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The Landing in the New World.

A LIFE OF
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

BY

HORACE ROSCOE ST. JOHN.

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MDCCCL.

In preparation,
BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

A

HISTORY OF THE INDIAN ARCHIPELAGO.

TWO VOLS. 8vo.

MR. H. R. ST. JOHN has for some years been engaged in preparing the materials for this work. It is a narrative that has never yet been written, and will trace, in minute detail, the progress of the Portuguese, English, Dutch, and French in the Archipelago, from the earliest period to the present day. To this, and to the rise and spread of piracy, the history will be chiefly, if not altogether, confined; for the pure native annals present little to interest, and less to instruct, an European reader. Of every island, as it is drawn within the circle of the narrative, an account will be given.

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PREFACE.

THIS volume was at first written without the aid of Washington Irving's work. The old narratives, including that by the son of Columbus, and his own letters, supplied the body of the biography, which I once intended to swell to dimensions far more voluminous. The American writer enabled me, with little labour, to fill in such minute details as could be introduced into a narrative so slight, and it is as much from feeling as from duty, that I congratulate Washington Irving on his work, and America on the historian of her discovery. The graceful style, and the warm spirit of his writings, have made him a familiar friend with the English reader; and, in producing this little biography of Christopher Columbus, I trust I shall be considered rather as seeking to follow in his track than as attempting to rival even the most compressed version of his narrative. In the "Life and Voyages" of Columbus, we have one monument of his fame, engraved elaborately with a picture of all his varied fortunes.

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But the story of the great navigator is eloquent in moral and political lessons, and while his frequent failures in early life create in the mind a contempt for the mean obstacles that stood in the way of his grand enterprise, the success of his more mature career shows the folly of succumbing too quickly to adversity. Few men ever laboured longer without promise of reward; few men were more successful in the great end of their ambition. His first aim was to open the western world to the industrious energy of Europe; his second, to build on this great discovery the fabric of his own fame and prosperity. What he sought to achieve for Spain he triumphantly accomplished; what he sought for his own fortune he never found. But there is no limit to the renown of his adventures; and mankind, more grateful in its memory of the dead than generous in its appreciation of the living, has erected an imperishable monument to him, as the discoverer of America.

If, not elaborate in its details, or complete in its execution, this narrative be found a true sketch of his career, it will have served its purpose. As it is modestly presented, so I hope it will be considerately judged.

HORACE ROSCOE ST. JOHN.

St. John's Wood, April, 1850.

CHAPTER I.

A.D. 1447 to A.D. 1484.

CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT BELIEF IN A WESTERN CONTINENT—FAILURE OF ATTEMPTS TO EXPLORE THE ATLANTIC—DANGERS OF THAT SEA—ADVENT OF A DISCOVERER—COLUMBUS—PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH—HIS FAMILY—EDUCATION—EARLY OCCUPATIONS—EARLY VOYAGES—ADVENTURES AT SEA—REACHES LISBON—HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE—HIS MANNERS—MARRIAGE—MEANS OF SUPPORT—MAPS—RETIRES TO PORTO SANTO—IDEA OF A NEW WORLD—GROUNDS OF THE BELIEF—INVENTION OF PRINTING—SPREAD OF KNOWLEDGE—DISCOVERY OF THE ASTROLABE—APPLIES TO PORTUGAL—PROPOSAL REJECTED—TREACHERY OF JOHN II—TO GENOA—TO VENICE—HIS POVERTY—FIRST VISIT TO LA RABIDA—HOSPITABLE RECEPTION—CONFERENCE OF THREE WISE MEN—PREPARATIONS TO VISIT THE COURT OF SPAIN—CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE MOORS—CHARACTERS OF FERDINAND AND ISABELLA.

L I F E
OF
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

Unus erat mundus ; duo sint, ait iste, fuère.—GAGLIUFFI.

A. D. 1447.

Ancient belief in a Western Continent.

THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA was the result of no sudden flash of conviction passing through the mind of Europe. It was the realisation of an idea born in antiquity, nourished among heathen nations, and through fifteen centuries of the Christian era. The existence of a vast continent beyond the Atlantic was a vague belief—supported by uncertain rumours—among the philosophers of remote times, and it is still a subject of speculation, whether an intercourse was at any period carried on between classic Europe and the western world. With many it was a fascinating dream ; with some it was a solid opinion,

Failure of attempts to explore the Atlantic.

A.D. 1447.

and, with a few, it was the motive to action. Undertakings were projected, commenced, abandoned, renewed, and again forsaken, and still the idea was not dissipated. The numerous endeavours to explore the regions of the setting sun proved it was upon no slender thread of probability that mankind hung its belief in the existence of a new world beyond the vast Atlantic. Failure was accounted for, not by the folly of the attempt itself, but by the chances of fortune, or by the neglect and timidity of those who undertook it. Ships had been equipped and sent forth beyond the bourne of waters, to return no more. The Phœnician navigators sailed far into this mysterious sea, and brought back rumours to confirm the general belief. The annals of Carthage indicate discoveries, the exact record of which is lost. From those times until the fifteenth century, an intermittent series of expeditions maintained life in the idea. But hasty preparations, ill-calculated arrangements, or hearts growing suddenly faint, brought all enterprize to a common termination—discouragement and failure.

It appeared that the Atlantic rolled an impassable barrier of waves and storms between the old world and that undiscovered realm beyond. Its dark, tempestuous waters seemed

A.D. 1447. Dangers of that sea. Advent of a discoverer. Columbus.

to heave interminably to the west, even so far as in reality to form the sleeping couch of the sun. Hope was discouraged by frequent failure; until in the fifteenth century there came a man to unlock the gates of the unknown world, and throw open to the Christian nations regions vast and rich for the employment and reward of their industry. The mountainous billows of the Atlantic were objects of no awe to him; his perseverance levelled all difficulties, his courage defied all danger, and all mystery was dispelled by his genius.

Ten cities, towns, and hamlets, claim to have been the birthplace of Christopher Columbus. Little mystery now hangs around the point, although in favour of each place some discussion is yet maintained. At Cogoletto is shewn a cabin, on the sea-shore, wherein local tradition points to the spot where his mother gave him birth. But the discoverer himself names Genoa as the place of his nativity; desiring in his will that a married member of his family should perpetuate his name there, "for from thence I came, and there I was born." Probably, therefore, it was a Genoese woman who, in her native city, rocked the cradle of Columbus.

Neither is the date of his birth marked accurately on the chart of time. In this he resem-

Place and date of birth. His family.

A.D. 1447.

bled many other great men, whose lives form so many eras in their national history. They spend their early years among the unnumbered and unnoticed millions. Gradually they elevate themselves above the masses of the unknown, and fix the admiration of mankind upon their achievements; and the world, dazzled, is intent only on their present actions. When they are dead, therefore, and posterity reviews their lives, it often fails to trace them to the cradle, or indeed far beyond that period when their genius first shone above the common horizon of humanity. Columbus is said by some to have been born about 1435 or '36, by others a decade later; but, calculating from data supplied by himself, I am inclined to believe that 1447 was the year rendered memorable by the birth of a man, than whom none greater has left his name on the records of discovery.

That his father was a humble weaver or wool-carder, is generally admitted. But as posterity considers it necessary that the hero of a great drama shall be of noble blood, it has assiduously laboured to trace the lineage of Columbus to a lofty source. However, it matters little. The son of a weaver discovered America, and he owed little of his success to the nobility. He had no patron of illustrious title. None helped

A.D. 1457.

Education.

him on, but all men of noble name seemed rather to combine against him. In spite of them, however, he won his way to the eminence of success and celebrity. He had two brothers, Bartholomew and Diego, both enterprising seamen, and one sister, whose career presents nothing of interest.

The education of the navigator was of an useful kind. He wrote well, was versed in arithmetic, and made great progress in drawing. At Pavia he studied grammar and the Latin language; geometry, geography, astronomy, and navigation. From the first years of his life, the adventurous career of a seaman was his ambition; and the idea of discovering new lands may be numbered among his earliest aspirations. The civilization of Europe at the time of his birth was ill calculated to nourish an enterprising spirit. Geographical science was an exile. But during the infancy and boyhood of Columbus a new era dawned. The passion for discovery was stimulated by success, and Europe was emerging from her monkish slumber into the light of a new epoch. Thus, whilst the artificial obstacles of his career were little and trivial, fortune was great and grand in her assistance.

Leaving the University of Pavia at an early age, Columbus is supposed to have spent some

time with his father at Genoa, employed in wool-carding. His son denies, but does not disprove this. Be it as it may, however, certain it is that a life within the walls of that noble city had no attractions for him. He longed to be on the sea, although piracy was then so rampant that a voyage to any distance presented dangers past belief. The ocean was covered with buccaneers; an intermittent war was waged against the Mohammedan powers, adding considerably to the merchantman's peril; but Columbus was eager for a seafaring life, and entered upon it before the age of fourteen. This part of his career is obscured by gloom. No distinct accounts of it have been transmitted to us, so that the first time we meet the navigator on his element is in an expedition fitted out at Genoa in 1459, by John of Anjou, to recover the crown of Naples for his father, René, Count of Provence. The Republic took part in this enterprise with numerous privateers, among whom was an adventurous Captain, named Colombo, who, with another of the same name, employed the services of the young navigator. He sailed with them on many voyages, and is said to have embarked with the squadron for Naples. This is disputed; but there is no doubt that he was once employed by René to capture a galley off the port of Tunis. Arriv-

A.D. 1459.

Adventures at sea.

ing at San Pédro, in Sardinia, he learned that two ships and a carrack were with the galley—intelligence which damped the courage of his crew, who, refusing to attack a force so superior, resolved to return to Marseilles for reinforcement. The authority of Columbus could not prevail against their fears. He ordered all sail to be spread in apparent compliance with their will ; but, altering the compass, made rapid progress towards the Cape of Carthagená, whilst his men believed they were in the direct track for Marseilles. We can pursue this adventure no further, all record of it vanishing at this point. But those who accompany Columbus on his first voyage will remember the alteration of the compass.

The crown of Naples, contended for during four years, was finally won by John of Anjou, but for a long subsequent period we find few traces of Columbus. He is supposed to have been engaged in the Mediterranean and up the Levant—sometimes in war, sometimes in commerce, sometimes in predatory attacks on infidel shores. It is related that he was captain in the squadron of a great corsair, when a desperate engagement took place with four richly laden Venetian galleys, bound from Flanders, on their way to Lisbon. His ship grappled with one

Reaches Lisbon. His manners.A.D. 1470.

opponent: showers of fiery missiles were exchanged, and both vessels were wrapped in conflagration. Columbus floated to the beach on an oar, and thus, for the first time, trod Portuguese soil. The account, however, is traditional, and based on no certain testimony.

He arrived at Lisbon about the year 1470. In the vigorous spring of life, though with grey hair, his tall well-wrought figure, his fine face, and kindling eyes, inspired an enthusiasm of admiration; whilst his courteous manners, his engaging discourse, his charity, kindness, and religion, won the friendship and respect of his associates. Wherever he appeared in Lisbon he was esteemed, and his society was sought by the learned, the curious, and the philosophical. Accustomed to attend the religious services in the convent of All Saints, he there met with Donna Felippa, the daughter of Bartolomeo de Palestrello, an Italian navigator of aristocratic family, who had formed a colony, which he afterwards governed, on the newly discovered island of Porto Santo. This lady was resident in the convent. She had no fortune; but the qualities of her mind were of a high order. Columbus successively formed an acquaintance, a friendship, and a deep attachment for her. She loved him in return, and they married—an union

A.D. 1470.

Means of support. Maps.

which made Lisbon, for some time at least, the home of the future discoverer.

His father-in-law being dead, he took up his abode in the house of his wife's mother, who placed at his disposal all the charts, papers, and memoranda which formed the wealth of the old navigator. These nourished in the mind of Columbus that love of discovery which afterwards ripened into so rich a fruit. Accident contributed to stimulate this thirst. Being, by marriage, naturalised in Portugal, he frequently accompanied the expeditions of that nation to the coast of Guinea, and when on shore—as his means were small—devoted himself to the construction of maps for the support of his family. Limited as was his income, however, he was enabled, through strict economy, to assign a portion of it to the support of his aged father at Genoa, and the education of his younger brothers. His maps attracted much attention, as geographical science was then confined with the narrowest circle.

About this time Felippa inherited a little estate at Porto Santo, where Columbus immediately took up his residence, and where his son Diego was born. Being frequently in the society of his brother-in-law, Pedro Correo, also a navigator, his attention was directed to the disco-

veries then making on the African coasts, to the passage to India, and to the widely-diffused rumours of an unknown continent, or vast archipelago in the west. These ideas received strength from his geographical studies, which shewed how vast a blank there was on the general map of the world. Rumours and traditions floated through Europe, were elaborated in the mind of Columbus, and moulded into a solid opinion, based on three classes of authority: reason, or the nature of things, the testimony of learned writers, and the reports of navigators.

That the earth was a terraqueous globe, which might be travelled round from east to west, was his first axiom. Now, the vast oriental hemisphere being the great object of discovery, it appeared clear to him that, sailing in a westerly direction, the navigator must either pursue an uninterrupted track across the ocean to the Indian continent, or be opposed by the shores of some unknown region. In either case the result would be important. The rival cities of Venice and Genoa were then the great trading powers of Europe. The former almost monopolized the commerce of the East, so that it was a national pride that impelled Columbus to this great adventure, which might open a new channel to

A. D. 1470.

Grounds of the belief.

the oriental seas, through which the wealth of those exhaustless regions might pour into the port of Genoa. It was a patriotic idea, and the refusal to encourage him was a disgrace to his native city.

The testimony of writers, ancient and modern, also threw itself into the scale; and no little weight was added by reports of certain indications of land in the west, which adventurous navigators brought from that tempestuous region. A piece of wood, elaborately carved, but not with an iron instrument, had been found at sea, thirteen hundred and fifty miles west of Cape St. Vincent. A similar fragment had drifted from the same quarter to Porto Santo, whilst reeds of an immense size continually floated from the west. In the Azores it was a tradition that many huge pine trees, of an unknown species, had been wafted from the lands of the setting sun; and the bodies of two men, belonging to a strange race, were also said to have been cast ashore. Land had been dimly and distantly seen by various navigators, whose vessels had been carried by storms far westward over the dark Atlantic; and, therefore, by a process of logic, not sophistical, Columbus judged that an undiscovered region lay beyond that sea,—a fertile, peopled land, from which the in-

habitants of Christendom were shut out by no natural law.

I am compelled briefly to indicate the grounds of this belief. Washington Irving details them fully, and attributes the success of the undertaking, in great part, to the existence of two happy errors—that of the immense extension of Asia to the west, and that of the small size of the earth. Much ingenuity has been exerted in the attempt to dim the lustre of this great man's name—to detract from the merit of his discoveries; but his biographer, to whom I have alluded, roots up all such weeds of prejudice, jealousy, and pedantic puerility. Around the memory of every celebrated character is woven a web of renown, in which all who seek to tarnish the unsullied reputation find themselves entangled to their own confusion. Columbus devoted himself to study, and the conviction he arrived at was reached after a long and laborious pursuit. The idea was ripening in his mind: it had acquired consistency as early as 1474. He wrote in the summer of that year to Paulo Toscanelli, at Florence, detailing his theory, and was, by the reply of that learned man, encouraged to prosecute the attempt. He sent him a map,—used afterwards in his first great voyage. The correspondence was main-

A.D. 1477.

Invention of printing. Spread of knowledge.

tained; the solid idea was revolved; the navigator continued to make fresh studies, and to accumulate probabilities in the intervals of his voyages at sea, hoping, one day, with the aid of fortune, to carry this vast enterprise into action. But, too poor to fit out the necessary armament, he was compelled to wait the tide of accident, and would also have hesitated to make a journey to such regions, unless armed with the sanction of an European power.

The art of printing was now invented. It opened the hidden mines of knowledge, and drew forth the precious ore to be scattered over Christendom. Information, hitherto embalmed in musty archives, buried in monkish libraries, and recorded only on perishable manuscripts, now spread itself far and wide for the enlightenment of mankind; and knowledge, which was before the monopoly of the few, became the property of the people, and chief weapon in the struggle for liberty. Among the results of this discovery was—that it stimulated the curiosity of the world. John II ascended the throne of Portugal, and, animated with the general passion, sent many expeditions to Africa, ambitious of opening the long-sought route to India. The discovery of the astrolabe—since improved into the quadrant—then first enabled the seaman to

Applies to Portugal. Proposal Rejected.

A. D. 1474.

ascertain his distance from the equator. Navigation, which had hitherto timidly crept along the shores, not daring to put forth upon the boundless sea, acquired courage to venture beyond sight of land on the surface of the ocean, where the waves rolled away further than the eye could pursue them, and the sailor found himself upon a watery wilderness—the centre of a circle, bounded on all sides by the meeting of the clouds and the waves.

Immediately after this discovery, Columbus made his first proposition to the court of Portugal. John II granted him an audience, listened to him, was struck with his theory, and referred him to a council of great and learned men, who evinced their wisdom by ridiculing the project. The king was not satisfied. He summoned a new cabinet of noble sages, and they again declared the scheme visionary, vain, and impracticable. John, therefore, refused the application of Columbus; but, lending his royal ear to the advice of crafty councillors, consented readily to do an act of treachery. By the advice, it is said, of the Bishop of Ceuta, who opposed all encouragement of the Genoese navigator, he dispatched a vessel, with the ostensible object of carrying provisions to the Cape di Verd islands, though with the real design of cheating Columbus of his

A.D. 1476.

Treachery of John II. To Genoa.

fame. But the crew of the caravel, having for many days bent their cruise westward, through a stormy tossing sea, without perceiving any promise of land, lost courage, and returned to Lisbon, declaring that the project of discovery was no more than a presumptuous vision.

Columbus was incensed at this act, and refused—though now solicited—to renew negotiations with the king who had played so mean a part. The sorrows of his life were begun: his wife was dead, and he deeply mourned her loss. We have no record of his domestic life; but doubtless it was a thornless path, for he dearly loved Felippa, and her affection seems to have been worthy of such exalted fondness. Lisbon was no longer a home for him. Accompanied by his son Diego, therefore, he privately left it towards the close of 1476. Two reasons are assigned for his secret manner of departure. In the first place, the king might detain him, and in the second, his affairs were in confusion, and he feared arrest for debt. This is alluded to in a letter written several years after by the King of Portugal, inviting Columbus to return, and engaging to shield him from arrest, whether by the civil or criminal officers.

From Lisbon he is supposed to have gone to Genoa, where, in 1485, he repeated in person

His poverty. First visit to La Rabida.

A. D. 1476.

the offer he had made by letter. It was contemptuously rejected. The republic was in a declining state; her energies sank with her fortune and her freedom, and she refused to undertake an enterprise which might once more have lifted her to an exalted eminence among the great commercial powers. But we have no authentic account of this transaction, or of that which succeeded it at Venice, whose government was equally deaf to the proposal. Once more visiting Genoa, to make some arrangements for the comfort of his father's hoary age, Columbus again cast himself upon the world, wandering from court to court, as a beggar, neglected and despised, to offer to the princes of Christendom an empire, more rich than the chrysorhean streams of Lydia.

About two miles from the little seaport town of Palos de Morguer stood the Franciscan convent of Santa Maria de Rabida. It still stands—a memorial of the discoverer's first arrival in Spain. One day, as we are told by Garcia Fernandez, a stranger on foot, accompanied by a little boy, stopped at the gate and begged a little bread and water for his child. The refreshment was given, and just then the prior, Friar Juan Perez de Marchena, passed. He noticed the traveller, was attracted by his appear-

A. D. 1476.

Conference of three wise men.

ance, entered into conversation with him, and learnt his history. Whence he was at that particular time coming is conjectural. He was on his way to Huelva, where resided a brother-in-law—probably Pedro Correa.

The prior possessed much knowledge, and a large mind, unshackled with prejudice or pedantry. He had studied geographical science, and deeply interested as he was in the project of Columbus, detained him as his guest, and sent for Fernandez Garcia, the physician of Palos, who was equally struck with the manner and appearance of the stranger. These three really wise men conferred: the scheme was revolved, and the mariners of Palos were consulted. One of them stated that thirty years before he had been driven by a storm so far to the north-west, that Cape Clear, in Ireland, was to the east of him. Here, although a heavy gale blew then, there was little roll in the ocean. Had the waters stretched very far beyond, he judged they would not have been so smooth. This, therefore, was regarded as indicating the existence of land to the westward. Juan Perez undertook to introduce Columbus to the court of Spain. He gave him a letter to the prior of the monastery of Prado—Fernando de Talavera, confessor to the queen, and, therefore, deep in her confidence—stating the project,

and asking for his assistance. The good friar also undertook to maintain and educate Diego in the convent. To him Columbus mainly owed his success, and the navigator's remembrance of the service was long and grateful. With him he remained until the opening of 1476, when the court settled in old Cordova, to prepare for a campaign against the Moors in Grenada.

Spain was now rising into wider power. The Moorish dominion had shrunken within the narrow boundaries of Grenada, and still the combined armies of Arragon and Castille pressed upon them, to crush this last remnant of their independence. Ferdinand and Isabella reigned joint sovereigns of the kingdom. Her influence was equal to his. She was, in many respects, the reverse of her husband. Her mind was powerful and vigorous, as her form was delicate and beautiful. Her firmness, energy, and keen intellect, her justice and generosity, display her in striking contrast with her sordid husband, whose mind was only susceptible of the ideas of aggrandisement and gain. His ambition was great, but superior to his wisdom. Simple in his diet, persevering, devout, and somewhat affectionate, he was yet cold, selfish, and artful. His ear was more readily opened to slander, and that petty ribaldry which always greets the

enunciation of a great theory, than to the lofty ideas of an honourable ambition, or the just praises of a great and good man. More readily urged to attempt an acquisition to his empire through the bloody path of conquest, than by the peaceful means which Columbus proposed to employ for the addition of a world to his possessions, he shrunk from this small expense, whilst he revelled in the immense preparations for a long, desolating war. The queen's superior wisdom saw the glory of the project. It was a woman who consented to the equipment of those vessels which brought back for their cargo news of the discovery of a new world. Fortunate was it for Spain that the influence of this wife was not neutralised by the dull indifference of her little-minded husband.

These were the sovereigns whose reign was to be rendered illustrious by the discovery of America. For their aggrandisement and glory Columbus was to enter the remote regions of the unknown, where nature still held an undivided sway over man and his mother earth. Fancy, of magical creative power, had already painted an unfathomable ocean—waves too high to surmount, winds too dangerous to brave—that shut out from the navigator's enterprise the mysterious lands beyond the Atlantic. Won-

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Ideas of the unknown world.

A.D. 1484.

derful islands, moulded in all the forms and tinted with all the hues of beauty, peopled by an innocent race, bathed by gentle blue seas, and breathed over by an eternal balm—these were the dreams of the poet's florid fancy; while others imagined a desolate wilderness of land and wave, where the hot sea surged for ever upon dismal, bleak, and barren shores, the waste and silent borders of creation.

Such were the tales told and repeated, while the theory of Columbus, by king, court, and country, was derided as the mad delusion of an enthusiast.

CHAPTER II.

A.D. 1486 to A.D. 1492.

CHAPTER II.

COLUMBUS ARRIVES AT CORDOVA—CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE MOORS—INTRODUCTION AT COURT—COUNCIL AT SALAMANCA—ARGUMENTS OF THE WISE MEN—CAMPAIGN OF MALAGA—MISSION FROM JERUSALEM—PROJECT TO DELIVER THE HOLY SEPULCHRE—BEATRICE ENRIQUEZ—SECOND CONSULTATION AT LA RABIDA—MISSION TO COURT—COLUMBUS HAS AN AUDIENCE OF THE QUEEN—TERMS PROPOSED—NEGOTIATION ABANDONED—RESOLVES TO LEAVE SPAIN—FINAL EFFORT BY LOUIS DE ST. ANGEL—THE QUEEN CONSENTS—COLUMBUS OVERTAKEN—AGREEMENT DRAWN UP—PREPARATION OF AN ARMAMENT—THE THREE SHIPS—THE ANCHORS WEIGHED—VOYAGE TO THE CANARIES—ENTER ON UNKNOWN SEAS.

CHAPTER II.

“The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared.”

COLERIDGE.

COLUMBUS came to Cordova early in 1486. To obtain an audience of the king and queen was not easy. The Prior of Prado regarded his scheme as a vision. He was poor. He came in humble apparel, without pomp or clamour, and, therefore, they gave him no ear. Nor were circumstances favourable. The court was then in the full excitement of a war against the Moorish powers, whose formidable coalition offered little promise of their speedy subjugation. Other claims of variety and moment thus pressed upon the king and queen, leaving them no leisure to heed the importunities of an adventurer. It is even questionable whether Fernando de Talavera ever brought it to the royal ear. So passed the summer and autumn. Columbus supported himself by the construction of maps, and, meanwhile, was introduced into the house of Alonzo de Quintanilla, finance-controller of Castille, who warmly encouraged his project. By the aid of him and others he became ac-

quainted with Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, archbishop of Toledo and grand cardinal of Spain.

He at first opposed religious objections to the scheme, but, being no bigot, these were removed, and Columbus explained his theory. Listening with steady attention, the archbishop gradually felt convinced that the project was based on reason. He became the firm friend of the navigator, introduced him at court, and, by this means, Columbus at length procured an audience of the king and queen. The project struck them. They referred it to a council of learned men—astronomers and cosmographers. The conference took place in the convent of St. Stephen, at Salamanca. Unnumbered objections were urged. Was the world round, and not flat, with the skies reared above like a tent? If so, were there any dwellers in the opposite hemisphere? Could men walk thus hanging by their feet? Could it rain, hail, and snow upwards? Could trees grow with their branches downwards? Even allowing this, could ships, having once passed the central line, sail back over the vast upward slope of sea? If not, then the thing was impossible. Such was the logic of the learned men. Some said the world was an island floating onwards through a vast ocean, whose opposite shore was a limit to the duration of created things.

The consultations of the council were inter-

A. D. 1489.Campaign against Malaga.

rupted by the great campaign of Malaga. The court was perpetually in motion. Columbus kept in its track. Regarded as a madman, pointed at in the streets by children, who touched their foreheads significantly as he passed, jeered and scoffed by self-adoring philosophers, he continued, never disheartened, always hoping, and earning daily bread by his old pursuit of map making. Occasionally he lived in the hospitable houses of wealthy men.

The court, however, since it attached Columbus to its train by the magnetic influence of promises, could not but defray a part of his expenses, and records of the sums thus paid him remain in the archives of Simancas. Whilst with the camp before Malaga, in 1487, he was introduced to the Marchioness of Moya, who became interested in his enterprise, and exerted an useful influence on his behalf. In 1488 he received an invitation to Lisbon from John II, dated the 20th of March. But he declined, and in 1489, when the Spanish court returned to Cordova, the negotiation appears to have been actively renewed. The sovereigns wrote to that city, ordering that entertainment should be given, free of expense, to one Christopher Columbus, who was coming there to a conference with them, which was postponed, say the annals of Seville,

by the campaign, when this same Columbus was found fighting in the foremost ranks, among the boldest and the best.

During the siege of Boza two friars, employed in the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem, arrived at the Spanish camp. They came with a message from the Grand Soldan of Egypt, who threatened to massacre all the Christians in his empire, to destroy the holy sepulchre, and tread the cross into the dust, unless the war with Grenada were abandoned. The war was, nevertheless, continued, but Isabella granted a yearly sum of 1,000 ducats to the monks in charge of the holy sepulchre, sending a veil of her own embroidery to drape the holy shrine. Columbus then conceived the idea—which he nourished until his death—of devoting the profits of his contemplated discovery to the deliverance of the rocky tomb, where the Saviour's body once was, from the power of a sacrilegious infidel.

But it were wearisome to detail the endless efforts which he made, and the renewed disappointments which he suffered. Let me hasten on.

At Cordova, Columbus met Beatrice Enriquez, a lady of aristocratic family, who probably tied him to Spain more firmly than his patience would have done. The nature of his connexion with this woman is obscure. He does not ap-

A.D. 1490.

Second consultation at La Rabida.

pear to have married her, but she was the mother of his son and historian, Fernando, whom he treated equally well with Diego, Felippa's child. Relinquishing all hope of assistance from the royalty of Arragon and Castille, he yet lingered at Cordova, endeavouring to awake the spirit of adventure in the minds of private men, whose cupidity he sought to touch. He applied first to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, whose vast estates were princedoms in themselves, and subject only in a modified fashion to the rule of Isabella and Ferdinand. Temporising and objecting for some period, this nobleman at length refused to encourage the project. Celini saw reason in the scheme, and held out hopes which he afterwards withdrew, promising, however, to use his influence with the sovereigns of Spain. But Columbus was weary. An encouraging letter from the French king determined him to proceed to Paris. Once again, therefore, he arrived at the gate of La Rabida, where, after an interval of seven years, he once more met his friend, the worthy prior, who still maintained Diego. On learning that Columbus intended to depart the country with his son, the spirit of Fray Perez was aroused; Garcia Fernandez was a second time called to a consultation; and the navigator, the monk, and the physician deliber-

ated upon further plans. They took the advice also of Martin Alonzo Pinzon, the head of a family well known for their adventures upon the sea. This man offered his purse to assist Columbus, advised him to renew his application, and promised all possible help.

At length it was resolved to despatch a letter to the queen from friar Perez, who had formerly been her confessor: Sebastian Rodriguez, an old pilot of Lepi, was selected for the mission. He travelled to Santa Fé, before Grenada, and at the end of fourteen days was again at the convent, bearing a message to Juan Perez, inviting him to court.

Now the friar tarried not a day, but, saddling his mule, departed before midnight, and the result of his mission was, that Columbus renewed an active negotiation with the king and queen. Still his terms were refused. Bigotry retained its hold, and once again the adventurer, indignant, commenced his journey to France.

But Louis de St. Angel, receiver of the ecclesiastical revenues in Arragon, with many others, entered warmly into the cause. He, in particular, made a last effort at persuasion. The queen was solicited. She wavered, hesitated, urged the cost, feared to draw upon an exhausted treasury, but finally exclaimed—"I undertake the

A. D. 1491.

Agreement drawn up.

enterprise for my own crown of Castille, and I will pledge my jewels to raise the necessary funds.”*

Columbus was overtaken by a mounted messenger, at a bridge two leagues from Grenada. When assured that the enterprise was resolved on, he came back to the Santa Fé. Here he had an audience of the queen. An agreement was drawn up, stipulating on the part of the adventurer that he and his heirs for ever should enjoy the office, honours, and prerogatives of admiral in all lands discovered by him; that he should be viceroy in all such territories, with the privilege of nominating three candidates for the government of each island or province, of whom the sovereign should choose one; that he should retain for himself a tenth of all profits derived from the collection of precious commodities, whether by barter or otherwise; that he, or his lieutenant, should be sole judge in all disputes arising out of traffic between those countries and

* For this there was no necessity. The funds were drawn, chiefly, from the coffers of Arragon; but Ferdinand advanced 17,000 florins. He did not fail, however, to indemnify himself, when Columbus brought his first gold from the new world. It was employed to gild the vaults and ceiling in the saloon of the grand palace of Sarragossa, built by the Moorish kings.

Spain, provided the High Admiral of Castille enjoyed similar power in his district.

That he might fit out, at his private expense, an eighth part of each enterprise, and retain an eighth part of the profits.

These conditions being agreed to, it remained to procure and furnish forth an armament. Columbus, now more than forty-five years old,* was relieved of much anxiety by the appointment of Diego, his son, to an office of page at court. To prepare him for this, two learned men of Moguer undertook the completion of his education. The navigator's mind, therefore, was wholly turned to his enterprise. Now, however, a new difficulty arose. The shipowners of Palos refused to furnish vessels, while officers and men could not be found willing to accompany the expedition. The perils of that great voyage were beheld through the magnifying medium of superstitious ignorance. The Atlantic ocean was peopled with the countless terrors which a timid imagination can devise, and all shrunk from

* Washington Irving fixes his age at this period at fifty-six. But Columbus, in a letter to the king and queen, dated 1501, tells them he had been forty years at sea, and began his mariner's life when he was fourteen years of age. Thus my conjecture as to the date of his birth receives its main support.



Departure from Palos.—Page 33.

A.D. 1492.

The three ships. The anchors weighed

the adventure, until Martin Alonzo Pinzon redeemed his promise by the equipment of a vessel and an offer to embark, with his brother, Vicenté Yañez, also a skilful navigator. At length others followed, and Columbus found himself in command of the Santa Maria, a large decked vessel, prepared expressly for the voyage, which bore the admiral's flag; the Pinta, captained by Martin Alonzo, with his brother Francisco as pilot; and the Nina, by Vicenté. These two were caravels—light vessels, without deck in the centre, but built up high at the stem and stern. Equipped, manned, and furnished with ample munition, this little squadron was, in appearance, but a humble instrument to accomplish a design so great. With the pilots, the crew, notary, a physician, and surgeon, several private adventurers, and their servants, the whole number embarked was no more than one hundred and twenty.

Now, with religious ceremonies, confession, and sacred communion, all was ready. On Friday, therefore, the 3rd of August, 1492, the sails were set, and the three vessels, bound on their mission of discovery, weighed anchor from before Huelva, and bent their course towards the Canary Isles. Glad in heart, but not yet confident that resolution would not fail his fellow

34 LIFE OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

Voyage to the Canaries. Enter on unknown seas.

A.D. 1492.

voyagers, Columbus made all haste to lose sight of Europe. On the third day the Pinta's rudder was disabled. Alonzo Pinzon secured it with ropes; but these gave way, and the vessel lagged on her course. The admiral, therefore, touched at the Canaries, and for three weeks sought another ship, but, finding none, caused a new rudder to be made for the Pinta, and started forth again. The eruption of Teneriffe, witnessed by the crew, spread a panic among them; but Columbus, bringing his scientific knowledge to dispel this superstition, allayed all fear, and induced them to proceed vigorously on their way. Three caravels, mounting the Portuguese flag, were reported to be cruising off the isle of Ferro. Suspecting John of Portugal of some sinister design, consistent with the cunning treachery characteristic of that prince, the admiral made all haste to leave the navigator's usual route, and spread sail for the unknown seas of the west.

CHAPTER III.

A.D. 1492.

CHAPTER III.

LOSE SIGHT OF LAND—FEARS OF THE CREW—COLUMBUS
ADOPTS A FALSE RECKONING—OMENS OF WRECK—VARI-
ATION OF THE NEEDLE—COLUMBUS EXPLAINS IT—BIRDS
AT SEA—THE TRADE WINDS—WEEDY SEA—CLOUDS MIS-
TAKEN FOR ISLANDS—CALMS—CHANGE OF THE WIND—
VAST COVERING OF WEEDS—DEAD CALM—THE SAILORS
REASON ON THE PRUDENCE OF THE VOYAGE—CRY OF
“LAND!”—CLOUD ILLUSIONS—REWARD FOR THE FIRST
SIGHT OF A SHORE—THEY SAIL TO THE WEST SOUTH-
WEST—RENEWED DISAPPOINTMENTS—SAILORS RESOLVE
TO RETURN—UNMISTAKABLE EVIDENCES OF LAND—
SIGNS FLOATING ON THE WATER—COLUMBUS ADDRESSES
THE CREWS—THE NIGHT WATCH—THE BEACON—SIGNAL
FROM THE PINTA—LAND!

A.D. 1492.

Lose sight of land. Fears of the crew.

CHAPTER III.

“Alone, alone—all, all alone—
Alone, on a wide, wide sea.”—COLERIDGE.

FOR three days a dead calm brooded over the sea; but on the 9th of September, when Ferro, the last of the Canaries, was grown dim in the distance, a lively breeze sprung up, and swiftly and steadily the three ships sailed to the west. Fear now possessed the crews: lamentations broke out, and a panic spread. Sight of land was lost, and a strange region—perhaps an ocean without limit—perhaps vast quicksands and submerged rocks—lay before them. Nevertheless, Columbus, by dwelling on the wealth of the undiscovered world, excited their imaginations, and revived the fainting spirit of enterprise.

Advancing rapidly before this powerful gale, the admiral feared lest their great distance from Europe might reawaken terror in the minds of his fellow voyagers. The expedient of a false reckoning of the ship's progress suggested itself, and the crews were thus kept in ignorance of the real breadth of sea they had traversed. On the 11th they saw floating part of a mast belonging

to some large vessel, which was looked upon as ominous of shipwreck. On the 13th, in the evening, the variation of the needle was observed. It pointed no more to the north star, but to the north-west, and gradually increased its changing tendency. Nature's laws seemed altered. They were in a trackless sea, where even the mysterious guides of heaven failed them. To the crews this circumstance appeared pregnant with alarm; but Columbus ingeniously allayed their fears. The needle, he said, pointed to some stationary and unseen point, and the motion of the Polar star caused the variation of the compass. The solar system was not then understood, and this explanation received credence. The phenomenon is now the source of no surprise, although its cause is still unknown. This is a curious illustration of human weakness. The most portentous wonders are disregarded because they are familiar, whilst novelty, even of a trivial character, makes deep impression on the mind. The vast organization of the universe, with the power that created it, form matter of light discussion, whilst the smallest deviation from the accustomed course of nature affords food for more marvel than the noblest and grandest operations of Almighty agency.

The morning of the 14th of September was

A. D. 1492.

Birds at sea. The trade winds. Weedy sea.

ushered in with appearances of joyful augury. A heron and a water-wagtail fluttered on the wing around the mast head, and were regarded as promise of land. The next night they saw something like a flame of fire falling from the sky into the sea—another sign of hope. They now came under the influence of the trade winds—the steady, unvarying, unceasing breezes, which follow the sun, and breathe over the ocean between the tropics, from east to west. Still onward, before this ceaseless gale, they sailed, further, and still further, over the unknown, unnavigated ocean.

Large patches of weeds were now seen floating on the water, drifting from the west. Some seemed to have been detached from rocks, others to have been washed from river banks—some yellow and withered, others green and fresh. A live crab was on one of them: this Columbus carefully preserved. They saw also a white tropical bird, of a kind that never sleeps on the sea. Tunny fish sported around the vessels, and recalled to the navigator's mind the description in Aristotle, of certain adventurers, driven by storms far into the west, where the waters were clothed with matted weeds, and where the tunny was in great plenty. He had now, he thought, arrived in the Weedy Sea, described by ancient mariners.

On the 18th, the same breeze still blew over a tranquil sea. Each vessel strove to be in advance. The Pinta, a fast sailer, kept ahead, and Alonzo Pinzon, hailing the admiral, told him that a great flight of birds hovered in the north, where some singularly shaped clouds, in the peculiar light of sunset, assumed the appearance of islands. Columbus, however, detected the delusion, and maintained his course. On the next day the breeze sank, and drizzling showers succeeded. Two pelicans visited the vessels, and, as these are shore-loving birds, appeared to herald land. Two hundred fathoms of line, however, found no bottom to the sea. Columbus judged that islands must lie to the north and south; but, having engaged to sail westward, refused to alter his course, although the sailors murmured deeply when they thought of the vast track of ocean they had left behind.

When, on the 20th, the wind veered to the south-west, this circumstance, though unfavourable to their progress, was hailed gladly, as the unvarying gale, blowing from the east to the west, appeared preternatural and mysterious. Orchard-loving birds flew over head, with lively songs—cheering music to the sea-wearied navigators. These small songsters, they thought, would not sing if wearied, and a long flight from land must exhaust their strength.

A. D. 1492.

Vast covering of weeds. Dead Calm.

At length the vessels entered upon a track of water matted with a vast covering of weeds, sweeping in huge floating fields as far as eye could reach, and impeding their way, for the breeze was weak and variable. The crews believed this to indicate a shallow sea, and feared to rush blindly on the rocky and desolate boundaries of creation, where, amid breakers and quicksands, the vessels would be engulfed in inevitable wreck. Still the sounding-line sank vainly in search of the sea-bed. Then the wind fell, the weather calmed, the glassy sea scarcely heaved under its influence. A whale rolled its broad back above the water, and the sailors, who found in every phenomenon the active source of fear, dreaded lest in that sluggish sea they were doomed to be fixed for ever. Columbus never failed to account plausibly for these things; but mutiny threatened; alarm induced discontent, and discontent appeared to forebode an open and irresistible rebellion. On the 25th, however, as though by a special providence, the glassy ocean broke into a long heavy roll, and dispelled the dread of an eternal stagnation.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free—
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The sailors still reasoned on the prudence of proceeding further. They were now far beyond the bounds of navigation; they had been wafted, day after day, over unknown expanses of ocean, and it appeared that they were sailing through an illimitable sea, which rolled its waters to eternity beyond. Provisions could not last for ever, and every day lengthened the distance between them and the known world. Still they did not understand how far they had in reality proceeded. Knots of conspirators, nevertheless, clustered on the decks, and whispered conversations nursed the idea of rebellion into a definite resolve. With some the project of casting the admiral into the sea was actually conceived and meditated. Columbus, however, knew the tempers of his men. Some he soothed, some he threatened, some he encouraged with promises most calculated to stimulate the fainting heart of adventure.

On the 25th, when the vessels were sailing in close companionship, Columbus leaned over the bulwarks of the *Santa Maria*, and conversed with Pinzon in the *Pinta*. A map was thrown from this vessel into that of the admiral, and whilst he, with his pilots and several old seamen, was contemplating the chart, Martin Alonzo Pinzon gave a joyful shout, and cried, "Land! land! *Senor*, I claim my reward!" He pointed

A.D. 1492.

Cloud illusions. Reward for the first sight of a shore.

to the south-west, and Columbus, on his knees, gave instant praise to God. Pinzon sang the *Gloria in Excelsis*, and the crews mingled their voices in a chorus of glad thanksgiving.

All eyes, from the highest points, strained towards the south-west. Night came on, amid hope and exultation; but morning brought disappointment, for a cloud, in the refracted rays of the sinking sun, had deluded them. The light of dawn melted it, and a blank horizon swept in an unbroken circle round, ever widening as they advanced. Again they steered westward, whilst dolphins disported in the glassy sea,—so calm that the sailors swam for amusement, and flying fish leapt upon the decks.

When they had proceeded, according to the reckoning, five hundred and eighty-four leagues, but in reality seven hundred and seven, from the Canaries, they lost sight of birds, and the weeds floated from the east. Thinking that they had passed amid islands, widely separated, the sailors murmured and menaced, but new indications of hope suppressed their discontent. A pension of thirty crowns had been promised, by the king and queen, to him who should first discover land. The cry was, therefore, constantly heard, and disappointment was thus continually renewed, until the admiral proclaimed, that should one of the company give an alarm, and

They sail to the west south-west. Renewed disappointments. A.D. 1492.

no land be reached within three days, he should entirely forfeit his claim.

A clamorous demand, in which Pinzon joined, induced Columbus to steer west south-west. Another grievous disappointment had occurred. The Santa Maria's crew believed that the setting sun showed land. The Nina crowded sail in advance, and soon, from her mast head, a flag was waved, and from her deck a gun discharged, in signal that a shore was seen. An electric thrill of joy passed from ship to ship. Hope ran high; but the cloud melted, and it ebbed away. In proportion to their exultation before was their dejection now, and it was to appease the consequent discontent that Columbus for once consented to vary his course. For three days, therefore, they sailed west south-west. Green herbage, birds, tunny fish appeared plentifully, and the gale was as sweet as April breezes in fresh and fragrant Seville. But the evening of the third day closed in upon a boundless horizon, ceaselessly receding from their view, and the crews, almost as one man, insisted that the prows should point homewards. The admiral refused. Affairs were ripening to a crisis, when—now that all expedients seemed to fail, and hope was well nigh worn out—fresh weeds floated by, a fish, known to inhabit only rocky waters, swam around; a branch of thorn,

A. D. 1492. Signs floating on the water. Columbus addresses the crews.

covered with berries, tossed before them, and they picked up a reed, a small board, and a carved staff. Again Expectation stood tiptoe on the prow, and the three vessels went gaily on, steered by Hope, with joyful hearts on board.

At evening, when the usual vesper hymn was sung, Columbus addressed his companions, reminded them of God's goodness shown in the stormless voyage and tranquil sea, and in the multiplied signs which had led them to the land, promised long ago by hope. On leaving the Canaries, he had predicted that, having sailed two thousand one hundred miles, it would be wise to shorten sail at midnight. Land might intercept their course ere morning broke. This precaution was now taken. A vigilant watch was ordered, and a doublet of velvet, in addition to the pension, was promised to him who should first proclaim the sight of a shore.

Away westward they kept their slackening course. An unremitting watch was maintained on board. The day closed, the sun set, and night fell. Columbus, from the lofty poop, stretched his gaze towards the horizon, now growing dim in the thickening light. At ten o'clock, a glimmer, as of a distant beacon, seemed to shine in the west; he called one of the company, asking him if he saw a light in that direction. He said

The beacons. Signal from the Pinta. Land!A. D. 1492.

yes. But Columbus, unwilling to delude himself with a fancy, called another, who mounted the round house, but the appearance had vanished. It soon shone out again, like a torch in the sea-tossed bark of a fisherman, or a light carried to and fro in a forest. Slight as was this sign of hope, Columbus rested on it with sanguine expectation.

Morning brought the blessed fulfilment. A gun, fired from the Pinta, carried on its flash the confirmation of their hopes—the intelligence that a land was seen. Rodrigo de Triana first saw it. The new world was discovered, and the navigator's long life of weariness, toil, and disappointment was crowned with success—success which opened to the nations of civilized Europe rich, unbounded, and exhaustless fields of enterprise. The reader who accompanies me further will, doubtless, not fail to compare the savage regions then first seen, with the flourishing dominions now rising into yearly increasing power, under the fostering influence of the great united republic. The contrast between summer and winter is not greater than that of the verdant, fresh, and fruitful shores, first revealed to the view of Columbus, with the populous city-studded coasts, now marked with the thousand features of a ripening civilization.

CHAPTER IV.

A. D. 1492.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST SIGHT OF THE NEW WORLD—THE LANDING—THANKS-GIVINGS—COLUMBUS TAKES POSSESSION OF THE ISLES—JOY OF THE VOYAGERS—WONDER OF THE PEOPLE—FIRST INTERCOURSE BETWEEN THE EUROPEANS AND INDIANS—TRAFFIC—SEARCH FOR GOLD—SAN SALVADOR—VOYAGE ALONG THE COAST—ADVENTURES WITH THE NATIVES—PLEASANT INTERCOURSE—MAGNIFICENT HARBOUR—GOLD REGION IN THE SOUTH—CUBA DISCOVERED—THE RIVER OF SAN SALVADOR—EXCURSION ALONG THE COAST—MIS-SION INTO THE INTERIOR—DREAMS OF WEALTH—RE-TURN OF THE ENVOYS—THE GREAT VILLAGE—DISCOVERY OF THE POTATOE—OF TOBACCO—INTERVIEW WITH THE CHIEFS—THEY ACCOMPANY THE ENVOYS—FIELDS OF MAIZE, SWEET PEPPER, AND COTTON—SAIL IN QUEST OF THE ISLE BABIQUE—DESERTION OF THE PINTA—PINZON'S JEALOUSY—“BOHIO!”—DISCOVER THE ISLAND HAITY.

CHAPTER IV.

— “The lightly-launched canoe,
That stemmed the studded archipelago,
O'er whose blue bosom rose the starry isles.”

BYRON.

ON Friday, 12th October 1492, early in the morning, Columbus saw the new world. A level green shore spread before him, covered with trees, luxuriantly verdant, and beautiful beyond fancy. Numbers of wild men issued from the woods to gaze upon the white-winged monsters of the sea. The anchors were cast. The admiral, in rich scarlet attire, with the national banner in his hand, descended into a boat, which was well manned and armed, whilst the two Pinzons entered others, each with the flag of the expedition, worked with a green cross and the initials of the Spanish sovereigns, surmounted by a crown.

The shores were approached. The boats bounded over waters clear as crystal, and bright even as light itself. Trees, hung with unknown but beautiful fruits, were seen bending under their delicious load; wild flowers, of rare fragrance and brilliant hues, spangled a turf more

Thanksgivings. Columbus takes possession of the isles.A D. 1492.

green than emerald. The earth was all beauty, the air all balm. It may be said that the knees of Columbus touched the land sooner than his feet, for ere he stood erect, to gaze on his discovery, he was down in the posture of prayer, giving thanks to God, with a swelling heart, and eyes brimful of tears.* Then, unfurling the Spanish banner, and, for the first time drawing sword, he gathered round him the captains, the notary, with the rest of those who landed, and, naming the island San Salvador, declared it the possession of Castille. All tendered him homage as admiral and viceroy of Spain. It was thus, says an ingenious writer, that the two worlds were first introduced one to another. The natives looked on with simple wonder, while a ceremony was performed which deprived them of their natural liberty.

The voyagers now forgot their sufferings, and clustered round Columbus with petitions for

* The prayer said to have been employed by Columbus, and which was, by the orders of the king and queen, made use of by Balboa, Cortes, and Pizarro, in their discoveries, was in Latin, and may be rendered thus:—

“Lord God, Eternal and Omnipotent! By thy sacred word thou hast created the heaven, the earth, and the sea: Blessed and glorified be thy name; praise be to thy majesty. It is a glory to be thy humble servant, and thus let thy sacred name be recognised and acknowledged in this new region of the world!”

A.D. 1492.

Joy of the voyagers. Wonder of the people.

pardon, for favour, and with promises of future obedience. Some kissed his hands, some embraced his neck. Meanwhile the savages stood by in wondering awe, supposing that the sea had been the mother of some portentous monsters, whose outspread wings had borne these strange beings to their shores. Columbus, by his superior figure, air, and manner, attracted their chief attention. They approached the Spaniards, touched their beards, smoothed their white skins. The belief was universal that heaven had rolled back its gates, and sent down its messengers. It was no action of the admiral's that undeceived them. But the surprise was mutual. The copper-coloured natives, fearless as truth, with agreeable countenances and brilliant eyes, were variously painted. One young girl, whose natural beauty was conspicuous among her wild brethren, was surpassingly lovely in form and feature. Columbus, imagining that he was on an island at the extremity of Asia, gave these people the appellation of Indians, and since that name was pronounced by his lips, on the 12th of October 1492, it has clung to the aborigines of the whole of that western world. The day passed pleasantly. The sailors wandered freely among the groves, while the admiral distributed gifts among the natives—

coloured caps, glass beads, hawks' bells—which they received as gifts of priceless worth. The simple aborigines—some of whom were armed with lances of wood, hardened at the end with fire, or pointed with a fish bone—were soon relieved of all apprehension, and visited the ships in great numbers. Some swam, some put off in light barques, called canoes, formed from a single tree, and capable of holding from one man to forty or fifty. These they skilfully paddled, and, if over-set, easily righted, baling them with calabashes—their general substitute for glass and earthenware. The smallest fragments of any of the ship's utensils were eagerly picked up; but they had to offer in return only parrots and cotton yarn. This commodity they gave, in bundles of twenty-five pounds, for a mere trifle. They brought also cassava, or cakes of sweet bread.

Small ornaments of gold were seen in the noses of some of the savages, which they willingly exchanged for valueless trinkets; but Columbus forbade it, reserving the traffic as a royal monopoly, with that in cotton also. Enquiring where the precious ore was found, the natives pointed to the south, saying that there dwelt a king so wealthy that he was served only in vessels of wrought gold. In other islands, they said, dwelt the traders in gold and gems,

A. D. 1492.

San Salvador. Voyage along the coast.

who descended upon the neighbouring shores to seek slaves. They were pirates also, and scars were exhibited as the memorials of bloody strife. The splendid region, described by Marco Polo, appeared to be now discovered, and the heart of the navigator beat high. Gold was his chief object of search, since that alone could recommend him to the avaricious court of Spain.

The native name of this first discovered island was Guanahacha. It retains that of San Salvador, and is one of the Bahamas which dot the sea off the northern coast of Cuba. On the morning of the 14th, Columbus started with the boats for a general survey of its shores. Steering northward, he found a harbour where the fleets of all Christendom might safely ride. The entrance was narrow; but the water within was as placid as the sky above it. Many large rivers discharged themselves into the sea; great forests covered the island at intervals; several villages were seen, and the people in all instances offered homage to the white men, as visitants from heaven. They ran along the beach with fruits and vessels of water. Some plunged into the sea, and followed the boats. Seven of them were taken, to learn Spanish, that they might act as interpreters. Supposing that a settlement might be formed here, the admiral's eye rested with in-

terest on a small broad-headed but narrow-necked peninsula, which could easily be separated from the land, remarking that it was an excellent site for a fort. But the sailors being weary with rowing, the ships were regained, and, well supplied with wood and water, left San Salvador that evening. They steered amid a multitude of low-lying green islands, rising verdant even from the water's edge, and continually multiplying to the sight. The Indians mentioned more than a hundred names, and Columbus, bewildered, knew not where next to land. Marco Polo told of an archipelago of many thousand isles, on the coast of Asia, where spices, and gums, and fragrant trees, emitted clouds of balmy incense, and this, it appeared, was the realisation of that splendid dream.

He everywhere found the same primitive savages—simple, confiding, and wonder-stricken at the apparition of the white men and their ships. To all he behaved as to those of San Salvador, and won their admiration and confidence. One of the Indians on board, nevertheless, attempted to escape, for, expecting nothing short of a speedy flight to the skies, or, perhaps, a descent to some dismal realms below, he plunged into the sea, and swam to a large canoe filled with natives. A boat put off in pursuit.

A.D. 1492.

Adventures with the natives.

The savages with their paddles outstripped the white men with their oars, and, gaining the shore, fled swiftly into the woods. Taking the canoe with them, the sailors returned to their ship. There was bad policy in this, for it planted the young shoot of ill-feeling. Soon after, a single native, in a canoe, approached the admiral's vessel, with a ball of cotton to barter. The crew seized him; but Columbus, standing on the high poop of the *Santa Maria*, ordered the trembling creature to be brought up, treated him with all kindness, put a cap on his head, gave him armlets of green beads, and decorated his ears with hawk-bells. Then, returning him his ball of cotton, he restored him his canoe, and the poor Indian was soon seen amid groups of his admiring brethren, displaying the gifts which the children of heaven had bestowed. The captured canoe was then cut adrift, to be regained by its deserters. The vessel next overtook a solitary craft, paddled by a single native, who, provided with a little cassava, a calabash of pure water, and a little paint to improve his personal appearance, was intrepidly making a voyage from island to island, to signal the arrival of the ships. He was taken on board, with his hollow tree, feasted with bread, honey, and wine—carried to his destina-

Pleasant intercourse. Magnificent harbour.

A. D. 1492.

tion, and sent to the beach with his simple barque, joyful in mind, but thoroughly amazed.

All night long the natives crowded to the vessels, with offerings of fruit and sweet spring water. They were enriched, feasted, and dismissed. No gold, however, was seen with them. Landing next morning, Columbus named the island—now called Exuma—Fernandina. The people seemed superior to any he had met with. Some of the women wore broad girdles of cotton, and some a kind of mantle; but most of them appeared in the simplicity of nature. Their lofty tent-shaped huts, neat and clean, and shaded by trees, were constructed of woven branches, reeds, and palm leaves. Their beds were swinging cotton nets, called *hamacs*, whence the name now so familiar in the navy was derived.

On the north-west coast of this island Columbus found a harbour, wherein a hundred ships might be safe from storms. The beauty of these lands was unparalleled, but disappointed the Spaniards, who looked for gold and gems, instead of fertile soils and brilliant vegetation. But reports lured them on. They sailed on the 18th from Fernandina in quest of Sanoeta, which, as they were told, was wealthy beyond description in precious metals and stones. The

A. D. 1492.

Gold region in the south. Cuba discovered.

island was found to be of rare beauty, with a pleasant variety of lakes, groves, streams, and green grass land; but with no great city, no mines, no king of boundless wealth. Flights of gorgeous parrots were disturbed in the woods, and fish of strange species and dolphin hues darted through the transparent water near the beach. No animals, except the lizard, the dog, the coney, and the harmless guana, were found.

Various accounts pointed southward, where it was said lay an island called Cuba, rich in gold, pearls, and spices, which abounded as the dust of the earth, where large merchant vessels came to trade. Another, named Bohio, was described as the crown of this wealthy region, and thither Columbus resolved to steer, after a visit to Cuba, when he would bend his course to India,—now, as he thought, within ten days sail,—seek the splendid city of Quinsai, and return with the triumphant news to Europe. Therefore, having named this island Isabella, he sailed on the 24th, and sighted Cuba on the morning of the fourth day, touching at many places by the way. The towering mountains, the wide fertile plains, the valleys full of promise, and the bold coast scenery of the island, enchanted the navigator's eye. The vessels approached. Every moment revealed

fresh luxuries of nature. They anchored at the mouth of a noble river—the San Salvador; but the same things were seen, the same rumours heard. The natives were simple in their demeanour, full of marvel at the sight of the white men, and primitive in their modes of life. The landscape glittered with bright colours. Everything was variegated and of a rich hue. The parrots, in vast flocks, and the scarlet flamingos, were only surpassed in brilliance by the countless flowers and blossoms. The admiral saw in everything signs of the wealth he coveted for Spain—spices in the balmy woods, pearls on the shell-strewn shore, a genial climate in the mild atmosphere. Villages, composed of large well-constructed habitations, were seen on the river banks, regularly laid out. Most of the people had fled; but some wooden masks, skilfully carved, betokened more ingenuity than was possessed by the natives of the Bahama group.

Sailing along the coast, the admiral, with his three vessels, reached the Cape of Palms, and thence skirted the shore, carrying on intercourse with the natives, but forbidding his crews to barter for anything but gold. From certain reports received here, he was induced to send two of his men on a mission to a monarch said to dwell in a rich city of the interior. They were fur-

A.D. 1492.

Mission to the interior. Discovery of the potatoe.

nished with abundance of trinkets, to sprinkle on their way among the people, and were instructed to observe the geography of the island, to tell the king that the great admiral Columbus had come to him on a special embassy, and to inquire whether such drugs and minerals, of which they were provided with specimens, existed in the country. Six days were allowed them to go and return.

During their absence the vessels were careened, and Columbus occupied himself in the examination of the coast. Showing the Indians some pearls and gold, he received from them accounts of a certain island—Bohio—where such things were abundant, and whose cannibal inhabitants were dog-headed. The mines he put faith in, the dogs' heads he disbelieved, because the one was agreeable with his wishes, the other repugnant to his reason. Indeed, he easily persuaded himself of the inexhaustible treasures to be discovered in this new golden Chersonese. Making a fire to melt tar, a powerful odour, resembling mastic, was emitted by the burning wood; forthwith Columbus dreamt of whole cargoes of this precious gum. Searching for costly luxuries, they discovered the humble potatoe. Thus, while seeking for pearls and gold, and perfumes, to lavish on the volup-

Of tobacco. Fields of maize, sweet pepper, and cotton.

A. D. 1492.

tuous luxury of a court, they found a root which was to be the support and nutriment of millions.

On the 6th of November the two ambassadors returned, saying that thirty-six miles thence there was a collection of fifty large houses, with a thousand inhabitants, where they had been received with much solemnity, seated on pieces of wood hewn in the forms of quadrupeds, and feasted with delicious fruits. The villagers had then, they said, sat down in a circle to hear the admiral's message. On being informed that gold and jewels were sought, they pointed to the south, where, in the spice country, they said, they were plentiful. The envoys then returned with one of the principal men, his son, and an attendant. On their way to the ships, they saw many of the savages smoking small rolls of a certain plant—a custom which much astonished them. These rolls the natives called *tobacco*. They passed through spacious fields well cultivated with sweet pepper, maize, and potatoes, and were shewn vast quantities of cotton, growing, and in various stages of rude manufacture.

But the admiral's hopes still rested on the discovery of some wealthy Indian region, where "all gems, in sparkling showers," would pour into his hand. Therefore, he sailed away from

A.D. 1492.

Desertion of the Pinta. Discover the island Haity.

this coast, and through the channel between the Bahamas and Cuba. On a lofty headland of this island he erected a cross, to denote the Spanish sovereignty, and standing boldly out to sea, would have proceeded at once in search of the isle Babique, but that contrary winds hindered him.

The Pinta now deserted. Her commander, Alonzo Pinzon, who had long chafed under the admiral's authority, had been tempted by the offer of an Indian to conduct him to a region rich in gold, and relying on the superior sailing of his caravel, made away to windward, baffling all pursuit. Columbus, grieved at this treachery, cruized about until the 5th of December, when an island of great size opened to his view. The Indians cried "Bohio!" and signified that it was peopled by a savage race, whom it would be death to intrude upon. Still the admiral never bent his rudder, but steered straight on. The coast-dwellers fled, the ships approached, and Columbus soon found himself in St. Nicholas' Harbour, Haity.

The land-locked port was bordered on either side by groves of fruit trees. In front was a wide plain, across which a fine river rolled from the interior into the harbour.

This island, said the natives, was the home of

an uncouth and cannibal race, divided into tribes, governed each by its own chief. Savage and fierce, they allowed no strangers to visit their country; but roved at night, in their canoes, along the coasts of the Archipelago, seizing young girls and children, to feast upon in the luxury of their barbarian daintiness. The admiral valued these reports, in general, at what they were worth, though he put faith in the Isle of Amazons, and in the tales of gold and gems—more profuse than the sands on the sea-shore—that assailed his ears as he advanced. It is remarkable how this great man welcomed the idlest tales that accorded with the creations of his own conception. To rumours that sought to turn him away from the accomplishment of his chosen enterprise, he never gave ear; but followed eagerly in the train of whatever ignis fatuus of fancy seemed to dance before him in the obscurity of the unknown, and to tempt him on in the pursuit of his warmly-cherished hope.

CHAPTER V.

A.D. 1492 to A.D. 1493.

CHAPTER V.

APPEARANCE OF HAITY — THE YOUNG CAPTIVE — THE SEARCH FOR GOLD—INTERCOURSE WITH THE NATIVES—SAILORS PROPOSE TO REMAIN—WRECK OF THE SANTA MARIA—ERECTION OF A FORT—THE YOKE OF EUROPE—NEWS OF THE PINTA—THE FORT—FAREWELL FEAST—DEPARTURE—MOCK FIGHT—SAILS SPREAD—THE PINTA REJOINS—MEETING OF COLUMBUS WITH PINZON—WAR-LIKE TRIBE IN THE GULF OF ARROWS—THE FIRST BLOOD SHED—UNFAVOURABLE WINDS—GREAT TEMPEST—VOWS TO THE VIRGIN—THE ADMIRAL'S EXPEDIENT TO PRESERVE A RECORD OF HIS ADVENTURES—THE PINTA AGAIN DISAPPEARS—THE STORM ABATES—ARRIVAL AT ST. MARY'S—PERFORMANCE OF THE VOW—TREATMENT BY THE GOVERNOR—STORMY VOYAGE—ARRIVAL AT LISBON—CARGO OF THE NINA—TREATMENT BY THE PORTUGUESE KING—EXCITEMENT CAUSED BY THE NINA'S ARRIVAL—COLUMBUS LEAVES THE TAGUS—REACHES PALOS.

CHAPTER V.

“ All above them the dark heavens,
All around them the deep sea.”

SIMILAR beauties, and similar savage country—similar wild people, were here discovered. A young girl was captured, and brought on board. Her nose-ring of gold excited hope. By kindness her confidence was soon won. The trinkets with which the Spaniards adorned her person seemed a source of deep delight, and soon, by her friendly aid, the natives, to the number of two thousand, were attracted to the beach. A friendly intercourse was at once established. The navigator landed, and was delighted with this new discovery. The country possessed a rich soil, and was varied with sweeping undulations, lovely valleys, and bright streams. From its resemblance to Andalusia, Columbus named it Espaniola. Although, however, the island was wealthy, the Spaniards were dissatisfied. A gold region was their ambition. One native chief—the cacique Guacanagari—visited them in some state, and displayed a little of the glittering ore; but no monarch came down with

Wreck of the Santa Maria. Sailors propose to remain.

A.D. 1492.

gong and timbrel and all the gorgeous pageant of an eastern potentate, to welcome their arrival at his shores.

On the 24th of December, being Christmas Eve, the admiral's vessel was driven into a dangerous current, which left her a helpless wreck upon the sands. The crew, being saved, were treated hospitably by the cacique Guacanagari: their merchandise was stored on land and protected. The admiral became dejected after this misfortune; but a traffic for gold, and information that it existed plentifully in a mountainous district in the interior, called Cibao,—the region of which Marco Polo had left his glowing account,—somewhat soothed his mind.

I might enlarge much upon their pleasant intercourse with the natives; but this the limits of my narrative forbid. They saw so much that pleased them; they received so much gold; they were so warmly welcomed, that many of the seamen wished to forego the pleasures of home, in consideration of the perils of the homeward voyage, and entreated permission to become denizens of that remote island. Columbus heard the proposal, and resolved, with the wreck of the Santa Maria, to build a place of defence; to arm it with her guns, and plant a colony, which might thereafter flourish as a

A.D. 1492.

Erection of a fort. The yoke of Europe.

great and fruitful branch of the mother country. To the cacique it was represented that a force would be left behind to protect him from his enemies. He was delighted, and readily gave the consent, which it would, indeed, have been madness to withhold. The natives assisted in the erection of the fortress. The work went vigorously on. Meanwhile news was received that the *Pinta* was anchored in a neighbouring river; but a search for her was unsuccessful. One ship—one slowly-sailing barque, was left. The tremendous voyage was to be made in her. Life and fortune were to be committed to her charge; and should she founder in the deep Atlantic, the waters must engulf with her her crew, and with them the knowledge of the new world; unless Pinzon should reach home, and cheat Columbus of the fame of his discovery. Either way the opening vista was gloomy.

In ten days the fort was built: the yoke was put upon the Indian's neck, never to be shaken off. The wild courser of the forest was bridled, to wander free no more. A spacious vault was surmounted by a wooden block house, surrounded by a broad deep ditch. Ammunition was abundant, and the guns of the wrecked caravel peered portentously through the loops. The fort was named *La Navidad*; and thirty men, with Diego de Anna at their head, were

Farewell feast. Departure. Mock fight.A.D. 1493.

chosen to be the garrison. The governor dying, was to be succeeded by Pedro Gutierrez, and he by Rodrigo de Escobedo. A physician, a ship-carpenter, a caulker, a cooper, a tailor, and a gunner, were among the number. One boat, with plenty of seeds to plant, and numerous articles for traffic, were left with the colonists. They were enjoined to be diligent in the collection of gold, obedient to lawful authority, and mindful of their allegiance to Spain.

On the 2nd of January 1493, Columbus landed to take his farewell of the hospitable cacique and his chieftains, feasting them, promising to return with more costly presents, and earnestly recommending the settlers to their kind treatment. They promised to persevere in the friendly path. The admiral had already secured their esteem; it was now his aim to win their respect. This he accomplished by an innocent display of the superior weapons of civilization. A mock fight was ordered to take place. Swords, bucklers, lances, cross-bows, arquebusses, and cannon were employed. The lustre of the burnished steel, the whizzing bolt of the cross-bow, and the sharp echo of the arquebuss, excited their admiration, which deepened into awe, as forth from the cannon's mouth the deadly hail of stone balls went crashing through the trees, and calling an echo from every hollow rock.

A.D. 1493.

The Pinta rejoins. Meeting of Columbus with Pinzon.

On the 4th of January, a signal gun was fired from fort Navidad. Then the solitary vessel spread sail, and, steering eastward, passed a tent-shaped, grass-covered promontory, which they called Monto Christi. Rounding the cape, they joyfully saw the white canvas of the Pinta bellying before the wind, and every moment drawing nearer. All hearts beat gladly, for they were now not to steer through that dreary silent waste of sea alone. Pinzon and Columbus met in apparent friendship. The one volunteered much plausible explanation; the other refrained from a too close inquiry. The Nina and her companion then began their voyage. The discoverers were anxious to see the old familiar shores of Europe, and novelty could not induce delay. Having discovered a river—the Santiago—whose sandy bed glittered with particles of gold, and restoring to their homes two girls, prisoners on board the Pinta, they steered along the coast of Espaniola, and reached Cape Cabron. There a tribe of warriors, hideously painted, armed with bows, arrows, clubs, and heavy swords of palm-wood, and adorned with parrots' feathers, appeared in strange contrast with the simple races hitherto seen. These were supposed to be the savage Caribs, dwelling, as they had been told, near

The first blood shed.

A. D. 1493.

an island, peopled only by women, whom they visited for a short period every year. Friendly communication was commenced; but the savages, when the Spaniards were in some force upon the beach engaged in barter, seized their arms, and approached with cords, as though to capture and bind the intruders on their soil.

In a moment the European steel was out, and the first blood shed. Two natives were wounded, and the rest, terrified by the flashing blades, made off in hasty flight. What a war was then commenced between the white and the Indian race—a war which has continually raged from that day till now! However, friendship was restored, and the traffic renewed. The chief of the tribe—the Cinquayens, inhabiting a hilly region on the coast, made terms of peace, and sent to Columbus his coronet of gold, as an offering of reconciliation. When he visited the vessels, his reception was honourable and friendly. Four of his young men consented to accompany the ships, as guides, to certain eastern islands, lying in the route to Spain. Leaving this place, —named by the admiral the Gulf of Arrows, but now known as the Gulf of Semana, they cruised for a short time in the neighbouring seas; but home was the loadstone now, and once more the vessel's bowsprit pointed to Spain.

A.D. 1493.

Unfavourable winds. Great tempest.

The winds, which had favourably filled their sails in their voyage to the Bahamas, were adverse to their homeward progress. The Pinta, foremost before, was now in the rear, with her foremast seriously injured. For many days they were carried to and fro by the capricious breeze; but in the early part of February, being in the thirty-eighth degree north, it steadied, and their keels were again in the track for Spain. The voyage was anxious: the ocean was unknown; to steer through it was perilous and difficult. Unaccustomed to the variations of the wind in these latitudes—uncertain what rocks and shoals, or other submerged dangers might lie in their course, they sailed in the constant fear of wreck.

On the 12th of February, a tremendous tempest burst, with lightning, thunder, and a wind so furious that it drove the vessels on with naked masts. The barques tossed and laboured; the waves broke over them, and far above and wide around, amid the glare of the electric light, and the repeated thunder peals, the black sea rose and fell in mountains, with those helpless vessels on its surface. Skill was vain; patience seemed useless. The sailors took refuge in superstition. Numerous beans were thrown into a cap. Each man vowed that, should he draw forth one which was marked, he would,

Vows to the Virgin. The Pinta again disappears.

A. D. 1493.

bearing in his hand a wax taper five pounds in weight, make a pilgrim's journey to the shrine of Santa Maria of Guadaloupe, provided Heaven would deliver them from their great peril. The lot fell to the admiral. He resolved to perform his oath. Another fell upon one of the seamen—to tread the pilgrim's path to the chapel of Our Lady of Loretto. The expense was to be defrayed by Columbus, to whom a third lot was by chance assigned, to walk to Santa Clara de Rioquer, to perform mass and keep solitary vigil in the chapel.

Still the storm, with unabated violence, continued to rage. The mariners then vowed that, wherever they should land in a Christian country, they would, barefooted and in their shirts, go in solemn procession to some church, and offer the Virgin thanks. Each man also made his private vow. Meanwhile the Pinta disappeared. The fear of her total loss grew strong. In that case the Nina was again alone on the un-navigated sea, liable every moment to founder. If she perished, all record of her voyage would be lost. The admiral, however, resolved to make one effort to preserve the history of his wanderings. Writing on parchment an account of all their adventures, he sealed it, directed it to Isabella and Ferdinand, with a written pro-

A.D. 1493.

Arrival at St. Mary's. Performance of the vow.

mise of a thousand dollars to whomsoever should deliver it, unopened, at the court. Wrapping this memorial in a cerecloth, and enclosing it in a cake of wax, he placed the whole in a large cask, and committed it to the waters—the crew believing that he was engaged in the performance of some religious rite. A similar barrel, with similar contents, was placed on the poop, so that, should the vessel perish, the story of its wanderings might live. What became of the cask that was cast afloat is a mystery. Perhaps it was washed on some civilised shore, to be the prolific source of curiosity among educated men; perhaps it was thrown among savages, to whom it must have been an object of utmost marvel; or, perhaps, it was dashed to atoms amid the rocks of some wild unpeopled coast.

At break of dawn, on the 15th, land appeared, and in two or three days the vessel rode safely under the northern shore of St. Mary, in the Azores.

The reception of the navigator and his companions was hospitable; but the good feeling of the governor and the people was of that untempered kind which wears away with very little friction. Whilst performing their vow to the Virgin, the men met with uncourteous treatment from the inhabitants, and from the repre-

Stormy voyage. Arrival at Lisbon.A.D. 1493.

sentative of authority. Juan de Castaneda, as a Portuguese, disclaimed all respect for Columbus and his sovereign; for John II had given orders that, should Columbus arrive at any of his ports, he should be seized and detained. The wary admiral eluded the trap, put to sea again, and, after a stormy voyage, arrived, on the 4th of March, off the rock of Cintra, Lisbon. Dispatching a courier to the court of Spain with tidings of his arrival, he also wrote to the King of Portugal, asking leave to refit in the harbour of Lisbon, as to remain with his richly-laden caravel at the mouth of the Tagus would neither be safe nor convenient. Rumour had exaggerated the value of her cargo, and piracy was then so bold, that to snatch a prize at the very entrance of a royal port, was an achievement which had more than once been performed.

The commander of a war-ship next day pompously summoned Columbus on board, to give an account of himself; but received for answer, that the High Admiral of Spain was accountable to no Portuguese captain. Receiving this reply, and learning that the navigator was really of high rank, and, therefore, not to be treated as common mortals, the commander changed his tone, and visited the *Nina* with great pomp, with courteous words, and proffers of assistance.

A.D. 1493.

Cargo of the Nina.

Crazy, leaky, and battered, that little barque, which had crossed so vast a wilderness of ocean, attracted more observation than the proudest gold-laden galleon that ever "walked the waters." She carried the key of a great dominion—then wild, desolate, peopled by savages, heathen, and degraded—now the home of our best offspring, the parent of wealth, the cultivated, rich, Christian, and noble empire of civilization. Let us contrast, mentally, the scenes which met the navigator's eye when he first—subsequently—trod on terra firma, forest covered, with naked inhabitants—with the noble cities, the well-tilled lands, and the magnificent population of the majestic American republic. Here we have an instance of that frequent occurrence—the son threatening to outgrow and eclipse the sire. All former voyages, however distant, dangerous, or novel, showed insignificantly in contrast with that of Columbus. All Lisbon thronged to see. The Tagus was burdened with vessels of every kind, each impelled towards one common centre—the crazy caravel, with its precious burden—the tidings of a new world.

On the 8th of March, a letter arrived from King John, inviting Columbus to Valparaiso, some leagues from Madrid. Everything which

Treatment by the Portuguese king.

A.D. 1493.

could contribute to the comfort of his crew and his own magnificent journey, was ordered to be given free of cost. Stormy weather, which bound his barque in port, incited him to accept this offer, otherwise distasteful, and he proceeded to meet the king, to whom, in the course of a long conference, he gave an account of his voyage and his discoveries. John hinted that these new countries, belonging to him, might, perhaps, be included in the papal bull, which granted to Portugal all lands discovered between Cape Non and the Indies. This idea received instant confirmation from the Solons of the court, too eager to snatch at such a notion. They suggested treachery—proposed that the admiral should be embroiled in a quarrel, and honourably slain; but John II, who basely endeavoured to rob from Columbus the fruits of his enterprise, refused to stoop to this baser act of a dastard. However, he accepted a proposal, that an armament should be fitted out, to seize the newly-discovered lands, and actually chose a commander for the expedition. Faria of Sousa asserts, in extenuation of this mean policy, that the admiral entered Lisbon with a vain-glorious exultation, in order, by displaying the tokens of his triumph, to wound the heart of the Portuguese monarch. Columbus was, mean-

A.D. 1493.

Columbus leaves the Tagus. Reaches Palos.

while, conducted back to his ship under an honourable escort, and, after a visit to the queen, who much wished to see him, once more unfurled the sails of the *Nina*, and found himself, on the 19th of March, in the harbour of Palos, whence, seven months and a half previously, he had emerged, in the full confidence of hope, to win an unfading renown by the discovery of a new world.

Here we naturally delay the narrative, to reflect on the nature of the discoverer's success, and the perils that had led him to it.

For years he laboured to inspire with the spirit of his own ambition, some man wearing a crown, whose wealth and power could alone give action to his project. Poverty, toil, and insult,—hope baffled, and only cheered to be disappointed,—these were the fruits of his first attempts. Then wrangling with kings about ducats and doubloons; then struggling with the superstition of timid mariners; then dangers from the treachery of the Portuguese monarch; then perils from unknown oceans, and from strange winds; then mutinies, jealousies, and defiance of authority—all these were the difficulties that beset him, before the first view of the Bahamas drove into oblivion, by its sweetness, the bitter rigours of his early life.

He wandered among the fresh and fertile islands, in quest of gold, spices, gems, drugs, and costly products of the earth. His eye was ever longing for a glimpse of some superb city, with marble walls and battlements, crowned with a noble castle, and brilliant with all the splendour of an eastern potentate. Instead of naked savages, wild forests, and shores fresh from the mould of nature, he every day expected to burst upon the view of some magnificent retinue passing through the gates of an imperial citadel, in the midst of a populous and wealthy land.

Instead of this, the islands glowed with the fresh tints of the infant earth. Fishes of dolphin hues sported along the beach; trees shaded the sward; streams of cool sweet water ran through the plains; and landscapes, redolent with fragrance, opened every moment to his view, as he pursued "the unreachèd paradise" of his ambition. Still the people were all wild, savage, and blessed with happy poverty.

CHAPTER VI.

A.D. 1493.

CHAPTER VI.

WELCOME AT PALOS—PINZON'S FATE—COLUMBUS INVITED TO COURT—TRIUMPHAL PROGRESS, AND ENTRY INTO BARCELONA—AUDIENCE WITH THE KING AND QUEEN—HIS SOJOURN AT BARCELONA—ENNOBLED—ANECDOTE OF THE EGG—THE PAPAL BULL—NEW ENTERPRISE—ARRANGEMENTS—PORTUGUESE CLAIMS—TREATY—THE SECOND EXPEDITION SAILS—VOYAGE TO THE CARRIBEE ISLANDS—THE CANNIBALS—SKULLS AND BONES—COOKING HUMAN FLESH—CAPTIVES—EIGHT MEN MISSED—THEY RETURN—SANTA CRUZ—ATTACK OF CARIBS—THEY ARE OVERCOME—ADMIRAL'S ANXIETY TO REACH LA NAVIDAD—BURIAL OF A BISCAYAN SAILOR—INVITATION TO LAND—A BAPTIZED INDIAN LIBERATED—DISCOVERY OF BODIES—FEAR FOR THE SETTLERS—ARRIVE OFF LA NAVIDAD—THE SILENT BAY—MESSAGE FROM THE CACIQUE—THE ALARM INCREASED—VISIT TO THE SHORE—THE RUINED FORTRESS—THE SETTLERS' FATE—SPOILS OF THE FORT—CONDUCT OF THE COLONISTS—CAONABO, THE CARIB KING—SLAUGHTER AT LA NAVIDAD.

CHAPTER VI.

— “ Could man but leave thy bright creation so,
Nor it's fair promise from the surface mow
With the sharp scythe of conflict.”—BYRON.

THE navigator and his companions were welcomed at Palos by their kindred, their friends, and, indeed, by the whole population, with shouts, with ringing of bells, and every other expression of joyful greeting. Around Columbus, as he passed along, all the townspeople thronged with praise and acclamation. When he first came thither, it was on foot, with a weary child, to beg bread and water at a convent gate. Now, with the triumph of a conqueror, he proceeded to the church, where solemn thanks were given to God, for his protection during the perilous voyage. The court was at Barcelona, and the admiral resolved to depart for Seville, and there wait its orders. To that favourite city, therefore, he went, accompanied by a retinue, and six Indians. Ten had embarked; but one died at sea, and three fell sick at Palos.

Martin Alonzo Pinzon had—and the coincidence is singular—arrived at Palos on the same evening. His voyage had been stormy; but he reached the port in safety, and hearing that Columbus was already come, felt little pleasure in the prospect of a meeting. He, therefore, landed privately, and concealed himself from observation. In his retirement, he received a letter from the king and queen, in reply to one which he had written, and being therein addressed in the language of cold contempt, his anger and remorse were unbounded. He had behaved nobly when the scheme was ripening; he had assisted materially in its consummation; but once stepping over the boundary of rectitude, had not the courage to recross it, choosing rather to pursue the open track of error—and now died, a broken-hearted, miserable, and remorseful man, withered by his own self-contempt. His children are said to have cherished a deep malignity against the family of Columbus. Isabella and Ferdinand, writing from Barcelona, desired the admiral's attendance, to consult upon a new enterprise. His progress to court was one of brilliant triumph. Everywhere, the multitude was gathered to admire and to applaud. A vast and gallant concourse thronged from Barcelona to meet him; and he entered the city



Reception by Ferdinand and Isabella.—Page 83.

A.D. 1493.

Triumphal progress, and entry into Barcelona.

surrounded, not by the spoils of a desolating war, but by the trophies of a great and tearless triumph. The Indians, painted and bedecked with gold, led the procession. Behind them were drawn cars, bearing numerous live parrots, stuffed birds and beasts of great beauty, and a rich display of golden bracelets and coronets. Next rode Columbus, at the head of a glittering troop; whilst from every window, house-top, and balcony, all ardent eyes were bent to gaze upon him, who once had to beg his way from court to court, to move the ambition of a king.

In the great saloon of the palace, was erected a vast canopy of cloth of gold. Beneath it sat the king and queen, with the rest of the court; and when Columbus entered all rose. Receiving his homage with hesitation, the sovereigns requested him to sit down! and describe his adventure. He told all that he had done, seen, and experienced; displayed his treasures of gold, rare plants, and other things; brought forward the savage Indians; and spoke with fiery enthusiasm of the regions he had discovered. The narrative affected the minds of Isabella and Ferdinand so much, that they bent on their knees to thank God for the great gift of dominion which Columbus had for seven years offered for their acceptance. *Te Deum laudamus* was

His sojourn at Barcelona. Ennobled.A.D. 1493.

chanted from the choir, and all the assembly burst into a mingled melody of grateful praise.

During his sojourn at Barcelona, Columbus experienced treatment at once honourable and grateful. In the first enthusiasm of delight, royalty lavished rewards on its servant. By the exercise of that mysterious art, which has long been practised, but never understood in Europe, his blood was converted from plebeian black to aristocratic blue; a process which conferred on him new worth, new titles to honour, new claims upon the admiration of the common herd.* He was assigned a coat of arms, with the royal castle and lion, and a group of islands surrounded by waves, inscribed in Spanish, "For Castile and for Leon, Columbus found a new world." The pension of thirty crowns was adjudged to him as the first discoverer of land, since he had seen the dancing light from the poop of the Santa Maria.

At a banquet given to Columbus, by Pedro Gonzales de Mendoza, Grand Cardinal of Spain, a pert courtly person, somewhat jealous of the admiral's honours, remarked, that although he

* With many of the old Spanish nobility it was believed that the colours of patrician and plebeian blood were actually different—pure blue and vile black being the epithets applied.

A.D. 1493.

Anecdote of the egg. The Papal bull.

had discovered a new world, it was not, after all, so wonderful, since many men could have done the same thing.

Columbus made no reply; but, taking an egg, requested the courtier to set it upon its end, and make it stand thus. He failed; and each of the company tried in turn, but all failed. The admiral then took it, struck it on the table, broke its end, and left it standing. The out-witted courtier, surprised, exclaimed that any one could have performed that feat. "Then why did you not do it?" replied Columbus. This was a sufficient rebuke.

The Spanish sovereigns, naturally proud of this vast accession to their dominions—gained for them by him who had begged at the convent gate—now bethought themselves of securing the title. The pope—holding the empire over all mysteries—was applied to. With royal liberality, he made an immediate grant, issuing a bull, which declared that all lands discovered westward of a line drawn from pole to pole, a hundred leagues westward of the Azores, should belong to Spain, and the eastward regions to Portugal; excepting such countries as already submitted to a Christian power. Whether the two tides of discovery might not come into collision on their junction at the antipodes, was

a question with which the pope did not distress his mind.

This question being settled by a bull, it only remained to fit out a new expedition. Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca was made Patriarch of the Indies; and the control of all their affairs committed to him. Officers were appointed, and numerous arrangements made for the regular government of the new world. All shipowners were to deliver up their vessels when required; and it was proclaimed that no settling, either on the islands or on terra firma, should be allowed, unless by express permission. Twelve ecclesiastics, among whom was a clever political friar, named Bernardo Boyle, were chosen to convert the heathens; the six Indians were baptised; and after some angry negotiations with Portugal, on the subject of territorial rights, Columbus found himself admiral of a fleet of seventeen ships, well manned, equipped, and laden, both for settlement and conquest. Horses, cattle, and domestic animals of all kinds; grain, seeds, vines, sugar-canes, grafts, and saplings; with trinkets, beads, hand-bells, mirrors, and provisions, arms, ammunition, and medicines, were shipped in abundance. Fifteen hundred persons embarked. The preparations were hastened with all possible diligence. A Portuguese vessel

A. D. 1493.Treaty. The second expedition sails.

had sailed from Madeira, and three caravels from Lisbon, ostensibly to overtake her, and arrest her westward voyage. Portugal, jealous of Spain, was, in truth, endeavouring to defraud her of her discovery; but the affair was at length, in 1494, settled by a treaty, in which the line of partition indicated in the papal bull should be moved as far as three hundred leagues west of the Cape de Verd Islands. Meanwhile, Columbus proclaimed that he would seize all vessels which he should overtake sailing to the western world, punish their crews, and detain them as prisoners.

On the 25th of September 1493, three large vessels and fourteen caravels spread sail in the Bay of Cadiz. Columbus, after taking leave of his two sons, went on board, and gave to each of his captains a sealed letter of instructions, with orders not to open them unless a separation of the fleet took place. This precaution he took that he might create an absolute dependance on himself, which might preserve uniformity.

On the 5th of October, the squadron anchored at Gomera, for a supply of wood and water. Here they procured some calves, goats, and sheep, with eight hogs, a number of fowls, and the seeds of oranges, lemons, bergamots, and many other fruits which now flourish in immense abundance.

in those lands. Contrary winds, calms, and storms occurred; but they proceeded vigorously, cheered by anticipation, and by those lambent flames—always full of meaning to the superstitious mariner*—which glanced through the rigging of a vessel tossed by tempests. On Sunday morning, the 3rd of November, a lofty shore came in view. Every heart beat high. Other islands rose up one after another, and soon they were steering through shallow narrow seas; green coasts on either hand, green coasts behind and in front, whilst brilliant swarms of parrots winged their way, with playful gyrations, from shore to shore. Columbus was rejoiced. He led the fleet further into the Archipelago; whilst from every crowded deck rose songs of thanksgiving and glorification; but no human being could be seen. Landing on an island, which he named after his own ship, the Madegalente, the

* When the air, during a storm, is heavily charged with electricity, these flames are sometimes seen flitting about the masts and rigging of a vessel labouring in the tempest. To sailors—and no men are so superstitious—they have ever been full of mysterious omen. During this voyage seven lights were seen burning round the topmast, and they affirmed it to be the body of Saint Elmo, which would protect them from danger,—chanting praises and thanksgivings in acknowledgment of the blessing.

A.D. 1493.

Voyage to the Carribee Islands.

admiral unfurled the banner of Arragon and Castille, proclaiming all that region Spanish territory. Thence they sailed to another, Guadaloupe, where they found astonishingly thick groups of trees, some with fruits, some with flowers; and saw also a huge peaked mountain, from the summit of which rolled many sparkling streams. Over a lofty ridge a vast waterfall foamed down from a stupendous height, which the men declared to be a towering ridge of white rocks. It was a noble stream, plunging over the mountains, and lost in dazzling spray.

On the 4th, they discovered the first village, consisting of square dwellings, constructed of trees and branches, woven and thatched with palm leaves. They saw here many geese and large parrots, and discovered and tasted the delicious pine-apple. The stern-post of a ship was picked up. It doubtless belonged to some ill-fated barque which had perished in the waters of the old world, and of which this fragment had been drifted to Guadaloupe by the changeless current from Africa. It is probable that many such relics of shipwreck had from time to time rolled hither upon the waves, affording matter of wonder to the natives. Or, was this the sole record of some former adventure to search the mysteries of the unknown western seas? Several

children, who had been deserted by the savages in the hurry of their flight, were discovered among the huts. They were presented with trinkets, and taught, at least for a short time, to bless the advent of the strangers from Europe.

Numerous bones and skulls depending from the roofs of the dwellings, like those ghastly trophies which grace the houses on the river banks of Borneo, caused the belief that this was in reality the abode of the cannibal Caribs. Columbus learnt from several natives who were captured, that the island was inhabited by a predatory race, who, being in league only with two other islands, carried on war against all the rest, making use in their battles of poisoned arrows. Like the pirates of the Indian Isles, they landed on the peaceful coasts, surprised the villages, slew the old and helpless, carried off the young and handsome women to be slaves or companions, and the men to be devoured. Eight sailors, who had gone ashore with one of the boats, were missed for several days. By no means comforted by the accounts he heard, the admiral ordered search to be made; and the cannibal nature of the people was proved by the discovery of the head of a young man, still bleeding, depending from a beam, and portions of his body stewing in a pot with some geese, whilst

A.D. 1493.

Cooking human flesh. Eight men missed.

his limbs were roasting before the fire. Several captives whom the savages had allowed to escape during the panic caused by the apparition of the fleet, sought refuge on board. Some women also, who had been adorned with trinkets, and sent to conciliate their tribes, returned completely stripped; and with them came a number of young boys, whom the islanders were rearing and fattening, until their plump limbs should render them fit for the table of a dainty chief.

At length, when their recovery was nearly despaired of, the eight wanderers returned. Their haggard looks told what they had endured. They brought with them several women, but had not yet seen a man. Most of the warriors were absent on the war path, leaving their brave wives to defend the islands. The captain of this party was put under arrest, and the men were punished with stinted rations; since Columbus, rejoiced as he was at their return, was careful to punish every breach of discipline.

Cruizing among the Carribees, they one morning sent a boat ashore at an island, which they named Santa Cruz. It was returning, with some men and women, when a canoe, manned by Caribs, suddenly rounding a little headland, came full in view. The savages attempted to escape, but, when closely pursued, faced about,

and discharged a shower of arrows. Two Spaniards were wounded. The Caribs were then attacked and overpowered, with the loss of one of their number. The prisoners were kindly treated. Still pursuing this conciliatory course of policy, Columbus continued his way through the archipelago, visiting many islands, and discovering in them similar traces of cannibalism. But the harbour and fortress of La Navidad now chiefly filled his thoughts. The success of the thirty settlers would be an omen of the future prospects of his scheme of colonization. Thither, consequently, he bent his way, after a rapid glance at the wonderful island region he had discovered.

Arriving at the eastern extremity of Espaniola or Hayti, a party was sent on shore to bury a Biscayan sailor, who had died from a wound inflicted by one of the Carib arrows. Here the admiral was invited to land. The natives promised him great stores of gold; but he had resolved not to drop anchor until La Navidad was in view. At the Gulf of Semana one of the baptised Indians was liberated. He carried with him into the woods many presents, with which it was hoped he would spread a favourable opinion of the white race. He was never seen again. Only one now remained in

A. D. 1493.

Message from the cacique. The alarm increased.

the fleet. On the shore, near Monto Christi, they discovered the bodies of a man and woman, the former with a necklace of Spanish grass, and his arms extended along a stake. It was feared that these were Europeans, especially when two others were subsequently found, one with a beard, evidently a white man; but decomposition had proceeded so far that recognition was impossible. Gloomy foreboding now took the place of expectant hope; but the natives confidently thronged to the ships, a circumstance which in part dissipated the alarm.

On the 27th, arriving off La Navidad, the admiral ordered a discharge of ordnance, to signal his arrival; but no responding salute was made. No light shone on the beach. The darkness was silent as death, until midnight, when the dip of paddles was heard. Presently a canoe came alongside the admiral's ship. It contained the cousin of Guacanagari, who had sent Columbus two carved masks of wood, profusely adorned with gold. He said that many of the Spaniards had died of sickness; some had been killed by the natives; others had retired to the remote part of the interior, to live with their Indian wives. The cacique himself had been attacked by a chieftain from the golden mountains of Cibao, and his village destroyed.

The ruined fortress. The settlers' fate.

A.D. 1493.

He had been wounded, and now lay in a neighbouring hamlet.

Columbus was ill at ease when he heard this account. He more than suspected that the Spaniards had fallen out among themselves on the usual subjects of strife—women and gold—quarrelled with the natives, forgotten justice and decency, irritated the Indians, and been slain by them. He, therefore, awaited with impatience the visit of Guacanagari. The day broke and deepened into noon. Not a canoe appeared, where formerly scores of them had passed to and fro from dawn to sunset. Dead silence and desertion reigned in the bay. A boat's crew went on shore. The black charred ruins of the fortress, broken chests, scattered provisions, and remnants of garments, spoke ominously of the settlers' fate. No bodies were discovered. The cacique's village was in the same ruin. Exploring the neighbourhood, Columbus reached another hamlet, also deserted; but, in the high grass between the houses, were found concealed many European articles—stockings, pieces of cloth, the anchor of the *Santa Maria*, and a magnificent robe of Moorish manufacture, which had not been unfolded since it left Spain.

Arana had been directed, in case of danger,

A.D. 1493.

Caonabo, the Carib king.

to bury all treasure, or throw it into the well. But a careful excavation revealed no such stores. Some melancholy catastrophe had, doubtless, occurred. It soon came to light. Eleven bodies, in widely scattered graves, were found, and from some Indians whom the admiral fell in with, and who spoke a few words of Spanish, he learnt the dismal story.

All the colonists, with the exception of Arana the governor, and one or two others, were faithless to their trust. No sooner had the fading sails of the *Nina* left them to their own guidance, than they broke the restraints of discipline, of honour, sobriety, and morals, and afforded to the simple savages, to whom they had hitherto appeared as the children of heaven, a spectacle of gross brutality, well calculated to obliterate all impressions of their divine descent.

Each man sought all for himself. They pillaged the country, spoiled the natives of their little treasures, and, not content with the companions assigned them by Guacanagari, robbed the Indians of their wives and daughters. Breaking into factions, the infant colony was soon an example of riot and quarrel. Some remained at La Navidad; others departed in quest of gold to Magnana, a province where Caonabo, a Carib, was chief. At this time, the

most powerful cacique on the island, he saw with jealousy the new power which threatened to eclipse his own. He acted as though he had by intuition learnt the truth, which experience has since confirmed, that the continuance of native power is incompatible with a flourishing foreign authority. In our own Indian empire we have studied this lesson, and every year adds force to the conviction. Marching down to the coast, Caonabo suddenly attacked La Navidad, cut off the Spaniards, killed many of their allies, and wounded Guacanagari. Such was the fate of the first Spanish settlement.

Yet which bears the heaviest guilt—the ferocity of the savage, or the fierce cupidity of the civilized man?

CHAPTER VII.

A.D. 1494.

CHAPTER VII.

VISIT TO GUACANAGARI—MUTUAL PRESENTS—THE CARIB PRISONERS—THE CACIQUE'S VISIT TO THE SHIPS—CATALINA THE CAPTIVE—SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOUR OF THE CACIQUE—ESCAPE OF THE PRISONERS—SITE OF THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CITY—THE SETTLERS MURMUR—WEALTH OF THE COUNTRY—ABUNDANCE OF GOLD—TWELVE SHIPS SENT HOME—PROGRESS OF THE TOWN—THE ADMIRAL'S JOURNEY TO CIBAO—BEAUTIFUL PLAIN—THE GOLDEN REGION—SURPRISE OF THE PEOPLE—A FORT BUILT—INDIAN RELIGION—BELIEF—BURIALS—MANNERS—THE HAPPY VALLEY—EFFECTS OF THE INTRODUCTION OF CIVILIZATION—PARALLEL OF GOOD AND EVIL—RETURN TO ISABELLA—TEMPER OF THE SETTLERS—SICKNESS—EMPLOYMENTS OF THE SPANIARDS—STRANGE LEGEND—THE HAUNTED CITY—DISPOSITION OF FORCES—FIRST DISTURBANCE OF PEACE—PRISONERS CONDEMNED TO DEATH—PARDONED AT THE PLACE OF EXECUTION—COLUMBUS PREPARES FOR A NEW VOYAGE—SETS SAIL.

CHAPTER VII.

“What rainbow tints, what magic charms are found—
Rock, river, forest, mountain, all abound.”

BYRON.

VISITING the cacique Guacanagari, Columbus found him anxious to destroy all doubt of his fidelity. He shewed the many wounds his subjects had received in defence of the Spaniards, and, as all these had evidently been inflicted with native weapons, his good faith was believed. He was, above all things, anxious to secure the friendship of Columbus, who was attended, during his visit, by a train of Spanish officers, richly dressed and armed. An amicable intercourse, and an interchange of presents, took place. Eight hundred beads of a valuable stone called *ciba*, a hundred of gold, a golden coronet, and three small calabashes full of the glittering dust, were given for a number of knives, needles, pins, hawks' bells, mirrors, glass beads, and ornaments of copper—a metal prized by the Indians in preference to gold. Guacanagari represented that he had been severely bruised

The cacique's visit to the ships.A. D. 1494.

by a stone, although no trace of the wound could be discovered. The Spaniards looked upon him with an eye of suspicion; but the admiral acted as though he believed his tale, and treated him with all imaginable kindness.

On board the admiral's vessel were several Carib prisoners chained, with ten women delivered from the cannibal islands. When Guacanagari came to visit Columbus, he was astonished at the vast armament, at the cattle, horses, sheep, and swine, at all the articles of manufacture, and the whole economy of the vessels, whose deep gloomy holds appeared awful as he peered into them from the decks. Above all, however, he was surprised at the sight of those ferocious Caribs, manacled and powerless. Among the women was one of superior mien and beauty, whom the Spaniards called Catalina, and with whom the cacique conversed so confidentially that suspicion awoke in the minds of the crew; but Columbus, unwilling that this should be perceived, treated his guest with respectful cordiality. Still doubt spoke in the countenances of the Europeans. Guacanagari took his leave. Next morning, unusual commotion was observed on shore. The cacique's brother came on board to trade, and was observed to converse privately with the captive

A.D. 1494.

Escape of the prisoners.

women. An inquiry had previously been made, how long the admiral intended to remain in the bay. Columbus replied, that he should weigh anchor within forty-eight hours.

When night was come, Catalina, in accordance with a concerted plan, plunged with her companions into the sea. A beacon light burnt on shore to guide them. Three miles of rough water lay between. But they swam boldly on; pursuit was vain, for the beautiful captive was already under cover of the forest before a boat was rowed to the beach. Four of the others were retaken. At early dawn, Columbus sent to demand the restoration of the fugitives; but Guacanagari had fled, and not a solitary native remained in the neighbourhood. All had disappeared, and the cacique, with the lovely islander, was, doubtless, far away in the depths of some intricate wood. The path of his flight was marked by no trace, and, finding it impossible to discover a clue to his retreat, the admiral made sail to a great harbour thirty miles eastward of Monto Christi; and here, landing the emigrants, with the horses, cattle, pigs, and sheep, the guns, provisions, small arms, and implements of all kinds, with all the necessary stores, laid the plan of the first Christian city—to be named Isabella, in honour of the woman

who had offered to pledge her jewels, that he might carry his project into action. A church, an arsenal, and a residence for the admiral, were to be built of stone; the other houses, in the first instance, of wood, plaster, or any slight materials, which might subsequently be replaced by more solid fabrications. All fell eagerly to work, but for a short time only, since with the necessity for labour came discontent. Many had come out with the vain idea of picking up virgin gold in the river beds, of gathering rich spices in every forest, and costly gums in every grove, of collecting pearls without number on the beach, and receiving precious gems in exchange for every trifling commodity which they chose to barter.

It being necessary to dispatch most of the ships to Spain, Columbus was anxious that they should carry back some richer cargo than the dismal tale of *La Navidad*. He, accordingly, sent an expedition into the interior, with the view of discovering that golden region, built up by imagination on the airy base of rumour. Penetrating for some distance towards the centre of the island, the explorers found large specimens of the virgin ore, and everywhere saw indications of its abundant existence. Cheered by their accounts, the admiral dispatched twelve

A. D. 1494.

The admiral's journey to Cibao.

vessels, commanded by Antonio de Torres, with a glowing account of the countries he had discovered; their productions, their beauty, and their wealth, with a still more brilliant picture of the prospective view. He requested additional supplies, a number of miners and other workmen, and recommended Pedro Margarite, an Arragonian cavalier, and Juan Aguado, to the good will of the sovereigns. The fleet sailed on the 2nd February 1494, and, on its arrival in Spain, spread abroad a description of the new world, which strengthened the general belief in its inexhaustible wealth and its unparalleled beauty.

The city of Isabella rapidly rose into being. But the energies of the workers lagged. Like all schemers, the colonists soon lost spirit when they found that the maturity of success did not precede the cultivation of the soil, the sowing of the seed, and the culture of the plant. Most of them clamoured for a return to Spain. A conspiracy was formed, whilst Columbus lay sick on his couch, to seize the five remaining ships; but it was discovered, defeated, and punished. The admiral then started on an expedition to the mountains of Cibao, leaving his brother Diego in command. Bartholomew had gone, many years previously, on a mission to

Beautiful plain. Surprise of the people.A. D. 1494.

the court of Henry VII, in England, and had not since appeared. His courage, energy, and honesty, would have been valuable at this period of the New World's history.

At the head of a hundred men—some mounted—clad in glittering steel armour, Columbus left the beach, in the close array of battle, with the broad banner of Spain flying in the van, whilst, for the first time since the date of their creation, those old woods and rocks reechoed back the sound of drums and trumpets. Arriving the same evening at the extremity of a pleasant plain—at the foot of a dreary rocky pass, they encamped. Next morning, they marched through the wild rocky defile, at the further end of which a noble prospect burst to view. Far around, a splendid plain—dotted with the habitations of men, and rich in all the luxury of tropical verdure—spread beyond the reach of vision.

Amid the clash of military music, in battle array, with unfurled flag and arms displayed, the little troop descended upon the plain, passing many populous villages, and through sweeps of varied cultivation. The Indians, awe-struck, gazed in fearful wonder upon the strangers, especially the horsemen. Imagining that the beast and his rider formed one being, their astonishment exceeded all bounds when they saw

A.D. 1494.

Signs of gold. Indian religion.

a man separating himself, as it were, in two. They were a hospitable and simple race, and such as their possessions were, they freely offered them to the white men. Passing through this beautiful region, the travellers entered another, less lovely to look upon, but wealthier in their eyes, because in the beds of numberless sparkling streams glittered particles of virgin gold. Columbus collected a considerable quantity of the precious dust, and ordered a strong wooden fortress to be erected. He named it St. Thomas, proposing that it should establish the Spanish authority in this golden region of Cibao. Trafficking, with glittering but tawdry trinkets and the much-prized hawks' bells, they collected much gold, in small grains and lumps—some half an ounce in weight. The natives signified that far beyond the mountains lay a district where the ore might be obtained in large masses. Columbus heard the description with delight, and, sending small parties to explore the neighbourhood, was confirmed in his belief of the wealth of this magnificent island.

It was now for the first time discovered, that the Indians practised a kind of religion, believed in certain powers, good and evil, and looked for the rewards of justice and iniquity after death. In every family a household god, of wood, stone,

or clay, was worshipped. Every valley, every rock, sea, river, grove, or plain, was presided over by some deity, who ministered, according to his disposition, to the many wants of man. A populous world of mythology was believed in; wild ideas of creation, of the universal deluge, of death, and a resurrection to immortality prevailed. Probably, when the first white men issued from the rocky gorge, they appeared to the bewildered tribes of the plain as the spirits of the mountains, who had issued from their cavernous abodes to take up a temporary habitation among mortals. Had the Spanish troop passed over the Vega, entered the hilly region of Cibao, and appeared no more, this idea would, doubtless, have been rooted in the Indian mind. As it was, familiarity bred contempt, and the savages learned that their visitors were men, more civilized indeed, but ruled by more degrading passions than themselves.

The Indian burials were strange, and of various mode. Chiefs, on the bed of death, were strangled, that they might not die like vulgar men. Poor people were left in their hamacs, with a provision of bread and water, to expire at leisure, unless the cacique kindly honoured their relatives with permission to use the bow-string. Mystic dances were performed,

and numerous rites observed—all tending, as they believed, to smooth the road to heaven. Paradise was said to be a lake-bordered region in the west, where, in broad green valleys, abounding in a certain pleasant fruit, the souls of the dead—concealed all day in rocky caves, or hollow trees—came forth at night to revel and regale on the sweet fruits of the valleys. Indeed, the ideas, the manners, and the lives of these simple people, were pervaded by the most unsophisticated spirit of harmony. They almost realised, in the unclouded sunshine of their existence, the fable of the happy hunting grounds; but with the first flourish of the Spanish trumpet, and the flash of European steel, the seed of a conquering civilization was planted; the spell of their long enchantment was broken, and a new era, marked by much of misery and contest, dawned on the Indian race. It is a condition of humanity, that with good we must accept a portion of evil. Enlightenment and Christianity broke upon the heathen darkness of the new world; but the ravenous appetites, the selfishness, and the discordant passions of the white men, introduced evils, which, if they were not commensurate with the good effected, were, at least, foul blots, to throw a blemish on the great results which sprung from the discoveries of Columbus.

Returning to Isabella, the admiral found the settlement thriving well. Nature willingly responded to man's endeavours, and the prolific earth yielded a ready return to toil. But sickness, dejection, and sullen discontent, weighed upon the soul of enterprise. Intelligence came from Cibao that an attack from the ruler of the mountainous region was expected—since the Spaniards had, as usual, plundered the natives, insulted their women, and sown the prolific seeds of exasperation. Reinforcing his hill-fort with twenty men, Columbus applied himself to the settlement of Isabella. He employed the settlers in all useful ways. He made them cut roads, which the natives, though they would not assist, did not oppose, not understanding that it is the most effectual means to enslave a savage people.

He also accustomed his people to the country, endeavoured to dissipate their wild notions of golden treasures, taught them that labour was the true source of wealth, and that mills, gardens, and meadows, were richer than the most exhaustless mine; that industry alone possessed a Midas' power to turn all things to gold.

But provisions became scarce, medicines failed, sickness increased, and discontent spread rapidly through the little colony. Those of blue

A.D. 1494.

Strange legend. The haunted city.

blood, whom Columbus, with too exalted an idea of their zeal, called on to share in the general labour, were not cautious in expressing their resentment. Many of them soon filled their graves, cut off by a virulent disease.

When Las Casas was resident on the island, the abandoned city of Isabella lay desolate and in ruins. A remarkable belief prevailed among the people. The deserted town was regarded as a fearful place. The wayfarer, they said, heard portentous shrieks issuing, by night and by day, from beneath its crumbling wreck. Two Spaniards one evening entered the streets, and met a number of men, richly attired in the costume of the old nobility of Castille, with broad hats and long rapiers, advancing in double ranks along the footway. Saluting them, they inquired whence they had come. The cavaliers remained mute, but, courteously bowing, took off their hats and their heads along with them, and stood thus decapitated before the wayfarers, who dropped senseless to the ground, whilst the apparitions vanished. Such was the story attendant on the early history of the settlement of Isabella.

Columbus distributed his forces at various points. The intercourse of Europe and the new world was now changing its aspect. The

ties of harmony were dissolved, mutual enmity was engendered, until an open contest was commenced. The natives began with predatory attacks. Some were caught *in flagrante delictio*, and condemned to lose their heads, but pardoned by Columbus at the place of execution. Loth to quit his pacific course of policy, he sought by all means at his command to establish his authority on the basis of peace and civilization.

Meanwhile he made preparation for new discoveries, and leaving his brother Diego, with four counsellors, to direct affairs, with two of the largest ships in the harbour, sailed with three caravels on the 4th of August. Visiting Cuba, and steering along coasts where an European face had never yet appeared, he was once more delighted with the wondering simplicity and the timid admiration of the natives. All of them, at first sight of the Spaniards, mistook them for celestial beings. Pity, that in all cases they were undeceived by the gross brutalities practised by their civilized brethren!

CHAPTER VIII.

A.D. 1495.

CHAPTER VIII.

DISCOVERY OF JAMAICA—APPEARANCE OF THE ISLAND AND ITS INHABITANTS—INTERCOURSE WITH THEM—THE QUEEN'S GARDENS—SOUTHERN COAST OF CUBA—LANDSCAPES—SUPPOSED DISCOVERY OF THE CONTINENT—ERROR OF COLUMBUS—THE OLD INDIAN CHIEF—VOYAGE TO HAYTI—DANGERS AND FATIGUE—BARTHOLOMEW—MADE ADELANTANDO—MANAGEMENT OF THE COLONY DURING THE ADMIRAL'S ABSENCE—CAONABO'S CAPTURE—CONSPIRACY OF THE CHIEFS—BATTLE, AND VICTORY OF THE SPANIARDS—REINFORCEMENTS FROM SPAIN—NOBILITY AND INDUSTRY—COMMUNICATION WITH EUROPE—RISING OF THE NATIVES—ARMY OF A HUNDRED THOUSAND MEN—GREAT BATTLE—DEFEAT AND SLAUGHTER OF THE INDIANS—RAPID CAMPAIGN—CONQUEST OF THE ISLAND—TRIBUTE—CHANGE IN THE INDIAN'S DESTINY—INFLUENCE OF CIVILIZATION.

CHAPTER VIII.

“Sorrow and shame, to see with their own kind
Our human brethren mix, like beasts of blood
To mutual ruin, armed by one behind
Who sits and scoffs.”—SHELLEY.

LEAVING Cuba on the 3rd of May, Columbus sailed directly south, and soon perceived, in the distance, the dim blue peaks of Jamaica. Its superb scenery impelled him to name as Santa Gloria the bay in which he first cast anchor, and which is now known as St. Anne. The natives, as the caravels drew near, manned more than seventy large canoes, and approached with brandished spears and terrific yells, as though to scare away the majestic sea birds, whose advent was so sudden and so marvellous. A few presents soothed them; the vessels sailed on their way, and at length entered a spacious harbour on the western coast. The whole beach swarmed with savages, decorated with black paint, palm leaves, and parrots' feathers, who hurled their javelins in showers against the ships. Two volleys from the cross-bows, and the onset of a single dog,

put them to flight, when Columbus, landing, took formal possession of the island, and christened it Santiago; but it has retained its native name of Jamaica.

However, an amicable intercourse was soon commenced, and continued until Columbus set sail for Cuba, and thence, steering far to the north-east, entered an archipelago of islands; some low, level, and sandy; others green, woody, and fertile. Soft odours breathed among them; birds of splendid plumage fled from shore to shore, and fragrant blossoms were strewn over the sea. Conceiving these to be the isles of the Asiatic ocean, Columbus named them the Queen's Gardens, in general; but one, in particular, Santa Maria; the others were, for the most part, uninhabited. He now sailed along the southern coast of Cuba, where the land rose in gentle round-backed slopes to the interior. The mighty landscape was framed within forests; open expanses of meadow land spread in soft undulations between; one or two large rivers flowed in a calm current from the hills, and dashing streamlets sparkled through plains rich with varied cultivation. Countless villages peeped from amid the woods, and tall balmy groves studded the intervals between the forest land. The news of their arrival had not hitherto

A.D. 1494.

Supposed discovery of the continent.

reached this region, and the gentle, hospitable natives were eager in their welcome of the Sons of Heaven. The melody of their wild chants was borne out to sea after nightfall by a breeze already heavy with the fragrant breath of that spicy land. Everywhere they saw unknown regions, strange tribes, new and wonderful animals and productions.

It now occurred to the admiral that possibly this was the great Indian continent, and he sent round a notary, with four witnesses, to every one of the company, demanding whether he had any doubt that the land before him was terra firma, the beginning and the end of the Indies, across which lay the overland route to Spain, and the navigation of whose coast would lead them among civilized nations? All declared their belief in this, and it was then announced that, if any officer should capriciously retract his expressed opinion, he should be fined ten thousand maravedis; whilst all the inferior people should risk the penalty of one hundred lashes and the amputation of the tongue—a tyranny over opinion, for which, I infer, we must seek an excuse in the undeveloped civilization of the fifteenth century. In three days Columbus might have rounded the extremity of Cuba, and learnt his error; but, as it was, he believed on his death-bed that this formed a portion of the

The old Indian chief.A.D. 1494.

Asiatic continent. Parallels to this circumstance may frequently be observed in our moral and social conduct—we pursue an object nearly to its consummation, and relinquish it just when a little more exertion of perseverance would bring success; we investigate a question, and consider our judgment mature, when we have studied nearly to that point, which would demonstrate the fallacy or the evil of our pursuit.

Setting up a cross at the mouth of a river, Columbus ordered solemn mass to be performed, whilst numerous Indians—headed by a man of fourscore—beheld the ceremony. When it was over, the aged savage, who had walked to the spot hand-in-hand with the admiral, addressed him, saying that he approved of what he had done, believing it to be a giving of glory to God; but warning him not to allow a thirst for conquest to break the peace of that happy region. Columbus assured him, through an interpreter, that he was come as a friend, not as an enemy. The old native was surprised and overjoyed at this; but still more so, when told of the wonders and the grandeur of the kingdom of Spain; with its cities, its palaces, its armies, and its fleets. Desiring to see this noble country, he would have embarked on the spot, had not his wife, with tearful lamentations, called up

A.D. 1494.

Dangers and fatigue. Bartholomew.

the picture of the home which his departure would desolate, and the sorrow of those whom his absence would leave without their main prop, in adversity and danger. The white-headed Indian consented to remain in his wigwam.

Thence Columbus sailed along the southern coast of Jamaica, and thence along the shores of Espaniola, until, on the 4th of September, the vessels anchored off the infant town of Isabella. The voyage was one of great peril, and Columbus, overcome with long watching, anxiety, and fatigue, lay in a death-like lethargy. Awaking soon after the anchors dropped, he was rejoiced by the sight of his brother Bartholomew, who had proceeded from England to Spain, and thence been sent, in command of three vessels laden with supplies for the colony. The admiral, inexpressibly gladdened by his arrival, created him adelantando, or lieutenant-governor—an act of authority which irritated King Ferdinand. Jealous of any assumption of responsibility by a subject, this monarch at all times allowed his anger, at a trifling fault committed, to out-run his gratitude for an immeasurable service rendered.

During the absence of Columbus, the affairs of the colony had been stirred into a complicated mass of confusion. Caonabo, the Carib king, had

laid siege to the mountain fortress of Cibao. The little garrison had spread slaughter through his ranks. Ojeda, a bold-hearted young Spaniard, had, with his few dauntless followers, vanquished ten thousand enemies; but this victory, although it created terror, did not inspire respect. The licentious profligacy of the colonists at Isabella scattered wide the feelings of enmity and revenge. An armed coalition of native chiefs was formed, and the admiral, on his return, at once saw that the salvation of the settlement must be effected by the most vigorous means. Guacanagari now once more visited him. He revealed a secret plot among the island caciques, and promised the assistance of his forces.* But skilful management was required. The admiral resolved to effect, by stratagem, what it must cost much blood to purchase with arms. Caonabo, the Carib chief, was an enemy by no means contemptible. His territory was naturally fortified by ravines, forests, rivers, rocks, and mo-

* I may here briefly indicate the further career of this chief. Faithful to the Europeans, he was cut off from the sympathy of the islanders. The enmity of his fellow caciques, the sorrows of the people, and the rapacity of the conquerors, drove him to an obscure retreat among the mountains, where he died, deserted, wretched, and poor, in the land of which large provinces were once his own.

A.D. 1494.

Ojeda's stratagem. Caonabo's capture.

rasses, more impregnable than granite ramparts. But Alonzo de Ojeda engaged to take him alive by a subtle manœuvre. With ten chosen followers, mounted and armed, he reached the populous town where Caonabo dwelt. He was received with the courtesy which a brave man deserved from an enemy equally fearless. He asked the cacique to visit Isabella, there to conclude a treaty, and lured him by the offer of the church-bell—long an object of wonder to the Indians, who could not account for its gathering the Spaniards to the house of worship, but by the supposition that it spoke articulately in an unknown tongue.

Caonabo consented. On the way home, they arrived at a broad shallow river, whose clear limpid waters tempted the cacique to bathe. Ojeda then produced a set of polished-steel manacles, bright as silver, which he described as ornaments worn by Spanish kings, who had received them as gifts from heaven. He proposed that the chief, putting them on, should mount behind his horse, and astonish his subjects with them. Flattered by the idea, the cacique consented, and the haughty Carib, thus subdued by a trick, was presented to Columbus, a manacled but not a humbled captive. He was kept in chains and close confinement, but other-

wise treated kindly. Severe as it may seem, this course was, perhaps, necessary, for conciliation of this chief was impossible. They might cheat him of his power, but could not break his unconquerable spirit of enmity and independence. When the admiral entered any room, it was customary for all to rise; but Caonabo sat unmoved, rising only when Ojeda approached. In explanation, he said Ojeda had dared to visit his territory and seize him, which Columbus had not ventured to attempt. The brother of this Carib chief, in revenge for his capture, made a second assault on fort St. Thomas, in the Cibao hills; but his army of seven thousand men was routed by a small body of horse under Ojeda.

Again the colony was becoming exhausted, and again relief was brought from Spain in four vessels, commanded by Antonio de Torres, who was accompanied by a physician, an apothecary, numerous mechanics, fishers, and labourers, infinitely more valuable to the settlement than hidalgos of blue blood and refined ideas. A rising colony needs no nobility to render it prosperous, and one that is sinking, will accelerate its dissolution by the encouragement of birth and titles. In the dependencies, as in the mother-country, industry and intellect are the foundations of national greatness, whilst an aris-

A.D. 1495.

Communication with Europe.

ocracy is the airy superstructure, imparting, perhaps, elegance, but augmenting the substantial reality of the whole in proportion only as an unity of interest is recognised between it and the industry of the people.

Antonio de Torres brought a letter from the court, addressing Columbus in a gratifying tone, and proposing that a caravel should sail monthly from Isabella, to carry news of its progress; relating the progress of the negotiation with Portugal, and requesting his return to be present at a convention to settle the boundary line. Another letter commanded the colonists to obey Columbus, as the representative of the Spanish authority. Knowing what slander had breathed at home, the admiral would have gladly crossed the sea, had not illness prevented him.

By the fleet which left for Spain, however, he sent with Torres his brother Diego, to watch the progress of affairs. The vessels were stored with gold, specimens of other metals, fruits, and rare plants. The value of the cargo was increased by five hundred Indians, to be sold in Seville for the profit of the crown.

Meanwhile the subjects of Caonabo were full of hostility. The capture of their cacique incensed them, and their anger was fomented by the Indian chiefs. A large army took the field. A battle was fought on the 27th of March 1495,

Army of a hundred thousand men. Great battle.A. D. 1495.

within a few days' march of Isabella. The whole forest was alive with Indians. A hundred thousand of them swarmed in immense lines from right to left, scoffing at the small band of white men—two hundred infantry, twenty horsemen, with a score of blood-hounds—which was arrayed to oppose them. There was a pause, and then suddenly, from behind the thickets, the infantry poured in several volleys, and, with drum and trumpet sounding, appeared in little groups in all directions, advancing suddenly upon the naked army. The Indians closed up, and whilst compacted in a mass, offered a broad mark for the arquebus and the cross-bow. Then Alonzo de Ojeda and his twenty horsemen, with lance and sabre, charged, to the sound of a blast of trumpets, full in the midst, and hewed a passage through. The blood-hounds, let loose, spread a panic through the woods. The Indian host, thinned by the swords, lances, and arquebusses of the Spanish infantry, trampled and terrified by the horses, and torn by the dogs, was routed with vast slaughter, and scattered by an enemy nearly five hundred times their inferior in number. Some fled to the distant forests, some to dreary swamps, some to hill-tops, whence they made abject submission to their foes. This first achievement was followed

A.D. 1495.

Conquest of the island. Tribute.

by others. Columbus now marched from end to end of the island, never allowing an enemy to rest; but pushing on, fought and bivouacked, fought and marched again, until the whole population was subdued. The conquest spread to every shore, and Espaniola became a province of Spain.

Alonzo de Ojeda, with his mounted troop, was always ready to dissipate opposition, and sweep away the last remnants of native independence. Having conquered, Columbus now applied himself to lay the country under tribute. In the provinces of the Vega, Cibao, and the mine districts, he exacted from each individual a yearly payment of four Flemish hawks'-bells full of gold dust. The chiefs were subjected to higher imposition—Caonabo's brother, in particular, being called on for two calabashes full of the costly grain. In provinces producing none of this metal, each Indian was required to contribute yearly a hundred pounds weight of cotton, every man receiving, in shape of receipt, a copper medal, to be worn constantly round the neck, under pain of penalty. Subsequently this rate was abated; but the yoke fell heavily on the natives. Gradually, fortress after fortress was erected, and the chain securely riveted upon Espaniola.

The Indian's happy life was now a tradition. Toil was his portion—toil to satiate the rapacity of a white invader. The project of starving out their conquerors was planned; but the miseries they proposed to inflict upon the Europeans fell heavily among themselves. They abandoned their fields and gardens, and retired into the inhospitable and impracticable fastnesses of the interior. Pent up in those dreary regions, they perished, the prey of famine and pestilence. Thousands died. At length, weary of misery, the wretched Indians came forth and submitted to slavery, that they might eat bread and be restored to health.

But, if the people had cause to deplore the advent of the white race, it received great standard benefits from it. Columbus carried to the New World eight cows and a small number of cattle. That was three hundred and fifty-seven years ago. Now what vast herds find pasture on the prairies. Europe sent oxen to the western world, and now from the western world Europe draws a large supply of animal provisions.

CHAPTER IX.

A. D. 1495 to A. D. 1498.

CHAPTER IX.

ENEMIES OF COLUMBUS AT HOME—SLANDERS AND DEFAMATIONS—THEIR SUCCESS—THE COURT FORGETS ITS OBLIGATIONS TO THE NAVIGATOR—OFFICER SENT OUT TO INQUIRE—HIS ARRIVAL AT ISABELLA—HIS CONDUCT—COLUMBUS SAILS FOR SPAIN—DRIVEN BACK BY A STORM—WRECK OF SIX VESSELS—ROMANTIC INCIDENT—DISCOVERY OF THE HAYNA MINES—NEW SETTLEMENT—SAN DOMINGO—COLUMBUS STARTS AGAIN—CONFLICT WITH AMAZONIAN WARRIORS—CAONABO—DISTRESS OF THE MARINERS—REACH SPAIN—JOURNEY TO COURT—RECEPTION—ACCUSATIONS CONFUTED—NEW EQUIPMENT—DELAYS—SAILS ON THE THIRD VOYAGE—PERILS AT SEA—MIST—HEAT—RAIN—DISCOVERY OF TRINIDAD—THE PEOPLE—ENTER THE GULF OF PARIA—DISCOVER THE CONTINENT—STRANGE APPEARANCES IN THE SEA—COLUMBUS'S CONJECTURE—RETURN TO HAYTI.

CHAPTER IX.

“Far to the right the restless ocean roared,
Whose bounding surges never keel explored,
If bounding shore, as Reason deems, divide
The vast Atlantic from the Indian tide.”

CAMOENS.

A MAN, while reaping honour, wealth, and fame, generally scatters also the seeds of enmity. Columbus was building up for himself an imperishable structure of renown; but his very greatness was undermining him. His success abroad engendered jealousy at home. Nor was this the sole source of slander. It frequently happens that to anticipate a charge is to shift the cloak of guilt from our own shoulders to those of another. The recreant Margarite, whose influence had been the active cause of troubles in the colony, with friar Boyle, whose conscience was also heavy with the responsibility of the late seditions, fled to Spain, sought the court, and poisoned the public ear with the defamation of Columbus. That he neglected the colony, that he deceived the king and queen with false accounts of gold, that he had imposed

on the country the description of a region of wealth, beauty, and plenty, for a desert, hideous and unproductive—these were the chief charges laid against him. His frequent absence from the colony was also made ground of complaint. The public ear, in a corrupt country, thirsts for slander and welcomes defamation. Liberty alone makes a nation generous. These accusations were heard eagerly, and readily believed. An officer was dispatched to inquire into the transaction. In case the admiral was found absent, he should assume the direction of affairs; but at any rate was to institute inquiry, with which he was to return and report.

Meanwhile limitless permission was given to private individuals to adventure to Hayti, provided all vessels sailed from Cadiz, under inspection of the crown, and gave one-tenth of their tonnage to the free service of the state, paying a tithe of their cargo as tribute on returning. For every eight ships fitted out, Columbus was to be allowed to freight one on his own account. At this juncture the squadron of Antonio Torres arrived in Spain, bearing news of the admiral's success in his late voyage, the supposed discovery of the Asiatic continent, with specimens of gold and costly merchandize. The effect of this was, for a time, to popularize the

A.D. 1495.

Officer sent out to inquire. His arrival at Isabella.

navigator. Fonseca, the bishop, had been entrusted with the selection of an officer to inquire into the affairs of the colony. He was known to bear enmity towards the admiral, and the crown, as a mark of favour, withdrew his authority, and itself appointed Juan Aguado, who, about the end of August, sailed with four caravels, in company with Diego, the brother of Columbus.

In October he arrived at Isabella, and immediately assumed power, harshly, pompously, and boldly. Columbus was now in a distant native town, and Aguado profited by his absence. In the double character of a bully and a spy, he raked up unreal grievances, and having, doubtless, learnt his lesson at Seville, endeavoured, on the admiral's return, to goad him into a violent altercation. Failing in this, he welcomed all accusations, all slanders, all the charges of falsehood, all the insinuations of malice. Thus stored, he prepared for his infamous mission to the court, whose favour he had obtained through the kindness of Columbus, who also resolved to return, convinced that to plead successfully before a throne, he must plead in person. All things being ready, seven vessels left the port, when a tempest, such as had not before occurred in the memory of man, burst forth, and de-

stroyed four ships under the command of Aguado, and two others. Only one—the *Nina*, survived. Whilst she was in repair, and another was built from the fragments of wreck, tidings of the discovery of some rich mines arrived.

A young native of Arragon, Miguel Diez, having in a quarrel wounded one of the settlers, fled, with five or six followers, to an Indian village near the mouth of the Ozema, on the south coast. The little community, which hospitably received the strangers, was governed by a woman, who became deeply attached to Diez. He returned her affection, and for some time they lived lovingly together. But the young Spaniard soon wearied of life in an Indian village, and became melancholy. An outcast from civilization, under the fear of punishment, he dreaded to return, yet was not content to remain. The beautiful cacique read the thoughts of his heart. Knowing how the white man loved gold, she revealed to him the existence of certain rich mines, which he examined, and then bade him go to his countrymen, persuade them to abandon unhealthy Isabella, and found a more salubrious city on the fertile banks of the Ozema. He did so. His welcome news procured his pardon. Forthwith a settlement was planted on the banks of the Hayna; and Diez,

A. D. 1496. Columbus starts again. Conflict with amazonian warriors.

returning to his Indian bride, whom he is supposed to have baptised and married, lived faithfully with her. She bore him two children. The gold mines of this place were found to be extremely rich, and Columbus dreamed that he had discovered the ancient Ophir.

On the 10th of March the two caravels, commanded severally by Aguado and Columbus, commenced their homeward voyage. Thirty Indians, and a miserable crew of the most idle and dissolute of the colonists, also embarked. Caonabo was among the natives. The Europeans, with a comfortable impiety, ascribed to heaven the misfortunes of which their own vicious folly was the source. At Guadaloupe they were attacked by a large body of female warriors, who lined the shores, and discharged flights of arrows to protect their land from invasion. A volley of fire-arms drove them into the woods. Ten were captured. They were tall women, finely formed, naked, but decorated with feathers. One of them—the wife of a cacique—was so swift of foot that her escape would have been easy, had she not turned upon her pursuer with the design to strangle him. When the rest were set at liberty, she refused to go on shore; she would, she said, remain with the Carib chief, Caonabo. The men of the island were away on the war path.

The homeward voyage was perilous and tedious. Unacquainted with the more expeditious route, Columbus sailed in the latitude of 22, and falling in with contrary winds, a scarcity ensued, and they were driven to great straits of hunger. The allowance of food to each man was reduced to six ounces daily. The admiral shared all dangers and privations; but in the midst of these never forgot his humanity. The crew, desirous of reducing the consumption of food, wished to throw the Indian captives overboard; but he peremptorily refused. It was now the 20th of May. Nine experienced pilots were on board, but none could tell in what region they were. Arguing from the lapse of days, they concluded that Europe must be near; but the skilful navigator, judging from scientific observation, maintained that their position was but little westward of the Azores. The crews wished to crowd all sail; but, as night was coming on, he foresaw danger in this, and, as he had predicted, the dawn of morning brought the island into view. This, and much else, exalted him in the minds of his companions, and probably saved him from many eruptions of mutiny.

On the 11th of June they anchored in the Bay of Cadiz, reefing their sails just as the un-

A.D. 1496.

Journey to court. Reception. Accusations confuted.

furled canvas of three caravels bellied in the wind to make the voyage to Hayna with supplies. Caonabo had died on the way. Columbus, therefore, wrote to his brother, the adelantado, with this news, urging his attentive care of the colony, and the diligent working of the Hayna mines, near the river Ozema. Receiving a kind letter from the court, he went thither, clad humbly, in friars' garb, and girdled with a rope, but displaying, nevertheless, the bracelets, necklets, and coronets of gold, which had been collected as the spoils of the "exhaustless East." The Indians accompanied him. They were all decorated with precious ornaments, and Caonabo's brother wore a heavy and massive golden collar—a splendid chain—to gild the bitterness of servitude.

Columbus was honourably received. Accusation was confuted, prejudice removed, and suspicion dispelled by his bold denials, his generous bearing, and his frank admissions. The testimony of his fellow-voyagers supported his character, and the treasures he displayed gave a lie to those calumnies on the score of deception. When slander had failed, secret obstacles were thrown across his path, which succeeded so far as delay went, for it was not until the autumn that six millions of maravedis

(coins of little more than half a farthing value) were ordered to be advanced for the equipment of a new squadron. Royalty had run into deep expenses, and could not well afford this sum.

A Spanish commander, in the service of the crown, now arrived from Espaniola, and wrote to the court, saying that on board his caravels was a large amount of gold. On hearing this, the king immediately swept the six million maravedis into the bottomless sink of royal expenditure, and ordered that the sum should be paid to Columbus out of the precious cargo just arrived. This was nothing more than a number of slaves, figuratively described by the gold which was to be the fruit of their sale.

The equipment was thus delayed until the spring of 1498, when Columbus, relieved of his responsibility of an eighth part of the expenses for three years, was offered a grant of land, with the title of duke or marquis. He refused it, as it would afford a new handle for slander. However, in a will, dated 1498, he entailed his estates, in virtue of permission accorded him so to do. His heirs were to use no other signature than that of "The Admiral", and a married person of his family was always to remain in Genoa, that the name of Columbus might be perpetuated in his native city. The edicts—

A.D. 1498.

Sails on the third voyage. Perils at sea.

injurious to his interests—referring to private enterprise, were revoked, and courtly favour was lavished in reparation of the grievances he had endured. The king allowed him to take out a number of persons in the royal pay to improve the colony, and Isabella used every exertion to promote the welfare of the Indians themselves. The enmity of the mitred Fonseca—whose name is now coupled with all that is wretched and contemptible—retarded the day of departure until the 30th of May 1498, when Columbus sailed on his third voyage of discovery. Proceeding to the Cape de Verd islands, he steered to the south-west. It was now the end of June. A thick fog fell upon the sea, shutting out for many days the light of sun and stars. This was succeeded by an intense and burning heat. The sun, nearly vertical, flooded the sea with overpowering rays: the decks dried up, the seams opened, the tar melted, the casks burst, and the provisions decomposed.

“All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody sun at noon
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the moon.”

Then a great rain fell, without any change in the melting temperature, whilst the admiral, with many of his companions, suffered griev-

ously, until at length a prosperous cool breeze sprung up, and they sailed away west for seventeen days. In gratitude for their deliverance, Columbus resolved that the first land discovered should be named Trinity. Suddenly, at mid-day of the 31st July, the peaks of three lofty mountains appeared dimly defined against the horizon. A nearer approach shewed that at the base they united into one. Struck with this singular coincidence, he immediately called the island La Trinidad, the name it still bears.

Coasting this island, the navigators were charmed with its verdure and beauty; but, as yet, discovered no traces of human beings. However, they filled their casks from a limpid rivulet, and thus refreshed, proceeded on their way. Reaching El Gallo rock, they were met by a vast number of savages, who came off in canoes. They were fairer and of finer forms than any yet seen, and many of them wore cotton girdles about their loins, and fillets on their heads. The flotilla hovered round the vessels at a distance; but no attempt to communicate with them was successful. After paddling about for some time, engaged in feasting their curious eyes on the novel armament before them, they shot off in their swift canoes, and were seen no more. Thence Co-

A.D. 1498.

Enter the Gulf of Paria. The people.

lumbus sailed into the unnavigated Gulf of Paria, encountering many perils among its unknown shoals and currents, and meeting with many pacific adventures with the population of its shores,—infinitely more graceful in their movements, more civilized in their appearance, more industrious in their habits, than the natives of Hayti. The coast was broken by beautiful bays and quiet inlets, where the waves, after their boisterous gambols, rolled in for a few moments' peaceful rest. Forests, of magnificent foliage, almost bent over the water, while, beyond these, uplands of the richest green stretched in wave-like undulations towards the interior, and were threaded with numbers of glittering streams. Some quiet hamlets were scattered at intervals over the landscape, which was brightened by an unclouded sun. The mariners beheld in this region the fair land of promise. The natives brought great quantities of inferior gold, with strings of rare pearls. Columbus procured many specimens for transmission to Spain. He had once mistaken an island for a continent, and now, mistaking a continent for an island, penetrated further and further into the gulf, but was at length alarmed to find the water becoming shallower and fresher, and of a new colour.

Accustomed to the majestic roll of the ocean, the voyagers were alarmed by the contest of the elements—the flood from the land pouring down from among remote hills and lakes, and that of the sea, heaving in an unbroken surface of many hundred leagues, here meeting in violent strife. All things seemed changed. They had come across waters dark and tempestuous, with a damp atmosphere, and a murky heaven over head: they were now in seas of bright blue, with a pure sky and light balmy air. The position of the stars seemed different, the gales were more soft, the land was more beautiful; the people were of a superior race, and all nature appeared under a lovelier aspect. Columbus began now to doubt his theory of the spherical shape of the world, supposing it to possess the form of a pear, on the taper end of which he had now arrived, immediately below the sun.

The intricate navigation of this region, the dangerous water-pass of the Boca del Drago, or Dragon's Mouth, the time spent in lingering along the tempting shores, with the return voyage to Espaniola, occupied until the 19th of August. Columbus meanwhile indulged in speculations on the region he had discovered, supposing that on the peak of this pear-shaped world lay the deserted gardens of Eden, and

A.D. 1498.

Return to Hayti.

that from the fountain of life, created by God at the foot of the tree of forbidden fruit, flowed the flood of fresh water that caused the commotion in this sea, which he named the Gulf of Pearls.

Further observation convinced him that the rich and beautiful land that spread away on either side of the gulf was no island, but a continuation of the boundless Indian continent. The earth rose, he supposed, lessening as it approached the sun, and below the abandoned seat of Paradise, was still favoured with a more benignant sky, more genial air, calmer seas, and fairer lands, with more delicious fruits, more abundant wealth, and peopled by a more chaste and happy race than any other region of the world. The variations of the sky, the changes in the landscape, the phenomena of the currents, and the aspect of the coast, with its bold promontories and retiring bays—all these, aided by his fertile fancy and the supposed testimony of travellers and writers, combined to support his curious and poetical theory.

Ophthalmia now afflicted him so greatly, that he was no longer able to enjoy the delightful scenery of the coasts along which they ranged. Rejoiced by his accumulation of costly pearls, he was glad to reach Hayti, and meditated a

Return to Hayti.A. D. 1498.

visit to the mines of Hayna; but a strange current carried the vessels a hundred and fifty miles below their destination, and the month of August had consequently closed before he reached the new colony. The result of the voyage had been some important discoveries, and the collection of much treasure. Europeans and natives indeed, were well content, because each flattered themselves they had over-reached the others—always a satisfactory thing.

CHAPTER X.

A.D. 1498.

CHAPTER X.

PROGRESS OF AFFAIRS DURING THE ADMIRAL'S ABSENCE—
GERM OF A NEW CITY—THE ADELTAÑO VISITS XARA-
GUAY—PROCESSION OF WOMEN—RECEPTION IN BEHE-
CHIO'S CITY—MOCK FIGHT—ENTERTAINMENT—RETURN
TO ISABELLA—DISCONTENT—INSUBORDINATION—FORTI-
FIED HOUSES—REVOLT OF GUARIONEX—DESECRATION OF
A CHAPEL, AND BURNING OF THE OFFENDERS—NEW
VISIT TO XARAGUAY—ANACAONDA'S ASTONISHMENT—
HER HOUSE—REVOLT OF ROLDAN—PROPOSES TO FLY TO
XARAGUAY—PICTURE OF A CYBARITE LIFE—THE AD-
MIRAL RETURNS—FLEET SENT TO SPAIN—ARRANGE-
MENTS WITH ROLDAN—HE BREAKS THE AGREEMENT—
COLUMBUS'S LETTER TO THE KING AND QUEEN—ROLDAN
RETURNS—NEW CAUSES OF DISQUIET.

CHAPTER X.

“Here, in the sultriest season, let him rest—
Fresh is the green beneath those aged trees—
Here winds of gentlest wing will fan his breast,
From heaven itself he may inhale the breeze.”

BYRON.

DURING the absence of Columbus, the erection of a fortress near the Hayna mines had been commenced and carried out, though with frequent interruptions, from the continual necessity of detaching parties in quest of supplies, as provisions were scarce. On the lofty bank of the Ozema another place of defence was constructed. Here it was proposed to found a seaport, and with this view the first house was erected—the germ of a city now flourishing and populous—San Domingo. The *adeltando* meanwhile visited various parts of the island with an armed force, to rivet the links of thralldom which Columbus had forged and laid on.

Among the chiefs whom he proposed to terrify was Behechio, cacique of Xaraguay, a province so delightful as to be the traditionary site of Paradise. He marched into this territory

at the head of a powerful detachment. The chieftain met him, with a host of savage warriors; but none other than a friendly encounter took place. Bartholomew was conducted towards the residence of Behechio—a town situated at the bottom of a deep narrow bay, now known as the Bight of Leagon. As they approached, a procession of women, singing songs and waving palm branches, came forth to meet them. The young matrons were girded with a narrow band of cotton, the maidens with slight fillets of leaves, their long hair falling down in abundant tresses over their persons. They were beautifully formed, with smooth soft skin and a clear brown complexion. These nymphs, arranging themselves before the adeltando, knelt, and held forth the palms. Then came Anacaona, the cacique's sister, borne in a litter by six Indians. She wore a girdle of variegated cotton, and a chaplet of white and crimson flowers, with similar wreaths entwined about her neck and limbs. Her name signified "The Flower of Gold", and she was said to be the most beautiful woman in that country, as well as an accomplished poetess.

Conducted into the abodes of these hospitable people, the Spaniards were feasted and entertained with various games. Of these, one was the representation of a mock battle, in which

two armies of Indians fought with bows and arrows. Four were killed and many wounded! The adeltando begged that this royal sport might not continue, and the bloodshed ceased. Having commenced their intercourse in this friendly manner, it was concluded similarly—the cacique of the heavenly province of Xaraguay engaging to pay tribute in cotton, for no gold existed in that celestial region.

Returning to Isabella, Bartholomew found insubordination rampant. Discontent and repining had completely usurped the place of energy. Many of the colonists had deserted, and the whole district was in ferment. A line of five fortified houses was established between the old town and San Domingo, and by means of these, open rebellion was for a time prevented. Still the murmurs of the disaffected were audible enough. No fear of authority silenced them. When the government sent out Aguado to inquire into the admiral's conduct, they diverged from the path of sound policy. That a colonial governor, appointed by a despotism, may rule with effect, it is necessary at least that he should appear to enjoy the confidence of the supreme department of power. Men will offer but an equivocal obedience to an authority which they are not taught to honour. The settlers presumed

Desecration of a chapel, and burning of the offenders.

A. D. 1498.

on this in the case of Columbus. They saw him checked, and therefore respected him less. The Indian caciques caught the contagious idea, and during the absence of the admiral a rebellion broke forth. There is no epidemic like insurrection.

The cacique Guarionex, who had nominally become a Christian, was scoffed by his fellow chiefs as an apostate, who renounced his religion through the contemptible motive of fear. This rankled in his breast; but he must have a fair excuse to retract. The white men soon afforded it. A Spaniard seduced Guarionex's wife, and he forthwith retreated again to his heathen creed. The missionaries in his territory then directed their efforts to the conversion of another cacique, and removed from the district with one baptised Indian—Juan Matoo, whose family, nevertheless, remained. A small chapel was prepared for their use, and furnished with a cross, an altar, and images. The natives seized these emblems, broke, and buried them in a field, whence, as tradition says, grew certain roots in the form of a cross. The perpetrators of this act were captured, and suffered death at the stake; but the same flame which consumed them kindled the indignation of their countrymen, and a rebellion broke forth which was not easily extinguished.

A.D. 1498.

New visit to Xaraguay. Revolt of Roldan.

Visiting Xaraguay once more, to receive Behechio's tribute, with that of the inferior caciques, who had filled a house with cotton, and in addition offered great stores of cassava bread, Bartholomew was surprised at what he saw in the dwelling of Anacaonda. Intricately wrought cottons were displayed in profusion, with magnificent tables of ebony, worked without iron, and numerous other productions of Indian industry. The cacique's generous wife offered any of these as presents. She was delighted with the society of the whites. But her astonishment was beyond fancy when she beheld the caravel, which bore away the tribute, spread its wide white sails, discharge its cannon in salute, and move before the breeze, whilst strains of martial harmony floated from its deck. These were affairs conducted in the absence of Columbus—extremely well and ably, and, with the exception of the burning of the Indians, with humanity.

But a new conspiracy was maturing, and Francisco Roldan, a man under the heaviest obligations to the admiral, was busy in directing it. He defied authority, and proposed to his followers to settle in Xaraguay, there to pass a life of indolent luxury, with all nature, human and inanimate, beautiful around them—an Ely-

sium, where, steeped in enjoyment, they might spend the years in an unending circle of voluptuous pleasure. The lovely aspect of nature, the sweet climate, the teeming soil, the simple, hospitable, easily-deluded people—these were by him pictured as enhancing the temptations to a settlement there. Guarionex, also, again revolted, and a dangerous crisis had thus arrived, when reinforcements from Europe reached San Domingo, with the king's confirmation of Bartholomew's title of adelantado. The rebellious cacique was overcome, driven to the mountains, pursued, captured, and imprisoned. The insurrection was most vigorously suppressed, but most mildly punished. The first governors of Hayti thus set a lesson, which it would be well for the humanity of Europe were it taught in the schools of modern policy.

When Columbus arrived from the Gulf of Pearls, he found the country thus overrun with the unchained passions of men. He confirmed his brother's measures, denounced Roldan—who was joined by thirty-two Spaniards from the ships—and prepared himself with energy to suppress this rising spirit of turbulence. Roldan was now in Xaraguay, and there, openly avowing his proposed plan of sybaritic life, refused

A. D. 1499.

Fleet sent to Spain. Arrangements with Roldan.

a pardon proffered, and wrote a plausible letter to the king and queen of Spain, excusing his rebellion, and heaping libels on Columbus. This missive was borne by a messenger, embarked in a fleet of five vessels, just then sailing to Spain, with a letter from the admiral to the sovereigns, accompanied by ample specimens of gold and pearls. The ships sailed on the 18th of October. Before a month had elapsed, the struggle between Roldan and the governor had a pacific termination. An agreement was made, by which it was arranged that the rebels should embark in two caravels bound for Cadiz—to be fitted out within fifty days—with their slaves or wives, orders for full pay, and certificates of good conduct.

Columbus then proceeded on a tour to discover the condition of the island. Neglected lands, scattered flocks, deserted mines,—all the marks of confusion presented themselves. Still a prospect of better things was opened, when he learned that Roldan's vessels, having been driven back by a storm, were again in harbour, and that the rebels now refused to go. Their excuse was, that the equipment of the ships had been delayed, that they were unfit for sea, and ill provisioned; but, in reality, the turbulent band was unwilling to relinquish the epicurean

luxury of Xaraguay. In addition to this source of discouragement, arrived a letter from Fonseca, in reply to one of earnest representation from the admiral. It was couched in the coldest terms, and intimated that an inquiry into all the affairs of the colony was pending. Crippled by his weakness, and unarmed with the weapons which his government might have granted him, Columbus was compelled to make easy terms with Roldan. The miscreant—never moved by any generous feeling—fomented continual discontent, and the admiral once more dispatched a letter to the king and queen. He requested assistance, but demanded that, as his rule was considered unjust, a legal judge might be sent out to relieve him of the responsibility of punishments. He asked them to send to him his son Diego, for his years were whitening, and he felt the infirmities of age. He had intended to depart for Spain at once, but various circumstances deterred him.

Among these was the clandestine arrival, on the west coast, under the command of Alonzo Ojeda, of four caravels, on something like a plundering expedition. Roldan was dispatched to call him to account. He, having now been received into employment, was anxious to blot out the recollection of his flagitious acts, and

A.D. 1499.

Ojeda's expedition. New causes of disquiet.

readily undertook the task. By a skilful movement he cut off the adventurer from his ships, and extracted from him an account of his purpose. The expedition had been dispatched, under the patronage of the perfidious bishop of Fonseca, on a voyage of discovery. The projectors hoped thus to reap what Columbus had sown; to profit by his labours, to their own advantage. The vessels sailed in May 1499. They had reached the southern continent and ranged along its shores, six hundred miles west of the Oronoko, to the Gulf of Paria. Thence, passing through the Boca del Dragon, they had discovered the Gulf of Venezuela, passed through the Carribee archipelago, attacked the natives, and made many prisoners. Their voyage was the longest hitherto made in this region.

The chief pilot of the squadron was Juan de la Cosa, who sailed with the admiral on his first voyage. Americo Vesputio sailed with this expedition, and from him that vast continent received its name.

By a series of well-managed manœuvres, planned by Roldan, Ojeda was at length deprived of the strength of his expedition, and compelled to depart the island, which he did with threats of a speedy and more formidable return. It is supposed he retired to the adjacent coasts, and pursued the traffic in slaves.

This vile trade in human flesh is the great blot on the discoverers who introduced civilized Europe to the savage New World. In almost all new regions, however, it has been established; though what were the ideas of the barbarians on the natural rights of humanity, it is impossible to know. Men are easily seduced into slavery, especially if sweetened by the idea that the enslavers belong to a superior order of beings, such as the tribes of the Carribee archipelago considered the Spaniards. Perhaps they thought submission a duty, though instinct occasionally impelled them to resistance.

Nor were the Europeans slow to profit by the weak ignorance of the natives. Gain was their ambition, and selfishness, the universal sin that rots into the heart to the decay of all its natural virtue, blunted the edge of conscience, and led them to see no injustice in slavery—the rupture of all the relations between man and man.

CHAPTER XI.

A. D. 1500 to A. D. 1502.

CHAPTER XI.

NEW TROUBLES—GUEVARA'S LOVE ADVENTURE—ITS BANE-
FUL RESULTS—REBELLION OF MOXICA—IT IS CRUSHED
—MOXICA'S FATE—BUSY MALIGNITY IN SPAIN—FRAN-
CISCO BOBADILLA SENT OUT AS JUDGE, TO SUPERSEDE
COLUMBUS—HIS CONDUCT ON ARRIVAL—CONTRADICTION
OF THE ADMIRAL'S MEASURES—TREATMENT OF COLUM-
BUS—HE IS SENT HOME IN CHAINS—HIS REMARKS—
REACHES SPAIN—IS ACQUITTED WITHOUT INQUIRY—
BOBADILLA SUPERSEDED—PREPARATIONS FOR A FOURTH
VOYAGE—IT STARTS—PROJECT TO DISCOVER A ROUTE
TO INDIA—VOYAGE TO ESPANIOLA—OVANDO REFUSES
SHELTER FROM A STORM TO THE ADMIRAL'S SHIPS—THE
TEMPEST—WRECK OF A HOMEWARD-BOUND FLEET—
COLUMBUS STEERS ALONG THE MOSQUITO COAST—ADVEN-
TURES ON THE WAY—PEOPLE OF HUERTA—SPLENDID
ISLANDS—TRAFFIC FOR GOLD—HOSTILE DEMONSTRATIONS
—THE CHILDREN OF HEAVEN—THE ADMIRAL'S HAPPY
ERROR—DISCOVERS PUERTO BELLO.

CHAPTER XI.

“Again Columbus o’er the hoary tide
Pursues the evening sun, his navy’s guide.”

CAMOENS.

NEW troubles broke forth. Don Hernando de Guevara, a young Spanish nobleman, who had been compromised in the recent outbreaks, was sent to Xaraguay, there to await the departure of a vessel for Spain. Higuanoa, the daughter of Anacaonda, was a beautiful girl, and won the heart of the youthful cavalier, preferring him to Roldan, who was also her suitor. This was an active source of jealousy, which grew into a more serious hatred. Commanded to leave the province, Guevara disobeyed, remaining in the house of Anacaonda, with the purpose of marrying the damsel, as soon as she should be baptised. An angry contest ensued; but the young nobleman was compelled to lower his tone before the authority of Roldan. From this quarrel arose a plot of insurrection, which exploded, and Guevara, arrested, was imprisoned in the fortress of San Domingo. His cousin,

Moxica, in revenge, laid the plan of a new conspiracy, which rapidly grew, and was about to burst into a rebellion, when Columbus, by a sudden surprise, seized the leader, with his confederates, threw them into prison, and condemned him to immediate death on a gibbet. Conducted to the summit of the lofty fort, Moxica begged a few moments' delay, that he might confess his sins. The indulgence was granted. The culprit delayed, hesitated, began anew, and clinging to each moment of life, commenced accusing others instead of himself. Forthwith the admiral, incensed, ordered him to be hurled from the ramparts—an act which, however it may be palliated, rests as a stain on the memory of Columbus.

Malignity is always industrious. The enemies of Columbus at home, were unwearied in their assailment of his character. Conscious that a ready way to the ear of power lies through the feeling of jealousy, they insinuated that he designed to establish an independent authority in the New World. Other accusations were but wanting. He was an alien who despised the Spanish nobles; he owed them vast debts which he would never pay. They stunned the royal ears with clamour, with an unceasing buzz of defamation.

A.D. 1500. Francisco Bobadilla sent out as judge, to supersede Columbus.

To please the aristocracy, the king and queen, with a weakness common to such personages, consented to injustice, and sent out a judge to the American islands. It was made his interest to condemn the admiral. Francisco de Bobadilla, a member of the household, was selected. He was invested with ample power, and bore letters to Columbus, requiring him, for himself and his brothers, to yield up all authority, and submit to the judge's will. Bobadilla, who was poor, and therefore at the beck of the admiral's wealthy enemies, sailed with two ships, about the middle of July 1500.

Columbus was at fort Conception, Bartholomew was in pursuit of the rebels, and Diego was at San Domingo, when, on the 23rd of August, the two vessels anchored in this port. Bobadilla soon made known his mission. He learnt that seven of the rebels had been hanged, and that five more, including the lover of Anacaonda's daughter, lay under sentence of the gallows. Two Spaniards, swinging from gibbets, were set down as proofs of the admiral's cruelty. Swelling with importance, the judge immediately assumed authority—opened the prison doors, discharged persons in office, established himself in the governor's house, and took possession of all his property, in gold, plate, arms,

His conduct on arrival.A. D. 1500.

jewels, books, horses, and even public and private papers. He released the captives, not through any impulse of mercy, but for an ostentatious display of power, and, by every means attracting the admiration of an idle, grasping population, overthrew the fabric which Columbus had so laboured to erect. His behaviour to the discoverer was uncourteous, even insulting. Having written in polite terms to the new governor, Columbus, receiving no answer, remained for some time in suspense; but at length was summoned, by virtue of the royal letters, to yield up all authority, and appear before Bobadilla, who welcomed every word from every individual who sought to purchase favour by defaming the fallen authority.

Arriving at San Domingo, the great navigator was thrown into prison, with orders that he should be put in chains. Even his worst enemies hesitated to perform this shameful task, until a miserable cook, in the service of Bobadilla, came forward to do that which the most graceless jailor refused to undertake. Diego and Bartholomew experienced the same indignities with their brother, who was, in the early part of October, shipped—a manacled captive—for Spain. Miscreants of all kinds were released from confinement, and the founder of the



Columbus Returns in Chains.—Page 159.

A.D. 1501.

Columbus is sent home in chains. His remarks.

colony was sent home in chains. Andreas Martin, the master of the caravel, offered to strike off the fetters. "No," said Columbus, "since the king has commanded that I should obey his governor, he shall find me as obedient to this as I have been to all his other orders. Nothing but his commands shall release me. If twelve years of hardships and fatigues, of continual dangers and frequent famines; if the ocean first opened, and five times passed and repassed, to add a new world abounding in wealth to the Spanish monarchy; and if an infirm and premature old age, brought on by these services, deserve these chains, it is fit then that I should wear them to Spain, and keep them by me as memorials to the end of my life."

Columbus forgave all injuries, but he could not forget. He carried these irons about with him during the rest of his life, and hung them above his death-bed, requesting that they might be buried with him.

Reaching Spain in the early part of 1501, the tidings of his arrival quickly spread through Spain. The discoverer of the new world was a manacled prisoner! Forthwith a cry of anger was shouted through Cadiz, caught up at Seville, and pealed from every city in the kingdom. He was already an old man; his hair was white, his

Is acquitted without inquiry.

A.D. 1501.

tall figure bent, his eye had dimmed, his face was furrowed with the cares of such a weary life. Storms and dangers, fatigues and privations, had shaken his frame, and his countenance was shaded by a deep cast of sorrow. He, whose abasement would not have been regarded with anger, was looked upon as a martyr now that he was persecuted. He wrote to the sovereigns. Isabella read his letter, and he was at once set free—the court not waiting to receive the report of Bobadilla. As in punishing they had not inquired into his conduct, so in acquitting him they forebore all inquisition. He appeared before them on the 17th of December, attended by an honourable pageant, and the violence of his feelings, when introduced to the queen, broke forth in a profusion of tears. All possible means were resorted to to soothe him. Bobadilla's accusations were disregarded, for the mere sight of this great man threw denial in the face of calumny.

Since the year 1495, numerous expeditions had been fitted out by rival nations, and Spain also had sent forth other of her sons to prosecute the great adventure which the Genoese navigator had begun. Meanwhile, at San Domingo, Bobadilla was urging the settlement to confusion. His policy was consistent. He con-

A D. 1502.

Bobadilla superseded.

fiscated to his own use much of the admiral's property; endeavoured to gain over the people by permitting an unbounded licence, and, by ruining the revenue, nearly ruined the colony also, until he was recalled and replaced by a more competent man—Nicholas de Ovando,—more courteous and more able than his predecessor, but not less deficient in generosity and justice. He was sent out with instructions to root up the grievances which had sprung up under Bobadilla's capricious rule; to enforce restitution for Columbus and his brothers; and to carry to Espaniola a number of industrious men, to take the place of the most dissolute, who were to be returned to the mother-country. With a fleet of thirty sail, Ovando put to sea on the 13th of February 1502. When it had not yet proceeded many leagues, a great storm came on; all merchandize was cast from the decks, that the vessels might be lightened, and one ship, with a hundred and twenty souls on board, went down, with all her crew. The shores were covered with articles thus lost, and so great was the sorrow of the queen and king, at what they supposed to be the destruction of their whole expedition, that they shut themselves up for eight days, in the strictest seclusion. Ovando's fleet reached its destination on the 15th of April.

Preparations for a fourth voyage.A.D. 1502.

Columbus remained in Grenada for nine months, engaged in rebuilding his wrecked affairs. He had opened a road to glory, conquest, and wealth, and saw others thronging through it, whilst he remained behind—because he was not a noble, because he had no family influence, and little gold to supply its place. Smiles and promises were showered on him. If they had been of any worth, he was a wealthy man; but these in courts are plentiful, in lieu of substantial assistance. Like spurious bank paper, they deceive, until they are presented and uncourteously returned.

To excite the crown to an enterprise to recover the holy sepulchre was now the object of Columbus. It had been his favourite dream, and his unfulfilled vow was ever present to his memory. But the discovery of the passage to India, by way of the Cape of Good Hope, awakened his predominant, but now drowsy passion for adventure, and he conceived the idea of a new and more daring voyage. Persuaded that somewhere between the coast of Cuba—which he still believed to be a continent—and the shores to the west of Paria, must lie the easy route to the East, he proposed to solve the problem—to open a new channel for the diamonds and other costly gems; the gold, silver, antimony, and pearls; the porcelain, the silken

A.D. 1502.

The expedition starts. Voyage to Espaniola.

and woollen fabrics, the precious odoriferous woods, the camphor, the spices, and the drugs of India. His proposition was listened to, and towards the end of 1501, he went to Seville to prepare his fleet. On the 9th of May 1502, his fourth and last voyage of discovery commenced. Four small caravels sailed from Cadiz—a little squadron, but directed by a great and soaring mind. He was, according to his own calculation, fifty-five years old (according to Andrez Bernaldez, sixty-seven), with a somewhat broken constitution, and feelings galled by continual struggling against an adverse fortune. No man was ever more successful as regarded his enterprises; no man was ever more unsuccessful as regarded himself. Bartholomew his brother, and Diego his son, were his companions. Steering to Ercilla, on the Morocco coast, thence to the Grand Canary, thence to the Carribee archipelago, and thence, contrary to the king's orders, to Espaniola, he arrived off San Domingo just as the fleet, wherein Bobadilla was embarked in charge of a great treasure, was about to sail. On board one of the ships was a solid mass of virgin gold—picked up in a brook by a woman—which was said to weigh three thousand six hundred castellanos.

From various indications, Columbus knew that a tempest was approaching. He wrote to

The tempest. Wreck of a homeward-bound fleet.

A.D. 1502.

Ovando, demanding leave to enter the port, and warning him to delay the sailing of the fleet. The governor was deaf to the request and the caution. He disdained the advice, and forbade Columbus to shelter his squadron in the harbour of an island that might almost be called his own. The only resource was to draw up the vessels as close to the shore as possible, and await the hurricane. It broke with irresistible fury; but the admiral's squadron rode it safely through, and, at the end of several days, tossed gently on the subsiding waters of a sheltered bay. The homeward-bound fleet, however, put to sea, and was overtaken and scattered by the storm. Sixteen vessels foundered. The rest were driven back, in a shattered condition, to San Domingo. Only one—and that contained the remnant of the admiral's treasure—reached Spain. Bobadilla, Roldan, and Guarionex, the rebel chief of the Vega, perished.

The four caravels, commanded by the navigator, then refitted at Point Hermoso, and proceeded on their voyage. Columbus discovered many small islands near Jamaica, and then sailed along the coast of Honduras, declaring the whole region to be a dependency of Spain. Thence, encountering many storms, they rounded the Cape of Gracias a Dios, or Thanks to God, and steered into a portion of the

A.D. 1502.

Columbus steers along the Mosquito coast.

sea swept by easy and favourable gales. They were now off the Mosquito shore, and here, on the 16th of September, a melancholy accident occurred. A boat, attempting to enter the mouth of a river, was swallowed up amid the contest of the waves and the current, whereby many lives were lost. Naming it the Rio del Deserte, they proceeded along the coast, and reached the fertile isle of Huerta, where the inhabitants offered them many presents. Columbus refused these, saying that it was his practice to barter, and to receive no gifts. Apparently coinciding, the natives brought great stores of provisions and curiosities, exchanging them for toys and trinkets; but the Europeans found every article tied up and left on the beach.

The people of Cariari—the Indian name of Huerta—were a singular race, whose strange manners impressed even the philosophical mind of Columbus with the idea that they were dealers in forbidden mysteries. It was therefore with pleasure that he left the island, and sailed along Costo Rica, which they explored in the early part of October. They discovered here an immense bay, sprinkled with a multitude of isles, verdant and fragrant as those of the utmost East. Pure gold was found in them, and all along the coasts of Veragua, the precious

metal was obtained in plates and eagle-shaped masses, which the natives gladly exchanged for hawks' bells, toys, and trinkets of the most trifling value. Towns of considerable size were seen. Every league brought in view the mouth of some river, some bay, some village, or some island which no voyager had ever yet seen. The population was dense, and the manners of the Indians were gentle and not wholly without refinement. Observing the great thirst for gold displayed by the Spaniards, they shewed the towns where the plates were wrought, and collected large quantities for barter.

Occasionally, hostilities were threatened. The natives, alarmed at the strange armament which appeared on their coast, gathered in vast multitudes, to the sound of their drums and trumpet-shells, with clubs and spears and wooden swords, to oppose the foe. With them, as in ancient Rome, stranger meant enemy; but the flash of a single cannon was sufficient to scatter the naked host. The belief that the Spaniards were children of heaven was then confirmed, and the savages regarded with timidity those wonderful warriors of the sea, who seemed to wield the thunders and lightnings of the firmament.

The admiral, whose mind was full of the wild and vague accounts left by ancient travellers,

A. D. 1502.

The admiral's happy error. Discovers Puerto Bello.

grasped still more firmly the belief—of which everything he saw appeared a confirmation—that this was the coast of the teeming Indian continent. It is remarkable with what ease the mind will support a dear delusion, by evidence which, if rightly interpreted, would destroy it. But this error was fruitful in important results. It led Columbus on. He discovered a new continent whilst seeking the road to an old one. On the 2nd of November the squadron rode in the magnificent harbour of Puerto Bello, whose lovely shores, covered with fruit trees, palm groves, and fields of maize, were thickly dotted with the habitations of man.

This place still bears the name that Columbus gave it—a name suggested by the beauty of the landscape that framed the magnificent haven. Orchards planted by nature with trees of delicious fruit, and flowers of various tint and fragrance, covered the shores, and crops of prolific Indian corn alternated with these delightful groves and gardens.

Thence the navigator steered eastward, touching at various points of the coast, and giving names to each division of the region, from the circumstances of time or place. One harbour, where his company was amply refreshed, he called the Port of Provisions; one coast, where

vexing winds were prevalent, he christened the Coast of Contradiction; another little haven, walled in with rocks, he designated The Cabinet.

At most of these places some intercourse was carried on with the people. It was generally pacific, but sometimes warlike. Europeans and Indians quarrelled and mutually shed blood, the latter roused to hostility by the licentious insolence of the strangers. The flash of a few guns usually drove the savages howling into forests, and the white men retained the eminence they might have secured by gentler means.

CHAPTER XII.

A.D. 1503.

CHAPTER XII.

THE VOYAGERS WEARY OF THE EXPEDITION—THEY RETURN TOWARDS VERAGUA—BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY—ABUNDANCE OF GOLD—EXCURSIONS ON SHORE—PLAN OF A SETTLEMENT—ERECTION OF BUILDINGS—CONSPIRACY OF A CHIEF—ITS DEFEAT BY STRATAGEM—CATASTROPHE ON THE RIVER—MASSACRE OF A BOAT'S CREW—THE SPANIARDS ATTACKED—INDIANS IN THE WOOD—THE SPANIARDS RETREAT TO THE BEACH—FORTIFICATION—COLUMBUS AT SEA—SUICIDE OF THE PRISONERS—THE ADMIRAL'S DREAM—THE SPANIARDS BROUGHT OFF ON A RAFT—TWO SHIPS ABANDONED—WEARISOME VOYAGE—REACHES JAMAICA—THE VESSELS RUN AGROUND AND ROOFED—ARRANGEMENT WITH THE INDIANS—CANOE VOYAGE TO ESPANIOLA—ADVENTURES OF DIEGO MENDEZ—REBELLION OF PORRAS—HIS CRIMES—INDIANS REFUSE PROVISIONS—THE ECLIPSE.

CHAPTER XII.

Πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρογητον δερκεσκετο, δακρυα λειβων.

HOMER.

THE enterprise of Columbus was still ardent when that of his fellow-voyagers grew cold, and the murmurings of discontent prevailed against the fervour of his own enthusiasm: he was compelled, about the end of November, to turn his prow about, and sail in the van of the squadron towards the Veragua coast. A wild hurricane and a thunder-storm, terrible as it only is in the tropics, tossed them to and fro for nine days, when the apparition of vast water-spouts was a new source of marvel and alarm. But Providence steered them to a port, where, for three days, they lay beyond reach of the tempest. Here they saw many native dwellings perched amid the branches of trees, as is still the custom in some of the Indian islands. Arriving at the mouth of the river Veragua, in the province of the same name, Bartholomew was sent on shore to explore the district. Every-

Beautiful country. Abundance of gold.A.D. 1502.

where delicious landscapes opened to his view. The route lay through a paradise of beauty and plenty, where every man seemed rich in that metal which was so dear to the Spanish heart. Collecting a great quantity of it, the adelantado returned to his brother with glowing accounts, and these costly specimens. It was determined to found a settlement on the river Belen, near the Veragua. Columbus believed that from this favoured province Solomon drew his wealth of gold, for the soil seemed everywhere auriferous, and every river appeared a new Pactolus, whose glittering sands rolled down the riches of the distant mountain mines.

Eighty men were selected to form the germ of the colony. The erection of dwellings was commenced on a little hill, belted by dreary woods, and situated at the mouth of the river. An ample magazine of arms, provisions, ammunition, and stores was prepared, and every exertion which their scanty means allowed was made to secure their safety and subsistence. Columbus had anchored within the bar of the stream, and when he attempted to regain the sea, found the water so much fallen that there was nothing to depend on but patience. The cacique of Veragua, who had from the first viewed with jealousy the visits of the white men, resolved to profit

A.D. 1503.

Conspiracy of a chief. Its defeat by stratagem.

by this circumstance, and a conspiracy was formed to drive the foreigners altogether from the land; but the plan, concerted with craft, was met with equal cunning, and the chief found himself a prisoner in Bartholomew's boat, and rapidly proceeding down the river. Although bound to one of the thwarts, he continued to loosen the cord, and plunging suddenly into the water, contrived to escape, in spite of a swift pursuit.

The *adeltando*, who had, when the conspiracy was discovered, boldly ventured into the interior in search of the Indian camp, and there surprised the cacique in his dwelling, was thus compelled to be content with the massive golden ornaments which were the spoils of the place. Two magnificent coronets were found, and of these Bartholomew received one as the reward of his achievement. The cacique, however, was not daunted by his perils. The settlement soon suffered from his anger, which was unmitigated, for his wives and children were on board the vessels now standing out to sea. I have described the dwellings of the Spaniards as standing on an elevated spot girdled by the forests. Through these the Indians came with stealthy tread, and suddenly hurling a shower of spears, burst from concealment with the

hereditary war-whoop of their race. Several of the Europeans—and the *adeltando* among them—were wounded; but the enemy was quickly repulsed. A blood-hound let loose upon them completed the rout.

Meanwhile a boat, which had been dispatched from the ships, was proceeding up the river in search of good water. Suddenly countless small canoes, filled with armed savages, swarmed around it, in a spot between high shadowy banks. The shrill blasts of the conch, the storm of missiles, the yells and numbers of the assailants, struck the boat's crew with a panic, and twelve of them were massacred. Only one escaped, who leaped overboard, and, diving, reached the shore, bearing the cheerless tidings to the settlement.

Far around, in the forest, the roll of the war-drum and the shouts of gathered multitudes every moment becoming louder and more fierce, told that the Indians were collecting from all parts to share in the destruction of the colony. The dark woods, which now swarmed with savages, concealed them from sight and screened them from attack. The village was no longer tenable. Abandoning it therefore, Bartholomew guided his followers to a spot near the sea, where with a boat, some casks, and chests, a barricade

A.D. 1503.

Columbus at sea. Suicide of the prisoners.

was raised, defended by two guns, and here the Spaniards resolved to make a last stand for life. With their firearms they succeeded in keeping the savages at bay; but perils thickened round them, and the corpses of the boat's crew now floated over the bar, and added to the terrors of their position.

On board the vessels—now far out at sea—no better state of affairs prevailed. The prisoners having made a desperate effort to escape, were for the most part recaptured, and confined closely in the forecastle for the remaining hours of the night. Determined to die if freedom was denied them, they one and all committed self-slaughter. Some were found hanging, with their feet drawn up, because the room was so low-roofed; others had strangled themselves with ropes fastened to the boarding. This was a melancholy disaster, and the admiral's distress was increased by his fear for the fate of the boat's crew which had gone in search of water. A high raging surf seemed to forbid communication with the land; but a bold pilot braved the danger, swam through the white boiling foam, learned the perilous situation of the people on the beach, and came off to the ships with the melancholy news. To abandon the settlement altogether, to leave it to certain desolation,

The Spaniards brought off on a raft. Two ships abandoned. A.D. 1503.

or to remain with all his force for its protection were the courses open. To the first he was grievously averse; the second he could not dream of; but the third would shut him out for ever from the civilized world. Days of suspense were passed, and Columbus, on a bed of sickness, almost gave way to despair. He declares that at this time a vision appeared to him, commanding that he should hope, and trust in the providence of God. His vigorous mind was buoyed up by this creation of his imagination, and he resolved to prosecute the project when fortune should favour his design. But stormy weather for some days prevented all intercourse with the shore. No boats remained. All had been either staved, swamped, or lost, so that when at length the sea sank into a calm, it was necessary to prepare a great raft. After two days' incessant labour, the stores were brought on board, and the eighty Spaniards embarked. One caravel had stranded, and its dismantled hull remained on shore, a memento of the white man's visit.

Another of the ships was abandoned at Puerto Bello. Two crazy, leaky caravels, therefore, contained the crews—now sadly diminished—of the four vessels which had sailed with Columbus on his fourth and last expedition of

A.D. 1503. Reaches Jamaica. The vessels run aground and roofed.

discovery. Scarcity, incessant disappointment, weariness, and grief, made that voyage no happy one. It was with the utmost labour, and at the most imminent and constant peril, that they steered over the tract of stormy sea that lay between them and their earlier discoveries. At length, having vainly endeavoured to reach San Domingo, the admiral was compelled to put into Puerto Bueno, in Jamaica. The caravels were so riddled with holes, that, had they been far out on the ocean, they must have foundered; as it was, they were run aground to prevent them settling down in the harbour. Those stout sea-castles, therefore, which had been driven by so many storms and waves, were laid alongside in shallow water, and covered with thatched roofs. The guns were disposed with a view to defence, and thus the discoverer of the New World was a prisoner of fortune in the waters of Puerto Bueno.

Arrangements, of an equitable nature, were made with the Jamaica Indians, who engaged to supply the strangers with provisions, which were to be paid for with articles of European manufacture. Columbus pursued his accustomed policy of kindness and conciliation. Indeed, had all his fellow-voyagers, in all their enterprises, resembled him, fewer pages in the

early history of the western world would have been polluted with stains of innocent blood. But the prospect of remaining for ever in this desolate place was cheerless in itself, and to the last degree unwelcome to Columbus, who had already projected many new voyages and a long career of discovery. But how to communicate with Espaniola? No barque, save a light canoe, was at their disposal. And who would peril his life in the voyage? Calling aside one of his companions, Diego Mendez, the admiral asked his opinion. Diego replied that the plan was one of immense danger, and that he knew of no one who would undertake the enterprise. Columbus was silent, but bent a significant look upon the other's face. Mendez then said, that it had passed into a proverb among the crews that *he* was chosen for every adventure of honour. It would be well, therefore, to summon all the people, propose the canoe voyage, "and if all decline it, I will then come forward, and risk my life in your service, as I many times have done."

All shrank from the enterprise, and Mendez, who had purchased a canoe, furnished it with a false keel, strengthened it with boards, payed it with tar, set up a mast and sail, provided it with provisions, and, with one Spaniard and six Indians, entered on this strange voyage.

Landing at the extremity of the island, they were seized by a great number of savages, who carried them away to a distance, but quarreling about the spoils, gave Diego an opportunity to escape. The fate of his companions was never known. Alone in the canoe, he traversed the hundred miles of sea, and reached Puerto Bueno, offering at once to renew his attempt, provided a strong party would accompany him to the shore at the extremity of Jamaica, to protect his final departure. This was agreed to, and Diego Mendez was, in the course of a short time, paddling out to sea, in the direction of San Domingo.

The community in the stranded hulks, having waited long for the return of the canoe, betook themselves to despondence and discontent, as though relief were to be drawn from such sources. Two brothers, Francisco and Diego Porras, fanned the flame of mutiny, inducing numbers to desert and accompany them in a piratical cruize along the shore. The atrocities they committed on the coast-dwellers, and the Indians who accompanied them, almost forbid belief. Columbus, weakened by fatigue, and bowed by sorrow as he was, maintained order in the ships, whilst the elder Porras and his companions revelled in the luxury of debauch

Indians refuse provisions.A. D. 1503.

and rapine. But the natives, learning by familiarity to despise those strangers, whom once they thought divine, and to disregard the trinkets which they formerly prized as priceless treasures, grew weary of supplying provisions. They became exasperated, and the admiral feared that his worst misfortune was to come.

But nature seemed to lend itself to him, or rather he seemed to borrow the weapons of infinite power, to accomplish his designs. To restore the impression of awe which the first sight of those ships had created, it was necessary to devise some scheme. The natives were shrewd enough to perceive the helpless condition of the Spaniards, and, animated by what appears the natural perversion of human nature, took advantage of it.

Suddenly, Columbus, fertile in expedients, summoned together the people and their chiefs. He foresaw a visible eclipse of the moon, and resolved to profit by the event. When the concourse was assembled, he upbraided them with their inhumanity, threatened the vengeance of God on them, and predicted that that very night the moon would first appear of a bloody hue and then altogether lose its light. By some the prophecy was regarded, by many it was ridiculed. But when

A.D. 1503.

The eclipse.

its accomplishment came, fear spread among the people. The blackening heavens seemed to bode a worse and more terrible phenomenon. The caciques thronging to the caravels, implored Columbus to turn away the evil, and forgive the sins of which they believed they were now about to pay the penalty. He promised to intercede with God, and retiring to his cabin, remained there until the darkness began to melt away; then he issued from his seclusion, and promised that the calamities should be averted, if they would continue to supply the strangers with food. The howling savages were overwhelmed with joy, and piled provisions before the gracious admiral.

Meanwhile Porras and the other mutineers were carrying on their cowardly depredations against the people, whom they plundered and insulted with all the insolence of superior power, whenever their own strength was sufficient to the task. Otherwise they cringed humbly to the savages, and sought to gain their favour by exciting their hatred against Columbus. He had come, they said, to make himself king of the Caribee Islands, where he would reign as a ruthless tyrant, until all the native races were enslaved under his authority. Already were many of those beautiful regions, it was declared,

marked with a broad track by his destroying hand, and if he mildly sought to gain influence here, it was gently to bridle the tribes, whom he would afterwards persecute with the bitterest rigour.

Such was the malignity of Porras and his companions. Some of their crimes were of still greater magnitude. Fearing the admiral, and tempted by the smoothness of the sea, they one day embarked in canoes, intending to pass over to a neighbouring island; but, when they were yet not twelve miles from land, a great storm arose, and the Spaniards, fearing for their lives, compelled their Indian companions to leap into the water, and swim. The distance was too great, and the exhausted wretches occasionally clung to the canoes for aid, thus endangering their balance. To secure their own safety, the white men cut off the hands of the poor savages, and stabbed or drowned eighteen of them, as they followed the flotilla, vainly supplicating for mercy.

CHAPTER XIII.

A.D. 1503 to A.D. 1796.

CHAPTER XIII.

EIGHT MONTHS PASS—A SAIL APPEARS—ATTACK ON THE
MUTINEERS—CAPTURE OF PORRAS—TWO VESSELS IN
SIGHT—RELIEF!—OVANDO'S POLICY—HIS ATROCITIES—
FATE OF THE PRINCESS ANACAONDA—COLUMBUS LEAVES
PUERTO BUENO—REACHES SAN DOMINGO—HIS RECEP-
TION—HE SAILS FOR SPAIN—VOYAGE TO EUROPE—LAST
AND GREATEST PERILS—CONDUCT OF THE KING—DISAP-
POINTMENT—INGRATITUDE OF THE COURT—SOLICITA-
TION FOR JUSTICE—KING PHILIP AND QUEEN JUANA—
COLUMBUS'S LAST CODICIL TO HIS WILL—HIS DEATH—BED
—HIS GRIEFS—HIS ASHES—WANDERINGS AFTER DEATH
—FINALLY BURIED IN CUBA—MONUMENT TO HIS MEMORY
—HIS CHARACTER.

CHAPTER XIII.

“And where he trod those bare and savage lands,
A mighty fabric, reared by freedom, stands.”

ANONYMOUS.

“In that erewhile vast wilderness,
Remote from tyrants, wrong, and sore distress,
Where man may breathe, may live free life, nor see
How treacherous power, how barbarous kings, may be.”

THOMAS ROSCOE.

HOPE itself sickened, as eight months passed away without tidings from San Domingo. Patience grew weary of waiting. At length, when a new mutiny was about to break out, a sail was descried, looming over the watery horizon. It did not approach near; but sent a boat into the harbour with a fitch of bacon, a barrel of wine, and a letter of empty compliments from Ovando. These were brought by Escobar—one who was under sentence of death when Bobadilla opened the prison gates. This man triumphed in his insulting mission, put the provisions on board, and retiring from the motionless vessels, conversed with Columbus from a distance, received a letter soliciting help, and returned to the ship. The sails were soon lost to sight, and the great discoverer was once more

desolate—almost hopeless. But his indomitable mind refused to yield even before this new accession of calamity.

Porras and his fellow-mutineers, being one day quartered at an Indian village in the neighbourhood of the harbour, were visited by two ambassadors from Columbus, with offers of reconciliation and pardon. The *adeltando* followed at a distance with fifty men, well armed, and inflamed against this band of turbulent wretches who stirred up the ill-will of the natives. Willing, however, to shew mercy, he sent forward the envoys on their errand of peace; but the rebels replied with defiant insults, drew up in order of battle, and charged, sword in hand, upon the advancing troop. Many were cut down, more were captured. Bartholomew himself slew several. A short but bloody struggle took place. The revolted party was defeated and humbled, while Porras was taken prisoner and placed in confinement.

The mutiny was thus suppressed; but, doubtless, others would have succeeded it, had not the closing of that year of captivity brought with it the joyful sight of two approaching sails. Diego Mendez, after a voyage of toil and peril by sea and an adventurous journey by land, reached San Domingo, caused a ship to be fitted out at the admiral's expense, and prepared to

A.D. 1504.

Ovando's policy. Fate of the Princess Anacaonda.

proceed to his deliverance. Ovando then, shamed into exertion, furnished and equipped another vessel, to be sent on this errand of humanity.

The source of his unmanly neglect lies bare to the view. He enjoyed his post of governor; he loved the sweets of power, and was loth to relinquish a position at once of consequence and profit. The natives, however, chafed under his yoke, and their turbulent discontent was a proof of his maladministration, since the existence of dissatisfaction among large masses of the people is the sure evidence of misrule, though the quiet apathy of the multitude is not, *vice versâ*, a proof of honest government. Among the other acts of Ovando was—the hanging of Anacaonda, the beautiful princess of Xaraguay, with the cruel execution of several chiefs who took part in those bloody and continual intestine wars which were the fruits of Ovando's administration. But the weal of the subject is seldom consistent with the will of the despotic ruler. The settlers and the natives both were injured by the policy of this governor, whose absolute sway was, however, of brief duration. When the account of his atrocities reached Spain, Isabella—then on her death-bed—elicited a promise from her husband that he would recall Ovando, which he did—after an interval of four

Columbus leaves Porto Bueno. He sails for Spain.

A.D. 1504.

years. The king was eight-and-forty months in collecting courage to keep his vow.

Columbus left Puerto Bueno on the 28th of June, and on the 13th of August reached San Domingo. Ovando was troubled for the consequences of his conduct. Receiving the admiral with all conceivable courtesy, inviting him to lodge in his house, and treating him honourably as a guest, he endeavoured thus to efface the recollection of his past brutality. The magnanimous navigator suppressed all resentment, kindly received the governor's attentions, and made no strictures on his policy, until he set Porras at liberty, and arrogated the supreme authority to himself, refusing to concede even a share of it to him to whom it belonged by all the titles of justice.

Columbus then, on the 17th of September, embarked for Spain; to leave for ever—a ruined, deserted man—the vast region which forms his monument, and which, so long as the earth shall endure, will carry down the name of its discoverer, through the storms and tides of time, through whatever revolutions may convulse the world, through all ages, through centuries of peace or war, until the confusion of created things. Columbus has written his name on every western shore, and even the unwrinkling

A.D. 1504.

Voyage to Europe. Last and greatest perils.

sea, in every wave, is full of his memory. Witnessing the departure of those gigantic vessels, that periodically steam their certain way over the three thousand miles of ocean, which roll between these islands and that continent, we are sometimes led to paint the contrast between their confident conductors through the now familiar waters of the west, and those little barques, manned by Doubt and steered by daring Adventure, that put forth, three centuries and a half ago, to sail beyond the boundaries of the known world, into a region all darkness and mystery, to explore a waste of heaving billows, that perhaps rolled upon the confines of creation.

His last voyage was full of peril. Seven hundred leagues he sailed without a mainmast, in a vessel which could scarcely hold together, and at length reached Spain. He was now old. The gout severely afflicted him. The queen, his patroness, was in declining health, and the king, withdrawing himself within the narrow circle of his own selfishness, refused to acknowledge the merit of the illustrious man who crowned his reign with all its greatest glory. When Bobadilla had replaced the admiral as governor of Hispaniola, he took possession of his house and his property: and the navigator had endured losses which had never been re-

paired, grievances without redress, and insults never wiped away; and now, when he sought restitution, mean excuses were employed to drive him from the doors of justice. Ferdinand was royal in his gratitude, and allowed the discoverer of the New World to drag on the wretched remnant of his years in hopeless and degrading penury. He was a beggar when he entered on his mission; he was a beggar when he had accomplished his triumph. The reader of Washington Irving's beautiful work will find the details of his miserable fortune far more fully described than it is possible to describe them here. I have rudely sketched the life of Columbus;—he has unrolled a panoramic view of his career minutely and artistically painted. "Little have I profited," says the navigator, "by twenty years of service, with such toils and perils, since at present I do not own a roof in Spain. If I desire to eat or sleep, I have no resort but an inn; and, for the most times, have not wherewithal to pay the bill." Thus he was left in want, and his seamen—hardy companions of his perils—were inhumanly left in poverty, cheated of the fruits of their long and laborious service.

As long as Isabella lived, Columbus built his hopes on her; but she died, and the fabric fell.

A.D. 1504.

Solicitation for justice. King Philip and Queen Juana.

Determined once more to appear at court, he applied for permission to ride a mule, which the king had interdicted, lest their general use should depreciate the breed of horses! This privilege graciously granted, he went with Fernando his second son, and entered Segovia meekly mounted on the humble beast.

His solicitation was unceasing. He was not avaricious, and only sought the just and honourable reward, which is the ambition of every honest man, and the right of every great public servant. Lavish promises were the answers to his petition.

King Philip and Queen Juana, the daughter of Isabella, arrived just then from Flanders to mount the throne of Castille. Bartholomew went in the train of Ferdinand's court to meet them. He hoped that they, at least, would accord justice to his brother. But they lent no ear to his petition, and Columbus, feeling that the infirmities of age, the accumulated fatigues of his life, and the consciousness of ungrateful treatment, were rapidly wearing away the remnant of his strength, added a last codicil to his will—a document whereon his charitable, generous, and provident character is legibly impressed. He occupied some time in drawing up papers of advice for his children.

Columbus's death-bed. His ashes. Finally buried in Cuba. A.D. 1796.

On the 20th of May 1506, he lay on his death-bed. Sixty years of toil, the hardships and privations of his voyages, the sorrows he had endured, and the wrongs he had suffered, had worn out this noble frame, and broken this manly spirit. Crushed by the pressure of disappointment, Columbus died. Piety smoothed his passage to the grave. "In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum", were the words which preceded his last sigh.

The ashes of the dead were destined to be as wandering as the career of living man. Buried first in Valladolid, thence transported and interred with the remains of his son Diego, at Seville; thence carried to the chapel of the cathedral in St. Domingo, they were finally laid to rest in the cathedral of the Havannah, Cuba. This last ceremony was enacted with infinite pomp on the 15th of January 1796, when Columbus had mouldered in his coffin for a hundred and ninety years. Ferdinand, when he had lost the greatest man in his kingdom, raised a monument to his memory, with the laconic inscription—

"Por Castilla y por Leon
Nuevo mundo hallo Colon."

"For Castille and for Leon, Columbus found a new world"; "a record", says Washington

Irving, "of the greatest debt of gratitude due to the discoverer, which the monarch had so faithlessly neglected to discharge."

Of Christopher Columbus may be repeated what was said of another who lived a beggar, and was honoured after death with a marble monument:—He asked for bread, and the king gave him a stone. Ferdinand thus recorded the greatness of the discoverer, and at the same time trophied his own baseness before mankind. Such was the royal reward of a magnificent achievement; but it is, perhaps, vain to speculate on the probable welcome of Columbus in the first instance, and his treatment in the last, had he applied to Spain for encouragement and looked to Spain for reward. History, even when most radiant, reveals only the dim outlines of the past. We look upon the landscapes of departed time, not by a light like that of the sun, but by the glare of a torch, that leaves vast shadowy spaces unrevealed. Few can comprehend the features of the present time, and still more difficult is it to discern clearly, through the dusky twilight of historical records, the form and colour of the past.

Consequently, we can never certainly know the temper and the condition of Spain at the period when Columbus entered the country in

the course of his pilgrimage from court to court. It could not have been more disheartening than it was, and would, probably, have been better. Had the nation possessed the power, he would, in all likelihood, have inoculated them with the inclination to pursue this noble enterprise. But the despotic dominion of the court was wielded only for the selfish purposes of ambition. King and grandees were equally giddy on the elevation of their authority. Power, like wine, is an inebriating and inflammatory draught; but as the whole vintage of the world could not intoxicate its entire population, so power, justly shared among the people, could never be wielded to the detriment of the commonwealth, as by a mad and drunken few. In Spain, however, the honour of the country was at the foot of the throne, and Ferdinand was barely dissuaded not to spurn it from him, as the Portuguese monarch had already done.

Boldness in the conception of an idea; courage in project; soaring thought and energy in action; charity, piety, and humanity; justice, magnanimity, and unquailing bravery—these were some of the mental and moral qualities of Christopher Columbus. He was grand in the plan of his enterprises; unwearied in their prosecution. He was dignified in power, merciful

A. D. 1796.

Columbus's character.

in conquest, vigorous in conflict, benign to the weak and poor, magnanimous in suffering, religious and patient in distress. Grateful to those who served, he bore no malice to those who wronged him. Towards the king only—who treated him with an ingratitude so base—was he ever bitter in the utterance of a reproach; and if some of his actions in the New World appear of equivocal humanity and equity, we must not, in judging of them, apply the standard of our own civilization to measure the conduct of a conqueror in the fifteenth century.

Columbus would seem soon to have forgotten his wife, and embarked on another stream, when the channel of her affections was dried up by death. This is a blemish on his nobility of character; but of this, as of every other equivocal action of his, we may say, things worse by a thousand degrees have been perpetrated and repeated by men whom the world has worshipped while they lived, and canonized as great when they were dead.

Try the actions of Columbus by the test of the times in which he lived, and it will be seen that, so far from being a cruel, an avaricious, or a mean-souled man, he was preeminent, among a barbarous people, in barbarous times, for his humane and generous character.

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Columbus's character.

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Show him among the countless heroes of the world's idolatrous veneration, and he will appear as snow to scarlet in the comparison. That he ever did evil is a debateable point, while they, for the greatest part, are famous for nothing so much as for their crimes against God and man.

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