville, or other places, necessary to that end. We request you to write by our courier, who brings you this and who returns immediately, that the whole may be arranged by the time you return thither to us.

“I, the King.

“I, the Queen.

“By order of the King and Queen,

“FERNAND ALVAREZ.”

What a wonderful journey that was from Seville to Barcelona, both of them cities destined to be greatly enriched by commerce with the newly discovered country! It extended throughout the entire length of eastern Spain, from near the Atlantic to the northwest Mediterranean, and all the way was like a triumphal procession. The people could not sufficiently express their gratitude to Columbus nor their admiration of the wonders he had brought to their country. Most of all they wondered at the Indians, natives of an unknown land, who had existed, themselves unknown to Europe, until brought to view by the voyage of Co-

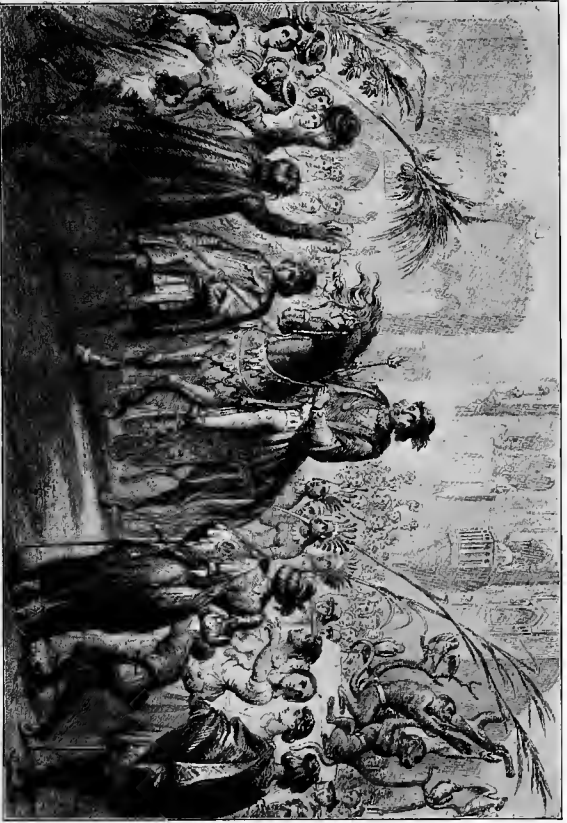
A TRIUMPHAL JOURNEY

lumbus and his company. They, as well as the honored Admiral and some of his sailors, were mounted on mules and horses, and, despite the triumphs accorded them on every hand, the long and dusty journey must have been sorely distressing. Six Indians went with Columbus to Barcelona, three having been left at Palos or Seville, too ill to make the journey, and one having died at sea, after baptism. This last, a pious writer of the time suggests, was probably the first of his race to enter heaven—that is, the heaven of the Christians. He soon had company, however, for within a few years thereafter the Spaniards caused the deaths of many thousand Indians in the islands discovered by Columbus.

The strangest procession ever witnessed in Spain arrived at Barcelona about mid-April, and as it approached the city was met by a brilliant cavalcade, the cavaliers of which esteemed it a high honor to form an escort for the great discoverer, friend of their King and Queen. Thus escorted, and followed closely by his captives and men of his crew carrying various products of the new land, such as gold and spices, parrots, and other trophies of the voyage, Columbus

COLUMBUS

was ushered before the sovereigns he had so loyally served and singularly honored. He received with apparent pleasure, yet with modesty, the plaudits of the multitudes; and he bore himself with dignity when arrived at the throne of his sovereigns, who rose to receive him, and commanded that he be seated in their presence, as he bent to kiss their hands. As a suitable culmination of this notable achievement, the King and Queen had ordered their throne of state conspicuously placed in public, beneath a canopy of gold-embroidered brocade, so that all who were entitled to the distinction might witness how they honored their great Admiral. They listened intently to the recital by Columbus of the chief events of his voyage, at the close of which he showed them the gold he had brought, in nuggets and wrought into barbaric ornaments, and then presented the six Indians, who had remained crouching near the throne, in fear and apprehension. When he had finished, both King and Queen were moved to tears, and upon bended knees gave thanks to God for His favors. The choir in the chapel adjoining chanted the noble anthem, "*Te Deum Laudamus*"—"We Praise Thee, O God," and then the Ad-



RETURN OF COLUMBUS FROM HIS FIRST VOYAGE

A TRIUMPHAL JOURNEY

miral was shown with ceremony to a suite of royal apartments, where he found awaiting him his son, Diego, from whom he had been so long separated. Father and son, once more reunited, were everywhere received with honor, and when the King rode out on horseback, they might frequently be seen accompanying him and Prince Juan, whom Diego had served as a page. The venerable and majestic appearance of the discoverer impressed all who saw him, and it was especially noted that he bore himself with a gravity and dignity that became him well, receiving the adulation of the people and the attentions of royalty as if convinced they were but his just deserts.

The sovereigns confirmed the rights and dignities assigned him in the "capitulation" of the previous year, and as a token of high favor allowed him to quarter the royal arms, a castle and a lion, together with a group of islands and anchors, upon the shield they gave him. Afterwards was added the motto (which may be seen engraved upon the marble slab covering the remains of Fernando Columbus, in the cathedral of Seville):

COLUMBUS

*"A Castilla y a Leon,
Nuevo Mundo dio Colon."*

(To Castile and to Leon,
A New World Columbus gave.)

On the coat of arms, which is preserved to-day, the inscription above the lion, castle, islands, and anchors reads:

*"Por Castilla y por Leon, Nuevo Mundo hallo
Colon."*

(For Castile and for Leon, a New World Columbus found.)

It was while in Barcelona that the incident occurred—if at all—relating to the egg, when a mean-spirited courtier asked him, sneeringly, if it might not have been possible for some other man to have discovered the Indies. Asking for an egg, Columbus desired the company present at the banquet to make it stand on end. No one could do so, but he, setting it down forcibly, broke one end and left it standing there erect; thus, without saying a word, rebuking the courtier and illustrating how easy it was for one to do a thing when another had shown the way.

A TRIUMPHAL JOURNEY

The news of the discovery was slow in getting to foreign parts, and probably Italy was the first country outside of Spain to hear of it, by means of a letter from the historian, Peter Martyr, who wrote from Barcelona, in May, 1493: "A certain Christopher Columbus, a Ligurian, has returned from the antipodes. He had obtained for that purpose three ships from my sovereigns, with much difficulty, because the ideas he expressed were considered extravagant. But he came back and brought specimens of money and precious things, especially gold, which those regions naturally produce."

This may have been the first intimation to the public; but that an official communication had been sent without delay to the Pope, Alexander VI., himself a native of Spain, is very probable, as in May, 1493, he issued his famous "bull" granting the Spanish sovereigns territorial rights and privileges similar to those enjoyed by their royal brother of Portugal. He then, in order to obviate any conflict of authority between the two crowns in their foreign acquisitions, drew on the map an imaginary line from pole to pole, bisecting the ocean one hundred leagues west of the Azores and Cape de Verde islands.

COLUMBUS

This imaginary line was, in June, 1494, removed two hundred and seventy leagues farther westward, and a perfect understanding existed between the two crowns that all lands discovered by them to the eastward of said line were to belong to Portugal, and all to the westward were to pertain to Spain. The pontiff's ignorance of geography was exceeded only by his generosity, in bestowing upon these two kingdoms the undiscovered regions of the world, over which he had no jurisdiction whatever, and to which he could show no claim. But it answered the purpose of the crowns to appeal to him as to a court of last resort, and, since they thus gained all the unknown world to themselves, they had little cause for complaint; but they respected each other's claims and discoveries. This will account for the possession of the Brazils by Portugal, when, by a most natural partition, they would have fallen into the hands of Spain, together with other portions of South America.

Both Spain and Portugal were now extremely active in pushing forward preparations for expeditions, and there ensued a long period of diplomatic correspondence between the two courts respecting the rights

A TRIUMPHAL JOURNEY

of each. In the end, the artful diplomacy of King Ferdinand prevailed over the less astute King John, and the schemes of the latter were thwarted, while those of the Spanish King went forward without a day's delay. The Spanish sovereigns had accidentally, as it were, and through no merit of their own, become possessed of a new world beyond the ocean. Though they were slow in sending out an expedition of discovery, and though they had contributed hardly more than a moiety of its cost, they now assumed all the prerogatives of sovereignty, and claimed vastly more than they were, by any stretch of authority, entitled to. Once convinced, however, of the magnitude of this discovery of their Admiral, they lost no time in prosecuting its exploitation. As we have seen, they instructed him to make preparations for another voyage, even before they had heard from his lips the story of the first.

While in Seville Columbus prepared memoranda relating to a second voyage, and when in Barcelona he was given authority and means for its accomplishment. A "house of the Indies" was established in Seville, an inland port on the river Guadalquivir, and

COLUMBUS

at its head was placed a subtle churchman, Archdeacon Fonseca. For some reason, but probably on account of his arrogance and unreasonable demands, he became the obstinate enemy of the Admiral, and during his long continuance in an office which controlled the destinies of the colonial dependencies, he never failed to oppose any who ventured their pretensions above his own. He regarded Columbus as an upstart adventurer, who by accident had brought to light a country which had been until then in darkness. When, therefore, the man who less than two years before was a ragged beggar at the foot of the throne, applied for lackeys and footmen, butlers and pages, as if he were, indeed, one born into the purple, he refused to sanction the extravagance. As Columbus was then in the heyday of his career, and had convinced even the cold and unresponsive Ferdinand that he had found for him another kingdom greater in extent than Spain, Fonseca was reprimanded, and from this incident dated his inveterate hostility or aversion. He did not, however, dispute any reasonable requisitions made by Columbus, and preparations for another voyage went on so rapidly (armed as were

A TRIUMPHAL JOURNEY

both Fonseca and the Admiral with authority to impress any mariners they needed, and take by force all the vessels required) that by the early autumn of 1493 a large fleet was ready to sail on a second voyage of discovery.

XI

SECOND VOYAGE AND FIRST SETTLEMENT

1493

THE second voyage of Columbus to the New World disclosed far more beautiful islands than those which had greeted him on the first, and his "landfall," in the chain of the Caribbees, was vastly more impressive than that of Guanahani or San Salvador. He had departed from the port of Cadiz with a fleet of seventeen vessels, including three large carracks of more than a hundred tons burden each and fourteen caravels. These were laden with everything considered necessary to the planting of a colony in the wilderness, and with a great many things altogether useless and superfluous. Although it had been intended to take out not more than a thousand persons in all, the number that finally embarked, including volunteers and "stowaways" (lured by the wonderful stories of an idle life in that glorious country,

SECOND VOYAGE—FIRST SETTLEMENT

where gold was to be had for the seeking), was scarcely less than fifteen hundred.

Old Spain, in fact, might have been almost depopulated of its men had there been ships enough to carry all who wished to go. There were, besides the sailors, priests, monks, and cavaliers; soldiers who had fought against the Moors, and now were looking for other peoples to conquer, other fields in which to garner fame and golden harvests. The veritable weapons which had been used against the Moors, such as lances, arquebuses, halberds, and the defensive armor—helms, corselets, coats of mail—were taken from their repositories and furbished up anew for this coming conquest of the transatlantic heathen. The nobility, as well as the commonalty, contributed its quota of adventurers; and such was the enthusiasm aboard the ships, such the display of wealth and warlike accoutrement, that a most notable contrast was afforded to the dubious departure from Palos, on the first voyage, scarcely fourteen months before.

By sunset of September 25, 1493, the walls of Cadiz were lost to view. On October 13th, Ferro, in the Canaries (at which Columbus had touched for wood, water, and

COLUMBUS

live-stock), was left behind, and the course was shaped towards the Carib islands, of which the Admiral had been informed by the Indians he had captured in the Gulf of Samana. By sailing more southerly than on the aimless first voyage, he avoided somewhat the Sargasso's vast expanse of seaweeds, and sooner received the strength of the trade-winds. Except for a single tropical tempest, encountered in the last week of October (during which the sailors were treated to a display of "St. Elmo's fire," playing in circles of lambent flame around the flag-ship's topmasts), nothing occurred to mar the serenity of that second outward voyage from Spain. Signs of land were noticed November 1st, and at dawn of the 2d, a gloriously beautiful island, like an apparition of enchantment, rose to greet the eager voyagers. This vision of beauty, in the shape of a lofty mountain, clad with varying green from sea-line to summit, was called by Columbus, Dominica, from having been first seen on a Sunday. By this name it is still known, and lies about midway the crescent-shaped chain of islands called the Lesser Antilles, or Caribbees. It should interest the reader to note that here, to-day,

SECOND VOYAGE—FIRST SETTLEMENT

on the eastern slopes of that mountain seen by Columbus in November, 1493, resides a remnant of the Carib race, or people, from which the islands took their name. He could not land on the "windward," or Atlantic coast of the island, the seas there were so rough, the shores so difficult of approach, but kept on towards another smaller isle, to which flocks of screaming parrots were winging their way. Here he found a "lee" and landed, taking possession with much ceremony, and giving to the island the name of his flag-ship, *Mariegalante*. The shores were fringed with fragrant forests, the breezes from which came off to the fleet as sweet as gales from paradise; but another and larger island lured Columbus on. Three thousand feet above the sea yawned the crater of a cloud-capped volcano, its lower slopes and shoulders covered with magnificent forests, while its shores contained the villages of Indians, who fled at the approach of the Spaniards. In a bay of this island the Admiral cast anchor, and sent a boat ashore to find the natives.

Fortunately for some of his company, who were lost in the forest several days, most of the Indian warriors were away on a

COLUMBUS

war expedition to the northward. Only the women and children remained, but some of the females were so fierce, so skilled in the use of their barbaric weapons, fighting like veritable demons, that they could not be captured alive. Their abandoned huts were visited and found to contain cotton hammocks, carved calabashes, spear-heads and ponderous battle-axes of stone, poisoned arrows, and domesticated parrots. Here, also, *the Spaniards found what they considered undoubted evidences that these newly discovered Indians were "man-eating cannibals," for from the rafters of the larger huts hung the smoke-dried limbs and heads of human beings! By leaping to this conclusion that the Caribs were cannibals, Columbus fastened a stigma upon those brave people which for many years operated to their hurt. Those smoke-blackened relics which he found in the huts of the island called by the natives *Turuqueira*, and which he named Guadalupe, were merely the remains of their deceased relatives and ancestors, which they thus piously preserved in the manner prescribed by Carib custom. Columbus made their alleged propensity to devour human beings an excuse for their

SECOND VOYAGE—FIRST SETTLEMENT

capture and enslavement, whenever he had opportunity. That was not often, however, for the wary Caribs were rarely found off their guard, and, when discovered, it was more frequently the savage than the Spaniard that came off the conqueror.

Still, the bad name clung to them; and moreover, says an old writer, from their generic name we have derived the term *canniba*, cannibal, meaning in the aboriginal speech a man-eater. "And finding in *canniba* the word resembling *Khan*," says this writer, "Columbus was of the opinion that these pretended man-eaters were in reality merely subjects of the great *Khan of Cathay*, who for a long time had been scanning these seas in search of slaves." Thus we see Columbus still in search of evidence to prove that he had arrived at the outlying possessions of the Grand Khan, for whom, in fact, he was seeking to the end of his days.

Sailing onward, after leaving the island of the great volcano, where he beheld waterfalls falling, as it were, out of the clouds, and where the first Caribs had been found in their native haunts, Columbus brought other and equally beautiful islands to view, one after another. Most of them were sky-

COLUMBUS

piercing mountains, covered with virgin forests, sheltering bays, and harbors in which large fleets might lie at anchor. He gave names to all, as the caravels and carracks sailed past their gloomy headlands, or lay idle with their spars and hulls mirrored in calm waters. The island of Montserrat succeeded Guadalupe, both of which he named after monasteries in old Spain. Nevis was the snow-topped mountain; St. Christopher he called after himself and the fabled giant who bore the infant Jesus on his shoulders; Antigua, after a city in Spain; Redonda, because it is round; Santa Cruz, in memory of the holy cross; after which succeeded St. Thomas and St. John, with a great group northwardly which was named the Virgins, in memory of the good St. Ursula and her martyred followers.

Thus sailed the Spaniards through that chain of gemlike islands, passing from one vision of beauty to another, lost in admiration of their charms, and yet hardly daring to explore them, because their destination was that solitary fort on Haiti's northern shore, to the relief of which they were hastening. They tarried at Santa Cruz long enough to skirmish with some Caribs, whom

SECOND VOYAGE—FIRST SETTLEMENT

a boatload of sailors surprised in a canoe, while they gazed in wonder upon the great winged vessels sailing past—the first they had ever seen. Rounding a great rock, the boat dashed against the canoe and overturned it, throwing the savages into the sea. They were not a whit dismayed, however, but, recovering their bows and arrows, sent a flight of missiles among the Spaniards, wounding several. One of these warriors was a woman, and might well have been queen of the Amazons, of whom Columbus was in search, so fierce and warlike was she.

Half submerged in the sea as she was, she sent an arrow quite through a Spanish target, which a sailor held up for his protection; while a young man with her, having a lion-like and savage face, did the same. They were only taken after their missiles were exhausted, weak from loss of blood, and even then they fought with tooth and nail. Even after they were on board ship, bound and helpless, their very aspect of ferocity made the timid tremble with affright. Such as these, the brave and fearless rovers of the Caribbean Sea, the Admiral was fortunate in having avoided on his first voyage to the West Indies, though he had

COLUMBUS

met some of the milder ones at Samana. Those that he took in the skirmish mentioned, he sent home to Spain by the returning ships of the fleet, with a recommendation to Isabella that they be sold as slaves, somewhat as a recompense for the cost of the expedition, and also "for the good of their souls."

Near the termination of this voyage through the Caribbees, in which scores of beautiful islands had been discovered, there came into view one larger than the others, vast, forest-covered, mountainous — known to the natives as *Borinquen*, and renamed by Columbus, San Juan de Puerto Rico, or St. John of the Noble Port. The harbor from which this island derived its name is now called Aguadilla, and lies on the west coast of Puerto Rico — the only island of importance in the West Indies now belonging to the United States. The fleet watered here from a bountiful spring which still gushes forth beneath the cocoa palms, and then the Admiral steered across the channel to Hispaniola, or Haiti, the eastern coast of which he skimmed most hurriedly, being anxious to arrive at Navidad. A brief tarry was made, however, at the Bay of Arrows,

SECOND VOYAGE—FIRST SETTLEMENT

where had occurred the only skirmish of the first voyage, and one of the Indians, who had then been carried to Spain, was here put ashore, finely clad and laden with gifts for the cacique, to whom he took a message of greeting from the Admiral. He disappeared, and was never seen again, plunging with all his finery into the great forest, which received him into its secret fastnesses.

On, on sped the fleet, beyond the Bay of Arrows, passing the "Port of the Silver Mountain," but pausing only at Monte Cristi and the Rio del Oro. On the grassy bank of a tributary of this river, as some of the company were looking for gold, they found the corpse of a man, evidently a Spaniard, with a rope of Spanish grass around his neck, as if he had been strangled, and near him the body of a boy. This sad discovery was made when less than a day's sail distant from the fortress of Navidad, so that the gloomy apprehensions to which it gave rise were quickly verified. The fleet arrived off Guarico and Navidad after dark, on November 27th. No light appeared on shore, no answering report came from the fort, when guns were fired on board the flag-ship. Only

COLUMBUS

their echoes replied and the stillness on shore was of the grave. The hours passed by, filled with gloom and suspense; but about midnight a canoe was discovered hovering near, and, being hailed, the Indians in it told a tale of disaster. They said the fort had been attacked by the dread Caonabo, cacique of the Goldstone Country, who had massacred every Spaniard left alive, after a sickness which had wasted them away. Not only had the fierce cacique destroyed the fort and Spaniards, but also the village of Guarico, having wounded Guacanagari and killed many of his people.

Not an eye was closed in sleep that night on board the ships, and in the morning, before the sun had risen above the eastern hills, a search was under way on the site of the fort. It had been burned to the ground, and amid its charred ruins Columbus sadly groped for some indication of the garrison's fate. Cannon were fired, soldiers were sent into the enclosing forest, the few Indians discovered were closely questioned; but all, all in vain. To this day the fate of Fort Navidad's garrison remains a mystery. By some it was surmised that Cacique Guacanagari had instigated the massacre, and

SECOND VOYAGE—FIRST SETTLEMENT

called Caonabo down from his mountain stronghold to commit the bloody deed; but it was probably the result of an independent foray by that savage chieftain of the Cibao country. That Guacanagari had sufficient cause for an attack upon the Spaniards, no apologist for them has had the hardihood to deny; for they ranged the villages with licentious intent, and deprived the chieftain and his subjects of provisions as well as of gold. Humanly speaking, they probably deserved their fate; but it is a saddening thought that the first garrison of white men ever left in America should have been massacred by an outraged people in retaliation for atrocities they had committed.

The fort had been plundered before it was set on fire, and in some of the houses near were found several articles which had belonged to the garrison, as well as an anchor that had been taken from the *Santa Maria*. Caonabo had evidently tried to carry it off, as well as the lombards, but had been compelled to abandon them on account of their weight. What became of the cannon we do not know; but what is supposed to have been the veritable anchor that was taken ashore from the wrecked

COLUMBUS

vessel, Christmas morning, 1492, was recovered near the site of the fort, by the writer of these lines, and sent for exhibition at the Columbian Exposition of 1893. It was found on a deserted plantation not far from Guarico, where resided the generous Guacanagari, who welcomed Columbus when in extremity, and gave him the first gold which he obtained in any quantity.

Columbus could not believe in the guilt of Guacanagari, in connection with the massacre of the garrison, and when, at last, he emerged from the forest, whither he had fled at the coming of the fleet, he treated him with consideration. He had been wounded in conflict with Caonabo, showing in evidence a contusion on his leg, which he said caused him great pain and had delayed his coming more promptly to greet his friends of the year before. He was shown the various wonders aboard the ships, including the horses, which amazed and terrified him greatly, as he had never seen any beasts larger than raccoons, or "dumb dogs," which had their habitat in Haiti. He also viewed the prisoners taken in the southern islands, including the Caribs, who appeared so fierce and formidable, even in their

SECOND VOYAGE—FIRST SETTLEMENT

chains, that he trembled and shrank away in horror.

There was another group, consisting mostly of Indian women, who had come aboard ship at Puerto Rico, which excited feelings of a different nature in his breast. Among them was a fine-looking maiden of queenly presence, to whom he spoke gently and frequently, as she seemed to have captivated his heart at first sight. None of the Spaniards understood what they said to each other, but the purport of the conversation may be divined from the fact that the next night, while the ship was wrapped in darkness and the crew slept, the queen and her companions slipped overboard and swam ashore. They were pursued by sailors in a boat, but, though the distance was several miles, they succeeded in landing and escaping to the forest. At the same time Chief Guacanagari, who had made a beacon-fire on shore to guide them, also disappeared with all his family, and was not seen again by the Spaniards until a long time afterwards.

The gloomy termination to a voyage that had begun so auspiciously preyed upon the mind of the Admiral to such an extent that

COLUMBUS

he could not bring himself to found a settlement at Guarico, as he had originally intended. While there were most attractive sites for one farther westward, such as in the Vale of Paradise, he chose rather to consider the vicinity to the gold region, Cibao, than natural beauty of location. So he retraced his course to the eastward, intending to land at the Port of the Silver Mountain (now known as Puerto Plata), which would have been a very desirable location. A head wind, however, threw him into a spacious though shallow harbor guarded by coral reefs, into which a winding river discharged its waters. This stream, Columbus was told by the Indians, had its source in the Cibao, or Goldstone region, to which this harbor was so near as to be its natural port. This information was sufficient to decide the Admiral to commence his settlement at this spot, though in itself it had few natural advantages, being a great breastwork of coral rock in front of dense forests, with a white-sanded beach on one side and a river on the other. It was then December 7th, and, having been for more than ten weeks on board ship, the weary crews and passengers were anxious to get firm land beneath their

SECOND VOYAGE—FIRST SETTLEMENT

feet. They went ashore most joyfully, and with alacrity set themselves to the building of their city. The carracks and caravels discharged their freightage—of soldiers, cavaliers, priests, monks, horses, sheep, hogs, plants for cultivation, provisions, munitions, and articles for trade and barter—upon a beautiful beach between two coral bluffs. This beach is less than three hundred feet in length, curves like a scimitar, and is overlooked by an abrupt headland which is the sea-front of a wooded plain that extends back to the rocky hills.

It was upon this beach Columbus landed, on December 7, 1493, and upon this headland that he laid the foundations for the first European city in the New World. He called it Isabella, after his royal patroness, and erected here a church, a "king's house," or melting establishment, where the gold was assayed as it was brought from the mountains, and a residence for himself. These were built of stone obtained on the spot, as also was a circular, battlemented tower, later erected for defence. The dwellings of the settlers generally were made of frail material, such as reeds or palm leaves, plastered together with mud, and have long

COLUMBUS

since disappeared; but the more substantial structures remained intact for many years, and not long ago could have been traced by their ruins and foundation-walls, though overgrown with tropical vegetation.

XII

EXPEDITIONS IN SEARCH OF GOLD

1494

ISABELLA was an unfortunate settlement from the start, situated as it was between deep forests and the sea, with no means of access or egress save by the boats, which Columbus controlled. Unused as they were to the severe labor imposed by him, and attacked by the diseases so prevalent in a newly opened region in the tropics, the cavaliers, who had come out with great hopes and high expectations, soon became disheartened, then rebellious. A sedition was started which became very serious. It was promoted by the Pope's apostolic vicar, Father Boyle, who was at the head of the first religious establishment in the New World, and who felt the exactions imposed upon one of his importance by the Admiral. In fact, almost the entire company was disposed to murmur, even rebel, against this "upstart

COLUMBUS

of a foreigner," Columbus, who had drawn them into the wilderness by his exaggerated stories of wealth untold within the secret recesses of the interior. They had expected to find the precious metal lying about on the ground, and with their little stores of trinkets had hoped to barter with the natives so profitably to themselves that they should be able to return to Spain in a few months with wealth to suffice them a lifetime. Instead, they were compelled to toil at menial tasks, to build forts and dwellings, even to cook their own food, while the elusive gold still remained in possession of Mother Nature. As the city had been planted by Columbus solely with a view to its nearness to the gold region, and as his enemies would prove to the crown that he had committed a blunder at the outset unless he could produce vast quantities of the precious metal, he sent expeditions in search of it as soon as circumstances would warrant him in doing so.

Behold, then, the first of the gold-hunting parties that ever penetrated the interior of Hispaniola and found the grains and nuggets in their beds of sand and gravel. It was commanded by a reckless and daring

EXPEDITIONS IN SEARCH OF GOLD

adventurer, Alonzo de Ojeda, who made a name for himself in the annals of early America, and who was the first to come into personal contact with that valiant cacique who had massacred the garrison at Navidad, Caonabo the Carib. He lived in the mountains of the Cibao (which Columbus still believed might be the veritable Cipango), and his title, by which the Indians knew him, of "Lord of the Golden House," indicated the opulence of his kingdom.

Behold Ojeda and his little band of daring cavaliers as they sallied forth from Isabella forded the river, and sped across the fruitful plains that extended from the sea-coast to the mountains. Mounted on neighing steeds, like themselves eager for a dash into the country; clad in corselets of steel, with helmets on their heads and swords on their hips, they presented a terrible spectacle to the innocent Indians, whose peaceful villages were scattered over the plain, and who fled in wild terror before them. These primitive people had never seen white men before, they had never seen horses before, and they mistook beast and rider for a terrible monster which had come up from its lair in the ocean to ravage and destroy.

COLUMBUS

The rugged mountains were crossed, the valley of the Yaqui was reached, and in the sands of its headwaters Ojeda and his comrades found nuggets and grains of gold, with which they returned to Columbus, and which he sent back to Spain in the seven ships that sailed on February 2, 1494. With them went a promise that the next shipment should be at least a ton, for the riches of the country seemed inexhaustible. But the sovereigns would not always content themselves with promises; the enemies of the Admiral were already at work undermining his reputation at home. The gold could only be obtained by toilsome marches into a hostile country; but there was a source of profit ready at hand, in the natives of the islands, some of whom he sent back in the returning ships to be sold as slaves.

There were more Caribs (whom he conveniently branded as "cannibals") than was good for the peace of the country; but if they could be exchanged for cattle and horses, of which the settlement was greatly in need, a double purpose might be achieved. "The royal treasury would be greatly enriched, and a vast number of souls would be snatched from perdition, and carried, as it were, by

EXPEDITIONS IN SEARCH OF GOLD

main force to heaven!" The Queen did not approve of this means of reimbursing the crown for its outlay; but it was a long time before Columbus learned of her decision, and meanwhile he went forth on another expedition, ostensibly for gold, but with the intention of making captives of Caonabo and his ferocious subjects.

The many vexations attendant upon the founding of the settlement and the pacification of the malcontents had caused Columbus to fall seriously ill; but on his recovery he organized the second expedition, consisting of all the soldiers and cavaliers who could bear arms and endure the rigors of a march into and through the rugged mountain country. The total population of Isabella at this time was about one thousand men, and, leaving behind the sick and the laborers, Columbus selected about five hundred of the choicest spirits for this expedition, which he was to command in person. They marched across the plain, rejoicing to escape their irksome confinement amid the forests and mangrove swamps, and, with banners flying, drums beating, and trumpets sending forth their inspiring sounds, penetrated the obscurity of the forests, which

COLUMBUS

glittered with helm and corselet, lance and sword and arquebuse. That was the first day's march; the second took them through the Yaqui mountain range, where the enthusiastic cavaliers opened a road which to this day bears the name they gave it of *el Puerto de los Hidalgos*, or the Gentlemen's Pass.

The Spaniards who marched through the defile cleared by the cavaliers then saw before them the magnificent valley of the Yaqui, where verdant plain and sombre forest alternated, strung upon a noble river's silver chain. They did not know it, they were not then aware of it, but this was the same river seen by Columbus in January, the year before, and named by him the *Rio del Oro*, because of the golden flakes which clung to his water-casks, and which gave promise of a rich country to be found at or near its source. Two days longer they continued their march, meeting everywhere with hospitality from the natives, who lived here in peace and contentment. They were at first afraid of the terrible horses, and of the men in shining armor; but when once their confidence was won they were only too glad to serve the invading strangers and place

before them all the wealth of their homes and their mines.

On the evening of the second day the Spaniards had reached the confines of the Cibao, a stony and mountainous region, the crystal streams of which ran over sands glistening with gold. Convinced that he was now at the portal of the Golden House—though he had seen no evidences of its lord's existence—Columbus concluded to penetrate the interior no farther, but to erect here a fort to serve as an outpost on the frontier. He chose a headland half surrounded by a river, in the bed of which he found jasper, porphyry, and grains of gold. Here he raised a wooden tower, which was protected in front by the curving stream, and in rear by a moat. This, the second fort erected in the wilds, was called *Santo Tomas de Yanico*, or St. Thomas of the River Yanique.

While the fort was in process of construction an active exploration of the surrounding region went on, and glowing reports of its richness were brought in daily. When the Indians learned the desire of the white strangers to obtain gold, they ran to the rivers, and, sifting the sands, brought in a large supply. One nugget was discovered

COLUMBUS

nine ounces in weight, and for another weighing an ounce the Indian who found it considered himself richly rewarded by receiving a hawk's-bell in exchange.

When completed, the fort was placed in charge of Pedro Margarite, a knight of the noble order of Santiago, and under him were left fifty-six men of mettle. Then Columbus leisurely returned to Isabella, lingering by the way to cultivate friendly relations with the natives; but hardly had he reached the coast than a messenger from Margarite was at his heels, with the startling tidings that the Indians of the mountains had suddenly become unfriendly and were withdrawing from the vicinity of the fort. The fate of Navidad's devoted garrison, it would seem, must have been forgotten by the soldiers of St. Thomas, for no sooner had the Admiral left them than they gave themselves up to the same passions that had wrought the destruction of their compatriots under Diego de Arana. Columbus sent them a reinforcement of fifty men, and this served temporarily to deter the hostiles; but the fire kindled by Spanish atrocities was smouldering, and the fierce Caonabo was already massing his warriors for a descent upon the

EXPEDITIONS IN SEARCH OF GOLD

fort. He had kept ominously silent since the massacre at Navidad, even holding aloof when his territory was invaded by the Spaniards; but they were soon to hear from him, soon to learn that not all the caciques were like the timid Guacanagari.

In order to relieve the congested condition of the city at the coast, and to give scope for the enterprise of his chafing cavaliers, Columbus decided to dispose the bulk of his troops in the interior, where he could not only be supported by the natives, but conduct a protracted search for gold. So he sent the first detachment, a little army of about four hundred men, under Alonzo de Ojeda, to relieve Margarite, who was instructed to make a military tour of the island. Ojeda was a gallant but headstrong soldier, and learning, while on the way, that some Spaniards had been robbed by Indians at a ford of the Yaqui, he seized the thieves, cut off their ears, and sent them, together with their cacique, who had shielded them, to Columbus for further punishment. The Admiral had them conducted in chains to the public square of Isabella, where, after making a pretence of preparing for their execution, he released them, with an admonition

COLUMBUS

to behave better in the future. This act of Ojeda's was perhaps the first recorded one of deliberate cruelty towards the Indians by the Spaniards; but it was to be followed by innumerable others.

Having in mind his obligations to the crown relating to the discovery of new lands, as well as the founding of settlements, Columbus set sail, on the last week of April, 1494, for the purpose of finishing his exploration of Cuba's southern coast. He left the settlement in charge of his brother, Diego, and, with three caravels, departed in search of new adventures and new lands. During this voyage he suffered many hardships and made many interesting discoveries; but we will not immediately follow him, for occurrences in Hispaniola more urgently claim our attention. Captain Margarite, to whom Columbus had sent a letter of advice, cautioning him to deal gently with the Indians, and by no means to mistreat them, from the very first departed from the course recommended by his superior, and committed arbitrary acts that caused a rebellion which became almost universal.

We have thus far dealt with only two of the five caciques, or great chiefs, who ruled

EXPEDITIONS IN SEARCH OF GOLD

the natives of Hispaniola at the coming of Columbus; but there were several others in that island, which was called by them *Babeque* or *Qisqueya*. They held their office by hereditary rights, and each was absolute within his own territory, except that Caonabo frequently invaded the districts of the coast. The first cacique to be encountered by the Spaniards—as we have already noticed—was the unfortunate Guacanagari, who held sway over the northwestern part of the island, or in what is now known as Haiti, and near whose town of Guarico the *Santa Maria* was wrecked. At the Yaqui River began the possessions of another cacique, Guarionex, extending eastward probably as far as the Bay of Samana. The third caciquedom was ruled by the savage Caonabo, whose capital was at Managua, on the southern slopes of the Cibao Mountains. The fourth province belonged to Cotubana, and was called Higüey or Cigüey. It was with warriors from this province, probably, that the Spaniards had their first skirmish, at the Bay of Arrows, in the month of January, 1493, when on their homeward voyage. The fifth and last province to be mentioned was known as Xaragua, compris-

COLUMBUS

ing all the western and southwestern portions of the island. It was very populous, and under the sway of Cacique Behechio, whose sister was Caonabo's wife, and celebrated for her beauty. In all, it was estimated, more than a million Indians occupied this great and beautiful island, where they lived in comparative peace and content, until so rudely disturbed by the Spaniards.

Although Columbus himself was indirectly responsible for the atrocities which ended only in the complete extinction of these people, yet it was Margarite who commenced the course of action which really brought about their rebellious conduct and eventual enslavement. Instead of making a well-regulated tour of military exploration, he conducted his soldiers to the most populous and agreeable villages of the interior, where he quartered them upon the people, whom he plundered without mercy. When their complaints reached Don Diego Columbus, he sent a remonstrance, which was unheeded by Margarite, who at last became wearied of dwelling in the wilderness and departed for Isabella. There he found powerful partisans among the cavaliers, who also induced the head ecclesiastic, Father Boyle, to take

EXPEDITIONS IN SEARCH OF GOLD

sides with them. The upshot of the matter was that Margarite, Boyle, and others of the disaffected, seized some ships in the harbor and departed in them for Spain, to lay their grievances before the Crown.

Left without a commander, the soldiers formerly under Margarite split up into roving bands of robbers, wandering over the country in search of plunder, and committing such terrible excesses that even the mild and patient Indians were provoked to retaliation. Finding the Spaniards in small parties, scattered here and there, they fell upon them with overwhelming numbers and put many to death. Chief Guatiguana, a subcacique within the territory of Guarionex, was the first to show the natives their strength, by killing ten licentious soldiers who had forced themselves upon his people, and then setting fire to a hut containing forty-six more. The Indians flocked to his standard and invested the little fort of Magdalena, which had been built in the neighborhood of what is now Santiago. But the most formidable enemy of the Spaniards who then took the field was the redoubtable Caonabo, from whom alone they had expected trouble, and who secretly and

COLUMBUS

suddenly descended upon the fort of St. Thomas.

He and ten thousand of his warriors, armed with bows and arrows, stone-headed lances and war-clubs, surrounded the fort and attempted to carry it by storm. But they had in Ojeda a wary as well as courageous foe to deal with, one who had received his war-training in conflict with the Moors. He and his men were alert, and, intrenched within their moat-surrounded tower, well provisioned and armed, they bade the Carib chief defiance. Finding it impossible to take the fort by assault, Caonabo finally settled down to a siege, and for thirty days maintained so close an investment of this isolated tower in the wilderness with his savage warriors, that its occupants were reduced to the verge of famine.

During this investment, many were the forays the daring Ojeda led from the fort, in which he defeated every art and stratagem of the savage, and, amid flights of darts and arrows, bore himself so bravely that he won the rude chief's admiration. Neither prevailed in open combat, however, and at last the Carib wearied of the siege and drew off his forces to the mountains.

EXPEDITIONS IN SEARCH OF GOLD

The sequel to this strange encounter followed after the return of the Admiral from Cuba, several months later; but we cannot do better than refer to it here, on account of the bearing it has upon the chivalrous daring of Ojeda and the innate nobility of Caonabo. The latter retired from the fort, but after a brief rest at his capital returned to ravage the territory adjacent to Isabella. Accompanied by his brother-in-law, Behechio, cacique of Xaragua, he successively visited all the caciques of the island, and organized an offensive league against the Spaniards. All except Guacanagari joined the league; but he, recreant to fraternal obligations and ties of blood, not only refused to assist, but informed Columbus of the conspiracy. But for him it might have succeeded, for it was wide-spread, and the movements of its organizers were veiled in secrecy. When they learned of his betrayal, Caonabo and Behechio made a descent upon his capital, killed some of his wives and relatives, and carried away others into captivity; but the misguided chieftain still remained devoted to the Spaniards, and thereby hastened his end.

Captain Ojeda was in Isabella at the time

COLUMBUS

Caonabo was ravaging the country, and, being appealed to by Columbus, he offered to deliver the Carib into his hands, dead or alive. Taking with him ten companions, as rash and daring as himself, he plunged into the trackless forests beyond St. Thomas, and finally reached the stronghold of his foe, by whom he was warmly received, without a thought of treachery. This stronghold was at Maguana, on the southern slopes of the Cibao Mountains. Caonabo was promised, if he would return with his visitors, the bell that hung in the church-tower at Isabella. As he had heard its clear, mellow tones ringing through the forest when prowling about the settlement, he greatly desired to possess it, and consented to accompany Ojeda to the coast. But his warriors were also to go, he said; and several thousand assembled for the purpose.

Ojeda was puzzled, but he met the situation, and soon found means for accomplishing his purpose by stratagem. As they were encamped on the bank of the river Yegua one day, he exhibited to Caonabo a pair of handcuffs, made of steel, but bright as silver, which, he told the chief, were royal ornaments sent him by the King. To obtain

EXPEDITIONS IN SEARCH OF GOLD

them properly, he must first slip them on his wrists, then mount behind the Spaniard on his horse. The unsuspecting Indian complied, and, having thus rendered his foe defenceless, the artful Ojeda clapped spurs to his steed, and away they went, on a mad race through the forest. The warriors raced after them, but Ojeda's comrades beat them back with their swords, then closed about their leader, and swept down towards the coast. The journey was long and dangerous, but that strange cavalcade accomplished it in safety, and at its ending Ojeda delivered his captive to Columbus, by whom he was placed in a dungeon. He was kept there many months, and throughout his captivity invariably greeted his captor with deference, but treated the Admiral with contempt, saying one was a brave warrior, the other a coward.

XIII

JAMAICA DISCOVERED

1494

LEAVING Isabella in three caravels, on April 24, 1494, Columbus revisited Monte Cristi and Navidad, thence standing away for Cape Maysi, the eastern end of Cuba and his point of departure for Haiti on the previous voyage. Coasting the shores of Cuba westerly from Maysi, he discovered a magnificent, lakelike harbor, which he called *Puerto Grande*, but which now bears its native name of Guantanamo, and is occupied as a naval station by the United States of America. He remained here several days, trafficking with the natives, who were so amazed at the sight of the great winged vessels that they crowded to the shores by thousands, and so generous that they gave the Spaniards freely all they had. At one spot within the harbor-mouth, the latter found large quantities of fish, iguanas,

JAMAICA DISCOVERED

and utias suspended in the smoke of fires kindled on the ground, and, being half famished, they devoured them to their bones, without exciting the ire of the Indians, who seemed greatly pleased that the strangers should have enjoyed the banquet they were preparing for themselves. They went off to their gardens in the forest and returned with cassava, delicious fruits, and calabashes of water, which they offered these beings, whom they regarded as descended from the skies.

Beyond Guantanamo (passing by that stretch of coast made famous in the Spanish-American War of 1898), Columbus spied the entrance to another harbor, the peerless port of Santiago de Cuba, where a settlement was made twenty years later by Velasquez, and whence, in 1518, Cortés sailed forth for his conquest of Mexico. He did not explore the shores of its beautiful bay, though the natives were numerous and hospitable, but, learning from them that *Babeque*, the country of gold, lay farther to the south, he soon set out in quest of it.

Departing from the coast of Cuba, May 3d, standing boldly out into the open sea, he soon brought to view the towering peaks of Jamaica's central mountain chain. The

COLUMBUS

highest of these peaks rises to an altitude of seventy - three hundred feet, the crowning pinnacle of a multitude of others, sheltering within their forest-covered ridges more than a hundred beautiful valleys, each one with a stream embowered in tropic vegetation. The harbors on its north coast were as numerous as in Cuba, and from one of them darted out to meet the fleet a gigantic canoe, leading a convoy of seventy more, filled with savages decked with war-paint and adorned with feathers. They saluted the Spanish ships with fierce yells and gestures, brandishing their lances and shooting arrows, so Columbus stood off from shore, and later made another harbor, which he called Santa Maria. Here he was saluted by another party of naked savages, many of whom were painted black, their heads covered with gay feathers. They disputed the entrance of the caravels into the harbor (where they were to be careened and overhauled), and Columbus ordered out the small boats, the soldiers in which dispersed the Indians by a discharge of arrows from their cross-bows. Then they landed and let loose upon the fleeing savages a fierce blood-hound, which overtook and mangled a large number before

JAMAICA DISCOVERED

its fury was appeased. This is the first instance, it is said, of a blood-hound being used against the Indians of America; but it was not the last, sad to relate, for thousands of poor wretches afterwards met horrible deaths through being torn to pieces by this loathsome beast. Blood-hounds were last used in Jamaica, for the purpose of hunting human beings, nearly three hundred years later, when a pack was imported from Cuba to aid English soldiers in tracing the maroons, or runaway negroes, to their lairs in the Blue Mountains.

The Indians of Jamaica were more warlike than any others Columbus had met, except the Caribs of the Lesser Antilles, whom they greatly resembled. Like them, they performed long voyages in canoes, some of which were nearly a hundred feet in length, by eight or ten in breadth. They were hollowed from the trunks of gigantic *ceiba* trees, the wood of which is soft and easily hewn with the rude stone implements possessed by the Indians. Columbus called this magnificent island Santiago, but it is yet known by its aboriginal name *Xamaica*, or Land of Springs and Streams. He coasted the north shore westward as far as Montego Bay,

COLUMBUS

which he called *Buontempo*, or Fairweather Gulf, and whence, the wind being unfavorable for further coasting, he set sail once again for Cuba. On May 18th the glorious peak of Turquino rose, pinnacle-like, above the clouds, and then a headland appeared, which the Admiral called Cape Cruz, a name it still retains. This was the third approach he had made to Cuba, and he still believed it to be a continent, rather than an island, as he sailed in and out of deep gulfs and bays, the misty shores stretching interminably before him. Westward from Cape Cruz he became entangled in that labyrinth of isles and islets which still bears the name he gave it of *Los Jardines de la Reina*, or Gardens of the Queen. With their shores of coral, lofty forests, and verdurous aspect generally, they so much resembled the Asiatic archipelago described by Marco Polo, that Columbus was more than ever convinced he had reached the outposts of Asia.

Fragrant, spicy odors were wafted to his caravels from off shore; vast flocks of flamingoes and other brilliantly colored birds winged their way above the strands, or stood, statue-like, on sands and reefs, while the waters were alive with fish of rainbow

JAMAICA DISCOVERED

colors, vying with the parrots and humming-birds in hue. Columbus was amazed at the wonders he saw, but nothing interested him more than the native method of *fishing with a fish*. Instead of using hooks and lines, the Indians tied a supple vine to the tail of a peculiar fish called the remora, the head of which is furnished with sucking-disks, by means of which it attaches itself to whatever it meets. Not only the smaller fish were taken in this manner, but (according to Columbus) sharks and sea-turtles.

Whatever they had at the time Columbus met them, the natives of these islands generously gave him: fish, parrots, "dumb dogs" (now extinct), and wood-pigeons of delicious flavor, on account of the spices upon which they fed. In this manner voyaging, now threading the mazes of far-stretching archipelagoes, now the guests of hospitable Indians, the Spaniards sailed almost to the western end of Cuba; but turned about a little too soon to discover its insular character. When, one day, an archer who had strayed into the wilds came running back with the report that he had seen men clothed in long, white garments, who had flitted like ghosts among the trees, but whom his fears

COLUMBUS

had prevented him from accosting, Columbus was convinced that he had arrived on the confines of a civilized country, probably the famous Mangi, the richest of the Grand Khan's Oriental provinces. Nothing further was seen of these "men in white garments," however, by the party that was sent in search of them, and they were probably merely white cranes, or herons, which the imagination of the archer had distorted into human shapes.

Columbus had visions of a voyage around the "Golden Peninsula," across the Indian Ocean, to the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, provided he could continue on far enough to the westward; but his three caravels were insufficient for such a voyage—their seams had opened, their rigging and cables were worn—so he was persuaded to abandon the attempt. But it was necessary, in order to sustain his contention that he had really arrived at the eastern coast of Asia, to receive some confirmation of the fact from his fellow-voyagers, so he compelled them all to sign a paper to this effect, drawn up by the notary of the fleet. They all made deposition, from the Admiral down to the cabin-boys, that they had no doubt whatever that Cuba was a con-

JAMAICA DISCOVERED

continent, the "beginning and ending of Asia"; and whoever should recant, if an officer, should incur a penalty of ten thousand maravedis, or, if of inferior rank, should receive a hundred lashes and have his tongue cut out. As Columbus attested, and compelled his sailors to attest, so he really believed, even to the day of his death, that, instead of discovering a country entirely new and unknown, he had found the way to the eastern coast of the Old World. Thus he belittled his own discovery, and went around chasing a will-o'-the-wisp; which should prove a warning to those who would make everything conform to a theory.

This paper was drawn up and signed while the voyagers were in the waters subsequently called the Sea of Cortés, sailing southward from which they discovered a lofty island which Columbus named Evangelista, now the Isle of Pines, where they anchored and took in supplies of wood and water. Bearing up again towards the coast of Cuba, they retraced their course to an Indian settlement at the mouth of a fine river, the cacique of which received them joyously. His subjects brought in from the country vast stores of provisions, such as utias, pigeons, cassava

COLUMBUS

bread, and delicious fruits. After the Spaniards had feasted to their hearts' content, they held religious services in a natural grove, and the cacique was profoundly impressed. After they were over, he addressed Columbus as follows: "I am told that thou hast lately come to these lands with a mighty force, and hast subdued many countries, spreading great fear among the people; but be not, therefore, vainglorious. Know thou that, according to our belief, the souls of men have two journeys to perform after they have departed from the body: one to a place dismal, foul, covered with darkness, prepared for such as have been unjust and cruel to their fellow-men; the other full of delights, for such as have promoted peace on earth. If, then, thou art mortal, and dost expect to die, beware that thou hurt no man wrongfully, neither do harm to those who have done no harm to thee."

This speech was interpreted by a young Lucayan Indian, one who had been taken by Columbus on his first voyage, and who had been named after his brother, Diego Colon. The Admiral was deeply moved, apparently, by the true spirit of Christianity manifested by this simple savage, and it

JAMAICA DISCOVERED

would have been well had his precepts sunk into his heart. But, as the near sequel will show, he must have quickly forgotten them, for his conduct towards the natives of Hispaniola was not in accord with their spirit. No one dwelling in those islands had ever done harm to Columbus, yet he brought upon those gentle, peace-loving Indians all the horrors of a devastating war.

After having been entertained several days by the hospitable cacique, Columbus departed for Cape Cruz, on the way encountering a gale which threw his vessels on their beam ends, so violent was the wind, which continued contrary for nearly a week. As he could not, on account of it, immediately return to Hispaniola, he stood across the sea-channel to Jamaica, where, for nearly a month, he beat along its southern coast, ever sailing easterly by day, and making harbor every night. Like many others who have followed in his course around that magnificent island, he was lost in admiration of its beauties, and filled with a desire to explore its unknown interior.

From one of the harbors, on a morning about the last of July, the Spaniards saw

COLUMBUS

three great canoes come out to meet them. The largest canoe, which was carved, and decorated in bright colors, contained a native cacique and his family, consisting of his wife and several sons and daughters. The young men were stalwart, and the girls were models of grace and beauty, though all were naked, wearing only caps and tufts of feathers. In the prow of the canoe stood their standard-bearer, waving aloft a white banner, while other Indians beat lustily on native drums hollowed out of logs and covered with skins. The cacique and his family all wore golden ornaments and carried presents in their hands, which they gave to the Admiral as they stepped aboard his caravel. While his wife and the maidens stood modestly by, he addressed Columbus, saying: "My friend, I have determined to leave my country and go with thee to thine. For thou hast destroyed the canoes and dwellings of the Caribs, slaying their warriors, and carrying their wives and children into captivity. All the islands are in dread of thee. Rather, therefore, than thou shouldst take away my dominions, I will embark with all my household in thy ships, and will go to do homage to thy King and Queen, and to behold thy

JAMAICA DISCOVERED

country, of which thy Indians relate to me such wonders."

Those simple savages, naked as they were, considered themselves fit for voyaging anywhere, and were greatly disappointed when Columbus told them that, while he received them as vassals of his sovereigns, yet could not take them with him, on account of the crowded condition of his ships. They returned to their canoes in sadness; but if they had only known what perils they escaped, from what bondage they were saved, they would have departed with thanksgivings. This incident enlivened the monotony of the voyage along the southern coast somewhat, and shortly after Columbus took his departure from the eastern end of Jamaica (now known as Point Morant), and steered across another unknown channel. He was, it should be remembered, feeling his way along from island to island, and from cape to promontory, without chart to guide or pilot to direct, through waters absolutely unknown and unexplored. When, therefore, he arrived off the southern shores of Haiti, he had coasted a long distance before he became aware it was the same island from which he had departed four months before.

COLUMBUS

One day, August 23d, an Indian came aboard his caravel and addressed him in Spanish, by which token he knew that Hispaniola had been reached at last. Then the terrible fatigues he had suffered, the strain of watching day and night through weary months, combined to cause a collapse, and, now that the long suspense was over, he fell into a stupor of exhaustion. The navigation of his ship was left to the crew, who, seeing their commander plunged into a death-like lethargy, from which there seemed no possibility of his awaking, set all sail for Isabella, finally arriving in port with their unconscious charge, in the last week in September.

XIV

SUBJUGATION OF THE INDIANS

1495-1496

THE writing of this chapter is a painful task for one who admires the elevated character of Columbus in the abstract, who recognizes his innate nobility, high aspirations, and dignified composure under repeated reverses; but the verities of history are inexorable. They impose upon the historian and biographer obligations which cannot be evaded; hence we are compelled to record, not only that Christopher Columbus initiated the system of tribute that hastened the extinction of the Indians, but laid the foundations for human slavery in the West Indies.

The occurrences which contributed to the first great crime of Columbus transpired in the city of Isabella, whither he had been taken in a state of insensibility, and where, when he recovered consciousness, he was

COLUMBUS

rejoiced to the heart to find at his bedside his noble brother, Bartholomew. This brother, who will henceforth be intimately associated with the Admiral, had been sent (as will be recalled) to solicit the assistance of Henry VII. of England, when Christopher was vainly pleading with the sovereigns of Spain. Captured by a corsair while on his way to England, several years elapsed before he made his appearance at King Henry's court, and by the time he reached Spain, with the royal assent, his brother had already returned from his first voyage, had bound its laurels upon his brow, and sailed on his second, followed by the acclaim of the world. Bartholomew shared in the favors bestowed by the sovereigns of Spain upon his more famous brother, and, being an expert seaman, was furnished by them with a fleet of three vessels laden with supplies for Isabella, at which settlement he arrived soon after Christopher had departed for Cuba and Jamaica.

There were then three Columbus brothers in Isabella, but of them all Don Bartholomew was the most richly endowed with the qualities for leadership, and, recognizing his worth, Christopher invested him with the

SUBJUGATION OF THE INDIANS

title of *adelantado*, or (as he was then styled) lieutenant - governor. The third brother, Don Diego, was less capable than the other two, and, the sovereigns having sent a request for some one to appear before them to explain the Admiral's charts and maps, at the conference about to be held with Portugal for adjusting the line of demarcation between the poles, he was despatched for that purpose to Spain. By the same ship, which sailed in the latter part of 1494, were sent about five hundred Indians—men, women, and children—taken in various raids throughout the country, with the suggestion that they be *sold as slaves* in the market of Seville.

It is related that Queen Isabella forbade this sale, and ordered the Indians sent back to Hispaniola; but this is doubtful, as she had, only a few years before, sanctioned selling into slavery thousands of Moors, including women of refinement, babes, and children, without giving evidence of any compunctions whatever. Columbus, of course, was aware of this, and he also knew that part of the expenses of his second voyage was paid from the pillage of the Jews, who likewise were treated more like beasts

COLUMBUS

than human beings. He saw, then, no objection to the sovereigns reimbursing themselves (and incidentally their "Admiral of the Ocean Sea") from the proceeds of the slave mart, even though he could not urge that these human chattels were cannibals—which was his lame excuse in the case of the Caribs. Disappointed in the scant returns from his pillaging expeditions, and goaded by the threats and murmurs of exasperated cavaliers, soldiers, and clergy, Columbus resolved to make at least one desperate effort to obtain the gold with which the country was reported to abound.

By the middle of March, 1495, his health had sufficiently recovered to permit him to take the field, especially as he could rely upon Don Bartholomew to assist him with his military skill in event of an emergency. Learning, then, that a brother of Caonabo, named Manicaotex (his successor to command on the occasion of his capture), had assembled a mighty force for an assault upon Isabella, Columbus made immediate preparations for active warfare. With the aid of his brother, he mustered his little army, now reduced to less than two hundred and fifty men, including twenty cavalry, and marched

SUBJUGATION OF THE INDIANS

up the valley of the Yaqui. There they found the savages assembled, to the estimated number of one hundred thousand. But, whatever their number, they were of no account whatever when opposed to the Spaniards. With their naked bodies and primitive weapons, such as pikes and bows and arrows, they were utterly defenceless when the mail-clad soldiers charged upon them, armed with swords, lances, cross-bows, arquebuses, and *espingardas*, or big muskets, which were sometimes mounted on wheels, like small cannon.

Guacanagari went with Columbus, and an array of warriors; but he was useless in the fight that followed, for he was completely demoralized by the two chief allies of the Spaniards, the horses and the blood-hounds. The horses took their riders into the thick of the fight, bearing down the naked warriors like standing grain before a gale; while the fierce blood-hounds, twenty in number, sprang upon the terrified Indians and tore them to pieces. If, indeed, Columbus were the kind and compassionate man his apologists represent him, he might have dispensed with the blood-hounds. He might, in truth, have avoided any encounter whatever with the

COLUMBUS

peaceful natives of Hispaniola, for they were all, with some few exceptions, gentle and trustworthy, like the unfortunate Guacanagari, who retired from this field of carnage broken-hearted, and soon after disappeared, having been driven by the Spaniards to the mountains, where he perished miserably. The outcome of this battle—as it was vauntingly called by Columbus—may be easily imagined. Thousands were slain, the Indians flying at the first attack, followed by the cruel Spaniards, who butchered them without mercy, and the revolting work was finished by the blood-hounds. The field was covered with the mangled bodies of men who had died in defence of their native soil, invaded by these monsters in the name of civilization and religion—and commanded by Christopher Columbus!

This causeless massacre was committed in a region which is a very paradise of beauty. In the centre of a rolling plain, known as the Royal Vega, and so vast that it is bounded only by the horizon and distant mountains, stands a hill six hundred feet in height, called the *Sacro Monte* (Holy Mount). From its summit Columbus is said to have viewed the battle-field and directed the battle,

SUBJUGATION OF THE INDIANS

standing beneath a medlar-tree, the gnarled trunk and jagged branches of which still remind us of the horrible circumstance. Here he caused a cross to be erected, in memory of a massacre which should consign its perpetrators to everlasting infamy; here he gave thanks for a victory which broke the spirits of those innocent Indians, and condemned them to a form of slavery which ended only in their complete extermination.

Thus the province of the Cacique Guarionex came under the hoof. He submitted, surrendered, and Columbus imposed upon the wretched remnant of his people an exacting tribute, ordaining that each Indian should furnish a hawk-bell full of gold every month, and each cacique a calabash full. This crushing imposition was complied with for a while by Cotubanama, who was then, by succession, cacique of the Cibao or Goldstone Country; but Guarionex protested, truthfully, that his province contained little, if any, gold. He offered, in lieu of it, to sow the entire Vega with maize, from sea to sea, "enough to have furnished all Castile with bread for full ten years"; but Columbus would not listen to this proposition. Soon, in truth, he was experiencing the rewards of his

COLUMBUS

short-sighted policy, for, unable to satisfy the Spaniards' lust for gold, the miserable Indians fled to the mountains, and famine spread over the land. Thither their fiendish enemies followed them relentlessly, pursuing women with famished babes on their shoulders, cleaving with their swords the skulls of children, as well as of warriors, who were already tottering from weakness produced by famine. In short, they compelled such as they reserved alive to return to never-ending toil, in the mines and on plantations, until finally these Indians, so indolent by nature, whose weak frames could not endure the strain of continual labor under a tropic sun, sank beneath their accumulated woes, and the earth knew them no more.

Columbus found in Hispaniola a population, the least estimate of which was a million souls; before his death, in 1506, many thousands had been murdered by the Spaniards, through the workings of a system he inaugurated; and before the end of that century these people had become extinct. Columbus himself, in his latter years, bore this testimony: "The Indians of Hispaniola were and are the riches of the island, for it is they who cultivate the maize and make the

SUBJUGATION OF THE INDIANS

bread of the Christians; who dig the gold from the mines, and perform all the offices and labors both of men and beasts. I am informed that since I left that island, six parts out of seven are dead, all through ill-treatment and inhumanity; some by the sword, others by blows and cruel usage, others through hunger. The greater part have perished in the mountains and glens, whither they have fled, from not being able to support the labors imposed upon them."

After the battle of the Vega, bands of marauding Spaniards prowled through the country, led by Columbus, and that fair land, which he had found an Eden of natural delights, and inhabited by people with all the innocence and joyousness of childhood—that beautiful island, within whose borders peace and plenty were enjoyed by all, became the abode of desolation.

While Columbus was engaged in riveting the fetters upon these conquered people, his influence at the court of Spain was being undermined by such men as Margarite, and avenging fate was preparing a series of persecutions, which were to continue from that time till his death. Word reached him that one Aguado had arrived at Isabella, with

COLUMBUS

royal authority, which he had proclaimed by sound of trumpet, to inquire into the wrongs inflicted by Columbus, and perhaps to supersede him. Hastening to the coast, he found the rumor verified by the presence of Aguado; but, instead of resenting the insolence of this shallow individual, who had ignored Don Bartholomew's authority as adelantado, and had threatened to arrest the Admiral himself, he received him courteously, and ordered his credentials trumpeted through the streets of the town. His loyalty to the sovereigns ever remained unshaken; but, learning that his rights had been invaded, and his prospective profits diverted, by royal orders issued in April of that year, while he was fighting in the Vega, he resolved to return to Spain and demand reparation. A fleet was prepared in which he and Aguado (who had collected testimony most damaging to Columbus) were about to embark, when the harbor was visited by one of those tropical tempests, known to the natives as *uricans*, or hurricanes. Three ships were sunk at their moorings, and all the rest were shattered, so that it became necessary to delay the voyage in order to make repairs and construct another caravel from the wreckage.

SUBJUGATION OF THE INDIANS

This detention was afterwards regarded by Columbus as providential, for, in the meantime, information reached Isabella respecting the discovery of rich gold deposits on the southern coast. A runaway soldier, who had formed an attachment for a female cacique, was told by her of an ancient goldmine, which had thus far eluded the vigilant search of the Spaniards. Going as she directed, and finding great nuggets of the precious metal, the soldier conceived the idea that he might then placate his commander with them and obtain pardon for his desertion. He went with the information to Isabella, and not only was pardoned, but promoted, after the adelantado had verified his statements by personal investigation; and with a large quantity of gold from this newly found region, the Admiral set sail for Spain, after giving orders that a fort should be built in the vicinity of the mines.

This was quite an opportune discovery for Columbus, for it enabled him to make terms with his sovereigns, even as it had served the poor soldier to obtain forgiveness; and, with his head turned by the reports of vast wealth contained in those ancient mines, he imagined that he had at last found the

COLUMBUS

veritable Ophir, which had yielded to King Solomon gold for the adornment of the temple at Jerusalem. His mind was filled with golden visions as, at last embarked on board one of the two caravels saved from the wreckage of the hurricane, he set out on his voyage to Spain. In the other caravel was his enemy, Aguado, and both vessels were crowded with disappointed fortune-seekers now returning to their homes after a futile quest for wealth.

During this unfortunate voyage, which was greatly protracted by mistakes in navigation and contrary winds, Columbus was tormented by the gibes, complaints, and ridicule of this wretched rabble. Setting sail on March 10, 1496, a month later he had only reached the island of Marie-Galante, the first at which he had landed on his second outward voyage. And what a contrast between the two landings, but a little more than two years apart! The first was made in the flush of hopes excited by his first, most wonderful voyage, when in command of a splendid fleet, filled with eager and happy adventurers; the second found him creeping slowly home, in a crazy caravel, laden with the remnants of that once hopeful band,

SUBJUGATION OF THE INDIANS

now emaciated through hunger and disease. Still, the Admiral did not allow his zest for discovery to flag, his quest for gold to slacken. He put over to Guadeloupe, and there found some Carib families, the children and females of which only were at home, and these supplied him with provisions, such as cassava bread, parrots, iguanas, and utias, of which he was greatly in need. The casks were filled with pure water from the mountain streams, and then, after taking on board some prisoners and dismissing others for whom he had no room, Columbus set forth once more for Spain. It is a fact worthy of note that, while nearly all the outward voyages from Spain were made in tranquil weather, those of the return were almost invariably tempestuous. This one was no exception, and the caravels were so buffeted by adverse winds, and tossed by billowy seas, that before land was sighted their passengers were threatened with famine.

Made desperate by hunger, some of the Spaniards proposed killing and eating their Indian prisoners, while others advocated tossing them into the sea, thus lessening the number of mouths to fill. Thirty unfortunate Indians had been taken from Isabella,

COLUMBUS

and among them that famous cacique, Caonabo, who had been for two years a prisoner, yet whose spirit was unsubdued. Some have narrated that he perished in the hold of a caravel wrecked by the hurricane, along with hundreds of others, his companions in captivity; but the more probable story is that he accompanied Columbus on this voyage. At the island of Guadeloupe a Carib princess was captured, an Amazonian female who fought with spirit and nearly strangled one of her captors. When taken aboard the caravel, she saw Caonabo on deck, naked and dejected, yet imperious even in his chains, and her heart went out towards this redoubtable warrior of her race, of whose prowess she had doubtless heard. She might have regained her liberty had she chosen to go ashore, but she refused the proffer, preferring to remain by the side of Caonabo, whom she cheered and comforted by her ministrations, until finally he expired almost within sight of land. This was the end of the most valiant chieftain encountered by Columbus in the West Indies; thus miserably perished the "Lord of the Golden House," cacique of the Cibao, which Columbus once mistook for the veritable Cipango.

SUBJUGATION OF THE INDIANS

A few days later, after a wearisome voyage three months in length, the two caravels and their famine-stricken crews gained the port of Cadiz, where they attracted the attention of the populace: the vessels with shattered hulls and rigging, the passengers wasted by disease, and with the only evidence of the gold they had gone to seek showing in their yellow eyes and jaundiced faces. In token of humility and the disgrace he believed himself to be in with his sovereigns, the Admiral clad himself in the garb of a monk, girded about with a cord; but he did not omit to display all the golden treasure he had brought, such as the collars, anklets, bracelets, and coronets of gold, which excited the admiration of the multitude and hushed their murmurings. A brother and a nephew of Caonabo, also prisoners, had survived him, and when going through a town or city they were decorated with massive chains and collars of gold, in token of having been residents of the golden Cibao. One of these chains was wrought of virgin gold to the value of more than three thousand dollars, and there were also masks and images of the precious metal cast in hideous shapes. The Admiral did his best to make this a

COLUMBUS

triumphal procession, as he wended his way to Almazén, by order of the King and Queen; but it was in sad contrast to his former tour to Barcelona less than three years previous. The novelty which invested the first savages brought to Spain had worn away; the favor in which the sovereigns held Columbus had diminished; and, besides, he was everywhere pursued by the execrations of those unfortunates who had been lured to the New World by his tales of wealth in prospective never realized. Still, he was favorably received by the sovereigns, who knew the difficulties attendant upon his ventures, and who even listened with interest while he told of his pursuit of the yet elusive Grand Khan and the recent discovery of ancient Ophir's wonderful mines. When he asked for six or eight ships, in which to prosecute a voyage still farther south, they promised to furnish them in due time; but the period of delay was so protracted that nearly two years passed before he was given a fleet for the purpose desired. Meanwhile, he lost no opportunity for intrenching himself behind the breastwork of rights and privileges erected in the "capitulation" of January, 1492. He was ever jealous of his prerogatives, and al-

SUBJUGATION OF THE INDIANS

ways insisted upon being addressed as the "Admiral."

Twice, at least, while preparing for a third voyage, Columbus lost his temper, which he generally held in strict restraint. The first time was when, after King Ferdinand had granted six million *maravedis* for the voyage, it was retracted upon information from one Pedro Niño, then recently returned from the Indies, that his vessel's hold was full of gold.

"If that be the case," said the crafty King, "our Admiral may get his gold from Niño." And he issued an order to that effect. When it was learned, however, that the vaunted "gold" brought by Niño was in the shape of *Indian prisoners*, captured by orders of Columbus himself, and who were to be sold as slaves before it could be realized, his chagrin and vexation may be imagined. But, as he was "hoist by his own petard," he received no sympathy.

XV

THE RULE OF DON BARTHOLOMEW

1496-1498

THE Indians brought to Spain by Niño, and which caused Columbus such vexation and delay, had been sent by his brother, Don Bartholomew, who, in his capacity of adelantado, had completed the subjugation of the Royal Vega. He also built a fort in the district where gold was found by Miguel Diaz, the soldier, who settled down happily with the caciquess as his wife, but who continued to serve his commander as a guide, and eventually piloted him to the mouth of the river on which the mines were situated. This river still bears its native name, *Ozama*, and is famed for the beauty of the scenery along its banks. Finding at its mouth a secure harbor, Don Bartholomew erected a fortress there, and this was the beginning, in 1496, of the capital city, known by the name of the Spanish portion of the island, Santo

THE RULE OF DON BARTHOLOMEW

Domingo. The first fort was called San Cristobal, better known as the Golden Tower; the second received the name of Isabella, changed afterwards to Santo Domingo; and no sooner were they built and garrisoned than Don Bartholomew set out on an exploring expedition to Xaragua.

This was the province ruled by Cacique Behechio and his sister Anacaona, or the "Golden Flower." She was the wife of Caonabo, still young and beautiful, with a reputation among the Indians of being the handsomest woman of her tribe. She was gracious and charming also, and though the Spaniards had kept her husband in captivity for years, and had finally taken him away to his death, she seemed to bear no malice, but received Don Bartholomew with hospitality. As he and his army marched across the border-line of Xaragua, they were met by Behechio and a host of warriors, prepared to resist the invasion by force of arms; but when assured that this was a peaceful mission, they received them in friendship. Messengers were sent ahead to Anacaona, who soon appeared, borne in a litter on the shoulders of six Indians. She was preceded by thirty beautiful maidens, adorned with

COLUMBUS

garlands of flowers, who, as they sang and danced, waved great palm leaves in the air, which they later, on bended knees, presented to Don Bartholomew. A banquet ensued, at which, for the first time, the adelantado tasted the flesh of the ill-looking but toothsome iguana, and at night all the soldiers were presented with cotton hammocks in which they slept. The next day a sham battle was fought by the Indians for the entertainment of their guests, in which they became so excited that several of them were slain; but no affront of any kind was offered to the Spaniards.

When it was explained to the cacique and Anacaona that the object of the visit was to collect tribute and secure their homage to the Spanish sovereigns, they readily promised to furnish supplies of cotton and cassava, the products of their province, which contained little gold within its borders. It was with mutual regret that the adelantado and his hospitable hosts parted company, and all looked forward to another visit, to be made when the promised tribute should be collected. From Xaragua, which was on the south coast of the island, Don Bartholomew marched directly across to Isabella, on the

THE RULE OF DON BARTHOLOMEW

north coast, at the same time establishing several forts or armed camps, as links in the military chain connecting that settlement with the newer one of Santo Domingo.

He found Isabella in a sad state, most of its residents ill with fevers, and all complaining, so he set about withdrawing them from such a sickly spot. Some he sent to dwell with the Indians of the interior, some to Santo Domingo; and in a short time this, the first settlement by white people in the West Indies, was virtually abandoned. A few years later it was entirely so, and was only visited by hunters of Indians and wild beasts. Even the soldier-settlers stood in awe of it, on account of the many cavaliers who had died within its walls. One of the stories told of it was that, nightly, bands of those unfortunate hidalgos roamed the ruined city, and could be seen by any visitor. Wrapped in sombre garments, they stalked gloomily about; but in their spirit form they preserved traditions of their breeding, for when met by strangers they always saluted them gravely; but when they bowed they removed their heads with their helmets!

While the adelantado was busily engaged at Isabella, reports were brought him of an

COLUMBUS

insurrection in the Vega, where, at the instigation of some priests, two Indians had been burned at the stake for violating a chapel. With his accustomed energy and promptness, he marched against the natives in force, reduced them to subjection, and restored order for the time being, after putting one of the caciques to death and imprisoning others. In labors of this sort the year 1496 passed by, and the time came for collecting the tribute at Xaragua. At the head of his little army, with drums beating, trumpets sounding, and banners flying, Don Bartholomew marched a second time into the territory of Anacaona and Behechio, by whom he was received as before, with joy and gladness, and entertained with games, banquets, and festivities.

Such a quantity of cotton and cassava had been gathered by them and their thirty-two tributary chiefs that the adelantado was obliged to send for a caravel to carry it away. As this was the first vessel with sails that either Anacaona or her brother had ever seen, they were struck dumb with astonishment. When they went aboard the craft, and a salute from the lombards was fired in their honor, the "Golden Flower"

THE RULE OF DON BARTHOLOMEW

fell into Don Bartholomew's arms, so filled with fear was she, while some of her subjects leaped into the sea. Their admiration of all they saw and heard was unbounded. They regarded the Spaniards as the most wonderful of beings, and the grave, benignant Don Bartholomew as the grandest of all. They gladly paid him tribute, everything they had was at his disposal, and he was so affected by their frank and joyous generosity that he would not have harmed them for a kingdom. He was capable of appreciating real worth and innocence; he loved these simple children of nature, and if their fate had been left in his hands, it might have been less lamentable.

But, at that very time, a conspiracy was being formed against him and his brothers, which not only undermined their authority and banished them from the island, but eventually wrought the destruction of these innocent people. It is known as the conspiracy of Roldan, an uneducated man who had been raised from obscurity by the Admiral, until he filled the office of *alcalde*, or justice of the peace. Envious of the Columbus brothers, who filled the chief offices in the government, Roldan instigated an insurrection, and,

COLUMBUS

forming a band of malcontents, marched from Isabella to the Vega, where he laid siege to Fort Conception, which was in charge of a stout soldier and devoted servant of the adelantado. He sent for his commander, who promptly came to his aid, but found, after he had thrown himself, with a reinforcement, into the fort, that he, too, was a prisoner within the walls. Roldan had gathered so many of the discontented around him, whom he had armed and equipped from the royal stores, that his force was stronger than any Don Bartholomew could raise. After worrying the adelantado awhile in the Vega, the rebels suddenly departed for Xaragua, many leagues distant, where, amid the delights of that charming region, they held high revel, forcing the natives to comply with their demands, and soon had demoralized the entire province. The subjects of Anacaona and Behechio were reduced to slavery, their properties seized, and their lives and honor held at the caprice of libertines and ruffians unworthy the name of men. This was the beginning of the end, for the peaceful people of Xaragua, involved in the strife between the Spaniards themselves, miserably perished.

THE RULE OF DON BARTHOLOMEW

While rebel Roldan was sowing seeds of death and disease among Anacaona's people, the adelantado was reaping a harvest from his previous planting in the Vega, where Cacique Guarionex again broke out and took the field. Instigated by the archtraitor, Roldan, the old chief formed a conspiracy among his tributary caciques, to rise and massacre all the Spaniards in and around Fort Conception. Don Bartholomew had recently departed for the south coast, having received reinforcements and supplies from Spain; but on receipt of the startling news he at once returned to the Vega. But for the miscalculation of one of the tributary caciques, who took up arms too soon, the attack having been arranged to take place on the night of the full moon, it might have been successful. As it was, the Spaniards easily repulsed the small detachment that fell upon the fort, and Guarionex, being apprised of the return of Don Bartholomew, first put the unlucky cacique to death, then fled with his family to the mountains. He made his retreat in the cordillera of Ciguey, with Cacique Mayobanex, who (as the reader may recall) was chieftain of the tribe with which Columbus had his skirmish in the Bay

COLUMBUS

of Arrows. His province was rough and mountainous, bordered on the sea-coast, and was filled with the hardiest warriors in Hispaniola. Now that Caonabo had been removed, he was the most to be feared of any cacique commanding a native army. He received Guarionex with promise of protection, and faithfully kept his pledge, for, when the adelantado demanded the refuge, he refused to give him up, and assembled an army to protect him. Don Bartholomew was not a cruel man, judged by the Spanish standard, nor was he revengeful; but he realized the necessity for getting Guarionex in his power, and resolved to do so at all hazards. Leaving the beautiful Vega with a small but intrepid force, he led his men straight into the mountain wilds which had never before been penetrated by Europeans.

As they were crossing a river hemmed in between high cliffs, a troop of painted savages burst upon them, with yells of rage which made the forest ring. A flight of arrows filled the air, and many of the Spaniards were wounded, but the adelantado bravely forced a passage across the stream, then pursued the enemy into the tangled thickets. There he was frequently am-

THE RULE OF DON BARTHOLOMEW

buscaded, and many of his men were wounded; but on he pressed, until at last the desperate Ciguayans took refuge on a wooded promontory of the coast. It abounded in cavernous cliffs, in the dens of which the two caciques concealed themselves for nearly three months, while the incensed adelantado raged through the forests, determined never to give over the pursuit so long as those two mountain lions, Guarionex and Mayobanex, remained alive in their lairs.

His soldiers were nearly worn out from hunger and fatigue; some of them deserted, some fell ill, until only thirty were left to continue the pursuit. The two chiefs were in direr straits than the Spaniards, for they could only steal out by night in search of food, and were nearly starved. Still the noble Mayobanex held his promise as sacred, and to a demand that he deliver up his guest, replied, "He is my friend; he has fled to me for refuge; I have promised to protect him, and I shall keep my word."

These noble sentiments were uttered by a "savage," whom the Spaniards were hunting as though he were a beast of the forest. The war-cries died away, for the warriors had been killed or dispersed; but the pursuit was

COLUMBUS

not relaxed, and fighting now and then occurred. One day the adelantado found two of his scouts dead in his path, transfixed by Indians arrows, slain by orders of the cacique, whose hiding-place was soon after betrayed. A half-starved Indian was captured while foraging for food, and, compelled to reveal his master's retreat, led twelve Spaniards thither, disguised as Indians, with their swords wrapped in palm leaves. They came upon Mayobanex in his cave, surrounded by his family, and soon after Guarionex was taken in a similar manner. Both were placed in irons and confined in the fort, where they hourly expected death; but Don Bartholomew was not vindictive, and spared their lives, on condition that their subjects should supply the Spaniards with food. He forgot the fatigue and dangers he had been exposed to on their account; he overlooked their transgressions; and, being humane as well as just, when unfettered by higher authority, he made no slaves, except of such as had been guilty of great crimes. In fact, one of the charges against him by the rebels was on account of his lenity towards the Indians, whom he judged by the same standard that he applied to the Spaniards. The

THE RULE OF DON BARTHOLOMEW

man who had committed an offence against the wife of Guarionex, and thus given that chieftain an excuse for rebellion, the adelantado tried in court and condemned to death, meting out impartial justice. This did not suit the Spaniards; but the incident throws a ray of light upon Don Bartholomew's character, and, considered in connection with what we have seen of his doings, shows him to have been high-minded, noble, and sympathetic. Between him and his elder brother there was a strong bond of sympathy, and they had many traits in common; but of the two the adelantado was better qualified to rule than the Admiral.

In justice to the Admiral, we should not fail to note that, while he pointed out the way to the New World, and opened the routes for others to follow, in his capacity of ruler or governor, he failed most wofully. In the rôle of discoverer he was supreme, and had he but been allowed to pursue his chosen career, leaving to the adelantado, with his vast executive ability, the organization of government, the ending of both might have been more glorious. Meanwhile, Don Bartholomew was reducing order out of chaos in Hispaniola, his elder brother was

COLUMBUS

impatiently awaiting the slow movement of the court in the direction of another voyage of discovery. Six ships were finally granted him, but, in order to obtain their crews, Columbus was obliged to resort to an expedient which brought him bitter retribution in the future. At his suggestion, as no volunteers offered for the voyage, the ships were manned with criminals, whose terms of imprisonment were commuted to banishment to the colony for a certain number of years. The assembling of this band of malefactors was a sore trial to his high and noble nature, and, in addition to this insult thrust upon him, he was continually exposed to the taunts and revilings of those in the employ of his inveterate enemy, Fonseca, in whose charge was the fitting out of his squadron. The most annoying and despicable of these hirelings of his enemy was one Breviesca, Fonseca's trusted accountant, who followed the Admiral to his ship, at the time he was about to embark, and hurled at him most insulting epithets. The minion felt secure from assault, reckoning upon the dignity with which Columbus was clothed; but the Admiral had now reached the limits of his patience, and in a transport of passion turned upon the

THE RULE OF DON BARTHOLOMEW

scoundrel, struck him to the ground, and repeatedly kicked him; to the great relief of his feelings, doubtless, but to the positive detriment of his subsequent fortunes.

XVI

THE THIRD VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

1498

THIS was the voyage on which Columbus first found pearls, first saw troops of monkeys disporting in the tropical forests, and caught a glimpse of the continent he had so long and vainly sought. Sailing from the port of San Lucar, at the mouth of the river Guadalquivir, with six vessels manned by his motley crews, he boldly plunged into the unknown ocean to the south of his previous ventures, intending to pass under the equinoctial line. When, however, after nearly two months' voyaging, he encountered a torrid region of calms, the heated atmosphere of which caused the pitch in the seams of his ships to melt, the meats to spoil, and the wine and water casks to burst, he changed his course to a point more northerly and westerly. He left Spain on May 30th, and on July 31st, when but

THIRD VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

one cask of water remained to each vessel, land was sighted by a sailor at the masthead of the flag-ship. Three peaks appeared in the distance, which a nearer approach revealed as one huge mountain mass with triple summit. The land to which they appertained Columbus called *La Trinidad*, or the Trinity, having previously resolved to name his next discovery after the holy Triad. It proved to be an island, which he approached from the southeast and entered a great body of water beyond (the Bay of Paria) through a strait which he called the *Boca del Sierpe*, or the Serpent's Mouth, because of the angry waters which beset him there. Coasting its western shores, he was astonished at the verdure of its vast forests, containing immense trees that came down to the very water's edge; for he had previously reasoned out a theory that, being so near the equator (only ten degrees north of it), he should find the vegetation scant and parched from the heat, with little water or moisture. He had also thought to find the inhabitants of this country resembling the negroes of Africa, with coal-black skins and woolly hair; whereas the people who came out to his vessels in their canoes were

COLUMBUS

much like the Caribs in the islands to the north, though, if anything, more comely.

Here are his reasonings and conclusions, quaintly set forth by Peter Martyr, his contemporary: "The earth (as Columbus saith) is not round, after the form of a ball or an apple, as others think, but rather like a pear as it hangeth on the tree; and that Paria is that region which possesseth the supereminent or highest part thereof, the nearest unto heaven. Insomuch that he earnestly contendeth the earthly paradise to be situate in the top of those three hills which the watchman saw from the top-castle of the ship; and that the outrageous streams of fresh waters, which did so violently issue out of said Gulph, and strive so with the salt water, fall headlong from the summits of said mountains."

The historiographer was wrong, however, in attributing to Columbus the last conclusion: that the waters which caused him such inconvenience came from the mountains of Trinidad; for, on the contrary, he reasoned that they proved the existence of a vast continent, possessing, as they did, such great volume as to influence the currents of the Caribbean Sea. In the abstract, he argued

THIRD VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

correctly as to the existence of the continent; but when at last he saw the peninsula of Paria, with its beautiful shores and fair harbors, he did not suspect that he had it actually in view. Even as he insisted on making a continent of insular Cuba, so he mistook this coast of a continent for part of an island. However, on he sailed, delighted beyond measure at the things he saw: the monkey bands in the forests of Trinidad, the shapely Indians of Paria, and the oysters growing on trees along the shore.

Recalling what Pliny had written respecting the formation of pearls from drops of dew, he inferred that these oysters, which he saw suspended from the mangroves, hung there with their mouths wide open, ready to receive the night dews that were to be transmuted into precious pearls. Any visitor to Trinidad and the Bay of Paria may see oysters growing there now, in the same manner, attached to twigs and roots of mangroves; but to find the veritable oyster that produces the pearl, one must follow after Columbus to the islands he next visited on the Caribbean coast of Paria. He reached them only by sailing through the turbulent waters of that strait between Paria and

COLUMBUS

Trinidad, caused by the outflow of the great Orinoco's current, and which he named the *Boca del Drago*, or Mouth of the Dragon. Columbus was singularly happy in his choice of names for the natural objects he saw, and those he applied to the two straits still survive. Through the roaring waters of the Dragon's Mouth the little craft passed safely, though in imminent peril from the rocks and shoals, and emerged into the tranquil sea which laves the northern coast of Paria.

As he bore away westward, he saw in the distance the outlines of Tobago, which has since become famous as the scene of Robinson Crusoe's adventures; but he kept on until, on August 15th, he sighted and discovered the islands of Cubagua and Margarita, subsequently so famous for the pearls their seas afford. If some one could only have whispered to Columbus a hint of the riches those waters contained, he might have made that third voyage the most prosperous of all; but, though he saw Indians fishing for pearls, and obtained some of great size from them in exchange for shards of painted plates, he did not fully realize what he was leaving behind for others. He might have obtained, in a few weeks, pearls

THIRD VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

enough to satisfy even the greed and rapacity of King Ferdinand, and thus have purchased exemption from the persecutions that followed. But at that time the Admiral was suffering from gout and an affection of the eyes which nearly blinded him; his ships were leaky and his crews inclined to be mutinous; so he bore up across the Caribbean Sea for Hispaniola, and lost the one opportunity which fate threw in his way for the accumulation of treasure from the sea.

In the months following he sent home to Spain an account of his discoveries, with charts of his route and specimens of pearls, by which means, through the treachery of Fonseca and the baseness of his sovereigns, other adventurers quickly became informed of this vast treasure-trove beneath the sea. One of his former companions (none other than the brave and rash Ojeda, the same who had captured Caonabo), a favorite of Fonseca, was enabled to fit out an expedition which followed the route of Columbus in 1499. With him was another adventurer then unknown, but who subsequently achieved distinction by his narrative of the voyage, and through having his name be-

COLUMBUS

stowed upon the country discovered by Columbus—Americus Vesputius!

He and Ojeda sailed from Spain just a year after Columbus left on his third voyage; and though it has been denied by some geographers that our country was called after the Florentine, but derived its name from an aboriginal word, *America-pan*, applied to a settlement in Paria peninsula, yet it is certain that Vesputius (or Vesputi) was there within a year of his great rival's visit. Sailing beyond the Pearl Islands, after greatly enriching themselves, these purloiners from the fame and wealth of Columbus discovered Curaçao, and gave the name to the north coast of South America which it still bears, of *Venezuela*, or Little Venice, from the dwellings of Indians found by them above the surface of Lake Maracaibo. Their voyage ended in June, 1500, when they returned to Cadiz, only a few months previous to the arrival in that same port of the Admiral himself, wearing the manacles placed upon his limbs by the usurper Bovadilla.

We have already narrated some of the circumstances by which the fetters were forged to which allusion is made in the pre-

THIRD VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

ceding paragraph. When Columbus reached Hispaniola and landed at the port of Santo Domingo (which had been founded in 1496 by Don Bartholomew, acting under his orders), he was worn with watching, nearly blind, suffering from the gout, and exceedingly despondent. He was refreshed by the meeting with sturdy Don Bartholomew, and one of his first proceedings, after arrival, was to issue a proclamation confirming the title of adelantado, which he had bestowed upon his brother, and heartily approving his course with reference to the rebels. These were now in full possession of Xaragua, and were shortly reinforced by the very vagabonds and criminals brought over by Columbus as his crews. Thus quickly these foul birds revenged themselves upon the author of their banishment. They joined with Roldan and his ruffians, and between them they completed the ruin of the island, which the lust and cruelty of Spaniards had begun.

The condition of the Indians was heart-breaking; but Columbus, lost to a sense of their wrongs, in view of the appalling misery among the Spaniards themselves, still continued to urge their enslavement as the only

COLUMBUS

hope of the colonists. In treating with the rebels, even after vainly endeavoring to subdue them by force, he consented to their taking with them to Spain a large number of Indians as servants and slaves, some of whom were sold in Seville. Queen Isabella is said to have been greatly incensed at this usurpation of her authority in the matter of allowing rebels against the government to return with human chattels, and gave orders that restitution should be made to the unfortunate natives; but these orders were not obeyed. It was the policy of the crafty Ferdinand to allow her to issue such orders as a sop to her conscience; but her "righteous indignation" rarely carried her to the excess of sacrificing any pecuniary interest of the crown. The King and the Admiral had a perfect understanding on this point, whatever may have been the disfavor in which the latter was held by the former.

To the end of his career, Christopher Columbus continued his recommendations to the crown that the Indians be enslaved for the profit of the sovereigns and salvation of the colonies, and the vessels returning to Spain were nearly always full of miserable wretches who had been torn from their



COLUMBUS NEGOTIATES A PEACE WITH ROLDAN

THIRD VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

homes at his behest. They were generally stigmatized as "cannibals," "insurgents," or "rebels"; but sometimes Columbus made no pretence that they were sent to be sold into slavery for any other reason than the *real one*—namely, profit to himself and his sovereigns.

Finding Roldan too strongly intrenched in the mountains of Xaragua to be easily dislodged, he negotiated a peace with the rebel, by which, on the principle of "set a thief to catch a thief," he converted him into an ally, for the purpose of hunting down other malcontents less formidable than the ex-alcalde, who was now invested with his former dignities. It was Don Bartholomew's plan to hunt down the rebels and hang or shoot them wherever found; and, indeed, he was accused of taking with him on his forays both a hangman and a priest, for the saving of time and the benefit of their souls. But, though he did not sanction his brother's schemes, either as to the treatment of the Indians or the pacification of the rebels, he was too loyal to offer protest.

The defection of Roldan from his own party, caused some complications, some of them amusing, others tragical. Of the for-

COLUMBUS

mer kind was his expedition for the purpose of defeating the aims of Alonzo de Ojeda and Amerigo Vespucci, who, after picking up pearls in the route indicated by Columbus, must needs sail over to his own island of Hispaniola for the capturing of slaves and cutting of dye-woods. As one now high in favor with the Admiral, Roldan was sent with a force to drive them away. They had landed in his favorite province of Xaragua, and he was highly indignant at their illegal acts—as became an upholder of the government, against which, not long before, he himself was in rebellion. He finally prevailed, somewhat by force, but mainly by argument, during which Ojeda let drop that the Admiral was in very bad odor at court, insomuch that his successor was already determined upon by the sovereigns, and perhaps it might not be well for Roldan to appear too zealous in his behalf!

This information, coming to him from Fonseca's favorite, and probably indicating the sentiment at court, caused the former rebel, Roldan, to reflect. He did not, however, relax his severity against those whom he hated, or who came between him and his lusts. Among the latter was a young man

THIRD VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

named Hernando de Guevara, who had been banished to Xaragua on account of some misdemeanor at the capital, and who, being a cousin of Adrian de Moxia, one of Roldan's old comrades, was very well received by the reformed rebel. When, however, Guevara saw and became enamoured of Anacona's beautiful daughter, Higuenamota, and (though he came of a noble family) offered her honorable marriage, Roldan's friendship was suddenly turned to hate. He also had been smitten by the lovely maiden's charms, but was too base to conceive of legal alliance with an Indian, even though a princess, daughter of a queen. He immediately separated the lovers and banished young Guevara to another province; but the latter returned to the house of his intended bride and there concealed himself, with the object, it was alleged, of taking Roldan's life. This intention was not proved, but Guevara and seven of his companions, or accomplices, were arrested and confined in prison. When his cousin, Adrian de Moxia, heard of it, he organized a party of horsemen, fully armed, and set out to rescue his kinsman from the hands of his former leader in rebellion. And when Columbus heard that not only

COLUMBUS

Roldan's life was threatened by them, but also his own, he gathered a little band of well-armed men and fell suddenly upon the conspirators, whom he captured and took to Fort Conception. Though he had been lenient with the archrebel, Roldan, he seemed to feel that in this instance mercy would be misplaced and misunderstood. He resolved to make an example of Moxia, and ordered him to be hanged from the battlement of the fortress.

It is not clear that Moxia was engaged in anything more culpable than an attempted rescue of a kinsman who had offended Roldan and Columbus by offering to marry an Indian maiden whom he loved. Yet for this "offence" he was condemned to death without trial, and his nephew sent to Santo Domingo, where he was only saved from being hanged by the arrival of one having authority to supersede Columbus in the government of the island. It is related by the great apologist of Columbus, Mr. Irving, that while in the midst of his confession to a priest, who had been called for the purpose, Moxia was swung off from the battlement by order of Columbus, who was filled with "mingled indignation and scorn" because

THIRD VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

he sought to protract the interview in the hope that a rescue might be attempted. The historian seeks to palliate the murder of this man by calling him a "dastard wretch," guilty of falsehood and treachery; but nothing is submitted in proof that he was worse than Roldan, or even Columbus himself, who, while he may not have meditated the murder of his superiors, yet had sanctioned the massacre of helpless natives, and condemned thousands to hopeless slavery. With the aid of Roldan, Columbus and the adelantado pursued the "conspirators" relentlessly, hanging some and sending others to jail, at one time having seventeen imprisoned in a common dungeon, whence they were to be taken only for execution.

XVII

COLUMBUS AND HIS BROTHERS IN IRONS

1500

FOR condoning the grave offences of Roldan, the rebel, Columbus suffered the pains and penalties of one who has compounded a felony. Thenceforth, to the end of his life, he was beset by troubles and difficulties, until, overwhelmed by the burden of his sorrows, he sank into his grave. Although a truce had been concluded between the two, previous to this Roldan had written letters, when *alcalde mayor*, or chief-justice of the island, preferring serious charges against the Admiral. He and his brothers were accused of cruelty, avarice, and incapacity; they were charged, as foreigners, with an intention to throw off their allegiance to the crown, and either set up an independent government or transfer the island to some other power. The charge of disloyalty was absurd on its face, and could be entertained

COLUMBUS AND BROTHERS IN IRONS

only by one like King Ferdinand, who saw in it an excuse for depriving Columbus of powers too great for a subject to possess, the granting of which he had long since repented. Against the accusations of his enemies, who now arose, like swarms of locusts, on every side, the frank and truthful letters of the Admiral availed little with the sovereigns. They themselves were convinced he had grossly deceived them in respect to the riches of the new country, which, instead of having been a source of wealth, was a constant drain upon the resources of Spain. They determined to inquire into the actual condition of affairs in Hispaniola, and appointed a commissioner to investigate the conduct of Columbus. Even had not their inclinations prompted them to the measure, they were forced to heed the clamors of the populace, who assailed them with demands for reparation, whenever they appeared in public. One day, as the royal pair were enjoying the charms of the Alhambra courts, a gang of fifty vagabonds, mostly returned colonists, broke into the corridors beneath their apartments and filled the air with denunciations of Columbus. His two sons, Diego and Ferdinand, who were then pages

COLUMBUS

at court, happening to pass by, some of the rabble shouted: "*Miralos*—behold them—the whelps of him who discovered the land of delusion and vanity, the grave of Spanish hidalgos!" Such was the feeling against the sons of Columbus that their lives were hardly safe in the streets, and they were compelled to remain in seclusion.

The commissioner appointed by Isabella and Ferdinand to inquire into the doings of their Admiral was one Francisco de Bovadilla, who, though an officer of the royal household and a knight of Calatrava, was an "unknown quantity" until he suddenly emerged from obscurity in the capacity of grand inquisitor. He received his instructions, and sailed from Spain about the middle of July, in the year 1500, arriving at Hispaniola in the last week of August. Sailing into the harbor of Santo Domingo, he was surprised and shocked to behold, hanging from gibbets on the bank of the river, the bodies of two Spaniards, and was further horrified to be told that seven had been hanged the week before, while as many more were in the fortress dungeon awaiting a similar fate. It is possible that Bovadilla may not originally have intended to proceed

COLUMBUS AND BROTHERS IN IRONS

so hastily as he did, but the sight of his dead countrymen, and the impending fate of those others in the dungeon, may have caused the inconsiderate action of which he was guilty. If he were culpable, then his sovereigns were still more so, for they had invested him with unrestricted authority to do as he thought best. The Admiral had requested them to send out a person empowered to inquire into the charges brought against him by Roldan and others. Conscious of his own integrity, he desired the questions to be submitted to an impartial judge, in order to silence, at once and for all, the clamors of malicious and unjust accusers. But, instead of complying with this reasonable request, his sovereigns had sent out a man who was charged, not only to inquire into the conduct of the rebels, to "arrest their persons and sequester their effects," but, if considered advisable, to supersede the Admiral himself.

Don Diego Columbus was in command of the city at the time of Bovadilla's arrival, and upon him, immediately on landing, a demand was made for the release of the prisoners in the fortress. When he refused to comply, Bovadilla produced his creden-

COLUMBUS

tials. He caused to be read aloud, first, his "patent," investing him with the government of the islands; second, the royal mandate ordering the Admiral to deliver up to him all fortresses, etc.; third, authority for him to pay all arrears of wages due from Columbus to others, and for this purpose, of course, to take possession of his effects if the demands could not be met otherwise. Don Diego was an honest but weak man; both his brothers were absent, engaged in the interior pacifying Spanish rebels and Indians. They had nearly accomplished their good work, and, but for the inopportune arrival of Bovadilla, the island would have been brought entirely under the rule of rightful authority.

The documents were read at the door of a little church, the first erected in Santo Domingo city, the walls of which are still standing, on the left bank of the Ozama. From its porch door Bovadilla could see the fortress, in which were confined the condemned prisoners, among them the unfortunate lover of Higuenamota, the Indian princess. Calling together a force of armed men, the new Governor marched upon and assailed the fortress, liberated the prisoners,

COLUMBUS AND BROTHERS IN IRONS

and into the dungeon they had occupied cast Don Diego himself, whose superstitious regard for the royal signature had prevented him from opposing the pretender, as he should have done. There he was soon joined by his brothers, who (also abjectly submissive to the royal mandate) came in and surrendered themselves at Bovadilla's command. The Admiral was at Fort Conception, nearly a hundred miles distant, but, on receiving a command from the arrogant Bovadilla to appear before him, travelled in haste, and almost unattended, to the capital. He was, of course, surprised and perplexed, and could not understand the true character of this usurper's business. For was he not the only Admiral of the Ocean Sea? Was he not viceroy and governor over the islands in perpetuity? There was no one higher in authority than he; how, then, could this person place his commands upon him? Whatever had operated to bring about this alarming condition of affairs, Columbus was soon convinced that the populace were on the side of Bovadilla, for he was received everywhere with hootings and revilings, and on arrival at the city was immediately arrested and sent to the fortress. By orders

COLUMBUS

of the usurper, manacles were fastened on his wrists and ankles, and riveted there by a shameless wretch, who had once cooked the food for his table.

Two of the brothers were captives and in chains; but there still remained the lion-hearted adelantado, from whom Bovadilla expected at least a show of resistance, as he was in command of armed forces and was not of a nature to tamely submit. But, like his elder brother, Don Bartholomew was loyal to his heart's core, even when to be so was his undoing. Receiving from the Admiral an injunction to submit without resistance, he hastened in and gave himself up, leaving his retainers in the field. He, also, was placed in irons, and thus, by an unexampled display of assurance, Bovadilla obtained possession of the "upstart Columbus" and won a bloodless victory. He had reversed the proceedings as indicated in his instructions, and, instead of first bringing to trial the guilty and criminal wretches who had rebelled against royal authority, he had arrested and incarcerated its only lawful representatives! We must not, however, hold Bovadilla entirely blameworthy in this wretched affair, for the real culprits

COLUMBUS AND BROTHERS IN IRONS

were those who sent him to the island. It cannot be urged in their defence that their creature, Bovadilla, exceeded his instructions, for he followed them out to the letter, and without them could not have proceeded in such a high-handed manner. Their treachery, duplicity, baseness, cannot be properly characterized without overstepping the bounds set by the impartial and judicious historian. As for Bovadilla, having made friends of the real criminals and taken their part, he did not lack for information against Columbus, whose great deeds were lost to sight, and whose elevated character was torn to shreds, by the hosts of enemies that flocked about the man in power and poured out complaints against his victim, sitting in the darkness of a felon's cell. Whatever we may have found to condemn in the dealings of Columbus with inferior people, like the Indians and the sailors in his employ, we should not be blinded to the true greatness of his nature apart from his avarice and selfishness. The mask of ignoble ambitions and duplicity falls away when he is in sore distress, and reveals the innate nobility of his character. The sins he committed were for the sake of his sovereigns: enslaving and op-

COLUMBUS

pression of the Indians—even the massacres—that they might receive the greater profit and he the greater glory. Honor and renown were empty phrases now, he must have bitterly reflected. He had imperilled his life, had committed what mankind generally considers unpardonable crimes, for the augmentation of his sovereigns' grandeur, and *this* was his reward!

That he expected to be executed is shown by the following fragment of a conversation with Alonzo de Villejo, commander of the caravel in which he was sent to Spain. As the dungeon door was thrown open and that officer entered, accompanied by an armed guard, Columbus considered that his time had come. He had but recently sent men to the scaffold for the very crimes of which he was accused, and it seemed not unlikely this was his destination.

"Villejo," he said, mournfully, "whither are you taking me?"

"To the ship, your excellency; to embark."

"To embark," repeated the Admiral earnestly. "Villejo, do you speak the truth?"

'By the life of your excellency, it is true,' replied the honest officer, who, throughout

COLUMBUS AND BROTHERS IN IRONS

the voyage, was kind and courteous to his distinguished prisoner.

There were some to whom the venerable appearance of the Admiral appealed and by whom his great services were remembered, but these were few. The majority of the colonists exulted over his downfall and rejoiced at his distress. As he was taken to the caravel, between guards with loaded arquebuses, and to the accompaniment of clanking chains, a great shout went up from the rabble gathered at the river's bank. All had grievances, real or imaginary, which they held now to be avenged by the abasement of the Admiral, freed from whose detested rule they could indulge in license and liberty. Bovadilla was not among the throng, but kept in the background, from a window of the Admiral's house (where he maintained guard over the precious papers, moneys, and treasures he had seized), watching with satisfaction the departure of his enemies. But his reign was short, his rule disastrous, and his end was hastened by his arrogance. Knowing that his course in ousting Columbus and seizing the reins of government, which he was unable to control, would not be sustained by his sovereigns upon sober reflection, he

COLUMBUS

urged the colonists to make the most of their opportunity. He sold them lands at minimum prices, gave them Indians without number to work the mines, and exacted only an eleventh of their proceeds, instead of the third formerly paid as tribute to the crown. Crime was rampant, criminals assumed the airs and equipages of cavaliers, for the dregs of the communities had risen to the surface. Ruffians and cut-throats, who had escaped the gallows or the galleys only by being banished to this island, compelled the hereditary caciques over a once free and happy people to become their slaves and burden-bearers. They seized their sons and daughters, consumed their provisions, and obliged them to bear them from place to place in litters, or hammocks suspended from poles, their shoulders raw and bleeding, until they fell to rise no more. Whatever the form of government adopted by the Spaniards, the miserable natives felt its exactions, were crushed by its severities, and before many years passed they had ceased to exist.

Scarcely had the two caravels in which Columbus and his brothers were embarked left the island out of sight ere it was a veritable region of misrule. But, except for the

measures they had initiated, they were no longer responsible for the horrible cruelties enacted there. In a certain sense, Columbus was paying the penalty for his misdeeds; but it was light in comparison with what was to follow. He was enduring no more than he himself had inflicted upon captive Caonabo, who, also a prisoner and in chains, had preceded him over this very route to Spain. Caonabo had died and been thrown to the sharks; hundreds of others were languishing in slavery. What would befall the man who had caused all their miseries? His reflections, doubtless, were gloomy, but his spirit was unbroken. When Villejo would have removed his manacles, he said, disdainfully: "No, my sovereigns ordered me by letter to submit to Bovadilla, and by their authority he has chained me. I will wear these irons until they are removed by royal order, and then I shall keep them as memorials of the rewards bestowed for my services." He was as good as his word, wearing the manacles throughout the long and wearisome voyage, and in this condition he and his brothers were delivered to the alcalde of Cadiz. His son, Fernando, who was with him on his fourth voyage, says in his biography, "I saw them

COLUMBUS

always hanging in his cabinet, and he requested that when he died they might be buried with him."

So far as rigid research has been able to ascertain, these chains were placed with Columbus in his coffin, after his death, in 1506, at Valladolid; but the pious intention of his heirs was frustrated by a Spanish thief. When his coffin was opened, at the time of the removal of his remains to Seville, a few years later, the manacles were missing, and it is a well-established tradition that they were stolen, by the keeper of the tavern in which he died. For many years, they were secreted by this man, his family, and descendants, but finally came into possession of a Genoese cavalier, by whom they are now preserved as precious relics.

XVIII

THE LAST AND MOST DISASTROUS VOYAGE

1502-1504

“**C**OLUMBUS has returned in chains. He is in custody of the alcalde of Cadiz.” This was the surprising message received by Isabella and Ferdinand at their court in the Alhambra of Granada. It flashed over the country. All Spain was aghast, and the increasing murmurs of the people roused the sovereigns to make, if possible, reparation for their offences. They sent at once an order for his release, and a letter filled with expressions of grief and gratitude. Two thousand ducats were forwarded for his expenses, and he was requested to appear before them without delay: By this action they removed the doubts which, since his arrest and during all the voyage, had hung darkly over the mind of the man they had so deeply wronged. He had borne with silent scorn the taunts of the rabble, the gibes of his ene-

COLUMBUS

mies; but when he appeared before the royal pair "the Queen burst into tears, and Columbus fell sobbing at her feet. She took his hand and led him to a seat," wrote the historian Oviedo, who was a witness of this pathetic scene, "and when he was able to control his emotions he recited at length, and with great eloquence, the wrongs and humiliations he had suffered in her service."

Ample restitution was promised; but there is no record that the Admiral ever received anything more substantial than mere sympathy. He was not restored to his viceroyship, and it was nearly fifteen months before he could obtain permission to make another voyage. Even then he was denied the privilege of an asylum at Santo Domingo where, in accordance with his contracts with the sovereigns, he was to be perpetual ruler. The testimony of the historians of that time, however, acquits Isabella of ingratitude or indifference, as she was overruled by the Council of the Indies, under the malevolent Fonseca, and by King Ferdinand.

After months of wearisome waiting, during which he was fed with promises that were never realized, the bitter truth came home to Columbus: that the King and Queen no

THE LAST VOYAGE

longer considered him essential to the success of their schemes for discovery and colonization. Other captains, trained under the eye of the Admiral himself, were now offering to carry out those schemes for discovery without cost to the crown; other courtiers, with high and noble connections, were clamoring for governmental positions, which Columbus and his brothers had shown their incapacity to fill. By his original contract with the crown, Columbus was to receive a tithe of all receipts from the New World, as well as other emoluments and honors. These charges upon the voyages and discoveries of others seemed superfluous to the avaricious Ferdinand, and they were actually very burdensome. Hence he did not intend to resume them, and, now that his Admiral and Viceroy had been deprived of office (though he was told it was only temporarily), he was to be kept out forever. The crafty King assured the victim of his avarice and duplicity that he would be reinstated after an interval of two or three years, during which, in order to allow the turmoil in the island to subside, some other person of exalted character should be intrusted with the government in place of the discredited Bovadilla.

COLUMBUS

The man selected for this purpose was one Nicolas de Ovando, who, though in high standing at court, was wholly untried and unknown. He sailed in February, 1502, with a fleet of thirty vessels, the largest in number and tonnage that had been sent to the West Indies, and with the most distinguished company and magnificent equipment. Nearly three months later a beggarly squadron of four small caravels crept forth from Cadiz, in the wake of Ovando's splendid convoy, the combined tonnage of which was only twice that of his largest ship. Only nine years before, Columbus had sailed from this same port of Cadiz, with three times as many vessels and ten times as many men; but he did not repine, for, though he had endured great ignominy at the hands of his sovereigns, he was at last on the salt sea again in quest of the Indies, which he had sought ten years before. The utterly unknown Ovando was furnished a fleet of stately ships and a retinue of hidalgos. He was safeguarded at every point, and was to reap the honors of a discovery planned and achieved by Columbus; while the great Admiral of world-wide fame was despatched by his ungrateful sovereigns with a fleet of crazy

THE LAST VOYAGE

caravels, every one of which was unseaworthy at the start. Had it really been their intention to reward their new favorite, Ovando, with the wealth of Columbus as well as his honors, and deprive the latter of an existence they had already made most miserable, they could not have taken surer means for accomplishing their ends.

When Christopher Columbus first appeared in Spain he was in the prime of life, sound in health and vigorous of frame; but in the ten years that had elapsed since his first voyage, the hardships and exposures he had undergone in the service of his adoptive sovereigns, and the mental anguish they had caused him, had reduced the once stalwart mariner to a wreck of his former self. He was no longer young, it is true, for sixty-six years had passed over his head; but his sufferings, of body and mind, had prematurely aged him. That he at last suspected his royal patrons of insincerity, if not of base duplicity, is instanced by the means he took to secure the record of his achievements to posterity. Just before sailing on this last voyage, he caused copies to be made and legally authenticated of all contracts with the crown, all his journals and numerous letters describing the

COLUMBUS

lands he had found, and these he sent out of Spain in care of a trusted friend, with instructions to deposit them in some safe place in Genoa. Bitterly he realized, at last, that he had nothing to hope for from the crown of Spain; proudly he resolved never to ask another favor of the royal ingrates to whom he had given a world and received in exchange contumely and rebuffs. In a letter written a year later he says: "I was thirty-eight years old when I came into your Highnesses' service, and now I have not a hair upon me that is not gray; my body is infirm, and all that was left to me, as well as to my brother, has been taken away and sold, even to the frock that I wore—to my great dishonor."

He had nobly done what he could for the sovereigns and the country of his adoption, to the neglect of his own affairs; they had rewarded him as we have seen; but he sailed on this last long voyage with a mind serene, with ambition unabated. He was going forth to make one final effort to find that hitherto elusive strait, or passage, to the Indies; infirm of mind and body, but animated with high hopes for success. Since he had opened the way, Ojeda and Vespucius (as we have seen) had coasted the northern shores of

THE LAST VOYAGE

South America; Vicente Yañez Pinzon had discovered the Brazils; Vasco de Gama, in the service of Portugal, had sailed around Africa, and Sebastian Cabot, for England, had explored our Atlantic coast from Labrador to Florida. Still, despite their discoveries, not one of them had found the shorter route to India, in pursuit of which we now find Columbus, after ten years of eventful voyagings, in his old age as hopeful as in youth.

Not one of those wretched caravels ever returned to Spain, for two years later their remains were left on the coast of Jamaica; but never was so disastrous a voyage begun under more propitious promises as to the elements. Departing from Morocco, after rendering assistance to the governor of a Portuguese seaport, the Admiral steered straight for the Caribbees, where he arrived, "without shifting a sail," at the island of Martinique, about June 15th. Thence he coasted the inner curve of the Caribbees until he came to Puerto Rico, from which he departed for the south coast of Santo Domingo. Now, he had been expressly forbidden to touch at this island, on account of the animosities his presence might arouse; but, as one of his miserable vessels was even worse

COLUMBUS

than the rest, and difficult to navigate, he desired to exchange it for some one of the many in possession of Ovando. This was ostensibly his excuse for sailing into the harbor whence he had departed in chains less than two years before; but he could not have arrived at a less propitious time, for it was at that moment filled with his enemies. Ovando had arrived three months previously, had taken the reins of government, and now the usurper, Bovadilla, was about to embark. He was taking back to Spain with him many of the idle and discontented colonists of Hispaniola, and also a vast amount of gold obtained by his grinding oppression of the Indians. Among this treasure was a mass of virgin gold so large that the miners who found it once used it as a table, off which they ate a roasted pig, boasting at the time that never a king or queen had anything of the kind so massive or so rare.

The vessels were crowded with criminals, mostly Roldanites, who, regarding Columbus as the author of their woes, hooted and reviled him heartily, when, on the refusal of hard-hearted Ovando to allow him to land, he predicted the near approach of a hurricane,

THE LAST VOYAGE

and begged him to detain the fleet until after it was over. The weather prophet of those days was equally an object of derision as in these, and quite as likely to be in error; but it happened that the Admiral made a shrewd guess at the right moment, and his prediction came true. He bore the insults of the rabble crews with lofty scorn, and also the murmurings of his own men on account of their being denied a shelter which others were afforded; but the event he predicted came to pass, two days later, and their repinings were turned to thanksgivings. A terrible hurricane smote the island and adjoining seas, and the greater portion of Bovadilla's fleet was swallowed by the waves. The Admiral's warning was disregarded, and the ships had sailed just far enough to receive the full force of the tempest. Down to the bottom of the sea went ships and sailors, carrying with them all the chief passengers, including Bovadilla, Roldan, and many others who had rejoiced at the discomfiture of Columbus. All the vast treasure was also lost, and it probably remains within those sunken hulks to-day, off the southeast end of the island, near the islet Saona. One vessel only was enabled to hold on its voy-

COLUMBUS

age to Spain, where it safely arrived with property of the Admiral amounting to four thousand pieces of gold. When this circumstance was brought to the notice of the superstitious Spaniards, they ascribed the dread event to the magic arts of Columbus, who desired to overwhelm his enemies in a terrible catastrophe; but he and his friends were prone to regard it as a condign punishment by the Almighty of the guilty wretches who had persecuted him. Neither party, however, took account of the innocent who had also perished, among whom was the unfortunate cacique of the Royal Vega, Guarionex.

Forlorn and unseaworthy as was the little squadron commanded by Columbus, it escaped the fury of the hurricane intact, except that the vessel captained by Don Bartholomew lost a long-boat, and all those rotten caravels were strained and shattered. Refused admission into the Ozama, Columbus had sought shelter in a wild harbor named by him Port Hermosa, from which, after the vessels had been repaired and their crews refreshed, he sailed westerly towards the coast of Honduras, where he first sighted land and went ashore at or near the present town of

THE LAST VOYAGE

Truxillo. It is worthy of note that while he was on shore a great canoe arrived from a distant voyage to the northward and westward. It was manned by Indians, more intelligent and alert than any the Admiral had seen before, who wore cotton garments, and possessed utensils of copper, clay, and carved wood of superior workmanship. The canoe was laden with cacao beans, which they told him they had obtained in a country to the northward that contained cities of stone and a people wonderfully civilized. This was the great peninsula of Yucatan, which was not discovered by white men until fifteen years later, but which, had Columbus taken the advice of those Indians on the coast of Honduras and sailed in its direction, might have led him to Mexico and beyond. It was reserved for Hernando Cortés, nearly twenty years later, to conquer the Mexicans; but he came near being anticipated by Columbus. Instead, however, of taking the advice of these Indians, he turned to the eastward, and coasted the shore-line of that vast country since known as Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and the Isthmus of Panama. He sought a western passage that should enable him to sail around the world, and, groping along the

COLUMBUS

coast, for forty days beset by terrible tempests almost without cessation, he sailed *tierra a tierra*, or from point to point, entering unknown rivers, exploring gulfs and bays, all the time beating up against the trade-winds, which blew fiercely, as if to turn him from the rich country beyond. The entire coast country was inhospitable, but it was not desolate, for Indians swarmed on every headland, disputed his landing at every harbor and river-mouth, until he and his crews were entirely worn out by continual watching and fighting. "Exposure and disappointment had shattered the constitution of the once hardy seaman, and his strength was fast failing. His old enemy, the gout, had attacked him again, and the miasmatic shores filled him with fever. There was, indeed, little left of him but his indomitable will. He had a bunk built in the bows of his little vessel, where he could rest his weary bones and still guide the fleet. And thus he explored the entire coast of the isthmus, from Yucatan to Darien, finding an unbroken line of continent, in defiance of all his theories, in contradiction to his reasoning, and an impassable barrier to the ambition he had cherished for more than thirty years."

THE LAST VOYAGE

After a month of beating against the winds, the crazy craft at last arrived, with opening seams and tattered sails, at the northeastern extremity of Honduras, which Columbus, in gratitude for a change of course and easier sailing, named *Cape Gracias a Dios*, or Thanks to God. It is on the map to-day; and please remember, when you see it, that it stands for the heart-felt ejaculation of Columbus, at his sudden relief from incessant watching, labor, and perilous navigation. Now, with full sails and fair winds, the toil-worn navigators swept southward along the great "Mosquito Coast," where the natives crowded to the shores with arms and hands full of gold and cotton, endeavoring to lure the Spaniards to land, but in vain. For perhaps the first time in his career, Columbus turned his back upon offers of the precious metal in exchange for worthless trifles. This is strange, for in a letter written after that voyage was over, while he was a prisoner in a sea-environed hulk, he says: "Gold is the most precious of all commodities. Gold constitutes treasure; and he who possesses it has all he needs in this world, as also the means of rescuing souls from purgatory and restoring them to the enjoyments of paradise."

COLUMBUS

Then why did he not tarry, and reap the golden harvest spread forth as he coasted the Mosquito shores? Because he was in pursuit of that hoped-for strait through the continent that should conduct him to the spicy isles and populous shores of farther India. He never found it, and, though he went south as far as the isthmus of Panama at its narrowest point, no good angel whispered to him of that "great South Sea" discovered by Balboa eleven years later. Thus, as we have seen, he came most tantalizingly near to the discovery of Mexico, on the one hand, and of the Pacific on the other. If only that strait had existed, and he could have sailed through it to the other ocean, in advance of Balboa, of Magellan, of Cortés, and of Pizarro! But no, Columbus had reaped rewards enough for one man's share of world-discovery. That great first voyage was sufficient to satisfy an ordinary man; but Columbus was not content; continually he was crying out to others, "The world is mine, invade it at your peril!"

He abandoned the search for the strait, at last, after he had reached a spacious harbor which he named *Puerto Bello*—the Beautiful Port. After the conquest of Peru, a city

THE LAST VOYAGE

was founded here, to which gold and silver in vast quantities was brought across the isthmus and shipped in galleons to Spain; but the finder of this port had then been many years gathered to his fathers. Ten leagues beyond Puerto Bello he yielded to the importunities of his men and turned about to revisit *Costa Rica*, the Rich Coast country, where they had seen gold in immense masses—in nuggets, flakes, and grains. They obtained at one place nineteen great platters of gold, and saw a wall of stone and lime, which indicated a more advanced state of civilization than then existed. They came to a region occupied by savages, who offered them gold in virgin masses and golden gods from the graves of their ancestors; but Columbus would not trade, believing them bewitched, for the very day he turned about the winds turned also, blowing “great guns” for nine successive days, and contrary all the time.

The waves were bright with phosphorescent flames, amid which swam great sharks seeking for prey; and in the midst of the storm a vast waterspout swept down upon the caravels, almost engulfing them in its trailing funnel. Finally, abandoning the search for the strait, Columbus attempted a

COLUMBUS

settlement at Puerto Bello, but, after losing several men by disease and the Indians' poisoned arrows, he was compelled to depart. On January 6, 1503, he regained and anchored in a river of Veragua, which he called Belen, or Bethlehem. Here he determined to start a settlement; but there was a big obstacle in the way in the person of Cacique Quibian, chief of a tribe of naked Indians, who was equally determined no settlement should be founded in territory which had belonged to him and his ancestors from immemorial time. The Admiral did not think it necessary to consult the wishes of Cacique Quibian, even though he owned the lands bordering the river, but, as he had heard there was much gold in an adjoining province, he sent the adelantado to treat with him. The adelantado was royally received by the cacique, whose subjects fished a great stone out of the river as a sort of throne for him to sit on; but he would not give him permission to exploit the golden province. As it was evidently very rich, the natives all wearing great plates of gold obtained from it, both the adelantado and the Admiral concluded to exploit it anyway, with or without permission of Quibian. In truth, as the settle-

THE LAST VOYAGE

ment progressed, the chief became quite aggressive and gathered a great army of his warriors, with intent, doubtless, of falling upon the Spaniards and putting an end to their operations. So Don Bartholomew proposed effecting his capture, if possible, before he could do so, and, taking a small force of soldiers, hid them in the forest surrounding the hill on which the chief's hut was built. He then advanced with an Indian interpreter, and, engaging the chief in conversation, suddenly seized him by the arm. The chief resisted, but the adelantado's grip was like iron, and his soldiers coming up at a pre-arranged signal, Quibian and all his family were captured, to the number of fifty persons. They were placed in boats to be taken aboard ship; but night had arrived by that time, and, as it was very dark and stormy, the wary chief managed to escape, plunged overboard, and swam to land. Meanwhile, Don Bartholomew had remained ashore, where he secured the spoils, consisting of bracelets, anklets, coronets, and massive plates of gold, to the value of several hundred crowns. It did not benefit him, however, to have captured the cacique, who was now at large in the forest, where he gathered his warriors to-

COLUMBUS

gether and suddenly descended upon the incipient settlement. A shower of javelins through the roof of his palm-thatched dwelling was the first intimation the adelantado had of danger; but he sallied forth armed with a lance, and, assisted by some of his men, put the savages to flight. He might not have done so had he not been aided by a fierce blood-hound, which sought them out in the darkness and tore them limb from limb; and, as it was, one Spaniard was killed and he himself received a javelin wound in the breast. A boatload of Spaniards engaged in exploring the river were not so fortunate, for of eleven soldiers and sailors only one escaped, by diving to the bottom of the river and swimming to the bank. While all these untoward things were happening in the settlement, Columbus, with three ships, had remained outside the bar awaiting a fair wind for Spain, whence he was to send back other ships with supplies and reinforcements. He knew nothing of what had transpired, and was about to set sail, when the mangled corpses that came drifting down the stream, with flights of carrion-crows hovering over them, awakened his suspicions. The sea was running high, and no boat could live in

THE LAST VOYAGE

it, so one of the pilots, gallant Pedro Ledesma, of Seville, stripped himself, and, after a hard battle with the waves, succeeded in swimming ashore, where he found the survivors barricaded behind casks and chests, and completely surrounded by savages. The caravel which had been assigned the settlers was riding at anchor within the bar, but the water of the river had fallen and it could not be gotten out. Neither could Columbus get to them, so, while the adelantado and a few soldiers kept the savages off with their weapons, the others made a raft by lashing two canoes together, using spars from the dismantled caravel, and on this they succeeded in escaping to the vessels outside. They were received as if from the grave, and so alarmed was Columbus at this narrow escape of his brother and friends from massacre, that he determined to leave this land of disappointments and sail at once for Hispaniola.

The gloom aboard ship was made intense, shortly before sailing, by several of the Indian captives hanging themselves, after an attempt to escape. They were confined in the hold of the Admiral's ship, beneath a hatch which was chained down, and upon which slept a guard. Bracing their backs

COLUMBUS

beneath the hatch, some of the warriors suddenly flung it and the guards into the air and gained the deck, but were recaptured and again confined in the hold. The next morning all were found dead, having hanged and strangled themselves with ropes. Their corpses were cast into the sea; and it was with the horror of this occurrence upon him that Columbus retraced his course to the islands.

XIX

SHIPWRECK AND RESCUE, COAST OF JAMAICA

1503-1504

COMPELLED to abandon one of his caravels at Belen, where it was left to rot in the harbor, Columbus set sail with the same number that he had in his first voyage for the island of his greatest triumphs and worst disasters. He could not sail direct, on account of the contrary winds, but stood over to the eastward, far into the Caribbean Sea, to a point whence he could shape his course with a fair prospect of "making" Hispaniola. He thus returned to Puerto Bello, greatly to the disgust of his crews, who in their ignorance imagined he meant to renew his search for the mysterious strait. Perhaps he did; but if so, his intention was frustrated by the work of the teredo, or terrible ship-worm, which had bored one of the caravels so full of holes that he was compelled to abandon her in the Beautiful Port.

COLUMBUS

This left him but two vessels, the same number in which he had made his first return to Spain; but they were far less seaworthy than the historic *Niña* and *Pinta*, and were crowded to suffocation. A month of anxious voyaging followed, during which these unfortunates were buffeted by storms innumerable, and finally, by the force of unseen currents (upon which Columbus had not reckoned), set upon the south coast of Cuba, in the midst of the "Queen's Gardens," instead of on the shores of Hispaniola. Here they encountered a dreadful storm that nearly wrecked the miserable hulks, but recovered sufficiently to bear up for Jamaica, on the north coast of which was found a sheltering harbor, into which they ran, on June 24, 1503. The caravels (as Columbus wrote in a letter afterwards) were bored as full of holes as a honey-comb; he had lost all his anchors, and his crews were utterly exhausted from hunger, constant watching, and battling with the elements. They had only strength enough to run the vessels into another harbor, which the Admiral called Santa Gloria, and there both ships and crews succumbed beneath their repeated calamities.

The worthless hulks which the Spanish

SHIPWRECK AND RESCUE

sovereigns had furnished their Admiral for a voyage around the world nearly fell to pieces in Santa Gloria, where they were run ashore, to save them from sinking with all on board. They were stranded on the sands of a beautiful beach not far from St. Ann's harbor, on the north coast of Jamaica, which ever since that event has been known as "Don Christopher's Cove." The caravels settled into the sands, the water rising to their decks, and, after fastening them together, Columbus built cabins of palm leaves in prow and stern. These frail huts sheltered him and his men for more than a year, while they were drearily waiting for a rescue purposely delayed by Ovando, to whom a messenger was sent soon after the shipwreck. Their provisions were already scanty when they reached this haven, their ships were now immovably fixed in the sands, and not a single small-boat remained in which to cross the channel for relief. In this emergency rose the man for the occasion, one Diego Mendez, who embarked in a frail canoe, with a single Spanish comrade and six Indians, for Hispaniola. The channel that separated the east end of Jamaica from the western end of Hispaniola was one hundred miles in width, but about midway was a small

COLUMBUS

island, Navassa, at which they touched, at the close of the second day, and where they found refreshment for their perilous voyage. The heat was so intense and the labor so severe that one of the Indians died on the way, while all were so consumed by thirst that when they landed at Navassa and found a supply of water accumulated in hollows of the rocks, three of them drank to excess and died upon the spot. But, after enduring terrible privations, the faithful Mendez arrived at Santo Domingo and delivered to Governor Ovando the letter from Columbus requesting the despatch of immediate relief. Now, Nicolas de Ovando was such a fiend in human shape as history reveals to us in the person of Philip II. of Spain. His inhuman acts in Hispaniola would fill a volume, and record the most revolting cruelties that even the Spaniards of his day were capable of perpetrating. He hated Columbus and envied him his fame. Now that he had him completely at his mercy, he resolved to bring about his destruction, and, on one plea and another, delayed sending relief for more than seven months! Then, when he believed that his enemy must have perished from starvation or the arrows of hostile Indians, he

SHIPWRECK AND RESCUE

despatched a pardoned rebel, one Escobar, whom Columbus had previously condemned to death, on a visit of observation. Eight months after the departure of Mendez the haggard and emaciated men on board the stranded hulks saw a sail in the offing, one evening just at dusk. It proved to be the ship sent by Ovando in command of Escobar, who warily approached and hailed the shipwrecked mariners, but stood "on and off," so that none of them could get on board his vessel. Sending a boat to shore, with a letter to the Admiral and a present of a cask of wine and a side of bacon, he waited long enough merely to receive a reply to the missive, then sailed away into the darkness of the night. The astonished and now despairing Spaniards looked vainly for his reappearance, for he never returned, and four months of dreary waiting intervened before succor came at last.

In the meantime, while Mendez was endeavoring to raise an expedition for his former comrades, and Ovando was doing all in his power to add to their misery, if not to effect their destruction, how passed the time with the Admiral and his crews? At first, having made arrangements with the natives

COLUMBUS

for regular supplies of provisions, he did not suffer much from hunger, although the food was poor and coarse, and, unaccustomed to it, and to the confined existence aboard the wrecks, he and many of his men fell sick. Columbus, in addition to his mental sufferings, was confined to his bed by the gout, and but for the presence of his son, Fernando, who was constantly by his side, might have succumbed to the accumulation of miseries. He reproached himself constantly for having brought Fernando with him on this voyage; but the lad was a solace and comfort to him all the while, and survived the terrible experiences of the Veragua coast and Jamaica to write a history of his father's life. The name Veragua has been perpetuated in his family by the title bestowed upon his nephew, Don Luis, son of his brother, Diego, and still borne by his descendants.

More than six months after the arrival at Santa Gloria, on January 2, 1504, a mutiny broke out among the crew, led by two brothers, Diego and Francisco Porras, who burst into the Admiral's cabin, where he lay helpless in bed, flourishing their swords, and demanding that he sail at once for Spain. This absurd demand was only a pretext for



"THE ADELANTADO SALLIED FORTH . . . AND SWORE HE WOULD HACK THEM TO PIECES!"

SHIPWRECK AND RESCUE

license, but was the signal for the mutineers to rise, which they did on every side, shouting: "*A Castilla, a Castilla!* Lead us on to Castile!" Columbus attempted to restrain them, but was forced to take to his cot again, after tottering to the deck. The adelantado sallied forth, sword in hand, and swore he would hack them to pieces; but the mutineers were too many for him, and he was compelled to see them depart, with ten canoes and the greater portion of the provisions then on hand. Porras and his gang at first attempted to cross the channel to Hispaniola, filling their canoes with Indians to paddle them over; but a great gale coming up they were obliged to return to Jamaica. To lighten their canoes, they threw overboard their effects, then compelled the hapless Indians to leap into the sea. The natives were almost as much at home in water as on land, but the shore was too far away for them to reach it, and when some of them attempted to rest themselves occasionally by taking hold of the gunwales of the canoes, the cruel Spaniards would cut off their hands or stab them with their swords. This incident shows their character; but in truth they were no different from the majority of those ruffian

COLUMBUS

adventurers who, in the wisdom of Providence, were permitted to explore, to plunder, and to destroy, in the opening years of our New World's history.

The mutineers dispersed themselves among the Indian bands of the interior, where they created such a feeling of enmity against Columbus and his unfortunate companions that soon all supplies of provisions were cut off entirely, and the horrors of famine soon began to threaten those dwellers on the hulks embedded in the sands. Most of the hundred Spaniards remaining with the Admiral were too ill to forage for provisions, but not so ill they could not fill the air with their complaints; and at last, driven to desperation, Columbus bethought himself of an expedient. He and his crews were superstitious, but the Indians, as he knew, were even more so, and, invoking the aid of his astronomical lore, he predicted an eclipse of the moon within three days, in the early part of the night. The rebellious caciques had been assembled for the purpose of receiving this valuable information, and they were told, furthermore, that the Spaniards were under the protection of a deity who rewarded those who served them and punished those who, for instance,

SHIPWRECK AND RESCUE

failed to supply them with provisions. In token of his wrath, the moon, which was then shining brightly in the heavens, would soon veil her face in darkness, and remain obscured until they promised better behavior for the future. The simple savages hooted and scoffed at Columbus; but when, indeed, the moon went into a cloud and did not emerge as was her wont, they became really alarmed, even terrified. They robbed themselves of provisions in order to placate the wily Admiral, and, casting them at his feet, implored him to intercede with his deity in their behalf. This he promised to do on condition that they would not fail of supplies in the future, and, retiring to his cabin, soon emerged with the assurance that their prayers were granted. He timed his emergence to coincide with the reappearance of the celestial orb, which soon flooded the forests with silver light and filled the hearts of the savages with joy. They went back to their homes in happier frame of mind, so thoroughly convinced a great calamity had been averted through the intercession of Columbus, that they never after failed with their supplies.

Shortly after this event, which better il-

COLUMBUS

illustrates the sagacity of Columbus than his honesty, occurred another, which brings into contrast the different natures of the Admiral and the adelantado. The latter was the fighter of his family, while the former, if not absolutely cowardly by nature, yet has left little evidence of his valor. He was courageous in his convictions, but shrank from personal encounters, while Don Bartholomew was a very lion in a fight. After they were reunited, at Isabella city, he always stood as a shield between his elder brother and danger. So now, when Porrás, the rebel, ventured one day to attack the Admiral in his stranded ship, the adelantado set upon him so furiously that he was overpowered and captured. This, too, after Don Bartholomew had killed several men who had sought to intervene, and received from Porrás himself a serious wound in the hand, after the latter's sword had cleft his buckler. This action brought the rebels to terms; but their surrender only made so many more mouths to feed, and Columbus awaited most anxiously news from honest Diego Mendez.

It is thought that his troubles at this period must have affected his mind; and that he was, at least, broken and dispirited is

SHIPWRECK AND RESCUE

shown by a letter he wrote and despatched by the hand of Mendez to his sovereigns: "Hitherto I have wept for others; but now have pity upon me, Heaven, and weep for me, O earth. As to my temporal concerns: without a farthing to offer for a mass, cast away here in the Indies, surrounded by cruel and hostile savages, isolated, infirm, expecting each day will be my last; in spiritual concerns, separated from the holy sacraments of the church, so that my soul, if parted here from my body, must be forever lost. Weep for me, whoever has charity, truth, and justice. I came not on this voyage to gain either honor or estate—that is most certain—for all hope of the kind was already dead within me. I came to serve your Majesties, with a sound intention and an honest zeal, and I speak no falsehood."

When we think of him at this time, pent up within the narrow walls of his cabin, enduring the heat of an almost vertical sun by day and the discomforts caused by tropical insects at night, added to his physical and mental infirmities, the hardest heart must needs go out to him in sympathy. That he survived this period of captivity on the coast of Jamaica, in which he suffered all that

COLUMBUS

mortal man can well endure, may be attributed to his hardy constitution. That he at last escaped, may be placed to the credit of sturdy Diego Mendez, who finally succeeded in fitting out a vessel, at the Admiral's expense, which reached the imprisoned Spaniards the last week in June, 1504, after they had been a year and a few days marooned on the hulks. At the same time, another vessel arrived, sent by Ovando, and in the two the survivors of that protracted and unfortunate voyage of 1502-1504 returned to Santo Domingo.

Columbus was treated with great superficial courtesy by the despicable Ovando, who in his heart hated him for his well-earned honors, and had hoped he and his companions would have met their deaths before the vessels reached them. He lodged him in his own, formerly the Admiral's house, and bowed obsequiously before him; but at the same time he prated loudly of the vast powers granted him by the sovereigns and of his sagacity in dealing with the Indians. How must the heart of Columbus, callous as it was, have swelled within him when he learned of what had happened to the Indians during the reign of Ovando; and how Don Bar-

SHIPWRECK AND RESCUE

tholomew must have longed to slay that base minion of King Ferdinand, when he heard of the terrible wrongs committed by the Spaniards in Xaragua!

For Ovando had massacred every one of the eighty caciques who had so hospitably entertained the adelantado and rendered tribute, seven years before. He had murdered their subjects in cold blood, thousands of them, and put them to the torture. And lastly, he had hanged as a felon the beautiful and joyous Anacaona, who had received Don Bartholomew like a brother and entertained him like a prince. He had done his best, or worst, to make the island desolate, and before his rule was over he hunted down and hanged the last of the five native caciques who were in power at the coming of Columbus.

Not satisfied with plundering the natives and shedding their blood, this were-wolf in human guise, Don Nicolas de Ovando, the trusted servitor of Ferdinand and Isabella, inflicted upon them the most outrageous tortures. He caused gibbets to be erected everywhere, upon which the Indians were hung thirteen at a time, "in reverence of our Saviour and the twelve apostles"; he burned them at the stake, women and children as

COLUMBUS

well as men; he pierced them with spears, hacked them to pieces with swords, and cut off the hands of all he found roving at large. The island was filled with lament; and, writhing in anguish, unable to endure the scenes of misery, Columbus took ship, with his family, for Spain, where he arrived after a tempestuous passage of two months—fit termination to the most disastrous voyage of his life.

XX

THE END OF A GREAT CAREER

1504-1506

IN opulent, golden Seville, a city enriched by his discoveries, indebted to him for renewed commercial life, Columbus experienced nothing but coldness and neglect. He had hastened thither from San Lucar, as soon as his health permitted after landing, and hoped to find there a haven of refuge from his enemies. But they pursued him yet, and even to the grave, giving him no rest until at last he found surcease of trouble in death. His end was approaching—of that he felt assured—and his only thought now was to “place his house in order,” to collect the vast sums due him from the Crown, and so arrange affairs that Diego, his son, might sometime receive those honors and privileges which, though solemnly pledged him by his sovereigns, had been persistently denied. Though accounted wealthy by the world at

COLUMBUS

large, and accused by his enemies of withholding vast sums from the Crown, the Admiral was poor. He never, in fact, from the beginning to the end of his life, enjoyed the possession of riches. He entered Spain in poverty, he began his first great voyage in debt for the very caravels that carried him; and now, after fourteen years of unprecedented services to the country, he found himself broken in health and poverty-stricken to the last degree. In a letter he wrote at this time to his son, Diego, he says: "I have received nothing of the revenue due me, but live by borrowing. Little have I profited by twenty years of toil and perils, since at present I do not own a roof in Spain. I have no resort but in an inn, and, for the most times, have not wherewithal to pay my bill."

In his own distress, however, he thought of the mariners who went with him on the last voyage, and who, though they had been nearly three years absent from their homes, had not received their wages. "They have endured infinite toils and perils," he wrote, "and they bring invaluable tidings, for which their Majesties ought to give thanks to God and rejoice"; yet they, too, were neglected, forgotten. Present troubles weighed heavily

THE END OF A GREAT CAREER

upon the Admiral; but there was one debt he seems to have forgotten: that to the Pinzons, without whose aid he could not have performed the first voyage from Palos. Martin Alonzo Pinzon was in his grave, to which he had been hastened by the injustice of Columbus, sanctioned by the sovereigns. The Admiral was experiencing the fickleness of royal favor, his cup of bitterness was full and running over; but he could not complain that royalty alone was capable of ingratitude. He writes to his son, at this time, of the services so faithfully rendered him by Diego Mendez, who saved his life when a prisoner at Jamaica, and afterwards labored heroically in his behalf in Hispaniola and Spain. "I trust," he says, "that the truth and diligence of Diego Mendez will be of as much avail as the lies of Porras." This honest creature was with him to the very last, and some have thought that he closed the aged Admiral's eyes when death called him. When on his death-bed, Columbus promised he should be appointed chief *alguacil* of Hispaniola, and Diego, his heir, who was standing by, assented; yet, when the son came to power, as viceroy of the island, he evaded that promise, which should have been most sacred, and poor Mendez went to

COLUMBUS

the end of his life unrewarded for an inestimable service.

Yet, whatever his own failings, Columbus could truthfully write: "I have served their Majesties with as much zeal and diligence as if it had been to gain Paradise; and if I have failed in anything, it has been because my knowledge and powers went no further." He had, indeed, served them to the utmost; and it was because his powers could go no further—because he was now decrepit, impotent for harm as well as incapable of rendering greater service—that he was allowed to fall into the abyss of forgetfulness. He had arrived at Seville about the middle of November, 1504. On the 26th of that month, while desperately ill and unable to proceed to court, he lost by death his only influential friend on the throne, Queen Isabella. She died after an illness of several months, and, the tidings of the sad event reaching Columbus as he was penning a letter to his elder son, he added in a postscript: "A memorial for thee, my dear son Diego, of what is at present to be done. The principal thing is to commend affectionately, and with great devotion, the soul of the Queen, our sovereign, to God. Her life was always good and holy; . . . for

THE END OF A GREAT CAREER

this reason we may rest assured that she is received into His glory, and beyond the cares of this rough and weary world. The next thing is to watch and labor in all matters for the service of our sovereign the King, and endeavor to alleviate his grief. His Majesty is the head of Christendom. Remember the proverb which says, when the head suffers, all the members suffer. Therefore, all good Christians should pray for his health and long life; and we who are in his employ ought more than others to do this with all study and diligence."

Supremely loyal to the latest breath he drew, Columbus could think no ill of their Majesties, even of Ferdinand, who, after the death of his consort, was less inclined than before to have dealings with the man he and she had created Admiral and Viceroy, but whom he had so signally dishonored. The great discoverer expected little, if anything, from the King, but to the very last he cherished hopes of some comforting message from the Queen. "Ascertain whether the Queen, who is now with God, has said anything concerning me in her testament," he wrote Diego, shortly after the demise of Isabella. But the Queen had said nothing. When she made

COLUMBUS

her last will and testament, her thoughts were of the future, not the past. Promises weigh more with royalty than fulfilment, and the account with Columbus was cancelled in two words: "services rendered!"

Detained at Seville for many months by continued illness, it was not until the early summer of 1505 that Columbus was able to venture forth to present himself at court. He was then too infirm to ride on horseback, and so permission was obtained from the King, allowing him to ride a mule. This is the edict:

"A decree granting to Don Cristobal Colon permission to ride on a mule, saddled and bridled, through any parts of these kingdoms. . . . The King: As I am informed that you, Cristobal Colon, the Admiral, are in poor health, owing to certain diseases which you had, or have, and that you cannot ride on horseback without injury to your health, therefore, conceding this to your advanced age, I, by these presents, grant you license to ride on a mule, saddled and bridled, through whatever parts of these kingdoms or realms you wish and choose, notwithstanding the law which I issued thereto; and I command the citizens of all parts of these kingdoms and realms not to offer you any impediment or allow any to be offered you, under penalty of ten thousand *maravedis* in behalf of the treasury, upon whoever does the contrary. I, the King."

THE END OF A GREAT CAREER

This special concession was as balm to the lacerated feelings of Columbus; and to be addressed as "Don" and "the Admiral" were hopeful signs that the King still respected his titles, as granted by contract. His hopes were dashed, however, when, after infinite toil and pain, he arrived at court, then held in Segovia; for Ferdinand received him coldly, though with courtesy and compliments. Months passed, as months had passed before, in humiliating attendance upon the court, in pressing petitions upon the King, which he was nowise inclined to grant, and requesting restitution which he had concluded it would not be for the interests of the crown to make. He would not consent, even, to the appointment of Diego to the high offices his father was entitled to, though the latter offered to waive all his pecuniary claims against the crown, if it would only sanction his claim to privileges formerly granted by solemn treaties. Many years later, but only after long process of law against the crown, aided by a matrimonial alliance with a lady distantly related to the King, the son obtained a partial restitution, grudgingly yielded by the hard-hearted sovereign.

The despair of Columbus is expressed in a

COLUMBUS

letter to his old friend, Diego de Deza, Archbishop of Seville, who then, as formerly, aided Columbus with his purse, and to whom he wrote: "It appears that his Majesty does not think fit to fulfil that which he, with the Queen (who is now in glory) promised me by word and seal. For me to contend to the contrary would be to contend with the wind. I have done all that I could do. I now leave the rest to God, whom I have ever found propitious to me in my necessities."

If the benignant Isabella were alive, he mournfully reflected, he would not be supplicating vainly for his rights; but he was prone to exaggerate the interest which the late Queen took in him and his schemes during the latter part of her life. Her interest had waned, her estimate of Columbus had changed, and it is doubtful if he could have obtained more from her than from Ferdinand, had she lived to see him then; except that he might have aroused her pity—a sentiment to which the cold nature of the King was a stranger. A fitful flame of hope was awakened in the bosom of Columbus by the return to Spain of Isabella's daughter, known afterwards as *Juana Loca*, or "Crazy Jane," who, married to young Philip of Aus-

tria, had come into succession of her mother's throne of Castile. But she had not wit enough to appreciate the worth of Columbus, nor will enough to do him justice in face of her father's opposition; so the mission of Don Bartholomew, who had been sent to represent his brother and press his claims, came to naught. The Admiral was then too ill to leave his bed, and as both he and the adelantado felt the end was not far off, their leave-taking was most affectionate and impressive. Don Bartholomew, in truth, never saw his elder brother again in life; and with his departure on his fruitless mission, he makes his exit from these pages. He survived the Admiral several years, living to serve his King, and Don Diego, his nephew, with the fidelity that was so conspicuously a part of his noble nature.

The Admiral's flame of life was burning low. The first week of May, 1506, while arranging his affairs, preparatory to departure on that last long journey which we all must take, his reason seemed to totter on its throne. He gave evidence by his writings, at this time, that the cold neglect, the continued denial of justice, by King Ferdinand, and the aspersions of his enemies of lower rank, had en-

COLUMBUS

gendered a gloom which overspread his mind. The impression forced upon him: that he must depart with his great work unfinished, leaving those he loved to the mercies of those in power who had caused his ruin, depressed him to the verge of insanity; but as the end approached his mind was clarified as by fire. In his last will and testament, which he amended and signed two days before his death, are exhibited those transcendent qualities of his higher self, which raised him above the plane of ordinary life. When they shone forth, in that last awful moment of preparation for eternity, all that was mean and petty in his nature dissolved away, leaving his great soul pure and crystal-clear. Having made his peace with man so far as within him lay the power, and with God so far as human vision could perceive, Columbus was resigned to die. The end came without suffering, on May 20, 1506, when, so far as can be known, he had just completed the allotted span of life.

Ere he expired, he murmured: "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," and, with these words expressive of resignation and trust on his lips, he passed away.



THE DEATH OF COLUMBUS

THE END OF A GREAT CAREER

The great Admiral's earthly existence had closed in peace, but the unrest that had attended him in life seemed to attach to his remains after death. He had performed many voyages, including eight across the ocean, before his final venture into the "unknown sea of darkness"; but his mortal relics were yet to voyage again. The life of Columbus, as the writer of these lines once observed, shows him to have had a dual nature: at least two towns claim the honor of his birthplace; two nations hold the lustre of his deeds in reverence; two continents unite in laudation of his greatness; after his death two convents in Spain held his remains temporarily in charge, and now two countries lay claim to the absolute possession of his ashes! It was a strange fate that decreed the name of Columbus should live forever, while his last resting-place should be shrouded in obscurity.

The earthly career of Columbus came to a close at Valladolid, in Spain, whither he had gone with the court, still demanding reparation, and still regarded by King Ferdinand as an unwelcome visitor, of whose presence he wished to be rid. When seized with his mortal illness, he was, as usual, lodging at an inn, a wretched abode for one who had done

COLUMBUS

great things. It is still pointed out to visitors in Valladolid, and the room is shown in which he last drew breath. The last rites of Spain's great Admiral were celebrated with pomp and ceremony, in the church of Santa Maria la Antigua; but in 1513 his body was given sepulture in the Carthusian monastery of Las Cuevas, in Seville, where, thirteen years later, that of his son, Diego, was placed beside it.

In Diego's will, which was drawn in 1523, the desire is expressed that his remains be deposited in the convent-vault of Las Cuevas, in Seville, and also: "I would like taken there the body of Doña Felipe Muñoz, my father's legitimate wife, that is now in the monastery of Carmen, in Lisbon; as well as the body of Don Bartolomé Colon [his uncle], which is deposited in the monastery of San Francisco, in the city of Santo Domingo." All except the wife were finally gathered in Santo Domingo, in accordance with a petition of Doña Maria de Toledo, the widow of Don Diego, who stated that it was at the expressed desire of the Admiral himself. This, the second removal of the remains of Columbus, was made in or about the year 1540, and at the same time the body of his son was taken thither, both being in charge of Doña Maria,

THE END OF A GREAT CAREER

who afterwards resided in Santo Domingo during the remainder of her life.

It is well authenticated that the remains of Columbus were sent to Santo Domingo, the "Cradle of Spain's greatness in the New World"; yet soon after their arrival *all trace of them was lost*. The archbishop of that city, first established by Don Bartholomew in 1496, wrote, in 1549: "The tomb of Don Cristobal Colon, where are his bones, is much venerated in this cathedral"; and all the biographers are agreed with the historian Herrera, that "from the Cuevas of Seville the bones of Columbus were removed to the city of Santo Domingo, and are in the great chapel of the cathedral." In 1683 the diocesan synod states: "The bones of C. Colon are in a leaden case in the cathedral, . . . *according to traditions of the island's old inhabitants*." Thus, in a century and a half, the resting-place of Columbus had become a matter of tradition merely, but no one knew exactly where it was. This is owing to the piratical acts of Sir Francis Drake, who once sacked the city, and of whom the residents were in such terror that they hid themselves, after first destroying all evidence of the Columbus tomb, for fear it might be desecrated.

COLUMBUS

Another century rolls round, and in the last decade of it we find a Spanish man-of-war transporting to Havana some bits of lead, fragments of bones, and pinches of dust, which, found in a vault beneath the presbytery of the cathedral, were taken for the last vestiges of the great Columbus. As we have seen, tradition, only, pointed to the tomb of Columbus, for there was no monument, no memorial marble, no inscription. It was in the year 1795 that, with vast pomp and display, the "sacred ashes of the Admiral" were transferred to Cuba, in order that (Santo Domingo having been ceded to France) the revered relics should still remain beneath the Spanish flag. The Spanish functionaries sent for the remains, had sounded the stone floor of the cathedral until they found a secret vault, and thence had withdrawn its contents, assuming that there was no other tomb in that sacred spot near the high altar. But *there was another*. Unknown, undiscovered for eighty years thereafter, it was found in 1877, while some repairs were being made to the cathedral. A narrow vault was opened near the altar, separated from the other, empty, tomb merely by a slab of stone. Within this vault a leaden case was found,

LEAD CASKET WHICH CONTAINED BONES OF COLUMBUS



THE END OF A GREAT CAREER

within the case some bones, a bullet, and a silver plate, with an inscription, also duplicated on the lid of the casket. In effect, this inscription read: "These are the remains of the Discoverer of America, the first Admiral; Illustrious and renowned man, Christopher Columbus."

But were they the remains which the Spaniards thought they had removed to Cuba eighty years before? Santo Domingo declares they were, and are, still having them in keeping; but a shout of indignant protest went up from Spain and from Cuba, voiced in the official report made by the historical Academy of Madrid, which says: "The remains of Christopher Columbus are in the cathedral of Havana, in the shadow of that glorious banner of Castile. It is most fit that over his sepulchre waves the same flag that sailed with him from Palos in the *Santa Maria*. . . . There rest the bones of the First Admiral of the Indies; there is his last abode!"

It were "most fit," decidedly, that the remains of Columbus should rest beneath the banner of Spain, in charge of his adoptive country, even though that banner has since been trailed in the dust, and though that country rendered him only insult and con-

COLUMBUS

tumely for his inestimable services. But all the evidence goes to prove that the sacred dust of the first Admiral is still in Santo Domingo, in the island where he built the first city, erected the first fort, first shed native blood, and where he himself desired to rest at last. Whether the remains may still be found in Santo Domingo or not, they cannot any longer be claimed by Havana, since the relics carried there in 1795 were taken to Spain in 1898, after the evacuation of that city by the Spaniards. Removed from the niche in the cathedral wall more than a century after they had been placed there by hands long since turned to dust, the precious relics were again received with salutes and ceremony on board a vessel of war, and from Havana taken to Spain, where, in the city of Seville, beneath the pavement of its great cathedral, they were deposited by the side of Ferdinand, second son of the Admiral. The Spaniards claim to possess the "legitimate remains" of their great discoverer, who, they say, after making eight voyages to and from the New World while in life, was taken on two more in death, finally ending at Seville, the city which had known him well in the period of his trials and his triumphs.

THE END OF A GREAT CAREER

But, though it has been conclusively shown that, while these remains were *not* those of the great Columbus, they may have been those of his son, Diego, who also was interred in the cathedral of Santo Domingo. They should have been left in Havana, since he was the chief colonizer of Cuba; and Santo Domingo should have treasured them, as he was once its viceroy; but truth and sentiment are satisfied now that the two brothers, Diego and Ferdinand, who were devotedly attached to each other when in life, lie side by side beneath the historic marble of Seville cathedral, the inscription on which perpetuates their father's glory: "To Castile and Leon, a New World gave Colon."

At the close of an impassioned appeal to the world for an impartial verdict on this question, a native of Santo Domingo says: "And what did fate reserve for the discoverer of America, in return for so much faith and a life devoted to a realization of the soul's ideal? Sad for humanity to confess, the hatred of the envious, the sorrows of a faithful servant, the crushing weight of insult, shipwreck, disappointment, and, finally, a sad and solitary death, filled to overflowing with the bitterness of one who, after having consecrated his

COLUMBUS

whole life to the cause of humanity, goes down to the grave, seeing that mankind has for him only a Calvary. Nearly three hundred years after the death of the great Admiral, posterity gave evidence of a desire to pay their debt of gratitude, and it was decided to transfer his remains from one Spanish colony to another. But those in charge of the removal made a mistake, and homage was paid to *his son*, while the great hero remained forgotten in his stone vault in Santo Domingo."

It matters not, of course, where rest the bones of him who in the flesh was named Columbus; who found the way to America; who died without a home, victim of a king's ingratitude. Four hundred years have rolled by since he died, yet his deeds shine with lustre undimmed, his memory is perpetuated in a thousand forms. In the course of our narrative we have seen and noted what those deeds were, and have gathered somewhat, it is assumed, respecting the character of the man and his motives. Lest the writer may have seemed to convey an unfair estimate of Columbus, he presumes to quote, in closing, from two authors of undoubted fairness, and who possess a reputation for erudition and re-

search. "The character of Columbus," says Justin Winsor, "is not difficult to discern. If his mental and moral equipoise had been as true, and his judgment as clear, as his spirit was lofty and impressive, he could have controlled the actions of men as readily as he subjected their imagination to his will, and more than one brilliant opportunity for a record befitting a ruler of men would *not* have been lost.

"The world always admires constancy and zeal; but when it is fed, not by well-rounded performance, but by self-satisfaction and self-interest, and tarnished by deceit, we lament where we would approve. Columbus's imagination was eager and, unfortunately, ungovernable. It led him to a great discovery (which he was not seeking for); and he was far enough right to make his error more emphatic. He is certainly not alone among the great men of the world's regard who have some of the attributes of the small and the mean."

"The grand object to which he dedicated himself," wrote the talented Prescott (author of *Ferdinand and Isabella*), "seemed to expand his whole soul, and raised it above the petty shifts and artifices by which great ends

COLUMBUS

are sometimes sought to be compassed. There are some men, in whom rare virtues have been closely allied, if not to positive vice, to degrading weakness. Columbus's character presented no such humiliating incongruity. Whether we contemplate it in its public or private relations, in all its features it wears the same noble aspect. It was in perfect harmony with the grandeur of his plans and their results, more stupendous than those which Heaven has permitted any other mortal to achieve."

THE END

