


thing was foolish and impossible, unworthy of a great king's attention.

39. Better give it up, Cristoforo Colombo, and make charts for a living the rest of your days. No, says Colombo, that western ocean must be crossed. He turns to the powerful Spanish nobles. They are friendly, but hardly dare take up the project. He will go to France and present his case. But first to La Rabida to see Diego, a tall lad now. "What!" says the prior, "no success? Too bad, too bad! But Spain must not give the glory of this great undertaking to France. I know the queen, and I will write to her; I was her confessor once."

40. He wrote with such force that he was summoned to the queen at once, and his earnest pleading determined Isabella to send again for Columbus. But again disappointment came, for they took offense at Columbus's high demands and would not grant them. The Spanish sovereigns were to furnish the largest share of the equipment; he should be admiral of the seas, and he and his sons after him were to rule, under the king, the countries discovered, and share in all the profits of the enterprise. Bold demands from an adventurer! Seventeen years of waiting might have taught him common sense; but with his absurd faith and uncommon sense he would accept no other terms, and turned away again with his Idea and his determination.

41. "Too bad, too bad!" said St. Angel, the tax-collector; "I will plead with the queen. She must not let slip this chance of enriching the king—and converting the khan. I will myself lend the money necessary, if the king can't afford it." Said Isabella to St. Angel: "I think as you do. This is a wonderful plan. Let them say what they will, by my own right I am queen of Castile, as well as queen of Spain, and I pledge the crown of

Castile to raise for Cristoforo Colombo a suitable equipment to sail to the Indies by the west. Let him make his own terms."

42. At last the fretting applications, the repeated explanations, the harrowing suspense, the long restriction are over, and the strong wings of the sea-bird are free to bear away over the Atlantic. 

THE VOYAGE.

43. At Palos, in Southern Spain, three small ships were provided. One, the Santa Maria, in which Columbus was to sail, was fully decked; the other two—the Pinta and the Niña—had decks and cabins only at the ends. As for crews, to secure them was no easy matter. Not many sailors cared to trust themselves upon that unknown "Sea of Darkness." Not many believed in this story of a western route to Asia.

44. A few, with visions of the Grand Khan's palaces and the marvelous sights of the East, would go for adventure's sake, and risk the mystery between. A few, thinking of the "great hills of gold," would risk the danger of tumbling into hell midway for the chance of getting safely across to the land of treasure. Alonzo Pinzon was on hand, as he had promised, and was given command of the Pinta, while the Niña was put in charge of his brother Vincent. Royal pardon for crimes and offenses was offered for any who would undertake this voyage, and so some jail-birds were added to the company. Queer stuff for such an undertaking! But beggars can not be choosers, and Cristoforo Colombo might be thankful that he could get anybody for his fool's errand!

45. On August 3, 1492, in the early morning, the three ships lay in Palos harbor, and down to Palos harbor

flock all the town to see them off for Cathay. Groups of trades-people shudder companionably over the vague terrors of the Atlantic, and chatter over the probabilities of the adventurers' return with untold wealth. Excited women—bareheaded likely—gaze again upon the strong, controlled face of Columbus, and thank God for this missionary to the Grand Khan—only the dark sea will surely be his destruction before he gets there! Children wriggle through the throng and stare at the men who are soon to find out what becomes of the sun when it sets, and to know for themselves whether or no it hisses and makes the water boil. The sailors make their way toward the ships through a running fire of conversation and hand-clasps, culminating at the dock in general good-byes and the clinging embraces and sobs of daughters and sweet-hearts and wives. The Pinzons are there with their friends. Dr. Fernandez is going, too, and the prior of La Rabida, in his long robe, is exulting with him over this success. Diego, soon to go to court as page to the prince, is there to bid his father good-by.

46. Now all are on the docks ready to embark. A hundred and twenty men to brave the unknown terrors of that sea stretching before them! The prior steps gravely down among them, carrying the sacred host; kneeling before him, Columbus murmurs his last confession and receives the communion; and after him the Pinzons and the sailors reverently commune. The people are silent as the prior blesses the departing ones, and then the ships are manned, the sails spread, and Palos watches until they flutter, like white birds, out of sight—never to return! moan the daughters and the sweethearts and the wives; and the children, with wide dark eyes, whisper of the unicorns and dragons of the East.

47. Off at last! Oh, the exhilaration of it! Admiral

of three rickety ships and all the unknown seas; governor of a hundred disreputable sailors and the realms of Cathay!

48. They had not been out three days when the *Pinta's* rudder got out of order. That crew of the *Pinta* had been none too willing to start on this rash expedition, and Columbus had his suspicions that they put it out of order on purpose. Perhaps they did; anyway, the next day it was reported broken again, and Columbus pointed for one of the Canary Islands to get it mended. "We are going to Cathay by way of the western ocean," they said in reply to the islanders' questions. "Oh," said the islanders, "every year we can see land lying west of us, away off there. You will find it, though none of us have been there." Some weeks of delay that unseaworthy *Pinta* caused; but at last, on September 6th, they were once more started. Now, *to the west!* And, with their homes and the known world behind them, into the west they sailed!

49. Hardly had the land disappeared when the sailors, dismayed at their own boldness, began to be frightened enough. The steersmen let the vessels drift around a bit. "Steer to the *west!*" sternly cried Columbus. There was grumbling in the crew, and the admiral showed his wit by commencing then and there two records of the distance traveled each day. The record for the faithless sailors' edification showed fewer miles than the reality, and the truth of the matter no one knew but himself, from that day until he brought them safe to the other side. The fifth day a fragment of a ship drifted by them—"a wreck!" cried the sailors, and grew gloomy over the bad omen. One night a "remarkable bolt of fire" fell into the sea, and the superstitious men were panic-stricken. How could they go on in the face of this message from

heaven? But go on they must. This remarkable admiral said calmly: "Steer to the west."

50. As the days went on "they began to meet large patches of weeds, very green." "We must be near to land," said the sailors. "Perhaps some island," said the admiral; "but the continent we shall find further ahead." Another strange thing happened. That little compass, their only sure guide to Cathay, began to behave as if it too had lost its head over this foolhardy undertaking. The neighbors at home had warned them that the devil managed the compass; and this needle, never known to point anywhere but north, now pointed west of north! Was the devil steering them for hell? Heaven's fiery bolt had warned them; they had not heeded, and now the devil was tampering with the compass. Poor sailors! They looked fiercely on Columbus, and wished themselves well out of this business. But the admiral faced the strange occurrence quietly, though his heart may well have beat fearfully, and proceeded to investigate its cause. He soon announced it. "It is the north star that moves," he coolly informed the terrified men; "the needle is always true." The admiral was certainly a marvelously wise man, and the sailors said no more.

51. Eleven days out. No thickening of the sea yet, except with this mass of floating weed. No darkness, except the darkness of night. No nearer the sunset, and always at sunset-time that golden western path across the water. Weeds, weeds—vast stretches of weeds; they must betoken land; and a live crab discovered among them would surely seem to indicate it. The sea is smooth, the air clear. It is like "Andalusia in April, all but the nightingales," exclaims the admiral. What would you give to hear a nightingale just now, brave-hearted admiral, gazing into the moonlit infinity of silence that enspheres

you! You can not bear the crystal tension; go below to the relief of the narrow room and the journal faithfully kept!

52. More signs of land. They kill tunnies—sure sign, say the sailors. And all the signs are from the west, "where I hope the high God in whose hand is all victory will speedily direct us to land," writes the admiral. Even the faithless sailors begin to forget their sullen disapproval, and the three ships race merrily to see which shall first discover land. Great flocks of birds Alonzo Pinzon saw from the Pinta. "This very night we shall reach land, I believe!" he exulted; and the Pinta swiftly shot ahead, expecting to sight the shore at any moment. "There must be islands all about us," thought the admiral; "but we will not stay for them now. Straight to the west!"

53. Still no land, for all the signs and eager watching. Leagues of undulating weeds, but no land! And the faint-hearted sailors grumble again. They fear that they never shall "meet in these seas with a fair wind to return to Spain." A head-wind heartens them, but it quickly flits off laden with kisses for Andalusian sweet-hearts; and again the east wind fills the sails and carries them away, and away, and away!

54. Alonzo Pinzon and Columbus hold a conference, and Columbus, spreading out that dear map of the Atlantic lying between Europe and Asia, traces for the pilots the course they have pursued—a bold, straight westerly line—and shows them that they are now near the islands of the Asiatic coast. Inspired delusion! How did it happen that the distance you reckoned to Asia was just the distance that landed you on American shores!

55. Then, again, all eyes strain to the west, and the three little ships in that great circle of water steer swiftly on their unknown course to unknown lands. The excited

sailors can scarce do their work. "We are nearing land, the admiral says." "He says it will be perhaps Cipango itself!" "Think of the gold!" "And the dragons!" "Thou'rt a coward. In Cipango the king has his palace roofed and floored with gold." "And the pearls there are of a beautiful rose-color." "If it is not Cipango, it will be still some other famous island, if not Cathay."

56. "But, bethink you of the monsters of those islands: we are like to meet two-headed men, they say, and lions, and beasts with men's heads!" "Ay, but the gold, the gold!" "What will gold be to thee, man, with a cannibal drinking thy blood?" "And there is somewhere there a valley of devils!" "Hist about that, there's no need to speak." "Any land were better than this dreary, endless ocean!" "Ay, ay, any land were better than this endless ocean!—I go to look for land. The admiral offers a reward to the man first discovering it." Ho! for the west, and the golden cities of Cathay!

57. Monsters? devils? The admiral was a man of science and not of superstition, but those wild stories may well have made the night uncanny for him. Suddenly Alonzo Pinzon cried "Land!" and with praiseworthy prudence hastened to claim the reward. The admiral fell on his knees and thanked God. Alonzo Pinzon's crew sang the "Gloria"; the men of the *Niña* ran up the rigging, and shouted that the land was truly there. All night the excited men talked of nothing but that land, and the admiral changed their course to southwest, where it appeared to lie. Fast they sailed till morning, till noon, till afternoon, and then "discovered that what they had taken for land was nothing but clouds!" Oh, the fearful reaction after that tense twenty-four hours! "There is no further shore!" cried the sailors. "It is as they said: the sea goes on forever, and we are going to death!" The

admiral quietly ordered, "Sail on into the west." They could not gainsay him. He willed it, and they sailed on.

58. Weeds and birds still float and fly about the ships. "Fine weather and the sea smooth, many thanks to God," says the admiral. Alonzo Pinzon wished to seek the islands that might be near them. "No," said the admiral, "we shall not change our course." But the signs of land again brought reviving spirits and new hope to the men, and again the three ships try to outsail one another in the race for the first discovery. The *Niña* suddenly fired a salute—signal of land—but the land did not appear. Seeing flocks of birds flying southwest, Columbus altered his course to that direction, thinking that the birds knew better than he where land lay.

59. And three days more they sailed, watching eagerly the various signs—weeds, pelicans, passing birds—gazing, gazing upon that unbroken boundary line sweeping around the lonesome watery world! Only sky and sea, sea and sky, with lines of passing birds black across the one and the undulating weeds streaking the other—three little ships with spreading sails under the blue dome, that distant, limiting circle, delicately distinct, always curving in unbroken perfection. Ah! the calm cruelty of the smiling sea and sky!

60. "The admiral encouraged them in the best manner he could, representing the profits they were about to acquire, and adding that it was to no purpose to complain; having come so far, they had nothing to do but continue on to the Indies till, with the help of our Lord, they should arrive there." It is said, though Columbus does not record it, that now the sailors whispered about among themselves "that it would be their best plan to throw him quietly into the sea, and say he unfortunately fell in while he stood absorbed in looking at the stars!" If they did

plot such folly, they had sense enough not to carry it out.

61. So there was, indeed, nothing for it but to sail on. The next day brought more floating articles and newly excited expectancy. A cane, a log, a carved stick the Pinta found. Think of the way that carved stick passed from hand to hand! "Carved with an iron tool," said one. "Nay, I doubt it." See, they are waving a branch from the Niña's deck! Ho, the Pinta! "A stalk loaded with roseberries!" There *must* be land—or else the devil himself puts these signs in our way. Alonzo Pinzon, in the swift Pinta, kept ahead. Night came down. At ten the admiral, peering into the darkness, saw a light—was it one of those phantom lights reported to dance over these waters? A faint, glimmering light! "Pero Gutierrez, come here. I see a light! Look that way!"—"I see it too," said Pero. "Rodrigo Sanchez, come here—a light!" But Rodrigo Sanchez does not stand in the right place, and sees nothing at all. It was gone a moment. Then the admiral saw it moving up and down. "It *may* be an indication of land," admitted Rodrigo Sanchez; but Columbus was certain, and his orders were prompt and imperative: a strict watch to be kept upon the fore-castle, and for him who should first see land a silken jacket and the reward promised by the king and queen.

62. At midnight the Pinta was still ahead. Ninety miles they had made since sunset. Look out for land, Alonzo Pinzon. Midnight—look sharp. No land. One o'clock—look sharp. No land. Two o'clock—what is it? Rodrigo de Triana has seen land, *land!* Make the signals, Alonzo Pinzon. Ho, the Santa Maria—*Land!* Ho, the Niña—*Land!* Take in the sails, wait now for the dawn—first dawn for Europe in the new world.

63. In the morning—it was Friday, October 12th,

five weeks since they saw the last of the Canaries—they found that the land was a small island with naked people on its shore. Here we are at last! We have accomplished it! Think of the exultation! Land with fitting ceremony, and take possession for the king and queen of Spain. Drop the small boat from the Santa Maria (put in your guns, lest the natives prove cannibals). Get in you, and you, and you, of the sailors; get in, Rodrigo de Escovedo, our secretary; you, of course, Rodrigo Sanchez, since the king sent you on purpose to bear witness to this occasion. Alonzo Pinzon and Vincent, carry your standards of the green cross; and the admiral bears the royal standard of our sovereigns. All aboard—put off the boat—row for the shore.

64. The curious natives flock about these strange beings, who come in winged ships, and have bodies covered with something besides skin—handsome natives, evidently no cannibals, and very obliging. No lions, or hippogriffs, or unicorns. But gold—yes, little pieces of it hanging about the savages' necks. They make signs that it comes from a land to the south. Cipango, thought Columbus, and set sail to find it. They were in the group of islands between North and South America, which we call the Bahamas and the West Indies. The first island discovered the natives called Guanahani, but Columbus named it San Salvador—"Holy Saviour."

65. They sailed about among them, hunting for gold and Cipango; bartering with the astonished natives; observing the land. Not quite equal to Mandeville's tales were the sights they saw, yet the luxuriant, tropical vegetation of the islands, the trees with luscious fruit and sweet perfume, the brilliant birds flitting through the green foliage, the marvelous fish flashing in the waters, the lizards darting across the paths, were wonderful

enough in their new beauty to the sea-weary eyes of the Europeans. "I saw no cannibals," says Columbus; but he heard of an island full of them. He heard, too, of the island of the Amazons, fierce, wild women, who use bows and spears, and are less like women than men. And there was an island where the inhabitants had no hair, and one where the people had tails. Mermaids he saw, but, adds the honest admiral, they were "not so like ladies as they are painted."

66. "Where do you get your gold?" says the admiral by signs to the islanders. "Cubanacan," say the natives. *Kubla Khan* flashes across the admiral's mind, and he sails off in renewed certainty. The island which the natives called Colba, or Cuba, he took for Cipango, and after much searching he came to it at last. When he did reach it, its size deceived him into thinking he had reached the continent, and messengers were straightway dispatched to seek the Grand Khan, with his marble bridges and golden towers. Columbus had brought along a letter to him from Ferdinand and Isabella, in which they tell him that, having heard of his love for them, and his wish to hear news from Spain, they now send their admiral to tell him of their health and prosperity! But the messengers could not find the khan. How could you know, Cristoforo Colombo, that you were only half way around the great world, and thousands of miles yet from Cathay!

THE REWARD.

67. America was discovered. The daring admiral never knew it. To the day of his death he thought the world was only half as large as it is, and that he had sailed west to Cathay.

68. America was discovered. Shout, Palos! Seven

months only have passed, and here come the heroes back again—back from Cipango and Cathay. Weep for joy, daughters and sweethearts and wives! Little children, gaze with fear upon those dark-skinned painted savages, and be consoled that they brought no dragons. Barcelona, ring your bells! The hero, Columbus, is coming in state! Crowd the streets, the doors, the windows, the roofs; king and queen receive him in magnificence. Hail to the man who has *succeeded!*

69. Three times afterward Columbus crossed the ocean to the new-found Indies, touching once the mainland of South America. No need to go into the details of his after life. How can one have the heart to tell of the quick subsiding of his triumph, the malicious envy of courtiers, the unreasonable discontent of subordinates, the selfish ambition of rivals, the wanton wickedness of the West Indian settlers; of his removal from the governorship, and his voyage home in chains, over *his* Atlantic; of his weakening health, his accumulating anxieties, his troubled old age? The peaceful death that closed it all in 1506 was relief to the bold spirit which injustice and pain could not subdue, but only hamper and fret. From the island of Jamaica, three years before his death, America's discoverer writes to his king and queen:

70. "For seven years was I at your royal court, where every one to whom the enterprise was mentioned treated it as ridiculous; but now there is not a man, down to the very tailors, who does not beg to be allowed to become a discoverer. . . . The lands in this part of the world which are now under your highnesses' sway are richer and more extensive than those of any other Christian power; and yet, after that I had, by the Divine will, placed them under your high and royal sovereignty, and

was on the point of bringing your majesties into the receipt of a very great and unexpected revenue, . . . I was arrested and thrown, with my two brothers, loaded with irons, into a ship, stripped and very ill treated, without being allowed any appeal to justice. . . . I was twenty-eight years old when I came into your highnesses' service, and now I have not a hair upon me that is not gray; my body is infirm, and all that was left to me, as well as to my brothers, has been taken away and sold, even to the frock that I wore, to my great dishonor. . . . I implore your highnesses to forgive my complaints. I am, indeed, in as ruined a condition as I have related; hitherto I have wept over others—may Heaven now have mercy upon me, and may the earth weep for me. With regard to temporal things, I have not even a blanca for an offering, and in spiritual things, I have ceased here in the Indies from observing the prescribed forms of religion. Solitary in my trouble, sick, and in daily expectation of death, surrounded by millions of hostile savages full of cruelty, and thus separated from the blessed sacraments of our holy church, how will my soul be forgotten if it be separated from the body in this foreign land! Weep for me, whoever has charity, truth, and justice!"

Ellen Coit Brown.

CHAPTER VI.

DEFENSE OF FREEDOM ON DUTCH DIKES.

1. AFTER the destruction of the Roman Empire all Europe was in a state of anarchy. The long domination of Rome, and the general acceptance of the Roman idea that "the state is everything and the individual man nothing," had unfitted the people for self-government. While Rome fell, the system of Rome, leading to absolute monarchy, persisted, and out of it grew the present governments of Europe. The conquering Goths brought in a modifying condition which changed the whole relations of monarch to people. In their social and political relations chieftains of tribes or clans divided power with the monarch, and for many centuries there was continuous warfare between these antagonistic ideas. This period is known as the "dark ages," for while it lasted there was little visible progress, and an apparent almost entire forgetfulness of the ancient civilizations.

2. During the dark ages roving bands of freebooters wandered about from place to place, engaged in robbery, rapine, and murder. To resist this systematic plunder the people placed themselves under the guardianship of some powerful chieftain in the vicinity, and paid a certain amount of their earnings for the privilege of enjoying the remainder. Hence there grew up, in the Gothic communities of Europe, that peculiar state of society known