

EARLY DISCOVERIES AND SETTLEMENTS

Geographical Knowledge in the Fifteenth Century.—

The people of Europe had then never heard of America. About that time, a great desire for geographical knowledge was awakened. The compass and the astrolabe—an instrument for reckoning latitude—had given a new impulse to navigation. Voyagers were no longer compelled to creep along the shore, but began to strike out boldly into the open sea. The art of printing had just come into use, and books of travel were eagerly read. Marco Polo

Questions on the Geography of the First Epoch.—In the accompanying map there are no divisions of the continent, as none existed at that time. When they are called for in the following questions, the object is to test the pupil's knowledge.

Locate the West Indies. San Salvador, [now called Guanahani (gwah nah hah ne), though many assert a neighboring island to be the true San Salvador]. Cuba. Hispaniola or Hayti (ha ti). Cape Breton. Roanoke Island. Manhattan Island.

Describe the Orinoco River. Mississippi River. St. Lawrence River. James River. Ohio River. Colorado River. Columbia River.

Where is Labrador? Central America? Florida? Mexico? New Mexico? California? Oregon? Peru?

Locate St. Augustine. Santa Fé (sahn tah fa). New York. Montreal. Quebec. Albany. Jamestown. Port Royal. Isthmus of Darien. Cape Henry. Cape Charles. Cape Cod. Chesapeake Bay. Hudson Bay.

and other adventurers returning from the East told wonderful stories of the wealth of Asiatic cities.

Genoa, Florence, and Venice, commanding the commerce of the Mediterranean, had become enriched by trade with the East. The costly shawls, spices, and silks of Persia and India were borne by caravans to the Red Sea, thence on camels across the desert to the Nile, and lastly by ship over the Mediterranean to Europe.

The great problem of the age was how to reach the East Indies by sea, and thus give a cheaper route to these rich products.



COLUMBUS.

Columbus* conceived that by sailing west he could reach the East Indies. He believed the earth to be round, which was then a novel idea. He, however, thought it much smaller than it really is, and that Asia extends much farther round the world to the east than it does. Hence, he argued that by going a few hundred leagues west, he would

* Christopher Columbus was born in Genoa, Italy, about 1435. He was trained for the sea from his childhood. Being the eldest of four children, and his father a poor wool-comber, much care devolved upon him. It is said that at thirty his hair was white from trouble and anxiety. His kind and loving disposition is proved by the fact that in his poorest days he saved part of his pittance to educate his young brothers and support his aged father.

Columbus was determined, shrewd, and intensely religious. He believed himself to be divinely called to "carry the true faith into the uttermost parts of the earth". Inspired by this thought, no discouragement or contumely could drive him to despair. It was eighteen years from the conception to the accomplishment of his plan. During all this time his life was a marvel of patience, and of brave devotion to his one purpose. His sorrows were many; his triumph was brief. Evil men maligned him to Ferdinand and Isabella. Disregarding their promise that he should be governor-general over all the lands he might discover, the king and queen sent out an-

touch the coast of Eastern Asia.* He was determined to try this new route, but was too poor to pay for the necessary ships, men, and provisions.

Columbus at the Court of Portugal.—He accordingly laid his plan before King John of Portugal, who, being pleased with the idea, referred it to the geographers of his court. They pronounced it a visionary scheme. With a lurking feeling, however, that there might be truth in it, the king had the meanness to dispatch a vessel secretly to test the matter. The pilot had the charts of Columbus, but lacked his courage. After sailing westward from Cape Verde Islands for a few days, and seeing nothing but a wide waste of wildly tossing waves, he returned, ridiculing the idea.

Columbus at the Court of Spain.—Columbus, disheartened by this treachery, betook himself to Spain. During seven long years, he importuned King Ferdinand for a reply. All this while, he was regarded as a visionary fellow, and when he passed along the streets, even the children pointed to their foreheads and smiled. At last, the learned council declared the plan too foolish for further attention.† Turning away sadly, Columbus determined to go to France.

other governor, and by his order Columbus was taken home in chains! No wonder that the whole nation was shocked at such an indignity to such a man. It is sad to know that although Ferdinand and Isabella endeavored to soothe his wounded spirit by many attentions, they never restored to him his lawful rights. From fluent promises they passed at last to total neglect, and Columbus died a grieved and disappointed old man. At his request, his chains were buried with him, a touching memorial of Spanish ingratitude.

* Several facts served to strengthen the faith of Columbus in the correctness of his theory. The Azores and the Madeira, Canary, and Cape Verde islands being the most westerly lands then known, were the outposts of geographical knowledge. There had been washed on their shores by westerly winds, pieces of wood curiously carved, trees, and seeds of unknown species, and especially the bodies of two men of strange color and visage.

† "It is absurd", said those wise men. "Who is so foolish as to believe that there are people on the other side of the world, walking with their heels upward, and their heads hanging down? And then, how can a ship get there? The torrid zone, through which they must pass, is a region of fire, where the very waves boil. And

Columbus Successful.—His friends at the Spanish court, at this juncture, laid the matter before Queen Isabella, and she was finally won to his cause. The king remained indifferent and pleaded the want of funds. The queen in her earnestness exclaimed: "I pledge my jewels to raise the money." But her sacrifice was not required. St. Angel, treasurer of Aragon, advanced most of the money, and the friends of Columbus the remainder. Columbus had succeeded at last, after eighteen years of waiting.

Columbus' Equipment.—Though armed with the king's authority, Columbus obtained vessels and sailors with the greatest difficulty. The boldest seamen shrunk from such a desperate undertaking. At last, three small vessels were manned; the Pinta (pīn'tā), Santa Maria (mā rī'ā), and Niña (nīn'yā). They sailed from Palos, Spain, Aug. 3, 1492.

Incidents of the Voyage.—When the ships struck out boldly westward on the untried sea, and the sailors saw the last trace of land fade from their sight, many, even of the bravest, burst into tears. As they proceeded, their hearts were wrung by superstitious fears. To their dismay, the compass no longer pointed directly north, and they believed that they were coming into a region where the very laws of nature were changed. They came into the track of the trade-wind, which wafted them steadily westward. This, they were sure, was carrying them to destruction, for how could they ever return against it? Signs of land, such as flocks of birds and fresh, green plants, were often seen, and the clouds near the horizon assumed the look of land, but they disappeared, and only the broad ocean spread out before them as they advanced. The sailors, so often deceived, lost heart, and in-

even if a ship could perchance get around there safely, how could it ever get back? Can a ship sail up hill?" All of which sounds very strange to us now, when hundreds of travelers make every year the entire circuit of the globe.

sisted upon returning home. Columbus, with wonderful tact and patience, explained all these appearances. But the more he argued, the louder became their murmurs. At last, they secretly determined to throw him overboard. Although he knew their feelings, he did not waver, but declared that he would proceed till the enterprise was accomplished.

Soon, signs of land silenced their murmurs. A staff artificially carved, and a branch of thorn with berries floated near. All was now eager expectation. In the evening, Columbus beheld a light rising and falling in the distance, as of a torch borne by one walking. Later at night, the joyful cry of "Land!" rang out from the Pinta. In the morning, the shore, green with tropical verdure, lay smiling before them.

✓ *The Landing.*—Columbus, dressed in a splendid military suit of scarlet embroidered with gold, and followed by a retinue of his officers and men bearing banners, stepped upon the new world, Friday, Oct. 12, 1492. He threw himself upon his knees, kissed the earth, and with tears of joy gave thanks to God. He then formally planted the cross and took possession of the country in the name of Ferdinand and Isabella.

The wondering natives, who crowded the shore, gazed on the spectacle with awe. They supposed the ships to be huge white-winged birds, and the Spaniards to have come from heaven. How sadly and how soon these simple people were undeceived!

Further Discoveries.—Columbus found the land to be an island, which he named San Salvador. He supposed that he had reached the islands lying off the eastern coast of India, and he therefore called the dark-hued natives, Indians. Careful inquiries were also made concerning the rich products of the East, such as spices, precious stones, and especially gold. But the simple people had only a few golden ornaments. These they readily bartered for small bells.

Cuba, Hayti, and other islands were discovered and visited in the vain hope of securing Oriental treasures. Columbus even sent a deputation into the interior of Cuba, to a famous chief, supposing him to be the great king of Tartary!

At last, urged by his crew, he relinquished the search and turned his vessels homeward.

His Reception, on his return, was flattering in the extreme. The whole nation took a holiday. His appearance was hailed with shouts and the ringing of bells. The king and queen were dazzled by their new and sudden acquisition. As Columbus told them of the beautiful land he had discovered, its brilliant birds, its tropical forests, its delightful climate, and above all, its natives waiting to be converted to the Christian faith, they sunk upon their knees, and gave God thanks for such a signal triumph.



TOMB OF COLUMBUS AT HAVANA.*

the new world. A German named Waldsee-Müller published

* The body of Columbus was buried at Valladolid. It was thence transported, in 1513, to the Carthusian Monastery of Seville, where a monument was erected by Ferdinand bearing the famous inscription—"To Castile and Leon, Colon gave a new world." In 1536, his body was removed to the city of Saint Domingo, Hayti. But, in

Subsequent Voyages.—Columbus afterward made three voyages. In 1498, he discovered the mainland, near the Orinoco River. He never, however, lost the delusion that it was the eastern coast of Asia, and died ignorant of the grandeur of his discovery.

How the Continent was named.—Americus Vesputius (à mēr'ī eūs vēs py'shī ūs), a friend of Columbus, accompanied a subsequent expedition to

a spirited account of this mariner's adventures, and suggested that the country should be called America. This work, being the first description of the new world, was very popular, and the name was soon adopted by geographers.

John Cab'ot, a navigator of Bristol, England, by studying his charts and globes, decided that since the degrees of longitude diminish in length as they approach the pole, the shortest route to India must be by sailing north-west instead of west, as Columbus had done. He easily obtained authority from King Henry VII., to make the attempt. After a prosperous voyage, he came in sight of a sterile region, probably Labrador,* and sailed along the coast for many leagues. This was in 1497, FOURTEEN MONTHS BEFORE COLUMBUS DISCOVERED THE CONTINENT. Cabot supposed that he had reached the territory of the "Great Cham," king of Tartary. Nevertheless, he landed, planted a banner, and took possession in the name of the king of England. On his return home, he was received with much honor, was dressed in silk, and styled the "Great Admiral."

Sebastian Cabot continued his father's discoveries. During the same year (p. 24) in which Columbus reached the shore of South America, and Vasco da Gama found the sea-route to India (p. 41), Sebastian, a youth of twenty-one, discovered Newfoundland and coasted as far south as

1796, the remains, as was supposed, were taken to Havana with imposing ceremonies. The tomb in the Cathedral is inscribed in Spanish:

"O, rest thou, image of the great Colon,
Thousand centuries remain, guarded in the urn,
And in the remembrance of our nation."

In 1877, however, while excavating near the Cathedral in Saint Domingo, the vault was opened and a leaden coffin found containing human bones, and inscribed in Spanish—"Illustrious and renowned man, Christopher Columbus". It is therefore thought that the body carried to Havana was not that of the great admiral.

* Very little is definitely known of John Cabot, and even the time and place of his birth and death are matters of conjecture. Sebastian went with his father on the first voyage, and some give him the credit of all that is attributed above to John Cabot.

Cape Cod. As he found neither the way to India, nor gold, precious stones, and spices, his expedition was considered a failure. Yet, by his discoveries, the English acquired a title to a vast territory in the new world. Though he gave to England a continent, no one knows his burial-place.

We shall now follow the principal explorations made within the limits of the future United States, by the SPANISH, FRENCH, ENGLISH, and DUTCH. The Spanish explored mainly the southern portion of North America; the French, the northern; and the English, the middle portion along the coast.

SPANISH EXPLORATIONS.

Feeling in Spain.—America, at this time, was to the Spaniard a land of vague, but magnificent promise, where the simple natives wore unconsciously the costliest gems, and the sands of the rivers sparkled with gold. Every returning ship brought fresh news to quicken the pulse of Spanish enthusiasm. Now, Cortez had taken Mexico, and reveled in the wealth of the Montezumas; now, Pizarro had conquered Peru, and captured the riches of the Incas; now, Magellan, sailing through the strait which bears his name, had crossed the Pacific, and his vessel returning home by the Cape of Good Hope, had circumnavigated the globe. Men of the highest rank and culture, warriors, adventurers, all flocked to the new world. Soon, Cuba, Hispaniola, Porto Rico, and Jamaica were settled, and ruled by Spanish governors. Among the Spanish explorers of the sixteenth century we notice the following:

Ponce de Leon (pōn'thā dā lā ōn') was a gallant soldier, but an old man, and in disgrace. He coveted the glory of conquest to restore his tarnished reputation, and, besides, he

had heard of a magical fountain in this fairy land, where one might bathe and be young again. Accordingly, he equipped an expedition, and sailed in search of this fabled treasure. On Easter Sunday (Pascua Florida, in Spanish), 1512,* he came in sight of a land gay with spring flowers. In honor of the day, he called it Florida. He sailed along the coast, and landed here and there, but returned home at last, an old man still, having found neither youth nor glory.

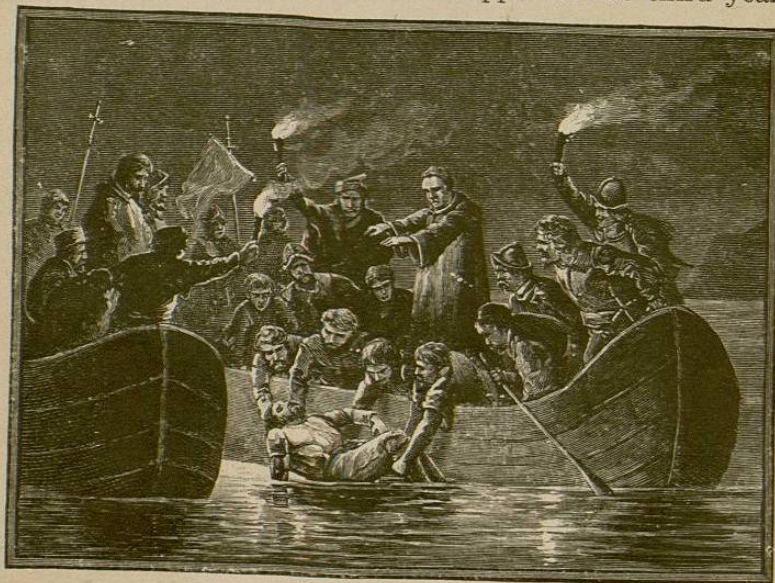
Bälböä crossed the Isthmus of Darien the next year, and from the summit of the Andes beheld a wide expanse of the Pacific Ocean. Wading into its waters with his naked sword in one hand, and the banner of Castile in the other, he solemnly declared that the ocean, and all the shores which it might touch, belonged to the crown of Spain forever.

De Narvaez (nār vā'ēth) received a grant of Florida, and (1528) with 300 men attempted its conquest. Striking into the interior, they wandered about, lured on by the hope of finding gold. Wading through swamps, crossing deep rivers by swimming and by rafts, fighting the lurking Indians who incessantly harassed their path, and nearly perishing with hunger, they reached at last the Gulf of Mexico. Hastily constructing some crazy boats, they put to sea. After six weeks of peril and suffering, they were shipwrecked, and De Narvaez was lost. Eight years afterward, four persons—the only survivors of this ill-fated expedition—reached the Spanish settlements on the Pacific coast.

Ferdinand de Soto, undismayed by these failures, undertook anew the conquest of Florida. He set out with 600 choice men, amid the fluttering of banners, the flourish of

* Eight years afterward, De Ayllon (da ile yōn') made a kidnapping expedition to what is now South Carolina. Desiring to obtain laborers for the mines and plantations in Hayti, he invited some of the natives on board his vessels, and, when they were all below, suddenly closed the hatches and set sail. The speculation did not, however, turn out profitably. One vessel sunk with all on board, and many of his cap-

trumpets, and the gleaming of helmet and lance. For month after month, this procession of cavaliers, priests, soldiers, and Indian captives strolled through the wilderness, wherever they thought gold might be found. They traversed what is now Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. In the third year



BURIAL OF DE SOTO.

of their wanderings (1541), they emerged upon the bank of the Mississippi. After another year of fruitless explorations, De Soto died. At the dead of night, his followers sunk his body in the river, and the sullen waters buried his hopes and his ambition. "He had crossed a large part of the continent," says Bancroft, "and found nothing so remarkable as his burial-place." De Soto had been the soul of the company. When he died, the other adventurers were

tives, preferring starvation to slavery, died on the voyage. History tells us that in 1525, when De Ayllon went back with the intention of settling the country, the Indians practiced upon him the lesson of cruelty he had taught them. His men were lured into the interior. Their entertainers, falling upon them at night, slew the larger part, and De Ayllon was only too glad to escape with his life.

anxious only to get home in safety. They constructed boats and descended the river, little over half of this gallant array finally reaching the settlements in Mexico.

Menendez (mā nēn' dēth), wiser than his predecessors, on landing (1565), forthwith laid the foundations of a colony. In honor of the day, he named it St. Augustine. THIS IS THE OLDEST TOWN IN THE UNITED STATES.*

Explorations on the Pacific.—*California*, in the sixteenth century, was a general name applied to all the region north-west of Mexico. It is said to have originated in an old Spanish romance very popular in the time of Cortez, in which appeared a queen whose magnificent country bore this name. The Mexicans told the Spaniards that most of their gold and precious stones came from a country far to the north-west. Cortez, therefore, turned his attention in that direction and sent out several expeditions to explore the Californias. All these adventurers returned empty-handed from the very region where, three centuries afterward, the world was startled by the finding of an El Dorado such as would have satisfied the wildest dreams of Cortez and his credulous followers.

Cabrillo (ka brēl'yo) made the first voyage along what is now the California coast (1542); he died in San Diego harbor, but his pilot went north past the present limits of Oregon.

New Mexico was explored and named by Espejo (ēs pā'ho) who (1582) founded Santa Fe, which is the second oldest town in the United States. This was seventeen years after the settlement of St. Augustine.

Extent of the Spanish Possessions.†—Spain, at the close of the sixteenth century, held possession not only of the

* Many Spanish remains still exist. Among these is Fort Marion, once San Marco, which was founded in 1565 and finished in 1755. It is built of coquina (ko kē'ná)—a curious stone composed of small shells.

† The conquests of the new world enriched Spain, which became the wealthiest