

**St. Francis taming the wolf of Gubbio.
A figure of his influence on society.**

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PEREZ AND COLUMBUS

OR

THE FRANCISCANS IN AMERICA

BY

Rev. FRANCIS DENT



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DEDICATION.

TO THE MEMORY OF MR. AND MRS. NICHOLAS DEVEREUX
DEVOTED CHILDREN OF THE FAITH, ZEALOUS FOR THE
CAUSE OF RELIGION, EVER REVERENTIAL TO THE
LORD'S ANOINTED, KIND IN WORD AND DEED, FOUNDERS
OF CHURCHES AND PATRONS OF CHARITABLE INSTITU-
TIONS, TO WHOSE UNTIRING MUNIFICENCE ST. BONA-
VENTURE'S COLLEGE, ALLEGANY, NEW YORK, OWES
ITS BEGINNING, THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE GRATEFULLY
DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

The appearance of a new religious order in the Church is considered a mark of the divine favor. There is some good to be done, some wrong to be righted or some evil to be uprooted; and the new institute is an instrument in the hands of Christ's Vicar to bring about Heaven's designs. The beginning of such undertakings is often veiled in obscurity, for holy souls are wont to conceal their good deeds from the gaze of men. Self-diffidence, too, is a characteristic of the saints. Charity leads them onward, but humility holds them back, until Divine Providence or the voice of the Church gives the signal to advance.

In the beginning of his conversion, Francis of Assisi thought only of his own salvation. This, indeed, is man's most important affair; and to neglect it, for any other consideration, is the acme of folly. He went about doing good, but he had no fixed purpose, except to secure God's friendship. At length, Heaven's will is revealed. While praying in the church of St. Damian, a voice said to him, clearly and distinctly: *Francis, go and rebuild my house.* The command might have had a twofold meaning, but he took it in its literal sense. He did not realize that he was called to succor the Holy Church of God; but he began to repair

the material temple, which seemed about to tumble down. His real mission was, however, soon defined.

In that epoch the condition of the Church was most deplorable. Irreligion was defiant, heresy was rampant and frequent wars killed souls as well as bodies. Greed of wealth, thirst for power, a disregard of justice and an absence of charity were the curse of the age. Hell seemed about to prevail against the Fair Spouse of Jesus Christ; but He did not fail in His promises. At the opportune moment, two men appeared on the scene; and these two men were Dominic de Guzman and Francis of Assisi. Neither dreamed of a mission, but it soon became apparent that to each was assigned a part in a providential plan. Religion was to be revived, society was to be saved and each was to have a share in the work. Each founded a religious order, and so well did they succeed that, after the lapse of three centuries, Pope Sixtus IV compared them to two trumpets, with which the Lord called His people to the Gospel banquet.

Disciples gathered around Francis, so that in his lifetime his followers were numbered by the thousand. One of the most distinguished was St. Anthony of Padua, who is justly styled a thaumaturgus, on account of his wonderful works. He was a profound theologian and a great preacher. He also wrought many miracles, and he

effected conversions without number. Anthony became the first professor of theology in the order, and he received from Francis the injunction that, in his search for scientific truth, he should not extinguish the spirit of holy prayer. From that commission sprung all the schools and scholars and doctors that made the order so famous. At the time of which we speak, a course of philosophy and theology embraced a knowledge of every science; and the Franciscans were well versed in all. Every department of literature, and all that was sublime or beautiful in art came within the reach of the humble Friar Minor. They taught in the best universities of Europe and many a famous doctor, like St. Thomas of Aquin, was the disciple of a Franciscan master.

The missionary spirit was developed in the order from its very foundation. The children of Francis went as Gospel envoys to the most distant regions, and they necessarily became travelers, navigators and explorers. It was, also, requisite to cultivate the sciences, for they had to instruct the ignorant and come in contact with the most learned of every nation. Their mission was to lead men from error, and bring them to a knowledge of the true God. They had to appear in the palaces of kings, in the halls of the learned and among savage tribes. For the good, too, of religion they sometimes acted a part not entirely in keeping with their calling; as when St. John of

Capistrano and St. Laurence of Brindisi, cross in hand, led Christian hosts to victory against infidel armies.

Father John Perez was a worthy member of this illustrious order. His was a grand mission, and he proved equal to the occasion that called him forth. He and Columbus were chosen by Divine Providence to find a way on the pathless ocean to the land without a name. They had a common purpose, and they were the principal figures in a providential plan. To them we owe the discovery of America, and one could not have succeeded without the other. The undertaking was entirely Catholic, inspired by Catholic faith, revealed by Catholic genius, supported by a Catholic government and made a success by the bravery of Catholic hearts. The grand design was not less Franciscan, for as the great historian Cesare Cantù aptly remarks: « Columbus always found among the children of St. Francis that aid which was constantly denied him by kings ». The man of Providence cannot be separated from the Seraphic Order. He found therein a shelter, encouragement, assistance to carry out his design, comfort when persecution came, a peaceful death and, in the end, an honored grave.

The purpose of the following pages is to present to American readers the Discovery of America in its Catholic and Franciscan aspect; namely, as an undertaking entirely Catholic, and

not the least among the glories of the Seraphic Order. I have to acknowledge my obligations to the lamented Father Pamfilo da Magliano, who really inspired this work. One of the brightest lights of the Franciscan order, and an Italian like Columbus, his character bore a striking resemblance to that of Perez. After a distinguished career in his native land, he spent several of his most useful years on the American mission. Like everything Franciscan, he was thoroughly Catholic; and this fair young land won the enthusiastic admiration of his great soul. He thirsted to propagate the glories of his order, and, with that intent, he was engaged in writing a history of the same, when he died. To collect reliable material, he visited many of the libraries and archives of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Belgium, England and Ireland. It was my privilege to accompany him on some of those journeys, as a child listening to the words of wisdom falling from the lips of a beloved father. The documents and books that came within my reach were the fruit of his labor.

I commend my humble efforts to Mary the Star of the Sea, who was so often invoked during the long and perilous voyage of Columbus from Palos to the New World. She calmed the seas as well as the violent passions of the disheartened and frenzied sailors. On her the great navigator constantly relied with a childlike confidence. She made the skies bright and the winds propitious;

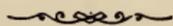
and she led him safely to the unknown land. Under her guidance he passed many a dark night and many a gloomy period, until she smilingly welcomed him to his eternal reward.

May St. Francis accept this little volume, as a tribute of love to him and his order, and may he obtain for it a favorable recognition at the throne of Jesus Christ. Pray, dear reader, for the Church and the Seraphic Order. Pray, also, that you and I may find a place near Mary and Francis in the abode of eternal bliss.



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PEREZ AND COLUMBUS

OR THE FRANCISCANS IN AMERICA

CHAPTER I.

La Rabida.

Before the Revolution of 1834, Spain was enriched with several flourishing provinces of the Franciscan Order; but none was more illustrious than that of Andalusia. It was justly famous for its schools, its holy abodes, its learned men and zealous missionaries, who bore the light of Christ's gospel to Pagan lands. One of the convents of that province became, especially, renowned as the scene of the events which we are about to narrate.

Three miles from Palos, a place of considerable commercial activity, a picturesque promontory covered with pine trees hung over the sea; and on its summit there stood, like a dove-cot, a little convent dedicated to the Queen of Angels, under the title of our Lady of *La Rabida*. It was built on the ruins of a Moorish temple, and it had been the abode of Franciscan friars, from the year 1261. Nothing could be seen from the ocean except the

belfry, and it well deserved the title of *Rabida*, which signifies, in the Arabic tongue, a solitary place. It was held in great veneration, on account of the singular beauty of the location, and the odor of sanctity that came from its hallowed interior.

A very old wall, triangular in form, enclosed the hill, which served as a pedestal to the convent. In all probability, it was designed as a rampart against the Moors, in the days of their invasions. Beneath grew the aloe and thyme, the myrtle and palm. The simple little garden bore no mark of wealth; but it contained some cedar and orange trees, as well as an abundance of grapes mingling their tender shoots with a hedge of fragrant flowers. From the garden a path covered with laurel and thyme led to a chapel among the pines dedicated to St. Francis.

There was one thing that struck the eye of every visitor to *La Rabida*. It was an irregular terrace above the convent, which served as an astronomical observatory. From this point, there was a good view of the Valley of the Guadalquivir interspersed with tributary streams. The mountains of Portugal, with the walled towns and towering cities of the neighboring provinces were, also, discernible. Towards the sea, the sight was lost in the immensity of the far distant West. All was peace. Perpetual silence reigned in that charming retreat. No sound was heard except the singing

of birds and the devout psalmody of the friars. It was a fitting abode for men enamored with poverty, tired of the world and anxious only for Heaven's joys. Nothing could entice them to *La Rabida* except the solitude of the place, nature's sweet calm, recollection of spirit and the view of the endless ocean, a sensible image of the greatness of God.

The little church was cruciform, and almost without ornament. It had three altars, and above there was a very pretty cupola. The adjoining convent was of the same style of architecture. It contained about twenty small rooms, besides the kitchen, refectory and library. All were in keeping with the rigid poverty of the inmates. The library was stored with choice works, and those of the Franciscan doctors were conspicuous. One almost felt the presence of St. Anthony of Padua, Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, Scotus, Roger Bacon, Lyranus and other illustrious sons of the Seraphic Patriarch.

Within the church there rested on the principal altar an image of the Blessed Virgin, which, according to popular tradition, was discovered in a miraculous manner. Some fishermen came, one day, from Palos; and having cast their nets great was their surprise, in drawing them forth, when they found on the sand a beautiful marble statue of our Heavenly Queen. It is well known that Spain had been, for a long time, disturbed by Moorish invasions; and

it is possible that the statue was hidden in the sea, to save it from sacrilegious insult. It is, also, possible that it was carried out by the waves, or the place of its concealment forgotten.

As soon as found, it was carried in triumph to the Convent of *La Rabida*. So many were the favors obtained through the intercession of the Mother of God that the sanctuary grew in popular esteem; and the little church received the new title of our Lady of Miracles. Here people came, at early morning and after their daily toil, to pray at Mary's altar, and lay at her feet their votive offerings. Here, too, the weary pilgrim refreshed his spirit before knocking at the door of the convent, to receive food and shelter. The mariner, also, going out to sea cast a loving glance at the belfry; and, reverently uncovering his head, he breathed a prayer for favorable winds to Mary Star of the Sea. In fine, the tempest tossed sailor, returning from distant lands, looked, with ardent desire, for a glimpse of the sacred spot, and thanked the kind Providence that brought him safe to home and loved ones.

CHAPTER II.

Perez.

Among Franciscan friars, each community is usually styled a convent, and the local superior is called the guardian. In the year 1484, the Convent of *La Rabida* had for its superior a man whom history cannot ignore. He was Father John Perez, a native of Marchena, an ancient city of Seville. As a child, his sweet disposition, love of study and self-denial won all hearts. His soul was adorned with virtue, his passions were under control and his will was guided by divine grace. At an early age, he hearkened to the voice of God, and became an humble Friar Minor. The year of novitiate was passed in the Convent of St. Eulalie, about three miles from Marchena. Having made his religious vows, he went through a course of philosophy and theology under able masters. So great was his progress that he soon ranked among the great men of the order, and he bore the reputation of being a zealous and exemplary young priest.

He did not confine himself to the sacred sciences, for talent and inclination led him to literature, as well as to speculative studies. As a true priest, he grasped at everything knowable, which might be useful in rendering the world happier and men

more pleasing to God. In a short time, he acquired fame for literary genius; and he became proficient in geography, cosmography, astronomy and mathematics. He was, also, familiar with the works of Ptolemy and Strabo.

It is true that history is not always either just or impartial, and men of real merit are sometimes forgotten. Perez suffered in this regard, but it seems the design of Providence to rescue his memory from oblivion. Roselly de Lorgues, Cesare Cantù, Marcellino da Civezza, Washington Irving, Geraldini, Oviedo, Pamfilo da Magliano, Padre Agostino D'Osimo, Herrera, Lopez de Gomorra and others bear witness to his mental and moral greatness. They declare that his extensive learning and varied attainments cannot be questioned. Fervent piety did not lessen his ardor for secular studies, and close application to the exact sciences did not interfere with his success in literature.

Notwithstanding his love of retirement, he was capable of the tenderest friendship; but his friends were worthy of him, and they were literary or scientific men. One of those was Garzia Hernandez, a physician of Palos, whom he held in great esteem. Don Garzia was a man of a generous nature, of lofty sentiments and a close student. These kindred spirits passed many an hour, in conversation agreeable to both and useful to their fellow men.

Father Perez had the happy faculty of making himself all to all. He was able to entertain great

minds, but the poor and the ignorant felt at home in his presence. He was, peculiarly, the sailor's friend; and every returning seaman felt it a duty to call on the Guardian of *La Rabida*, to tell his own experience, as well as to bring the news of distant shores. In this way, he became acquainted with all the recent discoveries, and he was kept informed on a subject dear to his heart. Not a moment of his time was wasted. When he went from his convent home, it was to do good, and bestow on all the fruit of his priestly zeal. He knew how to heal the wounds of sorrow-stricken hearts, and every one called him the father of the poor. It is not wonderful that the fame of this ideal priest went abroad.

One day, Father Perez was surprised at the receipt of a letter, which bore the royal seal of Castile. It was from the queen herself, who commanded him to appear before her without delay. The mandate was distasteful, because he loved his convent home; but the beautiful character of Isabella was too well known to occasion any evil forebodings. Her devotion to the Seraphic Order was, also, a matter of common repute; and it proved a glory to herself, as well as a blessing to the Spanish nation. Doubtless this same devotion prompted her to call the humble Franciscan, Cardinal Ximenes, to be a light to his country and one of her greatest prime ministers.

Perez obeyed the summons. When he appeared before Isabella, she gazed on him in silence. She had to admire the gravity of his deportment and his intellectual bearing. His prompt replies to every question increased the queen's esteem; and she determined to profit by his wise counsels. Nature did not fit the humble friar to be a courtier, and Isabella the Catholic had too much respect for his order to retain him in such a capacity. She made him her confessor, that is, the depositary of her secrets and her guide in every important undertaking.

Life at court was not agreeable to the man, who passed his happiest days at *La Rabida*. He was not one of those who imagine that a royal palace is an abode of bliss. He longed for his dear solitude and the poverty of his lonely cell. Many and vain were his entreaties to be allowed to return, but the queen would not part with her venerated spiritual guide. At length, his prayers were heard, but another Franciscan had to take his place. This was Father Ferdinand de Talavera, who, afterwards, became Archbishop of Granada.

Perez hastened to his beloved *Rabida*, where he devoted himself more assiduously to his favorite studies. He loved astronomy and astronomical observations, because they revealed the greatness of God. Every spare moment was passed in the rudely constructed observatory. There he was not disturbed except by the murmuring of the

ocean, the rustling trees and the singing of birds. Everything spoke of God. Often, on a clear night, he fixed his gaze on the distant West, saying to himself: *Is that ocean without limit? Are there not other lands beyond its confines? Are there not men in those distant regions made to the image and likeness of God?* Night after night, he took in the same prospect. Night after night, he repeated the same questions. He was conversant with all the discoveries of his age, and it was an age of discovery. Did not a benign Providence single out Perez to be the precursor or, at least, the benefactor, the friend, the guide and the hope of Columbus?

CHAPTER III.

Meeting of Perez and Columbus.

On a beautiful evening in the summer of 1484, just as the Sun was disappearing behind the hills of Portugal and the Moon began to shed her silvery rays on the Eastern horizon, Father Perez and Garzia Hernandez were walking, in animated conversation, along the portico of the Convent of *La Rabida*. In the fervor of his discourse, pointing towards the sea, with his countenance glowing, the priest said to the doctor: « Don Garzia! many rational creatures, beyond that ocean, deprived of the knowledge of God and far from the society of other men, are leading lives little better than beasts! but God is good. He will extend His mercy to those poor souls made to His own image and redeemed by His precious blood. I feel that, before long, we shall clasp to our bosom our long lost brethern, who are as numerous as the stars of Heaven ».

Don Garzia could not grasp the sublime prophetic thought spoken by Perez. While waiting for an explanation, he perceived a stranger approaching the door of the convent, where the poor usually received alms. He appeared to be about forty years of age. His countenance was sad, and he had, by the hand, a little boy as pale and

emaciated as himself. He asked the porter for a piece of bread and a drink of water in the name of God. Don Garzia judged from his accent that he might be a foreigner; while his dignified bearing, his intellectual countenance and his poor garments spoke of some mystery. The attention of Perez being called, he went to receive the dignified mendicant, who thus addressed him:

« Father, I am an Italian directing my steps towards Castile, where I wish to lay before the king and queen an important secret; but I am so tired that I cannot go farther to-night. Hence I crave your hospitality in the name of God ». The Father Guardian took him by the hand, and thus spoke to him:

« Brother, I bid you welcome among us. No one knocks at the door of this convent without receiving assistance according to his needs and our poverty. We eat the bread of Providence. There is enough for all. You will not find here any luxuries, but you will experience fraternal charity ». The stranger entered. His name was Christopher Columbus, and the little boy, who accompanied him, was his son Diego.

We have now reached the principal point of our story. How can we account for the unexpected coming of Columbus to the Convent of *La Rabida*? Two different answers are given by historians. Some attribute it to mere chance, a very convenient excuse for all who do not wish to enter into in-

trinsic reasons; while others recur to that wonderful Providence which directs and rules all things. It is certain that the wife of Columbus had a sister married to a Spaniard named Muliar, and that he was journeying to the home of the latter, where he intended to leave his little son, before proceeding to the royal palace, or until he settled his affairs. But why did he not go direct from the commercial city of Palos, and not wander three miles out of his way to *La Rabida*, visible on no side, because surrounded by a diminutive pine forest? Here we see the guiding hand of God. Columbus, a wanderer, without means, in a strange land, and ignorant of the language, is led to rest at a place where he finds a man prepared to receive him, able to comprehend his theories and worthy to confirm him in his grand designs. Let us take up the thread of our story.

Having entered the convent they went to the dining room, where they partook of a frugal but hearty supper. Little Diego was then conducted to his much desired place of rest, while the Father Guardian led Columbus to the terrace, over the convent, to refresh his spirits after the long journey. At the sight of the ocean rendered more sublime by the rays of the Moon, shining as a queen amid numberless stars, those kindred spirits understood each other; and a few words were sufficient to arouse mutual confidence. Columbus unbosomed himself to the hospitable child of St. Francis in the following manner:

« I was born at Genoa of respectable parents, who loved me tenderly, but I remained under their care only ten years and a few months. While yet a child, I was sent to Pavia to be initiated into the sciences. From my earliest years, a secret inspiration of Divine Providence led me to love geography and navigation above all other studies. At fourteen years of age, I was placed on a Genoese vessel, which sailed along the Adriatic and I took part in the expedition of John of Anjou, Duke of Calabria, who attempted to regain his kingdom from the power of Aragon. Having failed as a man-of-war's-man I became a trader, and I went through the Grecian Isles and Asia Minor. Tiring of a mercantile life, I again took up arms in the service of Portugal, and I had a part in a fierce engagement with Venetian galleys near Cape St. Vincent. The conflict lasted an entire night, and both sides were of equal valor. During the battle my ship took fire, and I fell into the sea, where I was cast about for two hours. Saved, as if by miracle, I reached Lisbon, where I found my brother Bartholomew and some other Genoese. Love detained me at the capital of Portugal, and I married the daughter of a distinguished navigator, who had no other dower than her father's charts. These gave a new flame to my predominant passion. God blessed our union, and our first born is the little boy, who enjoys with me your kind hospitality to-night. As if dreaming, I often thought that I

could find a way to the Indies through the West, and that millions of souls in distant Asia might be called to Christianity. This sublime idea took possession of me, and agitates me even now. As I sailed along the coast of Guinea and the Azores, I frequently went away from my companions, to meditate alone on the subject dearest to my heart. Oh! how often did the majestic voice of the waves unite with the internal desire of my soul, and tell me of the marvelous things reserved for me to discover! But how can I cross the boundless ocean alone, and without human aid? I returned to my beloved Genoa, the mistress of many seas, but I obtained nothing. I tried Venice, but the Republic of *San Marco* could not understand my designs. I asked assistance from King John of Portugal, and he called a council of the most distinguished cosmographers of his kingdom to examine my project; but they declared it absurd, and I was publicly treated as a visionary and a fool. To condemn an undertaking is not, however, to judge it; and, to the surprise of all, John gave the subject his earnest attention. I was again called by order of the king and my plans being unfolded he promised his assistance; but alas! that I should live to experience deceit in a Catholic court. A vessel was sent under an experienced captain, ostensibly with provisions to the Isles of Cape Verde, but in reality to seek in the West the lands described by me. God did not, however, favor

the treachery; for, after a few days of navigation towards the West, a storm arose, which forced her to return. My sorrows were not yet over, because I soon lost my wife, the companion of my sufferings, the confidante of my secrets, the light of my heart and the mother of my beloved boy. I did not, however, despair. I turned, anew, to my beloved Genoa, but a second refusal awaited me. Casting a rapid glance at all Christian nations, Spain seemed destined for the glory of carrying out the designs of Providence. Embracing for the last time my aged father, I bid adieu to my native land; and I came to Spain, where I find myself a homeless wanderer led by Providence to this abode of peace and Christian charity ».

The reader may well imagine the thoughts which filled the soul of Perez on hearing the sad tale of Columbus. It was not the time to discuss the project so dear to both. Nothing but words of consolation came from his lips. The heart of the great Franciscan was conquered. Bathed in tears, he extended his arms, and pressed to his bosom his mysterious guest. There is for man a moment so full of consolation that every vestige of past suffering disappears. This is when the wounds of the heart are laid bare to a prudent friend, who applies to them the healing balm of well timed sympathy. If you, dear reader, have had such an experience, you can understand how the homeless wanderer was cheered by the words

of Perez. Certainly the generous hospitality found at *La Rabida* had its influence over the entire future of Columbus; but that hospitality was not strange, for it was merely the outcome of the charity of Jesus Christ proclaimed in His gospel.

John Perez was truly a great man. A gentle soul was covered with the rough Franciscan habit. Nothing had occurred to embitter his spirit. Age, profound studies, monastic austerities, the rigid poverty of his order and the discharge of priestly duties combined to expand his heart and sweeten his disposition. Moreover, there was between him and Columbus a conformity of sentiments. On the night of that interview, there was no sleep for him. Again and again, his heart went out to the mysterious Italian, whose words he heard anew, whose sorrows wounded him, and his eyes were continually bathed in tears. He could not help repeating: «How similar are our ideas, our thoughts, our projects and our hopes! There is one who thinks with me that there are other lands and other people beyond the ocean; but who was first to conceive this thought?

The weary wanderer slept soundly in the little cell assigned to him', but he was an early riser. The birds announcing a new born day aroused him from his slumbers. The silvery Moon is gliding from the firmament, and the morning star appears. The Sun dawns in the East, and gradually arising enlivens all nature. Columbus remains awhile in

prayer, contemplating the greatness of God and the mysterious dispositions of His Providence. A knock is heard at the door; it opens and the Father Guardian enters. The door being carefully closed, the two friends sit down together. Perez speaks of his restless night and his presentiment that there are other lands and other people beyond the ocean. He speaks, too, of his astronomical observations, and of his having constructed the terrace for that sole purpose. Many a night, said he, did I ask the waves and the stars whether my apprehension was correct, and their united answer was ever in the affirmative. I thought, however, that I was the only living being filled with this idea; but, now, I am not alone. Oh! mysterious disposition of God's Benign Providence! Heaven sent you here. You are my companion. We shall work together, that Christ's Kingdom may be extended, and that the light of faith may be shed on numberless unhappy souls enveloped in darkness.

From that moment a mysterious friendship united these two favored souls, and their friendship continued until death. One of the grandest conceptions of human genius was thus developed, in an humble Franciscan convent, with an enthusiasm worthy of the sublimest faith. In that convent the rotundity of the earth was implicitly believed, and the possibility of reaching unknown lands was established, while colleges and universities deemed such theories the

creation of disordered brains. Oh! how many other grand conceptions were thus matured in the shadow of such a convent!

Perez persuaded Columbus to remain at *La Rabida*, until a favorable opportunity presented itself for an audience with the queen. The disturbed condition of the country, on account of continued war with the Moors, rendered the undertaking difficult; and it was thought better to wait until spring. In the meantime the two friends considered the means for executing their design, and little Diego took up his abode and studies at *La Rabida*.



CHAPTER IV.

Life of Columbus at La Rabida.

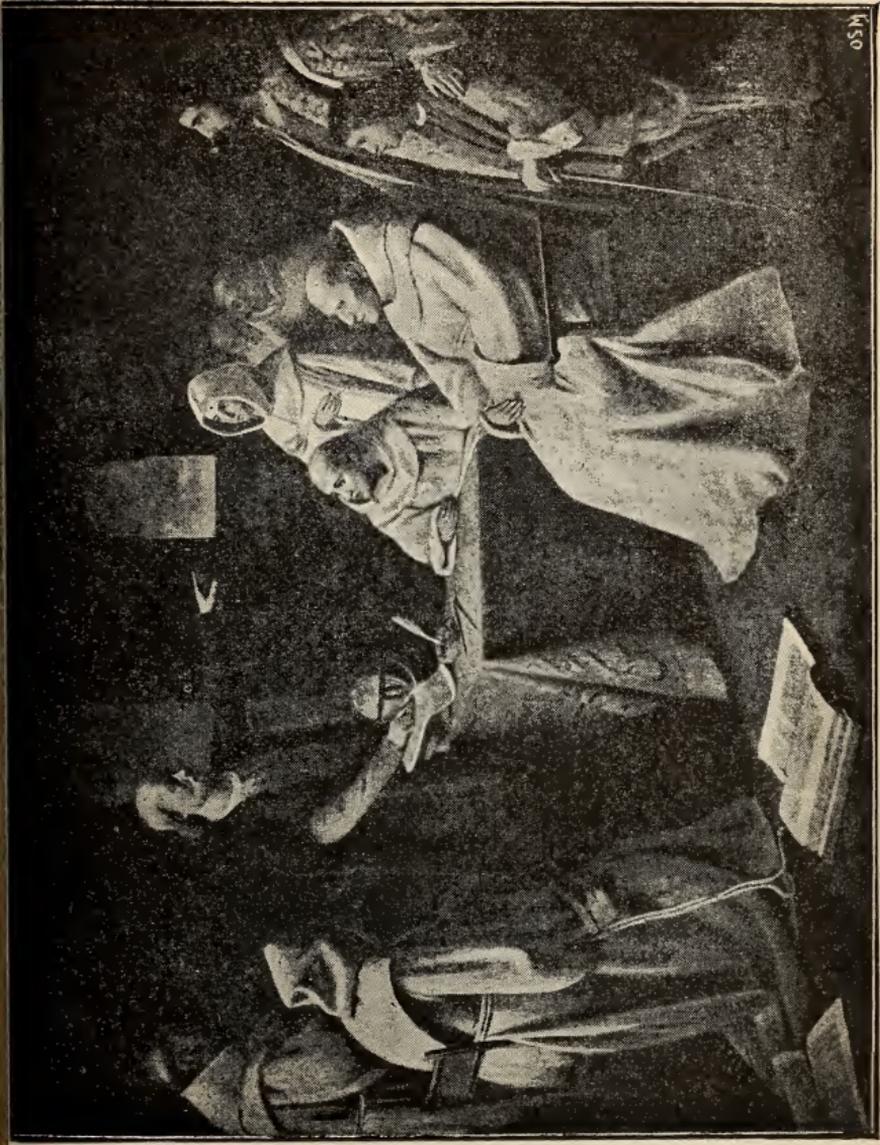
When Columbus knocked at the door of the Convent of *La Rabida*, he did not fear refusal, because Franciscan hospitality is proverbial; and it never fails, while the children of the sweet saint of Assisi cherish the spirit of their father. It is true that he did not expect a great deal. He was hungry and tired and heart-sore, but a crust of bread and a corner to rest his weary limbs were sufficient for his immediate needs. Contrary to his expectations, he found in the abode of poverty that which was denied him at the palaces of kings. A patient hearing was accorded, and he received that sympathy, which nerves the heart for arduous undertakings.

It may interest the reader to know how Columbus passed his time at *La Rabida*. The story is full of inexpressible beauty, and we shall keep as closely as possible in the footsteps of Roselly de Lorgues. Being relieved of all anxiety in regard to the daily wants of himself and Diego, he was free to give his thoughts to the affairs of his soul, as well as to his beloved project. He entered on the path, which leads to Christian perfection; and by fervent prayer he sought purity of soul, that he might be a worthy instrument for the accom-

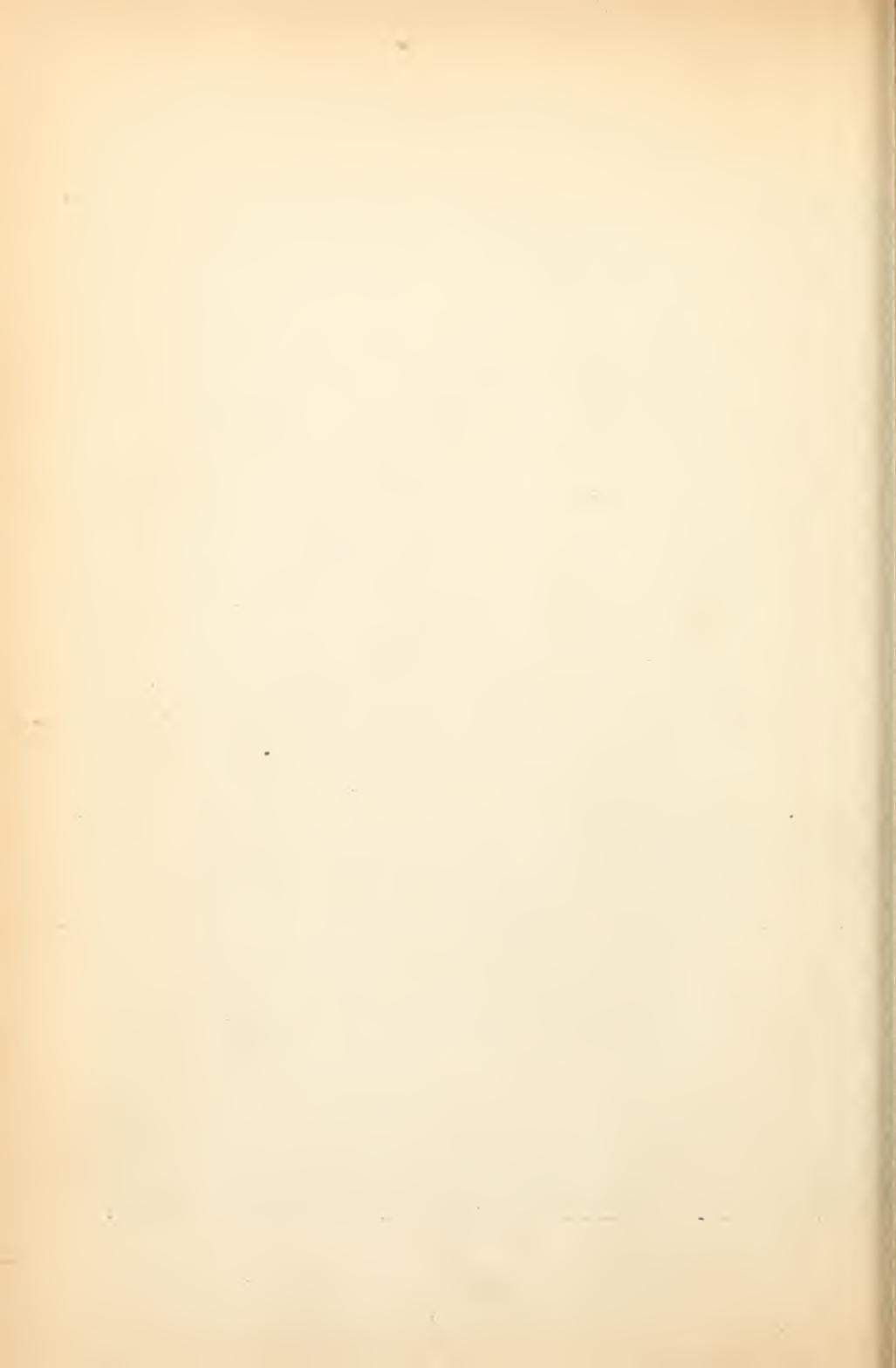
plishment of Heaven's designs. He led the life of a friar, and he took part in all the duties of the community. He imbibed the spirit of St. Francis; and he loved his rule, his habit and his children.

Much of his time was passed in the library, studying the Holy Scripture and learned commentators. He became familiar with the works of St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose and St. Isidore. He was charmed with the subtle reasoning and convincing arguments of Scotus, as well as the profound erudition of Lyranus; but he found a special delight in the Angel of the Schools and the Seraphic Doctor. These precious moments were not all given to speculative studies. Christ was his great teacher, the Cross his school and the internal voice of the God-Man better than books.

Father Perez loved in Columbus the man whose genius he admired; but he loved far more the simple faith of his spiritual son, which gave a charm to his vast erudition and grand conceptions. Why should he not admire the wonderful genius whose thoughts were vaster than the known world, while he knelt in the humble confession of his sins? No one can fathom the love which a true priest has for the erring soul, repentant and sincere in the sacred tribunal. Perez read in the profundity of the soul of Columbus its rare beauty; and he had to admire the great mind adorned with such hu-



Columbus at "La Rabida,"



mility. He saw in him all the signs of a providential election, he became interested in his destiny and he conceived an affection for him which could not be extinguished by the opposition of men or the world's frowns.

Such was the life of the immortal Genoese, during his first stay with the Franciscans of *La Rabida*, which continued six months. It is comprised in the few but eloquent words of the French historian whose beauty is lost in the translation. It shows that misfortune has, at least, one comfort, and that comfort is religion. It teaches that to acquire divine consolation it must be sought with an humble heart. It, also, teaches that true humility does not necessarily require an ignorance of one's endowments, but a sincere acknowledgment that all are the gift of God and talents that must be rightly used. Columbus was aware of the greatness of his destiny, the responsibility of his mission and the talents with which he was favored; but he had ever in his heart God's glory, and in humble submission to God's will he labored, despite adversity, to accomplish God's designs.

At the approach of spring, he expressed to Perez a desire to take up his journey to the Court of Castile. He was destitute, and he had to make a long journey before reaching his destination. Hence money had to be found. The poor Franciscan was without means; and, in virtue of his holy rule, he could possess nothing. To the honor of the

order be it said, poverty was strictly observed in those days; and, even now, there are friars and provinces that emulate St. Francis in his love for voluntary poverty.

What was Perez to do? Ah! true friendship is ever active. He made his friend's cause his own. Without delay, he went to Palos; and, having gathered around him some benefactors blessed with the goods of fortune, he collected sufficient for the long journey. Returning, in triumph, to *La Rabida*, he consigned all to his friend; but there was something more to be done. Columbus had neither friend nor acquaintance at the Court of Castile, and the reader knows that influence is very necessary in the palaces of kings. We have already said that Perez had been the confessor of Queen Isabella, and that he was succeeded, in that capacity, by another Franciscan, Father Ferdinand de Talavera. Father Ferdinand was still exercising that office. and Perez wrote him a long letter introducing Columbus. He, also, asked him to espouse his cause, and obtain for him an audience with the queen. This was not all. There was more to be done. Friendship made other demands on Perez. The little boy, Diego, had to be thought of in the absence of his father; and he was fed and clothed and educated, at *La Rabida*, under the fostering care of the Franciscans. Is it true that the friars did nothing for society?

CHAPTER V.

Disappointments.

What would man be without hope? None are entirely exempt from cares. Trials and sorrows imbitter the life of all. If a ray of our blessed immortality did not cheer him onward, man might envy inanimate things. Yes, all need hope. It dispels every cloud, but disappointments reappear, and constant nourishment becomes a necessity for the soul. That nourishment is divine grace. After years of conflict, when the sky becomes bright, and the star of hope appears, the soul has, indeed, a foretaste of Heaven's bliss; but when fresh disappointments arise, and the new-born hope fades away, then, God alone can succor the despairing soul.

Such was the condition of Columbus, soon after he left the Convent of *La Rabida*. The hope of easy access to the court, and of a favorable audience with the queen, cheered him as far as Cordova. The letter of Father Perez directed to the confessor of Isabella assured him of a favorable reception; but, alas! he was sadly disappointed. Father Ferdinand, although a profound theologian, knew very little of cosmography; and he was not capable of grasping the ideas of Columbus. To speak of unknown lands beyond the ocean was a sign of

a disordered mind. On reading the eloquent letter of his brother of *La Rabida*, he felt that the good man was imposed upon by his kindness of heart. The words, also, of an obscure foreigner, poor and homeless, would have little weight in a court where every cent was needed to repel the Moorish invaders. Poor Columbus, disappointed and alone in a strange land, was almost forced to beg his daily bread.

God did not abandon his faithful servant. Beatrice Henriquez, a young woman of rare beauty and noble family, became enamored with the genius and virtue of the Italian wanderer; and, notwithstanding the opposition of her relatives, they were united in matrimony. This second marriage of Columbus took place in 1486. Fernando the fruit of their union was born a year after, and he was destined by Providence to be the defender of his father's memory.

A few days after his marriage, Columbus wrote himself to the king; but the latter did not deign a reply. This circumstance would be sufficient to extinguish the last spark of hope in the breast of other men; but not in that of Columbus, for his constancy was equal to his courage. Then he formed the acquaintance of the Papal Nuncio, Antonio Geraldini; and through him he gained the favor of Cardinal Mendoza, Prime Minister of the kingdom. The latter obtained the desired audience with the king, who ordered a scientific conference

to be held at Salamanca, to examine the project of Columbus.

The conference assembled, in the year 1486, at the Dominican Convent of St. Stephen. There were present the principal scientific men of the land, including the doctors of the university, with representative Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, Augustinians and Benedictines; but Columbus was doomed to a new disappointment. Isabella was not there. To encourage learning, she was accustomed to attend public scientific debates; but, on this occasion, the disturbed condition of the country kept her away. There was another person absent, who alone could defend the Genoese hero, for he alone was capable of understanding his grand conceptions; and this person was the Guardian of *La Rabida*. Prejudice prevailed, and the conference refused to recommend the project.

Washington Irving, Cesare Cantù and Roselly de Lorgues describe, in glowing terms, the appearance of Columbus before the learned men of Salamanca. The task was serious, and much depended on the impression made. The simple sea-faring man had reason to be diffident before such an august assemblage. He had to listen to arguments drawn from the writings of the ancient philosophers, which seemed directly opposed to his theories. The Holy Scripture was frequently quoted, and the authority of St. Augustine was invoked. When Columbus began to reply in defense of his project, he was

no longer the timid sailor, but the man of Providence convinced of his mission. His noble bearing, and simple yet persuasive eloquence captivated that hostile audience. The months passed, under the guidance of Perez, in the library of *La Rabida*, furnished him with powerful arguments. He knew the Bible well, and he was as conversant with St. Augustine as were his adversaries. He was familiar with every text of the Holy Book bearing, in the least degree, on his cherished undertaking, as well as with every note and comment and exposition of St. Augustine on the same subject; and he proved, most conclusively, that the project of discovering unknown lands beyond the ocean was not contrary to the Bible or the teaching of the Holy Fathers. The great navigator was not a man of one book, but he had his favorite authors. He loved the commentary of the great Franciscan, Nicholas de Lyra; and with this invincible author he was able to expound the Sacred Text, in a marvelous manner, as well as to unfold the true doctrine of St. Augustine and the other Fathers.

The homeless wanderer became, not only a learned cosmographer, but a profound theologian and a great Biblical student. Washington Irving thus sums up his notice of the argument:

« Casting aside his maps and charts, and discarding, for a time, his practical and scientific lore, his visionary spirit took fire, and he met his doctrinal opponents upon their own ground, pouring

forth those magnificent texts of scripture, and those mysterious predictions of the prophets, which, in his enthusiastic moments, he considered as types and annunciations of the sublime discovery which he proposed! »

Yes, prejudice prevailed, but all was not lost; for all were not hostile. Cardinal Mendoza, the Papal Nuncio Geraldini and the Franciscans appeared favorable; but the Dominicans were the most valiant champions of the scheme, and they offered Columbus the hospitality of their college. One of their number, Diego Deza, the preceptor to the heir apparent of the Spanish throne, and afterwards Archbishop of Toledo, espoused the cause so ardently that he brought over some of the principal doctors of the university. The name of the Dominican Diego Deza deserves the grateful remembrance of all posterity; but the man without whose zealous cooperation Columbus could never have succeeded was the Franciscan John Perez.

Other conferences were held, from time, to time, but they merely served to render Columbus an object of ridicule. Courtiers and people believed his project worthy only of a fanatic; and the very children pointed him out, as a madman, but the man of Providence did not despair. Faithful to his Heaven-Given mission of discovering a new world, he obtained another audience at court, through the influence of Cardinal Mendoza, Luis de Santangel, Alonzo de Quintanilla and the Papal Nuncio. The

sky, again, became bright, and a new hope dawned; but the country was called to arms, and all peaceful pursuits had to be abandoned. Great was the disappointment, but the man of hope could not be crushed.

About this time occurred the memorable siege of Baza, one of the many bulwarks of the Saracen power in Spain. It was the last scene in the drama of the Crusaders, battling for ages against Moorish domination. Everywhere, the soldier of Christ girded on his sword to fight in the holy cause. Fortune begins to favor the gallant hosts, and a new impetus is given to their courage. Two Franciscans from the Holy Land appear in the camp of Baza, with the sad news that the Sultan of Egypt had decreed to exterminate all the Christians in his dominions, as well as to destroy the Holy Sepulchre of Christ. All hearts yearn for the victory of the Christian heroes battling against the Crescent, that they may follow it up by rushing to the defense of the Holy Places, and to the rescue of their brethern groaning under the Mohammedan yoke.

After the mysterious appearance of the Franciscans at the camp of Baza, the issue was no longer in doubt. The besieged made a splendid resistance, but they could not withstand the renewed courage of the Soldiers of the Cross. Queen Isabella went, in person, to witness the conflict. Riding a magnificent steed, she cheered on her men even to

the very walls of the city; and the Christian world was soon called to rejoice at the rout of Islamism. Then a new hope dawned for Columbus. He had an audience with the queen, and she assured him of her good wishes, promising to give his project her serious attention, as soon as the war was over.

Granada was now the only place in the hands of the Moors, and its fall was daily expected; but six long years passed, and peace was not restored. The patience of the man of hope was well tried. Vain promises, discouragement, jokes, ridicule and contempt were still his portion. He was tired out, but not disheartened. Nothing can crush the man who trusts in God. With a heart full of indignation, and a soul overwhelmed with bitterness, he left the Spanish Court. He did not, however, abandon his project, for his constancy was still unshaken, and his courage strong as ever.

His thoughts turned towards France, the light of hope still glimmering in that Christian land. Before starting, he wished to embrace his little son Diego, and pay a last visit of gratitude to the friend who stood by him, through seven long years of adversity. Ah! what mysterious providence leads him again to *La Rabida!* For what design was he conducted a second time to the poor little Franciscan convent?

CHAPTER VI.

Return of Columbus to La Rabida.

Love begotten in sorrow is the tenderest of all loves. Such was the mutual love of Columbus and his son Diego. Both were trained in the school of adversity, and disappointments filled up the life of each. Six years had passed since the father left *La Rabida*, and anxiety began to prey on the soul of the child. He was no longer the mirthful boy that won the hearts of the priests with whom he lived. Serious thoughts filled his mind, a gloom hung over him and the laughter of other days was gone. The father was dead, or some great evil had happened to him. No other conclusion could be drawn from a silence of six long years.

Perez tried to console the disconsolate child, but his efforts were vain. One evening they walked through the pine trees to a spot from which a good view could be had of the ocean. Here they sat down together, while the old man praised the beauties of nature and God the author of all. The boy was attentive, but he could not be comforted. With a deep sigh, he exclaimed: « Yes, father, all is beautiful! Beautiful those winding paths and gentle slopes! Beautiful the singing of birds at the

close of day! Beautiful the ocean, beautiful the heavens and more beautiful than all is the God who made them! Beautiful, too, is the face of my own dear father! Tell me, oh! tell me will I ever see him again!»

The old priest was discomfited at this outburst of filial grief. Grasping the hand of the child, he exclaimed, as if in prophecy: « you shall see him again! » While he was speaking the trees rustled, footsteps were heard, a man approached and Columbus stood before them. With a cry of joy, at the sight of his father, Diego rushed to his embrace. Perez experienced, however, a sensation of intense anguish. The sorrows of six years were plainly visible on the face of his friend, and his whole appearance spoke of new disappointments.

We shall not describe the exultation of the friars as they welcomed their former guest. Neither is it necessary to dilate on the consolation of Diego. The reader may imagine the gratitude of Columbus for the care of his boy, who had grown far beyond his brightest hopes. It was meet that the weary traveler should have refreshment, and after the meal was over he began the story of his disappointments. All listened with breathless attention, and all were bathed in tears, during the sad recital.

The indignation of Perez was aroused, when he learned from the lips of his friend the neglect of the scientific men of Spain, as well as his determination to seek in France the aid denied

him at the Court of Castile; for under the monastic habit there beat the heart of a patriot, and after God his best love was for Spain. He trembled at the very thought that another nation might reap the glory destined for his own. Hence he begged Columbus, in the name of seven long years of friendship, to defer his departure from *La Rabida*, until Providence would otherwise dispose. Then raising his eyes to Heaven, with arms extended, he swore, as if in prophecy, that ignorance and malice should not deprive his native land of the glory in store for her. This courage of the child of Francis inspired Columbus with a new hope, and he agreed to remain. The quiet of the little convent proved salutary. Recollection of spirit, under the guidance of religion, was necessary to calm the troubled soul. Perez took on himself the responsibility of getting the necessary assistance, and, with this intent, he wrote directly to Queen Isabella.

Now, who was Isabella? She was the hope of her country, the center of national unity, the heroine of her age, a fervent Catholic and the guiding star of Spain. She was a queen that favored science and loved literature. To her keen discernment was due the elevation of some of the greatest men that Spain ever produced. Among them we may mention General Gonsalvo de Cordova, Cortez the Conqueror of Mexico, as well as the renowned Franciscan, Cardinal Ximenes, the most

astute politician of his age and a model for Christian statesmen. This marvelous Christian woman united to sparkling genius a courage truly heroic in promoting grand designs. It will not be a waste of time to quote the following encomium worthy of the pen of Washington Irving: « Contemporary writers have been enthusiastic in their descriptions of Isabella, but time has sanctioned their eulogies. She was of middle size, and well formed; with a fair complexion, auburn hair, and clear blue eyes. There was a mingled gravity and sweetness in her countenance, and a singular modesty gracing as it did, great firmness of purpose and earnestness of spirit. Though strongly attached to her husband, and studious of his fame, yet she always maintained her distinct rights as an allied prince. She exceeded him in beauty, personal dignity, acuteness of genius, and grandeur of soul. Combining the active and resolute qualities of man with the softer characteristics of woman, she mingled in the warlike councils of her husband; and, being inspired with a truer idea of glory, infused a more lofty and generous temper into his subtle and calculating policy. It is in the civil history of their reign, however, that the character of Isabella shines most illustrious. Her fostering and maternal care was continually directed to reform the laws, and heal the ills engendered by a long course of civil wars. She assembled round her the ablest men in literature

and science, and directed herself by their councils in encouraging literature and the arts. She promoted the distribution of honours and rewards for the promulgation of knowledge, fostered the recently invented art of printing, and through her patronage Salamanca rose to that eminence which it assumed among the learned institutions of the age. Such was the noble woman who was destined to acquire immortal renown by her spirited patronage of the discovery of the New World ».

For eight long centuries, the Moorish invasions continued, and it was Isabella's glory to drive the infidel hordes forever from the land. At the time of which we are speaking, the conflict was going on with all its ancient fierceness. The treasury was exhausted and the nation was almost disheartened. The life of Spain, and our Christian civilization were at stake. In such straits was it prudent to waste a large amount on the visionary scheme of the obscure Genoese sailor? On two occasions, it received the solemn condemnation of the learned men assembled at Salamanca.

The project of Columbus seemed hopeless, as far as Spain was concerned, and it met with a similar fate in other nations. One man alone could move the queen to act in the face of such difficulties; and that man was her former confessor, Father John Perez. She was aware of his learning, his prudence and honesty of purpose. He made the cause his own, and he succeeded.

Despite the carping of universities and politicians, the lowly Friar Minor won the victory. He was the man sent from God, and to him belongs the glory of having discovered the genius of Columbus.



CHAPTER VII.

Perez in the Camp of Santa Fé.

The generous resolution was taken by the Guardian of *La Rabida*, and from that moment the cooperation of the Seraphic Order in the Discovery of America became a sublime enthusiasm. That enthusiasm triumphed over the prejudice of the age, the pride of universities and the errors of scientific men. The difficulties presented and the obstacles raised could not shake the resolution of heroic men determined on the glory of God and the advantage of the human race. Every Friar Minor made the cause his own, until the faith of Jesus Christ was planted in the New World. The zeal of the order was similarly aroused, when Scotus entered the University of Paris, to defend Mary's Immaculate Conception against some of the greatest doctors of the age.

Perez having written the letter to Isabella of Castile, his next task was to find a trustworthy person to whom it might be confided. A mistake or misplaced confidence might render all his efforts vain, because the postal facilities of the fifteenth century were far from being as perfect as they are in our own day. A good name was found useful, on this occasion, for every sea-faring man deemed it a duty to help the Sailor's Friend. The

reader is, already, acquainted with Garzia Hernandez, Through him, the precious document was committed to the care of Sebastian Rodriguez an experienced captain. No better selection could be made, because he was a man of considerable tact, as well as on intimate terms with some of the attendants at court. Moreover, he was a native of Santa Fé, where the court was temporarily located, and he found easy access to the queen.

The letter being delivered to her royal majesty, she requested Rodriguez to await her reply. Scarcely had she begun to read, when she was bathed in tears; and this was the first victory of Perez in behalf of his friend. Besides the tender sentiments expressed in favor of Columbus, Roselly de Lorgues tells us that the Franciscan appealed to her zeal for the glory of God and the honor of Spain. He spoke of the time spent at court as her confessor, and he insisted on his right to be heard. He concluded, in the following touching manner:

« If I have still any right to a place in the esteem of your majesty, if there be left a little of that benevolent regard, which I so often experienced, not on account of my own merit, but through your condescension, I entreat you for an opportunity to defend transcendent genius and greatness of soul which have been misunderstood. I ask you for an audience, in the name of our beloved country, that you may hear my voice, before Columbus abandons Spain. Hearken, I beseech you, to the

prayer of a poor old man, your former confessor, who cannot deceive his beloved spiritual daughter ».

Enough! Isabella was conquered. She came forth from her apartments, with a letter written by herself, which she intrusted to Sebastian Rodriguez. The letter bore the following superscription: *To Father John Perez of Marchena, Guardian of the Observantine Minors of St. Francis, at St. Mary's of La Rabida near Palos.* The trusty messenger did not delay his return. When Perez read the letter, he quickly broke the news to Columbus. The friars were beside themselves with joy, their prayers were heard and a new hope dawned. The queen commanded her venerated confessor to repair to her without delay, and the following words increased their confidence beyond measure: « I authorize you to console your friend, and revive his confidence with the brightest hopes ». When all abandoned Columbus, God proved faithful; and, after God, the humble Franciscan was his greatest support.

When Rodriguez reached *La Rabida*, the friars were at their midnight devotions. Perez resolved to start at once. All urged him to wait until morning, but entreaties were vain. The darkness of the night, the danger of being captured by a band of Moors, his great age and frail constitution were pleaded; but nothing could shake the resolution of the fearless old priest. Mounting a mule borrowed from a man named John Rodriguez Cabezudo, and trusting in God, he set out on his mission. Sublime

heroism, efficacious friendship and implicit confidence in God worthy of the ages of faith! A bronze door of the Capitol at Washington has a representation of the Franciscan friar riding on the mule dressed in his habit.

As soon as the grand old man had gone, his children knelt, in prayer, before our Lady of *La Rabida*, in his behalf. God, who gave him courage, heard their prayers, through Mary's intercession; and he safely reached the camp of *Santa Fé*. His reception was all that could be desired. Isabella was delighted to see her old confessor, from whose lips she had often heard words of holy guidance in the hour of need. She had to admire the eyes still bright, the serenity of soul and the implicit trust in Providence, which charmed her, years before.

Perez, respectfully but forcibly, impressed on her mind the obligation of sovereigns to promote the glory of God and the welfare of the human race. At the same time, he showed the advantages that would accrue to Spain from espousing the cause of Columbus. He spoke of the great navigator's devotion to his lofty mission of bringing the light of Christ's gospel to races still in darkness; and he eloquently urged the duty of seeking those unhappy souls, even at the risk of great sacrifice and bitter disappointments. Upholding the correctness of his friend's scientific conclusions, he proved the sphericity of the earth, and he promptly answered

every Biblical objection raised against his theories. The learning of the humble Franciscan appeared to great advantage. The life passed within convent walls was not entirely useless. Truly one cannot learn too much. Knowledge is never a burden. Studious habits bring contentment, and a further recompense will come in God's own good time. The vast amount of erudition stored away in the capacious mind of Perez proved useful, at the opportune moment. Having charmed Isabella with his learning and eloquence, he followed up his victory in the following language:

«It appears to me that your majesty is convinced of the truth of my conclusions. It is clear to your intelligence that this man was sent by God to elevate our beloved country. Vain fears should not extinguish your benevolent desires. The opinion of a few learned men ought not to impede the discovery of a new world. Great will be the remorse of Spain, when the grace held out to her is given to a less favored nation. Transmit to your successors this precious inheritance. Let not the crown enriched with the gems of so many glorious deeds be deprived of the brilliancy of this star. I speak to you thus, because you are my spiritual daughter, and because I love my country. Nay, I am impelled by a desire for God's glory, the triumph of religion and the salvation of souls. Woe unto me! if I have not the spirit of my Seraphic Father, who, like another Paul, carried in his heart the entire

human race. Courage, then, my child and my queen! Fear not! What frightens you? What impedes the vanquisher of the Moors from selecting between timidity and courage? The undertaking is arduous, and it may appear hopeless; but historians will not record a single magnanimous enterprise of Isabella of Castile that did not appear difficult and hopeless. The expense may be great, but the salvation of numberless souls is at stake. Magnanimous undertakings require great sacrifice, but they produce abundant fruit. The future of your people depends on the present. You promised to make Spain glorious, and the oath is recorded by the guardian angel of our country. Inspirations have their periods of coming and going, and to be successful, the opportunity must be grasped, as soon as it appears. Now, is the moment, my daughter and my queen ».

The words of Perez lose their force and beauty in the translation. They won, however, the heart of Isabella in favor of his friend misunderstood, neglected and despised, until he sought refuge in the little Franciscan convent of *La Rabida*.

CHAPTER VIII.

Perez a Peacemaker.

Having finished his discourse, Perez anxiously awaited the answer of the queen. Isabella was conquered. She could not resist the pleadings of the venerated Franciscan, who taught her to be magnanimous. Taking the hand of the old priest, she bathed it with tears, and promised to make every sacrifice for the undertaking so dear to him. She begged him to call Columbus, and not to depart from court until he came, that both might arrange the details for carrying out their project.

Who can fathom the heart of Perez in that moment, when he saw his great design about to be accomplished? His joy was full, and, he wrote, at once, to his friend, in these tender terms: « God has vouchsafed to hear the prayers of His servants. Touched by the grace of God, the wise and virtuous Isabella has granted my petition. All is settled, and she will not reject your proposition again. She has so far approved it as to call you to court, to propose the means which you deem opportune to carry into execution the designs of Providence. My heart is filled with joy, and my soul exults in the Lord. Come, at once, because the queen

awaits you, and I still more. Recommend me to the prayers of my beloved children and to Diego. The grace of God be with you, and may Our Lady of *La Rabida* accompany you ». The letter was intrusted to the care of a certain Diego Prieto, who happened to be in Santa Fé, and was about to return to his home in Palos. He consigned it to Grazia Hernandez, who in turn delivered it to Columbus, with money amply sufficient for his outfit and traveling expenses to the court.

What was the joy of Columbus in reading the letter! How deep his gratitude to the faithful friend, who remained far from home, that he might complete his generous undertaking! We must not pass over what happened at the convent, when the glad tidings came. The friars were beside themselves with joy. Columbus committed, a second time, to their care his little son; and he set out for Granada whither the court was removed.

We have now reached one of the most important events of the middle ages, an event which changed the destinies of Spain, and saved the civilization of Christian Europe. The bloody war waged for eight centuries had come to a close. The Crescent gave way to the Cross. Bobadil el Chico, the last king of the Moors in Spain, gave up the keys of the magnificent Alhambra. The standard of Man's Redemption was raised on the tower of Camares, in the presence of Ferdinand and

Isabella, amid the ringing of bells and booming of cannon.

Columbus, who came in time for the moving spectacle, was wild with joy. In his fervor, he forgot his own trials. Going through the streets of Granada, singing hymns of praise to God, he came face to face with Perez. Their meeting seemed more than human, and their embrace was that of two Heavenly spirits.

The immortal Genoese was soon presented to the queen. At the sight of the distinguished stranger, she was convinced of the errors of the scientists of Salamanca, and the truth of the doctrine preached by her former confessor. A conference was held; and Isabella, Columbus and Perez were in perfect accord. A commission was ordered to determine the recompense to be given to Columbus, in case his undertaking proved a success. The Franciscans, Ferdinand de Talavera and John Perez, presided over the commission. The confidence of Columbus in the enterprise became evident from the seeming exorbitance of his demands. He required that the offices of Viceroy of the discovered countries and Admiral of the Ocean be transmitted in perpetuity to the eldest son of his posterity, and that the tenth part of the products of the lands acquired for Spain be given to himself.

These were the terms which he proposed to King John of Portugal, nine years before. The commissioners deemed them enormous; and they

could not be persuaded to confer dignities little less than royal on a wanderer held up to ridicule, and protected by no one except a simple friar. Isabella also considered the demands excessive, but she offered other gifts honorable as well as lucrative. Columbus could not be moved. He claimed that merit was entitled to its reward; and that the sufferings, humiliations and disappointments of so many years deserved a commensurate recompense.

The negotiations were about to fail, and the great soul of Perez was well nigh crushed. He saw the labor of years almost lost; but his genius illumined by faith and inflamed with love proved equal to the emergency. By prayers and tears he induced Columbus to submit his demands to Cardinal Mendoza; but he was doomed to further disappointment. The influence of the great cardinal was insufficient.

The hostility of the commissioners was evident, and Columbus would not submit to injustice. He resolved to abandon Spain without bidding good-by to Perez, lest the claims of friendship might shake the fixity of his purpose. In fact, he had already entered on his journey; and he was on his way to France, before Perez heard of the cardinal's failure as a mediator. The poor old Franciscan was overwhelmed with grief. His first impulse was to go in person to the queen and chide her for allowing herself to be deceived by envious courtiers; but his veneration for his spiritual daughter would

not permit him to wound her great soul. In his apostolic zeal he would have threatened Heaven's direst vengeance on the vile flatterers who were betraying Spain; but he knew the imprudence of wounding the pride of worldly-minded men. Prudence is a cardinal virtue, on the right exercise of which depends the success of many a great enterprise. Prudence is not to be confounded with worldly wisdom, shrewdness or cunning; but the truly virtuous man is ever prudent.

When it pleases Providence to carry out some grand design for the welfare of man, He usually selects an instrument endowed with the grace necessary for the enterprise. God loves the clean of heart actuated with honesty of purpose. Many a noble undertaking fails, because the pretended benefactors of society are not pure in heart or intention. God wished the discovery of America to be the fruit of Catholic genius influenced by faith. Hence He intended the humble Franciscan to play an important part in the drama fraught with interest to all mankind. That America might be discovered Isabella and Columbus had to be reconciled, and Perez was the Providential peacemaker. He was endowed by nature and grace with all the qualities necessary for this new office.

Alonzo de Quintanilla and Luis de Santangel labored in vain with Isabella to change her determination and induce her to recall Columbus, now several miles from court. The venerable Guardian

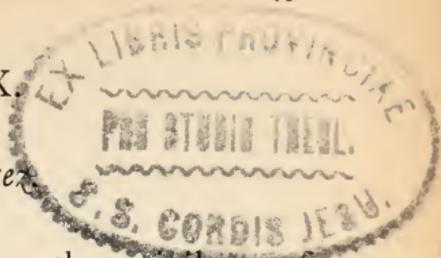
of *La Rabida* knew that a superior power had to be invoked, which no human force could resist. Prostrate before the Holy Tabernacle, he supplicated the Lord Jesus, through the merits of His Sacred Passion, that the mind of Isabella might be illumined by His grace. His prayer was heeded. Isabella suddenly changed her resolution; for she clearly saw that Columbus was a providential man, whom she was in danger of losing. Having ordered him to be called before her, in the presence of her ministers and the Guardian of *La Rabida*, she pronounced her irrevocable determination in these memorable words: « I take for my crown of Castile this enterprise, and I will give my jewels as a pledge that I will furnish the money ». The decree being signed, she pledged her word to Columbus and agreed to all his terms. The great navigator thanked God, with all the fulness of his heart; the soul of Isabella was elevated to Heaven, in humble recognition of the grace that changed her will; and a light shone on the face of Perez, which revealed his internal emotions.

This humble child of Francis had to rejoice. His triumph was complete over the enemies of his friend. Full of a holy enthusiasm, the offspring of a lively faith, he swore at *La Rabida* that ignorance and malice should not rob Spain of her glory. After twenty years of bitter disappointments, Columbus saw the dream of his

life realized, through the undying friendship of the humble friar, Father John Perez. A prosperous era dawned for Spain, new glories were in store for the Seraphic Order, the church was to have new triumphs and numberless unhappy souls were to receive the faith of Jesus Christ.



CHAPTER IX.

No Rest for Perez

Now, who can deny to Perez the privilege of resting awhile at the Court of Castile, to enjoy the fruits of his generous efforts in behalf of Spain? Did he not elevate her among the nations, and give her Columbus to discover new worlds? Was he not the arbiter of her destinies, and a peacemaker when great interests were at stake? Father Peter Simon, a Spanish historian, says: « The Guardian of *La Rabida* remained long enough at court to make the cause of Columbus a success; and this being done he sought peace in the silence of his little cell ».

Having reached his convent home, his first act was to kneel at the feet of the Mother of God, with little Diego and the rest of the community, in heartfelt thanksgiving for all the favors received. To God and to Mary all the glory was given.

Columbus did not remain long at court. On the 12th. of May, he set out for Palos. Although this little port was far from being the safest on the Spanish coast, yet it was chosen by the queen for the departure of the expedition. To those who view, superficially, the course of human events it may appear that the selection was made for the sake of economy; but we see in it the admirable

disposition of Providence, who directs everything here below for the welfare of man. Palos was near *La Rabida*, and no other port of Spain would reflect so well the glory of that little convent, which was the refuge of Columbus in the hour of trial.

Having arrived at Palos, he examined the port, and then betook himself to *La Rabida* among his Franciscan friends, the benefactors and teachers of his son. This was the third time that the children of Francis welcomed to their humble abode America's discoverer. He esteemed the little convent as a home, because he was on the most cordial terms with all the community. Between him and the Father Guardian there existed the strongest ties. Their souls were in perfect accord, and the same thoughts occupied both. Thus it was given to Perez to receive, as friend and guest, the man loaded with honors, who came, a few years before, a homeless wanderer, craving a crust of bread and a corner to rest his weary limbs.

The royal letters directing the authorities of Palos to furnish everything necessary for the expedition were read in the Church of St. George, on the 23rd. of May 1492. Here a new difficulty arises. The greatest obstacle experienced by Columbus stares him in the face; but, as Roselly de Lorgues remarks, the assistance of the Father Guardian was not less useful than when he first appeared at *La Rabida*. So formidable was the

difficulty that the whole project seemed about to fail; and we say, without fear of refutation, that Perez was the only one capable of saving the grand design. He upheld the great Italian against the learning of universities and the influence of courtiers; and his wisdom, his zeal and his eloquence prevailed over the heart of Isabella. The new difficulty was founded in the prejudice of the common people, and there is nothing harder to overcome than popular prejudice.

Scarcely had the royal letters been read, when the danger of the expedition became noised abroad, and few were willing to share in the danger. The most absurd notions prevailed concerning the size and form of the earth. The telescope had not been invented, and there was no means of examining and numbering the myriads of heavenly bodies. To enter on the dark and mysterious ocean was to expose one's self to certain destruction. Huge monsters, little better than demons were its sole inhabitants. Its limits were boundless or ending in eternal chaos. Woe to him who would rashly investigate the mystery! Such was the universal prejudice. Is it wonderful that the boldest ceased to be courageous? The days were gliding away with no hope of manning even one vessel. The shores were deserted, and sea-faring men hid themselves or took to flight.

Energetic measures had to be adopted. Sailors had to be forced into service of the enterprise

would fail. John of Penasola, an officer of great determination, appeared, with bands of soldiers, along the coast of Andalusia, forcing into service every man that could be found. Indignation prevailed at Palos. The cries and lamentations of those to be made widows and orphans rent the air. The name of the immortal Genoese was cursed. The honor of the queen suffered. The mission of Penasola failed. Murmurings of discontent were heard on every side. No one knew how or where all would end. During all this time, Columbus remained in his cell at *La Rabida*. Grief and disappointment took possession of his soul. Nothing cheered him except the constant friendship of the Franciscans bidding him confide in God and our Lady of *La Rabida*. He thanked them with his mournful looks, but he was silent. He would only recommend himself to God and to Mary. God heard his prayers, and Perez once more proved himself the untiring friend.

Among the religious orders there is none that enjoys the confidence of the poor to a higher degree than the Franciscan. Roselly de Lorgues, in his life of Columbus, says that a Friar Minor is naturally acceptable to the people, on account of his poverty and the simplicity of his habit. Recruited from every walk of life, depending on the people for daily bread, intermingling with the poor in modest familiarity and having with them a common interest, the Franciscan order is de-

servedly loved and trusted by the masses in every Catholic land.

Faithful to the traditions of his order, Perez was well equipped for the task before him. He enjoyed the veneration of the entire people. His learning and sanctity were known to all. No one could question his disinterested zeal or his strict sense of justice, and his prudence had been often tried. He was essentially a man of the common people. Leaving Columbus and Diego in prayer at the altar of Our Lady of *La Rabida*, he departed from the convent and betook himself to Palos. The well tried friend of Columbus had soon an anxious crowd around him.

God inspired him to address the discontented multitude. His burning eloquence and oratorical skill had the desired effect. Doubts vanished, fears disappeared and confidence was restored. He spoke of the sanctity of Columbus, his wonderful genius and his sublime mission. He combated the prejudices of the age concerning the form of the earth, and the motion of the heavenly bodies. He proved that the theories of Columbus were scientifically correct, and that his project was thoroughly feasible. He showed that the ocean was terrible only in ignorant prejudice, that beyond its waves, which appeared so frightful, there were lands and people still deprived of the light of faith.

He appealed to their self-interest, their love of country, as well as their zeal for God's glory, and the salvation of souls. He placed before their minds the triumph of the Church in getting under her spiritual sway so many lands; and he made it clear that the glory of discovering them was reserved for Spain in preference to other nations. He showed, in fine, that all taking part in the expedition would receive immortal glory, and that their names would be inscribed in the book of life as benefactors of the human race. In conclusion, he said: « I love you tenderly and I cannot deceive you. Our gracious queen has no motive for getting rid of her faithful subjects. God is my witness that I desire your temporal welfare, as well as your eternal happiness; but I wish to see His kingdom extended and His gospel preached in every land where there is a rational creature made to His image. Think of those unhappy souls far from civilized society, and without any means of religious instruction. If some of you suffer shipwreck, will you not die for Christ? He who dies in such a cause is not a subject for tears. Courage then my sons! To you is given to extend the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, to save numberless souls and to make your country great among the nations ».

The preaching of Perez was not confined to Palos. He was heard all along the coast. Like another Peter the Hermit, his words full of holy unction gathered men around the standard of Castile.

The reader may imagine the fatigue of the venerable old man, traveling in his bare feet, and talking to immense crowds, while exposed to the rays of a scorching Sun. So fruitful was his zeal that, according to the historian Pleyto, his deeds were the subject of fireside conversation for many a year.

CHAPTER X.

New Difficulties overcome.

During the excitement, Columbus did not deem it prudent to leave his safe retreat at *La Rabida*; but confidence having returned, he gave his attention to the preparation of three vessels for the expedition. Wherever Columbus went, there also was Perez. Everything seemed propitious; and, to all appearances, the last obstacle was removed; but it often happens that, in the midst of the brightest hopes, insurmountable difficulties arise. The future is, indeed, uncertain; and men well trained in the school of adversity prepare for every conceivable contingency. No other course assures victory.

The fervid eloquence of Perez dispelled all fear, and there was scarcely a doubt in regard to the feasibility of his project; but the crafty enemy of man's salvation was quietly at work, for he saw the danger threatening his power in the undiscovered lands. Passions had subsided, and reason took possession of men's minds. Sailors began to view the ocean with greater interest, and no eloquence could divest the mighty deep of its horrors. Ah! the sea is ever treacherous. New fears arise, and the good accomplished is nearly undone. Columbus is almost disheartened, but the persistency of Perez never fails. Trusting in God, he is full of resources.

Not versed in worldly wisdom, but full of the prudence of the Gospel, he understands the hearts of the people to their very depths. In fervent prayer at the Tabernacle of Love, he is enriched with the means to overcome new difficulties. His resolution is taken, but he is one of those men who do not speak of their plans until they are matured.

At that time, there lived at Palos three brothers called Pinzon, who had an abundance of this world's goods. They were well versed in navigation and held in great esteem by the most experienced mariners. They had made several long voyages; and the oldest, Martin Alonzo, had gone as far as Rome. On one occasion, Alonzo returned with some new ideas, which appeared like the project of Columbus. Being on friendly terms with a learned cosmographer, who was one of the librarians of Pope Innocent VIII, he had the privilege of seeing a celebrated map, on which was described a nameless land situated in the Western Ocean. In all probability, the cosmographer of the papal library had a presentiment, as well as the Guardian of *La Rabida*, that there were other lands beyond the ocean. It is certain that the theory which filled the mind of Columbus, was not entirely unknown at Rome; because Rome was the center of all human knowledge. It is certain, too, that Columbus was in correspondence with the celebrated Florentine scientist, Paul Toscanelli, who spent

much of his time in Rome; and it is to be presumed that he did not conceal his design from his Florentine friend. There is also a constant tradition, that Columbus communicated his grand idea to the Pope himself.

Seeing doubts and fears again taking possession of the minds of sea-faring men, Perez, with his usual prudence, had the project of Columbus approved by the Pinzons, whose fame and authority all respected. Without communicating his intention to any one, not even to Columbus, he sought their patronage, that they might cooperate in the project destined to give glory to Spain and new nations to the Church.

Thus while Columbus led a solitary life at *La Rabida*, supplicating God to remove every obstacle in the path of his cherished undertaking, the untiring Perez was applying an efficacious remedy to the latest difficulty. If all became skeptical and disheartened, the Pinzons would not be dejected. Martin Alonzo remembered the celebrated map seen by him at Rome. He was such a firm believer in the theories of Columbus that he deemed it an honor to be associated in the project, and promised the hearty cooperation of himself and his brothers.

Just as the Sun was setting, the Guardian of *La Rabida* entered the convent, on his return from the Pinzon home. The friars were taking their usual recreation along the portico, but Columbus

was not there. He loved solitude, and he was accustomed to pass the time, with Diego, among the pine trees, through which he could contemplate the ocean. The Father Guardian approached. He was acquainted with the silent retreats so dear to his friend. In an ecstasy of delight, he embraced Columbus. The interview with the Pinzons was gone over. The hope of Columbus that never died received new vigor. Turning to his son he said: « Oh! my beloved Diego, how untiring is the friendship of dear Father John! » Both pressed to their bosom the good old priest; and all wept, but the tears were tears of gladness. While thus rejoicing, the convent bell called them. Leaving their deliberations until tomorrow, they went to partake of the evening repast prepared by the hand of Providence, which never becomes scanty to the children of Francis.

In the morning, Columbus was up before the dawn, and the Sun was still gilding the tops of the hills, when he and the Guardian of *La Rabida* entered the Pinzon home. The interview was short, but a few words were sufficient to grasp his grand idea, and comprehend his lofty conceptions. A plan was adopted by which the people were to be made aware of the alliance between the stranger and the Pinzons. The conference being ended, Columbus and Perez returned to *La Rabida* filled with holy joy.

From that moment every difficulty grew less, and every doubt disappeared. In a few days, it became noised abroad that Señor Martin Alonzo was in accord with the project of the foreigner, and that he had agreed to take part in the enterprise. The Pope was even said to be of the same mind, and some one in his court had shown to Señor Martin a map, on which were described the unknown lands spoken of by the Guardian of *La Rabida*. To the great amazement of the people, the two brothers of Señor Martin were also reported to be in sympathy with Columbus; and the younger of the two, Señor Vincent Yanjez, was ready to give his little *Niña* as one of the three vessels for the expedition. Many other rumors went abroad, and all were in favor of Columbus. The example of the Pinzons was of great importance. Confidence was restored, and the friendship of Perez had its reward.

The setting out of the expedition appeared now as certain as anything in the future could be. Two vessels were ready, the *Pinta* and the *Niña*. The former was procured by John of Penasola at his first coming to Palos. A third only was necessary, and Palos offered a large and well tried ship called the *Gallenga*. She did not seem well adapted to her purpose, but Perez advised Columbus to accept, in order to avoid further delay. Columbus consented, but he asked that the name, *Gallenga*, be changed to *Santa Maria*. He

also requested that she be blessed by the Father Guardian, and placed under the protection of Our Lady of *La Rabida*. This vessel entirely Christian, and under Mary's special patronage became the flagship of the admiral.

All was now ready except to arm and provision the vessels, and this duty devolved on the old priest. Columbus thought of nothing but God and the affairs of his soul, What an example to all about to enter on a dangerous or important undertaking! His hours were spent in prayer, with Diego, in the little convent, the cradle of his destiny and the home of his incomparable friend.

Historians say very little concerning this period in the life of Columbus, but it is because he had not much to do with the world. On the contrary, all sound the praises of the self-sacrificing friar. It is certain that Columbus passed his time in prayer, on the advice of Perez, while the latter was engaged in a work which seemed foreign to his vocation. Such was the self-denying spirit of the grand old priest, who gave up his cherished retirement, for the sake of his friend. The truly religious man does not hesitate to leave his God in prayer, for a while, that he may find Him in the service of his neighbor.

Here we see how providential was the selection of Palos as the port of departure. Economy may have been the motive of the patrons of the expedition, but God's design was that His instru-

ment, Perez, would be at hand, to remove every obstacle that might arise. God's plans are not always understood by men; but the Divine Being is continually directing human means and human agencies for man's welfare.



CHAPTER XI.

The Parting.

The retreat made by Columbus at *La Rabida* in preparation for his perilous voyage changed him into a new man. Like Francis of Assisi coming down from Mont-Alvernia, after receiving the sacred stigmata, his resplendent countenance revealed the emotions of his soul. Filled with holy joy, he was enamored with God. Clothed in the habit of the Seraphic Patriarch, he became a child, as well as a follower of the Saint of Love. The great esteem, which he always entertained for the Friars Minor, is now changed into a new sentiment, for he has become their brother.

Henceforth, he shall wear the rough cord, whether crowned with glory or weeping in his lonely prison cell; and his life shall be that embraced at *La Rabida*. The soldier of Christ puts on a new armor. Gladness inundates his soul, and he can exclaim with the erring, the sinful and the penitent Augustine: « Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God! and our hearts can never be at rest, until they rest in Thee! »

Having become a member of the Third Order, during his retreat, Columbus is allied to the Seraphic Family. He is to partake in its joys and its sorrows, its glories and its humiliations. The

alliance may bring disgrace to one and endless misery to the other; but God has other things in store for both. He shall win renown, but he shall drink deeply of the bitter chalice of ingratitude; and his name is destined to give new lustre to that order, without which he could never succeed.

Three ships are anchored in the port of Palos ready to sail. Nothing remains to be done except to examine them from stem to stern, that every thing may be found adapted to its purpose. Columbus comes from *La Rabida* with Perez, to inspect the little fleet. Several merchants and mariners are with them, for all are now interested. The *Santa Maria* first claims his attention, from whose top-mast floats the flag of Castile. Diego of Aran, a nephew of the admiral, is her captain. Her crew numbered sixty men recruited from various lands; a bright foreboding, indeed, of that gathering of nations witnessed only in America. There was an Irishman among them, with the daring spirit and love of adventure characteristic of his race.

It is beyond a doubt that William Ires, an Irishman, was one of the heroic little band. Roselly de Lorgues carefully examined the original records. In his excellent work, he goes into details, giving names, nationalities and occupations. Nay, he describes the peculiar traits and temperament of some. There is a tradition, too, that a Galway man accompanied Columbus, and it is a strange

coincidence that a place in the City of the Tribes is called Eyre Square. Was the name corrupted, or did it suffer a change in the translation? In those days, persecution raged in Ireland, and many of her sons found a refuge in Spanish homes. There was also considerable communication between the two countries, and Galway bears many traces of the relationship. Time has wrought changes, but the arched gateways of Seville and the broad stairs of Cadiz still confront the tourist, in Galway, whose thoughts are carried back to Andalusia.

Having left him, for a while to inquire into the nationality of William Ires, let us now return to Columbus. From the *Santa Maria*, he passed to the *Pinta*, known as a good sailor. Here the eldest of the Pinzons, Martin Alonzo, is in command. His brother Francis accompanies him as lieutenant. The crew numbered thirty men including the officers. The pretty little *Niña* called the racer was the last to be visited. Her captain, Vincent Yanjez, the youngest of the Pinzon brothers, had with him twentyfour men; and all were relatives, friends and neighbors. Garzia Hernandez, the physician of Palos, was one of the number. Everything was in its place, and the ships were found in a seaworthy condition. The men, too, were full of courage. The wind alone was wanting to carry them on their perilous voyage.

No heart could be indifferent to the danger which menaced those heroic men. To leave one's

home and family in search of unknown lands, or to cross the stormy deep popularly believed to be the abode of demons was sufficient to try the courage of the bravest. At such a time, every one desires to be in friendship with God. The religious preparation was all that could be desired. Every heart was raised to the Father of Mercy in humble confession of sin and a worthy reception of the Eucharist. A procession to *La Rabida*, the cradle of the enterprise was arranged. Columbus felt that Mary's intercession made his project so far a success, and he wished to lay at her feet the tribute of his gratitude. His companions desired, also, to bid her a fond adieu, and ask her blessing on themselves and loved ones left behind.

At the ringing of the bells of Palos, the little city became almost deserted. All went to Mary's shrine, and having reached the hill-top they found the sacred temple in festive array. The Solemn Sacrifice of the Altar was commenced by the venerable Father Guardian. This was a happy day for the grand old priest. The church resounded with heartfelt prayers. Many a tear was shed, and many a sigh went up to the God of Mercy. All prayed according to their own needs, for all had something to ask. The mariners prayed for themselves, mothers for their sons, sisters for their brothers, wives for their husbands, children for their fathers and the Franciscans for all. Having received the Most Holy Sacrament, and the Mass

being finished, the sailors led the way to Mary's altar. Hymns were sung, prayers were offered, and the guidance of the *Star of the Sea* was invoked.

The religious services being concluded, and the souls of the dauntless heroes being strengthened with the Bread of Life, they repaired to the refectory to nourish their bodies with earthly food prepared by the hospitable Franciscans. Then all except Columbus, betook themselves towards the vessels.

Another scene was taking place within the convent walls. The future of little Diego had to be settled. The Abbé Sanchez de Moguer, a friend of the admiral, was about to conduct the boy to his step-mother at Cordova. Oh! how intense the grief of Columbus in parting with his beloved son, the companion of disappointments and his comfort amid sorrows! There was no time for delay, because the Abbé had to depart. The friars were assembled, to bid the last sad farewell, but Diego was not there. Behold! he comes led by Perez, his instructor, and for a long time his only father. The countenance of the child betrayed the sorrow of his soul. He had a sad presentiment that the happiest days of his life were coming to a close, and that the peace enjoyed at *La Rabida* would never more be his.

At the sight of his beloved son Columbus was almost unmanned, or rather he became more the man, because paternal love is an instinct worthy

of man's better nature. Claspings the child to his bosom his firmness of character was sorely tried; and the parting from Diego was one of his greatest sorrows. His words were few and full of assurance that they would soon meet again. He controlled his emotions that he might impart useful advice. « My son », said he, « the time has come for your leaving this holy abode full of happy recollections. Providential was the evening that you and I sought the hospitality of these good men. It was the turning point in our career. What could I have done without their charity? What would have become of you without their paternal care? May your years be few, if you ever prove ungrateful! Never forget the happy days passed within these hallowed walls! Let your prayers never cease for your kind benefactors. Cheer up! my boy, God is the father of the orphan ».

He could say no more. His feelings could not be controlled. The child was in tears. His poor young heart was breaking. All were deeply moved. The friars had few words to say. Their grief was beyond expression. Diego had not gone far, when he turned around for a last look at the fond familiar scenes soon to pass from his gaze. In a glance, he took in the church, the convent, the pine trees, the hills and the sea; and his heart was in that glance. « Farewell! », said he, « dear old hills, sunburnt plains, shady groves and ancient pines, silent companions which bid me hope through

long and weary years! Farewell! sacred temple, Mary's altar and dear old convent the refuge of God's poor! May my years be lengthened that I may see thee, *La Rabida*, again! Never can I forget the evening on which I first saw thy hill-top! I shall always remember the continued psalmody and the melancholy yet consoling music of thy bells, descending through the valleys, finding an echo in the breasts of weary travelers, and bidding them welcome to thy hallowed abode! Beloved *Rabida*, whatever may be my lot, my heart shall always turn towards thee in filial and grateful love! »

Alas! such is life. The son of Columbus had to act his part in the world's drama. Like his immortal father, he had few joys but many sorrows. The days spent at *La Rabida* were a source of consolation in after years. They enlivened his faith and strengthened his confidence, while buoying him up amid many a trial.

After the departure of Diego, Columbus secluded himself in the convent, leading a life of penance according to the Rule of St. Francis. For a while, he seemed forgetful of his mission, but he was merely awaiting that favorable wind which should lead him towards the west.

The night of the 2nd. of August 1492 is well nigh spent. The moon is shedding her silvery rays on the trembling sea. Only a few stars sparkle in the heavens. A peaceful calm pervades all nature.

La Rabida feels its influence. There is not a breath of air. Even a rustling of the leaves cannot be heard. Columbus still sleeps. His rest is peaceful. Ah! the long desired breeze has come. It commences to enrich the air with its perfume, and to shake the leaves of the neighboring pines.

The slumberer awakes. The hour for action arrives, and his heart beats. Strange, indeed, is the heart of man! Every joy has its sorrow, and there is no defeat so crushing as to leave no hope. In a few hours Columbus and Perez will have to part, and they may never meet again. Heart-rending thought, sufficient to imbitter the sweets of victory! Even now these two generous souls are divested entirely of self. Each conquers his own emotions, but neither can be indifferent to the sorrows of the other.

Columbus knocks at the door of the Father Guardian and enters his little cell. The venerable old priest is up and dressed for he did not go to sleep after the midnight devotions. Quickly interpreting the will of Columbus, he calls the sacristan to make the necessary preparations for celebrating the Holy Sacrifice.

The rest of the community still sleep. Columbus will not allow them to be disturbed, that the parting scene may be avoided. The two friends pass in silence to the little church. One prostrates himself at the altar of Mary, while the other commences the Solemn Sacrifice. Every priest

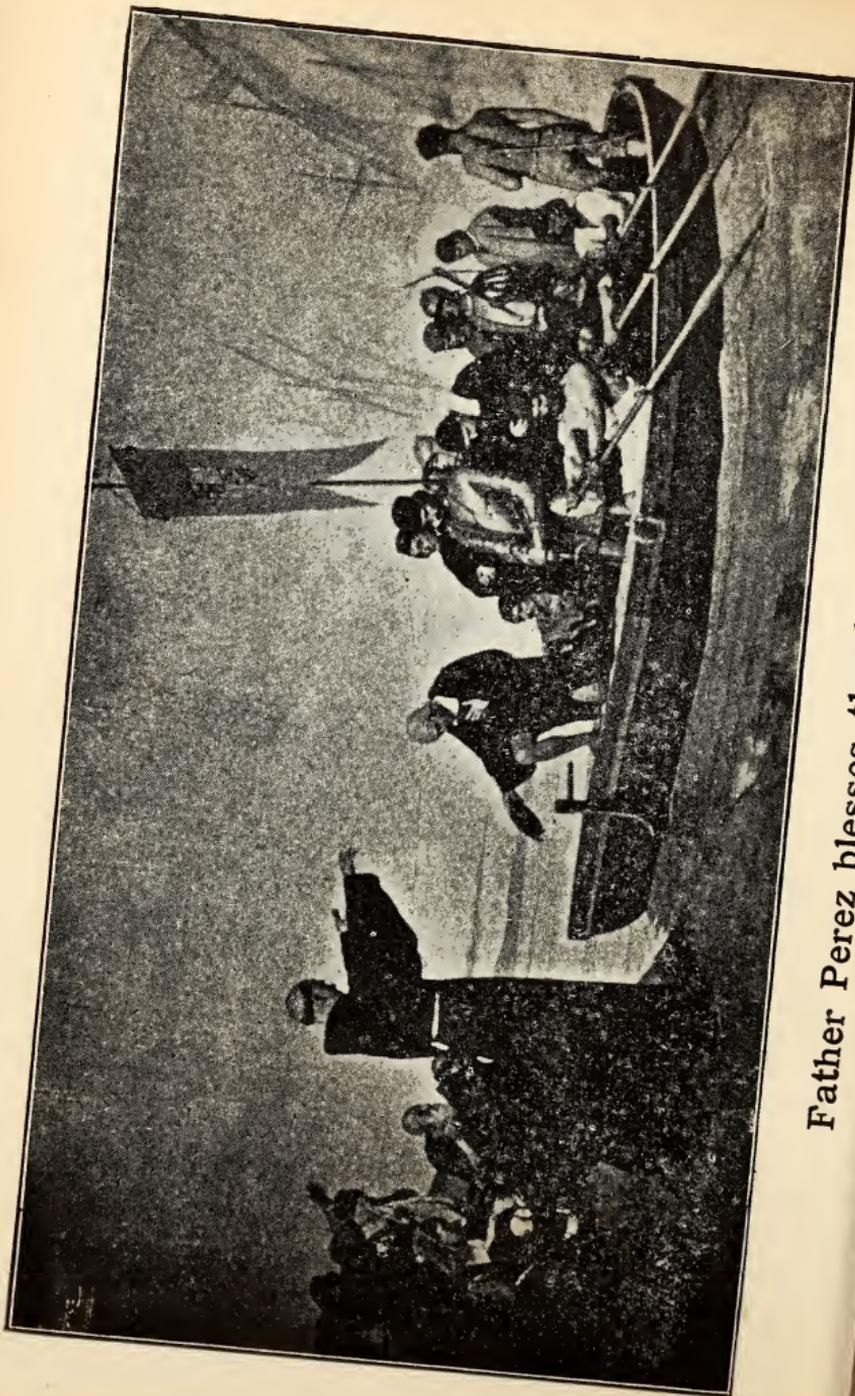
offers his mass for some particular intention. On this occasion, it is a most unusual one. Never before was such an intention formed. The Holy Sacrifice is offered that Mary the Star of the Sea may conduct the dauntless navigators to the land without a name. The intention is full of interest to millions yet unborn. From that moment, the Giver of every good gift poured His bounty on that land destined to be the hope of every race.

God alone can tell the fervor of the grand old priest in celebrating that mass in behalf of his friend. Ah! the heart of a priest is a mystery to the world, and a mystery even to himself. One's ideal priest may be as spotless as an angel, and dignity of character may control his life; but if a tender heart does not beat under his cassock, he is deaf to the cries of the sorrow-stricken and absolutely without zeal. A genuine priest is a man of the tenderest sympathies and a devoted friend. Judas was possible, because the love of material things steeled his heart against sympathy. A priest may be as heartless as Judas and as weak as Peter in the hour of temptation; but there are thousands as devoted as John. Within his heart there may be an emotion, which leads to heroic deeds; but, if he forgets for a moment that he is a priest, the same sentiment may bring about his own eternal ruin. Nothing proves the grandeur of the priestly character like the stern demand of duty. Let them be tried, and thousands will show that they have

the heart of a Perez, if not his great genius or a similar Providential call.

At the proper time, Columbus ascended the altar and received the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. So great was his devotion and recollection of spirit that the saintly old priest was filled with amazement. Such was the faith and devotion of the great discoverer of the New World. Oh! how he prayed for grace, for courage and for constancy in carrying out Heaven's designs! He did not leave the altar before opening his heart to the Mother of God. A loving confidence in Mary was one of the most beautiful traits of his grand character. He loved her with childlike affection, and he received many proofs of her maternal solicitude. He prayed also to St. Francis, for he was now a son of the Seraphic Patriarch, as well as a child of the Queen of Angels.

Their devotions being thus satisfied, the two incomparable friends betook themselves towards Palos. The stars are still sparkling in the heavens, but so dimly that they indicate the coming of another day. The morning air is filled with perfume, the last tribute of Europe to Columbus. Let us follow them down the hill from *La Rabida*. Few words are spoken, but the hearts of both are filled with emotion. In the hour of triumph, they are overwhelmed with unspeakable sadness; but it is a sadness that purifies the heart, gladdens the spirit and abounds in great deeds for God and humanity.



Father Perez blesses the departing fleet.

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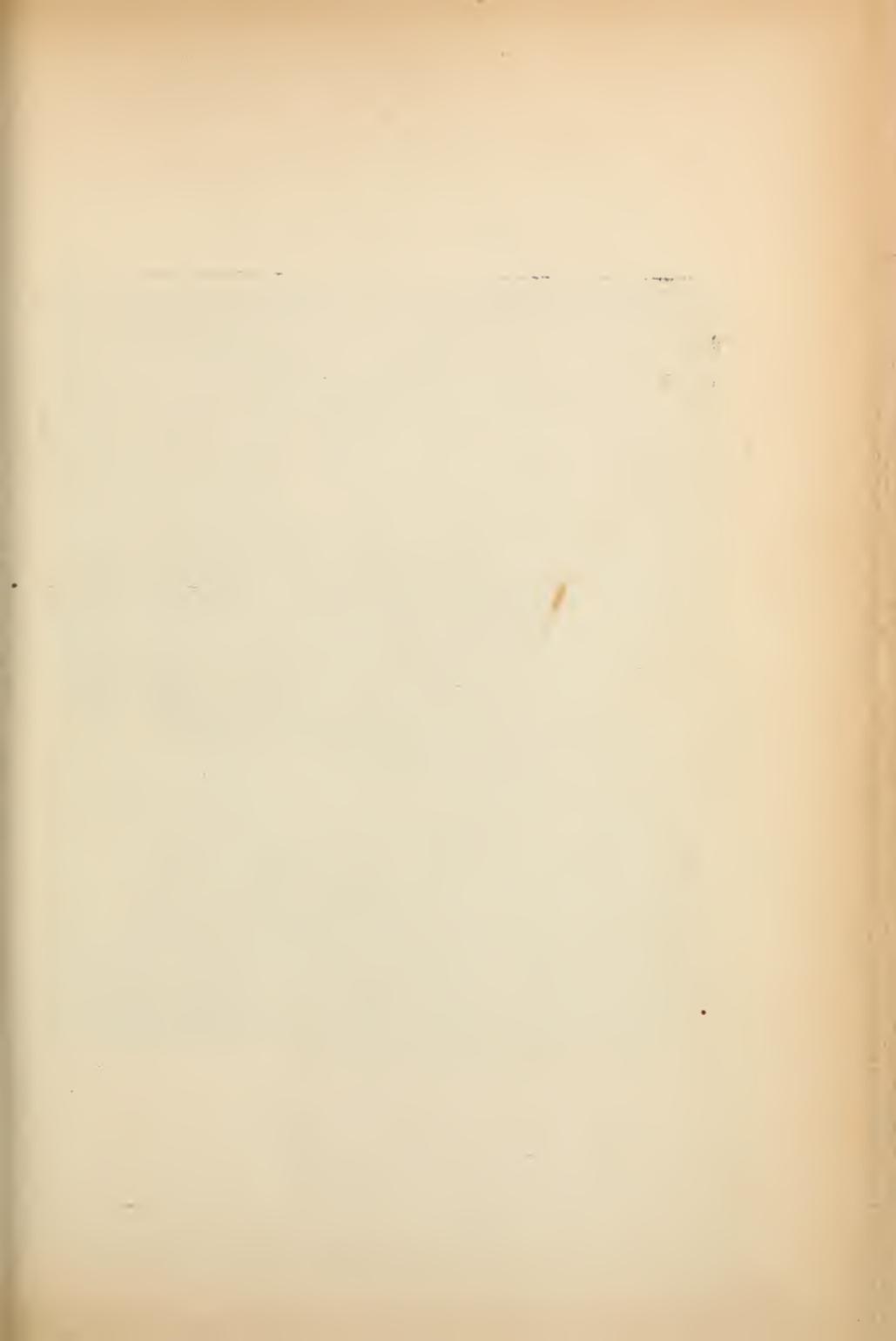
Having come to the sea, the *Santa Maria* bids them welcome; and giving the signal she prepares to receive her admiral. At this moment, there commences a scene of desolation and grief. The people of Palos are aroused by the noise of the sailors preparing to depart. Every window looking towards the port is opened. The houses are emptied, the streets are filled and cries rend the air. Mothers, wives, sisters and children run to get a last look of their loved ones. This was a trying moment. Grief had taken the place of reason. It was not a time for eloquence, because weeping and wailing rendered hearing impossible; but Perez was equal to the occasion. His task was not yet completed. Standing erect, his presence commanded attention; and kneeling on the sand he prayed, with the assembled multitude, to Mary the Star of the Sea, that she might accompany the mariners, and bring them back in safety.

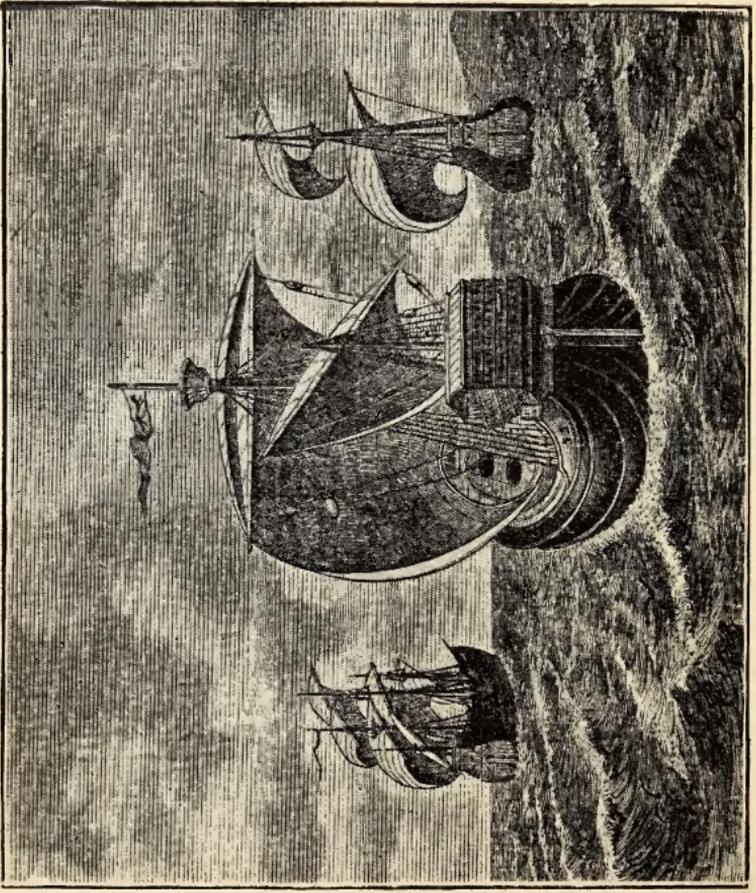
Pressing his friend to his bosom, Columbus bids him a fond adieu. Then entering the long boat he was carried to the *Santa Maria*. The raising of the glorious image of Jesus Crucified, on the admiral's ship, was the final signal; and the expedition set sail amid the cries of the multitude. It went forth in the name of God and blessed by the minister of Jesus Christ.

What were the emotions which filled the great soul of the venerable Guardian of *La Rabida*? It is impossible to tell. With his eyes fixed on the

little fleet, his gaze did not change until the last glimpse was gone. When nothing more could be seen, he quietly turned towards his convent home. Step by step, he continues his lonely walk. He ascends the hill, and he is at the convent wall. He reaches the portico, and his brethern are there, to watch the departing vessels going farther from the land. His heart leads him to the observatory, where he discerns, in the distance, the sails filled with a friendly breeze. There he remains motionless, for three long hours, until all is gone except sky and sea. Then Perez the friend of Columbus, without whose aid he could never have succeeded, offered a prayer to God for the safety of the expedition, and left in His divine care the accomplishment of His own grand designs.







On the steamship

CHAPTER XII.

On the Stormy Deep.

Why did not Perez accompany his friend, on the perilous voyage, and thus share in the glory? To answer this question, it is necessary to ask another. If it were decreed by Divine Providence that neither Columbus nor any of his companions should ever return, who would be the depositary of their grand idea? With all her wisdom, it is not likely that Isabella fully understood the mariner's theories. The doctors of Salamanca condemned them, on three occasions; and they would not countenance a second expedition, after a failure of the first. Desolate homes and broken hearts would stifle the enthusiasm of Palos and the rest of Andalusia; while the sorrows of twenty years would be enough for poor Diego. Who, then, would transmit to posterity the grand conceptions of Columbus and the hopes of unborn generations? No one except the illustrious Franciscan and Guardian of *La Rabida*.

Let us return to the departing fleet. Gradually, the shore disappears, and a last glimpse is taken of the distant hills. The vessels are on the foaming billows, and they are carried away at a fearful speed. Strange winds blow, and the great navigator is at his post. He questions the stars, he scents the air,

he tastes the water and he follows the harmonious course of the heavenly bodies. He watches, day and night, but the land is far away. Wonderful thought! For the first time, since the dawn of Creation, the vastness of the ocean and the grand machinery of the universe are contemplated amid those waters, where monsters of the deep roamed undisturbed. Every evening, hymns are sung to Mary Star of the Sea, and, every morning, fervent prayers are offered to Jesus Crucified.

Alas! the chants of the mariners cease. Hymns to Mary are no longer heard from the lips of the helmsman. Frowns are visible and the smile of joy has gone. August is passed and September begins, but no land appears. The little band are discouraged, and complaints are heard, but the voyage continues. The distance is measured, and the winds are studied. A notable change takes place. The sky becomes more serene and the color of the water is not the same. The heavens, too, are confusing, for the constellation so familiar to mariners appears to withdraw or grow dim.

On the 13th. of September, Columbus observed the magnetic variations. It was the first time that such an observation was made. The compass, the only guide of the mariner, began to fail, and he was left without the aid of science. He remains silent, but woe to him! if the other officers become aware of this frightful discovery.

September has reached the middle of its course, and, in the distance, something green appears. Every heart beats faster, and all eyes are strained. Ah! it is only an immense marsh filled with a peculiar kind of herbage, seemingly torn from rocks. Fear takes the place of hope. If their course be not changed the vegetation may entangle the vessels, and all may become a prey to the monsters of the deep. In vain, does Columbus try to revive their courage. All cry to turn the prow, but he brings the Crucifix before them; and, with an air of superhuman authority, he commands that the vessels proceed on their way. To the surprise of all a headlong wind carries them out of danger. All breathe in peace, but the land does not appear. Discontent again springs forth, and they curse the day that they left their native shores. Behold! a bird flies before the little *Niña* and all are filled with consolation. The land cannot be far off. Towards the close of September, the dense clouds arising from the water, the mild climate and the clear sky filled them with the hope of being near their destination; but they were deceived once more. Columbus himself had to admit that the land was still far-away.

Again violent complaints break out, fierce invectives are heard and a dark conspiracy is discovered against the life of the admiral; but the soul of the immortal genius is not disturbed. His self-control is matchless. He calmly keeps his

eyes fixed on the immensity of space, viewing the heavenly bodies, following their course and carefully considering the winds, which bear the vessels along with ever increasing rapidity. Convinced of his mission nothing can shake his confidence in God. The marvels of Creation are the subject of his constant meditation; and his greatest comfort is in reciting the divine office, according to the custom formed at *La Rabida*.

✓ Nothing elevates the soul of man like the ocean. Where Columbus happened to be, at the time of which we are speaking, the mysterious deep is truly grand. The water has a charming transparency revealing the many objects within its bosom. A profound silence prevails over the broad expanse, which evokes the infinite in thought. When night comes on, the magnificence does not disappear, but a new splendor succeeds. A great calm lulls the winds and the water to sleep. The heavens are studded with numberless stars, the horizon is clothed with all the beauty of the zodiacal light and in the transparent water the many living things appear as if asleep. The air, too, is delightful; while, now and then, mysterious sounds are heard coming from the armies of huge monsters below. At the morning's dawn the beauty does not grow less. The coming of the Sun, the dispersing of the clouds, the gilding of the horizon, the sweetness of the air, the gentle murmuring of the wind and the awakening of fishes of every size and species,

—all combine to render more beautiful and magnificent God's wonderful works.

All this had its influence on Columbus. All tended to unite him more closely with the Creator. Confidence in God buoyed him up against the threatened mutiny of his men. October had come and no land appeared. The disheartened sailors felt that to go farther was to seek certain death. The evil forebodings before they left home were remembered. The opposition of the learned doctors of Salamanca, and the fright of all Palos could not be forgotten. Would they ever see their loved ones again? This thought tore their hearts, and maddened them into frenzy. One and all regretted the confidence reposed in the Guardian of *La Rabida*, who was deceived by a boasting visionary. Is it right, said they, that one hundred and twenty men should perish to gratify the vanity of one? There is no time for delay, they cried; if this schemer does not turn homeward, let us cast him into the sea, which he so foolishly admires. All, not excepting the officers, were ready to mutiny. Even the nephew of Columbus deemed it a matter of rigorous necessity for their common safety.

The conspiracy was made known to Columbus, and he had still the courage to command more than a hundred in rebellion. They did not dare disobey, and the voyage continued. It was the 10th. of October, and the vessels were making

ten miles an hour; but the great speed only served to increase their fright. The land did not appear, and all felt that the favorable winds were hurrying them on to destruction. A mutinous spirit again shows itself, the sailors refuse to go farther and Columbus is threatened with a cruel death.

What will he do? He is alone against all. The officers and his nephew are with the discontented. Argument is useless. Succor can be found only in God, and the power of God triumphs. He disregards the protests of his men, and he is not disturbed by their threats. He solemnly declares, in a tone of authority, that nothing can move him from his purpose of going towards the unknown land, which he hopes to discover through the help of Jesus Christ.

How could such frenzy be calmed? How could such hatred be overcome? How could the ferocious instinct of self-preservation be ignored? A stranger, alone, distrusted, hated and cursed commands a crowd. He allays the fears of the multitude, who believe that he is leading them on to certain death. It was God's work. Heaven's protection was there. America's discovery was part of a providential plan.

One evening, after the hymn to the Blessed Virgin had been sung, the admiral ordered some of the sails to be hauled in; and he advised all to be in readiness to salute the land on the following day. The announcement filled every heart



with unspeakable joy. It was two o'clock, on the morning of the 12th. of October 1492, when a cannon from the *Pinta* proclaimed the glad tidings. It was the signal to be given at the first appearance of land. Every one was on deck. A cheer went up from every heart. The land! the land! was shouted by all. The cry rent the air, and went reechoing over the waters. The men crowd around their great leader, and, on bended knees, implore his pardon. He has his revenge, the revenge of a true Christian. He bids them thank God for the accomplishment of His own grand design; and a hymn of praise is sung to Mary Star of the Sea.

At the dawn of day, an Eden of verdure and flowers is presented to their view. Joy is depicted on every countenance. From their hearts they send a blessing on the New World. Columbus, in the act of placing his feet on the shore, falls on his knees, and, with eyes raised to Heaven, he pours forth to God a hymn of thanksgiving. The beautiful thoughts are preserved in history:

Omnipotent and Eternal God! Lord of the Universe! Thou hast created the heavens, the earth and the sea; and, by the Eternal Word, Thy own Divine Son, Jesus, Thou hast redeemed the world to a new life of grace; blessed forever by all people be Thy Sovereign Majesty; Thou hast deigned to exalt me, Thy unworthy servant, to be a preacher of Thy Holy Name in this new world! The assembled mariners answer: Amen!

Thus, for the first time, the sacred name of Jesus was heard resounding in this Western Hemisphere. The Guardian of *La Rabida* was not deceived. His prophecy was verified. There were other lands and other people to be led to the knowledge of God.



CHAPTER XIII.

Explorations and Return.

The island on which Columbus first landed was called by the natives *Guanahani*. Planting on it the Cross, he took possession in the name of the Crown of Castile; and anxious to offer to God the first fruits of the discovery he called it *San Salvador*, after the Saviour of the world. By that title he wished to indicate that the hour of Redemption had come for the benighted inhabitants. The sight of the mysterious and unexpected visitors filled with fear and amazement the people of *Guanahani*. They betook themselves to flight, but their fear was not of long duration.

Moved by innate curiosity they returned from their hiding places; and captivated by the serene expression and gentle benevolence which they read on the countenance of Columbus, they gathered around him. His lofty stature, his noble bearing, his rich garments and his glittering armor singled him out as the head of the mysterious band. Looking on him as a god, they began to give him divine homage. Their meaningless superstition saddened his great soul, and his heart yearned to draw them from error. « Not before me », said he, « not before us mortal men, ought you prostrate yourselves; but before your God who created and redeemed

you ». Then pointing to the glorious emblem of man's Redemption he gave the first lesson in Christian doctrine ever given on these shores.

The news being spread abroad, the wondering people came in crowds to gaze, in amazement, on the little fleet anchored in the harbor; and they brought to the Spaniards sweet smelling herbs, fresh water, food and tamed parrots, with pieces of gold and silver. Columbus was delighted with such marks of benevolence; and he knew that it would be easy to convert them to the Christian religion, if sweetness and meekness were used. This thought filled him with unspeakable gladness, and drew tears of consolation from his eyes. Yes, naked and ingenuous children of the forest, a ray of divine goodness has fallen on your virgin soil! The Eternal looks on you with an eye of pity! Yet a while, and that Cross which you admire planted on your shore, without understanding the mystery, will lead you from your abject condition! You shall become civilized men and children of the true God!

The religion of those unhappy souls was as degrading as their condition was deplorable. Numerous hordes roamed through the forests; and on their brows the light of reason had scarcely dawned. Their time was passed in bloody warfare and mutual destruction. Their actions were guided by brutal instinct, and their religious rites were just as brutal. Their worship was worthy of priests who drank

human blood, and sacrificed human beings on their abominable altars. Virtue was unknown, and the most hideous vices were cultivated.

On the morning of the 14th. of October, Columbus set out, on the *Santa Maria* to continue his explorations. He discovered other islands rivaling San Salvador in beauty. Having called the first after the Divine Saviour, he honored the second with the title of His Immaculate Mother; and to two others he gave the names of Ferdinand and Isabella, the King and Queen of Spain.

Continuing his explorations he reached an island which excelled the others in the richness of its soil. It was so large that it appeared like a continent. It was Cuba. Its mountains and valleys reminded him of the hilly countries of Europe, but the perfume exhaled bespoke a vegetation as yet unknown. It was not the thick and confused growth of the other islands, but a variegated and picturesque combination of groupings beyond the power of human skill. The trees, the shrubs, the flowers and the fruit exceeded all his expectations; and they were richer far than anything he had seen in his many voyages. Their beauty would have charmed a man less sensitive, and not as well prepared to contemplate the wonders of Creation. From the deck of his ship he saw a great river whose banks were shaded with trees laden with fruit, while birds of a diversified plumage skipped about on the branches.

Viewing the enchanting scene his thoughts were far away. They were beyond the ocean, near Palos, in the little Franciscan Convent of *La Rabida* and in the cell of his well-tried friend. With deep emotion, he said: « Oh! that you were here! best of friends, without whose aid this day could never have come! my hope when all hope failed! my comfort amid the greatest trials! whose genius dispelled my doubts and confirmed my faith! Father Perez, humble son of Francis, light of the Seraphic Order, would that you were here, to contemplate what we often saw together, and admired at a distance! » At that very moment the Guardian of *La Rabida* was, doubtless, praying for Columbus and his companions, far away, in those mysterious lands, which their genius had inspired and towards which their hearts turned, on many a bright night, from the convent terrace.

Having explored Cuba, Columbus went in search of other lands. It is not our purpose to follow him in all his discoveries. Neither shall we speak of his vicissitudes on land and sea. There is one thing, however, which we cannot pass over without injustice to the Catholic heart of the great navigator. Wherever he went, his first work was to plant the Cross of Jesus Christ; then kneeling before it, he implored the Divine Redeemer of mankind to regenerate those lands to a life of grace through the saving water of Baptism and the preaching of His gospel. Thus he inaugurated

that apostolate of love towards God and charity towards fallen man, which extended the Catholic faith, and Christian civilization throughout the New World.

In the beginning of January 1493, this man of Providence braves once more the stormy deep. He set sail for Spain from the shore of San Domingo, leaving behind a little band, who were destined never again to see home or family. Of the voyage we shall say only a few words. On the 13th. of February a tempest arose unequalled in the annals of navigation. All believed themselves lost except Columbus. Speaking of the storm in his diary he says: « My Lord Jesus Christ will not permit the discovery which I bear with me to perish with me ». God saved him. He escaped the fury of the sea to become a victim of man's iniquity. Touching along the coast of the Azores, he was induced to accept the hospitality of Castaneda, the governor, who being aware of the discovery treacherously sought the death of his guest. God once more interposed in behalf of His faithful servant. Columbus saved his life by immediate flight. Soon after another tempest arose, from which he was miraculously saved. He found it necessary to anchor at the mouth of the River Tagus. Thus he arrived with his three frail vessels, on the coast of Europe, at the close of a hard winter of frequent storms and many shipwrecks.

People came from all along the coast to see

the little fleet just returned from the New World. King John sent a messenger to invite Columbus to the court, to be honored according to his merits; and the queen did the same. Columbus did not wish to appear discourteous; but he had grave fears, especially, on account of the past. Those fears were not without foundation. Some of the very courtiers proposed to assassinate the great man; but the king did not conceal his horror for such a proposition, although extremely jealous of the glory acquired by Spain. Portugal heaped honors on the successful navigator. He was treated as a prince of royal blood. He set out from Lisbon on the 12th. of March, to commence his voyage towards Spain. It was not long or dangerous. Let us follow him to Palos, and accompany him with the wondering people to *La Rabida*.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Vow.

It is night. All is silent around *La Rabida*. The Moon is gently rising above the hills of Andalusia. A leaf does not move, and nothing is heard except the mournful notes of the owl. A majestic calm reigns everywhere. All nature appears to be enjoying a peaceful slumber. One voice, however, is heard, weeping and plaintive, as it descends from the convent terrace. Hark! Listen to the cries of fear mingled with hope:

« Columbus, my brother, where art thou? What sea has buried thee in its bosom? Perhaps, thou art cast on some barbarous shore! Lord of the Universe! Thou hast caused the Sun to shine for the good and the bad! forget not thy faithful servant! Mother of Mercy! Bright Star of the Sea! lead to safety the father of my beloved Diego! Columbus, guest of *La Rabida*, child of Providence, mysterious instrument of God's designs, come back to thy friend, to console his declining years! Seraphic Patriarch! beloved Poor One of Assisi! powerful St. Francis! protect thy worthy son ».

The voice, the accents and the language are those of the venerable Guardian of *La Rabida*. The prayer came from the depths of his soul. Seven months had passed since the departure of Columbus,

and no news had come, either good or bad, from the expedition. It was the common opinion that all were shipwrecked, and buried in the fathomless ocean. Mothers and wives cursed the Italian, from the bottom of their hearts, as the cause of their grief. Many an imprecation was heard against the immortal Isabella for having become so weak as to believe the ambitious foreigner. The venerable Guardian of *La Rabida* had lost his well-earned fame as the friend of the mariner. Had he not preached so much, said they, our loved ones would not have left us to be eaten up by the monsters of the deep or to die in a barbarous land.

The venerable old priest did not despair. His heart was sorely tried, but his confidence in God was never shaken. When night came on, and everything was silent, under the rays of the pale Moon, he was accustomed to ascend the convent terrace; and, fixing his eyes, on the distant West, he would pour forth his soul in prayers and lamentations to God, to Mary and to Francis. Thus he prayed, on the night of which we speak; and the subsequent hours were passed in his little cell, disturbed by a thousand dreams. At early morning, he went again to scan the distance, and view every ship tossed about by the waves. At length, he beholds one carrying the Standard of Castile. With beating heart and trembling limbs, he looks, again and again, that he may not be deceived. Going to the chapel, he celebrated the Holy Sacrifice in

behalf of his friend. He prayed, too, at Mary's altar, for the same intention; and the sacred image appeared to smile, as if in gladness. Then he betook himself to Palos, to cheer the heart-broken people. He could not, however, speak as before. The old eloquence was gone, and his spirit was crushed; but he infused into the disconsolate a cheering hope.

The new born hope was not of long duration. Grief reigned supreme in every heart; and the 15th. of March 1493 dawned on sorrow-stricken homes in Andalusia. Fortune is, however, as fickle as man. Some loungers on the coast espied a little fleet borne towards them by the wind. The sight caused no unusual emotions; but, after a while, the Standard of Castile appeared on the top-mast of one of the vessels. Every eye is strained, every heart beats and all are anxious. Then the little *Niña* is seen skipping briskly over the waves; and a cry of gladness goes up from every heart. Running to the town, they announce the glad tidings. Exultation takes the place of grief! The stores are closed, all work ceases and every house is deserted; because the populace have gone to welcome their returning loved ones. The bells ring, cannons boom and shouts of joy fill the air.

After a while, the admiral landed amid rapturous applause. He was welcomed with royal honors. The little city put on its best garb, The streets

were strewn with flowers. All were in commotion. Mothers, wives, sisters and children ran to embrace their loved ones. Every countenance bore the signs of unspeakable gladness. All were anxious to hear the wonderful tales of the extraordinary voyage and of what was seen in the New World. The sailors, who did not belong to Palos, wished to go, at once, to their own homes; but Columbus insisted that all should remain to keep the vow which was made on the stormy deep.

Here it is well to remark that, while the tempest raged near the Azores, Columbus vowed that, in the event of their safe arrival on Spanish soil, all would walk together, in their bare feet, to the nearest church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and there render thanks to God. The place at which they landed was Palos, the nearest church dedicated to our Lady was that of *La Rabida*, where Perez was guardian. What a beautiful and appropriate combination of Divine Providence! Reflection is needless. Joy was depicted on the countenance of Columbus and his companions, as they moved, in procession, towards the sanctuary of *La Rabida*. Here their hearts turned in many a gloomy hour. It was the cradle of the enterprise, and the prayers of the holy inmates accompanied the expedition. Hence it was proper that the hymn of thanksgiving should be sung on the same sacred spot. It was meet, too, that the mass should be celebrated by the lowly Franciscan who made the undertaking a

success, not by wealth or wordly power; but by the splendor of his genius, the efficacy of his prayers and the constancy of his friendship. What a happy day for Perez, for Columbus and his companions!

The procession had not yet reached the summit of the hill leading to the convent. The returned mariners had still a mile to go, when they saw before them the processional cross of the Franciscans. According to his custom, Perez was in the observatory, at an early hour. Discerning some vessels coming nearer and nearer to the shore, his heart beat with emotion. He could not believe his eyes. The revelation was too consoling to be true. The ringing of bells and the booming of cannon dispelled his doubts. The joy was too great for a heart so used to sorrow. He remained motionless as one dead; and he passed some time in a state bordering on ecstasy. Descending to the convent, he communicated the glad tidings to his brethern; and a resident of Palos came with the news that the returned mariners were already on their way to *La Rabida*. The grand old priest intoning the *Te Deum* went with the religious community to meet the procession.

The approaching bands of devout worshipers had not come together, when the eyes of Columbus and Perez met. Both were weeping tears of inexpressible delight. At length, they embrace. It was a moment of solemn silence. Neither could speak,

for their hearts were full. The procession continued to Mary's altar, the Divine Sacrifice of Thanksgiving is offered by Father Perez; and, in hymns of praise, the multitude give expression to their gratitude.

The sacrifice being concluded, it was time for greeting. Kneeling at the feet of the priest, Columbus thanked him for all the favors received through his hands. In the hour of triumph he was grateful to his benefactor. The sailors, also knelt before the venerable man of God, to receive his blessing and kiss his hand. The joyful people proclaimed him, once more, the friend of the mariner; and they begged his pardon for having distrusted him, when their hearts were sorely tried. Such expressions were distasteful to the humble Franciscan. He did not forget the respect due to his sacred character, but he was only a man and he insisted that the Creator should not be forgotten in the creature. « My dear children » said he, « not from me, but from God and His Blessed Mother you ought to ask pardon, for having been weak in faith or wanting in confidence » The vow being paid, all went their way. Columbus alone remained at *La Rabida*, where he commenced again, the life of a Franciscan.

We have just reached a very interesting point in the life of Columbus, which reveals a beautiful trait in his character. Palos was a small city, but it was sufficiently large to entertain one of his

great renown. The public inns and the wealthiest families were ready to give him a hearty welcome; while the authorities were impatient to feast him, according to his merits. Such a life was not congenial to the man of prayer, who loved to commune in silence with his God; but he had stronger reasons for making his home with the Franciscans.

He came to *La Rabida* a homeless stranger, a mendicant and a wanderer without hope. He found no one to fathom the depth of his grand project, until he met Father Perez. All hope failed before the eventful day of his coming. The cooperation of the Franciscans proved the practicability of his theories, and made them an established fact. Who, then, had a better right to share in the glory of his triumphs? The little convent was the cradle of his immortal destiny. There he ought to tell the story of his wondrous discovery. He had many things to say to his venerable friend. Columbus deposited secrets in the bosom of Perez, which man shall never know. All he suffered from men, all that he received from God, his intuitions, his deductions, his doubts, his hopes and his fears, — all were confided to his spiritual father. These two souls were chosen by God for the accomplishment of a grand design. They had the same thoughts, the same intuitions, the same aspirations and the same zeal for souls redeemed by Christ's precious Blood. Their genius triumphed over the

prejudice of scientific men. Their confidence in God, in Mary and in Francis removed every obstacle; and it was meet that their common joy should be shared within the hallowed walls of *La Rabida*.

CHAPTER XV.

The Triumph.

Columbus slept very little the night after his arrival at Palos. It was late when his interview with Perez came to an end. He tried to sleep, but in vain. His spirit was restless, joy overwhelmed him and his mind was filled with many projects for the church and the world.

Perez was no less agitated. He saw a glorious future reserved for the Seraphic Order, and he felt that the time was come for carrying out, in all its fulness, the command of St. Francis to his children. Yes, they would soon spread themselves throughout the world as apostles of peace and love. Beyond the ocean there were extensive lands ready for the seed of Christ's gospel, and his beloved order would have no small share in civilizing and evangelizing those lands. His predictions were verified, and his desires were more than filled. After a lapse of four centuries his memory is still fresh, and his fame is coextensive with the hemisphere which is the child of his genius and his faith.

Before the two friends retired, on that eventful night, they had affairs of deep interest to arrange. A dispatch had to be sent to the Court of Castile

announcing the discovery. Its proper wording was of no small moment, and it had to be ready for the messenger at early morning. Roselly de Lorgues says that no congress of diplomatists ever discussed a matter of greater importance than that which engaged the attention of Columbus and Perez in the little convent of *La Rabida*. It made Spain rich and powerful, and it enabled her to wield the scepter for many a day.

In the morning Columbus had other things to do, which show how Catholic was his faith. While the storm raged on the ocean, he made three vows besides the one spoken of in the preceding chapter. These were known only to himself, and they concerned him alone. He promised to make pilgrimages to the sanctuaries of Our Lady of Guadalupe, of St. Clare of Moguer near Palos and of Our Lady of the Cincture in the Province of Huelva. It may appear a strange coincidence, but it is none the less true that these three sanctuaries were in charge of Franciscans. The circumstance shows how deep was the love of Columbus for the Seraphic Order. Notwithstanding his great need of rest, he set out, at once, alone and in the garb of a penitent to satisfy his obligations. After his pilgrimages, he returned to *La Rabida*, to feast his soul with the food of divine grace under the spiritual guidance of Perez. There he remained until he learned that a dispatch inviting him to the court awaited him at Seville.

The fame of his discovery had gone before him. All Spain was alive to the importance of the event. He received, everywhere, a royal welcome. The people gathered in crowds to pay him homage. Parents carried their children in their arms, to point out to them the wonderful man. Girls dressed in white scattered flowers before him. Public officials met him at the gates of their cities, to receive him with the honor due his rank. In the towns and along the country roads, the applause was tumultuous. Thus Columbus entered Barcelona, the seat of the kingdom, on the 15th. of April 1493.

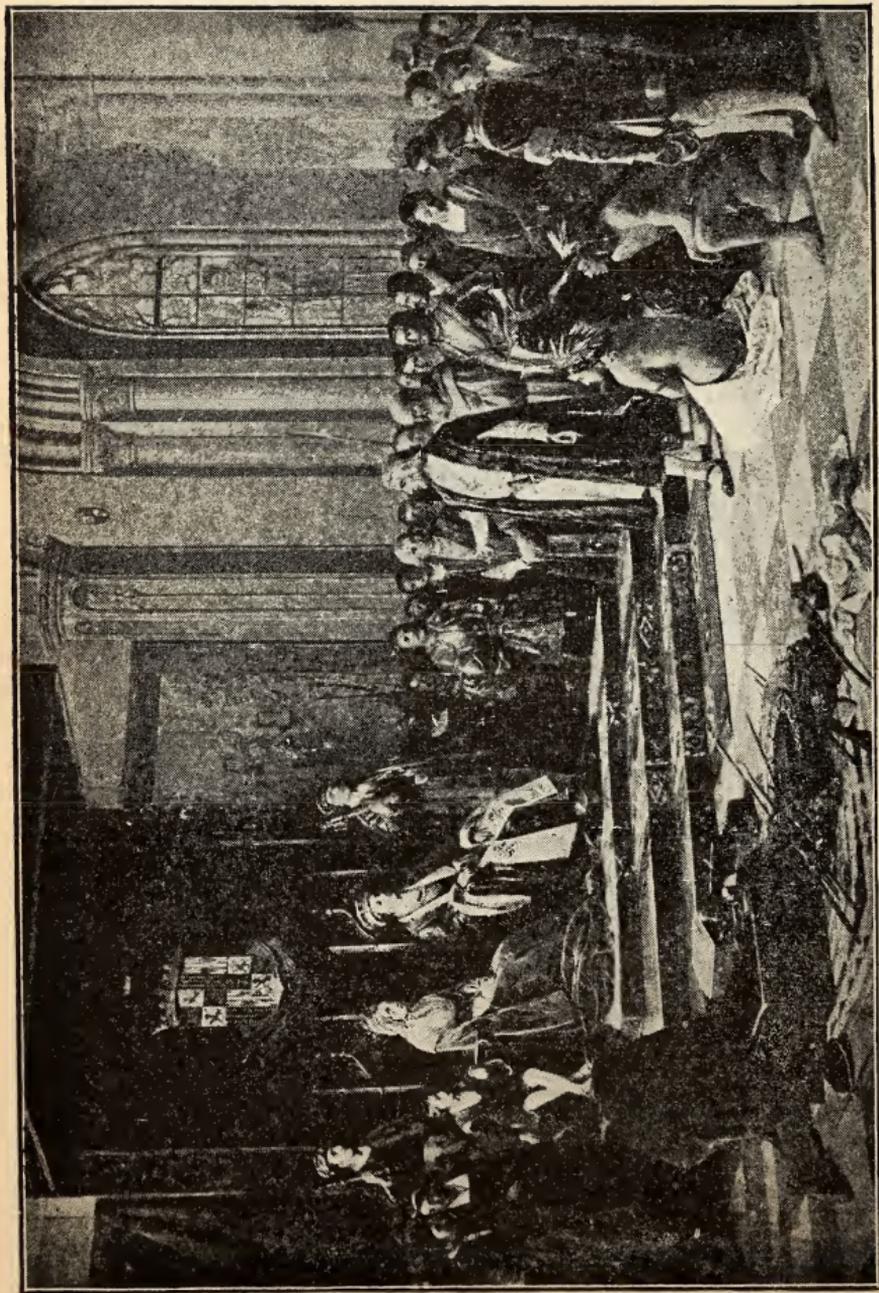
The day was all that could be desired. The Sun was out in splendor, and not a cloud darkened the horizon. A gentle breeze came from the sea, which exhaled its perfume on the flowers just budding forth in all their beauty. All nature appeared to offer her first fruits to gladden the reception. Spain never witnessed a greater triumph than that prepared for the immortal discoverer. Let us try to follow the description given by Roselly de Lorgues:

« As he reached Barcelona a great part of the citizens were out to meet him. The flower of the youth went before in a cavalcade. A deputation from the court welcomed him at the city's gate. The royal palace was magnificently decorated and enlarged to receive the immense throng. Under a beautiful canopy brocaded with gold there were

two seats covered with velvet and fringed also with gold.

« Before the arrival of Columbus, the two monarchs advanced to their thrones wearing their crowns and all the insignia of royalty. Trumpets announced their coming preceded by heralds and their military household. The heir apparent took a seat beside that prepared for Columbus. The royal chamberlains and the ministers of state, the dignitaries of Castile and Aragon, cavaliers, sword bearers and pages were arranged in order around the throne. A place was reserved for the ladies of honor, the prelates, the powerful lords and the nobility. Outside, the tumult was indescribable, and the streets of Barcelona were filled with an impatient throng. On every house and in every window there were flowers and decorations. The joyous shouts of thousands below ascended and ascended until they were heard reechoing from the balconies, terraces and housetops. Little by little the noise increased until the applause became tumultuous.

« The shouts of the multitude, and the return of the royal messenger from the gate announced the coming of the cortege. Suddenly the royal standard appears born aloft by the courageous sailors returned from the New World. Their manly bearing and their bronzed features excite universal admiration. Curiosity devours the multitude anxious to behold the plants, the animals and the Indians taken from the strange shores.



Reception of Columbus at Barcelona.

« At the end of all came Columbus simple and modest in the midst of his magnificent equipage. His heart was overflowing with joy and his countenance revealed the serenity of his soul. His entire bearing spoke of the grand mission so happily fulfilled. In an instant, every head was uncovered to salute the nation's guest. The Christian hero was deeply moved at such demonstrations, but he referred all to God. He would not consider himself in any other light than that of a mere instrument in carrying out the designs of Providence in behalf of man.

« As soon as the eyes of the king and queen rested on Columbus, they arose and advanced to greet him. He knelt before the queen to render her homage according to the etiquette of the Court of Castile, but Isabella would not allow it. She made him sit at her side, on the seat prepared for him, and she proclaimed him a grandee of Spain. After mutual congratulations, he was invited to tell the story of his discovery.

« Glancing on the august assemblage, as if to call them to bear witness to his words, he went on to consider the Christian, the scientific and the political aspects of the discovery. He declared that the favors which God deigned to bestow on Spain were a recompense for the piety of the sovereigns and faith of their subjects. He showed the mysterious ocean opened to the Spanish fleet and the glorious Standard of Castile. He then

went through a brief, but methodical narration of the incidents of the voyage from the day of setting sail until their arrival on the shore without a name.

« With a classification and order all his own, he described the nature of the soil, its geological and mineral properties, the richness of the vegetable kingdom, as well as the various species of animals and fishes. As a further illustration, he laid before his august hearers, now and then, specimens of his discoveries in the animal, mineral and vegetable kingdoms.

« Having completed the poetic review of his discoveries in the three kingdoms of nature, he came finally to man, the compendium of all God's works; and he called their attention to the seven Indians whom he brought with him on his return voyage. He described their race characteristics, their social condition, the simplicity of their manners and their religious belief. The dignified bearing of Columbus, his forcible reasoning, his poetic imagination, his fervid eloquence and the order of his discourse commanded rapt attention. The grandeur of his conceptions, were in harmony with the spirit of the age; and they found an echo in the breasts of those Christian sovereigns who had just raised the Standard of Man's Redemption on the ruins of Mohammedanism.

« The discovery was conceived in a desire for the glory of God and the propagation of the Christian faith, that the name of Jesus Christ might be

blessed in the extremities of the earth. The immortal discoverer, in closing his discourse, assured his audience that a multitude of souls would be led from paganism into the bosom of the Church, to partake of the blessings of Redemption. The king and queen, the nobles and courtiers crowded around him, to congratulate him; and falling on their knees, with one accord, all intoned together the triumphal hymn, *Te Deum*. The people took up the notes, and thousands of Christian hearts poured forth their thanks to God for His mercies to fallen man ».

Ah! how inconstant is human nature! Who could believe that this man of Providence, the benefactor of Spain, feasted and honored by the entire nation would, ere long, be carried in chains as a traitor before the same sovereigns of Castile? Who could believe that the wonderful genius, who gave to Spain a new world, would be reduced to such misery as to have no place to rest his weary head save a poor Franciscan convent? Who could imagine that he would live to be friendless, to see his merits unrecognized and to find himself abandoned by all the world except a few Franciscan friars? Poor Columbus! you lived long enough to prove man's inconstancy and experience the world's ingratitude! You had your labors, your triumphs, your glories and your humiliations! Your life and your history convey useful instruction, and recall scenes in the life of the world's Redeemer. The populace saluted Him as their king, and, a few days after, they

clamored for His Blood. Had Columbus died in the hour of his triumph, he would have been spared many a pain, many a heart-ache and many a bitter sorrow; but he had one consolation, he never lost the friendship of his Franciscan brethern. He, at least, was not misunderstood by them. After the discovery of the New World, he had still a mission; and it was to show how inconstant is human friendship, how vain is human applause, how fleeting is human glory and that there is nothing really worthy of man's aspirations except the glory of God and the happiness prepared for His faithful servants.



CHAPTER XVI.

Second Expedition.

The narrative of the triumphal entry of Columbus into the royal city may occasion surprise that Father Perez had no part therein. In fact, the great Franciscan appears to be entirely forgotten in the tumultuous applause along the streets of Barcelona, as well as in the Court of Isabella. He was able, however, to confirm the immortal discoverer in the faith of his mission, when adversities had almost extinguished the light of hope. He welcomed the homeless wanderer to his hospitable abode; and he was a father, as well as instructor, to his son, for seven long years. More than once, he risked life and honor for the beloved project; and he was God's instrument to open to the renowned navigator a path on the mysterious ocean. The jealousy of courtiers, the prejudice of the age and the authority of learned doctors prevailed against the wisdom of a penniless stranger; but Perez won the heart of Isabella and held her to her generous resolution of discovering the land without a name. His persistent efforts, also, saved the New World for Spain, just as she was about to lose it. Now, did not such heroic sacrifices render the benefactor worthy of a place beside his protégé in the hour of triumph? Why was there

no place in the Court of Castile for the grand old priest, who knew, perhaps, before Columbus that there were other lands and other people in the far distant West?

We have already remarked that the hope of human glory is never sufficient to arouse the energies of a true child of the Seraphic Patriarch. If faithful to his vocation, the glory of God and the welfare of his neighbor will be the moving spring of his conduct. He may keep in step with the march of human progress, but it is only when such progress has in view the real good of the people. Although indifferent to public opinion, the children of Francis have been able to alleviate human misery in almost every land. It matters not that life or liberty be in danger, when there is a needy mortal to be succored. They speak in every tongue, they breathe the air of every clime and they enter the most savage regions, to relieve human suffering or bring a soul to God. Nothing can stay the progress of a zealous friar. He is familiar with the customs of China, he relieves the plague-stricken in Hindoostan, he civilizes the savage in Africa, he preaches the Gospel within the shadows of the pyramids of Egypt and he gives up his life defending the tomb of our Divine Saviour. There is no land so barbarous, no people so inhospitable and no air so pestiferous as to stifle the zeal of the Seraphic Order.

Such being the life and aim of a true Franciscan,

one ought not to wonder that Perez did not take part in the triumphal entry of Columbus into Barcelona. It is not in keeping with the generous character of Columbus to imagine that he could have ignored his greatest benefactor and well tried friend in the hour of triumph. Neither is it likely that Isabella forgot her venerated confessor to whom she owed so many temporal and spiritual favors. Nay, there is authentic proof that Perez was invited to partake in the honors given to the immortal discoverer. The retirement of his convent was more congenial to his Franciscan heart. He was not of the world, and he had nothing to do with it unless to render it happier and better by the patient discharge of priestly duties. He sought retirement, but he would not conceal himself, when the public good demanded his presence. A second expedition to the New World was decreed, and the humble Franciscan was called to share the labors of the great navigator.

The reception being concluded the whole nation was aroused for further undertakings. The discovery enkindled in the fervid Castilian mind the conception of new glory. The New World presented a fine field for conquests, that would enrich Spain and exalt the Christian name. The time was most opportune. Islamism was conquered, and the Spanish heart became restless for new victories. Isabella read the sublime thought in the demeanor of her subjects, and she proved herself equal to

the occasion. She, therefore, issued a solemn decree ordering a second expedition. It was to be larger than the first, and the port of departure would be Cadiz, the safest and most spacious of the kingdom.

The publication of the decree was a joyful impulse to the entire nation. Cavaliers, religious men and fortune hunters rushed to enroll themselves under the Standard of Castile. Some were desirous of conquering new kingdoms, others thirsted for the conversion of Pagan nations, while others were charmed at the prospect of so many lands teeming with milk and honey. Columbus was justly chosen as the supreme commander, and the selection inspired confidence, while giving satisfaction to his former companions. Another appointment was made, which filled with joy the admiral, and proved the wisdom of Isabella. Of this we are going to speak.

Seventeen ships were ordered to get ready for the voyage, and the various offices were filled with men qualified for the undertaking. One alone remained vacant, and this was, perhaps, the most important of all, A skilled astronomer was deemed necessary in those days for every maritime expedition. Columbus was well qualified, but Isabella did not deem it right to burden him with unnecessary responsibility. She was well aware of the astronomical skill of the Guardian of *La Rabida*, and she knew how dear he was to the heart of the great

Italian. While he was her confessor she experienced his profound humility, his rare wisdom, his greatness of soul and his intimate union with God, the source of all scientific light. He, too, made the former expedition a success, by conquering prejudice, removing impediments and changing hopeless theories into an established fact. Hence the lowly Franciscan, Father John Perez of Marchena, the Guardian of *La Rabida*, was commissioned astronomer of the second expedition.

Any one, who has experienced the sentiments of true friendship, or its influence in comforting generous and afflicted souls, will understand how agreeable the selection was to Columbus. He saw in it a further proof of a providential design; and he became, more and more, convinced that he himself was one of God's instruments in carrying out the divine plan. It is certain that Isabella could have done nothing more in harmony with the aspirations of the two friends; because one and the other thirsted for the salvation of souls, and both wished to be united, in any capacity, as apostles of Jesus Christ.

We cannot say whether Columbus returned to *La Rabida*, before sailing from Cadiz. Historians are silent on the subject, and documentary proof is wanting. It is more than likely that he revisited his religious brethren before risking the stormy deep. We are quite certain that he wrote to Perez informing him of the queen's wishes, and

entreating him, in her name, to accept the proffered dignity.

Grand old priest! the long desired hour has come. The moment of setting out with your friend has arrived. You are going to the distant lands revealed to both, not in search of gold or kingdoms, but to lead your pagan brethern to the knowledge of God. You are well repaid for all your labors. The project so dear to both is an accomplished fact. You will be able to bring Redemption to some soul, at least, to some babe through the saving water of Baptism. This is worthy of the confessor's labors; nay, of the martyr's blood. Your religious brethern will become apostles, and confessors and martyrs in those savage lands. The prayer of your seraphic father is heard. His thought, which was not a dream, but a prophetic vision will be realized. His children will be messengers of peace and love to the ends of the earth. Their mission is to reform the world by the sublimity of their poverty and the intensity of their love for God and man. They will be the civilizers of savage nations, the benefactors of the human race and the glory of God's church. Rejoice! grand old Franciscan! your thought will not be all a dream, for history will prove the verification of your prophecy.

When Perez received the letter of Columbus, he was beside himself with joy. He prayed and he wept and from the depth of his soul he exclaimed:

« Blessed be the Providence of my God, my prayers are heard! I will go with my beloved friend to the new lands foreknown by us both! Yes, I will go, I will go, and soon! I will cross the dark and stormy sea! I will set my feet on those far distant shores, and I will plant there the Cross of Jesus Christ! I will gather as many idolators as God will give me, and I will bestow on them the blessings of Redemption! Yes I will go, I will go! » A young friar approached him weeping and said:

« Father, why do you abandon your children? to whom will you leave us? » Perez replied: « I will leave you under the care of the Blessed Mother of God. You will pray for me, and, from the shores of the New World, I will unite with you in spirit, that Our Lady of *La Rabida* may render our labors fruitful for the glory of her Divine Son ». The young friar said: « Father, you are old, take me with you. If you become sick, who will nurse you? » « Thanks, my son », answered Perez, « God, who sends me, will take care of me. I am old, it is true; but I have a young heart, and God will give me strength, as well as courage ». That day was one of mingled joy and sorrow for the Franciscans at *La Rabida*. The Father Guardian was full of the brightest hopes, but his children were overwhelmed with grief.

On the same day, Perez wrote to the Minister General of the Order, asking the necessary permission to cross the ocean. The successor of St. Francis,

at that time, was one of the most distinguished men that the order ever produced. He was Father Francis Nani of Brescia, a valiant champion of Mary's Immaculate Conception and justly styled a Sampson. He had recently declined the cardinal's dignity offered by Sixtus IV. Having obtained the necessary permission, Perez selected twelve companions from different provinces of Spain, among whom were the celebrated Father Garzia de Padilla and Father John de Borgognon. Bidding farewell to his children and friends at Palos, he set out, in the name of God, for Cadiz, where the seventeen ships were ready to sail. The expedition was composed of fifteen hundred men, soldiers, sailors and missionaries. All vied with each other in rendering homage to the Astronomer of the Expedition, the Mariner's Friend and the unwearied protector of their admiral.

CHAPTER XVII.

First Christian Missions in America.

Columbus had faults, but what mortal is without them? His deep religious faith, his fervent piety and his childlike confidence in Divine Providence cannot, however, be denied. His wonderful genius and his profound scientific researches are unquestioned. Scientific investigation led him to a knowledge of the existence of the nameless lands, but zeal for God's glory urged him on to a final triumph, despite so many obstacles. Religion was deeply rooted in his soul, and from the moment he fell under the influence of the great Franciscan his heart became thoroughly Catholic.

It cannot be doubted that Isabella's chief aim, in promoting the discovery of the New World, was to extend the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. She could not be indifferent to the glory of her monarchy, but the facts prove that the sacrifices she made were for unhappy souls. Divine Providence gave her the glory of driving the Moors from her country, and she saw the Cross triumph where the Crescent reigned. Gratitude to God was, therefore, her motive in hearkening to the prayers of Perez.

There is another circumstance which may serve to show our readers that the discovery of America was entirely a Catholic undertaking. Columbus

felt that no people could be happy without religion, and that the presence of God's chosen ministers was as necessary for the soul as laborers to cultivate the soil. Hence he asked King Ferdinand to petition the Holy See to send an apostolic vicar, to guide the little flock, which would grow up around the Cross planted by himself a year before. Better far would it have been, if he had made his wishes known to the ever faithful Isabella, because Ferdinand was guilty of an act of sacrilegious treachery that shall ever tarnish the glory of his reign. This fact may seem foreign to our purpose, but historic truth requires us to notice it.

In those days, there lived in Castile a priest who was more of a courtier than a theologian, and whose life was guided by worldly wisdom rather than the prudence of the Gospel. His name was Father Bernard Boyl, and he was a favorite of the king. Ferdinand sought, at once, the appointment of the courtier; but Pope Alexander VI knew too well the part taken by the Franciscans in the discovery to ignore them, on this occasion. Disregarding the recommendation of Ferdinand, he appointed Father Bernard Boil, the head of one of the Franciscan provinces of Spain, as the first vicar apostolic of the New World. The scheming Ferdinand was not to be baffled, and the similarity of the names enabled him to perpetrate a fraud. He suppressed the pontifical brief, and gave a pretended copy to his favorite, but the fraud could

not be concealed forever. The original bull appointing the Franciscan Father Bernard Boil was discovered in the private archives of the Vatican, on the 7th. of February 1851. It is found on page 122 of the apostolic letters of Alexander VI, and it is thus addressed: « To Our Beloved Son Bernard Boil, a Friar of the Order of Minors, and Vicar of the Same Order in the Kingdom of Spain ». The copy properly authenticated bore the signature and seal of the Prefect of the Archives, with the date here given. We shall see farther on the unhappy fruit of kingly intrigue. The false vicar apostolic proved to be one of the worst enemies of Columbus, and his vile conduct imbittered the closing years of the great discoverer's life.

On the morning of the 25th. of September 1493, everything was in readiness for the setting out of the second expedition. Of the seventeen ships, one called the *Graziosa Maria* was first in rank. She carried the most distinguished personages of the fleet, the admiral and the astronomer, Columbus and Perez. Father Bernard Boil and the missionaries were on other vessels. A joyful multitude stand on the shore impatient to behold the departure. Far different was it from that which started from Palos, a little more than a year before. At that time, there were doubts and fears, lamentations and weeping for the loved ones who might never return. Now, all is gladness. Wealth and power and glory are

in store for Spain, and a rich harvest of souls awaits the missionaries.

The hour fixed for starting has come, but the caravels do not move. There is some delay. What is the cause? Why does not the admiral give the signal? Ah! he is in tears, and the old Guardian of *La Rabida* is also weeping. Diego the son of Columbus is there with his younger brother Fernando. Columbus had not seen Fernando in years, and he parted with Diego more than a year before. Fernando was the fruit of the second marriage of Columbus with Beatrice Henriquez, and Diego was staying with her from the day on which he left his convent abode. Both came to bid their father good-by, and the scene was a painful one. The great navigator was not indifferent to parental instinct, and the old priest proved, once more, that he had a heart. Gladness and exultation are changed into weeping. Ah! is there an earthly joy without a sorrow? Columbus had to part with his two sons; and Perez found it hard to give up, perhaps forever, his beloved Diego. How many things were said at that moment! It was a painful separation, but stern necessity demanded it. The whistles are heard, the anchors are weighed, the sails are given to the breeze, the ships ride on the waters and a favorable wind carries them towards the Canary Islands.

On the 13th. of October, they lost sight entirely of the land. Twenty days later, the admiral noticed

a change in the winds and in the color of the waves. He knew that the land was not far off. In fact, on the morning of the 3rd. of November, a lofty island appeared, which he called *Dominica*; it being the Latin for Sunday, the day of the discovery. He did not go ashore, because it had not a suitable port. Another was quite near, and here they landed. Columbus was the first to touch the soil, and after him came the astronomer of the expedition. Father John Perez of Marchena was, therefore, the first priest to stand on the shores of the New World. As Columbus did a year before, he erected a cross and blessed the soil.

On the following morning, the admiral directed his course towards an island, the largest of the group, to which he gave the name of *Santa Maria de Guadalupe*, in memory of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe, where he made a pilgrimage some months before. This was in accordance with a promise given to the Franciscan friars in charge of the sanctuary, as a recognition of the kindness experienced and the favors received therein. He discovered four other islands, which he called *Santa Maria de la Rotunda*, *Santa Maria la Antigua*, *San Juan Bautista* and *Santa Ursula*. On the 22nd. of November, he reached Hispaniola, where he left his companions, before returning to Spain after his former voyage. What was his horror in finding the little garrison destroyed, and its brave defenders massacred, not one being left to tell how they died!

Let us leave him for a while to his grief. God is his only comfort.

The first work of Father Perez in Hispaniola was to build a little chapel almost on the shore. It was the first temple erected to the worship of the true God on this hemisphere. In it he celebrated the first mass. It was the first time that the Unbloody Sacrifice of the Son was offered to the Eternal Father in the New World. Here, too, he placed in the tabernacle the Most Holy Sacrament. He, then, went at the head of his brethern evangelizing the savages, making converts and forming little congregations. Filled with the zeal of a true apostle, his heart was inflamed with charity; and he was ready to suffer everything for Christ. He was patient and full of hope, laboring for the day and leaving the future to God. He could not be disheartened for it was his office to sow the seed; and he knew that the Divine Reaper would gather in the harvest, at the opportune time. An abundant fruit soon began to appear. The brutal cannibals were charmed with the meekness of the Gospel, and they were anxious to enroll themselves among the disciples of a Crucified God.

Thus began those Christian missions which were the cradle of civilization on this hemisphere. The Franciscans and the members of the Order of St. Jerome worked together hand in hand. These pioneers were a worthy example to all who followed

them. Their labors, their fatigues, their privations and their sufferings are recorded in the Book of Life. The Franciscan Father John de Borgognon and Father Roman Pane of the Order of St. Jerome applied themselves to the study of the language of the country. They succeeded so well that they soon mastered all its difficulties. Heaven's aid and Heaven's light were surely with them. They were the first Europeans to speak the language or dialects of the New World. They were the first preachers, and they taught other missionaries. The preaching of God's word was thus inaugurated full of hope.

Hail! first apostles of glad tidings to the New World! Hail! generous and fearless sons of the Seraphic Patriarch! Hail! devoted followers of the learned and austere Jerome! The seed of eternal life sown by you will yield an abundant fruit. Ere long, Mother Church will rejoice in her new children as numerous as the sands on the sea shore or the stars in the firmament.

In fact, only a few months had passed, when many souls were won to the Lord and regenerated in the waters of Baptism; but how many fatigues! how many labors! how many sufferings! and how many anxious cares in bringing such a savage people to the peaceful religion of Jesus Christ! To give an idea of the difficulty encountered, it is sufficient to say that, in the beginning, the missionaries had no means of teaching the profound

mysteries of religion except by material signs. Oh! how great the difficulty! What patience required! What zeal, and what charity for the poor savage! The missions thus inaugurated soon began to exhale a perfume all divine. The work was God's and to Him alone was due all the glory.

While the missionaries were thus laboring to convert the natives in one part of the island, Columbus was laying the foundation of a city in the other. He called it San Domingo after his father, whose name was Dominic. As soon as Perez became aware of the design of Columbus, he hastened with some of his companions to build a little church in the first American city, which was the second church constructed in the New World. There, too, he placed in the tabernacle the Most Holy Sacrament. Beside the little church he built a home for the missionaries; but it was so poor and so small that Columbus erected, at his own expense, a real convent. This was the first religious house on this hemisphere. It was called after the great Patriarch St. Francis of Assisi; and the former Guardian of *La Rabida* became its first superior.

These zealous apostles continued their work. The city grew daily in importance. The blessings of Christian civilization were seen on every side. The conversions were numerous. The flock became so large that a supreme pastor was necessary.

In due time, a bishop was consecrated. He was Father Garzia de Padilla, a Franciscan and companion of Perez. The Franciscan Order thus gave to America its first bishop, as well as its first priest.



CHAPTER XVIII.

The Deserters.

It is difficult to find a great man whose life is not intermingled with sorrow. Misfortunes and humiliations appear to be the common inheritance of the virtuous and magnanimous. The reader may remember that, in the preceding chapter, we left Columbus on the shores of Hispaniola grieving over the fate of his companions to whom he committed, a year before, the care of the New World. This was the commencement of a series of trials, which ended only at his death.

Let us meet him, again, in the same locality. Serious difficulties confront him, for discontentment has broken out among the colonists. The narrow quarters and sickness incident to long sea voyages have enfeebled minds as well as bodies; and the exposure on the shore before houses could be built has had a depressing influence on their spirits. The gentlemen of the band did not relish the fatigue of building homes, clearing the forest and cultivating the land. The soil was rich, and the rivers flowed on a bed of sand mixed with gold; but to labor is the command of the Creator, and the acquisition of honest wealth requires patient industry. Columbus insisted on the maxim of the ancient monks that *the industrious alone have a right to food*. This

doctrine was disagreeable to gentlemen reared in luxury and unused to work. Perhaps, not one among the cavaliers ever earned his daily bread in the sweat of his brow.

In the language of Washington Irving, many had embarked in the enterprise with the most visionary and romantic expectations; but cruel necessity undeceived them. The long desired Eden turned out to be a barbarous and uncultivated land. The climate was unhealthy, the natives were not all friendly and the comforts of living were few. It is true that the untutored savages were easy victims to gratify the vicious inclinations of libertines and marauders; but Columbus would not connive at wrong-doing of any species. Verily, the vices of civilization were not adapted to lead benighted Pagans to the sublime truths of the Gospel. The gentlemen became disheartened, and they cursed the schemer whose misrepresentations enticed them from happy homes.

A considerable number of the colonists were taken ill. Unhealthy exhalations from undrained marshes, and the action of the Sun on decayed vegetable matter caused various maladies. All the evils of a tropical climate were experienced. The sickness continued, and the stock of medicine was exhausted. The supply of provisions, also, began to fail, and very little could be expected from hostile neighbors. Famine threatened the community, and all were reduced to a shorter allowance.

Complaints were heard, and the Vicar Apostolic protested against being treated like the common herd. A devoted priest would have voluntarily sacrificed himself for the needy and suffering. Many workmen being ill, it became necessary to press every healthy man into service, without regard to rank or avocation. The missionaries did not object, but the cavaliers refused. Force appeared a necessity, and obedience was exacted by compulsory measures. This unpardonable procedure wounded family pride. Spanish honor was assailed, and the national dignity was outraged. In due time, the Italian upstart and fool-hardy genius learned that merit was of little consequence, that genteel blood ought to be respected and that courtiers had some influence at court.

The great navigator had crossed the stormy deep to discover new lands, and not to waste his time in weeping or listening to the complaints of chronic grumblers. Having attended to the wants of the suffering, he set out with Perez and a select few. They embarked on the little *Niña*, whose name was changed to that of St. Clare, the first daughter of the Seraphic Order. They sailed along the south-western coast of Cuba, where they discovered Jamaica. Then they directed their course towards the isles of the Caribbean Sea, with the design of destroying the retreats of the cannibal tribes; but Columbus fell sick, and he was taken in a dying condition to the island called Isabella.

A few days after, some savages stood wondering, in silent compassion, at a man lying on the sand, whose entire appearance told the story of intense mental anguish, as well as bodily pains. There was no one near except a poor old man, who soothed the agonizing brow, with one hand, while he pointed upward, with the other, as if saying: In Heaven there is hope. The poor old man was Perez, and the other was Columbus. The malady increased, and the sufferer was at the point of death. Ah! had he then died, he would have been spared greater sorrows. His energies could not endure for ever, and his turn of sickness came. The strain of many years was beginning to tell the tale of ruined health and a broken heart. We are indebted to Washington Irving for the following notice of Columbus at this period:

« The extraordinary fatigues which he had suffered both in mind and body, during this harassing voyage, which had lasted for five months, had secretly preyed upon his health. He had shared in all the hardships and privations of the common seamen, and he had cares and trials from which they were exempt. When the sailor, worn out with the labours of his watch, slept soundly, in spite of the storms, the anxious commander maintained his painful vigil, through long sleepless nights, amidst the pelting of the tempest and the drenching surges of the sea; for the safety of his ships depended upon his watchfulness. During a

great part of the voyage he had been excited by the hope of soon arriving at the known parts of India; he was afterwards stimulated by a conflict with hardships and perils, as he made his way back against contrary winds and currents. The moment he was relieved from all solicitude, and found himself in a tranquil sea, which he had already explored, the excitement suddenly ceased, and mind and body sunk exhausted by almost superhuman exertions. He fell into a deep lethargy, resembling death itself. His crew feared that death was really at hand. They abandoned, therefore, all farther prosecution of the voyage; and spreading their sails to a favourable breeze from the east, they bore Columbus back, in a state of complete insensibility, to the harbour of Isabella ».

Instead of sympathizing with him, some of the leaders took advantage of his illness to foment a conspiracy; but Perez was loyal to the end. Why was Columbus so isolated among his followers? Even barbarous tribes are drawn together by the bond of common suffering or common danger. In this instance, there were many reasons for unity of sentiment. One ostensible purpose brought all far from home. They might never see loved ones again. All professed the same faith, and all were children of Mother Church. Success would bring some good to each, and all would share in the common glory. Passions, however, controlled the minds of men; and when jealousy, avarice or

revenge enters the soul every noble sentiment disappears. Oh! how inconstant are men! There comes a moment, when popular idols become the victims of popular fury, and a nation's heroes are consigned to national execration. The renowned Italian author, Tullio Dandola, comments on these circumstances, in the following manner:

« Columbus attempted the civilization of a new world with a band of wicked men; but this end can never be attained, as long as force and despotism are employed. To civilize a people or regenerate a nation love is necessary. The Christian religion alone can sow the seeds of a true civilization, which establishes an alliance between God and man. The end of Christianity is to lead the creature to the Creator. Disregarding the designs of Columbus, the Spaniards treated the natives with unnecessary cruelty, and the latter naturally resented such conduct. Ill feeling sprung up, as well as consequent strife. Spain had to reap the fruit; for although God does not always visit the sins of men with rigor, yet He never forgets the crimes of nations ».

To the honor of the tender hearted Isabella be it said, she did not sanction the iniquities of cruel adventurers. She was ever humane, and she had worthy successors. Extermination was not the policy of Spain; but it was the peculiar method of other nations. She has been punished, and a day of reckoning will come for others in God's own time.

That which force and despotism and human skill can never accomplish was brought about by the meekness of the Gospel and the charity of a Crucified God. While the malcontents plotted and conspired against Columbus, the noble little band of missionaries rallied around Perez as their leader. They were solely intent on converting the savage tribes. Suffering and privations were of little consequence, if even one soul were saved through the Redeeming Blood of Jesus. They came not in search of gold, but to win souls to God; and they saw an abundant harvest before them. This harvest of souls was the only consolation of Columbus, through long years of subsequent trials. While the frightened Indians ran before the soldiers, they flocked around Perez and his companions. Columbus reposed unlimited confidence in the gentle influence of his friend; and Perez never grew weary in his work. In spite of the bad humor of the cavaliers and the ill-concealed enmity of the false vicar apostolic, he labored to lay a foundation of solid piety; for he knew that all human institutions remain just as long as Heaven permits. Ah! neither Perez nor Columbus estimated the evil consequences of envy and a desire to rule.

We are now approaching a subject which may occasion pain, but it must be faced for the sake of historic truth. Subsequent events will show the wrongs heaped on Columbus, and it is proper to lay bare the motive for the sake of justice.

Father Bernard Boyl was the real cause of the discontent at Hispaniola, and the cruel treatment which embittered the closing years of the great navigator's life. Washington Irving does not hesitate to style him *an intriguing man, who had conceived a violent hostility against the admiral, and had become disgusted with his mission to the wilderness*. The fair minded historian is not of our household of faith, and his testimony may not be accepted against one of the Lord's anointed; but no one will presume to question the authority of the great French writer, Roselly de Lorgues, whom the lamented Father Ventura calls the worthy biographer of America's discoverer. Nay, the immortal pontiff, Pius IX, deigned, in a special letter, to bless the historian's undertaking. Now, what has Roselly de Lorgues to say of Father Bernard Boyl? He styles him « a missionary without virtue, a priest without dignity and a citizen without obedience, who dishonored his order and became an echo of calumny, as well as a counselor to conspirators.

Father Boyl had not a particle of the apostolic spirit. Like the cavaliers, he crossed the ocean for riches and worldly glory, but not to win souls to God. He took his promotion as an earnest of further advancement. The dependent of an earthly king was disloyal to the King of kings. Not being a true shepherd, he could not be expected to lay down his life for the sheep. The creature of kingly intrigue, forced unlawfully upon the little flock,

abandoned his post, when danger appeared. The hireling was not of God, because he was not sent by Christ's vicar.

From the beginning, he threw the weight of his influence on the side of evil-doers. He fanned the flame of discontent, and he labored to render fruitless the noblest efforts of Columbus. A temporary abode in the New World was so distasteful to him that he sought an excuse for leaving his post. The heroic virtues of the other missionaries were a reproach to his unpriestly conduct; while the self-denial and gentle patience of Perez were unpardonable crimes. Like other weak men, he could abuse his power and play the despot, when he dared. His presumption carried him so far as to chide Columbus for an alleged want of consideration towards the cavaliers; and he had the effrontery to threaten him with a sentence of excommunication. History stamps the character of the fraudulent vicar apostolic with the mark of infamy; for he basely deserted his charge, in the hour of danger, and added treachery to his other crimes.

Father Boyl found favor with Pedro Margarite, the military commander. These kindred spirits plotted together. Both grew tired of privations in the newly discovered lands. The gentlemen resented the pretensions of Columbus, who, a few years before, was a homeless mendicant at the door of *La Rabida*. The leaders were of sufficient consequence to gain adherents in their own class.

Columbus had already sent twelve ships back to Spain, with specimens of gold, fruits and plants, as well as some Indian men and women. Five vessels remaining in the harbor, Margarite and Boyl were not at a loss for means of transportation. Taking on themselves the responsibility of their conduct, they embarked without delay. Being favorites with the king, they deemed it an easy matter to justify their desertion. A pretended zeal for the public good, as well as a desire to make known to the sovereigns the sorrowful condition of the colony and the unbearable tyranny of Columbus would satisfy every purpose. Such was the shameful desertion of the military commander and spiritual guide.

One day the Court of Castile was surprised at the unexpected coming of the deserters. They had not long to wait, for influence at court was their weapon and hope. Amid tears and lamentations, they assured the sovereigns that their escape was little less than miraculous; and they described the New World as a place without gold or silver, but abounding in ferocious savages and deathly plagues. Bitter complaints were made against the admiral, whose tyranny became, every day, more insupportable. The accused was absent, but the accusers were many, and the vicar apostolic lent the weight of his dignity to the accusations. Of course, there could be no unworthy motive, for all were persons of presumed respectability. All Spain was convinced.

No hearing was accorded, but the accused was found guilty. A cruel despotism ruled in Hispaniola, and the Italian adventurer was enriching himself on the life's blood of his victims. Such was the supreme conviction of all Spain.

Ah! the cup of affliction was not yet full, but it filled to the brim, and America's discoverer drank it to its very dregs. Father Boyl was the chief calumniator, but the Spanish nation was the unjust judge. The fearless Perez was far away, and it occurred to no one in that Christian land that the simplest principles of justice were ignored. Oh! how many crimes are committed in the name of justice! We are not disappointed in Ferdinand, who was not above forging apostolic letters, but the mistake of the magnanimous Isabella serves to show that the wisest may err. A royal minister was sent to inquire into the charges, and closely watch the suspected governor. Juan de Aguado was the man chosen for this task, and he entered on it with all the zeal of an ingrate.

It is surprising how men of genius are so easily deceived. Great minds and generous hearts are not conversant with the methods of vile natures. Aguado had been favored by Columbus. In fact, he owed his promotion to the influence and recommendation of the great navigator; but he repaid him with the basest ingratitude. Washington Irving says of Aguado that he « was one of those weak men whose heads are turned by the least ele-

vation ». He forgot his obligations to Columbus, as well as the nature and extent of his own commission. Treating the admiral as a criminal, he talked of going with a detachment of cavalry to arrest him. All having grievances were invited to make them known.

It was a period of Jubilee for evil-doers. Every coward hastened to give expression to his malice, and every law-breaker clamored against oppression. Aguado listened to all with deference; nay, he flattered himself that he had collected sufficient information to ensure the ruin of his benefactor. The rights of the accused were ignored, and his honor was set at naught. Notwithstanding these indignities, Columbus received the ingrate with the courtesy due to his office. This condescension was taken by craven spirits as a want of moral courage. To avoid new complications, he resolved to report to the sovereigns in person. Before setting out, he wrote to Perez, his only friend, who was preaching to the savages along the shores of Hispaniola.

Let us rest a while to contemplate the grief of the grand old priest. Ah! how he suffered for unborn generations, who would say that a monastic habit never covered a generous heart. An effort was made to drag him down in the humiliation of Columbus, but the conspirators never fathomed the depths of his great soul. He was only human, but he was well trained in the

school of adversity. At the feet of Jesus, he found light and strength and hope. What is he to do? The resolution is taken. He will accompany his friend; and soothe his sorrows during the tedious voyage.

The first apostle of the New World gathered the little flock around him. Like Paul at Ephesus, he wished to give his last instruction and impart his last blessing. The grateful converts stood before him. Through his ministry they were made children of God. His heart was full, but he was getting old. His strength began to fail, and the spirit of other days was gone. At *La Rabida*, at Mary's altar and in the Holy Sacrifice, he would remember them. From the observatory, his heart would go across the ocean to the lands he saw, on many a starry night, and to the people for whose salvation he thirsted. He had to go, because he was called, again, to aid the man sent by God to carry out Heaven's designs. Like Paul, he blessed his children, and he bid them farewell.

The hope of Perez did not fail, neither were his labors in vain. The work began at *La Rabida* was carried on to a successful issue. The virgin soil yielded an abundant harvest, and the sons of Francis and Jerome never wearied in their efforts. Many converts were made, but much evil was done by the dissolute men who came

for wealth and power. Roselly de Lorgues says that the violent deeds of some of the colonists gave a false idea of Christianity; and the religion being confounded with the men it suffered for the crimes of the oppressors.



CHAPTER XIX.

Columbus a Franciscan.

Before the providential meeting of Perez and Columbus, at *La Rabida*, the latter sent his brother Bartholomew to England with an offer of the projected discovery. After many vicissitudes, some hopes were held out to him, and he hastened to Spain in search of Christopher; but, at Paris, he received the news of the discovery and that a second expedition was in preparation. The generosity of the French monarch, Charles VIII, enabled him to hurry his movements, but he arrived too late. Being, however, a skillful navigator, he was placed in command of three ships freighted with supplies for the colony. He reached Hispaniola just in time to comfort his brother weakened by sickness, loaded with responsibilities and perplexed by the machinations of conspirators. Bartholomew was the bearer of the first letter to the New World. It was written by Queen Isabella to his illustrious brother, and it bore the date of August 16th. 1494. That letter reveals the sublime motives of Isabella in aiding Columbus; and it shows that the chief design of the noble hearted queen was the glory of Jesus Christ and the exaltation of His church. Thus she speaks: « We had great pleasure in reading the things which you wrote to us and we

render thanks for all to Our Lord. We hope that, through your aid, this work, which is all yours, will be the means of greatly extending our holy faith ». This paragraph, properly, belongs to a preceding chapter, but it is reserved until now, so as not to lose the thread of our story.

Having provided for the spiritual welfare of the new converts, Columbus and Perez set out for Spain on the 10th. of March 1496. In virtue of the power given to the viceroy, his brother Bartolomew was commissioned to exercise the same authority during his absence. Thirty-two Indians and two hundred and three sick soldiers accompanied them. They were not far from port, when they were met by contrary winds which tossed them about, twelve days, along the shore. When the storm ceased a new danger arose. The provisions began to give out, and it became necessary to return to the Island of Guadaloupe, to get a new supply. The shore was crowded with a band of warlike women, to prevent their landing, and hordes of savages were near to oppose their further progress; but the sight of the guns was sufficient to send them back to their retreats. After a few days spent in getting the necessary provisions, they set out, once more, for Spain.

New difficulties were in store for Columbus. As soon as they were on the high seas, despair took possession of nearly all. Some of the sick soldiers died, and others were at the point of death.

The great admiral could not be accused of a want of care for the sick, because he was attending to them day and night. Perez, too was unceasing in his charity, and he gave the clearest proofs of his heroic patience. Nevertheless, the suffering continued. To add to their other miseries, hunger threatens them; and the atrocious crime of cannibalism fills their thoughts and is heard in whispers. It was even determined to cast the poor Indians into the sea. Columbus and Perez heard the proposition with horror. Their firmness crushed the mutinous spirit; but confidence had to be restored, and religious feelings had to be aroused in the disheartened men. It was shown to them that the poor Indians were their brethern in Jesus Christ, that their conversion was the grandest fruit of the discovery and that all who died in the holy cause were martyrs of charity. In three days, they were in the waters of Cape St. Vincent, and their spirits revived.

On the 11th. of June, they entered the bay of Cadiz, and they were welcomed on the shore by a joyous multitude. The two incomparable friends were destined never to meet again in life. Bidding each other a fond adieu, one betook himself to Seville, while the other hastened to *La Rabida*. From Seville Columbus wrote to the court, informing the sovereigns of his return. A month passed without a reply. Historians find nothing worthy of notice in that month, except that America's

discoverer put on the Franciscan habit; and led the life of a Friar Minor. Washington Irving refers to this incident, in the following manner:

« The appearance of Columbus himself was a kind of a comment on his fortunes. Either considering himself in disgrace with the sovereigns or having some penitential vow, he was clad in the habit of a Franciscan monk ».

Other historians note the fact that he put on the Franciscan habit. Las Casas says that he saw him in Seville clothed as a Franciscan. The parish priest of Los Palacios relates that he entertained him in his own home wearing the cord of St. Francis and a habit which, in form and color, corresponded to that belonging to members of the same order. Humboldt says that he appeared in the streets of Seville clothed in the habit of the religious of St. Francis. Oviedo and Bernaldez confirm what is said by the foregoing authors.

The real motive for this conduct on the part of Columbus was not to satisfy a vow, but to show his contempt for the world, as well as to give public manifestation of his gratitude to the Seraphic Order. This conclusion is supported by Oviedo, Las Casas and Bernaldez, who lived in his day and were on friendly terms with him. Roselly de Lorgues goes still farther, for he says that the great navigator cherished the design of following Perez to *La Rabida* and ending his days within those hallowed walls.

Illustrious Francis! Founder of the Seraphic Institute! thou didst deign to add a new star to the crown which encircles the brow of thy poor but honored order! Popes and kings, cardinals and bishops, scientists and statesmen were numbered among thy children! Thy sublime poverty served as an inspiration to the beautiful in art and the magnificent in genius! Thy holy rule revealed to thee by Christ on the hills of Umbria became a model for the most perfect forms of civil government, as well as a constant impetus to true philanthropy! Apostles, martyrs, doctors, confessors, virgins, nay, saints without number call thee father, at the very throne of God! In fine, the immortal genius destined to bear the name of Jesus to the New World was enrolled among thy sons!

At length, it pleased Isabella to congratulate Columbus on his safe arrival; and she invited him to her presence, as soon as rested after his voyage. The message was couched in the kindest terms. He set out, immediately, for Burgos, where the court was located; and his appearance was a sufficient answer to his calumniators. Having heard his explanations, the queen had no sentiments except sympathy and reverence for Heaven's envoy. So far, the machinations of Boyl, Margarite and Aguado had failed. Isabella expressed her regret for the cruel wrong in which she had a part, as well as a desire to make reparation, but it was too late. The sting of ingratitude had reached



a vital part. The crushed spirit could not be aroused, and the wounded heart could not be soothed.

A third expedition was ordered, and, in spite of his enemies, Columbus was made the leader. On the 30th. of May 1498, he set out from the port of San Lucar de Barremeda; and on the 31st. of July an island was discerned close to the main-land to which he gave the name of La Trinidad in honor of the Most Holy Trinity. Then, too, he saw, for the first time, the continent, which had been the subject of his thoughts for so many years. After coasting a few days, a landing was effected; but he, again, set out on his explorations, and Hispaniola was reached on the 30th. of August. This expedition was the most disastrous of all for Columbus. He was sick almost unto death, and anarchy reigned among the adventurers. King Ferdinand had never much sympathy for the man that brought such glory to Spain. Unknown to Isabella, the infamous Bobadilla was sent to restore order, but he went rather to create disorder. America's discoverer was cast into prison, and a vile rabble clamored for his death beneath his window. The unhappy man really thought he was going to execution, when his jailers carried him in chains to the ship on which he was transported to Europe.

When the news reached Spain that the great discoverer was taken thither in chains, the whole

nation was filled with horror. The enemies of the great man were silent, and the queen was heart-broken. Ferdinand had to assume an air of grief, and he declared that Bobadilla exceeded his authority. Bobadilla was deposed, but the wrong done Columbus could never be repaired. He abandoned the court, where he had been so often deceived; and he went to find peace with his Franciscan brethren in the city of Granada.

Wonderful combination of circumstances! says the great historian Cesare Cantù. The illustrious Italian came a homeless wanderer seeking food and shelter at the Franciscan convent of Our Lady of *La Rabida*. No one could comprehend his theories until he met the lowly Perez. This poor friar without power or worldly influence made his mission a success. Again, the immortal genius is abandoned, and another Franciscan convent opens wide its doors to receive him. The convents of *La Rabida* and *Granada* welcomed him, in the hour of affliction; and *Guadaloupe* entertained him as an honored guest. The convent of *Zubia* is also to be made illustrious by his presence, and he enters therein, after a short stay in Granada. It seems to have been decreed by Providence that America's discoverer should find peace nowhere, except among the children of the Seraphic patriarch.

CHAPTER XX.

Death of Perez.

While a devoted friend remains, no one should deem himself entirely abandoned. The sweet influence of friendship dispels many a gloom, and saves the troubled soul from untold danger. Some spirits cannot be crushed until friendship disappears. When human sympathy dies, a turning point may be found in one's career. A weak heart succumbs, while a strong one puts forth renewed energy. If the cause be good, a brave man will fight and suffer and conquer or die alone; and his persistency may not grow less, even if his purpose be far from perfect. How necessary is friendship for human happiness! How rare is this virtue! No one needs its soothing influence more than the strong man bent on one idea, or whose heart is disturbed by warring emotions.

We have seen what the friendship of Perez did for Columbus. Its most beneficent effect was to save him from despair, when all hope was gone; and to inspire him with confidence in God, when faith was gradually ebbing away. It was written in the eternal decrees that these two friends should never meet again in life. Columbus wished to be at the bedside of the dying old priest, to bid him a last fond farewell, and to receive his last blessing,

just as his pure soul was going to God; but this comfort was not given to the victim of so many sorrows and disappointments. Let us hope that their meeting in Heaven was all the more joyful.

We saw in the preceding chapter that Perez hastened to his beloved home at *La Rabida*, as soon as he arrived at Cadiz. After an absence of three years, he is once more among his children. He conceived the grand idea of the discovery of the New World, when it was ridiculed as one of the day dreams of a fanatical friar. He infused new hope into the immortal discoverer, when all hope was gone. With his friend he contemplated the marvels of Creation in those distant regions, for which he sighed so often from the convent terrace. His was the privilege of celebrating the first mass in the Western Hemisphere. To him was given the glory of evangelizing and bringing into the Church the savage children of a race entirely unknown. After all these triumphs, he takes up, again, the monotonous life of a friar forgotten by men, but carefully watched by that God whom he faithfully served to the end of his days.

✓ Ah! the most peaceful joys are but a prelude to new sorrows. ✓ Such is the life of man! Joys and sorrows follow each other in close succession. The beloved Guardian of *La Rabida* was taken from his children and his friend. What a sorrow for them! We followed him in some of the most

important events of his life, and we learned to love him. You, dear reader, are anxious to know some of the particulars concerning the death of this great benefactor of the human race, but to our grief we cannot satisfy you. We know only that he died some years before his friend. The archives of *La Rabida* contained all the documents, but they were destroyed when the army of the First Napoleon invaded Spain.

Such a void in the history of so great a man cannot be considered less than a calamity. Although we cannot tell the precise day of his death, we know, however, that he was remembered, twenty years after, as the Champion of Columbus, the Father of the Poor and the Mariner's Friend. His rare virtues, his untiring friendship and his persistency in doing good made him illustrious as a man, a citizen and a priest. After the lapse of twenty years, his tomb was frequented by pilgrims to weep over his remains and ask divine favors through his intercession.

O Perez! first apostle of good tidings to the New World! Thou shinest as a star amid the greatest benefactors of the human race! Through thee the Seraphic Order was rendered illustrious in the discovery of America. Were it not for thee, Spain would have lost Columbus and the lands discovered by him. Thy aid rendered the theories of the immortal Italian an established fact. Thou didst open to thy order a new field for a glorious

apostolate, and thou didst enable thy brethern to go as ministers of peace and love to the extremities of the earth. Truly can it be said of them that there is no land not fertilized by their labors or their blood.

Hail! noble priest, true child of the Seraphic Francis! It is meet that thy illustrious memory be perpetuated in this fairest portion of the hemisphere which is the child of thy genius! Thy glorious deeds inscribed in many tongues are scattered, here and there, through different lands. The task of collecting the principal events of thy heroic life, and placing them before American readers in one small volume might have fallen to more worthy hands, but among thy admirers there is none more charmed with thy virtues and thy genius than the compiler of these pages.

The little convent of *La Rabida* became famous as the home of Perez and the cradle in which were nurtured the theories of Columbus. The people of Greece and Rome were accustomed to make frequent pilgrimages to the places rendered sacred in their national history. These pilgrimages kept alive a grateful remembrance of their sages and heroes, and enkindled a love of country which made them invincible. *La Rabida* should be dear to all who revere Columbus and are conscious of the genuine liberty, the enlightened progress and Christian brotherhood diffused by American influence throughout the world. Let us go in thought, to

dear old Spain. Let us climb the hill and view the convent and rest in the shade of the pine trees, which so often solaced the soul of the unfortunate Italian.

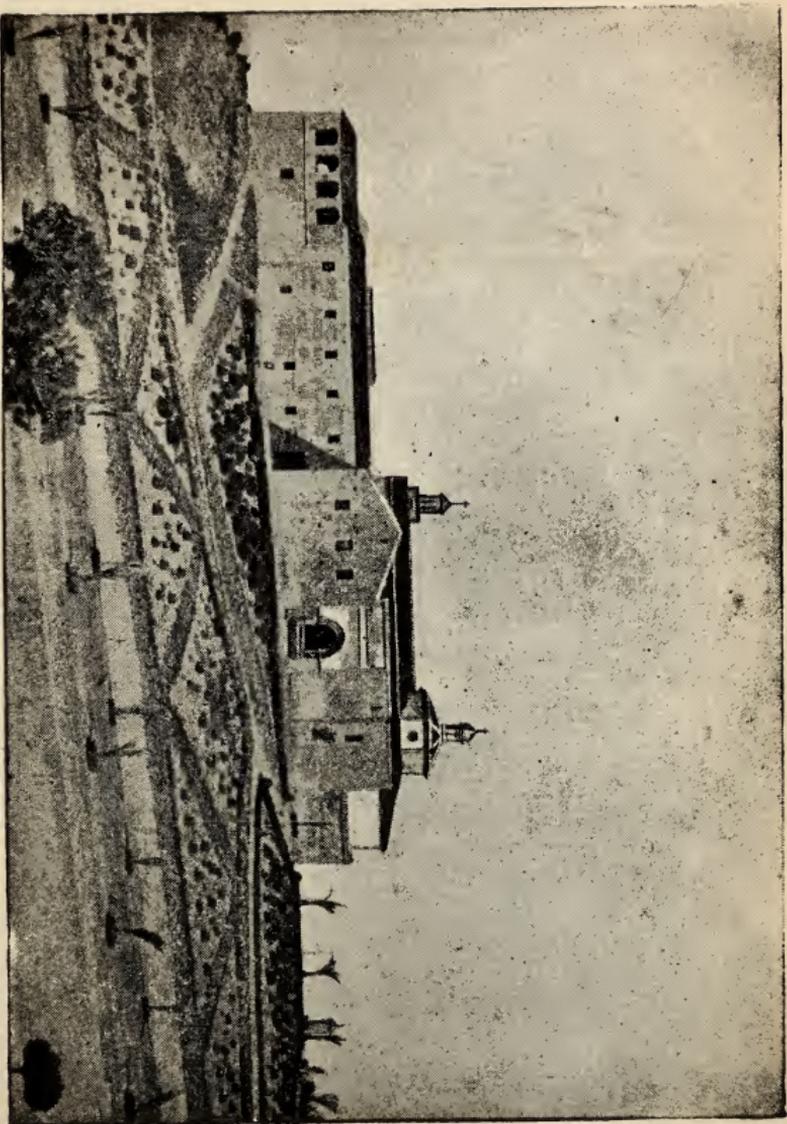
The recollection of the friendship between Perez and Columbus was preserved for many years, not only in the vicinity of Palos, but in the most distant parts of Spain. Every one returning from America was drawn by a religious instinct to visit *La Rabida* and the little cells rendered sacred as the abodes of the two incomparable friends. In the year 1528, which was twenty-two years after the death of Columbus, Hernando Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico, visited *La Rabida*, and met there Pizarro before the latter subjugated Peru.

This sacred retreat became, every day, more and more famous until the decline of Palos. As Moguer grew up, Palos decayed; and the loss of population rendered the labors of the Franciscans less necessary. It also became more difficult for them to get their daily bread, begging from door to door, according to their rule. The number of friars gradually decreased, but enough were always left to guard the cell of Columbus and the tomb of Perez. In fact, at the close of the 18th. century, the Franciscans still occupied the Convent of *La Rabida*; but the French Revolution came and after it the war against Spain. *La Rabida* was sacked, its inmates put to flight, its library scattered and its archives destroyed. In the year 1825, four

friars still lingered at the sacred spot, to watch the ruins, which could not be repaired, on account of continued wars. The walls remained, but the suppression of the religious orders gave the last blow to the dear old retreat. In the year 1855, nothing was left of the convent except a heap of stones. The pines were gone, and one palm tree alone resisted the ravages of time.

Such was the end of the celebrated convent of *La Rabida*, where, for six long centuries, the hungry found bread, the homeless shelter, the ignorant instruction, the afflicted consolation and all an example of brotherly love. The more we read its history, the greater our sorrow at the ruin of such a sanctuary, in this enlightened age. Our indignation is increased, when we reflect that it was destroyed by those who should have preserved it with loving care. It was the sacred abode of Perez and Columbus, who raised Spain to a glory unequalled in all her history, and Spanish hands laid waste the cradle of their country's greatness.

Brighter days are dawning for the sacred retreat. Thanks to the munificence of the families of Nemours and Montpensier, the work of restoration has been auspiciously begun. The walls have been raised and the place has become habitable, but the friars are not there. It was our pleasure to see it, on the 3rd. of September 1901. On that day, the ardent desire of many years was gratified. After



La Rabida on the 3rd of September 1901.

the compilation of this little work, devotion took us to Lisbon, the birth-place of St. Anthony of Padua. Thence we sailed to Huelva, a Spanish port of some importance. *La Rabida* was visible as our good ship entered.

With beating heart, we took in the scene of so many cherished memories, but we were not content until we went from room to room communing with the dead. We knelt, too, in the chapel; and as we poured forth our soul to our Heavenly Queen, near where her miraculous image rested, we thought of loved ones far away. We prayed, also, that the brethern of Perez might soon return. Why cannot America, the fruit of the genius of Perez and Columbus, take an interest in the work? The Knights of Columbus could make it a success. The decline of Spain began, when the inmates of *La Rabida* became victims of persecution; and she shall not enjoy peace until the wrongs of the past are repaired.

With its many vicissitudes, the Convent of Our Lady of *La Rabida* is fondly remembered. God will not permit it to be forgotten. The student of American history will ever find the dear name inscribed on one of its brightest pages; and the Franciscan Order will perpetuate its memory as the home of two of the most illustrious children of the Seraphic Patriarch. Its influence shall be felt in many lands, and its

name shall be a harbinger of glad tidings to unborn generations. May God bless the hallowed spot, and may the spirit of Francis, of Perez and Columbus be infused into the world to render it more Christian, happier and better!



CHAPTER XXI.

Columbus in a Franciscan Grave.

We left Columbus in the Franciscan convent of Zubia, which had been erected by Isabella the Catholic, a few years before, in remembrance of a signal victory over the Moors. It rested on a lofty eminence overlooking the fertile valley of the Vega, which embraced in its view the celebrated Alhambra and Albacyn, wonders of Moorish architecture. There the heartbroken genius soothed his soul in religious studies under the guidance of his Franciscan patrons. The sublime poetry of the Bible charmed his lofty nature, and the commentaries of Lyranus were his delight; while he enriched his scientific mind with the teachings of St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, Bacon and Scotus. The world forgot the old mariner in his solitude. His only friends were his religious brethern and a few scholarly men drawn by the fame of his wondrous deeds. He was often alone with his thoughts, but he learned that there were other sorrows besides his own. The remembrance of wasted years and blighted hopes disturbed many a prayer, but he was cheered with the vision of eternal bliss. Far from the world's strife, he thus found peace in this Franciscan retreat.

The grand achievement of Columbus opened a path to other discoveries. He showed the way, and to follow in his course required no effort of genius. While drinking to its dregs the chalice of ingratitude, others were enjoying the glory due to him. Vasco de Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and gave to Portugal a new route to the Indies. The jealousy of Spain was aroused, and she awoke to the merits of her neglected genius. He was ordered to set out from Cadiz on a fourth expedition, and he obeyed, although he feared new treachery against his rights and his honor.

On the 11th. of May 1502, he sailed from Cadiz with four caravels, one of which was called the Biscaglia. Only one priest accompanied him, Father Alexander, a Franciscan, who was shipwrecked and drowned in the waters of Panama. He was the first missionary to meet his death in the apostolate of the New World, and the glory of such a death belongs to the Seraphic Order. Having reached Hispaniola, he found it impossible to land, and night coming on he was surprised by a dreadful storm. Writing to the sovereigns he said:

« I sailed towards the land, but the storm continued for seventy days. Thunder, lightning and mountainous waves seemed to presage the end of the world. Adversities came to me in a heap, for I was sick, and at the point of death. I am, indeed,

a child of misfortune. For twenty years, I bore every fatigue without having even a little hut in Castile to rest my weary limbs. The inns were often closed against me, because I had not the money to pay for a meal or a bed ».

Finally he landed at Varaguas, and while erecting a fort a band of savages surrounded him. Then he goes on to say: « The storm raged, and I climbed to a high place, where I called the four winds to my aid. The captains of Your Majesties wept around me. Overcome with fatigue, I fell asleep; and I heard a voice saying to me full of pity: ‘ Oh! why art thou slow to trust in the God of all mankind? Has He done less for thee than for Moses, David or His most faithful servants? From thy birth He has had a special care over thee, and thou hast reached a good old age. He has enabled thee to break down the barriers which impeded the passage of the ocean, and thou hast acquired immortal glory in all Christian nations. Turn to thy God, and acknowledge thy error; for His mercies are infinite’. I heard all this as one dead, and I could not answer a word. The voice also said: ‘ Take confidence, thy tribulations are found worthy of eternal compassion’ ».

No one could help being moved by the inexpressible beauty and marvelous sublimity of these words. The soul of the illustrious unfortunate was filled with emotion. No voice could resound more eloquently to the glory of God, but words more

piercing never came from human lips than those which follow: «I have spent the best of my life in the service of Your Majesties. There is not a hair of my head which is not white. I am sick, I have lost all except the clothes on my back and I am in constant expectation of death surrounded by savage men. Ah! will no heart pity me? Does no one love truth or justice? Will no one weep over my misfortunes?»

He had not yet drank to its dregs the chalice of ingratitude. Bitter things were in store for him. His shipwrecked companions, to whom he was a father as well as a protector, conspired to hasten his death; and the infamous deed would have been carried out, had not a few remained faithful. The seeds of discontent being sown among the Indians, they refused to furnish provisions to the Spaniards; and famine stared them in the face. Columbus called the unfriendly chiefs and demanded a reason for their conduct. In reply, they laid before him the brutal deeds of his companions, and they showed in their bodies the marks of inhuman treatment. Their anger was appeased, and provisions were supplied.

The Spaniards were far more barbarous than the Indians. The shipwrecked mariners were seven months exposed to the mercy of the savages along the coast, although quite near the settlement of Hispaniola. They implored assistance for God's sake, but in vain. No one came to help them,

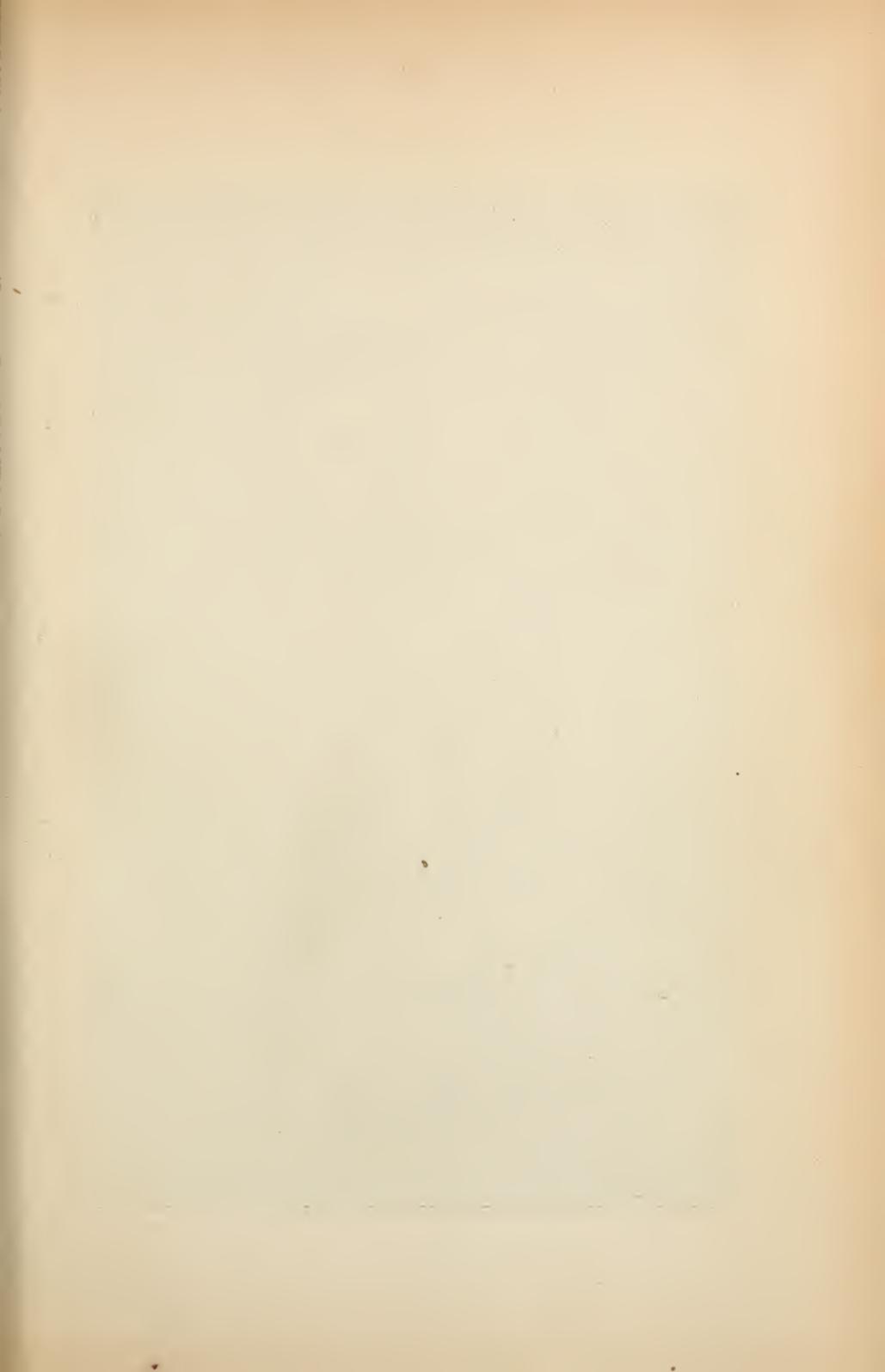
and no word was heard except in bitter reproach. A few, however, were possessed of human sympathy, and they could not be silent at the sight of such barbarity. Duty impelled them to proclaim the truth, and they were not afraid to chide men in power. These fearless men were the Franciscan missionaries and worthy brethern of the Guardian of *La Rabida*. True to their vocation, they were on the side of the weak, and their righteous denunciations brought the needed succor.

This danger had hardly passed, when another appeared. The life of the admiral was once more in peril. His enemies were determined to get rid of him, at any cost. They attacked him, but he defended himself and came out victorious. The vile traitors were put in irons, and held for well deserved chastisement. Columbus resolved to return to Spain; but Isabella was dead, and he missed her friendly influence. It may not be out of place to remark that this great queen was convinced of the vanity of all earthly things. She was buried in the Franciscan habit, which she had worn for many years.

After the death of Isabella, Columbus had very little to expect from the Court of Castile. Spain saw her great admiral poor, infirm and reduced to misery without being moved. A tear was scarcely shed in return for his great services. Old friends passed him by, pretending not to know him. Enemies ridiculed him, and Ferdinand kept him

far from court. He was not, however, entirely abandoned. His Franciscan brethren did not forsake him. In the hour of adversity their interest became greater, and they were ready to share his sorrows as well as his glories. His genius, his providential call, his heroic virtues, his humiliations and his bitter trials were all theirs. One man came to his aid, and restored him to comfort and honor. This man was the illustrious Franciscan, Cardinal Ximenes. Born of poor parents, he became a friar, a man of universal learning, Archbishop of Toledo, Cardinal of the Roman Church and Prime Minister of Spain.

The thoughts of the immortal discoverer were now entirely fixed on God, and religion was his only consolation. Being taken sick at Valladolid, he sent for his brethren, and they were soon around his bedside. It was no small comfort to behold the great admiral clothed in the humble habit, which he received from the Guardian of *La Rabida*. His last hours were cheered by the remembrance of his departed friend, and his countenance was lit up with the hope of soon meeting him at the throne of God. As the heroes of every age preserve with jealous care the trophies of victory, so Columbus had hung around his bed the chains which he wore by the order of Spain after his discovery of the New World. They were ever before his eyes, and conscious of his innocence they were a source of comfort; but fearing that they might





Death of Columbus.

inflame his heartbroken sons with vengeance he ordered them to be laid with him in the grave.

The final hour came and he received from Franciscan hands the last sacraments. Gazing on the sacred image of Jesus Christ Crucified, held before him by a child of Francis, he breathed forth his soul to God. He died at midday on the 20th. of May 1506. To the end his confidence in Providence buoyed him up. His last words were: « Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit ». Thus he went to his eternal reward, in the presence of his two sons and his Franciscan brethern.

Such was the death of Christopher Columbus, Heaven's instrument to reveal this hemisphere hidden for ages from the rest of the world. Faith was his characteristic virtue. He believed in the universal rule of the Gospel, and that no one can be happy without religion. To his sorrow, he trusted in kings; because he believed that neither jealousy nor deceit could be found under a royal mantle. He had a confiding hope in the lands which were the fruit of his genius; and his hope was not in vain. His virtues were such that a worthy recompense could be found only with God; and God deigned to call him to Heaven on the very day of Christ's Ascension.

Faithful even in death, the sons of Francis watched his remains, all night long while they prayed for the repose of his soul; and in the morning their loving hands bore him to the Cathedral of

Valladolid, where the last sad offices of religion were performed. The history of Columbus cannot be separated from that of the Seraphic Order. As *La Rabida* was the cradle of his glory, so it was meet that another Franciscan convent should receive his remains; and this honor was reserved for the Convent of Valladolid. A few days after his death, the great man seemed to be forgotten. His name was scarcely heard outside the convent walls; but his brethern did not forget him. His memory was cherished, his honor was defended and, after the lapse of centuries, his greatness is recognized in every land.

CHAPTER XXII.

Franciscan Missions in America.

It is generally believed that no priest accompanied Columbus on his first voyage to the New World; but an old manuscript was found in the archives of the City of Todi, in 1864, in which reference is made to such a priest. He was a Franciscan, and his name was Father John Bernard Monticastri da Todi. The same manuscript speaks of him as the confessor of Columbus and a man of great learning, especially, in astronomy. There is, however, no record of his labors.

The real founder of all the American missions was Father John Perez. His example was like a spark which enkindled a great flame. He was the first apostle, and all the subsequent fruit was but a consequence of the seed sown by him. We saw, in the 17th. chapter, that Father Garzia de Padilla was the first bishop consecrated to guide the young church; but a sudden death prevented his return to San Domingo, to continue his apostolic labors.

When the illustrious Franciscan, Cardinal Ximenes, became Prime Minister of Spain, he took up the work of evangelizing the New World. Through his influence a number of his brethern came to these shores. Many converts were made,

missions were formed, convents were established and colleges were erected, so that an abundant harvest was soon ready for the sickle.

In the year 1514 a Franciscan, Father John de Quevedo, was consecrated Bishop of Darien, and he was the first resident bishop in America. About the year 1522, we find Bishop Quevedo before the Spanish court, at Barcelona, making a report of his work. He deplored the extinction of the Indians, and he admitted that it was due, in part, to the excessive rigor of the Spaniards. He contended that the civilizing of the savage tribes could never be effected while they were allowed to roam without any fixed abode. His policy was to gather them in communities around the missions, to have them instructed as well as converted.

As new discoveries were made, the Franciscans were on the ground to sow the Gospel seed. Wherever a settlement was formed a church and convent sprung up. Henrion says that the Friars Minor planted the faith in Hayti, Cuba, Cubagua, Porto Rico, Jamaica, St. Margaret, Santa Cruz and on the coast of Cumana in South America. Herrera says that Cortez always had Friars Minor with him. In a letter written in 1520, he asks for more friars, and he expresses his appreciation of their services. Shortly after the Conquest of Mexico, three Franciscans made their abode in the capital; and Friar Peter of Ghent established the first school for Indians in that country, at a place called Tetzulco.

The priests who volunteered thus early for the American mission stood in the front rank of the order, and were among the brightest lights of the Church. Father Francis de los Angeles just on the point of setting out for the distant field, was chosen Minister General of the order, and he afterwards became a Cardinal. He committed the work to Father Martin de Valencia head of one of the Spanish provinces. Father Martin took with him twelve companions. Father John de Zumaraga became first bishop and archbishop of Mexico, in 1528; and Father Francis de Jural was the first bishop of Yucatan. Father Toribio de Benevento baptized no less than four hundred thousand Indians; and, being authorized by Leo X, he was the only priest that ever administered the Sacrament of Confirmation in Mexico. He, also, wrote a Christian Doctrine, which was the first book published in the Mexican language.

The blood of martyrs came to enrich the soil, and as the Franciscans were foremost in the good work, they had the honor of giving the first martyr in the New World. He was Blessed Bernard Cousin put to death while preaching the word of God. His martyrdom occurred some years before that of Friar John Calero, another Franciscan, who is reputed by some as the first martyr. The number so increased that, within a century after the coming of Perez, no less than one hundred and fifty Franciscans sealed their faith with their blood. As

they fell others rushed to their places. In the year 1587, there was a flourishing province of the order in Mexico, with two custodias and ninety seven houses.

The conquest of Peru followed that of Mexico, but it was not second to it in importance. It opened an immense treasure for the conquerors, and a wide field for the Gospel messengers. Here, too, the first missionaries were Franciscans. Father Mark of Nice accompanied Pizarro in his first expedition, and he penetrated as far as Tumbez, now Guyaquil, in the year 1527. A convent of the order was built at Cuzco as early as 1533. St. Francis' City was built on the ruins of ancient Quito, and a Belgian Franciscan was the first missionary there in 1534. Colleges for the instruction of the natives immediately sprung up in the neighboring cities.

To name, one by one, all the Franciscans who labored to evangelize and civilize Peru is beyond the purpose of our present work. We shall notice only one, who, on account of his wondrous deeds, is often called the Xavier of America. He is St. Francis Solano. When he came to America in 1589, he threw himself into the conflict with all the ardor of an apostle. Like most of his brethern, he became perfectly conversant with all the dialects of the barbarous tribes. He had converted thousands, when some powerful marauders came down on the neophytes breathing fury and

slaughter. All began to fly in dismay, and the new mission was threatened with destruction. Solano went out alone to meet the enemy, trusting in the protection of Mary, the Mother of God. All expected that the field would be crimsoned with his life's blood; but his calm demeanor and a moving discourse on the Passion of Christ disarmed the savages. On that day nine thousand souls were gained to Christ. After this, he went throughout the land, preaching everywhere Jesus Christ Crucified, and making converts without number. He died, in 1610; and three hundred witnesses attested, under oath, to his miracles and heroic virtues. Even before his beatification, which occurred in 1675, he was venerated through a tract of country two thousand miles in extent; and a hundred tribes kept lamps burning in his honor, day and night.

Father Martin Robleda was the first Bishop of Chili. He and his companions founded the convent of Santiago which became a province in 1572. Fathers Louis de Bolanos, Alphonsus of St. Bonaventure and Bernard de Amenta, as early as 1537, evangelized the tribes along the Rio de la Plata, in Buenos Ayres and in Paraguay; and they were the first apostles in those regions. Rio de la Plata became an episcopal see in 1547, and Father John Barros was the first bishop. Seven years later it was made an archbishopric; and another Franciscan, Peter de la Torre, became its first incumbent.

In 1592, the Christians in Paraguay were so numerous that a Franciscan custodia was established there; and the renowned Father Martin Ignatius de Loyola, a cousin of St. Ignatius, was made the first bishop of Assumption, in 1601.

In 1499, the King of Portugal sent a fleet to the East Indies, under the command of Pedro Alvarez Cabrel; but the winds drove them to an unknown shore, which was afterwards called Brazil. Father Henry of Coimbra and seven other Franciscans accompanied the expedition. Father Henry with his companions planted the Cross and offered the Holy Sacrifice, for the first time, in Brazil. The friars soon left with the fleet for their destination, but other members of the order took their place. Many converts were made, but a persecution sprung up; and the missionaries being massacred the neophytes were left without spiritual guides. New recruits came, from time to time, convents and schools were founded, and the faith was deeply rooted in Brazilian soil.

Marshall speaking of the Jesuits in Brazil says: « For two centuries they had toiled with results which, perhaps, none but the Franciscans had rivalled ». He also quotes Mr. Clement Markham who says:

« The Franciscans continued, during a century and a half, to send devoted men into the forest, who preached fearlessly, explored vast tracts of previously unknown land, and usually ended their

days by being murdered by the very savages whom they had come to humanize ».

We already spoke of Darien, which is in New Granada, as the first episcopal see on the American Continent, and of its first bishop, Father John de Quevedo. New Granada became a great missionary field. A Franciscan province was established there at a very early period; and in its report to the General Chapter of the Order held in 1587, there were numbered twenty five convents and forty four schools for the instruction of the Indians.

Father James Testera and four other Franciscan missionaries began their labors in Yucatan and Guatemala in 1534. The Dominicans soon followed, and the two orders worked in harmony, producing abundant fruit. Father James Testera returning from the General Chapter of the Order, at Mantua, brought with him one hundred and fifty friars, twelve of whom went to Guatemala. Yucatan was attended for a long time entirely by Franciscans, and the first four bishops were members of the order.

Nicaragua became a distinct Franciscan province in 1537, with twenty convents. Its first bishop was Pedro de Zuniga, a Franciscan, but he died before taking possession of his see.

Father Antonio Margil and Father Melchior Lopez worked together in Costa Rica. Within five years they converted more than forty thousand souls; and they founded fourteen villages with a church in each.

Florida has the glory of being the first part of the United States to receive the light of the Gospel. At an early period the Spaniards of Mexico turned their attention to Florida. The expedition of Pamphilus de Narvaez, in 1526, was accompanied by some Franciscans, under Father John Juarez. Annalists tell us that the same Father Juarez went there as bishop as well as superior. The Dominicans and Jesuits soon followed; but the former abandoned the field in 1561, and the latter in 1572. The Franciscans, however, persevered; and to them is due the settlement or City of St. Augustine. Father Francis Pareja published a catechism and some other works in the language of the Timuquas, which were the first books printed within the limits of the United States.

In 1603, Florida was made a custodia of the order, with eleven convents; and, in 1612, it was elevated to the dignity of a province, under the title of St. Helena. In a few years, the number of convents had increased to twenty. Speaking of Florida, De Courcy says:

« The convent of St. Helena became the center whence the Franciscans spread in every direction, even to the extremities of the Peninsula, and among the Apalachian clans. The faith prospered among those tribes, and the cross towered in every Indian village, till the increasing English colony of Carolina brought war into these peaceful realms. In 1703, the valley of the Apalachicola was ravaged by an

armed body of covetous fanatics; the Indian towns were destroyed; the missionaries slaughtered, and their forest children—their neophytes—sharing their fate, or, still more unfortunate, being hurried away, were sold as slaves to the English West Indies. Fifty years after, the whole colony fell into the hands of England—the missions were destroyed—the Indians dispersed, and St. Helena, the convent where Christianity had radiated over the Peninsula, became a barrack and such is that venerable monastery in our own days ».

Father Mark of Nice was the first to explore New Mexico, where he arrived in 1531. He also went through Texas and Upper California. Clothed in the skins of wild beasts, he passed from tribe to tribe, preaching the Gospel wherever he went. He was followed by Father John de Padilla and Friar John of the Cross, who soon gave up their lives for Christ; and they were the first martyrs within the limits of the United States. Father Francis Lopez, Father John of St. Mary and Brother Augustine Rodriguez received, also, the martyr's crown. It seemed to be the will of Heaven that this field should be thus prepared for an abundant harvest. After many vicissitudes, the missions of New Mexico were finally established in 1597. Thousands were converted, magnificent churches were erected and the Indians were taught to read and write. All this happened before the Settlement of Jamestown or the Landing of the Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock.

Dark days came again, and those peaceful abodes were destroyed by pagan neighbors. In 1660, churches were laid waste, and the priests were murdered. It was necessary to begin a second time, but divine grace was not wanting, and the missionaries were resolute. The civilizing influence of our holy faith was soon manifest. In 1748, the Indians were clothed in garments woven by their women; industry, peace and abundance flourished in the villages, and their churches would compare favorably with those of more pretentious lands. Mexican revolutions, the expulsion of the Spaniards and the war with the United States brought about changes. The Church in New Mexico is in a flourishing condition, and the Franciscans have returned. They have, also, gained a footing in Arizona; and, ere long, the ancient glories of the order may be revived.

Like Florida and New Mexico, Texas experienced Franciscan zeal at a very early period. When De Soto discovered the Mississippi, Father John de Torres was with him. In 1544, Father Andrew Olmos, founded the flourishing mission of Panuco. He, also, became conversant with several Indian dialects. The work did not, however, become general until a later date. Bands of missionaries entered the field, from time to time. One of the most illustrious was Father Antonio Margil, whose sanctity was so evident that steps have been taken for his canonization. This holy man founded

several missions. The Gospel seed took deep root, churches were erected and books were printed for the instruction of the converts. The work went on, from year to year, until the entire territory from the Rio Grande to the Sabine and Red rivers was dotted with Franciscan missions. As in other fields, the blood of martyrs fertilized the soil; and among those who gave their life for Christ were Father Joseph Pita, Father Joseph San Esteban, Father Alonzo Guisaldo de Ferreros with Fathers Francis and Silva Gonzabal. It pleased the Spanish government to suppress the missions, in 1812, and the poor Indians were deprived of pastors. They remained without priests until 1832, when Father Diaz went to take up the work of his brethern; but he soon fell a victim to his zeal, for he met his death at the hands of savages.

Such was the sad condition of the once glorious mission of Texas, when Father John Timon went there as Apostolic Visitor. Although without pastors for many years, thousands still retained the faith. This worthy son of Vincent de Paul became the first bishop of Buffalo. He lived to a good old age, and his zealous missionary career continued to the very end of his days. He was, indeed, a pioneer of civilization, as well as an apostle of the Christian faith; and his name deserves to be inscribed on one of the brightest pages of American history. The consolations of his eventful life

among the Indians of Texas formed the subject of many a conversation to which I was a listener in boyhood's days. I heard him saying that he was often literally exhausted administering sacraments to crowds flocking around him, who had not seen a priest in several years.

No Franciscans appeared in the field of Texas from 1832 until 1859. In the latter year Father Augustine da San Damiano and Brother Trinidad de Torres went to Houston, to reopen the missions of the order. They were soon followed by Father Felix da Cannobio, Father Pacifico, a native of Holland, and Brother Teobaldo da Novelle. It was my privilege to live under the same roof as these good men. All have disappeared from the scene of their missionary labors. The church is flourishing in Texas, but the Franciscans are not there.

San Francisco, the Queen City of the Pacific, is destined to withstand the ravages of time as a monument to the genius and zeal of the children of the Seraphic Patriarch in California. There are two Californias, Upper and Lower California. The former was ceded to the United States, but the latter remains under Mexico. The Franciscans were the first missionaries in both Californias. Their labors commenced in Lower California, as early as 1596, and the Jesuits came in 1642. After the expulsion of the Jesuits, the Dominicans expressed a desire to enter that field; and the Franciscans cheerfully yielded to them the former

Jesuit missions of Lower California. In 1769, Father Junipero Serra and other Franciscans established three posts in Upper California, which caused such joy in Mexico that the bells of the city were rung. Having obtained recruits, Father Serra, carried on his Gospel conquest. In 1775, one of his companions, Father Louis Jayme, was murdered by the savages. Hearing the news, the intrepid Serra exclaimed: « Thanks to God! the seed of the Gospel is, now, bedewed with the blood of a martyr. Henceforth the mission is established ». In a few years, he founded nine missions having ten thousand souls. On the death of Father Serra, in 1784, the work was continued by his brethern; and in 1823, they had seventy-five thousand Indians converted to the true faith. Political revolutions came, and the missions felt the baneful influence of wicked Mexican rulers. The poor Indian converts were corrupted, while vice and disease and cruel treatment caused their gradual extinction. Thus disappeared the once glorious missions of California. They cannot, however, be forgotten, because the entire country is studded with cities, towns and villages bearing the titles, of religious mysteries, or the names of Franciscan saints given by their founders.

The first bishop in California was the Franciscan, Father Diego Garzia. Father Joseph Gonzales, a member of the same order, was appointed to succeed him, but he declined. Father Joseph S. Alemany, a Dominican, was then appointed

Bishop of Monterey; and he was, afterwards, created Archbishop of San Francisco. Again, Father Gonzales was called to the bishopric of Monterey; but he refused once more, and Father Thaddeus Amat, a Lazarist, accepted the responsibility. There are some Franciscans in California, and the work of restoration has been auspiciously begun.

The celebrated historian, Bancroft, speaks of the Franciscans as the first missionaries north of the Potomac, as they had been the first south of that line. He also says:

« The unambitious Franciscan, Le Caron, years before the Pilgrims anchored within Cape Cod, had penetrated the land of the Mohawk, had passed to the North into the hunting grounds of the Wyandots, and, bound by his vows to the life of a beggar, had, on foot, or paddling a bark canoe, gone onward and still onward, taking alms of the savages, till he reached the rivers of Lake Huron ».

The pious Champlain, the founder of Qubec, brought with him from France, four members of the Seraphic Order, one of whom was Father Joseph Le Caron. They arrived in 1615, and they, at once, set about their work of evangelizing and civilizing the savage tribes. For ten years the sons of Francis were the only missionaries on both sides of the St. Lawrence. At length they called the Jesuits to their aid; and these two orders worked together in such harmony that they appeared

to be children of a common father. When the English pillaged Canada, and Champlain was carried off to England, the missionaries were all taken with him. Forty years elapsed before the Franciscans were allowed to return in 1670. Father Louis Hennepin was one of the new comers; and he is celebrated for his explorations in company with the famous La Salle.

Father Hennepin was a native of Holland, and he himself tells us that he was drawn to the American mission by the published reports of the voyages and labors of his own order, which had then five hundred convents in the New World. His first work was to build a church, at Fort Frontenac, near the site of the Canadian city of Kingston. Being well adapted to a life of exploration, he commenced his labors, which gave him immortal fame. Leaving Frontenac, on the 5th. of December 1678, he sailed up Lake Ontario and entered Niagara River on a vessel of ten tons burden, the largest here-to-fore seen on those waters. The Falls of Niagara impeded his progress, and he is supposed to be the first European to gaze on this wonder of nature. He and his companions sang a *Te Deum*, and he offered the Sacrifice of the Mass, the first ever celebrated in sight of the great cataract.

They were now obliged to build another vessel above the cataract, and Father Hennepin had to carry his vestments and sacred vessels twelve miles around the Falls. Their little craft was launched

a few miles farther up, at the confluence of a stream where a village now stands; and village and stream bear the name of *La Salle*, one of Hennepin's companions. The vessel was blessed according to the Roman Ritual, and it received the name of *Grifon*. The launching was accompanied with the singing of a *Te Deum* and the booming of cannon.

The *Grifon* continuing on her voyage soon entered Lake Erie, opposite where Buffalo now stands. She was the first vessel to navigate those waters, and the first cape discovered was called St. Francis. In a few days they reached the strait which connects Lakes Erie and Huron, and it received the name of St. Clair, probably, after the first daughter of the Seraphic Order. They soon passed through Lakes Huron and Michigan, but they had to abandon the idea of going through Lake Superior, on account of the Falls of St. Mary.

La Salle now returned to Canada, and Hennepin proceeded on his way to the Mississippi. It was reached after eight days, and the exploration continued as far as the Gulf of Mexico. There being no inhabitants in the locality, they had no missionary work to do; and they commenced the ascent of the great river. For twelve days their journey was without interest; but, on the thirteenth day, they were taken by a band of Sioux Indians, and led in captivity to a village near another celebrated cataract. Father Hennepin called this cataract the

Falls of St. Anthony, after the great wonderworker of the Seraphic Order. They remained in captivity, three months; and Father Hennepin did not fail to preach the Gospel, as far as his knowledge of the language of the tribe would permit. He had the consolation of baptizing a dying infant to whom he gave the name of Antoinette, in honor of St. Anthony. After an absence of more than two years, he reached Quebec, where he had been mourned as dead.

La Salle made a second exploration of the Mississippi as far as the Gulf of Mexico. He then ascended the river and returned to France. His great design was to explore it from the sea, and to plant the faith in the newly discovered lands. With this intent, he sailed from France with a fleet of four vessels, one of which was called St. Francis. He had six priests among his companions, three of whom were Sulpicians and three Franciscans. They reached the Gulf of Mexico, on the first day of the year 1685; and Father Anastasius, one of the Franciscans, celebrated a solemn mass of thanksgiving. Attempting his explorations, by land, La Salle was murdered by a treacherous Indian; but his companions discovered the mouth of the great river, and continuing their course, they made the ascent in canoes. Having reached Canada they returned thence to France.

The Franciscans, as chaplains for the French military posts, became the first resident pastors of

many places in North America subject to France. Twelve succeeded each other until 1760, at Fort St. Frederick on Lake Champlain, which is now called Crown Point; and their names are preserved in the archives at Montreal. They were also at Fort Orillon, now Ticonderoga, in the State of New York until 1775, and at Fort Niagara near Buffalo until 1759.

Fort Presque Isle, where Erie, Pennsylvania, now stands, the celebrated Fort Du Quesne, the site of the present City of Pittsburg, and other places in Western Pennsylvania had Franciscan chaplains, at an early period. The Franciscans filled the same office at Fort Detroit, until 1782; and one of their number, Father Nicholas Benedict Constantine, fell a victim to savage cruelty in 1706.

The French Franciscans having their headquarters at the Convent of St. Mary of the Angels in Québec extended their missionary conquests throughout the surrounding country. They founded a convent at Placenzia in New Foundland in 1680, and this fact is confirmed by records in the archives of Quebec.

They were at Nova Scotia, the ancient Acadia, as early as 1619; and De Courcy says that « the Recollects (Franciscans) and Jesuits of France traversed the territory in every direction, scattering the seed of the Gospel from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to the shores of the Pacific, and from the Gulf of Mexico to Hudson's bay ».

Notwithstanding this testimony of De Courcy, some American readers may affect surprise, when told that the children of the Seraphic Patriarch were in Maryland and vicinity, at an early period. Two priests of the Capuchin branch of the order were sent there by the Propaganda in 1642. In his work entitled « New Discoveries », Father Hennepin speaks of the English Franciscans in Virginia. The renowned explorer had excellent facilities for securing information on the subject, and his interest in the work cannot be questioned. As before stated, he was drawn to the American mission by the published reports of the voyages and labors of his own order.

In this connection, it may be proper to remark that, at the period of which we are treating, the English Franciscans, like their brethern in Ireland, were holding their own against brutal persecutions. Hunted as outlaws and homeless throughout the land, the friars bid defiance to the spy, the jailer and the hangman. Without convents or churches, they fought the good fight at home; and several of them braved the dangers of the New World, in order to succor their coreligionists, who, in spite of obstacles, were laboring to found, in Maryland, a refuge for the oppressed of every land and every creed.

As late as 1862, an authentic register was in the possession of the Bishop of Clifton, England, which showed that the Maryland mission engaged

the attention of the Franciscan province, at least from 1672 to 1720. The lamented Father Pamfilo da Magliano examined the register and took copies of it. It showed that at a meeting of the superiors held in 1672, the Maryland mission received their sanction, and it was decreed that the provincial send thither another priest. Other entries indicate the action taken, from time to time, until 1720. The names of the priests are given, and the dead are also mentioned. This shows that the mission had been in existence prior to 1672, and it may be taken for granted that the work continued later than 1720.

We have already spoken of the French Franciscans in New Foundland, where they labored until the place came under England's sway by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. It then began to be colonized by English speaking people, and the Irish Franciscans were among the first missionaries. Father O'Donnell, who became its first bishop, went there in 1784; and six Franciscan bishops governed in a continued line until 1880.

The Irish Franciscans appeared in the United States, from time to time, but they never effected an organization. Father Michael Egan was authorized by an Apostolic Rescript of Sept. 29th. 1804, to found a province of the order in the United States. The project, however, did not succeed at that time. The same Father Egan became the first bishop of Philadelphia. Father Charles B. Maguire, who had

been a professor in the Irish Franciscan College of St. Isidore, at Rome, came to America in 1812; and he labored with success until his death in 1833. He baptized nearly all the Catholics of his generation in Pittsburg; and he built the magnificent Church of St. Paul, which he designed as a cathedral, long before there was any talk of a resident bishop in that city. The first church on the Island of Manhattan, in New York City, was St. Peter's in Barclay St; and Father Nugent, an Irish Franciscan, celebrated the first mass therein, on the 4th. of November 1786. Father Charles Whelan, another Irish Franciscan, preceded Father Nugent.

Some German Franciscans labored here as early as 1789. Bishop Carroll spoke of them in a letter written, in that year, to Rev. Richard Plowden; and he said he was well satisfied with them. In 1789, Father Theodore Brauers, a native of Holland, had a little oratory in Youngstown, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania; and there was neither priest nor church within hundreds of miles, except Father Brauers and his humble chapel. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, offered there so often without a congregation, enriched the soil and produced abundant fruit. That little oratory proved to be the cradle of Catholicity in Western Pennsylvania. Flourishing congregations, as well as episcopal sees, have sprung from that humble beginning. Hundreds of secular priests, with members of various religious orders, are the successors of Father Brauers. Did he ever

see, in vision, the nurseries of learning, the charitable institutions, the stately churches and magnificent cathedrals that cover the scenes of his lonely circuits and weary sick calls?

Three colonies of German Franciscans came at a later period, who were destined to take deep root in the soil. Cincinnati Ohio, Teutopolis Illinois and Paterson New Jersey were the places selected for the foundations. They brought with them the spirit of the Seraphic Patriarch; and at the very outset, they began to observe the rule in all its primitive simplicity, The Kulturkampf in Germany proved a blessing to America, and the victims of persecution became messengers of glad tidings to this young land. The men who knew how to suffer for conscience in the fatherland could be trusted with the destinies of the order everywhere. Recruits from Germany and vocations in America increased their numbers. Their success has been phenomenal. Wherever they go, churches, convents and schools spring up, as if by magic; and it seems to be given to them to revive the ancient Franciscan missions.

Wisconsin has a Franciscan colony from the land of Sobieski. The seed is just being sown, but the laborers are expecting an abundant harvest. The lamentations of disconsolate Poland for her children over the seas are an impetus to this young community. The branches of the order known as Minor Conventuals and Capuchins have many

foundations throughout the country; and all are in a flourishing condition.

An Italian colony came from Rome, in the year 1855. They were Father Pamfilo da Magliano, Father Sisto da Gagliano, Father Samuel da Prezza and Brother Salvatore. The two first were members of the Province of St. Bernardine in Abruzzi; but Father Samuel belonged to the Roman Province, although a native of Abruzzi. At the time of their coming to America, Father Pamfilo and Father Sisto were professors in the Irish College of St. Isidore. They were invited by Bishop Timon of Buffalo, while in the Eternal City on the occasion of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. They settled at Allegany, New York, and St. Bonaventure's College became the cradle of the future mission. The foundation is due to the munificence of Nicholas Devereux, who donated a large tract of land and several thousand dollars for the undertaking. This was only the beginning, because he and his family were generous benefactors from year to year. Many a struggling pastor, in Central and Western New York, was succored, in the hour of financial need, by Nicholas Devereux and his sainted wife; and more than one church owes its existence to their religious zeal. They have gone to their reward, but their descendants are still found in the Devereux and Kernan families of Utica. May the children of the Seraphic Patriarch

never be without such benefactors as Nicholas Devereux!

A daughter accompanied Nicholas Devereux to Rome to secure the foundation. She had a desire to enter one of the contemplative orders, but the illustrious Pius IX. assured her that she had another mission. « Go », said he, « to your own country, and you will find many souls whom you may lead to God ». Was this a prophecy uttered by the sainted pontiff rendered glorious by the definition of Mary's Immaculate Conception? She became a Sister of Mercy in New York City, and as Mother Mary Joseph she did wonders of charity. Instead of wasting her years in the giddy pleasures of a heartless or silly thing called society, she devoted her life to instruct the ignorant, lift up the sin-laden, console the afflicted and bring solid comforts to needy homes.

Father Pamfilo, the leader of the band, was a man of extensive learning, profound humility, unwearied patience, and tireless zeal. It was a mystery to his brethern how he could get through so much work, but it was because he was well equipped for every priestly duty. In imparting the simplest rudimentary knowledge, or in solving the most intricate problems he was always entertaining, always lucid and always at home. He adhered closely to the definitions of the Church, but when he came to debatable ground, he was an enthusiastic champion of his favorite doctors,

St. Bonaventure and Scotus. He explained, however, the different scholastic systems; and he left every one free to follow his own, subject to the ruling of Rome, the mother and mistress of all churches. Like Perez and Columbus, he had his sorrows; and they were many, but a frown never overshadowed his countenance. Those who knew him best never saw his temper ruffled or the equanimity of his soul disturbed. As a superior, he was indulgent, and the erring could approach him without fear; but he never connived at evil doing, for sin was always hideous in his eyes. A conscientious Franciscan, and a firm believer in the greatness of his order, he was in perfect harmony with everything approved by Mother Church. To the sacred hierarchy, the divinely constituted rulers in the Church of God, he was reverential; and to his brethern in the ministry he was truly a brother. The needy, the homeless and the erring never knocked at the door without experiencing the hospitality inculcated by the Seraphic Patriarch to his children. An ardent lover of his native land, a Catholic to the core, his heart went out, in sympathy, to every race. The secret of his beautiful character was his deeply rooted faith, his love for the Church, a childlike confidence in Providence and a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Doubtless, it is vanity to associate one's self with such a man as Father Pamfilo, but it may find an excuse in filial love. He was the father

of the mission, and the compiler of these pages was the first fruit and most unworthy child.

Additions were made to the little band, from time to time. Father Valerian da Ulmeta, Father Emilian D'Asti, Father Augustine da San Damiano, Father Celso da Chieri, Father Michael da Nizza, Brother Bruno da Valdieri, Brother Teobaldo da Novelle, Brother Marcello da San Damiano and Brother Ludovic da Cuneo came from the Province of Piedmont. Fr. Felix da Cannobio belonged to Lombardy, and Father Pacifico was a native of Haarlem in Holland. Father James da Gombitelli and Father Joachim da Montefegatese were natives of Lucca, but members of the Roman Province. Father Leo da Saracena came from the Province of the Seven Martyrs in Calabria. Father Andrew Pfeiffer and Father Bonaventure da Trento were members of the Italian Province of South Tyrol, but Father Andrew was a native of German Tyrol. Some of these arrived soon after the first band, and all came within a period of about seven years. Father Leo da Napoli, the first pastor of St. Anthony's Church in Sullivan St. New York, was the last of the early comers. Those whom I have mentioned belonged to a generation all their own, and they were the real founders of the mission. They had trials not experienced in subsequent years. All tasted the poverty of the early days of Allegany. All were men of learning and nine were authorized to teach philosophy or theology; but all were ignorant

of the English language, at the time of their coming, except Father Pamfilo, Father Michael and Father Leo da Napoli. To study a new language, having almost nothing in common with their own, was the least among their difficulties. After a few days, they had to go out, one by one, among the people, to preach, to hear confessions and attend to all the needs of scattered congregations, because priests were few.

All were associates of Father Pamfilo, and all were worthy of their leader. Ah! who can tell the privations of those heroic priests? The long drives, on Sunday mornings, over bad roads, under a scorching sun, or through winter's storms, to afford a few families the consolation of hearing mass in a frame shanty, and another drive, miles farther on, to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice, at midday, with the return home, tired and hungry, to find few comforts, are forgotten by men but not by God! Who can tell the tales of sick calls, miles far away, on dark nights, over the hills, through the woods or amid snow drifts, without path or guide, to console a sorrow-stricken family and administer the sacraments to a soul about to appear before God? These devoted men were merely men; and, doubtless, they had defects, but who is without them? Yes, they had the spiritual trials incident to poor humanity; but they labored well to found their order, in this new land, to extend our holy faith and to

promote the glory of God. They sleep their long last sleep, in widely separated lands; and it has fallen to me to shed a tear at the grave, to place a flower on the tomb and to perpetuate their memory in this little work. May the earth rest lightly on the dead, and may God have mercy on their souls!

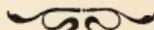
I have just received the glad tidings that Father Samuel da Prezza and Father Joachim da Montefegatese are yet alive, the former in his native diocese and the latter in distant Australia. Years have told on both, but they are working away with youthful zeal. Hosts of friends will rejoice at this correction.

The Minor Conventuals, the Capuchins and Friars Minor are three great branches of the Franciscan Order. With the daughters of St. Clare and the members of the Third Order in the world as well as in the cloister, they constitute the Seraphic Family. All are children of the same father, partaking of his glory and sharing in their common tribulations. In this hemisphere, the fruit of Franciscan zeal and Franciscan genius, the work goes on, from age to age, with an alternation of joys and sorrows. Within my own recollection, the number of priests of the Seraphic Family did not exceed fifty in the United States and Canada; but as I am writing nearly six hundred are laboring in the same territory. The mustard seed has become a tree of respectable proportions. Like

Giles of old, devoted lay brothers are helping the Lord's anointed; while novices and clerics are preparing to fill up the ranks. After many disappointments, the daughters of St. Clare have five houses in the United States; and they have thus taken root in the soil fertilized with the blood of their brethern. The Secular Third Order is found everywhere, and it is bringing sanctity and peace to thousands of American homes. The members of the Third Order living in religious communities are eminently successful. Numbering nearly seven thousand, they are engaged in works of charity in every section of the country. Their schools, hospitals, orphan asylums, homes for the aged and abodes of refuge for the erring cover the land. The Negroes and Indians are remembered in their zeal; and heroic women, trained on American soil, are giving their lives for Christ in the Leper Colony of Molokai.

Seraphic Order, founded by the Saint of Love, the poor and humble Francis of Assisi, exult in the genius, the virtues and deeds of thy sons! Perez and Columbus are not the least among thy children! They gave a new world to mankind, new children to the Church and new fields to be cultivated in the sweat and blood of their brethern! Thy rule served as a model for more than one republic; and thy poverty and love of Jesus Crucified were sufficient to eradicate deeply rooted disorders and save religion as well as society from

impending calamities! Thou art powerful as of old, and thou shalt be strong while thou remainest poor and tender hearted! God wishes thee to be great and honored amongst the orders of His Church; but He wishes thy poverty to be real, and thy seraphic love to produce the fruit of good deeds. The prayers of thy founder shall be heard, the promise of Christ shall be verified and thou shalt live until time is no more!

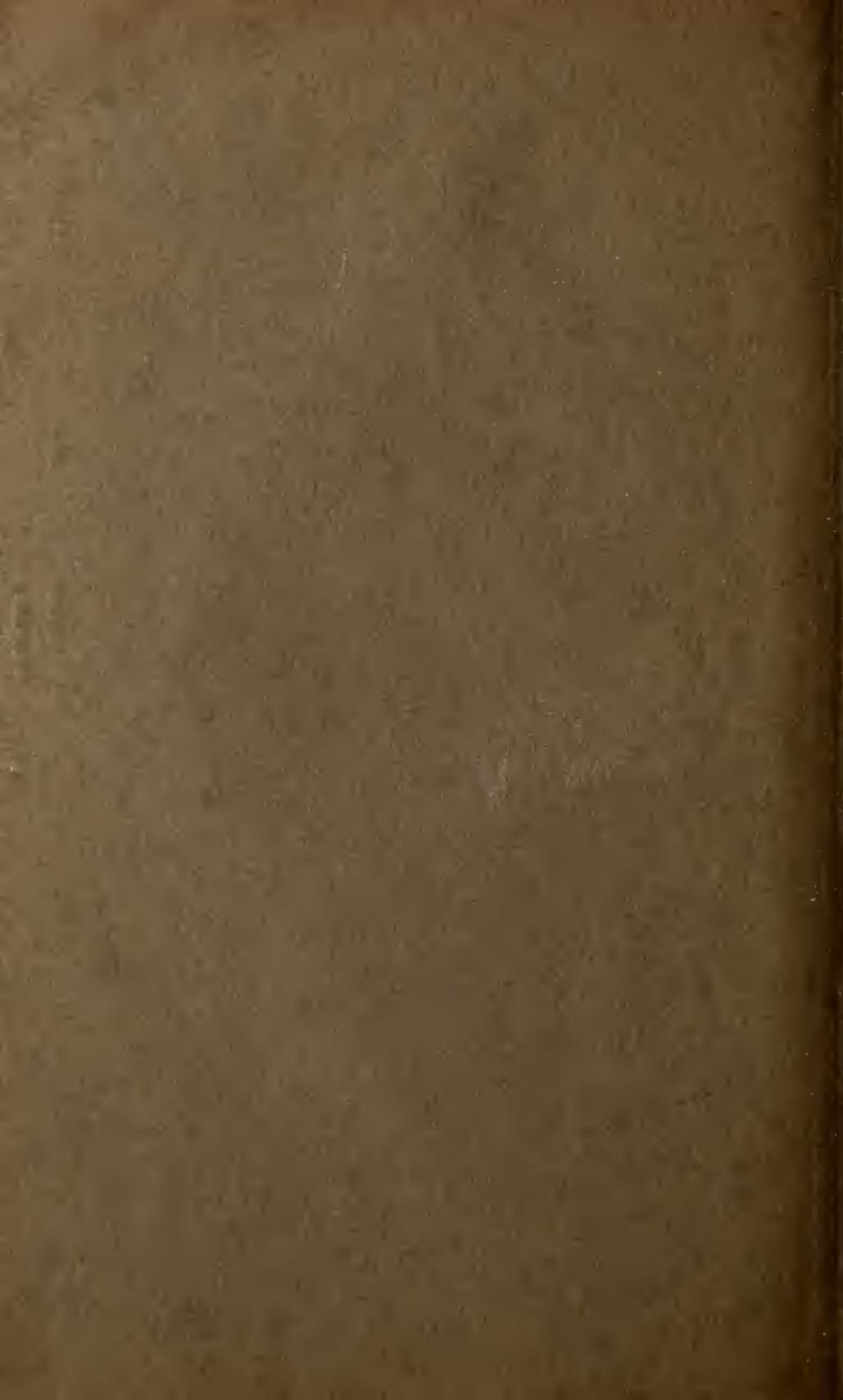


IMPRIMATUR

Fr. Albertus Lepidi Ord. Praed. S. P. A. Magister

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Iosephus Ceppetelli Archiep. Myren. Vicesg.



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