

Landing of Columbus.

HISTORY

OF

THE UNITED STATES.

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### BOOK I.

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CHAPTER I.

THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA.

THE latter part of the fifteenth century was the dawn of a new and brilliant age in the history of civilization. It was a period marked by the dispersion of the shadows and delusions of the Middle Ages, when new hopes animated all classes of people, and led to the exercise of unknown energies. It was the commencement of those experiments and reforms which have since agitated Christendom, and changed the whole structure of society. The restless and the enterprising were no longer willing to rest in the bondage and ignorance of feudal times. They aspired to break both their civil and ecclesiastical fetters. They were disgusted with prevailing absurdities, and were clamorous for greater privileges. The strife of parties and orders, of classes and interests, then began, which has not yet passed away, and which will continue until the people, everywhere, shall secure those great rights which constitute what is most to be valued in civilization.

BOOK I.

Ch. 1.

A. D.

1460

to

1500.

The spirit of activity and change.

BOOK I.
Ch. I.
A. D.
1460
1500.

And improvements in architecture, in husbandry, in mechanical arts, in dress, in cookery, and in all articles of domestic comfort, kept pace with the progress of liberty and the extension of intellectual light. Nature revealed unknown sources of wealth, and art presented new forms of beauty. Sculptors arose, and rivalled the faultless models of the classic world. Painters transmitted to posterity the most beautiful conceptions of loveliness and grace. Enthusiastic scholars collected and collated valuable manuscripts. The muses again returned from their long and melancholy exile, and rekindled the love of poetry and song. Philosophers revived the questions which had agitated the Grecian schools, and speculated on the profoundest truths which had ever moved the human mind. Reformers exposed the follies and errors of the dark ages, and denounced the corruptions which had crept into the Church. A new life pervaded society, and produced a desire among the people to improve their condition, and extend the boundaries of knowledge. A great era commenced in the history of civilization, and a better day dawned upon the nations.

Revival
of com-
merce.

But nothing has made this epoch more memorable than the spirit of commercial enterprise which first appeared among the Italian cities. The crusaders had developed the maritime importance of such cities as Florence, Venice, Pisa and Genoa, and stimulated the love of adventure and wealth. Travellers penetrated the East, and returned, as did Marco Polo, with glowing accounts of the wonders and magnificence of Asiatic cities. But whatever land adventurous curiosity may explore, will also be visited by those who are animated by the hopes of gain. The valued productions of Persia, Arabia and India, such as spices, silks, muslins

shawls, carpets, ivory, and precious stones, were carried over mountains, rivers and deserts, and sold, in the marts of eastern commerce, to the merchants of Italy. They rapidly acquired fortunes, which increased the desire for luxury, as well as encouraged literature, refinement, and art.

But the delay, inconvenience and expense attending the overland transportation of goods from Asia, made the supply more limited than the demand. It therefore became the great desire of the merchants to import their commodities direct from India by sea. But no direct passage was known to navigators; to discover one, became the great problem of the age.

None studied this subject with more earnestness than Christopher Columbus, of Genoa; a great genius by nature, and also acquainted, theoretically and practically, with all the science and art then known which pertained to navigation.

From the rotundity of the earth's surface, and from well-attested reports of floating timber, curiously carved — of canoes with the dead bodies of unknown races — and of plants and trees, natives neither of Africa nor Europe, which had been found at a great distance at sea west of Cape St. Vincent, or thrown upon the westerly shores of the Azores — he inferred that a great continent might be reached by sailing west, and that this continent was India.

He did not expect to discover a new continent, still less such as that of America, whose existence was not even dreamed of by the nations of antiquity, or by the most enlightened men of the fourteenth century. He simply hoped, by sailing west, to reach the eastern shores of Asia, having no definite idea of the greatness of the earth, nor of the difficulties to be surmounted. He did

BOOK I.
Ch. I.
A. D.
1460
to
1500.

A direct
passage
to India
by sea
the prob-
lem of
the age.

Colum-
bus in-
fers the
rotundi-
ty of the
earth,
and a
western
passage
to India.

BOOK I. not even know of the passage to India round the Cape of
Ch. I. Good Hope. The only way known by which merchants
A. D. could easily reach this El Dorado was, either by crossing
1486. the Isthmus of Suez, and then undertaking the dangerous
navigation of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean; or by
traversing the Syrian deserts to the Euphrates, and then
descending the river and sailing through the Persian
Gulf; subject, in either case, to great hardships, and the
attacks of hostile nations and tribes.

Colum-
bus ap-
plies to
the
courts
of Eu-
rope for
aid. Columbus, in order to realize the splendid idea of reach-
ing India by a westerly passage, had need of powerful
assistance. But the courts of Europe generally regarded
his project as visionary, and declined to aid him. He
was successively disappointed in his overtures to his native
city, to John II. of Portugal, and to Henry VII. of
England, though those kings were known to be liberal and
enlightened patrons of commercial enterprise. At last,
under the patronage of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain,
1492. he embarked upon the Atlantic Ocean with three small
vessels, provisioned for twelve months, and manned with
about a hundred followers. Providence favoured his bold
undertaking, and, without any serious misfortunes or dis-
couragements, apart from the murmurings of his men,
this self-sustained and intrepid man of genius, after a
voyage of thirty-six days from the Canary Islands, and
seventy from the harbour of Palos in Spain, discovered
land. This memorable event happened on the 12th of
October, 1492; and the land discovered proved to be
Guanabani, one of the Bahama Islands, on which he
landed with considerable ceremony and deep emotion; and
of which he took possession in the name of the King and
Queen of Spain, much to the amazement of the natives,
who offered no obstructions, and who regarded their
visitors as children of the Sun.

Disco-
very of
land.

After discovering other islands, among which were BOOK I.
Cuba and Hispaniola, Columbus returned in triumph to Ch. I.
Spain, and was received with universal respect and atten- A. D.
tion. His great services were appreciated, and, at first, 1493
rewarded. He afterwards commanded several expeditions to
to the new world, but was not sufficiently fortunate to give 1506.
it his name. That glory was reserved for another. Nor Colum-
bus' sub-
sequent
voyages.
would Spanish pride and jealousy permit the great disco-
verer to reap the rewards due to his matchless intrepidity.
His latter days were saddened by the ingratitude of the
princes whom he served, and the neglect of the country
he had enriched. The very great benefactors to our race
must be content with the glorious consciousness of having
elevated it, a posthumous fame, and the hopes of the fu-
ture life. Other rewards than these, they are not likely
to receive. His lat-
ter days.

Columbus started with the idea of solving the great
problem of his age—a direct passage to India by sea.
His idea was not realized by himself; this passage was
discovered by the Portuguese. But how much grander Conse-
quences
of the
disco-
very of
America
was the discovery of a new western continent, when all
the future consequences of it are considered, than merely
finding an easier way to import into Europe the riches of
the Indies! When we contemplate the inexhaustible
sources of mineral wealth, the vast extent of fertile tracts,
the rivers, prairies and forests of the new country—capa-
ble of supporting so many millions of people; and when
we consider the character of the people who settled it,
and their institutions and principles, destined to such un-
limited expansion and application, and giving every rea-
sonable hope of moral influence on the world's affairs
beyond the limits of human calculation—then the great-
ness of the discovery which was made by Columbus can-
not easily be exaggerated.

BOOK I.
Ch. 1.
A. D. 1496. The merit, however, of first seeing the main-land, after the great navigator had led the way, belongs to John Cabot, a Venetian by birth, but a citizen of Bristol, in the west of England. The claim to the discovery of the main-land was disputed by Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine, who succeeded in giving his name to the great continent of which the United States now form the most important part.

Cabot's first voyage.
In 1496, Cabot obtained from Henry VII. a commission similar to the one granted to Columbus by Ferdinand and Isabella, with this difference — that he was required to defray the expenses of the expedition himself. No records are preserved of his first voyage, in which he was accompanied by his son Sebastian; but it is believed that he reached the continent somewhere on the coast of Labrador. On his return to Bristol in 1498, he obtained a new, but less ample patent from the king, and another expedition was sent out, under the command of Sebastian Cabot, a man of singular talent and energy, who, after reaching the main-land in latitude 58 degrees, sailed south along the coast as far as Albemarle Sound, and then, for want of provisions, returned to England. Even then America was supposed to be some part of the eastern continent; and Cabot, like Columbus and other early navigators, was in quest of a westerly passage to India. The fruit of his labour was the addition of a part of North America to the English crown.

Cabot's second voyage. Discovery of American coast.
1504. In 1504, the French entered with other nations into competition for the commerce and soil of America. Some fishermen from Brittany discovered the island of Cape Breton; and, a few years afterwards, in 1522, John Verazzani, a Florentine, under the auspices of Francis I., explored the coast from Carolina to Nova Scotia. In 1534, Jaques Cartier discovered the river St. Lawrence,

BOOK I.
Ch. 1.
which he ascended as far as Montreal, which he named from the beautiful hill on the island.

A. D. 1512.
The French and English now claimed between them the northern sections of the American continent. The Spaniards and Portuguese, however, were the first to avail themselves of the great discovery which Columbus had made. They sought the southern sections of the continent, especially those which were supposed to be richest in precious metals. The first colony was established, soon after the discovery of America, in Hispaniola, or, as it was afterwards called, St. Domingo; and this was followed by a settlement in Porto Rico and Cuba, which islands were conquered and enslaved.

Early Spanish settlements.
Then followed the conquest of Mexico by Fernando Cortez, whose sovereign, Montezuma, was the most powerful and wealthy of all the Indian princes that have reigned in America before or since the arrival of the Europeans. The people whom he governed had attained a considerable degree of civilization, having a regular government, a system of laws, and an established priesthood. They possessed considerable skill in many useful and ornamental arts, were able to record events, and were rich in cities, in palaces, and in gardens. But their gold and silver excited the cupidity of the Spaniards, and proved the greatest of their misfortunes. Mr. Prescott has depicted their sufferings and ruin with exquisite art and beauty; and the young student is referred to his brilliant narrative, since the subjects to which it relates can only be alluded to here.

Conquest of Mexico.
About ten years after the conquest of Mexico, Pizarro, 1538. another adventurous Spaniard, landed in Peru, and soon added that country to the dominions of the King of Spain. Conquest of Peru. All Indians between the ages of fifteen and fifty were compelled to work in the mines; and so dreadful was the

BOOK I. forced labour, that four out of five of those who were so
Ch. I. doomed, perished annually. There was no limit to Spanish rapacity, which was exercised wherever the Spaniards
A. D. 1538. obtained a foothold on the American continent.

Conquest of Brazil. Portugal soon rivalled Spain in the extent and richness of its colonial possessions. Brazil was discovered in 1501, and was settled about fifty years afterwards. The natives, inferior to the Mexicans and Peruvians, were still more easily subdued, and a powerful State arose over the ruin of the native princes. But the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies were not enriched to the degree which was anticipated from their possession of inexhaustible mines. True riches are not in gold and silver; these are only the medium of exchange—the substitute for more valuable materials. National wealth consists in industry, skill, and art, as displayed in agriculture, commerce, and manufactures. The Spaniards, insensible to this truth, exchanged their gold for the productions of other countries; and thus those most distinguished for art became the real gainers.

Still, all nations, in that period, were infatuated with the supposed value of the precious metals, and unreasonable expectations were formed of the immediate advantages to be derived from the possession of the newly discovered continent. Not merely gold and silver were to be procured in boundless quantities, with scarcely any difficulty; but fountains were to be found, whose waters, flowing over beds of gems and gold, would prove the elixir of life, and produce perpetual youth. It was in quest of this fair land that one of the companions of Columbus, Juan Ponce de Leon, a rapacious adventurer, discovered the peninsula which he called Florida, from the brilliant blossoms and fresh verdure of that country in the early spring.

Discovery of Florida.

From the impression that Florida was a land of gold and jewels, sanguine adventurers went in quest of them. In consequence of their explorations, Georgia was visited, and the mighty Mississippi was discovered. Fernando de Soto, one of the companions of Pizarro in the conquest of Peru in 1538, was the first to see the queen of rivers, which he ascended, in 1541, to its junction with the Missouri. This latter river he explored for two hundred miles, and would have advanced farther, had he not died, exhausted with fatigue. From his discoveries, and also those of de Leon and others, the Spaniards laid claim to the country around the Gulf of Mexico, and also a part of the Atlantic coast of North America.

The new world, therefore, fell into the hands of the Spaniards, Portuguese, French, and English, on the ground of discovery. But it was not yet colonized by them. Many unsuccessful attempts were to be made before this could be effected. Difficulties and dangers were to be surmounted. These chiefly arose from the perils of the sea, want of provision, the unhealthfulness of the climate, and the unsubdued face of the country—from the impenetrable forests, extreme heat and cold, wild beasts, and the hostility of the Indians.

Before we trace these settlements, it is well to consider briefly that singular race which the Europeans had to encounter with such fierce warfare, and which presented the greatest obstacle to the peaceful possession of the country.

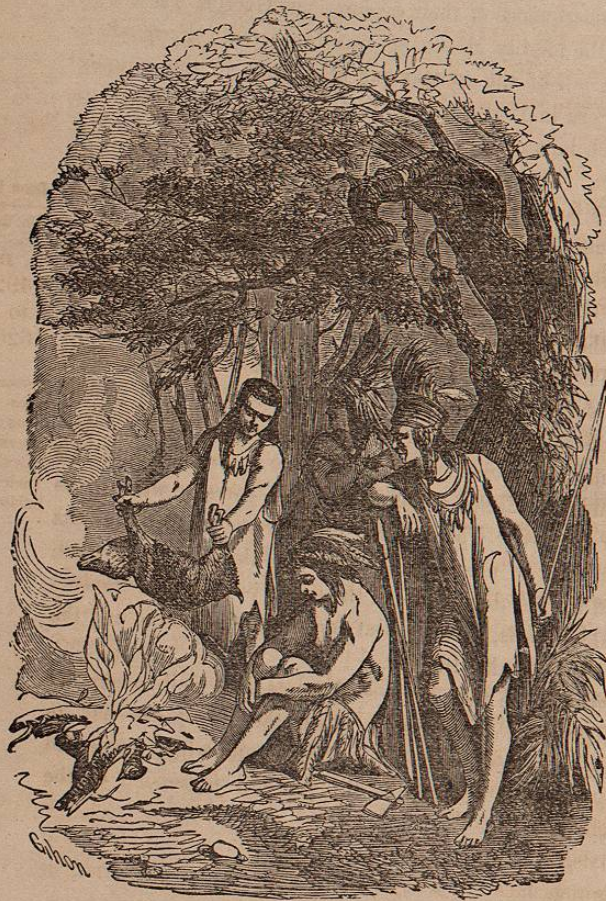
BOOK I.
Ch. I.

Discovery of the Mississippi.

CHAPTER II.

THE INDIANS.

THE early navigators, when they reached the shores Book I.
of the new world, found that it was inhabited by a people Ch. 2.
with whose language, manners and customs, they were A. D.
entirely unacquainted. Their personal appearance was as 1492
strange as their language and habits. Their peculiarities to
were different from all other known races of men. Their 1620.
complexion was copper-coloured, their countenances Person-
melancholy and sedate, their hair straight and black, their al as-
aspect wild, their bodies athletic and strong, and their pects of
language earnest and musical. Their mode of life showed the sa-
that they had made no attainments in civilization. They vages.
were more completely barbarous than any people then Their
known on the globe. Those who inhabited the present lim- habits.
its of the United States were savages, scantily clothed, living
in rude huts, and dependent for their daily bread on precari-
ous means of support. They had no arts, no literature, and
no records of their origin and history. Large settlements,
at least in North America, Mexico excepted, were unknown.
There were no cities, no temples, no palaces, no comfort-
able houses. They had neither ships, nor domestic ani-
mals, nor beasts of burden, nor any kind of mechanism to
lighten labour. They were ignorant of all luxuries, of
commerce, of agriculture to any extent, of manufactures,
and of the arts of cookery. They lived on a coarse kind
of grain called maize, on such game as the forests afforded,
and on the fish they caught in the rivers. They had no



Aboriginal Americans.

Book I. mechanical skill beyond the construction of a wigwam, or
 Ch. 2. a birch bark canoe, or the rude weapons of war and the
 A. D. chase. They were ignorant of government and laws, and
 1492 submitted only to the mild and imperfect jurisdiction of
 to their chieftains. There was no order of priests among
 1620. them, as among the ancient Celts and modern Hindoos.

Habits
 and cus-
 toms of
 the In-
 dians.

As individuals, they possessed no property aside from their arms, canoes, and a few ornaments, of which they were fond, unless we except the corn they had planted, and the game they had killed. They revenged their wrongs without having recourse to any public tribunal. They spent their time in alternate torpidity and intense excitement. Their pleasure, as well as business, were war and the chase. The forests were their home, their joy, and their security. Athletic games and feasting on important occasions, however, varied the ordinary monotony of their lives. They indulged in no high hopes; they formed no grand plans of life. All sedentary employments were regarded as degrading and servile. They committed to women the labour of the field and the drudgery of the wigwam, while they abandoned themselves to idleness and feasting, or engaged in amusements both dangerous and uncertain.

Their
 disposi-
 tions
 and
 traits.

Their dispositions and traits of character were as remarkable as their habits and customs. Individualism, in all its wild independence and in all its unsociality, was the grand peculiarity of the Red man. He hated everything like civilization. He loved to roam unrestricted in his forests, and avoid settlements and business. He had no inclination for the comforts of a fixed habitation. He was capable of great fatigue and privation, and exhibited in the chase peculiar sagacity. He was at home in the solitude of the wilderness, and never lost his way. He was meditative, reserved, and quiet — rarely made profes-

sions of friendship which were not sincere, and, for a Book I.
 barbarian, had great respect for his word. As a friend, Ch. 2.
 he was true, disinterested, and stable. As an enemy, he A. D.
 was revengeful, implacable, and cruel. He never forgot 1492
 a kindness, nor forgave an injury. He divided his last to
 cake of bread with the stranger who claimed his hospita- 1620.
 lity; he tormented with the most merciless barbarity the victim who had excited his vengeance.

He was not deficient in religious sensibilities; but, like the ancient German, whom he strikingly resembled, he disdained to worship God in temples made with hands, or with statues and images. He was no idol worshipper. He was not even a Pantheist, seeing God in the groves, the rocks, the rivers, the thunder, the sun, the moon, and the stars. Yet he believed in the reality of a Supreme Being, who controlled his destinies — an invisible Spirit, to whom all were subject and obedient. This Great Spirit was the universal Father who protected his children, who rewarded the good and punished the evil. The Indian feared and adored, though vaguely and indefinitely, this invisible power, and sought to propitiate his favour or avert his wrath by deeds of penance and severe meditation.

Religious
 rites and
 ceremonies.

He differed from the ancient Germanic barbarian in his views of woman, whom he degraded and kept in bondage. He did not reverence her nature, or yield to her entreaties. He heard in her voice no inspiration, nor was he influenced by her gentle counsels. He regarded her as an inferior being, and made her his slave. She carried his burdens when he travelled, she planted and gathered his corn, she made his mats and blankets, she discharged all the laborious duties of his home. Yet she toiled without murmuring, and loved without a generous return. She was rarely the mother of more than four children;

Views
 and
 treat-
 ment of
 woman.

BOOK I.
Ch. 2. but of these she was fond, and to their comfort she was devoted.

A. D.
1492
to
1620. The great passion of the North American Indian was war. He was engaged in constant hostilities. He looked upon warfare as the most honourable and glorious of all pursuits, and success in it secured both dignity and influence.

Games,
festivals

Hatred
of civil-
ization.

The brave and successful warrior was the pride of the tribe, and the object of unbounded panegyric. Next to war, the Indian loved the chase; and his hunting-grounds were more prized than all the united blessings of civilization. He obstinately refused to be civilized. He never exhibited any taste or desire for the privileges and blessings of society. When tamed and partially educated by white men, he would generally return to his wild pleasures in the wilderness. He never sympathized with the European in any of his pursuits. He neither envied nor imitated him. He had a natural antipathy to him, from whatever country he came, and whatever religion he professed. All his tastes, his habits, his prejudices and his passions, predisposed him to inveterate hostility to the European race and European civilization. And since barbarism cannot contend successfully with civilization, the Indians, when brought in contact with civilized enemies, faded away. Their fate was as inscrutable, as it was melancholy. But it has all the mystery of a Providential event.

When, however, the Europeans first visited the shores of North America, the natives were formidable, and much to be dreaded. They were more numerous than at any subsequent period, and were subdivided into numerous tribes, speaking different dialects.

The most powerful of these were the Algonquins, the Iroquois, and the Mobilians. The first named, which included the Delaware, Narragansett, Pequod, and perhaps

Huron tribes, inhabited the Atlantic coast, from Canada to the Chesapeake Bay. With these, the most desperate contests were carried on. From these, the early settlers received the greatest injury. They were objects of unceasing fear and detestation. The second great division inhabited the shores of the St. Lawrence, and afterwards central New York, under the various names of Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. They were called the Five Nations, and were chiefly formidable during the colonial wars with the French and Canadians. They lived too remote from the early settlements, to give serious alarm. The third great race, the Mobilians, included the Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, Appalachees, and Yamassees. Their hunting-grounds were still more remote from European settlements, although they were scattered along the Atlantic coast from Canada to Georgia. Had all these various tribes united to expel their invaders—had they been capable of concert, the historian might have had to record a different history of the colonization of America. But they were at perpetual war with each other, and did not know the designs of the Europeans, and were not fully prepared for an organized resistance. As their invaders obtained a foothold, they retreated into more remote forests. They could not relinquish their savage mode of life, and hence they faded gradually away.

BOOK I.
Ch. 2.

A. D.
1492
to
1620.

Various
Indian
tribes.