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COLUMBUS

AND THE

SPANISH DISCOVERY OF AMERICA.

BY

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AT a stated meeting of the MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, held Nov. 10, 1892, the President, Dr. GEORGE E. ELLIS, in the chair, Mr. CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS spoke substantially as follows:—

Since our last meeting, the four hundredth anniversary of the American land-fall of Columbus has occurred, and, as the members of the Society are well aware, every periodical has had its say on the discoverer; while the newspapers have been full, almost to the exclusion of other matter except what pertained to the impending presidential election, with accounts of celebrations and with utterances called forth by the event. Under these circumstances I call the subject up for two reasons: in the first place it seems only proper that some reference to an occasion of such wide-spread interest should hereafter be found in the record of our proceedings; but more especially, in the second place, because I have failed to find, in such reports of what has been said in the course of the celebration as have met my eye, that view of the event and its consequences which seems to me most in accordance with the truth of history. I may even say that an unfair verdict has been rendered, for honor has been unduly accorded while censure has been withheld; and from my point of view, it is in a certain sense incumbent on the Massachusetts Historical Society, representing as it essentially does the English and Protestant

settlement of America, as contradistinguished from the Spanish and Roman Catholic settlement, not to let such a verdict be recorded in silence.

In the general outburst of praise and admiration of Columbus, and of jubilation over the beneficent effects of his discovery, such a caveat as I propose to enter may seem to some ill-timed, — possibly it may sound like a harsh note of discord amid general harmony. On the other hand it is to be remembered that ours is an historical society, and that, while rhetoric and history are two very different things, gush sometimes verges dangerously on falsehood; this, moreover, as I have just said, is not only an historical society, but the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the matter in hand is one in which the record of Massachusetts is not to be ignored. Still, it is never easy to say that which to a certain extent runs counter to a chorus of jubilation without conveying an impression that paradox or sensationalism is the end sought after rather than the correction of error or the effect of a changed point of view; and for this reason, in what I now propose to submit I shall confine myself carefully to the accepted facts, almost the common-places, of history. Nothing will be said intended to invite controversy. — nothing which, so far as I know, admits of contradiction. Avoiding all parade of authorities, I shall make no pretence of research. The only reference necessary will be to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, or any other standard work of the same description.

That the opening of the New World was an historical event of the first importance goes without saying; and only the lover of contradiction for contradiction's sake will deny that its results have, taken as a whole, been most beneficial to mankind. Neither does it seem to me that the life and character of Columbus himself call here and now for any considerable discussion. Certain things, and those the essential things in regard to him and his discovery, are well established. We know, for instance, that he was for his day a bold and skilful navigator; a careful student, he was moreover possessed with an idea, the sphericity of the earth, which, though it did not by some two thousand years originate with him, was in its vital respect correct; that he risked his life in a daring attempt to carry out and demonstrate the truth of that idea is undisputed, as also that his attempt was crowned with brilliant success. On

the other hand, we know that he was more than devout in religion,—that he was an enthusiast and a visionary, a fifteenth-century crusader; finally, his voyages subsequent to the first in no way added to his reputation as an explorer, while as an administrator he was far from being a success. He achieved one magnificent result, but “he seems to have succeeded in attaching to himself few men who adhered loyally to his cause. Those under him were constantly rebellious and mutinous; those over him found him impracticable.”¹ As a scientific explorer it never dawned on his mind that the land he had discovered was not part of Asia, or its inhabitants Asiatics; much less that the whole theory of his first voyage was based upon an error which, but for the fortunate circumstance of his coming up against America while sailing in search of China, must have brought utter failure upon him. In fine, it is not easy to see how, on any recognized principle of classification, Columbus can be assigned a place among the world’s really great men; for to be so reckoned, a man must not only have accomplished something great in itself, but through subsequent events he must sustain himself on the high level of his great accomplishment. This Columbus distinctly failed to do. “Every step in discovery made after his arrival in the islands of the West tended to discredit his belief that he had reached the Asiatic archipelago; shrewder and less opinionated observers had disbelieved this from the first. Columbus clung to his early belief with a pertinacity which would be astonishing if we did not know that a stubbornness which did no credit to his judgment and self-control was the very secret of his successes and his failures. Only in his earlier years did that characteristic serve him. It procured him his caravels and his crews, and carried him westward over the Atlantic. In all that followed it did but impede him.”² Indeed, to such an extent did he on one well-known occasion carry this trait of mental “stubbornness” that a recent friendly critic has found himself compelled to say that the great navigator’s conduct was “hardly consistent with entire sanity.”³

¹ Dr. John Gilmary Shea, “the most eminent Catholic historical student of the United States,” quoted by Winsor (*Christopher Columbus*, pp. 54, 505); and by F. R. Coudert, in his Address before the Catholic Club and the United States Catholic Historical Society, of Oct. 11, 1892, p. 33.

² Payne’s *History of the New World called America*, vol. i. pp. 190, 191.

³ Coudert’s *Columbus*: Address before the Catholic Club and the United States

It is, however, wholly aside from my purpose to enter into any controversy over Columbus. It is enough to say that the part he played in the great drama of the discovery and subsequent development of America was no less important than it was dramatic; but, as it is my purpose to show, the real importance of his part in the discovery was due not to the man himself, but to those he represented, — the company, so to speak, he carried with him to America. Himself a Genoese adventurer, just as ready to sail in the service of France or England as of Portugal or Spain, it so chanced he did sail in the service of Spain, with results for Spain, Europe, the New World, and indeed for the whole human race, to some of which I now propose to refer.

It is necessary to say only one word more in regard to the discovery of America. Before doing so I want to repeat and emphasize the belief that nothing which scholars can unearth or critics suggest can, or in my judgment should, detract from the brilliancy of the exploit of Columbus, or the admiration it exacts. He sailed due West into the unknown in order to reach the East. He did it; and he alone did it. The fact that the Norsemen had five centuries before done what he now did in no wise detracts from the splendor of the achievement. The scientific result was his; he is entitled to all credit for it.

None the less it is equally indisputable that the discovery of America was then, so to speak, in the air. Had Columbus never lived, or had he and his whole company gone to the bottom of the sea while westward bound, that discovery could not long have been deferred. When the scientific thought or actual experience of the world reach a certain point of development in any direction, it not unseldom becomes apparent

Catholic Historical Society, p. 34. The character of Columbus is discussed in a condensed form and popular way, with both intelligence and impartiality, by C. K. Adams in his "Christopher Columbus," in the "Makers of America" series. As respects the discoverer's administrative capacity, Mr. Adams says (p. 101): "The fact is unmistakable that there are no indications of any attachment to him by any of the members of his crew. . . . It is evident that Columbus was quite devoid of tact in the management of men; for the bitterness that at a later period manifested itself could not otherwise be accounted for." The canons of criticism avowedly laid down by Irving in estimating the character of Columbus are such as to destroy the author's weight as an authority; while the vein of platitudinous moralizing which runs through the book makes it difficult for a writer of the present day to take it seriously.

that what afterward occurred was inevitable. It is of little consequence whom the light first strikes. It may strike one man, or it may strike several. We have had familiar examples of this in our own time. Darwin's development of the scientific idea of the origin of man is a case in point. Ever since the Mosaic dispensation, through more than thirty centuries, the belief had prevailed that the human race were the descendants of the fallen Adam and Eve, and the doctrine of special creations was unreservedly accepted as an article of all correct scientific as well as religious belief. It is even now less than forty years since, as the logical outcome of a half century of preliminary questioning and investigation, the doctrine of derivation was evolved. Yet, although three thousand years and more elapsed between the Mosaic dispensation and the discovery of Darwin, at the very time his discovery was taking form in Darwin's mind, Alfred Russel Wallace, on the other side of the globe, conceived the same idea; and it was the receipt of a paper from him by Darwin himself which led to Darwin's putting the results of his own thought and observation in the form in which we now have them.

Another familiar instance, which naturally suggests itself, was the simultaneous discovery in 1846, by Adams and Leverrier, of the planet Neptune; while, again, the very same year, in the case of anæsthetics, two physicians here in Boston used ether at so nearly the same time that no mortal man has ever been able to decide whether Dr. Morton or Dr. Jackson used it first. These were all remarkable discoveries; yet to each of them the world had been patiently groping its way for years, and it was simply a question as to who might chance first to catch the new light. So, while it is undoubtedly true that to Columbus belongs the bold resolution of steering due West to find Asia, and in doing so that he stumbled upon America, none the less the discovery of America was then closely impending as the necessary, logical outcome of what had gone before; and as a matter of fact, it could not possibly have been deferred later than the 22d day of April, 1500, when Don Pedro Alvarez de Cabral, either driven by storm or in order to avoid the troublesome African calms, found himself upon the coast of Brazil. This, indeed, is such a very familiar historical commonplace that it was observed by Dr. Robertson more than a century ago. If therefore Columbus had wholly failed in his

attempt, and either gone unheard of to the bottom of the Atlantic or returned to Spain a baffled man. America would have been none the less discovered only eight years later.¹ While this in no way detracts from the brilliancy of the Columbus achievement, it does indisputably limit its consequence as a factor in the course of subsequent human events. In other words, the real importance of the event did not lie in the discovery, — that was inevitable in the stage of human development then reached. — it did lie in the use made of the discovery, in the turn given by it to what followed.

In one of the rhetorical effusions to which the recent occasion afforded a vent, I find it stated that “individual intelligence and independent conscience found here [in America] haven and refuge. They were the passengers upon the caravels of Columbus, and he was unconsciously making for the port of civil and religious liberty.” As I scan the passenger-list of the “Santa Maria,” I fail to find “independent conscience” there, or any representative of it. I do find on that list various other names not unknown in history, to which I shall more particularly refer somewhat later on.

A few days since, at the recent meeting of the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester, our associate member, the Rev. Edward Everett Hale, read a most interesting paper, in which he recounted what he had been able to learn of the third centennial anniversary of the discovery of America as compared with its fourth. The leading feature in Mr. Hale’s paper related to a discussion which a century ago took place as to whether the discovery of America had been of advantage to mankind; and it appeared by his quotations from the publications of the Abbés Raynal and Genty and of Chastellux that the general verdict of European thinkers in 1792 was that the discovery of Columbus had upon the whole been to mankind the reverse of beneficent. Such a conclusion is now calculated to excite surprise not unmixed with derision; and another of our associate members, John Fiske, so referred to it in his address delivered here in Boston on the 21st of last month. Nevertheless, I think it not unfair to say that if the Abbés Raynal and Genty had limited their conclusions to the first century and a half after the discovery, those conclusions would have

¹ Irving’s Columbus, book xiv. chap. 2; Fiske’s Discovery of America, vol. i. p. 98.

been far less open to criticism than now appears. They would, indeed, have had the facts behind them; nor had the situation changed decisively even one hundred and fifty years later.

To estimate correctly the effect of the discovery on the different countries of the earth and mankind in general during the first century and a half which followed 1492, it is necessary to bear the course of concurrent events clearly in mind. The union of Spain under Ferdinand the Catholic and Isabella of Castile took place practically in 1474. In 1478 the establishment of the Inquisition in Spain was authorized by the Pope; and five years later, in 1483, it was regularly inaugurated under the presidency of Torquemada. In 1492 the edict was issued for the expulsion of the Jews from Spain; and the same year the conquest of Granada was completed. A newly consolidated Spain had thus committed itself to that policy of intellectual repression and religious persecution which it subsequently carried out with a relentless vigor which could not be exceeded, and on a scale to which history presents no parallel. The dates of two other events only need to be specified. In 1517 Luther affixed his famous theses to the door of the church at Wittenberg; and two years later Charles V. became Emperor. Then began the era of what is known as the Reformation, with its frightful series of wars, leading to the rise of the Dutch Republic, culminating in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and ending with the famous Spanish Armada of 1588.

It will thus be seen that the discovery of America by Columbus took place on the very eve of the great religious struggle between the Church of Rome and the Protestants, and the great political struggle between constitutional institutions and absolutism. In those struggles, as is again a commonplace of history, Spain was the mainstay both of the Catholic church and political absolutism. From whence did Spain draw the resources which enabled it to carry on the succession of wars which at one time threatened to destroy not only all freedom of religious thought, but all political freedom? Unquestionably, from America. In those days, as long before and long after, it was customary to invoke and to see the direct intervention of the Almighty in the course of human affairs. As the Chancellor of England expressed it to Parliament in 1416, the King's purpose "had been

openly determined and approved by the Omnipotent"; or, as our own pious ancestors put it two centuries later, "God himself [brought] in his own vote and suffrage from heaven." In like spirit and manner, only a few days since, Leo XIII. in his letter on Columbus dated "At Rome, near St. Peter's," July 16, 1892, and addressed to the Archbishops and Bishops of Spain, Italy and the two Americas, used this language: "In effect, Columbus discovered America at about the period when a great tempest was going to unchain itself against the Church. Inasmuch as that it is permitted by the course of events to appreciate the ways of Divine Providence, it really seems that this man for whom Liguria honors herself was destined by a special plan of God to compensate Catholicism for the injury it was going to suffer in Europe."¹ And, from the Vatican point of view, this inference is justifiable; for if there ever has been a case where it might fairly be assumed a vote was most opportunely brought from Heaven, that case was the discovery of America by a Spanish expedition just at the close of the fifteenth century. God's vote was, too, brought in unmistakably and emphatically against both religious reformation and political liberty.

Less than a year ago I chanced to be at Madrid. While there, as most tourists do, I visited the Escorial, and among other things worth seeing was shown, as every one is shown, the room in which Philip II. lived, and the adjoining cabinet, in which he transacted business of state, — or, as he expressed it, where, with a pencil and a little slip of paper, he ruled the world. They pointed out to me three chairs, or rather stools with backs to them, of different sizes. Sitting on the largest of these three chairs, or stools, Philip II. — they told me, whether truly or not — was in the custom of transacting business of state with the Duke of Alva, who occupied the larger one of the two lesser chairs, while the secretary who took down the King's conclusions sat on the third, or lowest. Every one who has been at the Escorial remembers the gloominess of the palace, and especially of that apartment in it, — a gloominess typical of the monarch who built the one and occupied the other; for it is again, I think, one of the accepted facts of history, that probably no man ever sat upon a throne who

¹ Newspaper rendering; New York Herald, August 1, 1892.

did, in his time and for subsequent times, more harm than Philip II. of Spain. Honest and narrow-minded, an intense religious bigot, endowed with hardly average parts, cruel, he yet ruled with absolute authority over much of the Old World, and nearly all of the New then occupied by Europeans. Spain, it is said, drew from America during the sixteenth century some seven hundred millions of dollars in gold and silver, — a sum which, as a factor in war, meant far more than seven thousand million dollars would mean now; and America thus constituted the military chest from which Charles V. and Philip II. derived the sinews of their wars. Without that comparatively inexhaustible military chest Philip II. could not have attempted his conquest of the Netherlands, much less the organization of the Armada; and Drake and the English freebooters showed the instinct of true fighters when they struck at the Spanish Main as Philip's vital point. They there thrust their knives into the very sources of a feverish life.¹ But, standing in that gloomy cell of the Escorial, the reality of those days came very forcibly to me. On the larger of the three stools had sat the monkish despot, and with one hand he had drawn to Spain the wealth of that Ind which Spain owed to Columbus; and then, with the other, he had hurled it in the shape of his land mercenaries and his galleons upon the staggering ranks of the patriots and the reformers in the Netherlands, in France, and on the high seas. The great world-tragedy was engineered from that little room in the Escorial.

During the life-and-death struggle of the sixteenth century, therefore, that the whole weight of the discovery of America was thrown against religious and political freedom cannot be denied. It only just failed to turn the trembling scale.

¹ "Meantime [1586] . . . Drake was just then engaged in a magnificent career of victory, sweeping the Spanish Main, . . . Europe was ringing with the American successes of the bold corsair, . . . and the supplies drawn so steadily from the oppression of the Western World to maintain Spanish tyranny in Europe were for a time extinguished. Parma was appalled at these triumphs of the Sea-King — 'a fearful man to the King of Spain' — as Lord Burghley well observed. . . . The first Englishman, and the second of any nation, he then ploughed his memorable 'furrow round the earth,' carrying amazement and destruction to the Spaniards as he sailed, and after three years brought to the Queen treasure enough, as it was asserted, to maintain a war with the Spanish King for seven years" — MOTLEY, *United Netherlands*, vol. i. pp. 494, 503; vol. ii. p. 101.

Columbus flourished between the two distinct phases of crusade, — that by Christendom against the Mohammedans, which came to a close in 1275; and that by the Church of Rome against the Protestants, which began in 1520. But, as I have said, he was a crusader, — a knight-errant, in some material aspects not altogether unlike another famous Spaniard of the same period, — and the dream of his life was to discover Cipango, with its gold-roofed temples, that he might use the wealth thence to be derived in marshalling an expedition which was to rescue Jerusalem from the infidel. In his will, executed in 1498, before starting on his third voyage, he provided that the accumulations from the income of his property should constitute a fund to be used for the recovery of the holy places, and the political support of the Papacy. Practically Charles V. and Philip II. constituted themselves the executors of this testament, carrying out its provisions in the most liberal spirit, and to an extent which the testator would never have dared to hope. The gold and silver of Mexico and Peru were used without stint by them in prosecuting the new crusade, not against the Mohammedans, but against those of whom Philip II. was accustomed to say that it was “better not to reign at all than to reign over heretics.” Thus the life dream of Columbus was realized in all its parts; for not only was well-nigh boundless silver and gold found in the land he discovered, but that silver and gold supplied the means which enabled the Church of Rome to carry on for more than a century the most formidable of all its crusades.

Apostrophizing the Duke of Wellington in one of his poems,¹ Byron exclaimed, —

“You have repair’d Legitimacy’s crutch”;

and something very similar might with equal truth be addressed to the shade of Columbus. It was Columbus who nerved the arm which held the sword of Spain; it was he who

“The faith’s red ‘auto’ fed with human fuel.”

He “repair’d” the Inquisition’s “crutch.”

The formal canonization of Columbus by the Church of Rome has of late been advocated.² The explorer cannot, of

¹ Don Juan, ix. 3.

² Winsor’s Christopher Columbus, pp. 52, 53, 505.

course, be held responsible, either at the bar of history or before a conclave of cardinals, for the use made by others of that which he discovered. The Catholic church of to-day repudiates the Inquisition; nor would it deem Philip II. or Torquemada suitable human material out of which to evolve new members of the celestial company. Halos are not for them. Columbus lived and died a faithful child of the Church; he carried the Cross to America, — indeed, he carried it there in every sense of the phrase; he opened the way to the conversion of millions to the Faith: and for these and other reasons it might be meet that his name should be inscribed in the roll of Catholic Saints. That concerns Rome only. But, when the act of canonization is performed, there seems no adequate reason why the descendants of English Puritans, Dutch Lutherans, and French Huguenots — still believing in those principles of civil and religious liberty for which their fathers strove — should join with any peculiar zeal in the sanctification of one whose special heavenly mission, if he indeed had such a mission, was to jeopardize every human being from whom they can trace origin, and every principle of thought or action in which they have faith. A silent acquiescence is, under such circumstances, all that could reasonably be asked of them. They are at least under no call to lead the loud acclaim.

Turning now from the general to the particular field, it is proper to consider the immediate results during the same period (1492–1588) of the discovery of America on the countries mainly affected by it. So far as Spain itself is concerned, Mr. Douglas Campbell, in a work recently published, makes the following statement: —

“The opening up of the New World has been called the greatest event in history. So perhaps it was; but to Spain it was the greatest curse. Before that time her people were tilling the soil, building up manufactures, and spreading their commerce, laying the foundations of a substantial and enduring prosperity. The wealth of Mexico and Peru changed them into a race of adventurers and robbers. Who would cultivate the land, or toil at the loom or by the furnace, when bold men across the seas were winning with the sword treasures of gold, silver, and precious stones, which they could not count, but measured by the yard? . . .

“The demoralization extended to all classes of the community.

Honest labor came to be despised in the race for ill-gotten wealth. Gold and silver poured in, fortunes were amassed; but the prosperity was all illusive; for, with agriculture and manufactures neglected, the land was impoverished, and the sun of Spain was going down. It set, however, in a blaze of military glory.”¹

While this statement, taken by itself, would probably be found untenable, in that it limits the subsequent decay of Spain to a single cause, yet, allowing all proper influence in bringing about that decay to those other and more deeply seated causes so powerfully set forth by Buckle² in his famous chapter on the subject, few, I fancy, either in Spain or outside of Spain, would to-day care to controvert the proposition that Spain has never recovered from the misfortunes entailed on it by the fact that Columbus sailed in the service of the crowns of Castile and Aragon; and it would need a bold prophet to express any opinion as to the period which must yet elapse before it does recover from its present low estate.

Leaving Spain, let us next look at the Protestant powers of Europe: and first, the inhabitants of the Netherlands. In connection with them it is only necessary to allude to Alva and “the Council of Blood,” to the fifty thousand victims of the Inquisition during the reign of Charles V.³ and the still larger number during that of Philip II., to the sieges of Haarlem and Leyden, to the assassination of William of Orange, and to the eighty years of warfare through which Holland fought its way to freedom. John of Barneveld estimated that Spain had expended more than two hundred millions of ducats, or four hundred and fifty million dollars, in that struggle prior to 1609;⁴ and the length of the struggle, then more than forty years, was directly due to this vast expenditure of the wealth which Spain drew from the discoveries of Columbus.

These again are all commonplaces of history, in regard to which full information is contained in the pages of Motley.

Coming next to France, though I have said I did not in this case propose to cite any recondite authorities, I cannot refrain from making one most apposite extract from that work of the

¹ Campbell's *The Puritan in Holland, England, and America*. vol. i. pp. 180. 181.

² *History of Civilization in England*, vol. ii. chap. 8.

³ Motley's *Dutch Republic*, vol. i. p. 114.

⁴ Motley's *United Netherlands*, vol. iv. p. 386.

Abbé Genty so slightly referred to by our associates, Mess. Hale and Fiske. Speaking of the policy pursued by the rulers of that Castile and Leon to which Columbus gave a New World, the Abbé says : —

“ Avec quelle profusion les richesses de l’Amérique furent-elles semées en France, pour y faire germer tous les malheurs et tous les attentats ? L’Espagne devint par ses trésors l’âme de nos guerres civiles et de toutes les conspirations qui éclatèrent parmi nous pendant près de deux siècles. C’est elle qui corrompit le cœur de Biron et qui soutint dans la révolte le Connetable de Bourbon, les Guises, le frère de Louis XIII., et Condé. . . . Les Rois d’Espagne s’étoient persuadés qu’ils pouvoient acheter le monde avec leur trésors, et tous les moyens de parvenir à ce but tant désiré sembloient leur être indifférens : il leur importoit peu d’employer le fer des soldats ou celui des traîtres : le feu de la guerre, les tisons de la discorde ou les torches du fanatisme.”¹

Finally, as respects England, the consequences of Spanish domination in America, — and it must be remembered that for the first one hundred and thirty years after the discovery there was, with the exception of the Portuguese, practically no other domination than the Spanish in America, — the consequences of that domination, I say, so far as England was concerned, are fully set forth by Mr. Froude. The story is instructive, but it is unnecessary to repeat it here. From the English point of view, as from the Dutch and French, the sixteenth-century results of the discovery were not wholly, or even in greatest part, those usually described as beneficent.

Turning now from Europe to America, in the paper to which I have referred as read by our associate before the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester was a striking poetical quotation,² delivered by Mr. Hale with even more

¹ Genty’s *L’Influence de la Découverte de l’Amérique sur le Bonheur du Genre-Humain*, p. 276.

² “ Give me white paper ;
The sheet you use is black and rough with smears
Of sweat and grime and fraud and blood and tears,
Crossed with the story of men’s sins and fears,
Of battle and of famine all those years
When all God’s children have forgot their birth,
And drudged and fought and died like beasts of earth.
Give me white paper.

“ One storm-trained seaman listened to the word ;
What no man saw, he saw ; he heard what no man heard ;

ran his usual force, in which America was likened to a sheet of white paper, — an “unstained page,” — upon which it had been possible to inscribe things which it would have been impossible to inscribe on the European sheet, soiled by superstition, by feudalism, and by all “the sweat and grime and fraud and blood and tears” of the exodus from the Middle Ages. As I listened to Mr. Hale, I could not help wondering whether it could possibly have occurred to him to look at the story first inscribed on that white American paper, — that “unstained page.” Four hundred years had then elapsed since the land-fall of Columbus. If, therefore, that white paper was converted into pages four hundred in number, the first one hundred and twenty-eight of them would be devoted almost exclusively to the story of Spanish domination in the New World. Dealing again only with the commonplaces of history, saying nothing which I believe is open to contradiction, it would not be unfair to ask whether there is any conceivable sin against God, or crime against man or against woman, any tale of “blood and woe and tyranny,” not inscribed on those first one hundred and twenty-eight pages. Leaving Columbus and his individual responsibility for what ensued wholly out of the question, saying nothing calculated to excite controversy, it would not be unsafe to assert that there is no record when “God’s children have forgot their birth,” in the whole history of mankind, which is, taken altogether, less creditable to those who were actors in it than the history of those first one hundred and twenty-eight years of European domination in the New World, — that “wild debauch of unmerciful brutality,” as an enlightened Catholic of our own day has forcibly termed it.¹

I have said that in examining the passenger-list of the “Santa Maria” I failed to find in it “independent conscience,” or any

For answer he compelled the sea
To eager man to tell
The secret she had kept so well :
Left blood and woe and tyranny behind,
Sailing still West that land new-born to find,
For all mankind the unstained page unfurled
Where God might write anew the story of the world.”

¹ Coudert’s Christopher Columbus, p. 38.

human being representative thereof. What names are found in that list? When Columbus made his land-fall, he potentially carried with him in the "Santa Maria," besides his ship's company, Ferdinand, the Catholic; Charles V., Emperor of Germany; Philip II., King of Spain; Torquemada, who had then burned some ten thousand human beings at the stake,

"The bigot monarch and the butcher priest";

Pope Alexander VI., himself a Borgia and the father of the Borgias; and, besides these, Spain, with all that the name implies, including the Fifteenth Century Roman Catholic Church, the Inquisition, and Slavery. Am I stating the case too strongly when I refer to this collection of potentates and institutions as constituting on the whole the most terrible band of pirates ever congregated together in the hold of a ship? I moreover venture to add that never, in the whole history of buccaneering, did any black-visaged gang of ruffians swarming over a vessel's side indulge in such atrocities, in such general plunder, murder, and cruelty, as that stately band which, bearing the Cross before them, potentially issued from the "Santa Maria," with Columbus at their head, on the 21st of October, 1492. They "looted" two continents.

In enumerating those comprising that band I have spoken of the Fifteenth Century Catholic Church and the Inquisition. I did so for the reason that in dealing historically with an institution like the Church of Rome it is well to discriminate. For the mediæval Church of Rome the student of history cannot but feel a profound veneration; for the modern and, so to speak, reformed Church of Rome, observers of more liberal views generally entertain a sincere respect: but of the Church of Rome of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, — the Church of the Borgias, the Inquisition, and the Jesuits, — Luther expressed himself none too strongly when he asserted, in 1511, that "if there is a hell, Rome is built over it; it is an abyss whence issue all kinds of sins." This, and not the Roman Catholic Church of to-day, was the institution for the express benefit of which Columbus discovered a New World; this was the institution he carried with him to that New World.

I have now enumerated a portion of the potential crew of the "Santa Maria." As an illustration of what those com-

posing that potential crew actually did shortly after possessing themselves of the land thus opened to them. let me quote from a recently published work by our associate member, Mr. John Fiske, merely premising, as I do so, that it is another undisputed fact in history that Columbus personally, more than any one else, was responsible for the introduction of slavery into the West Indies.¹

“Such a cruel and destructive slavery has seldom, if ever, been known. The work of the Indians was at first largely agricultural; but as many mines of gold were soon discovered, they were driven in gangs to work in the mines. There was a rush of Spaniards to Hispaniola, like the rush of all sorts and conditions of white men in recent times to California and Australia; and we know well what kind of a population is gathered together under such circumstances. . . .

“Many of the wretches were the offscourings of camps, the vile refuse of European wars: some of them were criminals, sent out here to disencumber Spanish jails. Of course they had no notion of working with their own hands, or of wielding any implement of industry except the lash. With such an abundant supply of cheap labor an Indian’s life was counted of no value. It was cheaper to work an Indian to death, and get another, than to take care of him: and accordingly the slaves were worked to death without mercy. From time to time the Indians rose in rebellion; but these attempts were savagely suppressed, and a policy of terror was adopted. Indians were slaughtered by the hundred, burned alive, impaled on sharp stakes, torn to pieces by bloodhounds. In retaliation for the murder of a Spaniard, it was thought proper to call up fifty or sixty Indians and chop off their hands. Little children were flung into the water to drown, with less concern than if they had been puppies. In the mingling of sacred ideas with the sheerest deviltry there was a grotesqueness fit for the pencil of Doré. Once, ‘in honor and reverence of Christ and his twelve Apostles,’ they hanged thirteen Indians in a row, at such a height that their toes could just touch the ground, and then pricked them to death with their sword-points, taking care not to kill them quickly. At another time, when some old reprobate was broiling half-a-dozen Indians in a kind of cradle suspended over a slow fire, their shrieks awoke the Spanish captain, who in a neighboring hut was taking his afternoon nap, and he called out testily to the man to despatch those wretches at once, and stop their noise. But this demon, determined not to be balked of his enjoyment, only gagged the poor creatures. Can it be, says Las Casas, that I

¹ Winsor’s Christopher Columbus, pp. 506, 507; Payne’s America, vol. i. p. 188; Adams’s Columbus, pp. 103, 104, 105, 134, 145, 146, 150.

really saw such things, or are they hideous dreams? Alas! they are no dreams; 'all this did I behold with my bodily eyes.'"¹

It is useless, as well as painful, to dwell upon this portion of that "white" American page to which our associate, Dr. Hale, referred at Worcester. Prescott and Helps and Fiske have told the awful story, and I refer to it now only for the purpose of doing what I look upon as historical justice.

If there is one creditable feature in the whole history of Spanish domination in America, except the lofty protest of Las Casas and the futile efforts of Spain to restrain Spaniards, those authors have failed to reveal it. It certainly is not revealed in what we know of the history of Cuba, where the natives were entirely exterminated; nor in the yet more terrible annals of Hayti: Mexico, you will remember, was conquered by Cortes; Peru was plundered by Pizarro. To-day the condition of the dry leaf in those islands and countries speaks volumes as to what happened in the green. In fine, were I to cast up the balance of advantages and disadvantages resulting from the discovery of the Americas, as between Europe and those continents during the first century and a quarter which succeeded 1492, I should be forced to say that Europe had sent to America bands of pirates and robbers backed by the Fifteenth Century Roman Catholic Church and the Inquisition, bringing slavery in their train; while America had returned this invoice from Europe by some hundreds of millions of gold and silver, to be used, if not wholly yet in greatest part, in prosecuting some of the most cruel wars which ever afflicted mankind, and besides that gold, as is popularly believed, the most loathsome of human diseases, which for a time threatened to poison the sources of life, bringing about a degeneracy, if not the destruction, of the human race.²

Such are the uncontradicted commonplaces of history, to use again that expression, respecting the first epoch of European domination in America. It lasted practically until the year 1620, when a new attempt at colonization was made from

¹ Fiske's *Discovery of America*, vol. ii. pp. 443, 444.

² It is, of course, matter of common knowledge, that the syphilis is not believed by recent medical authorities to have originated in America. Nevertheless, in its modern virulent form it appeared in Europe by a curious coincidence shortly after the discovery of Columbus, and for centuries was "popularly believed" to have been imported from the New World. See Genty, p. 232.

a wholly different source. The power of Spain being broken by the destruction of the Armada (1588), England and Holland, representatives of the Northern or Germanic races of Europe as opposed to the Latin races, came to the front, and between 1607 and 1620 a new migration set in. Of this migration it is wholly unnecessary for the purposes of this paper to trace either the beginning or the consequences. The allusion suggests what followed, and the proposition I now have to make is the logical consequence of what I have already said. The record, I submit, on my friend Mr. Hale's "white paper," his "unstained page," begins not with the 21st of October, 1492, but with the 21st of December, 1620. Let us insist on credit to whom credit is due; for every material record on that sheet of paper since 1620 is in direct variance with every material record, so far as I know, which preceded it. Hayti, Cuba, Mexico, and the States of South America still bear upon them the mark of the crew of the "Santa Maria"; as the twig was bent four hundred years ago, the tree inclines to-day. On the other and succeeding portion of the paper is the record of the company which came in the "Mayflower";—a record in parts by no means stainless or free from lines which one would wish to blot. But yet, in a large and general way, it would not be unfair to say that whatever has since 1620 been done on either the North or the South American continent, has been successfully done just in so far as it has undone what the Columbus dispensation did.

I think nothing has been said in this paper which can be successfully controverted. If such is the case, it follows as a logical sequence that the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492, he then sailing in the service of Spain, instead of being an event of unqualified beneficence to mankind, was, upon the whole, one of the greatest misfortunes that has ever befallen the human race,—a misfortune from which Spain has not yet recovered, a misfortune from which the Spanish States of America have not yet recovered, and a misfortune which for more than a century threatened the overthrow and suppression of political and religious freedom in Europe. This is a very considerable indictment at the bar of history. In their two recently published works on Columbus and the discovery of America, our associates, Messrs. Winsor and Fiske, have set forth the truth as they saw it, and so far as they traced re-

sults. The former especially has dealt none too leniently with Columbus; indeed, he has seemed to me at times hardly to award him that meed of glory which is fairly his due. The paper of our other associate, Mr. Hale, to which I have freely referred, deals with little more than the utterances of the third as compared with the present centennial, and, except in the one poetic quotation to which allusion has been made, does not touch on remoter historic consequences. Such contributions to this celebration have therefore a solid value, and in the case of the first two, a great and permanent value. They cannot for a moment be classed with the general utterances to which I have referred. But as for the mass of those utterances, I repeat that history is nothing, and worse than nothing, if the historian does not strive earnestly for the truth; and, as I said before, rhetorical gush and general jubilation verge at times dangerously on cant and falsehood. It is well to be good-natured: but hardly at the cost of implying, much more asserting, that which is not.

In dealing with historical problems it is not as a rule profitable to consider what might have resulted had events occurred otherwise than as they did occur. It was written in the book of fate that the New World should, on the very eve of Luther's protest against Rome, be discovered by a papist, and pass into the possession of Spain. It was not to be discovered by the descendants of those Norsemen who had discovered it five hundred years before, in advance of the maturity of scientific knowledge; but if it had so chanced that America was discovered by some Dutch "Beggars of the Sea," or English corsair, or even by Columbus in the service of England, it is curious to consider what a different record might now be found on Mr. Hale's "unstained" page. In such case it is not impossible the West Indies, Mexico, and Peru might have been occupied by descendants of the Germanic race. Had this been the case, however bad in other respects the record might be, and whatever work of demoralization that sudden influx of unearned wealth might have wrought on the land of the discoverer, the weight of the wealth drawn from America through the whole sixteenth century would in the struggles which then took place have been thrown in the Protestant scale instead of in the Romish scale. The effect of such a transfer on the course of subsequent events it is im-

possible to estimate. As to the natives, our own record as respects them will not bear a too close scrutiny. On that score it is not for us to cast stones.¹

¹ The aborigines of the West Indies Islands have wholly disappeared, exterminated by the Spaniards; the same may practically be said of the aborigines of the Atlantic States of the Union. The native races of Mexico and Central and South America have to a large extent become merged with those of Spanish blood there settled, and their later condition has been one of gradual improvement. This can hardly be said of any of the other North American races; though, on the other hand, it is unquestionable that the European found the continental native races of the South in a more advanced stage of barbarism than those of the North. As to the relative cruelty of dominant races, while the record of no race is creditable to it, or, so far as appears, consistent with precepts of ordinary humanity, there cannot, it would seem, be much room for doubt that for sustained cruelty Spain stands first on the list. As respects that country, the domestic record is in no respect better than the foreign; for the persecution and expulsion of the Jews and the Moriscos were no less savage than the extermination of the gentle and hospitable Cubans. Indeed, in the case of the Moriscos, the Spanish record is scarcely credible. In the seventeenth century the Archbishop of Toledo met a suggestion that children under seven years of age might be excepted from the general banishment of the race to which they belonged, and kept in Spain, with a declaration that "sooner than leave one of these unbelievers to corrupt the land, he would have the whole of them — men, women, and children — at once put to the sword." In a similar spirit a celebrated and influential brother of the Dominican order, Breda by name, wished that "for the sake of example, every Morisco in Spain [they numbered over a million] should have his throat cut, because it was impossible to tell which of them were Christians at heart, and it was enough to leave the matter to God, who knew his own, and who would reward in the next world those who were really Catholics." (Buckle's *Civilization in England*, vol. ii. pp. 492, 493.) The expulsion was decreed; and out of one single body of 140,000 exiles, 100,000 suffered death in its most frightful forms.

There is, indeed, something grandiose, as well as appalling, in the Spanish method of dealing with the problems of persecution. "Upon the 16th of February, 1568, a sentence of the Holy Office condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as heretics. From this universal decree only a few persons, especially named, were excepted. A proclamation of the king, dated ten days later, confirmed this decree of the Inquisition, and ordered it to be carried into instant execution, without regard to age, sex, or condition. This is probably the most concise death-warrant that was ever framed. Three millions of people — men, women, and children — were sentenced to the scaffold in three lines." (Motley's *Dutch Republic*, vol. ii. p. 158.)

So much for the Spanish record; nor is that of France wholly different. Passing over the Albigensian crusade in the thirteenth century, — in which, it is said, "grim fanaticism" so seconded "pitiless orthodoxy" that "no war was ever more atrocious," — it is only necessary to refer to the massacre of St. Bartholomew three centuries later, — that occurrence which caused a Pope of the sixteenth-century Catholic Church to hold a solemn *Te Deum* to render thanks to God for the mercies thus vouchsafed; while Philip II. laughed aloud at hearing the good news, and "seemed more delighted than with all the good fortune or happy incidents which had ever before occurred to him." Passing over these commonplaces of history, and coming to the present century and the French treatment of what are known as inferior races, in 1801 the troops of the Republic

Meanwhile, my present purpose is merely to enter a caveat against the unmeasured language of laudation and jubilation poured out during the last month. It is accomplished by the foregoing statement of facts, and may, in conclusion, be compressed into few words. If on that paper, that white and fair and virgin American paper, to which Mr. Hale referred at Worcester, there is anything written which is good in the sight of God, or which has advanced the prospects of mankind upon earth. — anything in which an American, whether of Latin or Teutonic descent, may take pride, — I submit it will be found on those pages which follow that numbered 128; in other words, it will be found on the pages which follow that opened at Plymouth Rock on the 21st day of December, 1620, and it will not be found on any of the preceding pages which relate to the discovery of the West India Islands on the 21st of October, 1492, or what ensued thereon. Once more, — honor to whom honor is due.

occupied Hayti, and in October, 1802, the commander of the expedition, General Leclere, wrote thus to Napoleon, then First Consul: "Here is my opinion on this country. We must destroy all the negroes in the mountains, men and women, keeping only infants less than twelve years old; we must also destroy half those of the plain, and leave in the colony not a single man of color who has worn an epaulette. Without this the colony will never be quiet." (Henry Adams's *History of the United States*, vol. i. p. 415.)

History, in fact, seems to tell but one tale as to the fate of inferior, when confronted by superior, races. The result, where not slavery, is extermination; and the variations in the several processes through which a result is reached, whether in New England or in the West Indies, are of secondary importance, the Spanish West India variation being probably the most pitiless. Yet the record of the English in Ireland could in this respect hardly be worse than it is; for Froude asserts that the soldiers of Elizabeth "came at last to regard the Irish peasants as unpossessed of the common rights of human beings, and shot or strangled them like foxes or jackals. More than once in the reports of officers employed in these services we meet the sickening details of these performances related with a calmness more frightful than the atrocities themselves; young English gentlemen describing expeditions into the mountains 'to have some killing,' as if a forest was being driven for a battue." (Froude's *The English in Ireland*, vol. i. p. 51.) In the Pequot campaign of 1636 the New Englander also made very thorough work of it, showing what he was capable of when roused. His method then was not dissimilar to the otherwise than "rose-water policy" pursued by Cromwell in Ireland a dozen years later. But the wholesale killing in these latter cases was at least done in hot blood; an alleviation of massacre which cannot always be advanced in the long story of outrage which has caused the more recent dealings of the American people and the United States government with the native tribes to be recounted under the apt title of "A Century of Dishonor."

As is remarked in the text, stone-casting as among nations is on this subject clearly not in good taste.

The PRESIDENT then said : —

As Mr. Adams began the reading of his interesting, able, and discriminating paper upon the good or ill service to humanity resulting from the Spanish discovery of America, he expressed his hope and wish that he might open a free and earnest discussion of the subject. There was one statement made by him which I cannot but think he will admit to need qualification at least, if it be not open even to a positive challenge. The statement was to the effect that, as to the treatment of our aborigines here, it made little difference to them that they should have first fallen into the hands of Spaniards rather than of English colonists. It seems to me that the accepted facts of history show, that in the matter of justice and humanity, the preference is vastly on the side of the English in their relations with the natives from their first settlements here down to the present dealings with them of our national government. It is true that both the so-called "Spanish conquests" and the progressive English occupancy of our national domain have alike resulted in the territorial spoiling and the threatened extinction of the aboriginal races. But the way and method by which these tragical results have been reached were marked by ruthless barbarities and atrocities on the part of the Spaniards, of which the English colonists were wholly guiltless. Rightfully do the descendants of the Plymouth Pilgrims boast that on their first coming they sought to meet the natives in the full and best sense of the word as Christians. Having in their own straits for food appropriated a burrow of the Indians' corn, they seized the first opportunity to make restitution. The English Governor affirmed on his own conscience that his company had not occupied a foot of the territory without paying to the natives what was to them a fair equivalent. The Plymouth Company at once entered into a league and covenant of justice and amity with the natives which lasted unbroken for more than fifty years. They executed an Indian for wronging a white man, and they also executed a white man for wronging an Indian. The most cruel incident in the English dealing with the Indians in our earliest years was in the roasting of hundreds of the Pequots in their own palisades by Capt. John Mason. But the English were provoked to this act by some wanton murders by the

Pequots, as first aggressors. If the Bible is to stand as the common source of law and truth and duty alike for both the creeds of the Spaniards and the English, the latter zealously provided that the savages even of their own generation should have the Book translated into their own tongue, and that native preachers should expound it to their own race in their own churches. Neither the Book nor the lessons which it teaches were in use by the Spaniards. "Conversion" was a word of very different meaning with the Spaniards and the English. And from that date on I stand by an affirmation which I have already made in print, that our English and American governments on this soil, both State and national, have in intent and design, and by actual legal enactments and lavish pecuniary outlays from the treasury, sought to be guided not only by humanity, but by generosity towards the natives. The large failures in the working of such intent and efforts come of their being thwarted by the mismanagement and tricks and frauds of agents. The enormous sums of money spent by our government in extinguishing Indian titles and in the funding for pensions have been earned by the industry and toil of our own people for the support of tramps and idlers. What has ever been done by the Spanish government for the reparation of ancient wrongs or the supply of present benefits to the aborigines and their successors in the States under its former sway?

If there were nothing more to be said, these suggestions might indicate that it did matter much to the natives of this continent whether they should have their first relations to Europeans through Spaniards or Englishmen. But what are we to say of those crimson pages of history all from the pens of Spaniards themselves, and relating the deeds of their own people, the first visitors, conquerors, and so-called missionaries of the Christian gospel to these fair lands and the children of nature who peopled them? Those pages are the most shocking and harrowing in their hue and contents of any to be found in the annals of this distracted world. In reading them we have to take ourselves away from the instincts, promptings, and environments of humanity, and look upon the infernal orgies of fiends. The saintly Las Casas, the faithful chronicler of the enormities and barbarities which wholly depopulated many well-peopled islands and wide reaches of the continent, gives

us his shuddering relations, which make us quiver with the agonies he witnessed and described. Drawings and engravings so hideously faithful to the reality in the volumes of De Bry and other original sources of history confound us with the direful possibilities of man's inhumanity to man. The ruthless frenzy of passion, the ingenuity of device in torture, maiming and mutilating the sensitive organs and members of living men, women, and children, the chopping off of hands and feet, and the putting out the eyes of victims left to a wretched remnant of existence, — these were hardly aggravations of the appalling brutality of Spanish inventiveness in cruelty. The surprises and treacheries which attended the beguiling hospitalities offered to confiding victims fill out the distressing story. If we reduce by nine tenths the number of these victims which Las Casas counts by millions, we leave the record unparalleled in the world's annals. All who are living on this continent with English blood in their veins may well affirm that none of their lineage are chargeable with this wantonness of barbarity to their fellow-creatures. Slaughter and butchery are the incidents of every battlefield, heathen or Christian; but the fighters and victims are voluntary and equal parties in it. But the ingenuity, the gloating delight, the persistency and utter aimlessness of Spanish brutality leave us the only relief of being able to charge it only to the people who first desolated the New World. In 1656 John Phillips, a nephew of John Milton, published in London, under the title of "The Tears of the Indians," dedicated to Cromwell, a translation of Las Casas's "Cruelty," etc. Phillips's Preface is a glowing appeal "to all true Englishmen"; and it rehearses the proud position they hold in history for religious liberty and human rights, and denounces the Spaniards as "a Proud, Deceitful, Cruel, and Treacherous Nation." Yet one more heinous iniquity is to be mentioned as vitally associated with the atrocities of Spanish rule in the New World, of which the English colonists were wholly guiltless. It was the whole Spanish system of the forced enslavement of the natives in gangs for tillage or work in the mines. The cruelties of this system, even in its reduced severities of peonism, in which the natives were flogged to their stunted tasks and to attendance on the Mass, need not prolong this rehearsal. No Englishman ever exacted forced labor or any task-work of an Indian, or stood to a savage in the relation of a master to a slave, after the example of the Spaniard.

Roger Williams from his first coming to New England, and consistently all through his long life here, was, in spirit, purpose, and act, a century later than Las Casas, fully his peer in humane regard and championship of the rights of the aborigines. He maintained their rightful ownership of the soil. He early learned their language, and helped others to learn it. He protested against every wrong done to them. He won their love and confidence. He schooled himself to be their guest in their "filthy, smoky holes." In the quaint metrical stanzas with which he closes the chapters of his "Key into the Language of America," we read the following lines:—

"Boast not proud English, of thy birth & blood,
Thy brother Indian is by birth as Good.
Of one blood God made Him, & Thee & All,
As wise, as faire, as strong, as personall."

MR. GAMALIEL BRADFORD said that Mr. Adams's comparison of Spanish and English colonization suggested a comparison of the two nations. He believed that the difference is much less of race than of government and circumstances. In England, from the absence of fear of invasion, the parliament obtained early control of taxation; while in France and Spain the necessity of standing armies enabled the Kings of France and Spain to govern without parliaments. Hence liberty on one side and despotism on the other. This was emphasized by the secession of the English Church under Henry VIII., while France and Spain sank deeper and deeper in submission to Rome.

Rev. Dr. MCKENZIE said, in substance, that he thought Columbus was entitled to rank among great men, even if he had done but one great thing, and was wanting in many of the elements of greatness. Few men do more than one great thing. There is much in the life and character of this man which we cannot admire, but he did find and open the way to the New World. He did not know what he had found, but he knew that he had found land, and he had made it possible for others to know what the land was, and to make use of it. It is true that men had long believed that the earth is a sphere; but they had not made much of the belief. Very likely some one else would have sailed westward and have found this conti-

ment if Columbus had not done so. But he did it. He changed the theories and purposes of men into the reality. He did it at a cost, and with rare skill and courage. An allusion has been made, by way of illustration, to the discovery of the anæsthetic properties of ether. Some men knew that ether had these qualities, but the world was not the better off for their knowledge. It was left for a poor dentist, who acquired this knowledge, to put it to practical use ; and to him belongs the chief credit. He did what others said could be done. He took the risk and achieved the success. Let him have the honor.

Mr. Adams has spoken of the "jubilation" which attended the recent anniversary of the discovery of America ; and he has painted in very dark colors the miseries and crimes which for the first century were connected with that discovery. He has drawn his picture in very dark, perhaps not too dark, colors. But it is not over that century that the country has been jubilant. That period was an incident, an episode, in the history of America. It was cruel and tyrannous, but it was not permanent. Its results have remained in some measure, but they have not been a part of the history of America. Then came the new beginning, which has been so well described in the address to which we have listened ; and it is in the centuries following 1620 that we find the meaning of the discovery and its place in the history of the world. If it be true that the primacy of the world is to be with the English-speaking people, and that their seat is to be here, then we cannot over-estimate the significance of the event which brought out of the sea of darkness the continent on which was to stand the Republic which was to teach the lessons of free government, of intelligence and liberty, and to make its beneficent influence felt in all the earth. In this is the reason of our "jubilation."

The PRESIDENT said that among the earnest discussions recently made in relation to the strictures on the character and agency of Columbus, he had noticed the statement that Las Casas — the one best qualified to describe and to judge him — regarded him with respect and admiration. I failed to find any proofs of high and unqualified esteem and approval of Columbus when, in writing the chapter on Las Casas for the "Narrative and Critical History of America," I made as

faithful a study of the subject as was within my power. I would ask Mr. Winsor to give us his conclusion on this subject.

Mr. WINSOR then said:—

Las Casas knew two characters. He knew Columbus as a personal friend, for whom he had an affection; and of this character that historian said that no one could say Columbus was not a good and Christian man. Las Casas also knew Columbus as a public actor in events, the kidnapper and enslaver of the natives, and the giver of them over to misery and criminal lust: and of this character Las Casas said,—and I quote the version made by President C. K. Adams to avoid any personal bias of my own in rendering it,—

“Ignoring that which ought not to be ignored concerning divine and natural right, and the right judgment of reason, Columbus introduced and commenced to establish such principles, and to sow such seeds that there originated and grew from them such a deadly and pestilential herb, and one which produced such deep roots, that it has been sufficient to destroy and devastate all these Indies, without human power sufficing to impede and intercept such great and irreparable evils.”

It is not meet that any historian should remember the one character of Columbus and forget the other.

I have followed Mr. Adams's paper with entire approval of the general course of his presentation. It is not necessary to enforce it further. The season of commemoration is past. The public has had its surfeit of what it dearly craves. Patriotism has warmed on the rostrum, “America” has been sung in the schools, and sentiment has glowed in the vestry. History is left to face the indisputable facts.

I have said so much in another way upon Columbus and the outcome of his personality, that I willingly turn for a moment to that unpolluted triumph of science to which Mr. Adams has referred for comparison. The amenities of the broadest Christian sympathies, so plainly significant in the event I shall relate, belong to all ages, whether to the fifteenth or to the nineteenth century, as the existence of such men as Las Casas and Wallace testifies.

The statement which Mr. Adams has made of Wallace's communicating his views on the theory of natural selection to

Darwin, as an instigation to the publication of Darwin's views, is true enough for Mr. Adams's purposes, and his statement is that of the encyclopædias; but as told by Mr. Wallace himself, it deserves to be remembered for the generous reciprocity of kindly sympathy.

Some years ago, when Mr. Wallace was the guest in Cambridge of the late Dr. Asa Gray, one afternoon I received a note from my neighbor, saying that Wallace was at his house, and asking me to come and dine with them; and Dr. Gray said further that he would set his guest to talking on the growth of his belief in the theory with which his friend's name was associated. I went. Mr. Wallace told the story with great calmness, and with beautiful recognition of the merit of the twin sponsor of that theory. He said of himself that he was in his camp in the jungles of Java, — as I remember the locality, — and had been reading Malthus. Evening came on, and he sat in darkness in his tent. His thoughts wavered about the subject, and slowly, but with striking precision, grouped themselves so as to account for the progress of life by natural selection. He at last found that his ideas had fashioned themselves into a completed system. He called to his servant to bring a light and his writing-pad, and before he closed his eyes for the night he had outlined the revelation, which had come to him almost as an inspiration. He kept the paper by him for a few days, and then despatched it to Joseph Hooker, with a note, asking him, if it seemed a contribution worth making, to contribute it to the next volume of the Linneæan Society. Hooker, upon reading it, said to himself: "Now, this is precisely what Darwin has been these four years working upon, and by hard labor evolving his views from the data which a lifetime has gathered. It is hardly fitting that this happy intuition of Wallace should forestall the results of such labors." Hooker then took the papers to Darwin, and read them to his friend. "That is indeed just the point I am making," said the naturalist. "Haven't you," said his visitor, "some outline of your theory, written some time since, and dated, which can be published at the same time with this paper by Wallace, so that the joint publication shall preserve your respective rights?" "No, I think not. The theory is in my mind. What I have committed to paper is the mere details of one phase or another. But stay! Yes; two years

ago I wrote a long letter about it to Asa Gray. If he has preserved that letter, it is just what you wish. I will write and ascertain." At this point Dr. Gray, who had listened with that animation of countenance which his friends all remember, pulled out the drawer of his table, and pushing about some papers, lifted a packet in a twinkling of an eye, exclaiming, "Here 's the letter! here 's the letter!"

Thus it was that the manuscript penned amid the jungles of Java, and the faithful letter to Dr. Gray, reclaimed from our Cambridge botanist, lay in due time side by side upon the table of the Linnæan Society; and in the next volume of that Society's Transactions they brought in conjunction before the world the greatest synthetical emanation of the scientific mind of our day.

COLUMBUS

AND THE

SPANISH DISCOVERY OF AMERICA.

BY

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS,
GEORGE E. ELLIS,

GAMALIEL BRADFORD,
ALEXANDER MCKENZIE,

AND

JUSTIN WINSOR.

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