



Columbus.

CHAPTER II

Christopher Columbus

2. THE PRINCE

WE must not think that everything suddenly became smooth and easy for Columbus. He must get together vessels, men, and provisions, and this was a difficult task. Sailors were very superstitious and could scarcely be induced to go on this unknown voyage. They thought that if they went they would never see home and friends again. At last two brothers named Pinzon, who had wealth and influence, decided to go with Columbus. Others were induced to join them, and in time three little vessels were ready.

These were very small, not so large as many of our fishing-boats. We should consider them hardly fit to sail from one port to another along the coast. In fact, only one of the three had a deck over the whole vessel. In the other two the deck covered only a part of the hold. Is it any wonder that the sailors were afraid to go?

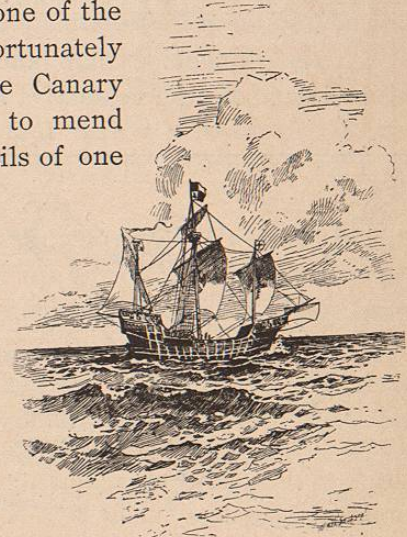
Columbus, however, was not afraid. He believed he was going to succeed, and succeed he did, though not exactly as he expected. He thought that he was going to find the east-

ern coast of Asia, and King Ferdinand gave him a letter of introduction to the King of China. We shall see whether he had a chance to use it or not.

Finally the last good-byes were said, and on one bright summer morning the little vessels turned their prows westward and were gone. For two days all went well, but, on the third, one of the vessels broke its rudder. Fortunately they were not far from the Canary Isles; they sailed into port to mend the rudder and change the sails of one of the vessels.

After spending nearly a month at the islands, they once more set sail and went on day after day, though it seemed as if each day brought them no nearer land. The sailors became frightened at the length of the voyage, and Columbus felt obliged to keep from them the true number of miles they sailed each day. Besides, the needle of the compass did not point just as it did at home, and the wind always blew from the east. The sailors thought that they surely would never get home again, for they would need a west wind to help them sail back. One day the wind changed and that trouble was ended.

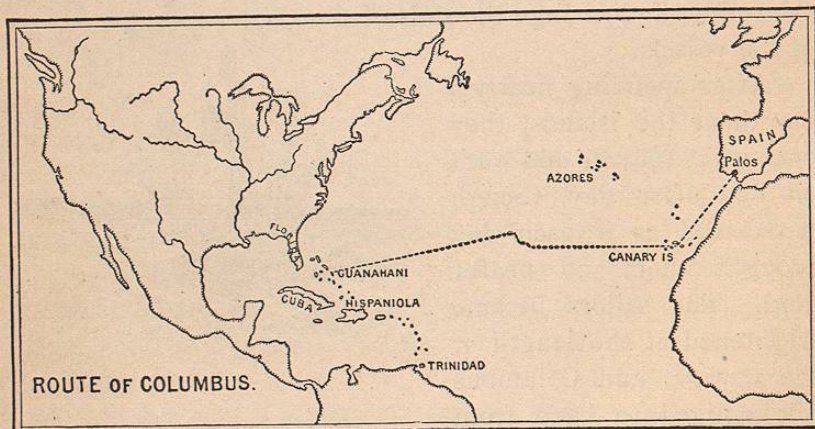
Still every strange thing frightened them, and their fear increased as each day went by and no land appeared. At one time they talked of throwing Columbus overboard, so



THE FLAGSHIP OF COLUMBUS.

that they might be free to go home. We must not blame them too severely for this. They were only poor ignorant sailors, and had never been so far from home before. All watched eagerly for land; nearly every day some one raised the cry of "Land!" This served only to make them more disappointed when what they saw proved to be only a cloud on the horizon.

At last all decided that land must be near. Many little birds flew about the vessels; a fish which only lives near the



shore was seen; a branch with red berries floated by; and a piece of wood, with marks on it that could only have been made by men, was picked up. All murmuring ceased, and every one was on the watch to be the first to catch sight of the long-desired land.

One night, as Columbus stood on the deck of his vessel, he thought he saw a light far off in the distance, which flashed out brightly several times and then vanished. Later, the cry of "Land! land!" came from one of the vessels. This time

it was no false call. With daylight a beautiful island covered with green trees and tropical plants appeared. The vessels were anchored; boats were lowered; and Columbus and his companions, richly dressed, were rowed to the shore.

As soon as they landed, Columbus knelt, kissed the earth, and gave thanks to God for having brought them safely on their voyage. Then he arose, planted his flag, and took possession in the name of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. We must not forget the day on which Columbus reached the island, as it is the first important date in the history of the New World. It was October 21st, 1492 (or October 12th by the old style of reckoning).

The inhabitants of the island, who at first had been frightened and had fled, now came up, bringing simple presents. They had never before seen men with white skins nor boats with great sails. They thought that the vessels were huge birds which had come from heaven, and that the men were gods. They gave the newcomers the best they had and treated them as superior people. Poor creatures! it was not many months before they found that these white people were very unlike gods.

The natives had a dark, copper-colored skin, and wore little or no clothing. Their hair was straight and black, their eyes bright, and their bodies well formed. They lived an easy, simple life. Everything they needed for food grew abundantly and was close at hand. So long as they had plenty to eat and shelter from storms, they required nothing else. Columbus called them Indians, because he thought that the island was off the coast of India. This name they kept, even after it was found that they did not live on one of the East Indies, but in a new and hitherto wholly unknown part of the world.

After this the vessels sailed from one island to another, seeking the rich kingdoms of Asia and gold. But Asia did not appear and gold was obtained only in small quantities. Among the islands discovered was Hayti, which Columbus called Hispaniola or Little Spain. Here his largest vessel went ashore through the carelessness of one of the sailors, and could not be repaired.

Columbus decided that this would be a good place to leave some of his followers. These men were to make a home on the island and put things in readiness, so that others could come out from Spain and join the colony. He built a fort from the timbers of the wrecked vessel, left on the island about forty men, and started back to Spain.

It was now winter and a severe storm came on. It seemed as though the vessels would be destroyed and all on board lost. Therefore Columbus wrote two accounts of his voyage and his discoveries, and put them in two casks. These he placed on the deck in such a manner that if the vessel sunk they would be washed off. He hoped that in time they might float to shore and tell the story of the voyage, even if the whole expedition were lost.

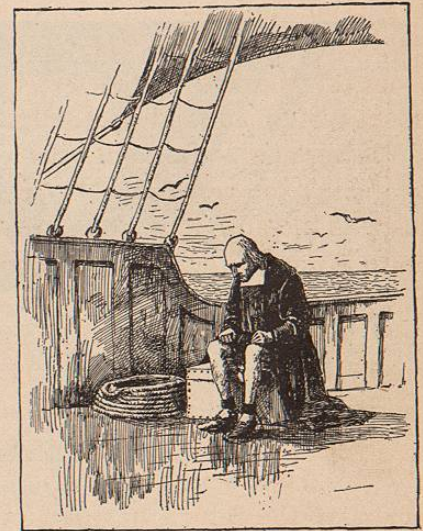
Fortunately the vessels were not destroyed, and the port of Palos was reached in safety. There was great rejoicing in Spain at the return of the expedition. A procession was formed, in which Columbus rode in state, preceded by the Indians whom he had brought back with him and by men bearing fruits and treasures from the land which he had discovered.

He was treated like one of Spain's greatest noblemen, and was given a seat in the presence of the king and queen while he told them the story of the voyage. How different was this from his first entrance into Spain! Then

he was a poor, unknown man—now he was a prince, honored by all.

Almost immediately preparations were made for a second voyage. This time there was no difficulty in finding men willing to go. Every one, from the poorest sailors to the nobles in court, wanted to gain a fortune in the new land. In a few months, seventeen vessels and fifteen hundred men were ready. They reached the islands without mishap, and anchored in the harbor near which the colony had been left the year before.

No signs of men or buildings were to be seen. The place was deserted and the fort completely destroyed. Columbus sought another place in which to leave his new colony. He selected a harbor thirty or forty miles distant, and commenced to build a city. This city, the first in the New World, was named Isabella, in honor of the Queen of Spain.



COLUMBUS RETURNING IN CHAINS.

Now began Columbus' misfortunes. He was well fitted for a life of exploration; he was a man of great earnestness and persistence of purpose, but he was not a good governor. He made many mistakes and more enemies. When it was found that gold was not to be picked up everywhere as was expected, and that every one was obliged to work hard to obtain even a

living, the colonists became very angry and declared that Columbus was an impostor.

So many complaints came from the colony to Spain that at last Ferdinand sent out a man to look into the truth of the stories. He thought it a good opportunity to make himself governor; therefore he put Columbus in chains and sent him back to Spain. Upon his arrival the people were indignant at the treatment he had received. They thought that even if he had made mistakes he ought not to have been sent home



HOW MUCH COLUMBUS DISCOVERED.
(The white spots show where he landed.)

like a common criminal. The king and queen received him kindly and gave him back his property; but they decided not to send him again as governor of a colony.

Columbus made four voyages of discovery in all. Soon after his last voyage he died, worn out by his many troubles. His body was carried across the Atlantic and buried on the Island of Hayti, which he had discovered. When that island was ceded to France, his remains were again taken over sea

and with great pomp deposited in the Cathedral in Havana, where they yet remain. To him belongs the honor of being the "Discoverer of the New World," even though it does not bear his name and though he died still believing that it was a part of Asia.

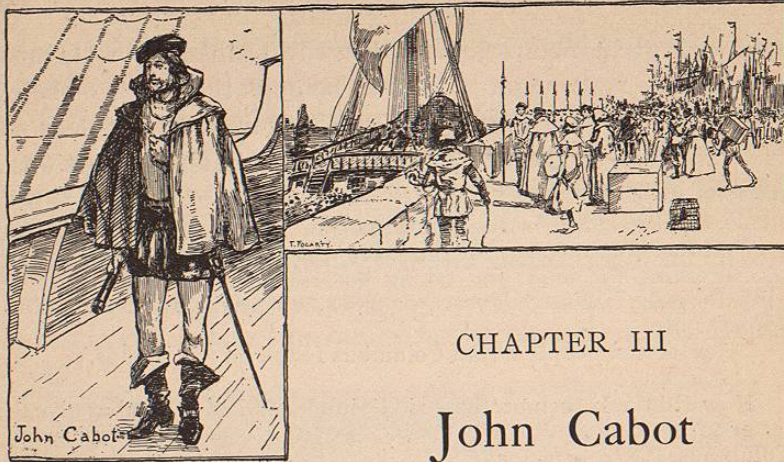
Tell the story of the preparations for the voyage; the voyage itself; the watching for land; the taking possession of the island; the return to Spain; the second voyage; the harsh treatment of Columbus; his later life.

Describe the people whom Columbus found on the islands.

How did the Pinzon brothers aid Columbus? Did Columbus give the letter to the king of China? What do you think made the light which Columbus saw? How many years have passed since the discovery of America? What changed the Indians' idea of the white men? Why did Columbus build a fort? How did the Spaniards expect to gain a fortune in the new land? What became of the fort and the men whom Columbus left behind?



COAT OF ARMS OF COLUMBUS.



CHAPTER III

John Cabot

ON the maps drawn four and five hundred years ago, the Atlantic Ocean, instead of a broad expanse of water west of Europe, was represented as being full of islands. Many stories of these islands were told by sailors, who said that land could frequently be seen, lying low on the horizon, as the sun set over the western sea.

Some of the islands were supposed to be large and important, especially the Island of Brazil and the Island of the Seven Cities. The latter was said to be inhabited by Christians, who, years before, had fled from seven cities of Asia under their seven bishops, and had taken refuge across the ocean.

For years the merchants of Bristol, England, had sent out vessels to search for these fabled islands. One of the commanders of these expeditions was John Cabot. He had been one of the foremost in these explorations, as he felt quite certain that, somewhere in the western ocean, land could be found. Thus far he had been unsuccessful, for he had at no time sailed far enough west to reach the American coast.

John Cabot, like Columbus, was born at Genoa, but he had lived for many years in Venice and is usually called a Venetian. He was a skilled and experienced seaman, who had sailed on many waters and had been in many countries. He had traveled east as far as Mecca, the Holy City of Arabia. There he had seen caravans loaded with fragrant spices that had come from the far East. He asked those who had charge where these spices grew, and received the answer that they had been brought by other caravans that had come from still farther east.

Whether Cabot had reasoned that these rich lands of Asia could be reached by sailing west is not certain. But as soon as the news of Columbus' discovery reached England, Cabot immediately decided that he could sail west and reach the coast of Asia also.

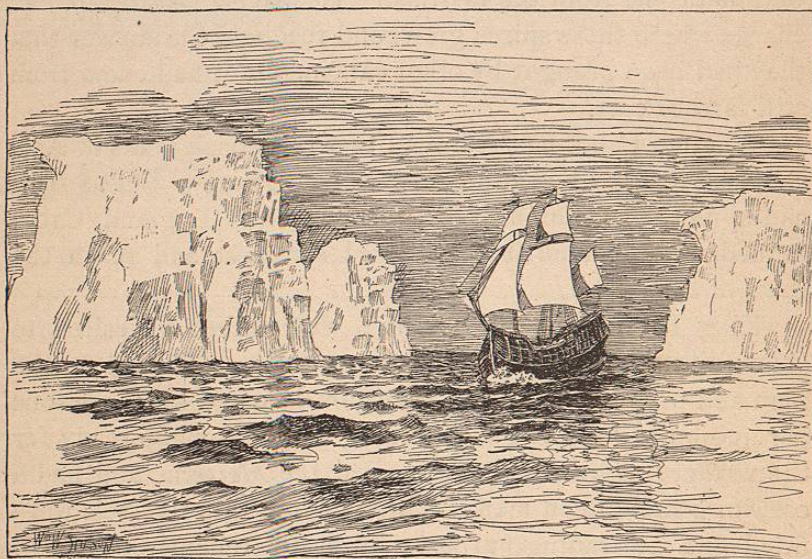
King Henry VII. of England, who naturally desired to share with Spain in the new discoveries, was pleased at the plan and promises of Cabot. He gave him and his three sons permission to sail, and soon a little ship was made ready for the voyage. This vessel was called the *Matthew*, and had a crew of but eighteen men. Three or four other vessels were fitted out for trading-purposes by the merchants of Bristol. These started with Cabot, but it is supposed that they went only a short distance and then turned back, leaving the little *Matthew* to sail on alone.

There is little known about this first voyage, except that it began early in May (1497). There could hardly have been any storms or serious hardships, as land was reached in June. This land, which Cabot called Newfoundland, is now known as Cape Breton Island, which is separated from Nova Scotia by a narrow channel.

Thus Cabot was the first to find the mainland of Amer-

ica. Although Columbus had by this time made a second voyage across the Atlantic, he had gone no farther than the islands that lie some distance from the coast. Not until the year after Cabot discovered the North American continent did Columbus succeed in reaching the coast of South America.

It was no fertile, tropical land that Cabot found, but a bar-



CABOT'S SHIP AMONG ICEBERGS.

ren and unproductive region. No natives came to the beach to welcome him, thinking that the newcomers were gods. So long as the vessel stayed no Indians appeared. Still it was decided that there must be some inhabitants, as traps were discovered in the woods, arranged for catching wild animals. A needle for net-making was picked up. Besides, many trees were found notched, perhaps to guide those who were traveling through the forests. Cabot and his men, however,

did not stay long enough to make a very thorough search. As they had but little food with them, they started back to England in a few days.

Their arrival caused the greatest excitement. The report got abroad that Cabot had discovered the Island of the Seven Cities and a portion of the coast of Asia. A writer of the time said that the Englishmen followed Cabot "like madmen." He was called "the Great Admiral." He dressed in silk and was treated like a prince. Cabot, unlike many others, did not wish to keep all his good fortune to himself. Instead, he wanted his friends and neighbors to share it with him. Some he appointed governors, others he made bishops over the new land which he had discovered.

King Henry was so delighted at the success of the expedition that he sent its leader the sum of £10, or about \$50 of our money. This seems a very small sum for a rich king to send to a man who had performed such a service as Cabot had. But Henry was a miserly king and it probably seemed a large sum to him. Besides, money went a great deal farther then than now.

The next year a larger expedition was fitted out. Cabot planned to go west until he reached the land he had found the year before. Then he thought that if he sailed south he would come to the Island of Cipango, or Japan, where he expected to fill his vessel with spices and jewels. Five or six ships started out early in the spring. This time they sailed farther north than before—so far that they met with many icebergs and the days were so long that there was almost no night. The sailors became frightened at the quantity of ice, and the vessels were turned to the south.

From Labrador Cabot sailed along the coast of North America until he nearly reached the peninsula of Florida.

Once he tried to form a colony. But the soil was barren, the men became discouraged, and the colony was given up.

Although the land was for the most part unproductive, the waters were wonderfully full of fish. In fact, Cabot called the country the "Land of the Codfish," because the seas contained such quantities of cod. The bears of the country were almost harmless, since they could obtain such an abundance of food. They were accustomed to swim out into the water and catch the fish in their claws. Terrible struggles would take place as the fish, which were large and strong, tried to get away. The bear would usually



A BEAR CATCHING COD.



WHAT CABOT DISCOVERED.

come off victor and would swim with its prey to the shore. Then it would eat the fish at its leisure.

This is all we know of John Cabot. After this second voyage no trace of him can be found. Whether he died on the return trip or soon after his arrival is not known. Why, then, should the boys and girls of the

United States know the story of this almost unknown man?

The reason is that, because of these two voyages of John Cabot, England laid claim to the whole Atlantic coast from Labrador to Florida. Because she laid claim to it, she sent out colonists to take possession. And because she sent colonists, the people of the United States speak the English language. Had it not been for John Cabot, we might now have for our native tongue the Spanish language, as do the people of Mexico and most of the nations of South America.

Give an account of the fabled islands. Tell the story of Cabot: in early life; on his first voyage; on his return; on his second voyage. Tell why Cabot supposed the new land to be inhabited. Tell Cabot's story of the fish.

Do you suppose the fabled islands were really the coast of America, or were they low-lying clouds? What was the difference between the aid given by Queen Isabella to Columbus and that by King Henry to Cabot? Why do some people claim that Cabot and not Columbus discovered America? Do you think that Cabot ever knew that the land he had found was not Asia? Why do you suppose we know so little about the life of John Cabot?



THE ROYAL ARMS OF ENGLAND.