

THE
HISTORY
OF
AMERICA.

BOOK II.

BOOK II. **A**MONG the foreigners whom the fame of the discoveries made by the Portuguese had allured into their service, was Christopher Colon, or Columbus, a subject of the republic of Genoa. Neither the time nor place of his birth is known with certainty^a; but he was descended of an honourable family, though reduced to indigence by various misfortunes. His ancestors having betaken themselves for subsistence to a sea-faring life, Columbus discovered in his early youth the peculiar character and talents which mark out a man for that profession. His parents, instead of thwarting this original propensity of his mind, seem to have encouraged and confirmed it by the education which they gave him. After acquiring some knowledge of the Latin

Birth and
education
of Colum-
bus.

^a See NOTE XI.

tongue, the only language in which science was taught at that time, he was instructed in geometry, cosmography, astronomy, and the art of drawing. To these he applied with such ardour and predilection, on account of their connexion with navigation, his favourite object, that he advanced with rapid proficiency in the study of them. Thus qualified, he went to sea at the age of fourteen, and began his career on that element which conducted him to so much glory. His early voyages were to those ports in the Mediterranean which his countrymen the Genoese frequented. This being a sphere too narrow for his active mind, he made an excursion to the northern seas, and visited the coasts of Iceland, to which the English and other nations had begun to resort on account of its fishery. As navigation, in every direction, was now become enterprising, he proceeded beyond that island, the Thule of the ancients, and advanced several degrees within the polar circle. Having satisfied his curiosity, by a voyage which tended more to enlarge his knowledge of naval affairs than to improve his fortune, he entered into the service of a famous sea-captain of his own name and family. This man commanded a small squadron fitted out at his own expense, and by cruising sometimes against the Mahometans, sometimes against the Venetians, the rivals of his country in trade, had acquired both wealth and reputation. With him Columbus continued for several years, no less distinguished for his courage than for his experience as a sailor. At length, in an obstinate engagement off the coast of Portugal, with some Venetian caravals returning

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B O O K richly laden from the Low-Countries, the vessel on board which he served took fire, together with one of the enemy's ships to which it was fast grappled. In this dreadful extremity his intrepidity and presence of mind did not forsake him. He threw himself into the sea, laid hold of a floating oar; and by the support of it, and his dexterity in swimming, he reached the shore, though above two leagues distant, and saved a life reserved for great undertakings^b.

He enters into the Portuguese service.

As soon as he recovered strength for the journey, he repaired to Lisbon, where many of his countrymen were settled. They soon conceived such a favourable opinion of his merit, as well as talents, that they warmly solicited him to remain in that kingdom, where his naval skill and experience could not fail of rendering him conspicuous. To every adventurer animated either with curiosity to visit new countries, or with ambition to distinguish himself, the Portuguese service was at that time extremely inviting. Columbus listened with a favourable ear to the advice of his friends, and, having gained the esteem of a Portuguese lady, whom he married, fixed his residence in Lisbon. This alliance, instead of detaching him from a sea-faring life, contributed to enlarge the sphere of his naval knowledge, and to excite a desire of extending it still further. His wife was a daughter of Bartholomew Perestrello, one of the captains employed by Prince Henry in his early navigations, and who, under his protection, had discovered and planted the

^b Life of Columbus, c. v.

islands of Porto Santo and Madeira. Columbus got possession of the journals and charts of this experienced navigator; and from them he learned the course which the Portuguese had held in making their discoveries, as well as the various circumstances which guided or encouraged them in their attempts. The study of these soothed and inflamed his favourite passion; and while he contemplated the maps, and read the descriptions, of the new countries which Perestrello had seen, his impatience to visit them became irresistible. In order to indulge it, he made a voyage to Madeira, and continued during several years to trade with that island, with the Canaries, the Azores, the settlements in Guinea, and all the other places which the Portuguese had discovered on the continent of Africa^c.

By the experience which Columbus acquired, during such a variety of voyages to almost every part of the globe with which at that time any intercourse was carried on by sea, he was now become one of the most skilful navigators in Europe. But, not satisfied with that praise, his ambition aimed at something more. The successful progress of the Portuguese navigators had awakened a spirit of curiosity and emulation, which set every man of science upon examining all the circumstances that led to the discoveries which they had made, or that afforded a prospect of succeeding in any new and bolder undertaking. The mind of Columbus, naturally inquisitive, capable of deep reflection, and

^c Life of Columbus, c. iv. v.

BOOK turned to speculations of this kind, was so often employed in revolving the principles upon which the Portuguese had founded their schemes of discovery, and the mode on which they had carried them on, that he gradually began to form an idea of improving upon their plan, and of accomplishing discoveries which hitherto they had attempted in vain.

He forms the idea of a new course to India.

To find out a passage by sea to the East Indies, was the great object in view at that period. From the time that the Portuguese doubled Cape de Verd, this was the point at which they aimed in all their navigations, and in comparison with it all their discoveries in Africa appeared inconsiderable. The fertility and riches of India had been known for many ages: its spices and other valuable commodities were in high request throughout Europe, and the vast wealth of the Venetians, arising from their having engrossed this trade, had raised the envy of all nations. But how intent soever the Portuguese were upon discovering a new route to those desirable regions, they searched for it only by steering towards the south, in hopes of arriving at India by turning to the east after they had sailed round the further extreimity of Africa. This course was still unknown, and, even if discovered, was of such immense length, that a voyage from Europe to India must have appeared at that period an undertaking extremely arduous, and of very uncertain issue. More than half a century had been employed in advancing from Cape Non to the equator; a much longer space of time might elapse before the more extensive navigation from that to India could

be accomplished. These reflections upon the uncertainty, the danger, and tediousness of the course which the Portuguese were pursuing, naturally led Columbus to consider whether a shorter and more direct passage to the East Indies might not be found out. After revolving long and seriously every circumstance suggested by his superior knowledge in the theory as well as practice of navigation; after comparing attentively the observations of modern pilots with the hints and conjectures of ancient authors, he at last concluded, that by sailing directly towards the west, across the Atlantic Ocean, new countries, which probably formed a part of the great continent of India, must infallibly be discovered.

Principles and arguments of various kinds, and derived from different sources, induced him to adopt this opinion, seemingly as chimerical as it was new and extraordinary. The spherical figure of the earth was known, and its magnitude ascertained with some degree of accuracy. From this it was evident, that the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, as far as they were known at that time, formed but a small portion of the terraqueous globe. It was suitable to our ideas concerning the wisdom and beneficence of the Author of Nature, to believe that the vast space still unexplored was not covered entirely by a waste unprofitable ocean, but occupied by countries fit for the habitation of man. It appeared likewise extremely probable, that the continent on this side of the globe was balanced by a proportional quantity of land in the other hemisphere. These conclusions concerning the existence

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The principles on which his theory was founded.

BOOK of another continent, drawn from the figure and
 II. structure of the globe, were confirmed by the observations and conjectures of modern navigators. A Portuguese pilot, having stretched further to the west than was usual at that time, took up a piece of timber artificially carved floating upon the sea; and as it was driven towards him by a westerly wind, he concluded that it came from some unknown land situated in that quarter. Columbus's brother-in-law had found, to the west of the Madeira isles, a piece of timber fashioned in the same manner, and brought by the same wind; and had seen likewise canes of an enormous size floating upon the waves, which resembled those described by Ptolemy as productions peculiar to the East Indies^d. After a course of westerly winds, trees torn up by the roots were often driven upon the coasts of the Azores; and at one time, the dead bodies of two men with singular features, resembling neither the inhabitants of Europe nor of Africa, were cast ashore there.

As the force of this united evidence, arising from theoretical principles and practical observations, led Columbus to expect the discovery of new countries in the western ocean, other reasons induced him to believe that these must be connected with the continent of India. Though the ancients had hardly ever penetrated into India further than the banks of the Ganges, yet some Greek authors had ventured to describe the provinces beyond that river. As men are prone, and at liberty, to mag-

^d lib. i. c. 17.

nify what is remote or unknown, they represented them as regions of an immense extent. Ctesias affirmed that India was as large as all the rest of Asia. Onesicritus, whom Pliny the naturalist follows^e, contended that it was equal to a third part of the habitable earth. Nearchus asserted, that it would take four months to march in a straight line from one extremity of India to the other^f. The journal of Marco Polo, who had proceeded towards the East far beyond the limits to which any European had ever advanced, seemed to confirm these exaggerated accounts of the ancients. By his magnificent descriptions of the kingdoms of *Cathay* and *Cipango*, and of many other countries the names of which were unknown in Europe, India appeared to be a region of vast extent. From these accounts, which, however defective, were the most accurate that the people of Europe had received at that period with respect to the remote parts of the East, Columbus drew a just conclusion. He contended that, in proportion as the continent of India stretched out towards the East, it must, in consequence of the spherical figure of the earth, approach nearer to the islands which had lately been discovered to the west of Africa; that the distance from the one to the other was probably not very considerable; and that the most direct as well as shortest course to the remote regions of the East was to be found by sailing due West^g. This notion concerning the vicinity of India to the western parts of our conti-

^e Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 17.

^f Strab. Geogr. lib. xv. p. 1011.

^g See NOTE XII.

BOOK II. } nent, was countenanced by some eminent writers among the ancients, the sanction of whose authority was necessary, in that age, to procure a favourable reception to any tenet. Aristotle thought it probable that the Columns of Hercules, or Straits of Gibraltar, were not far removed from the East Indies, and that there might be a communication by sea between them^h. Seneca, in terms still more explicit, affirms, that with a fair wind one might sail from Spain to India in a few daysⁱ. The famous Atlantic island described by Plato, and supposed by many to be a real country, beyond which an unknown continent was situated, is represented by him as lying at no great distance from Spain. After weighing all these particulars, Columbus, in whose character the modesty and diffidence of true genius were united with the ardent enthusiasm of a projector, did not rest with such absolute assurance either upon his own arguments, or upon the authority of the ancients, as not to consult such of his contemporaries as were capable of comprehending the nature of the evidence which he produced in support of his opinion. As early as the year one thousand four hundred and seventy-four, he communicated his ideas concerning the probability of discovering new countries, by sailing westward, to Paul, a physician of Florence eminent for his knowledge of cosmography, and who, from the learning as well as candour which he discovers in his reply,

^h Aristot. de Cælo, lib. ii. c. 14. edit. Du Val. Par. 1629. vol. i. p. 472.

ⁱ Senec. Quest. Natur. lib. i. in proem.

appears to have been well entitled to the confidence which Columbus placed in him. He warmly approved of the plan, suggested several facts in confirmation of it, and encouraged Columbus to persevere in an undertaking so laudable, and which must redound so much to the honour of his country and the benefit of Europe^k.

To a mind less capable of forming and of executing great designs than that of Columbus, all those reasonings and observations and authorities would have served only as the foundation of some plausible and fruitless theory, which might have furnished matter for ingenious discourse or fanciful conjecture. But with his sanguine and enterprising temper, speculation led directly to action. Fully satisfied himself with respect to the truth of his system, he was impatient to bring it to the test of experiment, and to set out upon a voyage of discovery. The first step towards this was to secure the patronage of some of the considerable powers in Europe capable of undertaking such an enterprise. As long absence had not extinguished the affection which he bore to his native country, he wished that it should reap the fruits of his labours and invention. With this view, he laid his scheme before the Senate of Genoa, and, making his country the first tender of his service, offered to sail under the banners of the republic in quest of the new regions which he expected to discover. But Columbus had resided for so many years in foreign parts, that his countrymen were unacquainted with

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His
schemes
for carry-
ing it into
execution.

He applies
to the Genoese ;

* Life of Columbus, c. viii.

B O O K his abilities and character ; and, though a maritime
 { II. } people, were so little accustomed to distant voyages,
 that they could form no just idea of the principles
 on which he founded his hopes of success. They
 inconsiderately rejected his proposal, as the dream
 of a chimerical projector, and lost for ever the op-
 portunity of restoring their commonwealth to its
 ancient splendour¹.

to the
 King of
 Portugal,

Having performed what was due to his country,
 Columbus was so little discouraged by the repulse
 which he had received, that instead of relinquishing
 his undertaking he pursued it with fresh ardour.
 He made his next overture to John II. King of Por-
 tugal, in whose dominions he had been long esta-
 blished, and whom he considered, on that account,
 as having the second claim to his service. Here
 every circumstance seemed to promise him a more
 favourable reception : he applied to a monarch of
 an enterprising genius, no incompetent judge in
 naval affairs, and proud of patronising every attempt
 to discover new countries. His subjects were the
 most experienced navigators in Europe, and the least
 apt to be intimidated either by the novelty or bold-
 ness of any maritime expedition. In Portugal, the
 professional skill of Columbus, as well as his per-
 sonal good qualities, were thoroughly known : and
 as the former rendered it probable that his scheme
 was not altogether visionary, the latter exempted
 him from the suspicion of any sinister intention in
 proposing it. Accordingly, the King listened to
 him in the most gracious manner, and referred the

¹ Herrera Hist. de las Indias Occid. dec. i. lib. i. c. vii.

consideration of his plan to Diego Ortiz, bishop of Ceuta, and two Jewish physicians, eminent cosmographers, whom he was accustomed to consult in matters of this kind. As in Genoa, ignorance had opposed and disappointed Columbus; in Lisbon, he had to combat with prejudice, an enemy no less formidable. The persons according to whose decision his scheme was to be adopted, or rejected, had been the chief directors of the Portuguese navigations, and had advised to search for a passage to India by steering a course directly opposite to that which Columbus recommended as shorter and more certain. They could not, therefore, approve of his proposal without submitting to the double mortification of condemning their own theory, and acknowledging his superior sagacity. After teasing him with captious questions, and starting innumerable objections, with a view of betraying him into such a particular explanation of his system as might draw from him a full discovery of its nature, they deferred passing a final judgment with respect to it. In the mean time they conspired to rob him of the honour and advantages which he expected from the success of his scheme, advising the King to dispatch a vessel secretly, in order to attempt the proposed discovery by following exactly the course which Columbus seemed to point out. John, forgetting on this occasion the sentiments becoming a monarch, meanly adopted this perfidious counsel. But the pilot chosen to execute Columbus's plan had neither the genius nor the fortitude of its author. Contrary winds arose, no sight of approaching land appeared, his courage failed, and he returned to Lis-

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by whom
he is de-
ceived.

B O O K bon, execrating the project as equally extravagant
 II. and dangerous^m.

He leaves
 Portugal,
 and repairs
 to the
 court of
 Spain;

Upon discovering this dishonourable transaction, Columbus felt the indignation natural to an ingenuous mind, and in the warmth of his resentment determined to break off all intercourse with a nation capable of such flagrant treachery. He instantly quitted the kingdom, and landed in Spain towards the close of the year one thousand four hundred and eighty-four. As he was now at liberty to court the protection of any patron whom he could engage to approve of his plan, and to carry it into execution, he resolved to propose it in person to Ferdinand and Isabella, who at that time governed the united kingdoms of Castile and Aragon. But as he had already experienced the uncertain issue of application to kings and ministers, he took the precaution of sending into England his brother Bartholomew, to whom he had fully communicated his ideas, in order that he might negotiate at the same time with Henry VII., who was reputed one of the most sagacious as well as opulent Princes in Europe.

sends his
 brother
 into
 England.

Obstacles
 to his suc-
 cess in
 Spain.

It was not without reason that Columbus entertained doubts and fears with respect to the reception of his proposals in the Spanish court. Spain was at that juncture engaged in a dangerous war with Granada, the last of the Moorish kingdoms in that country. The wary and suspicious temper of Ferdinand was not formed to relish bold or uncommon designs. Isabella, though more generous and enterprising, was under the influence of her hus-

^m Life of Columbus, c. xi. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 7.

band in all her actions. The Spaniards had hitherto made no efforts to extend navigation beyond its ancient limits, and had beheld the amazing progress of discovery among their neighbours the Portuguese without one attempt to imitate or to rival them. The war with the Infidels afforded an ample field to the national activity and love of glory. Under circumstances so unfavourable, it was impossible for Columbus to make rapid progress with a nation naturally slow and dilatory in forming all its resolutions. His character, however, was admirably adapted to that of the people whose confidence and protection he solicited. He was grave, though courteous in his deportment; circumspect in his words and actions, irreproachable in his morals, and exemplary in his attention to all the duties and functions of religion. By qualities so respectable, he not only gained many private friends, but acquired such general esteem, that, notwithstanding the plainness of his appearance, suitable to the mediocrity of his fortune, he was not considered as a mere adventurer, to whom indigence had suggested a visionary project, but was received as a person to whose propositions serious attention was due.

Ferdinand and Isabella, though fully occupied by their operations against the Moors, paid so much regard to Columbus, as to remit the consideration of his plan to the Queen's confessor, Ferdinand de Talavera. He consulted such of his countrymen as were supposed best qualified to decide with respect to a subject of this kind. But true science had hitherto made so little progress in Spain, that the pretended philosophers, selected to judge in a matter

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His
scheme
examined
by unskil-
ful judges;

BOOK of such moment, did not comprehend the first principles upon which Columbus founded his conjectures and hopes. Some of them, from mistaken notions concerning the dimensions of the globe, contended that a voyage to those remote parts of the east which Columbus expected to discover, could not be performed in less than three years. Others concluded, that either he would find the ocean to be of infinite extent, according to the opinion of some ancient philosophers; or, if he should persist in steering towards the west beyond a certain point, that the convex figure of the globe would prevent his return, and that he must inevitably perish in the vain attempt to open a communication between the two opposite hemispheres, which nature had for ever disjoined. Even without deigning to enter into any particular discussion, many rejected the scheme in general, upon the credit of a maxim, under which the ignorant and unenterprising shelter themselves in every age, "That it is presumptuous in any person, to suppose that he alone possesses knowledge superior to all the rest of mankind united." They maintained, that if there were really any such countries as Columbus pretended, they could not have remained so long concealed, nor would the wisdom and sagacity of former ages have left the glory of this invention to an obscure Genoese pilot.

who made
an unfavourable
report
concerning
it.

It required all Columbus's patience and address to negotiate with men capable of advancing such strange propositions. He had to contend not only with the obstinacy of ignorance, but with what is still more intractable, the pride of false knowledge.

After innumerable conferences, and wasting five years in fruitless endeavours to inform and to satisfy judges so little capable of deciding with propriety, Talavera at last made such an unfavourable report to Ferdinand and Isabella, as induced them to acquaint Columbus, that until the war with the Moors should be brought to a period it would be imprudent to engage in any new and extensive enterprise.

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Whatever care was taken to soften the harshness of this declaration, Columbus considered it as a final rejection of his proposals. But, happily for mankind, that superiority of genius, which is capable of forming great and uncommon designs, is usually accompanied with an ardent enthusiasm, which can neither be cooled by delays nor damped by disappointment. Columbus was of this sanguine temper. Though he felt deeply the cruel blow given to his hopes, and retired immediately from a court where he had been amused so long with vain expectations, his confidence in the justness of his own system did not diminish, and his impatience to demonstrate the truth of it by an actual experiment became greater than ever. Having courted the protection of sovereign states without success, he applied next to persons of inferior rank, and addressed successively the Dukes of Medina Sidonia and Medina Celi, who, though subjects, were possessed of power and opulence more than equal to the enterprise which he projected. His negotiations with them proved as fruitless as those in which he had been hitherto engaged; for these noblemen were either as little convinced by Columbus's arguments

B O O K as their superiors, or they were afraid of alarming the jealousy and offending the pride of Ferdinand, by countenancing a scheme which he had rejectedⁿ.

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Negotiation of his brother in England.

Amid the painful sensations occasioned by such a succession of disappointments, Columbus had to sustain the additional distress of having received no accounts of his brother, whom he had sent to the court of England. In his voyage to that country, Bartholomew had been so unfortunate as to fall into the hands of pirates, who having stripped him of every thing detained him a prisoner for several years. At length he made his escape, and arrived in London, but in such extreme indigence, that he was obliged to employ himself, during a considerable time, in drawing and selling maps, in order to pick up as much money as would purchase a decent dress, in which he might venture to appear at court. He then laid before the King the proposals with which he had been intrusted by his brother; and notwithstanding Henry's excessive caution and parsimony, which rendered him averse to new or extensive undertakings, he received Columbus's overtures with more approbation than any monarch to whom they had hitherto been presented.

Columbus has some prospects of encouragement in Spain;

Meanwhile, Columbus being unacquainted with his brother's fate, and having now no prospect of encouragement in Spain, resolved to visit the court of England in person, in hopes of meeting with a more favourable reception there. He had already

ⁿ Life of Columb. c. 13. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 7.

made preparations for this purpose; and taken measures for the disposal of his children during his absence, when Juan Perez, the guardian of the monastery of Rabida, near Palos, in which they had been educated, earnestly solicited him to defer his journey for a short time. Perez was a man of considerable learning, and of some credit with Queen Isabella, to whom he was known personally. He was warmly attached to Columbus, with whose abilities as well as integrity he had many opportunities of being acquainted. Prompted by curiosity or by friendship, he entered upon an accurate examination of his system, in conjunction with a physician settled in the neighbourhood, who was a considerable proficient in mathematical knowledge. This investigation satisfied them so thoroughly, with respect to the solidity of the principles on which Columbus founded his opinion, and the probability of success in executing the plan which he proposed, that Perez, in order to prevent his country from being deprived of the glory and benefit which must accrue to the patrons of such a grand enterprise, ventured to write to Isabella, conjuring her to consider the matter anew with the attention which it merited.

Moved by the representations of a person whom she respected, Isabella desired Perez to repair immediately to the village of Santa Fe, in which, on account of the siege of Granada, the court resided at that time, that she might confer with him upon this important subject. The first effect of their interview was a gracious invitation of Columbus back to court, accompanied with the present of a small

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 sum to equip him for the journey. As there was now a certain prospect that the war with the Moors would speedily be brought to an happy issue by the reduction of Granada, which would leave the nation at liberty to engage in new undertakings; this, as well as the mark of royal favour, with which Columbus had been lately honoured, encouraged his friends to appear with greater confidence than formerly in support of his scheme. The chief of these, Alonso de Quintanilla, comptroller of the finances in Castile, and Luis de Santangel, receiver of the ecclesiastical revenues in Aragon, whose meritorious zeal in promoting this great design entitles their names to an honourable place in history, introduced Columbus to many persons of high rank, and interested them warmly in his behalf.

is again
 disap-
 pointed;

But it was not an easy matter to inspire Ferdinand with favourable sentiments. He still regarded Columbus's project as extravagant and chimerical; and in order to render the efforts of his partisans ineffectual, he had the address to employ, in this new negotiation with him, some of the persons who had formerly pronounced his scheme to be impracticable. To their astonishment, Columbus appeared before them with the same confident hopes of success as formerly, and insisted upon the same high recompense. He proposed that a small fleet should be fitted out, under his command, to attempt the discovery, and demanded to be appointed hereditary admiral and viceroy of all the seas and lands which he should discover, and to have the tenths of the profits arising from them settled irrevocably upon himself and his descendants. At the same

time, he offered to advance the eighth part of the sum necessary for accomplishing his design, on condition that he should be entitled to a proportional share of benefit from the adventure. If the enterprise should totally miscarry, he made no stipulation for any reward or emolument whatever. Instead of viewing this conduct as the clearest evidence of his full persuasion with respect to the truth of his own system, or being struck with that magnanimity which, after so many delays and repulses, would stoop to nothing inferior to its original claims; the persons with whom Columbus treated began meanly to calculate the expense of the expedition, and the value of the reward which he demanded. The expense, moderate as it was, they represented to be too great for Spain in the present exhausted state of its finances. They contended that the honours and emoluments claimed by Columbus were exorbitant, even if he should perform the utmost of what he had promised; and if all his sanguine hopes should prove illusive, such vast concessions to an adventurer would be deemed not only inconsiderate, but ridiculous. In this imposing garb of caution and prudence, their opinion appeared so plausible, and was so warmly supported by Ferdinand, that Isabella declined giving any countenance to Columbus, and abruptly broke off the negotiation with him which she had begun.

This was more mortifying to Columbus than all the disappointments which he had hitherto met with. The invitation to court from Isabella, like an unexpected ray of light, had opened such prospects of success as encouraged him to hope that

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B O O K his labours were at an end ; but now darkness and uncertainty returned, and his mind, firm as it was, could hardly support the shock of such an unforeseen reverse. He withdrew in deep anguish from court, with an intention of prosecuting his voyage to England as his last resource.

II.

proves at
last suc-
cessful.
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January 2.

About that time Granada surrendered, and Ferdinand and Isabella, in triumphal pomp, took possession of a city the reduction of which extirpated a foreign power from the heart of their dominions, and rendered them masters of all the provinces extending from the bottom of the Pyrenees to the frontiers of Portugal. As the flow of spirits which accompanies success elevates the mind, and renders it enterprising, Quintanilla and Santangel, the vigilant and discerning patrons of Columbus, took advantage of this favourable situation, in order to make one effort more in behalf of their friend. They addressed themselves to Isabella; and after expressing some surprise, that she, who had always been the munificent patroness of generous undertakings, should hesitate so long to countenance the most splendid scheme that had ever been proposed to any monarch, they represented to her, that Columbus was a man of a sound understanding and virtuous character, well qualified, by his experience in navigation, as well as his knowledge of geometry, to form just ideas with respect to the structure of the globe and the situation of its various regions; that, by offering to risk his own life and fortune in the execution of his scheme, he gave the most satisfying evidence both of his integrity and hope of success; that the sum requisite for equip-

ping such an armament as he demanded was incon- B O O K
siderable, and the advantages which might accrue II.
from his undertaking were immense; that he de- 1492.
manded no recompense for his invention and labour,
but what was to arise from the countries which he
should discover; that, as it was worthy of her mag-
nanimity to make this noble attempt to extend the
sphere of human knowledge, and to open an inter-
course with regions hitherto unknown, so it would
afford the highest satisfaction to her piety and zeal,
after re-establishing the Christian faith in those
provinces of Spain from which it had been long
banished, to discover a new world, to which she
might communicate the light and blessings of di-
vine truth; that if now she did not decide instantly,
the opportunity would be irretrievably lost; that
Columbus was on his way to foreign countries,
where some prince, more fortunate or adventurous,
would close with his proposals, and Spain would
for ever bewail that fatal timidity which had excluded
her from the glory and advantages that she had
once in her power to have enjoyed.

These forcible arguments, urged by persons of
such authority, and at a juncture so well chosen, pro-
duced the desired effect. They dispelled all Isa-
bella's doubts and fears; she ordered Columbus to
be instantly recalled, declared her resolution of em-
ploying him on his own terms, and, regretting the
low estate of her finances, generously offered to
pledge her own jewels in order to raise as much
money as might be needed in making preparations
for the voyage. Santangel, in a transport of gra-
titude, kissed the Queen's hand, and, in order to

B O O K save her from having recourse to such a mortifying expedient for procuring money, engaged to advance immediately the sum that was requisite^o.

II.

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The conditions of his agreement with Spain.

Columbus had proceeded some leagues on his journey, when the messenger from Isabella overtook him. Upon receiving an account of the unexpected resolution in his favour, he returned directly to Santa Fe, though some remainder of diffidence still mingled itself with his joy. But the cordial reception which he met with from Isabella, together with the near prospect of setting out upon that voyage which had so long been the object of his thoughts and wishes, soon effaced the remembrance of all that he had suffered in Spain during eight tedious years of sollicitation and suspense. The negotiation now went forward with facility and dispatch, and a treaty or capitulation with Columbus was signed on the seventeenth of April, one thousand four hundred and ninety-two. The chief articles of it were:—1. Ferdinand and Isabella, as sovereigns of the ocean, constituted Columbus their high admiral in all the seas, islands, and continents, which should be discovered by his industry; and stipulated that he and his heirs for ever should enjoy this office, with the same powers and prerogatives which belonged to the high admiral of Castile within the limits of his jurisdiction. 2. They appointed Columbus their viceroy in all the islands and continents which he should discover; but if, for the better administration of affairs, it should hereafter be necessary to establish a separate govern-

^o Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 8.

nor in any of those countries, they authorized Columbus to name three persons, of whom they would choose one for that office; and the dignity of viceroy, with all its immunities, was likewise to be hereditary in the family of Columbus. 3. They granted to Columbus and his heirs for ever, the tenth of the free profits accruing from the productions and commerce of the countries which he should discover. 4. They declared, that if any controversy or law-suit shall arise with respect to any mercantile transaction in the countries which should be discovered, it should be determined by the sole authority of Columbus, or of judges to be appointed by him. 5. They permitted Columbus to advance one-eighth part of what should be expended in preparing for the expedition, and in carrying on commerce with the countries which he should discover, and entitled him, in return, to an eighth part of the profit^P.

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1492.

Though the name of Ferdinand appears conjoined with that of Isabella in this transaction, his distrust of Columbus was still so violent that he refused to take any part in the enterprise as King of Aragon. As the whole expense of the expedition was to be defrayed by the crown of Castile, Isabella reserved for her subjects of that kingdom an exclusive right to all the benefits which might redound from its success.

As soon as the treaty was signed, Isabella, by her attention and activity in forwarding the preparations for the voyage, endeavoured to make some repara-

The preparations for his voyage.

^P Life of Columbus, c. 15. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 9.

BOOK II.
1492.

tion to Columbus for the time which he had lost in fruitless solicitation. By the twelfth of May, all that depended upon her was adjusted; and Columbus waited on the King and Queen in order to receive their final instructions. Every thing respecting the destination and conduct of the voyage they committed implicitly to the disposal of his prudence. But that they might avoid giving any just cause of offence to the King of Portugal, they strictly enjoined him not to approach near to the Portuguese settlements on the coast of Guinea, or in any of the other countries to which the Portuguese claimed right as discoverers. Isabella had ordered the ships of which Columbus was to take the command to be fitted out in the port of Palos, a small maritime town in the province of Andalusia. As the guardian Juan Perez, to whom Columbus had already been so much indebted, resided in the neighbourhood of this place, he, by the influence of that good ecclesiastic, as well as by his own connexion with the inhabitants, not only raised among them what he wanted of the sum that he was bound by treaty to advance, but engaged several of them to accompany him in the voyage. The chief of these associates were three brothers of the name of Pinzon, of considerable wealth, and of great experience in naval affairs, who were willing to hazard their lives and fortunes in the expedition.

But after all the efforts of Isabella and Columbus, the armament was not suitable either to the dignity of the nation by which it was equipped, or to the importance of the service for which it was destined. It consisted of three vessels. The largest,

a ship of no considerable burden, was commanded by Columbus, as admiral, who gave it the name of *Santa Maria*, out of respect for the Blessed Virgin, whom he honoured with singular devotion. Of the second, called the *Pinta*, Martin Pinzon was captain, and his brother Francis pilot. The third, named the *Nigna*, was under the command of Vincent Yanez Pinzon. These two were light vessels hardly superior in burden or force to large boats. The squadron, if it merits that name, was victualled for twelve months, and had on board ninety men, mostly sailors, together with a few adventurers who followed the fortune of Columbus, and some gentlemen of Isabella's court, whom she appointed to accompany him. Though the expense of the undertaking was one of the circumstances which chiefly alarmed the court of Spain, and retarded so long the negotiation with Columbus, the sum employed in fitting out this squadron did not exceed four thousand pounds.

As the art of ship-building in the fifteenth century was extremely rude, and the bulk of vessels was accommodated to the short and easy voyages along the coast which they were accustomed to perform, it is a proof of the courage as well as enterprising genius of Columbus, that he ventured, with a fleet so unfit for a distant navigation, to explore unknown seas, where he had no chart to guide him, no knowledge of the tides and currents, and no experience of the dangers to which he might be exposed. His eagerness to accomplish the great design which had so long engrossed his thoughts, made him overlook or disregard every circum-

B O O K
 IL
 1492.

B O O K stance that would have intimidated a mind less ad-
 II. venturous. He pushed forward the preparations
 1492, with such ardour, and was seconded so effectually
 by the persons to whom Isabella committed the su-
 perintendence of this business, that every thing was
 soon in readiness for the voyage. But as Colum-
 bus was deeply impressed with sentiments of reli-
 gion, he would not set out upon an expedition so
 arduous, and of which one great object was to ex-
 tend the knowledge of the Christian faith, without
 imploring publicly the guidance and protection of
 Heaven. With this view, he, together with all the
 persons under his command, marched in solemn
 procession to the monastery of Rabida. After con-
 fessing their sins, and obtaining absolution, they
 received the holy sacrament from the hands of the
 guardian, who joined his prayers to theirs for the
 success of an enterprise which he had so zealously
 patronised.

His depar-
 ture from
 Spain.

Next morning, being Friday the third day of Au-
 gust, in the year one thousand four hundred and
 ninety-two, Columbus set sail, a little before sun-
 rise, in presence of a vast crowd of spectators, who
 sent up their supplications to Heaven for the pro-
 sperous issue of the voyage, which they wished ra-
 ther than expected. Columbus steered directly for
 the Canary Islands, and arrived there without any
 occurrence that would have deserved notice on any
 other occasion. But, in a voyage of such expecta-
 tion and importance, every circumstance was the
 object of attention. The rudder of the *Pinta* broke
 loose the day after she left the harbour; and that
 accident alarmed the crew, no less superstitious

August 13.

than unskilful, as a certain omen of the unfortunate destiny of the expedition. Even in the short run to the Canaries, the ships were found to be so crazy and ill-appointed, as to be very improper for a navigation which was expected to be both long and dangerous. Columbus refitted them, however, to the best of his power; and having supplied himself with fresh provisions, he took his departure from Gomera, one of the most westerly of the Canary Islands, on the sixth day of September.

B O O K
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1492.

Here the voyage of discovery may properly be said to begin; for Columbus, holding his course due west, left immediately the usual track of navigation, and stretched into unfrequented and unknown seas. The first day, as it was very calm, he made but little way; but on the second he lost sight of the Canaries; and many of the sailors, dejected already and dismayed, when they contemplated the boldness of the undertaking, began to beat their breasts, and to shed tears, as if they were never more to behold land. Columbus comforted them with assurances of success, and the prospect of vast wealth, in those opulent regions whither he was conducting them. This early discovery of the spirit of his followers taught Columbus, that he must prepare to struggle not only with the unavoidable difficulties which might be expected from the nature of his undertaking, but with such as were likely to arise from the ignorance and timidity of the people under his command; and he perceived that the art of governing the minds of men would be no less requisite for accomplishing the discoveries which he had in view, than naval skill and

The course
which he
held.

B O O K undaunted courage. Happily for himself, and for the country by which he was employed, he joined to the ardent temper and inventive genius of a projector, virtues of another species, which are rarely united with them. He possessed a thorough knowledge of mankind, an insinuating address, a patient perseverance in executing any plan, the perfect government of his own passions, and the talent of acquiring an ascendant over those of other men. All these qualities, which formed him for command, were accompanied with that superior knowledge of his profession, which begets confidence in times of difficulty and danger. To unskilful Spanish sailors, accustomed only to coasting voyages in the Mediterranean, the maritime science of Columbus, the fruit of thirty years' experience, improved by an acquaintance with all the inventions of the Portuguese, appeared immense. As soon as they put to sea, he regulated every thing by his sole authority; he superintended the execution of every order; and allowing himself only a few hours for sleep, he was at all other times upon deck. As his course lay through seas which had not formerly been visited, the sounding-line, or instruments for observation, were continually in his hands. After the example of the Portuguese discoverers, he attended to the motion of tides and currents, watched the flight of birds, the appearance of fishes, of sea-weeds, and of every thing that floated on the waves, and entered every occurrence, with a minute exactness, in the journal which he kept. As the length of the voyage could not fail of alarming sailors habituated only to short excursions, Columbus endea-

II.
1492.

Vigilance
and atten-
tion of
Columbus.

voured to conceal from them the real progress which they made. With this view, though they run eighteen leagues on the second day after they left Gomera, he gave out that they had advanced only fifteen, and he uniformly employed the same artifice of reckoning short during the whole voyage. By the fourteenth of September the fleet was above two hundred leagues to the west of the Canary Isles, at a greater distance from land than any Spaniard had been before that time. There they were struck with an appearance no less astonishing than new. They observed that the magnetic needle, in their compasses, did not point exactly to the polar star, but varied towards the west; and as they proceeded, this variation increased. This appearance, which is now familiar, though it still remains one of the mysteries of nature, into the cause of which the sagacity of man hath not been able to penetrate, filled the companions of Columbus with terror. They were now in a boundless and unknown ocean, far from the usual course of navigation; nature itself seemed to be altered, and the only guide which they had left was about to fail them. Columbus, with no less quickness than ingenuity, invented a reason for this appearance, which, though it did not satisfy himself, seemed so plausible to them, that it dispelled their fears, or silenced their murmurs.

He still continued to steer due west, nearly in the same latitude with the Canary Islands. In this course he came within the sphere of the trade wind, which blows invariably from east to west, between the tropics and a few degrees beyond them. He advanced before this steady gale with such uniform

B O O K
II.
1492.

Apprehensions and alarms of his crew.

B O O K rapidity, that it was seldom necessary to shift a sail,

II.

1492.

When about four hundred leagues to the west of the Canaries, he found the sea so covered with weeds, that it resembled a meadow of vast extent, and in some places they were so thick as to retard the motion of the vessels. This strange appearance occasioned new alarm and disquiet. The sailors imagined that they were now arrived at the utmost boundary of the navigable ocean ; that these floating weeds would obstruct their further progress, and concealed dangerous rocks, or some large tract of land, which had sunk, they knew not how, in that place. Columbus endeavoured to persuade them, that what had alarmed, ought rather to have encouraged them, and was to be considered as a sign of approaching land. At the same time, a brisk gale arose, and carried them forward. Several birds were seen hovering about the ship^a, and directed their flight towards the west. The desponding crew resumed some degree of spirit, and began to entertain fresh hopes.

These increase.

Upon the first of October they were, according to the admiral's reckoning, seven hundred and seventy leagues to the west of the Canaries ; but, lest his men should be intimidated by the prodigious length of the navigation, he gave out that they had proceeded only five hundred and eighty-four leagues ; and, fortunately for Columbus, neither his own pilot, nor those of the other ships, had skill sufficient to correct this error, and discover the deceit. They had now been above three weeks at sea ; they had

^a See NOTE XIII.

proceeded far beyond what former navigators had attempted or deemed possible ; all their prognostics of discovery, drawn from the flight of birds and other circumstances, had proved fallacious ; the appearances of land, with which their own credulity or the artifice of their commander had from time to time flattered and amused them, had been altogether illusive, and their prospect of success seemed now to be as distant as ever. These reflections occurred often to men who had no other object or occupation than to reason and discourse concerning the intention and circumstances of their expedition. They made impression at first upon the ignorant and timid, and, extending by degrees to such as were better informed or more resolute, the contagion spread at length from ship to ship. From secret whispers or murmurings, they proceeded to open cabals and public complaints. They taxed their sovereign with inconsiderate credulity, in paying such regard to the vain promises and rash conjectures of an indigent foreigner, as to hazard the lives of so many of her own subjects in prosecuting a chimerical scheme. They affirmed that they had fully performed their duty, by venturing so far in an unknown and hopeless course, and could incur no blame for refusing to follow any longer a desperate adventurer to certain destruction. They contended, that it was necessary to think of returning to Spain, while their crazy vessels were still in a condition to keep the sea, but expressed their fears that the attempt would prove vain, as the wind, which had hitherto been so favourable to their course, must render it impossible to sail in the

B O O K
II.
1492.

B O O K opposite direction. All agreed that Columbus should be compelled by force to adopt a measure on which their common safety depended. Some of the more audacious proposed, as the most expeditious and certain method for getting rid at once of his remonstrances, to throw him into the sea, being persuaded that, upon their return to Spain, the death of an unsuccessful projector would excite little concern, and be inquired into with no curiosity.

II.
1492.

The address of Columbus in soothing them:

Columbus was fully sensible of his perilous situation. He had observed, with great uneasiness, the fatal operation of ignorance and of fear in producing disaffection among his crew, and saw that it was now ready to burst out into open mutiny. He retained, however, perfect presence of mind. He affected to seem ignorant of their machinations. Notwithstanding the agitation and solicitude of his own mind, he appeared with a cheerful countenance, like a man satisfied with the progress he had made, and confident of success. Sometimes he employed all the arts of insinuation, to soothe his men. Sometimes he endeavoured to work upon their ambition or avarice, by magnificent descriptions of the fame and wealth which they were about to acquire. On other occasions, he assumed a tone of authority, and threatened them with vengeance from their sovereign, if, by their dastardly behaviour, they should defeat this noble effort to promote the glory of God, and to exalt the Spanish name above that of every other nation. Even with seditious sailors, the words of a man whom they had been accustomed to reverence, were weighty and persuasive, and not only

restrained them from those violent excesses which they meditated, but prevailed with them to accompany their admiral for some time longer.

B O O K
II.
1492.

As they proceeded, the indications of approaching land seemed to be more certain, and excited hope in proportion. The birds began to appear in flocks, making towards the south-west. Columbus, in imitation of the Portuguese navigators, who had been guided, in several of their discoveries, by the motion of birds, altered his course from due west towards that quarter whither they pointed their flight. But, after holding on for several days in this new direction, without any better success than formerly, having seen no object, during thirty days, but the sea and the sky, the hopes of his companions subsided faster than they had risen; their fears revived with additional force; impatience, rage, and despair, appeared in every countenance. All sense of subordination was lost: the officers, who had hitherto concurred with Columbus in opinion, and supported his authority, now took part with the private men; they assembled tumultuously on the deck, expostulated with their commander, mingled threats with their expostulations, and required him instantly to tack about and to return to Europe. Columbus perceived that it would be of no avail to have recourse to any of his former arts, which having been tried so often had lost their effect; and that it was impossible to rekindle any zeal for the success of the expedition among men in whose breasts fear had extinguished every generous sentiment. He saw that it was no less vain to think of employing either gentle or severe mea-

their fears
return.

Danger of
a mutiny.

Distress of
Columbus.

B O O K sures to quell a mutiny so general and so violent.

II.

1492.

It was necessary, on all these accounts, to soothe passions which he could no longer command, and to give way to a torrent too impetuous to be checked. He promised solemnly to his men that he would comply with their request, provided they would accompany him, and obey his command for three days longer, and if, during that time, land were not discovered, he would then abandon the enterprise, and direct his course towards Spain^r.

Encou-
raging ap-
pearances
of success.

Enraged as the sailors were, and impatient to turn their faces again towards their native country, this proposition did not appear to them unreasonable. Nor did Columbus hazard much in confining himself to a term so short. The presages of discovering land were now so numerous and promising, that he deemed them infallible. For some days the sounding line reached the bottom, and the soil which it brought up indicated land to be at no great distance. The flocks of birds increased, and were composed not only of sea-fowl, but of such land birds as could not be supposed to fly far from the shore. The crew of the *Pinta* observed a cane floating, which seemed to have been newly cut, and likewise a piece of timber artificially carved. The sailors aboard the *Nigna* took up the branch of a tree with red berries, perfectly fresh. The clouds around the setting sun assumed a new appearance; the air was more mild and warm, and during night the wind became unequal and variable. From all these symptoms, Columbus was so confident of

^r Oviedo, Hist. ap. Ramus, vol. iii. p. 81. E.

being near land, that on the evening of the eleventh of October, after public prayers for success, he ordered the sails to be furled, and the ships to lie to, keeping strict watch, lest they should be driven ashore in the night. During this interval of suspense and expectation, no man shut his eyes, all kept upon deck, gazing intently towards that quarter where they expected to discover the land, which had been so long the object of their wishes.

About two hours before midnight, Columbus, standing on the forecastle, observed a light at a distance, and privately pointed it out to Pedro Gutierrez, a page of the Queen's wardrobe. Gutierrez perceived it, and calling to Salcedo, comptroller of the fleet, all three saw it in motion, as if it were carried from place to place. A little after midnight the joyful sound of *land! land!* was heard from the Pinta, which kept always a-head of the other ships. But, having been so often deceived by fallacious appearances, every man was now become slow of belief, and waited in all the anguish of uncertainty and impatience for the return of day. As soon as morning dawned, all doubts and fears were dispelled. From every ship an island was seen about two leagues to the north, whose flat and verdant fields, well stored with wood, and watered with many rivulets, presented the aspect of a delightful country. The crew of the Pinta instantly began the *Te Deum*, as a hymn of thanksgiving to God, and were joined by those of the other ships, with tears of joy and transports of congratulation. This office of gratitude to Heaven was followed by an act of justice to their commander. They threw

B O O K
II.
1492.

Land discovered.

Friday,
Oct. 12.

B O O K themselves at the feet of Columbus, with feelings of self-condemnation mingled with reverence. They implored him to pardon their ignorance, incredulity, and insolence, which had created him so much unnecessary disquiet, and had so often obstructed the prosecution of his well-concerted plan; and passing, in the warmth of their admiration, from one extreme to another, they now pronounced the man, whom they had so lately reviled and threatened, to be a person inspired by Heaven with sagacity and fortitude more than human, in order to accomplish a design so far beyond the ideas and conception of all former ages.

II.
1492.
First interview with the natives.

As soon as the sun arose, all their boats were manned and armed. They rowed towards the island with their colours displayed, with warlike music, and other martial pomp. As they approached the coast, they saw it covered with a multitude of people, whom the novelty of the spectacle had drawn together, whose attitudes and gestures expressed wonder and astonishment at the strange objects which presented themselves to their view. Columbus was the first European who set foot in the New World which he had discovered. He landed in a rich dress, and with a naked sword in his hand. His men followed, and kneeling down, they all kissed the ground which they had so long desired to see. They next erected a crucifix, and prostrating themselves before it, returned thanks to God for conducting their voyage to such an happy issue. They then took solemn possession of the country for the crown of Castile and Leon, with all the formalities which the Portuguese were accus-

tomed to observe in acts of this kind, in their new discoveries^s.

The Spaniards, while thus employed, were surrounded by many of the natives, who gazed in silent admiration upon actions which they could not comprehend, and of which they did not foresee the consequences. The dress of the Spaniards, the whiteness of their skins, their beards, their arms, appeared strange and surprising. The vast machines in which they had traversed the ocean, that seemed to move upon the waters, with wings, and uttered a dreadful sound resembling thunder, accompanied with lightning and smoke, struck them with such terror, that they began to respect their new guests as a superior order of beings, and concluded that they were children of the Sun, who had descended to visit the earth.

The Europeans were hardly less amazed at the scene now before them. Every herb, and shrub, and tree, was different from those which flourished in Europe. The soil seemed to be rich, but bore few marks of cultivation. The climate, even to the Spaniards, felt warm, though extremely delightful. The inhabitants appeared in the simple innocence of nature, entirely naked. Their black hair, long and uncurled, floated upon their shoulders, or was bound in tresses around their heads. They had no beards, and every part of their bodies was perfectly smooth. Their complexion was of a dusky copper colour, their features singular, rather than disagree-

B O O K
II
1492.
Their mutual astonishment.

^s Life of Columbus, c. 22, 23. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 13.

B O O K able, their aspect gentle and timid. Though not tall, they were well shaped and active. Their faces, and several parts of their body, were fantastically painted with glaring colours. They were shy at first through fear, but soon became familiar with the Spaniards, and with transports of joy received from them hawkbells, glass beads, or other baubles, in return for which they gave such provisions as they had, and some cotton yarn, the only commodity of value that they could produce. Towards evening, Columbus returned to his ship, accompanied by many of the islanders in their boats, which they called *canoes*, and though rudely formed out of the trunk of a single tree, they rowed them with surprising dexterity. Thus, in the first interview between the inhabitants of the old and new worlds, every thing was conducted amicably, and to their mutual satisfaction. The former, enlightened and ambitious, formed already vast ideas with respect to the advantages which they might derive from the regions that began to open to their view. The latter, simple and undiscerning, had no foresight of the calamities and desolation, which were approaching their country.

Columbus assumes the title of Admiral and Viceroy; Columbus, who now assumed the title and authority of Admiral and Viceroy, called the island which he had discovered *San Salvador*. It is better known by the name of *Guanahani*, which the natives gave to it, and is one of that large cluster of islands called the Lucaya or Bahama isles. It is situated above three thousand miles to the west of Gomera, from which the squadron took its

departure, and only four degrees to the south of it; B O O K
 so little had Columbus deviated from the westerly II.
 course, which he had chosen as the most proper. 1492.

Columbus employed the next day in visiting the proceeds
 coasts of the island; and from the universal poverty towards
 of the inhabitants, he perceived that this was not the south;
 the rich country for which he sought. But, conformably to his theory concerning the discovery of those regions of Asia which stretched towards the East, he concluded that San Salvador was one of the isles which geographers described as situated in the great ocean adjacent to India^t. Having observed that most of the people whom he had seen wore small plates of gold, by way of ornament, in their nostrils, he eagerly inquired where they got that precious metal. They pointed towards the south, and made him comprehend by signs, that gold abounded in countries situated in that quarter. Thither he immediately determined to direct his course, in full confidence of finding there those opulent regions which had been the object of his voyage, and would be a recompense for all his toils and dangers. He took along with him seven of the natives of San Salvador, that, by acquiring the Spanish language, they might serve as guides and interpreters; and those innocent people considered it as a mark of distinction when they were selected to accompany him.

He saw several islands, and touched at three of discovers
 the largest, on which he bestowed the names of Cuba:
 St. Mary of the Conception, Fernandina, and Isa-

^t Pet. Mart. epist. 135.

BOOK bella. But, as their soil, productions, and inhabitants, nearly resembled those of San Salvador, he made no stay in any of them. He inquired every where for gold, and the signs that were uniformly made by way of answer, confirmed him in the opinion that it was brought from the south. He followed that course, and soon discovered a country which appeared very extensive, not perfectly level, like those which he had already visited, but so diversified with rising grounds, hills, rivers, woods, and plains, that he was uncertain whether it might prove an island, or part of the continent. The natives of San Salvador, whom he had on board, called it *Cuba*; Columbus gave it the name of *Juana*. He entered the mouth of a large river with his squadron, and all the inhabitants fled to the mountains as he approached the shore. But as he resolved to careen his ships in that place, he sent some Spaniards, together with one of the people of San Salvador, to view the interior part of the country. They, having advanced above sixty miles from the shore, reported, upon their return, that the soil was richer and more cultivated than any they had hitherto discovered; that, besides many scattered cottages, they had found one village, containing above a thousand inhabitants; that the people, though naked, seemed to be more intelligent than those of San Salvador, but had treated them with the same respectful attention, kissing their feet, and honouring them as sacred beings allied to Heaven; that they had given them to eat a certain root, the taste of which resembled roasted chesnuts, and likewise a singular species of corn

called *maize*, which either when roasted whole or ground into meal, was abundantly palatable ; that there seemed to be no four-footed animals in the country, but a species of dogs, which could not bark, and a creature resembling a rabbit, but of a much smaller size ; that they had observed some ornaments of gold among the people, but of no great value^u.

B O O K
II.
1492.

These messengers had prevailed with some of the natives to accompany them, who informed Columbus, that the gold of which they made their ornaments was found in *Cubanacan*. By this word they meant the middle or inland part of Cuba ; but Columbus, being ignorant of their language, as well as unaccustomed to their pronunciation, and his thoughts running continually upon his own theory concerning the discovery of the East Indies, he was led, by the resemblance of sound, to suppose that they spoke of the Great Khan, and imagined that the opulent kingdom of *Cathay*, described by Marco Polo, was not very remote. This induced him to employ some time in viewing the country. He visited almost every harbour, from Porto del Principe, on the north coast of Cuba, to the eastern extremity of the island : but, though delighted with the beauty of the scenes which every where presented themselves, and amazed at the luxuriant fertility of the soil, both which, from their novelty, made a more lively impression upon his imagination^x, he did not find gold in such quantity as was

^u Life of Columbus, c. 24—28. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 14.

^x See NOTE XIV.

BOOK sufficient to satisfy either the avarice of his followers, or the expectations of the court to which he was to return. The people of the country, as much astonished at his eagerness in quest of gold as the Europeans were at their ignorance and simplicity, pointed towards the East, where an island which they called *Hayti* was situated, in which that metal was more abundant than among them. Columbus ordered his squadron to bend its course thither; but Martin Alonzo Pinzon, impatient to be the first who should take possession of the treasures which this country was supposed to contain, quitted his companions, regardless of all the admiral's signals to slacken sail until they should come up with him.

discovers
the island
Hispani-
ola.

Columbus, retarded by contrary winds, did not reach *Hayti* till the sixth of December. He called the port where he first touched *St. Nicholas*, and the island itself *Espagnola*, in honour of the kingdom by which he was employed; and it is the only country, of those he had yet discovered, which has retained the name that he gave it. As he could neither meet with the *Pinta*, nor have any intercourse with the inhabitants, who fled in great consternation towards the woods, he soon quitted *St. Nicholas*, and, sailing along the northern coast of the island; he entered another harbour, which he called *Conception*. Here he was more fortunate; his people overtook a woman who was flying from them, and after treating her with great gentleness, dismissed her with a present of such toys as they knew were most valued in those regions. The description which she gave to her countrymen of the humanity

and wonderful qualities of the strangers ; their admiration of the trinkets, which she showed with exultation ; and their eagerness to participate of the same favours ; removed all their fears, and induced many of them to repair to the harbour. The strange objects which they beheld, and the baubles which Columbus bestowed upon them, amply gratified their curiosity and their wishes. They nearly resembled the people of Guanahani and Cuba. They were naked like them, ignorant and simple ; and seemed to be equally unacquainted with all the arts which appear most necessary in polished societies ; but they were gentle, credulous, and timid, to a degree which rendered it easy to acquire the ascendant over them, especially as their excessive admiration led them into the same error with the people of the other islands, in believing the Spaniards to be more than mortals, and descended immediately from Heaven. They possessed gold in greater abundance than their neighbours, which they readily exchanged for bells, beads, or pins ; and in this unequal traffic both parties were highly pleased, each considering themselves as gainers by the transaction. Here Columbus was visited by a prince or *cazique* of the country. He appeared with all the pomp known among a simple people, being carried in a sort of palanquin upon the shoulders of four men, and attended by many of his subjects, who served him with great respect. His deportment was grave and stately, very reserved towards his own people, but with Columbus and the Spaniards extremely courteous. He gave the admiral some thin plates of gold, and a girdle of curious workmanship,

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1492.

B O O K receiving in return presents of small value, but highly acceptable to him^y.

II.

1492.

Columbus, still intent on discovering the mines which yielded gold, continued to interrogate all the natives with whom he had any intercourse, concerning their situation. They concurred in pointing out a mountainous country, which they called *Cibao*, at some distance from the sea, and further towards the east. Struck with this sound, which appeared to him the same with *Cipango*, the name by which Marco Polo, and other travellers to the east, distinguished the island of Japan, he no longer doubted with respect to the vicinity of the countries which he had discovered to the remote parts of Asia; and, in full expectation of reaching soon those regions which had been the object of his voyage, he directed his course towards the east. He put into a commodious harbour, which he called St. Thomas, and found that district to be under the government of a powerful cazique, named *Guacanahari*, who as he afterwards learned, was one of the five sovereigns among whom the whole island was divided. He immediately sent messengers to Columbus, who in his name delivered to him the present of a mask curiously fashioned with the ears, nose, and mouth of beaten gold, and invited him to the place of his residence, near the harbour now called Cape Francois, some leagues towards the east. Columbus dispatched some of his officers to visit this prince, who, as he behaved himself with greater dignity, seemed to claim more attention. They returned

^y Life of Columbus, c. 32. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 15, &c.

with such favourable accounts both of the country B O O K
 and of the people, as made Columbus impatient for II.
 that interview with Guacanahari to which he had 1492.
 been invited.

He sailed for this purpose from St. Thomas, on One of his
 the twenty-fourth of December, with a fair wind, ships lost.
 and the sea perfectly calm; and as, amidst the
 multiplicity of his occupations, he had not shut his
 eyes for two days, he retired at midnight in order
 to take some repose, having committed the helm
 to the pilot, with strict injunctions not to quit it
 for a moment. The pilot, dreading no danger,
 carelessly left the helm to an unexperienced cabin-
 boy, and the ship, carried away by a current, was
 dashed against a rock. The violence of the shock
 awakened Columbus. He ran up to the deck.
 There all was confusion and despair. He alone re-
 tained presence of mind. He ordered some of the
 sailors to take a boat, and carry out an anchor
 astern; but, instead of obeying, they made off to-
 wards the Nigna, which was about half a league
 distant. He then commanded the masts to be cut
 down, in order to lighten the ship; but all his en-
 deavours were too late; the vessel opened near the
 keel, and filled so fast with water that its loss was
 inevitable. The smoothness of the sea, and the
 timely assistance of boats from the Nigna, enabled
 the crew to save their lives. As soon as the is-
 landers heard of this disaster, they crowded to the
 shore, with their prince Guacanahari at their
 head. Instead of taking advantage of the distress
 in which they beheld the Spaniards, to attempt any
 thing to their detriment, they lamented their mis-

B O O K fortune with tears of sincere condolence. Not satisfied with this unavailing expression of their sympathy, they put to sea a number of canoes, and, under the direction of the Spaniards, assisted in saving whatever could be got out of the wreck; and, by the united labour of so many hands, almost every thing of value was carried ashore. As fast as the goods were landed, Guacanahari in person took charge of them. By his orders they were all deposited in one place, and armed sentinels were posted, who kept the multitude at a distance, in order to prevent them not only from embezzling, but from inspecting too curiously what belonged to their guests². Next morning this prince visited Columbus, who was now on board the *Nigna*, and endeavoured to console him for his loss, by offering all that he possessed to repair it³.

**Distress of
Columbus;**

The condition of Columbus was such that he stood in need of consolation. He had hitherto procured no intelligence of the *Pinta*, and no longer doubted but that his treacherous associate had set sail for Europe, in order to have the merit of carrying the first tidings of the extraordinary discoveries which had been made, and to pre-occupy so far the ear of their sovereign, as to rob him of the glory and reward to which he was justly entitled. There remained but one vessel, and that the smallest and most crazy of the squadron, to traverse such a vast ocean, and carry so many men back to Europe. Each of those circumstances was alarming, and filled the mind of Columbus with the utmost solicitude.

² See NOTE XV. ³ Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 18.

The desire of overtaking Pinzon, and of effacing the unfavourable impressions which his misrepresentations might make in Spain, made it necessary to return thither without delay. The difficulty of taking such a number of persons aboard the Nigna, confirmed him in an opinion which the fertility of the country, and the gentle temper of the people, had already induced him to form. He resolved to leave a part of his crew in the island, that by residing there, they might learn the language of the natives, study their disposition, examine the nature of the country, search for mines, prepare for the commodious settlement of the colony with which he purposed to return, and thus secure and facilitate the acquisition of those advantages which he expected from his discoveries. When he mentioned this to his men, all approved of the design; and from impatience under the fatigue of a long voyage; from the levity natural to sailors, or from the hopes of amassing wealth in a country which afforded such promising specimens of its riches, many offered voluntarily to be among the number of those who should remain.

B O O K
II.

1492.

resolves
to leave a
part of his
crew in the
island;

Nothing was now wanting towards the execution of this scheme, but to obtain the consent of Guacanahari; and his unsuspecting simplicity soon presented to the admiral a favourable opportunity of proposing it. Columbus having, in the best manner he could, by broken words and signs, expressed some curiosity to know the cause which had moved the islanders to fly with such precipitation upon the approach of his ships, the cazique informed him that the country was much infested by the incursions of

obtains
the consent of the
natives;

B O O K certain people, whom he called *Carribeans*, who in-
 II. habited several islands to the south-east. These he
 1492. described as a fierce and warlike race of men, who
 delighted in blood, and devoured the flesh of the
 prisoners who were so unhappy as to fall into their
 hands; and as the Spaniards at their first appear-
 ance were supposed to be Carribeans, whom the na-
 tives, however numerous, durst not face in battle,
 they had recourse to their usual method of securing
 their safety, by flying into the thickest and most
 impenetrable woods. Guacanahari, while speaking
 of those dreadful invaders, discovered such symptoms
 of terror, as well as such consciousness of the in-
 ability of his own people to resist them, as led Co-
 lumbus to conclude that he would not be alarmed
 at the proposition of any scheme which afforded
 him the prospect of an additional security against
 their attacks. He instantly offered him the assis-
 tance of the Spaniards to repel his enemies: he en-
 gaged to take him and his people under the protec-
 tion of the powerful monarch whom he served, and
 offered to leave in the island such a number of his
 men as should be sufficient, not only to defend the
 inhabitants from future incursions, but to avenge
 their past wrongs.

builds
 a fort;

The credulous prince closed eagerly with the pro-
 posal, and thought himself already safe under the
 patronage of beings sprung from Heaven, and su-
 perior in power to mortal men. The ground was
 marked out for a small fort, which Columbus called
Navidad, because he had landed there on Christ-
 mas-day. A deep ditch was drawn around it. The
 ramparts were fortified with pallisades, and the great

guns, saved out of the admiral's ship, were planted upon them. In ten days the work was finished; that simple race of men labouring with inconsiderate assiduity in erecting this first monument of their own servitude. During this time, Columbus, by his caresses and liberality, laboured to increase the high opinion which the natives entertained of the Spaniards. But while he endeavoured to inspire them with confidence in their disposition to do good, he wished likewise to give them some striking idea of their power to punish and destroy such as were the objects of their indignation. With this view, in presence of a vast assembly, he drew up his men in order of battle, and made an ostentatious but innocent display of the sharpness of the Spanish swords, of the force of their spears, and the operation of their cross-bows. These rude people, strangers to the use of iron, and unacquainted with any hostile weapons but arrows of reeds pointed with the bones of fishes, wooden swords, and javelins hardened in the fire, wondered and trembled. Before this surprise or fear had time to abate, he ordered the great guns to be fired. The sudden explosion struck them with such terror that they fell flat to the ground, covering their faces with their hands; and when they beheld the astonishing effect of the bullets among the trees, towards which the cannon had been pointed, they concluded that it was impossible to resist men, who had the command of such destructive instruments, and who came armed with thunder and lightning against their enemies.

After giving such impressions both of the beneficence and power of the Spaniards, as might have

B O O K
H.
1492.
His instructions to those he left in it.

BOOK rendered it easy to preserve an ascendant over the
 II. minds of the natives, Columbus appointed thirty-
 1492. eight of his people to remain in the island. He
 intrusted the command of these to Diego de Arado,
 a gentleman of Cordova, investing him with the
 same powers which he himself had received from
 Ferdinand and Isabella; and furnished him with
 every thing requisite for the subsistence or defence
 of this infant colony. He strictly enjoined them
 to maintain concord among themselves, to yield an
 unreserved obedienee to their commander, to avoid
 giving offence to the natives by any violence or ex-
 action, to cultivate the friendship of Guacanahari,
 but not to put themselves in his power by straggling
 in small parties, or marching too far from the fort.
 He promised to revisit them soon with such a re-
 inforcement of strength as might enable them to
 take full possession of the country, and to reap all
 the fruits of their discoveries. In the mean time
 he engaged to mention their names to the King and
 Queen, and to place their merit and services in the
 most advantageous light^b.

1493. Having thus taken every precaution for the se-
 curity of the colony, he left Navidad on the fourth
 of January, one thousand four hundred and ninety-
 three, and steering towards the east, discovered and
 gave names to most of the harbours on the northern
 coast of the island. On the sixth he descried the
 Pinta, and soon came up with her, after a separation
 of more than six weeks. Pinzon endeavoured to

^b Oviedo ap. Ramusio, iii. p. 82. E. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i.
 c. 20. Life of Columbus, c. 34.

justify his conduct by pretending that he had been driven from his course by stress of weather, and prevented from returning by contrary winds. The admiral, though he still suspected his perfidious intentions, and knew well what he urged in his own defence to be frivolous as well as false, was so sensible that this was not a proper time for venturing upon any high strain of authority, and felt such satisfaction in this junction with his consort, which delivered him from many disquieting apprehensions, that, lame as Pinzon's apology was, he admitted of it without difficulty, and restored him to favour. During his absence from the admiral, Pinzon had visited several harbours in the island, had acquired some gold by trafficking with the natives, but had made no discovery of any importance.

From the condition of his ships, as well as the temper of his men, Columbus now found it necessary to hasten his return to Europe. The former having suffered much during a voyage of such an unusual length, were extremely leaky. The latter expressed the utmost impatience to revisit their native country, from which they had been so long absent, and where they had things so wonderful and unheard-of to relate. Accordingly, on the sixteenth of January, he directed his course towards the north-east, and soon lost sight of land. He had on board some of the natives, whom he had taken from the different islands which he discovered; and besides the gold, which was the chief object of research, he had collected specimens of all the productions which were likely to become subjects of commerce in the several countries, as well as many unknown birds,

B O O K

II.

1493.

resolves
to return
to Europe.

B O O K and other natural curiosities, which might attract the attention of the learned, or excite the wonder of the people. The voyage was prosperous to the fourteenth of February, and he had advanced near five hundred leagues across the Atlantic Ocean, when the wind began to rise, and continued to blow with increasing rage, which terminated in a furious hurricane. Every thing that the naval skill and experience of Columbus could devise was employed in order to save the ships. But it was impossible to withstand the violence of the storm, and, as they were still far from any land, destruction seemed inevitable. The sailors had recourse to prayers to Almighty God, to the invocation of saints, to vows and charms, to every thing that religion dictates, or superstition suggests, to the affrighted mind of man. No prospect of deliverance appearing, they abandoned themselves to despair, and expected every moment to be swallowed up in the waves. Besides the passions which naturally agitate and alarm the human mind in such awful situations, when certain death, in one of his most terrible forms, is before it, Columbus had to endure feelings of distress peculiar to himself. He dreaded that all knowledge of the amazing discoveries which he had made was now to perish; mankind were to be deprived of every benefit that might have been derived from the happy success of his schemes, and his own name would descend to posterity as that of a rash deluded adventurer, instead of being transmitted with the honour due to the author and conductor of the most noble enterprise that had ever been undertaken. These reflections extinguished all sense of his own

II.
1493.

A violent
storm
arises.

The con-
duct of
Columbus;

personal danger. Less affected with the loss of life, than solicitous to preserve the memory of what he had attempted and achieved, he retired to his cabin and wrote upon parchment a short account of the voyage which he had made, of the course which he had taken, of the situation and riches of the countries which he had discovered, and of the colony that he had left there. Having wrapped up this in an oiled cloth, which he inclosed in a cake of wax, he put it into a cask carefully stopped up, and threw it into the sea, in hopes that some fortunate accident might preserve a deposit of so much importance to the world^c.

B O O K
II.
1493.

At length Providence interposed to save a life reserved for other services. The wind abated, the sea became calm, and on the evening of the fifteenth, Columbus and his companions discovered land; and though uncertain what it was, they made towards it. They soon knew it to be St. Mary, one of the Azores or western isles, subject to the crown of Portugal. There, after a violent contest with the governor, in which Columbus displayed no less spirit than prudence, he obtained a supply of fresh provisions, and whatever else he needed. One circumstance, however, greatly disquieted him. The *Pinta*, of which he had lost sight on the first day of the hurricane, did not appear; he dreaded for some time that she had foundered at sea, and that all her crew had perished; afterwards, his former suspicions recurred, and he became apprehensive that Pinzon had borne away for Spain, that he

Takes
shelter in
the
Azores;

^c Life of Columbus, c. 37. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 1, 2. See NOTE XVI.

B O O K might reach it before him, and, by giving the first account of his discoveries, might obtain some share of his fame.

II.

1493.

Feb. 24.
arrives at
Lisbon ;

March 4.

In order to prevent this, he left the Azores as soon as the weather would permit. At no great distance from the coast of Spain, when near the end of his voyage, and seemingly beyond the reach of any disaster, another storm arose, little inferior to the former in violence ; and after driving before it during two days and two nights, he was forced to take shelter in the river Tagus. Upon application to the King of Portugal, he was allowed to come up to Lisbon ; and, notwithstanding the envy which it was natural for the Portuguese to feel, when they beheld another nation entering upon that province of discovery which they had hitherto deemed peculiarly their own, and in its first essay not only rivalling but eclipsing their fame, Columbus was received with all the marks of distinction due to a man who had performed things so extraordinary and unexpected. The King admitted him into his presence, treated him with the highest respect, and listened to the account which he gave of his voyage with admiration mingled with regret. While Columbus, on his part, enjoyed the satisfaction of describing the importance of his discoveries, and of being now able to prove the solidity of his schemes to those very persons, who, with an ignorance disgraceful to themselves, and fatal to their country, had lately rejected them as the projects of a visionary or designing adventurer^d.

^d Life of Columbus, c. 40, 41. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 3,

Columbus was so impatient to return to Spain, B O O K
 that he remained only five days in Lisbon. On the II.
 fifteenth of March he arrived in the port of Palos, 1493.
 seven months and eleven days from the time when returns to
 he set out thence upon his voyage. As soon as the Spain.
 ship was discovered approaching the port, all the
 inhabitants of Palos ran eagerly to the shore, in
 order to welcome their relations and fellow-citizens,
 and to hear tidings of their voyage. When the
 prosperous issue of it was known, when they be-
 held the strange people, the unknown animals, and
 singular productions, brought from the countries
 which had been discovered, the effusion of joy was
 general and unbounded. The bells were rung, the
 cannon fired; Columbus was received at landing
 with royal honours, and all the people in solemn
 procession, accompanied him and his crew to the
 church, where they returned thanks to Heaven,
 which had so wonderfully conducted and crowned
 with success a voyage of greater length and of more
 importance than had been attempted in any former
 age. On the evening of the same day, he had the
 satisfaction of seeing the Pinta, which the violence
 of the tempest had driven far to the north, enter
 the harbour.

The first care of Columbus was to inform the His recep-
 King and Queen, who were then at Barcelona, of tion.
 his arrival and success. Ferdinand and Isabella,
 no less astonished than delighted with this unex-
 pected event, desired Columbus, in terms the most
 respectful and flattering, to repair immediately to
 court, that from his own mouth they might receive
 a full detail of his extraordinary services and disco-

B O O K veries. During his journey to Barcelona, the people crowded from the adjacent country, following him every where with admiration and applause. His entrance into the city was conducted, by order of Ferdinand and Isabella, with pomp suitable to the great event, which added such distinguishing lustre to their reign. The people whom he brought along with him from the countries which he had discovered, marched first, and by their singular complexion, the wild peculiarity of their features, and uncouth finery, appeared like men of another species. Next to them were carried the ornaments of gold, fashioned by the rude art of the natives, the grains of gold found in the mountains, and dust of the same metal gathered in the rivers. After these appeared the various commodities of the new discovered countries, together with their curious productions. Columbus himself closed the procession, and attracted the eyes of all the spectators, who gazed with admiration on the extraordinary man, whose superior sagacity and fortitude had conducted their countrymen, by a route concealed from past ages, to the knowledge of a new world. Ferdinand and Isabella received him clad in their royal robes, and seated upon a throne, under a magnificent canopy. When he approached, they stood up, and raising him as he kneeled to kiss their hands, commanded him to take his seat upon a chair prepared for him, and to give a circumstantial account of his voyage. He delivered it with a gravity and composure no less suitable to the disposition of the Spanish nation, than to the dignity of the audience in which he spoke, and with that modest simplicity

which characterizes men of superior minds, who, satisfied with having performed great actions, court not vain applause by an ostentatious display of their exploits. When he had finished his narration, the King and Queen, kneeling down, offered up solemn thanks to Almighty God for the discovery of those new regions, from which they expected so many advantages to flow in upon the kingdoms subject to their government^e. Every mark of honour that gratitude or admiration could suggest was conferred upon Columbus. Letters patent were issued, confirming to him and to his heirs all the privileges contained in the capitulation concluded at Santa Fé; his family was ennobled; the King and Queen, and after their example the courtiers, treated him on every occasion with all the ceremonious respect paid to persons of the highest rank. But what pleased him most, as it gratified his active mind, bent continually upon great objects, was an order to equip, without delay, an armament of such force as might enable him not only to take possession of the countries which he had already discovered, but to go in search of those more opulent regions which he still confidently expected to find^f.

While preparations were making for this expedition, the fame of Columbus's successful voyage spread over Europe, and excited general attention. The multitude, struck with amazement when they heard that a new world had been found, could hardly believe an event so much above their con-

Astonishment of mankind at his discoveries;

^e See NOTE XVII.

^f Life of Columbus, c. 42, 43. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 3.

B O O K
II.
1493.

B O O K ception. Men of science, capable of comprehending the nature, and of discerning the effects of this great discovery, received the account of it with admiration and joy. They spoke of his voyage with rapture, and congratulated one another upon their felicity in having lived in the period when, by this extraordinary event, the boundaries of human knowledge were so much extended, and such a new field of inquiry and observation opened, as would lead mankind to a perfect acquaintance with the structure and productions of the habitable globe^s. Various opinions and conjectures were formed concerning the new-found countries, and what division of the earth they belonged to. Columbus adhered tenaciously to his original opinion, that they should be reckoned a part of those vast regions in Asia, comprehended under the general name of India. This sentiment was confirmed by the observations which he made concerning the productions of the countries he had discovered. Gold was known to abound in India, and he had met with such promising samples of it in the islands which he visited, as led him to believe that rich mines of it might be found. Cotton, another production of the East-Indies, was common there. The pimento of the islands he imagined to be a species of the East-Indian pepper. He mistook a root, somewhat resembling rhubarb, for that valuable drug; which was then supposed to be a plant peculiar to the East-Indies^h. The birds brought home by him

IL

1493.

^s P. Mart. epist. 133, 134, 135. See NOTE XVIII.

^h Herrera, dcc. 1. lib. 1. c. 20. Gomera Hist. c. 17.

were adorned with the same rich plumage which distinguishes those of India. The alligator of the one country appeared to be the same with the crocodile of the other. After weighing all these circumstances, not only the Spaniards, but the other nations of Europe, seem to have adopted the opinion of Columbus. The countries which he had discovered were considered as a part of India. In consequence of this notion, the name of Indies is given to them by Ferdinand and Isabella, in a ratification of their former agreement, which was granted to Columbus upon his return¹. Even after the error which gave rise to this opinion was detected, and the true position of the New World was ascertained, the name has remained, and the appellation of *West-Indies* is given by all the people of Europe to the country, and that of *Indians* to its inhabitants.

B O O K
II.

1493.

disting-
guished by
the name
of the
West-Indies.

The name by which Columbus distinguished the countries which he had discovered was so inviting, the specimens of their riches and fertility which he produced were so considerable, and the reports of his companions, delivered frequently with the exaggeration natural to travellers, so favourable, as to excite a wonderful spirit of énterprise among the Spaniards. Though little accustomed to naval expeditions, they were impatient to set out upon their voyage. Volunteers of every rank solicited to be employed. Allured by the inviting prospects which opened to their ambition and avarice, neither the length nor danger of the navigation intimidated

Prepara-
tions for
a second
voyage.

¹ Life of Columbus, c. 44.

B O O K them. Cautious as Ferdinand was, and averse to every thing new or adventurous, he seems to have caught the same spirit with his subjects. Under its influence, preparations for a second expedition were carried on with rapidity unusual in Spain, and to an extent that would be deemed not inconsiderable in the present age. The fleet consisted of seventeen ships, some of which were of good burden. It had on board fifteen hundred persons, among whom were many of noble families, who had served in honourable stations. The greater part of these being destined to remain in the country, were furnished with every thing requisite for conquest or settlement; with all kinds of European domestic animals, with such seeds and plants as were most likely to thrive in the climate of the West-Indies, with utensils and instruments of every sort, and with such artificers as might be most useful in an infant colony^k.

The right
of Spain to
the New
World
confirmed
by the
Pope.

But, formidable and well-provided as this fleet was, Ferdinand and Isabella did not rest their title to the possession of the newly-discovered countries upon its operations alone. The example of the Portuguese, as well as the superstition of the age, made it necessary to obtain from the Roman pontiff a grant of those territories which they wished to occupy. The Pope, as the vicar and representative of Jesus Christ, was supposed to have a right of dominion over all the kingdoms of the earth. Alexander VI., a pontiff infamous for every crime which disgraces humanity, filled the Papal throne at that

^k Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 5, Life of Columbus, c. 45.

time. As he was born Ferdinand's subject, and very solicitous to secure the protection of Spain, in order to facilitate the execution of his ambitious schemes in favour of his own family, he was extremely willing to gratify the Spanish monarchs. By an act of liberality which cost him nothing, and that served to establish the jurisdiction and pretensions of the Papal See, he granted in full right to Ferdinand and Isabella all the countries inhabited by Infidels, which they had discovered, or should discover; and, in virtue of that power which he derived from Jesus Christ, he conferred on the crown of Castile vast regions, to the possession of which he himself was so far from having any title, that he was unacquainted with their situation, and ignorant even of their existence. As it was necessary to prevent this grant from interfering with that formerly made to the crown of Portugal, he appointed that a line, supposed to be drawn from pole to pole, a hundred leagues to the westward of the Azores, should serve as a limit between them; and, in the plenitude of his power, bestowed all to the east of this imaginary line upon the Portuguese, and all to the west of it upon the Spaniards¹. Zeal for propagating the Christian faith was the consideration employed by Ferdinand in soliciting this bull, and is mentioned by Alexander as his chief motive for issuing it. In order to manifest some concern for this laudable object, several friars, under the direction of Father Boyl, a Catalonian monk of

B O O K
II.
1493.

¹ Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 4. Torquemada Mon. Ind. lib. xviii. c. 3.

BOOK II.
 1493. great reputation, as apostolical vicar, were appointed to accompany Columbus, and to devote themselves to the instruction of the natives. The Indians, whom Columbus had brought along with him, having received some tincture of Christian knowledge, were baptized with much solemnity, the King himself, the Prince his son, and the chief persons of his court, standing as their godfathers. Those first fruits of the New World have not been followed by such an increase as pious men wished, and had reason to expect.

Second voyage of Columbus. Ferdinand and Isabella having thus acquired a title, which was then deemed completely valid, to extend their discoveries and to establish their dominion over such a considerable portion of the globe, nothing now retarded the departure of the fleet. Columbus was extremely impatient to revisit the colony which he had left, and to pursue that career of glory upon which he had entered. He set sail from the bay of Cadiz on the twenty-fifth of September, and touching again at the island of Gomera, he steered further towards the south than in his former voyage. By holding this course, he enjoyed more steadily the benefit of the regular winds, which reign within the tropics, and was carried towards a larger cluster of islands, situated considerably to the east of those which he had already discovered. On the twenty-sixth day after his departure from Gomera he made land^m. It was one of the Caribbee or Leeward Islands, to which he gave the name of Descada, on account of the im-

Nov 2.

^m Oviedo ap. Ramus. iii. 85.

patience of his crew to discover some part of the B O O K
 New World. After this he visited successively II.
 Dominica, Marigalante, Guadaloupe, Antigua, San 1493.
 Juan de Puerto Rico, and several other islands,
 scattered in his way as he advanced towards the
 north-west. All these he found to be inhabited by
 that fierce race of people whom Guacanahari had
 painted in such frightful colours. His descriptions
 appeared not to have been exaggerated. The Spa-
 niards never attempted to land without meeting
 with such a reception as discovered the martial and
 daring spirit of the natives; and in their habitations
 were found relics of those horrid feasts which they
 had made upon the bodies of their enemies taken
 in war.

But as Columbus was eager to know the state of arrives at
 the colony which he had planted, and to supply it Hispa-
 with the necessaries of which he supposed it to be niola,
 in want, he made no stay in any of those islands, Nov. 22.
 and proceeded directly to Hispaniolaⁿ. When he
 arrived off Navidad, the station in which he had
 left the thirty-eight men under the command of
 Arada, he was astonished that none of them ap-
 peared, and expected every moment to see them
 running with transports of joy to welcome their
 countrymen. Full of solicitude about their safety,
 and foreboding in his mind what had befallen them,
 he rowed instantly to land. All the natives from
 whom he might have received information had fled.
 But the fort which he had built was entirely demo-

ⁿ P. Martyr, dec. p. 15. 18. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 7. Life of Columbus, c. 46, &c.

B O O K lished, and the tattered garments, the broken arms
 II. and utensils scattered about it, left no room to doubt
 1492. concerning the unhappy fate of the garrison^o.

The fate of
 the men
 whom he
 left there.

While the Spaniards were shedding tears over those sad memorials of their fellow-citizens, a brother of the cazique Guacanahari arrived. From him Columbus received a particular detail of what had happened after his departure from the island. The familiar intercourse of the Indians with the Spaniards tended gradually to diminish the superstitious veneration with which their first appearance had inspired that simple people. By their own indiscretion and ill conduct, the Spaniards speedily effaced those favourable impressions, and soon convinced the natives, that they had all the wants, and weaknesses, and passions of men. As soon as the powerful restraint which the presence and authority of Columbus imposed was withdrawn, the garrison threw off all regard for the officer whom he had invested with command. Regardless of the prudent instructions which he had given them, every man became independent, and gratified his desires without control. The gold, the women, the provisions of the natives, were all the prey of those licentious oppressors. They roamed in small parties over the island, extending their rapacity and insolence to every corner of it. Gentle and timid as the people were, those unprovoked injuries at length exhausted their patience, and roused their courage. The cazique of Cibao, whose country the Spaniards chiefly infested on account of the gold which it

^o Hist. de Cura de los Palacios. MS.

contained, surprised and cut off several of them, while they straggled in as perfect security as if their conduct had been altogether inoffensive. He then assembled his subjects, and, surrounding the fort, set it on fire. Some of the Spaniards were killed in defending it; the rest perished in attempting to make their escape by crossing an arm of the sea. Guacanahari, whom all their exactions had not alienated from the Spaniards, took arms in their behalf, and, in endeavouring to protect them, had received a wound, by which he was still confined^P.

B O O K
II.
1493.

Though this account was far from removing the suspicions which the Spaniards entertained with respect to the fidelity of Guacanahari, Columbus perceived so clearly that this was not a proper juncture for inquiring into his conduct with scrupulous accuracy, that he rejected the advice of several of his officers, who urged him to seize the person of that Prince, and to revenge the death of their countrymen by attacking his subjects. He represented to them the necessity of securing the friendship of some potentate of the country, in order to facilitate the settlement which they intended, and the danger of driving the natives to unite in some desperate attempt against them, by such an ill-timed and unavailing exercise of rigour. Instead of wasting his time in punishing past wrongs, he took precautions for preventing any future injury. With this view, he made choice of a situation more healthy and commodious than that of Navidad. He traced out

His prudent conduct.

^P P. Martyr, dec. p. 22, &c. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 7. 9. Life of Columbus, c. 49, 50.

B O O K the plan of a town in a large plain near a spacious bay, and obliging every person to put his hand to a work on which their common safety depended, the houses and ramparts were soon so far advanced, by their united labour, as to afford them shelter and security. This rising city, the first that the Europeans founded in the New World, he named Isabella, in honour of his patroness the Queen of Castile^q.

Discontent
of his fol-
lowers.

In carrying on this necessary work, Columbus had not only to sustain all the hardships, and to encounter all the difficulties, to which infant colonies are exposed when they settle in an uncultivated country, but he had to contend with what was more insuperable, the laziness, the impatience, and mutinous disposition of his followers. By the enervating influence of a hot climate, the natural inactivity of the Spaniards seemed to increase. Many of them were gentlemen, unaccustomed to the fatigue of bodily labour, and all had engaged in the enterprise with the sanguine hopes excited by the splendid and exaggerated description of their countrymen who returned from the first voyage, or by the mistaken opinion of Columbus, that the country which he had discovered was either the Cipango of Marco Polo, or the Ophir^r, from which Solomon imported those precious commodities which suddenly diffused such extraordinary riches through his kingdom. But when, instead of that golden harvest which they had expected to reap without

^q Life of Columbus, c. 51. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 10.

^r P. Martyr, dec. p. 29.

toil or pains, the Spaniards saw that their prospect of wealth was remote as well as uncertain, and that it could not be attained but by the slow and persevering efforts of industry, the disappointment of those chimerical hopes occasioned such dejection of mind as bordered on despair, and led to general discontent. In vain did Columbus endeavour to revive their spirits by pointing out the fertility of the soil, and exhibiting the specimens of gold daily brought in from different parts of the island. They had not patience to wait for the gradual returns which the former might yield, and the latter they despised as scanty and inconsiderable. The spirit of disaffection spread, and a conspiracy was formed, which might have been fatal to Columbus and the colony. Happily he discovered it; and, seizing the ringleaders, punished some of them, sent others prisoners into Spain, whither he dispatched twelve of the ships which had served as transports, with an earnest request for a re-enforcement of men and a large supply of provisions^s.

Meanwhile, in order to banish that idleness which, by allowing his people leisure to brood over their disappointment, nourished the spirit of discontent, Columbus planned several expeditions into the interior part of the country. He sent a detachment, under the command of Alonzo de Ojeda, a vigilant and enterprising officer, to visit the district of Cibao, which was said to yield the greatest quantity of gold, and followed him in person with the main body of his troops. In this expedition he dis-

B O O K

II.

1493.

1494.

Examines
into the
state of
the coun-
try.

March 12.

^s Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 10, 11.

B O O K played all the pomp of military magnificence, that he could exhibit, in order to strike the imagination of the natives. He marched with colours flying, with martial music, and with a small body of cavalry that paraded sometimes in the front and sometimes in the rear. As those were the first horses which appeared in the New World, they were objects of terror no less than of admiration to the Indians, who, having no tame animals themselves, were unacquainted with that vast accession of power which man hath acquired by subjecting them to his dominion. They supposed them to be rational creatures, They imagined that the horse and the rider formed one animal, with whose speed they were astonished, and whose impetuosity and strength they considered as irresistible. But while Columbus endeavoured to inspire the natives with a dread of his power, he did not neglect the arts of gaining their love and confidence. He adhered scrupulously to the principles of integrity and justice in all his transactions with them, and treated them, on every occasion, not only with humanity, but with indulgence. The district of Cibao answered the description given of it by the natives. It was mountainous and uncultivated, but in every river and brook gold was gathered either in dust or in grains, some of which were of considerable size. The Indians had never opened any mines in search of gold. To penetrate into the bowels of the earth, and to refine the rude ore, were operations too complicated and laborious for their talents and industry, and they had no such high value for gold as to put their ingenuity and invention upon the stretch in order to

II.
1494.

obtain it^t. The small quantity of that precious metal which they possessed, was either picked up in the beds of the rivers, or washed from the mountains by the heavy rains that fall within the tropics. But, from those indications, the Spaniards could no longer doubt that the country contained rich treasures in its bowels, of which they hoped soon to be masters^u. In order to secure the command of this valuable province, Columbus erected a small fort, to which he gave the name of St. Thomas, by way of ridicule upon some of his incredulous followers, who would not believe that the country produced gold, until they saw it with their own eyes, and touched it with their hands^w.

BOOK
II.
1494.

The account of those promising appearances of wealth in the country of Cibao came very seasonably to comfort the desponding colony, which was affected with distresses of various kinds. The stock of provisions which had been brought from Europe was mostly consumed; what remained was so much corrupted by the heat and moisture of the climate, as to be almost unfit for use; the natives cultivated so small a portion of ground, and with so little skill, that it hardly yielded what was sufficient for their own subsistence; the Spaniards at Isabella had hitherto neither time nor leisure to clear the soil, so as to reap any considerable fruits of their own industry. On all these accounts, they became afraid of perishing with hunger, and were reduced already to a scanty allowance. At the same time,

The distresses and disaffection of the colony increase.

^t Oviedo, lib. ii. p. 90. A.

^u P. Martyr, dec. p. 32.

^w Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 12. Life of Columbus, c. 52.

B O O K the diseases predominant in the torrid zone, and
 II. which rage chiefly in those uncultivated countries
 1494. where the hand of industry has not opened the
 woods, drained the marshes, and confined the rivers
 within a certain channel, began to spread among
 them. Alarmed at the violence and unusual sym-
 ptoms of those maladies, they exclaimed against Co-
 lumbus and his companions in the former voyage,
 who, by their splendid but deceitful descriptions of
 Hispaniola, had allured them to quit Spain for a
 barbarous uncultivated land, where they must either
 be cut off by famine, or die of unknown distempers.
 Several of the officers and persons of note, instead
 of checking, joined in those seditious complaints.
 Father Boyl, the apostolical vicar, was one of the
 most turbulent and outrageous. It required all
 the authority and address of Columbus to re-esta-
 blish subordination and tranquillity in the colony.
 Threats and promises were alternately employed
 for this purpose ; but nothing contributed more to
 soothe the malecontents, than the prospect of find-
 ing in the mines of Cibao, such a rich store of
 treasure as would be a recompense for all their suf-
 ferings, and efface the memory of former disappoint-
 ments.

Columbus
 attempts
 new disco-
 veries.

When, by his unwearied endeavours, concord
 and order were so far restored that he could ven-
 ture to leave the island, Columbus resolved to pur-
 sue his discoveries, that he might be able to ascer-
 tain whether those new countries with which he
 had opened a communication were connected with
 any region of the earth already known, or whether
 they were to be considered as a separate portion of

the globe hitherto unvisited. He appointed his brother Don Diego, with the assistance of a council of officers, to govern the island in his absence; and gave the command of a body of soldiers to Don Pedro Margarita, with which he was to visit the different parts of the island, and endeavour to establish the authority of the Spaniards among the inhabitants. Having left them very particular instructions with respect to their conduct, he weighed anchor on the 24th of April with one ship and two small barks under his command. During a tedious voyage of full five months, he had a trial of almost all the numerous hardships to which persons of his profession are exposed, without making any discovery of importance, except the island of Jamaica. As he ranged along the southern coast of Cuba*, he was entangled in a labyrinth formed by an incredible number of small islands, to which he gave the name of the Queen's Garden. In this unknown course, among rocks and shelves, he was retarded by contrary winds, assaulted with furious storms, and alarmed with the terrible thunder and lightning which is often almost incessant between the tropics. At length his provisions fell short; his crew, exhausted with fatigue as well as hunger, murmured and threatened, and were ready to proceed to the most desperate extremities against him. Beset with danger in such various forms, he was obliged to keep continual watch, to observe every occurrence with his own eyes, to issue every order, and to superintend the execution of it. On no oc-

B O O K
II.
1494.

* See NOTE XIX.

B O O K casion was the extent of his skill and experience as
 II. a navigator so much tried. To these the squadron
 1494. owed its safety. But this unremitted fatigue of
 body, and intense application of mind, overpowering
 his constitution, though naturally vigorous and
 robust, brought on a feverish disorder, which ter-
 minated in a lethargy, that deprived him of sense
 and memory, and had almost proved fatal to his
 life.

Sept. 27.
 On his re-
 turn, finds
 his brother
 Bartholo-
 mew at
 Isabella.

But, on his return to Hispaniola, the sudden
 emotion of joy which he felt upon meeting with
 his brother Bartholomew at Isabella, occasioned
 such a flow of spirits as contributed greatly to his
 recovery. It was now thirteen years since the two
 brothers, whom similarity of talents united in close
 friendship, had separated from each other, and du-
 ring that long period there had been no intercourse
 between them. Bartholomew, after finishing his
 negotiation in the court of England, had set out
 for Spain by the way of France. At Paris he re-
 ceived an account of the extraordinary discoveries
 which his brother had made in his first voyage, and
 that he was then preparing to embark on a second
 expedition. Though this naturally induced him to
 pursue his journey with the utmost dispatch, the
 admiral had sailed for Hispaniola before he reached
 Spain. Ferdinand and Isabella received him with
 the respect due to the nearest kinsman of a person
 whose merit and services rendered him so conspi-
 cuous ; and as they knew what consolation his pre-

Life of Columbus, c. 54, &c. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 13,
 14. P. Martyr, dec. I. p. 34, &c.

sente would afford to his brother, they persuaded him to take the command of three ships, which they had appointed to carry provisions to the colony at Isabella². B O O K
II.
1494.

He could not have arrived at any juncture when Columbus stood more in need of a friend capable of assisting him with his counsels, or of dividing with him the cares and burden of government. For although the provisions now brought from Europe afforded a temporary relief to the Spaniards from the calamities of famine, the supply was not in such quantity as to support them long, and the island did not hitherto yield what was sufficient for their sustenance. They were threatened with another danger, still more formidable than the return of scarcity, and which demanded more immediate attention. No sooner did Columbus leave the island on his voyage of discovery, than the soldiers under Margarita, as if they had been set free from discipline and subordination, scorned all restraint. Instead of conforming to the prudent instructions of Columbus, they dispersed in straggling parties over the island, lived at discretion upon the natives, wasted their provisions, seized their women, and treated that inoffensive race with all the insolence of military oppression³. The In-
dians take
arms
against the
Spaniards.

As long as the Indians had any prospect that their sufferings might come to a period by the voluntary departure of the invaders, they submitted in silence, and dissembled their sorrow; but they now perceived that the yoke would be as permanent as it was intolerable. The Spaniards had built a town,

² Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 15. ³ P, Martyr, dec. p. 47.

B O O K and surrounded it with ramparts. They had erected forts in different places. They had inclosed and sown several fields. It was apparent that they came not to visit the country, but to settle in it. Though the number of those strangers was inconsiderable, the state of cultivation among this rude people was so imperfect, and in such exact proportion to their own consumption, that it was with difficulty they could afford subsistence to their new guests. Their own mode of life was so indolent and inactive, the warmth of the climate so enervating, the constitution of their bodies naturally so feeble, and so unaccustomed to the laborious exertions of industry, that they were satisfied with a proportion of food amazingly small. A handful of maize, or a little of the insipid bread made of the cassada-root, was sufficient to support men whose strength and spirits were not exhausted by any vigorous efforts either of body or mind. The Spaniards, though the most abstemious of all the European nations, appeared to them excessively voracious. One Spaniard consumed as much as several Indians. This keenness of appetite surprised them so much, and seemed to be so insatiable, that they supposed the Spaniards had left their own country because it did not produce as much as was requisite to gratify their immoderate desire of food, and had come among them in quest of nourishment^b. Self-preservation prompted them to wish for the departure of guests who wasted so fast their slender stock of provisions. The injuries which they suf-

II.
1494.

^b Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 17.

ferred added to their impatience for this event. B O O K
 They had long expected that the Spaniards would retire of their own accord. They now perceived that, in order to avert the destruction with which they were threatened, either by the slow consumption of famine, or by the violence of their oppressors, it was necessary to assume courage, to attack those formidable invaders with united force, and drive them from the settlements of which they had violently taken possession. II.
1494.

Such were the sentiments which universally prevailed among the Indians, when Columbus returned to Isabella. Inflamed by the unprovoked outrages of the Spaniards, with a degree of rage of which their gentle natures, formed to suffer and submit, seemed hardly susceptible, they waited only for a signal from their leaders to fall upon the colony. Some of the caziques had already surprised and cut off several stragglers. The dread of this impending danger united the Spaniards, and re-established the authority of Columbus, as they saw no prospect of safety but in committing themselves to his prudent guidance. It was now necessary to have recourse to arms, the employing of which against the Indians Columbus had hitherto avoided with the greatest solicitude. Unequal as the conflict may seem, between the naked inhabitants of the New World armed with clubs, sticks hardened in the fire, wooden swords, and arrows pointed with bones or flints, and troops accustomed to the discipline, and provided with the instruments of destruction known in the European art of war, the situation of the Spaniards was far from being exempt from dan- War with them.

B O O K ger. The vast superiority of the natives in number, compensated many defects. An handful of men was about to encounter a whole nation. One adverse event, or even any unforeseen delay in determining the fate of the war, might prove fatal to the Spaniards. Conscious that success depended on the vigour and rapidity of his operations, Columbus instantly assembled his forces. They were reduced to a very small number. Diseases, engendered by the warmth and humidity of the country, or occasioned by their own licentiousness, had raged among them with much violence; experience had not yet taught them the art either of curing these, or the precautions requisite for guarding against them; two-thirds of the original adventurers were dead, and many of those who survived were incapable of service^c. The body which took the field consisted only of two hundred foot, twenty horse, and twenty large dogs; and how strange soever it may seem to mention the last as composing part of a military force, they were not perhaps the least formidable and destructive of the whole, when employed against naked and timid Indians. All the caziques of the island, Guacanahari excepted, who retained an inviolable attachment to the Spaniards, were in arms to oppose Columbus, with forces amounting, if we may believe the Spanish historians, to a hundred thousand men. Instead of attempting to draw the Spaniards into the fastnesses of the woods and mountains, they were so imprudent as to take their station in the Vega

1494.
1495.
March 24.

^c Life of Columbus, c. 61.

Real, the most open plain in the country. Co-BOOK
 lumbus did not allow them time to perceive their error, or to alter their position. He attacked them during the night, when undisciplined troops are least capable of acting with union and concert, and obtained an easy and bloodless victory. The consternation with which the Indians were filled by the noise and havock made by the fire-arms, by the impetuous force of the cavalry, and the fierce onset of the dogs, was so great, that they threw down their weapons, and fled without attempting resistance. Many were slain; more were taken prisoners, and reduced to servitude^d; and so thoroughly were the rest intimidated, that from that moment they abandoned themselves to despair, relinquishing all thoughts of contending with aggressors whom they deemed invincible.

II.
 1495.

Columbus employed several months in marching through the island, and in subjecting it to the Spanish government, without meeting with any opposition. He imposed a tribute upon all the inhabitants above the age of fourteen. Each person who lived in those districts where gold was found, was obliged to pay quarterly as much gold dust as filled a hawk's bell; from those in other parts of the country, twenty-five pounds of cotton were demanded. This was the first regular taxation of the Indians, and served as a precedent for exactions still more intolerable. Such an imposition was extremely contrary to those maxims which Columbus

A tax imposed upon them.

^d See NOTE XX.

B O O K had hitherto inculcated, with respect to the mode
II. of treating them. But intrigues were carrying on
1495. in the court of Spain at this juncture, in order to
undermine his power, and discredit his operations,
which constrained him to depart from his own system
of administration. Several unfavourable accounts of
his conduct, as well as of the countries discovered by
him, had been transmitted to Spain. Margarita and
Father Boyl were now at court, and in order to justify
their own conduct, or to gratify their resentment,
watched with malevolent attention for every opportunity
of spreading insinuations to his detriment. Many of
the courtiers viewed his growing reputation and power
with envious eyes. Fonseca, archdeacon of Seville,
who was intrusted with the chief direction of Indian
affairs, had conceived such an unfavourable opinion
of Columbus, for some reason which the contemporary
writers have not mentioned, that he listened with
partiality to every invective against him. It was not
easy for an unfriended stranger, unpractised in courtly
arts, to counteract the machinations of so many enemies.
Columbus saw that there was but one method of supporting
his own credit, and of silencing all his adversaries.
He must produce such a quantity of gold as would not
only justify what he had reported with respect to the
richness of the country, but encourage Ferdinand and
Isabella to persevere in prosecuting his plans. The
necessity of obtaining it, forced him not only to
impose this heavy tax upon the Indians, but to exact
payment of it with extreme rigour; and may

be pleaded in excuse for his deviating on this occasion from the mildness and humanity with which he uniformly treated that unhappy people^c.

The labour, attention, and foresight, which the Indians were obliged to employ in procuring the tribute demanded of them, appeared the most intolerable of all evils, to men accustomed to pass their days in a careless, improvident indolence. They were incapable of such a regular and persevering exertion of industry, and felt it such a grievous restraint upon their liberty, that they had recourse to an expedient for obtaining deliverance from this yoke, which demonstrates the excess of their impatience and despair. They formed a scheme of starving those oppressors whom they durst not attempt to expel; and from the opinion which they entertained with respect to the voracious appetite of the Spaniards, they concluded the execution of it to be very practicable. With this view they suspended all the operations of agriculture; they sowed no maize, they pulled up the roots of the manioc or cassada which were planted, and, retiring to the most inaccessible parts of the mountains, left the uncultivated plains to their enemies. This desperate resolution produced in some degree the effects which they expected. The Spaniards were reduced to extreme want; but they received such seasonable supplies of provisions from Europe, and found so many resources in their own ingenuity and industry, that they suffered no great loss of men. The

B O O K
II.1495;
Fatal effects of
that measure.

^c Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 17.

B O O K wretched Indians were the victims of their own ill-concerted policy. A great multitude of people, shut up in the mountainous or wooded part of the country, without any food but the spontaneous productions of the earth, soon felt the utmost distresses of famine. This brought on contagious diseases; and in the course of a few months more than a third part of the inhabitants of the island perished, after experiencing misery in all its various forms^f.

II.
1495.

Intrigues
against
Columbus
in the
court of
Spain.

But while Columbus was establishing the foundations of the Spanish grandeur in the New World, his enemies laboured with unwearied assiduity to deprive him of the glory and rewards which, by his services and sufferings, he was entitled to enjoy. The hardships unavoidable in a new settlement, the calamities occasioned by an unhealthy climate, the disasters attending a voyage in unknown seas, were all represented as the effects of his restless and inconsiderate ambition. His prudent attention to preserve discipline and subordination was denominated excess of rigour; the punishments which he inflicted upon the mutinous and disorderly were imputed to cruelty. These accusations gained such credit in a jealous court, that a commissioner was appointed to repair to Hispaniola, and to inspect into the conduct of Columbus. By the commendation of his enemies, Aguado, a groom of

^f Herrera, dec. 1. lib. xi. c. 18. Life of Columbus, c. 61. Oviedo, lib. iii. p. 93. D. Benzon Hist. Novi Orbis, lib. i. c. 9. P. Martyr, dec. p. 48.

the bed-chamber, was the person to whom this important trust was committed. But in this choice they seem to have been more influenced by the obsequious attachment of the man to their interest, than by his capacity for the station. Puffed up with such sudden elevation, Aguado displayed, in the exercise of this office, all the frivolous self-importance, and acted with all the disgusting insolence, which are natural to little minds, when raised to unexpected dignity, or employed in functions to which they are not equal. By listening with eagerness to every accusation against Columbus, and encouraging not only the malcontent Spaniards, but even the Indians, to produce their grievances, real or imaginary, he fomented the spirit of dissension in the island, without establishing any regulations of public utility, or that tended to redress the many wrongs, with the odium of which he wished to load the admiral's administration. As Columbus felt sensibly how humiliating his situation must be, if he should remain in the country while such a partial inspector observed his motions and controlled his jurisdiction, he took the resolution of returning to Spain, in order to lay a full account of all his transactions, particularly with respect to the points in dispute between him and his adversaries, before Ferdinand and Isabella, from whose justice and discernment he expected an equal and a favourable decision. He committed the administration of affairs, during his absence, to Don Bartholomew, his brother, with the title of Adelantado, or Lieutenant-Governor. By a choice less fortunate, and which proved the source of many calamities to the colony,

B O O K
II.
1496.

1496.

B O O K he appointed Francis Roldan chief justice, with very extensive powers[§].

II.

1496.

Returns to Spain.

In returning to Europe, Columbus held a course different from that which he had taken in his former voyage. He steered almost due east from Hispaniola, in the parallel of twenty-two degrees of latitude; as experience had not yet discovered the more certain and expeditious method of stretching to the north, in order to fall in with the south-west winds. By this ill-advised choice, which, in the infancy of navigation between the New and Old Worlds, can hardly be imputed to the admiral as a defect in naval skill, he was exposed to infinite fatigue and danger, in a perpetual struggle with the trade-winds, which blow without variation from the east between the tropics. Notwithstanding the almost insuperable difficulties of such a navigation, he persisted in his course with his usual patience and firmness, but made so little way that he was three months without seeing land. At length his provisions began to fail, the crew was reduced to the scanty allowance of six ounces of bread a-day for each person. The admiral fared no better than the meanest sailor. But, even in this extreme distress, he retained the humanity which distinguishes his character, and refused to comply with the earnest solicitations of his crew, some of whom proposed to feed upon the Indian prisoners whom they were carrying over, and others insisted to throw them overboard, in order to lessen the consumption of their small stock. He represented

§ Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 18. lib. iii. c. 1.

that they were human beings, reduced by a common calamity to the same condition with themselves, and entitled to share an equal fate. His authority and remonstrances dissipated those wild ideas suggested by despair. Nor had they time to recur; as he came soon within sight of the coast of Spain, when all their fears and sufferings ended^h.

B O O K
H.
1496.

Columbus appeared at court with the modest but determined confidence of a man conscious not only of integrity, but of having performed great services. Ferdinand and Isabella, ashamed of their own facility in lending too favourable an ear to frivolous or unfounded accusations, received him with such distinguished marks of respect as covered his enemies with shame. Their censures and calumnies were no more heard of at that juncture. The gold, the pearls, the cotton, and other commodities of value which Columbus produced, seemed fully to refute what the malcontents had propagated with respect to the poverty of the country. By reducing the Indians to obedience, and imposing a regular tax upon them, he had secured to Spain a large accession of new subjects, and the establishment of a revenue that promised to be considerable. By the mines which he had found out and examined, a source of wealth still more copious was opened. Great and unexpected as those advantages were, Columbus represented them only as preludes to future acquisitions, and as the earnest of more important discoveries, which he still meditated, and to which those he had

His reception there.

^h Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. i. Life of Columbus, c. 64.

B O O K already made would conduct him with ease and certaintyⁱ.

II.
 1496.
 A plan formed for the more regular establishment of a colony.

The attentive consideration of all these circumstances made such an impression, not only upon Isabella, who was flattered with the idea of being the patroness of all Columbus's enterprises, but even upon Ferdinand, who, having originally expressed his disapprobation of his schemes, was still apt to doubt of their success, that they resolved to supply the colony in Hispaniola with every thing which could render it a permanent establishment, and to furnish Columbus with such a fleet, that he might proceed to search for those new countries of whose existence he seemed to be confident. The measures most proper for accomplishing both these designs were concerted with Columbus. Discovery had been the sole object of the first voyage to the New World; and though, in the second, settlement had been proposed, the precautions taken for that purpose had either been insufficient, or were rendered ineffectual by the mutinous spirit of the Spaniards, and the unforeseen calamities arising from various causes. Now a plan was to be formed of a regular colony, that might serve as a model in all future establishments. Every particular was considered with attention, and the whole arranged with a scrupulous accuracy. The precise number of adventurers who should be permitted to embark was fixed. They were to be of different ranks and professions, and the proportion of each was establish-

ⁱ Life of Columbus, c. 65. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 1.

ed according to their usefulness and the wants of the colony. A suitable number of women was to be chosen to accompany these new settlers. As it was the first object to raise provisions in a country where scarcity of food had been the occasion of so much distress, a considerable body of husbandmen was to be carried over. As the Spaniards had then no conception of deriving any benefit from those productions of the New World which have since yielded such large returns of wealth to Europe, but had formed magnificent ideas, and entertained sanguine hopes with respect to the riches contained in the mines which had been discovered, a band of workmen, skilled in the various arts employed in digging and refining the precious metals, was provided. All these emigrants were to receive pay and subsistence for some years, at the public expense^k.

Thus far the regulations were prudent, and well adapted to the end in view. But as it was foreseen that few would engage voluntarily to settle in a country whose noxious climate had been fatal to so many of their countrymen, Columbus proposed to transport to Hispaniola such malefactors as had been convicted of crimes which, though capital, were of a less atrocious nature; and that for the future a certain proportion of the offenders usually sent to the galleys, should be condemned to labour in the mines which were to be opened. This advice, given without due reflection, was as inconsiderately adopted. The prisons of Spain were drained, in order to collect members for the intended colony; and the

B O O K
II.
1496.

A defect
in it.

^k Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 2.

B O O K judges empowered to try criminals were instructed to recruit it by their future sentences. It was not, however, with such materials that the foundations of a society, destined to be permanent, should be laid. Industry, sobriety, patience, and mutual confidence, are indispensably requisite in an infant settlement, where purity of morals must contribute more towards establishing order, than the operation or authority of laws. But when such a mixture of what is corrupt is admitted into the original constitution of the political body, the vices of those unsound and incurable members will probably infect the whole, and must certainly be productive of violent and unhappy effects. This the Spaniards fatally experienced; and the other European nations having successively imitated the practice of Spain in this particular, pernicious consequences have followed in their settlements, which can be imputed to no other cause¹.

Executed
slowly.

Though Columbus obtained, with great facility and dispatch, the royal approbation of every measure and regulation that he proposed, his endeavours to carry them into execution were so long retarded, as must have tired out the patience of any man less accustomed to encounter and to surmount difficulties. Those delays were occasioned partly by that tedious formality and spirit of procrastination, with which the Spaniards conduct business, and partly by the exhausted state of the treasury, which was drained by the expense of celebrating the marriage.

¹ Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 2. Tournon Hist. Gener. de l'Amerique, i. p. 51.

of Ferdinand and Isabella's only son with Margaret B O O K
of Austria, and that of Joanna, their second daughter, with Philip Archduke of Austria^m; but must II.
be chiefly imputed to the malicious arts of Columbus's enemies. Astonished at the reception which 1496,
he met with upon his return, and overawed by his presence, they gave way, for some time, to a tide of favour too strong for them to oppose. Their enmity, however, was too inveterate to remain long inactive. They resumed their operations; and by the assistance of Fonseca, the minister for Indian affairs, who was now promoted to the bishopric of Badajos, they threw in so many obstacles to protract the preparations for Columbus's expedition, that a year elapsedⁿ before he could procure two ships to carry over a part of the supplies destined for the colony, and almost two years were spent before the small squadron was equipped, of which he himself was to take the command^o.

This squadron consisted of six ships only, of no great burden, and but indifferently provided for a long or dangerous navigation. The voyage which he now meditated was in a course different from any he had undertaken. As he was fully persuaded that the fertile regions of India lay to the southwest of those countries which he had discovered, he proposed as the most certain method of finding out these, to stand directly south from the Canary or Cape de Verd islands, until he came under the 1498.
Third voyage of Columbus.

^m P. Martyr, epist. 168.

ⁿ Life of Columbus, c. 65.

^o Herrera, dec. I. lib. iii. c. 9.

B O O K equinoctial line, and then to stretch to the west before the favourable wind for such a course, which blows invariably between the tropics. With this idea he set sail, and touched first at the Canary, and then at the Cape de Verd islands. From the former he dispatched three of his ships with a supply of provisions for the colony in Hispaniola: with the other three, he continued his voyage towards the south. No remarkable occurrence happened until they arrived within five degrees of the line. There they were becalmed, and at the same time the heat became so excessive, that many of their wine casks burst, the liquors in others soured, and their provisions corrupted^p. The Spaniards, who had never ventured so far to the south, were afraid that the ships would take fire, and began to apprehend the reality of what the ancients had taught concerning the destructive qualities of that torrid region of the globe. They were relieved, in some measure, from their fears by a seasonable fall of rain. This, however, though so heavy and unintermitting that the men could hardly keep the deck, did not greatly mitigate the intenseness of the heat. The admiral, who with his usual vigilance had in person directed every operation from the beginning of the voyage, was so much exhausted by fatigue and want of sleep, that it brought on a violent fit of the gout, accompanied with a fever. All these circumstances constrained him to yield to the importunities of his crew, and to alter his course

II.
 1498.
 May 30.
 July 4.

July 19.

^p P. Martyr, dec. p. 70.

to the north-west, in order to reach some of the **B O O K**
 Caribbee islands, where he might refit, and be sup- **II.**
 plied with provisions.

On the first of August, the man stationed in the round top surprised them with the joyful cry of *Land!* They stood towards it, and discovered a considerable island, which the admiral called Trinidad, a name it still retains. It lies on the coast of Guiana, near the mouth of the Orinoco. This, though a river only of the third or fourth magnitude in the New World, far surpasses any of the streams in our hemisphere. It rolls towards the ocean such a vast body of water, and rushes into it with such impetuous force, that when it meets the tide, which on that coast rises to an uncommon height, their collision occasions a swell and agitation of the waves no less surprising than formidable. In this conflict, the irresistible torrent of the river so far prevails, that it freshens the ocean many leagues with its flood⁹. Columbus, before he could conceive the danger, was entangled among those adverse currents and tempestuous waves, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he escaped through a narrow strait, which appeared so tremendous that he called it *La Boca del Drago*. As soon as the consternation which this occasioned, permitted him to reflect upon the nature of an appearance so extraordinary, he discerned in it a source of comfort and hope. He justly concluded that such a vast body of water as this river contained, could not be supplied by any island, but must flow through a

1498.
 Discovers
 the contin-
 ent of
 America.

⁹ Gumilla Hist. de l'Orenoque, tom. i. p. 14.

B O O K country of immense extent, and of consequence
 II. that he was now arrived at that continent which it
 1498. had long been the object of his wishes to discover.
 Full of this idea, he stood to the west along the
 coast of those provinces which are now known by
 the names of Paria and Cumana. He landed in
 several places, and had some intercourse with the
 people, who resembled those of Hispaniola in their
 appearance and manner of life. They wore, as or-
 naments, small plates of gold, and pearls of consi-
 derable value, which they willingly exchanged for
 European toys. They seemed to possess a better
 understanding, and greater courage, than the inha-
 bitants of the islands. The country produced four-
 footed animals of several kinds, as well as a great
 variety of fowls and fruits^r. The admiral was so
 much delighted with its beauty and fertility, that,
 with the warm enthusiasm of a discoverer, he
 imagined it to be the Paradise described in Scrip-
 ture, which the Almighty chose for the residence of
 man while he retained innocence that rendered
 him worthy of such an habitation^s. Thus Colum-
 bus had the glory not only of discovering to man-
 kind the existence of a New World, but made con-
 siderable progress towards a perfect knowledge of
 it; and was the first man who conducted the Spa-
 niards to that vast continent which had been the
 chief seat of their empire, and the source of their
 treasures in this quarter of the globe. The shat-

^r Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 9, 10, 11. Life of Columbus, c. 66—73.

^s Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 12. Gomara, c. 84. See NOTE XXI.

tered condition of his ships, scarcity of provisions, his own infirmities, together with the impatience of his crew, prevented him from pursuing his discoveries any further, and made it necessary to bear away for Hispaniola. In his way thither he discovered the islands of Cubagua and Margarita, which afterwards became remarkable for their pearl-fishery. When he arrived at Hispaniola, he was wasted to an extreme degree with fatigue and sickness; but found the affairs of the colony in such a situation, as afforded him no prospect of enjoying that repose of which he stood so much in need.

B O O K
II.
1498.

Aug. 30.

Many revolutions had happened in that country during his absence. His brother, the adelantado, in consequence of an advice which the admiral gave before his departure, had removed the colony from Isabella to a more commodious station, on the opposite side of the island, and laid the foundation of St. Domingo^u, which was long the most considerable European town in the New World, and the seat of the supreme courts in the Spanish dominions there. As soon as the Spaniards were established in this new settlement, the adelantado, that they might neither languish in inactivity, nor have leisure to form new cabals, marched into those parts of the island which his brother had not yet visited or reduced to obedience. As the people were unable to resist, they submitted every where to the tribute which he imposed. But they soon found the burden to be so intolerable, that, overawed as they were by the superior power of their oppressors,

State of
Hispaniola
on his ar-
rival there.

^u P. Martyr, dec. p. 56.

B O O K they took arms against them. Those insurrections, however, were not formidable. A conflict with timid and naked Indians was neither dangerous nor of doubtful issue.

II.

1498.

Mutiny of
Roldan;

But while the adelantado was employed against them in the field, a mutiny of an aspect far more alarming broke out among the Spaniards. The ringleader of it was Francis Roldan, whom Columbus had placed in a station which required him to be the guardian of order and tranquillity in the colony. A turbulent and inconsiderate ambition precipitated him into this desperate measure, so unbecoming his rank. The arguments which he employed to seduce his countrymen were frivolous and ill-founded. He accused Columbus and his two brothers of arrogance and severity; he pretended that they aimed at establishing an independent dominion in the country; he taxed them with an intention of cutting off part of the Spaniards by hunger and fatigue, that they might more easily reduce the remainder to subjection; he represented it as unworthy of Castilians, to remain the tame and passive slaves of three Genoese adventurers. As men have always a propensity to impute the hardships of which they feel the pressure, to the misconduct of their rulers; as every nation views with a jealous eye the power and exaltation of foreigners, Roldan's insinuations made a deep impression on his countrymen. His character and rank added weight to them. A considerable number of the Spaniards made choice of him as their leader; and, taking arms against the adelantado and his brother, seized the King's magazine of provisions, and en-

deavoured to surprise the fort at St. Domingo. **B O O K**
 This was preserved by the vigilance and courage of **II.**
 Don Diego Columbus. The mutineers were obliged **1498.**
 to retire to the province of Xaragua, where they continued not only to disclaim the adelantado's authority themselves, but excited the Indians to throw off the yoke^w.

Such was the distracted state of the colony when Columbus landed at St. Domingo. He was astonished to find that the three ships which he had dispatched from the Canaries were not yet arrived. By the unskilfulness of the pilots, and the violence of currents, they had been carried a hundred and sixty miles to the west of St. Domingo, and forced to take shelter in a harbour of the province of Xaragua, where Roldan and his seditious followers were cantoned. Roldan carefully concealed from the commanders of the ships his insurrection against the adelantado, and, employing his utmost address to gain their confidence, persuaded them to set on shore a considerable part of the new settlers whom they brought over, that they might proceed by land to St. Domingo. It required but few arguments to prevail with those men to espouse his cause. They were the refuse of the gaols of Spain, to whom idleness, licentiousness, and deeds of violence were familiar; and they returned eagerly to a course of life nearly resembling that to which they had been accustomed. The commanders of the ships perceiving, when it was too late, their imprudence in

^w Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 5—8. Life of Columbus, c. 74—77. Gomara, c. 23. P. Martyr, p. 78.

B O O K disembarking so many of their men, stood away for
 II. St. Domingo, and got safe into the port a few days
 1498. after the admiral; but their stock of provisions was
 so wasted during a voyage of such long continuance,
 that they brought little relief to the colony^x.

composed
 by the pru-
 dent con-
 duct of Co-
 lumbus.

By this junction with a band of such bold and
 desperate associates, Roldan became extremely for-
 midable, and no less extravagant in his demands.
 Columbus, though filled with resentment at his in-
 gratitude, and highly exasperated by the insolence
 of his followers, made no haste to take the field.
 He trembled at the thoughts of kindling the flames
 of a civil war, in which, whatever party prevailed,
 the power and strength of both must be so much
 wasted, as might encourage the common enemy to
 unite and complete their destruction. At the same
 time, he observed, that the prejudices and passions
 which incited the rebels to take arms, had so far
 infected those who still adhered to him, that many
 of them were adverse, and all cold to the service.
 From such sentiments, with respect to the public
 interest, as well as from this view of his own situ-
 ation, he chose to negotiate rather than to fight.
 By a seasonable proclamation, offering free pardon
 to such as should merit it by returning to their duty,
 he made impression upon some of the malcontents.
 By engaging to grant such as should desire it the
 liberty of returning to Spain, he allured all those
 unfortunate adventurers, who, from sickness and
 disappointment, were disgusted with the country.
 By promising to re-establish Roldan in his former

^x Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 12. Life of Columbus, c. 78, 79.

office, he soothed his pride ; and, by complying with most of his demands in behalf of his followers, he satisfied their avarice. Thus, gradually, and without bloodshed, but after many tedious negotiations, he dissolved this dangerous combination, which threatened the colony with ruin ; and restored the appearance of order, regular government, and tranquillity¹.

B O O K
II.

1498.

In consequence of this agreement with the mutineers, lands were allotted them in different parts of the island, and the Indians settled in each district were appointed to cultivate a certain portion of ground for the use of those new masters. The performance of this work was substituted in place of the tribute formerly imposed ; and how necessary soever such a regulation might be in a sickly and feeble colony, it introduced among the Spaniards the *Repartimientos*, or distributions of Indians established by them in all their settlements, which brought numberless calamities upon that unhappy people, and subjected them to the most grievous oppression². This was not the only bad effect of the insurrection in Hispaniola ; it prevented Columbus from prosecuting his discoveries on the continent, as self-preservation obliged him to keep near his person his brother the adelantado, and the sailors whom he intended to have employed in that service. As soon as his affairs would permit, he sent some of his ships to Spain with a journal of the voyage which he had made, a description of the

A new
mode of
settlement
establish-
ed.
1499.

¹ Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 13, 14. Life of Columbus, c. 80, &c.

² Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 14, &c.

BOOK new countries which he had discovered, a chart of
 II. the coast along which he had sailed, and specimens
 1499. of the gold, the pearls, and other curious or valuable productions which he had acquired by trafficking with the natives. At the same time he transmitted an account of the insurrection in Hispaniola; he accused the mutineers not only of having thrown the colony into such violent convulsions as threatened its dissolution, but of having obstructed every attempt towards discovery and improvement, by their unprovoked rebellion against their superiors, and proposed several regulations for the better government of the island, as well as the extinction of that mutinous spirit, which, though suppressed at present, might soon burst out with additional rage. Roldan and his associates did not neglect to convey to Spain, by the same ships, an apology for their own conduct, together with their recriminations upon the admiral and his brothers. Unfortunately for the honour of Spain, and the happiness of Columbus, the latter gained most credit in the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, and produced unexpected effects^a.

The voyage of Vasco de Gama to the East-Indies, by the Cape of Good Hope.

But, previous to the relating of these, it is proper to take a view of some events, which merit attention, both on account of their own importance, and their connexion with the history of the New World. While Columbus was engaged in his successive voyages to the west, the spirit of discovery did not languish in Portugal, the kingdom where it first acquired

^a Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 14. Benzon. Hist. Nov. Orb. lib. 1. c. 2.

vigour, and became enterprising. Self-condemnation and neglect were not the only sentiments to which the success of Columbus, and reflection upon their own imprudence in rejecting his proposals, gave rise among the Portuguese. They excited a general emulation to surpass his performances, and an ardent desire to make some reparation to their country for their own error. With this view, Emanuel, who inherited the enterprising genius of his predecessors, persisted in their grand scheme of opening a passage to the East-Indies by the Cape of Good Hope, and soon after his accession to the throne equipped a squadron for that important voyage. He gave the command of it to Vasco de Gama, a man of noble birth, possessed of virtue, prudence and courage, equal to the station. The squadron, like all those fitted out for discovery in the infancy of navigation, was extremely feeble, consisting only of three vessels, of neither burden nor force adequate to the service. As the Europeans were at that time little acquainted with the course of the trade-winds and periodical monsoons, which render navigation in the Atlantic Ocean, as well as in the sea that separates Africa from India, at some seasons easy, and at others not only dangerous but almost impracticable, the time chosen for Gama's departure was the most improper during the whole year. He set sail from Lisbon on the ninth of July, and, standing towards the south, had to struggle for four months with contrary winds before he could reach the Cape of Good Hope. Here their violence began to abate; and during an interval of calm weather, Gama doubled that formidable promon-

B O O K

II.

1499.

1497.

Nov. 20.

B O O K tory, which had so long been the boundary of navigation, and directed his course towards the north-east, along the African coast. He touched at several ports; and after various adventures, which the Portuguese historians relate with high but just encomiums upon his conduct and intrepidity, he came to anchor before the city of Melinda. Throughout all the vast countries which extend along the coast of Africa, from the river Senegal to the confines of Zanguebar, the Portuguese had found a race of men rude and uncultivated, strangers to letters, to arts, and commerce, and differing from the inhabitants of Europe no less in their features and complexion than in their manners and institutions. As they advanced from this, they observed, to their inexpressible joy, that the human form gradually altered and improved; the Asiatic features began to predominate, marks of civilization appeared, letters were known, the Mahometan religion was established, and a commerce far from being inconsiderable was carried on. At that time several vessels from India were in the port of Melinda. Gama now pursued his voyage with almost absolute certainty of success, and, under the conduct of a Mahometan pilot, arrived at Calecut, upon the coast of Malabar, on the twenty-second of May one thousand four hundred and ninety-eight. What he beheld of the wealth, the populousness, the cultivation, the industry, and arts of this highly-civilized country, far surpassed any idea that he had formed, from the imperfect accounts which the Europeans had hitherto received of it. But as he possessed neither sufficient force to attempt a settle-

ment, nor proper commodities with which he could carry on commerce of any consequence, he hastened back to Portugal, with an account of his success in performing a voyage, the longest, as well most difficult, that had ever been made since the first invention of navigation. He landed at Lisbon on the fourteenth of September, one thousand four hundred and ninety-nine, two years two months and five days from the time he left that port^b.

B O O K
II.
1499.

Thus, during the course of the fifteenth century, mankind made greater progress in exploring the state of the habitable globe, than in all the ages which had elapsed previous to that period. The spirit of discovery, feeble at first and cautious, moved within a very narrow sphere, and made its efforts with hesitation and timidity. Encouraged by success, it became adventurous, and boldly extended its operations. In the course of its progression, it continued to acquire vigour, and advanced at length with a rapidity and force which burst through all the limits within which ignorance and fear had hitherto circumscribed the activity of the human race. Almost fifty years were employed by the Portuguese in creeping along the coast of Africa from Cape Non to Cape de Verd, the latter of which lies only twelve degrees to the south of the former. In less than thirty years they ventured beyond the equinoctial line into another hemisphere, and penetrated to the southern extremity of Africa, at the distance of forty-nine degrees from Cape de Verd. During the last seven years of the

^b Ramusio, vol. i. 119. D.

B O O K century, a New World was discovered in the West, ^{II.} not inferior in extent to all the parts of the earth with which mankind were at that time acquainted. ^{1499.} In the East, unknown seas and countries were found out, and a communication, long desired, but hitherto concealed, was opened between Europe and the opulent regions of India. In comparison with events so wonderful and unexpected, all that had hitherto been deemed great or splendid faded away and disappeared. Vast objects now presented themselves. The human mind, roused and interested by the prospect, engaged with ardour in pursuit of them, and exerted its active powers in a new direction.

Disco-
veries car-
ried on in
Spain by
private ad-
venturers ;

This spirit of enterprise, though but newly awakened in Spain, began soon to operate extensively. All the attempts towards discovery made in that kingdom had hitherto been carried on by Columbus alone, and at the expense of the Sovereign. But now private adventurers, allured by the magnificent descriptions he gave of the regions which he had visited, as well as by the specimens of their wealth which he produced, offered to fit out squadrons at their own risk, and to go in quest of new countries. The Spanish court, whose scanty revenues were exhausted by the charge of its expeditions to the New World, which, though they opened alluring prospects of future benefit, yielded a very sparing return of present profit, was extremely willing to devolve the burden of discovery upon its subjects. It seized with joy an opportunity of rendering the avarice, the ingenuity, and efforts of projectors instrumental in promoting de-

signs of certain advantage to the public, though of B O O K
doubtful success with respect to themselves. One ^{II.}
of the first propositions of this kind was made by ^{1499.}
Alonso de Ojeda, a gallant and active officer, who ^{Ojeda the}
had accompanied Columbus in his second voyage. ^{first of}
His rank and character procured him such credit ^{these;}
with the merchants of Seville, that they undertook
to equip four ships, provided he could obtain the
royal licence, authorizing the voyage. The power-
ful patronage of the Bishop of Badajos easily se-
cured success in a suit so agreeable to the court.
Without consulting Columbus, or regarding the
rights and jurisdiction which he had acquired by
the capitulation in one thousand four hundred and
ninety-two, Ojeda was permitted to set out for the
New World. In order to direct his course, the
bishop communicated to him the admiral's journal
of his last voyage, and his charts of the countries
which he had discovered. Ojeda struck out into ^{May.}
no new path of navigation, but, adhering servilely
to the route which Columbus had taken, arrived
on the coast of Paria. He traded with the natives,
and, standing to the west, proceeded as far as Cape
de Vela, and ranged along a considerable extent of
coast beyond that on which Columbus had touched.
Having thus ascertained the opinion of Columbus, ^{October.}
that this country was a part of the continent, Ojeda
returned by way of Hispaniola to Spain, with some
reputation as a discoverer, but with little benefit to
those who had raised the funds for the expedition ^{b.}

Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine gentleman, ac- ^{is accom-}
panied by

^b Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 1, 2, 3,

B O O K accompanied Ojeda in this voyage. In what station he served, is uncertain; but as he was an experienced sailor, and eminently skilful in all the sciences subservient to navigation, he seems to have acquired such authority among his companions, that they willingly allowed him to have a chief share in directing their operations during the voyage: Soon after his return, he transmitted an account of his adventures and discoveries to one of his countrymen; and labouring with the vanity of a traveller to magnify his own exploits, he had the address and confidence to frame his narrative so as to make it appear that he had the glory of having first discovered the continent in the New World. Amerigo's account was drawn up not only with art, but with some elegance. It contained an amusing history of his voyage, and judicious observations upon the natural productions, the inhabitants, and the customs of the countries which he had visited. As it was the first description of any part of the New World that was published, a performance so well calculated to gratify the passion of mankind for what is new and marvellous, circulated rapidly, and was read with admiration. The country of which Amerigo was supposed to be the discoverer, came gradually to be called by his name. The caprice of mankind, often as unaccountable as unjust, has perpetuated this error. By the universal consent of nations, America is the name bestowed on this new quarter of the globe. The bold pretensions of a fortunate impostor have robbed the discoverer of the New World of a distinction which belonged to him. The name of Amerigo has sup-

II.
1499.
Amerigo
Vespucci;

from
whom the
name of
America is
given to
the New
World.

planted that of Columbus; and mankind may regret B O O K
 an act of injustice, which, having received the II.
 sanction of time, it is now too late to redress^c. 1499.

During the same year, another voyage of discovery was undertaken. Columbus not only introduced the spirit of naval enterprise into Spain, but all the first adventurers who distinguished themselves in this new career were formed by his instructions, and acquired in his voyages the skill and information which qualified them to imitate his example. Alonso Nigno, who had served under the admiral in his last expedition, fitted out a single ship, in conjunction with Christopher Guerra, a merchant of Seville, and sailed to the coast of Paria. This voyage seems to have been conducted with greater attention to private emolument, than to any general or national object. Nigno and Guerra made no discoveries of any importance; but they brought home such a return of gold and pearls, as inflamed their countrymen with the desire of engaging in similar adventures^d.

Soon after, Vincent Yanez Pinzon, one of the 1500.
 admiral's companions in his first voyage, sailed Jan. 13.
 from Palos with four ships. He stood boldly to- of Vincent
 wards the south, and was the first Spaniard who Yanez Pin-
 ventured to cross the equinoctial line; but he seems zon.
 to have landed on no part of the coast beyond the mouth of the Maragnon, or river of the Amazons. All these navigators adopted the erroneous theory of Columbus, and believed that the countries which

^c See NOTE XXII.

^d P. Martyr, dec. p. 87. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 5.

B O O K they had discovered were part of the vast continent
 II. of India^c.

1600. During the last year of the fifteenth century, that
 The Portu- fertile district of America, on the confines of which
 guese dis- Pinzon had stopped short, was more fully disco-
 cover Bra- vered. The successful voyage of Gama to the East
 zil Indies having encouraged the King of Portugal to
 fit out a fleet so powerful as not only to carry on
 trade but to attempt conquest, he gave the com-
 mand of it to Pedro Alvarez Cabral. In order to
 avoid the coast of Africa, where he was certain of
 meeting with variable breezes, or frequent calms,
 which might retard his voyage, Cabral stood out to
 sea, and kept so far to the west, that, to his sur-
 prise, he found himself upon the shore of an un-
 known country, in the tenth degree beyond the
 line. He imagined at first that it was some island
 in the Atlantic Ocean, hitherto unobserved; but,
 proceeding along its coast for several days, he was
 led gradually to believe, that a country so extensive
 formed a part of some great continent. This lat-
 ter opinion was well founded. The country with
 which he fell in, belongs to that province in South
 America now known by the name of Brasil. He
 landed; and having formed a very high idea of the
 fertility of the soil, and agreeableness of the cli-
 mate, he took possession of it for the crown of
 Portugal, and dispatched a ship to Lisbon with an
 account of this event, which appeared to be no less
 important than it was unexpected^f. Columbus's

^c Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 6. P. Martyr, dec. p. 95.

^f Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 7.

discovery of the New World was the effort of an active genius enlightened by science, guided by experience, and acting upon a regular plan executed with no less courage than perseverance. But from this adventure of the Portuguese, it appears that chance might have accomplished that great design which it is now the pride of human reason to have formed and perfected. If the sagacity of Columbus had not conducted mankind to America, Cabral, by a fortunate accident, might have led them, a few years later, to the knowledge of that extensive continent^s.

While the Spaniards and Portuguese, by those successive voyages, were daily acquiring more enlarged ideas of the extent and opulence of that quarter of the globe which Columbus had made known to them, he himself, far from enjoying the tranquillity and honours with which his services should have been recompensed, was struggling with every distress in which the envy and malevolence of the people under his command, or the ingratitude of the court which he served, could involve him. Though the pacification with Roldan broke the union and weakened the force of the mutineers, it did not extirpate the seeds of discord out of the island. Several of the malecontents continued in arms, refusing to submit to the admiral. He and his brothers were obliged to take the field alternately, in order to check their incursions, or to punish their crimes. The perpetual occupation and disquiet which this created, prevented him from giving due

B O O K
II.
1500.

Machi-
nations
against
Columbus;

^s Herrera, dec. I. lib. vij. c. 5.

BOOK II. 1500. attention to the dangerous machinations of his enemies in the court of Spain. A good number of such as were most dissatisfied with his administration, had embraced the opportunity of returning to Europe with the ships which he dispatched from St. Domingo. The final disappointment of all their hopes inflamed the rage of these unfortunate adventurers against Columbus to the utmost pitch. Their poverty and distress, by exciting compassion, rendered their accusations credible, and their complaints interesting. They teased Ferdinand and Isabella incessantly with memorials, containing the detail of their own grievances, and the articles of their charge against Columbus. Whenever either the King or Queen appeared in public, they surrounded them in a tumultuary manner, insisting with importunate clamours for the payment of the arrears due to them, and demanding vengeance upon the author of their sufferings. They insulted the admiral's sons wherever they met them, reproaching them as the offspring of the projector, whose fatal curiosity had discovered those pernicious regions which drained Spain of its wealth, and would prove the grave of its people. These avowed endeavours of the malecontents from America to ruin Columbus, were seconded by the secret but more dangerous insinuations of that party among the courtiers, which had always thwarted his schemes, and envied his success and credit^h.

their influence on Ferdinand and Isabella;

Ferdinand was disposed to listen, not only with a willing but with a partial ear, to these accusa-

^h Life of Columbus, c. 85.

tions. Notwithstanding the flattering accounts BOOK which Columbus had given of the riches of America, the remittances from it had hitherto been so scanty, that they fell far short of defraying the expense of the armaments fitted out. II. The glory of the discovery, together with the prospect of remote commercial advantages, was all that Spain had yet received in return for the efforts which she had made. But time had already diminished the first sensations of joy which the discovery of a New World occasioned, and fame alone was not an object to satisfy the cold interested mind of Ferdinand. The nature of commerce was then so little understood, that where immediate gain was not acquired, the hope of distant benefit, or of slow and moderate returns, was totally disregarded. Ferdinand considered Spain, on this account, as having lost by the enterprise of Columbus, and imputed it to his misconduct and incapacity for government, that a country abounding in gold had yielded nothing of value to its conquerors. Even Isabella, who from the favourable opinion which she entertained of Columbus had uniformly protected him, was shaken at length by the number and boldness of his accusers, and began to suspect that a disaffection so general must have been occasioned by real grievances, which called for redress. The Bishop of Badajos, with his usual animosity against Columbus, encouraged these suspicions, and confirmed them.

As soon as the Queen began to give way to the torrent of calumny, a resolution fatal to Columbus fatal effects of this. was taken. Francis de Bovadilla, a knight of Ca-

B O O K ^{II.} **K**latrava, was appointed to repair to Hispaniola, with full powers to inquire into the conduct of Columbus, and, if he should find the charge of mal-administration proved, to supersede him, and assume the government of the island. It was impossible to escape condemnation, when this preposterous commission made it the interest of the judge to pronounce the person whom he was sent to try, guilty. Though Columbus had now composed all the dissensions in the island; though he had brought both Spaniards and Indians to submit peaceably to his government; though he had made such effectual provision for working the mines, and cultivating the country, as would have secured a considerable revenue to the King, as well as large profits to individuals; Bovadilla, without deigning to attend to the nature or merit of those services, discovered from the moment that he landed in Hispaniola, a determined purpose of treating him as a criminal. He took possession of the admiral's house in St. Domingo, from which its master happened at that time to be absent, and seized his effects, as if his guilt had been already fully proved; he rendered himself master of the fort and of the King's stores by violence; he required all persons to acknowledge him as supreme governor; he set at liberty the prisoners confined by the admiral, and summoned him to appear before his tribunal, in order to answer for his conduct; transmitting to him, together with the summons, a copy of the royal mandate, by which Columbus was enjoined to yield implicit obedience to his commands.

Columbus
sent in

Columbus, though deeply affected with the in-

gratitude and injustice of Ferdinand and Isabella, did not hesitate a moment about his own conduct. He submitted to the will of his sovereigns with a respectful silence, and repaired directly to the court of that violent and partial judge whom they had authorized to try him. Bovadilla, without admitting him into his presence, ordered him instantly to be arrested, to be loaded with chains, and hurried on board a ship. Even under this humiliating reverse of fortune, the firmness of mind which distinguishes the character of Columbus did not forsake him. Conscious of his own integrity, and solacing himself with reflecting upon the great things which he had achieved, he endured this insult offered to his character, not only with composure but with dignity. Nor had he the consolation of sympathy to mitigate his sufferings. Bovadilla had already rendered himself so extremely popular, by granting various immunities to the colony, by liberal donations of Indians to all who applied for them, and by relaxing the reins of discipline and government, that the Spaniards, who were mostly adventurers, whom their indigence or crimes had compelled to abandon their native country, expressed the most indecent satisfaction with the disgrace and imprisonment of Columbus. They flattered themselves, that now they should enjoy an uncontrolled liberty more suitable to their disposition and former habits of life. Among persons thus prepared to censure the proceedings, and to asperse the character of Columbus, Bovadilla collected materials for a charge against him. All accusations, the most improbable as well as inconsistent, were received.

B O O K
II.
1500.
chains to
Spain ;
October.

B O O K No informer, however infamous, was rejected. The result of this inquest, no less indecent than partial, he transmitted to Spain. At the same time he ordered Columbus, with his two brothers, to be carried thither in fetters; and, adding cruelty to insult, he confined them in different ships, and excluded them from the comfort of that friendly intercourse which might have soothed their common distress. But while the Spaniards in Hispaniola viewed the arbitrary and insolent proceedings of Bovadilla with a general approbation, which reflects dishonour upon their name and country, one man still retained a proper sense of the great actions which Columbus had performed, and was touched with the sentiments of veneration and pity due to his rank, his age, and his merit. Alonzo de Valejo, the captain of the vessel on board which the admiral was confined, as soon as he was clear of the island, approached his prisoner with great respect, and offered to release him from the fetters with which he was unjustly loaded. "No," replied Columbus with a generous indignation, "I wear these irons in consequence of an order from my sovereigns. They shall find me as obedient to this as to their other injunctions. By their command I have been confined, and their command alone shall set me at liberty¹."

Nov. 23.
set at liberty, but deprived of all authority.

Fortunately, the voyage to Spain was extremely short. As soon as Ferdinand and Isabella were informed that Columbus was brought home a pri-

¹ Life of Columbus, c. 86. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 8—11. Gomara Hist. c. 23. Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 6.

soner, and in chains, they perceived at once what universal astonishment this event must occasion, and what an impression to their disadvantage it must make. All Europe, they foresaw, would be filled with indignation at this ungenerous requital of a man who had performed actions worthy of the highest recompense, and would exclaim against the injustice of the nation, to which he had been such an eminent benefactor, as well as against the ingratitude of the princes whose reign he had rendered illustrious. Ashamed of their own conduct, and eager not only to make some reparation for this injury, but to efface the stain which it might fix upon their character, they instantly issued orders to set Columbus at liberty, invited him to court, and remitted money to enable him to appear there in a manner suitable to his rank. When he entered the royal presence, Columbus threw himself at the feet of his sovereigns. He remained for some time silent; the various passions which agitated his mind suppressing his power of utterance. At length he recovered himself, and vindicated his conduct in a long discourse, producing the most satisfying proofs of his own integrity as well as good intention, and evidence, no less clear, of the malevolence of his enemies, who, not satisfied with having ruined his fortune, laboured to deprive him of what alone was now left, his honour and his fame. Ferdinand received him with decent civility, and Isabella with tenderness and respect. They both expressed their sorrow for what had happened, disavowed their knowledge of it, and joined in promising him protection and future favour. But though they in-

B O O K
II.
1500.

Dec. 17.

B O O K stantly degraded Bovadilla, in order to remove from themselves any suspicion of having authorized his violent proceedings, they did not restore to Columbus his jurisdiction and privileges as viceroy of those countries which he had discovered. Though willing to appear the avengers of Columbus's wrongs, that illiberal jealousy which prompted them to invest Bovadilla with such authority as put it in his power to treat the admiral with indignity still subsisted. They were afraid to trust a man to whom they had been so highly indebted; and retaining him at court under various pretexts, they appointed Nicholas de Ovando, a knight of the military order of Alcantara, governor of Hispaniola[†].

Columbus was deeply affected with this new injury, which came from hands that seemed to be employed in making reparation for his past sufferings. The sensibility with which great minds feel every thing that implies any suspicion of their integrity, or that wears the aspect of an affront, is exquisite. Columbus had experienced both from the Spaniards, and their ungenerous conduct exasperated him to such a degree, that he could no longer conceal the sentiments which it excited. Wherever he went he carried about with him, as a memorial of their ingratitude, those fetters with which he had been loaded. They were constantly hung up in his chamber, and he gave orders, that when he died they should be buried in his grave[‡].

1501.
Progress of
discovery.

Meanwhile the spirit of discovery, notwithstanding

[‡] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 10—12. Life of Columbus, e. 87.

[†] Life of Columbus, c. 86. p. 577.

ing the severe check which it had received by the ungenerous treatment of the man who first excited it in Spain, continued active and vigorous. Roderigo de Bastidas, a person of distinction, fitted out two ships in copartnery with John de la Cosa, who having served under the admiral in two of his voyages was deemed the most skilful pilot in Spain. They steered directly towards the continent, arrived on the coast of Paria, and, proceeding to the west, discovered all the coast of the province now known by the name of Tierra Firme, from Cape de Vela to the Gulf of Darien. Not long after Ojeda, with his former associate Amerigo Vespucci, set out upon a second voyage, and, being unacquainted with the destination of Bastidas, held the same course and touched at the same places. The voyage of Bastidas was prosperous and lucrative, that of Ojeda unfortunate. But both tended to increase the ardour of discovery; for in proportion as the Spaniards acquired a more extensive knowledge of the American continent, their idea of its opulence and fertility increased^m.

Before these adventurers returned from their voyages, a fleet was equipped, at the public expense, for carrying over Ovando, the new governor, to Hispaniola. His presence there was extremely requisite, in order to stop the inconsiderate career of Bovadilla, whose imprudent administration threatened the settlement with ruin. Conscious of the violence and iniquity of his proceedings against Columbus, he continued to make it his sole object to gain the

B O O K
II.
1501.
January.

Ovando
appointed
governor
of Hispaniola.

^m Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 11.

B O O K favour and support of his countrymen, by accom-
 modating himself to their passions and prejudices.
 II. With this view, he established regulations in every
 1501. point the reverse of those which Columbus deemed
 essential to the prosperity of the colony. Instead
 of the severe discipline, necessary in order to habi-
 tuate the dissolute and corrupted members of which
 the society was composed, to the restraints of law
 and subordination, he suffered them to enjoy such
 uncontrolled license, as encouraged the wildest ex-
 cesses. Instead of protecting the Indians, he gave
 a legal sanction to the oppression of that unhappy
 people. He took the exact number of such as sur-
 vived their past calamities, divided them into dis-
 tinct classes, distributed them in property among
 his adherents, and reduced all the people of the
 island to a state of complete servitude. As the
 avarice of the Spaniards was too rapacious and im-
 patient to try any method of acquiring wealth but
 that of searching for gold, this servitude became as
 grievous as it was unjust. The Indians were dri-
 ven in crowds to the mountains, and compelled to
 work in the mines, by masters who imposed their
 tasks without mercy or discretion. Labour so dis-
 proportioned to their strength and former habits of
 life, wasted that feeble race of men with such rapid
 consumption, as must have soon terminated in the
 utter extinction of the ancient inhabitants of the
 countryⁿ.

New regu-
 lations es-
 tablished.

The necessity of applying a speedy remedy to

ⁿ Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 11, &c. Oviedo Hist. lib. iii. c. 6.
 p. 97. Benzon Hist. lib. i. c. 12. p. 51.

those disorders, hastened Ovando's departure. He had the command of the most respectable armament hitherto fitted out for the New World. It consisted of thirty-two ships, on board of which two thousand five hundred persons embarked with an intention of settling in the country. Upon the arrival of the new governor with this powerful reinforcement to the colony, Bovadilla resigned his charge, and was commanded to return instantly to Spain, in order to answer for his conduct. Roldan and the other ringleaders of the mutineers, who had been most active in opposing Columbus, were required to leave the island at the same time. A proclamation was issued, declaring the natives to be free subjects of Spain, of whom no service was to be expected contrary to their own inclination, and without paying them an adequate price for their labour. With respect to the Spaniards themselves, various regulations were made, tending to suppress the licentious spirit which had been so fatal to the colony, and to establish that reverence for law and order on which society is founded, and to which it is indebted for its increase and stability. In order to limit the exorbitant gain which private persons were supposed to make by working the mines, an ordinance was published, directing all the gold to be brought to a public smelting-house, and declaring one half of it to be the property of the crown°.

While these steps were taking for securing the tranquillity and welfare of the colony which Colum-

The disagreeable situation of Columbus.

° Solorzano Politica Indiana, lib. i. c. 12. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 12.

B O O K bus had planted, he himself was engaged in the unpleasant employment of soliciting the favour of an ungrateful court, and notwithstanding all his merit and services, he solicited in vain. He demanded, in terms of the original capitulation in one thousand four hundred and ninety-two, to be reinstated in his office of viceroy over the countries which he had discovered. By a strange fatality, the circumstance which he urged in support of his claim, determined a jealous monarch to reject it. The greatness of his discoveries, and the prospect of their increasing value, made Ferdinand consider the concessions in the capitulation as extravagant and impolitic. He was afraid of intrusting a subject with the exercise of a jurisdiction that now appeared to be so extremely extensive, and might grow to be no less formidable. He inspired Isabella with the same suspicions; and under various pretexts, equally frivolous and unjust, they eluded all Columbus's requisitions to perform that which a solemn compact bound them to accomplish. After attending the Court of Spain for near two years, as an humble suitor, he found it impossible to remove Ferdinand's prejudices and apprehensions; and perceived at length that he laboured in vain, when he urged a claim of justice or merit with an interested and unfeeling prince.

He forms
new
schemes of
discovery.

But even this ungenerous return did not discourage him from pursuing the great object which first called forth his inventive genius, and excited him to attempt discovery. To open a new passage to the East Indies was his original and favourite scheme. This still engrossed his thoughts; and either from

his own observations in his voyage to Paria, or from some obscure hint of the natives, or from the accounts given by Bastidas and de la Cosa of their expedition, he conceived an opinion that beyond the continent of America there was a sea which extended to the East Indies, and hoped to find some strait or narrow neck of land, by which a communication might be opened with it and the part of the ocean already known. By a very fortunate conjecture, he supposed this strait or isthmus to be situated near the Gulf of Darien. Full of this idea, though he was now of an advanced age, worn out with fatigue, and broken with infirmities, he offered, with the alacrity of a youthful adventurer, to undertake a voyage which would ascertain this important point, and perfect the grand scheme which from the beginning he proposed to accomplish. Several circumstances concurred in disposing Ferdinand and Isabella to lend a favourable ear to this proposal. They were glad to have the pretext of any honourable employment for removing from court a man with whose demands they deemed it impolitic to comply, and whose services it was indecent to neglect. Though unwilling to reward Columbus, they were not insensible of his merit, and from their experience of his skill and conduct, had reason to give credit to his conjectures, and to confide in his success. To these considerations, a third must be added of still more powerful influence. About this time the Portuguese fleet, under Cabral, arrived from the Indies; and, by the richness of its cargo, gave the people of Europe a more perfect idea than they had hitherto been able to form, of

B O O K
II.
1502.

B O O K the opulence and fertility of the East. The Portuguese had been more fortunate in their discoveries than the Spaniards. They had opened a communication with countries where industry, arts, and elegance flourished; and where commerce had been longer established, and carried to greater extent, than in any region of the earth. Their first voyages thither yielded immediate as well as vast returns of profit, in commodities extremely precious and in great request. Lisbon became immediately the seat of commerce and wealth; while Spain had only the expectation of remote benefit, and of future gain, from the western world. Nothing, then, could be more acceptable to the Spaniards than Columbus's offer to conduct them to the East, by a route which he expected to be shorter, as well as less dangerous, than that which the Portuguese had taken. Even Ferdinand was roused by such a prospect, and warmly approved of the undertaking.

His fourth voyage.

But interesting as the object of this voyage was to the nation, Columbus could procure only four small barks, the largest of which did not exceed seventy tons in burden, for performing it. Accustomed to brave danger, and to engage in arduous undertakings with inadequate force, he did not hesitate to accept the command of this pitiful squadron. His brother Bartholomew, and his second son Ferdinand, the historian of his actions, accompanied him. He sailed from Cadiz on the ninth of May, and touched, as usual, at the Canary islands; from thence he proposed to have stood directly for the continent; but his largest vessel was so clumsy and unfit for service, as constrained him

to bear away for Hispaniola, in hopes of exchanging her for some ship of the fleet that had carried out Ovando. When he arrived at St. Domingo, he found eighteen of these ships ready loaded, and on the point of departing for Spain. Columbus immediately acquainted the governor with the destination of his voyage, and the accident which had obliged him to alter his route. He requested permission to enter the harbour, not only that he might negotiate the exchange of his ship, but that he might take shelter during a violent hurricane, of which he discerned the approach from various prognostics which his experience and sagacity had taught him to observe. On that account, he advised him likewise to put off for some days the departure of the fleet bound for Spain. But Ovando refused his request, and despised his counsel. Under circumstances in which humanity would have afforded refuge to a stranger, Columbus was denied admittance into a country of which he had discovered the existence and acquired the possession. His salutary warning, which merited the greatest attention, was regarded as the dream of a visionary prophet, who arrogantly pretended to predict an event beyond the reach of human foresight. The fleet set sail for Spain. Next night the hurricane came on with dreadful impetuosity. Columbus, aware of the danger, took precautions against it, and saved his little squadron. The fleet destined for Spain met with the fate which the rashness and obstinacy of its commanders deserved. Of eighteen ships two or three only escaped. In this general wreck perished Bovadilla, Roldan, and the greater part of

B O O K
II.
1502.
June 29.

BOOK II. 1502. those who had been the most active in persecuting Columbus, and oppressing the Indians. Together with themselves, all the wealth which they had acquired by their injustice and cruelty was swallowed up. It exceeded in value two hundred thousand *pesos*; an immense sum at that period, and sufficient not only to have screened them from any severe scrutiny into their conduct, but to have secured them a gracious reception in the Spanish court. Among the ships that escaped, one had on board all the effects of Columbus which had been recovered from the ruins of his fortune. Historians, struck with the exact discrimination of characters, as well as the just distribution of rewards and punishments, conspicuous in those events, universally attribute them to an immediate interposition of Divine Providence, in order to avenge the wrongs of an injured man, and to punish the oppressors of an innocent people. Upon the ignorant and superstitious race of men, who were witnesses of this occurrence, it made a different impression. From an opinion which vulgar admiration is apt to entertain with respect to persons who have distinguished themselves by their sagacity and inventions, they believed Columbus to be possessed of supernatural powers, and imagined that he had conjured up this dreadful storm by magical art and incantations in order to be avenged of his enemies^P.

July 14.
Searches
in vain for

Columbus soon left Hispaniola, where he met with such an inhospitable reception, and stood to-

^P Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 7. 9. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. v. c. 1, 2. Life of Columbus, c. 88.

wards the continent. After a tedious and dangerous voyage, he discovered Guanaia, an island not far distant from the coast of Honduras. There he had an interview with some inhabitants of the continent, who arrived in a large canoe. They appeared to be a people more civilized, and who had made greater progress in the knowledge of useful arts, than any whom he had hitherto discovered. In return to the inquiries which the Spaniards made, with their usual eagerness, concerning the places where the Indians got the gold which they wore by way of ornament, they directed them to countries situated to the west, in which gold was found in such profusion, that it was applied to the most common uses. Instead of steering in quest of a country so inviting, which would have conducted him along the coast of Yucatan to the rich Empire of Mexico, Columbus was so bent upon his favourite scheme of finding out the strait which he supposed to communicate with the Indian Ocean, that he bore away to the east towards the gulf of Darien. In this navigation he discovered all the coast of the continent, from Cape Gracias a Dios to a harbour which, on account of its beauty and security, he called Porto Bello. He searched in vain for the imaginary strait, through which he expected to make his way into an unknown sea; and though he went on shore several times, and advanced into the country, he did not penetrate so far as to cross the narrow isthmus which separates the Gulf of Mexico from the great Southern Ocean. He was so much delighted, however, with the fertility of the country, and conceived such an idea of its

B O O K
II.
1502.
a passage
to the In-
dian ocean.

B O O K wealth, from the specimens of gold produced by the natives, that he resolved to leave a small colony upon the river Belen, in the province of Veragua, under the command of his brother, and to return himself to Spain, in order to procure what was requisite for rendering the establishment permanent. But the ungovernable spirit of the people under his command, deprived Columbus of the glory of planting the first colony on the continent of America. Their insolence and rapaciousness provoked the natives to take arms; and as these were a more hardy and warlike race of men than the inhabitants of the islands, they cut off part of the Spaniards, and obliged the rest to abandon a station which was found to be untenable^q.

ship-
wrecked
on the
coast of
Jamaica.

This repulse, the first that the Spaniards met with from any of the American nations, was not the only misfortune that befel Columbus; it was followed by a succession of all the disasters to which navigation is exposed. Furious hurricanes, with violent storms of thunder and lightning, threatened his leaky vessels with destruction; while his discontented crew, exhausted with fatigue and destitute of provisions, was unwilling or unable to execute his commands. One of his ships perished; he was obliged to abandon another, as unfit for service; and with the two which remained, he quitted that part of the continent, which in his anguish he named the Coast of Vexation^r, and bore away for

^q Herrera, dec. 1. lib. v. c. 5, &c. Life of Columbus, c. 89, &c. Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 9.

^r La Costa de los Contrastes.

Hispaniola. New distresses awaited him in this voyage. He was driven back by a violent tempest from the coast of Cuba, his ships fell foul of one another, and were so much shattered by the shock, that with the utmost difficulty they reached Jamaica, where he was obliged to run them aground, to prevent them from sinking. The measure of his calamities seemed now to be full. He was cast ashore upon an island at a considerable distance from the only settlement of the Spaniards in America. His ships were ruined beyond the possibility of being repaired. To convey an account of his situation to Hispaniola, appeared impracticable; and without this it was vain to expect relief. His genius, fertile in resources, and most vigorous in those perilous extremities when feeble minds abandon themselves to despair, discovered the only expedient which afforded any prospect of deliverance. He had recourse to the hospitable kindness of the natives, who, considering the Spaniards as beings of a superior nature, were eager, on every occasion, to minister to their wants. From them he obtained two of their canoes, each formed out of the trunk of a single tree hollowed with fire, and so mis-shapen and awkward as hardly to merit the name of boats. In these, which were fit only for creeping along the coast, or crossing from one side of a bay to another, Mendez, a Spaniard, and Fieschi, a Genoese, two gentlemen particularly attached to Columbus, gallantly offered to set out for Hispaniola, upon a voyage of above thirty leagues*. This they accom-

B O O K
II.
1503.

June 24.

* Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 9.

BOOK II.
1503. plished in ten days, after surmounting incredible dangers, and enduring such fatigues that several of the Indians who accompanied them sunk under it, and died. The attention paid to them by the governor of Hispaniola was neither such as their courage merited, nor the distress of the persons from whom they came required. Ovando, from a mean jealousy of Columbus, was afraid of allowing him to set foot in the island under his government. This ungenerous passion hardened his heart against every tender sentiment, which reflection upon the services and misfortunes of that great man, or compassion for his own fellow citizens involved in the same calamities, must have excited. Mendez and Fieschi spent eight months in soliciting relief for their commander and associates, without any prospect of obtaining it.

His distress and sufferings there.

1504.

During this period, various passions agitated the mind of Columbus and his companions in adversity. At first, the expectation of speedy deliverance, from the success of Mendez and Fieschi's voyage, cheered the spirits of the most desponding. After some time the most timorous began to suspect that they had miscarried in their daring attempt. At length, even the most sanguine concluded that they had perished. The ray of hope which had broke in upon them, made their condition appear now more dismal. Despair, heightened by disappointment, settled in every breast. Their last resource had failed, and nothing remained but the prospect of ending their miserable days among naked savages, far from their country and their friends. The seamen, in a transport of rage, rose in open mutiny, threatened

the life of Columbus, whom they reproached as the author of all their calamities, seized ten canoes, which they had purchased from the Indians, and, despising his remonstrances and entreaties, made off with them to a distant part of the island. At the same time the natives murmured at the long residence of the Spaniards in their country. As their industry was not greater than that of their neighbours in Hispaniola, like them they found the burden of supporting so many strangers to be altogether intolerable. They began to bring in provisions with reluctance, they furnished them with a sparing hand, and threatened to withdraw those supplies altogether. Such a resolution must have been quickly fatal to the Spaniards. Their safety depended upon the good will of the Indians; and unless they could revive the admiration and reverence with which that simple people had at first beheld them, destruction was unavoidable. Though the licentious proceedings of the mutineers had in a great measure effaced those impressions which had been so favourable to the Spaniards, the ingenuity of Columbus suggested a happy artifice, that not only restored but heightened the high opinion which the Indians had originally entertained of them. By his skill in astronomy, he knew that there was shortly to be a total eclipse of the moon. He assembled all the principal persons of the district around him on the day before it happened, and, after reproaching them for their fickleness in withdrawing their affection and assistance from men whom they had lately revered, he told them, that the Spaniards were servants of the Great Spirit who

B O O K
II.

1504.

B O O K dwells in heaven, who made and governs the world; that he, offended at their refusing to support men who were the objects of his peculiar favour, was preparing to punish this crime with exemplary severity, and that very night the moon should withhold her light, and appear of a bloody hue, as a sign of the divine wrath, and an emblem of the vengeance ready to fall upon them. To this marvellous prediction some of them listened with the careless indifference peculiar to the people of America; others, with the credulous astonishment natural to barbarians. But when the moon began gradually to be darkened, and at length appeared of a red colour, all were struck with terror. They ran with consternation to their houses, and returning instantly to Columbus loaded with provisions, threw them at his feet, conjuring him to intercede with the Great Spirit to avert the destruction with which they were threatened. Columbus, seeming to be moved by their entreaties, promised to comply with their desire. The eclipse went off, the moon recovered its splendour, and from that day the Spaniards were not only furnished profusely with provisions, but the natives, with superstitious attention, avoided every thing that could give them offence^t.

A cruel
addition
to them.

During those transactions, the mutineers had made repeated attempts to pass over to Hispaniola in the canoes which they had seized. But, from their own misconduct, or the violence of the winds

^t Life of Columbus, c. 103. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 5, 6. Benzon. Hist. lib. i. c. 14.

and currents, their efforts were all unsuccessful. Enraged at this disappointment, they marched towards that part of the island where Columbus remained, threatening him with new insults and danger. While they were advancing, an event happened, more cruel and afflicting than any calamity which he dreaded from them. The governor of Hispaniola, whose mind was still filled with some dark suspicions of Columbus, sent a small bark to Jamaica, not to deliver his distressed countrymen, but to spy out their condition. Lest the sympathy of those whom he employed should afford them relief, contrary to his intention, he gave the command of this vessel to Escobar, an inveterate enemy of Columbus, who, adhering to his instructions with malignant accuracy, cast anchor at some distance from the island, approached the shore in a small boat, observed the wretched plight of the Spaniards, delivered a letter of empty compliments to the admiral, received his answer, and departed. When the Spaniards first descried the vessel standing towards the island, every heart exulted, as if the long expected hour of their deliverance had at length arrived; but when it disappeared so suddenly, they sunk into the deepest dejection, and all their hopes died away. Columbus alone, though he felt most sensibly this wanton insult which Ovando added to his past neglect, retained such composure of mind as to be able to cheer his followers. He assured them, that Mendez and Fieschi had reached Hispaniola in safety; that they would speedily procure ships to carry them off; but, as Escobar's vessel could not

B O O K
II.
1504.

B O O K take them all on board, that he had refused to go with her, because he was determined never to abandon the faithful companions of his distress. Soothed with the expectation of speedy deliverance, and delighted with his apparent generosity in attending more to their preservation than to his own safety, their spirits revived, and he regained their confidence^u.

II.
1504.

Without this confidence he could not have resisted the mutineers, who were now at hand. All his endeavours to reclaim those desperate men had no effect but to increase their phrensy. Their demands became every day more extravagant, and their intentions more violent and bloody. The common safety rendered it necessary to oppose them with open force. Columbus, who had been long afflicted with the gout, could not take the field. **May 20.** His brother, the adelantado, marched against them. They quickly met. The mutineers rejected with scorn terms of accommodation, which were once more offered them, and rushed on boldly to the attack. They fell not upon an enemy unprepared to receive them. In the first shock, several of their most daring leaders were slain. The adelantado, whose strength was equal to his courage, closed with their captain, wounded, disarmed, and took him prisoner^x. At sight of this, the rest fled with a dastardly fear suitable to their former insolence. Soon after, they submitted in a body to Columbus, and bound themselves by the

^u Life of Columbus, c. 104. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 17.

^x Life of Columbus, c. 107. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 11.

most solemn oaths to obey all his commands. B O O K
 Hardly was tranquillity re-established, when the II.
 ships appeared, whose arrival Columbus had promised with great address, though he could foresee it with little certainty. With transports of joy, the Spaniards quitted an island in which the unfeeling jealousy of Ovando had suffered them to languish above a year, exposed to misery in all its various forms. 1504.

When they arrived at St. Domingo, the governor, with the mean artifice of a vulgar mind, that labours to atone for insolence by servility, fawned on the man whom he envied, and had attempted to ruin. He received Columbus with the most studied respect, lodged him in his own house, and distinguished him with every mark of honour. But amidst those over-acted demonstrations of regard, he could not conceal the hatred and malignity latent in his heart. He set at liberty the captain of the mutineers, whom Columbus had brought over in chains to be tried for his crimes; and threatened such as had adhered to the admiral with proceeding to a judicial inquiry into their conduct. Columbus submitted in silence to what he could not redress; but discovered an extreme impatience to quit a country which was under the jurisdiction of a man who had treated him, on every occasion, with inhumanity and injustice. His preparations His deliverance, and arrival at Hispaniola. Sept. 12.
 were soon finished, and he set sail for Spain with two ships. Disasters similar to those which had accompanied him through life continued to pursue him to the end of his career. One of his vessels being disabled, was soon forced back to St. Do-

B O O K mingo; the other, shattered by violent storms, sailed seven hundred leagues with jury-masts, and reached with difficulty the port of St. Lucar^y.

II.
1504.
December.
Death of
Isabella.
Nov. 9.

There he received the account of an event the most fatal that could have befallen him, and which completed his misfortunes. This was the death of his patroness Queen Isabella, in whose justice, humanity, and favour, he confided as his last resource. None now remained to redress his wrongs, or to reward him for his services and sufferings, but Ferdinand, who had so long opposed and so often injured him. To solicit a Prince thus prejudiced against him, was an occupation no less irksome than hopeless. In this, however, was Columbus doomed to employ the close of his days. As soon as his health was in some degree re-established, he repaired to court; and though he was received there with civility barely decent, he plied Ferdinand with petition after petition, demanding the punishment of his oppressors, and the restitution of all the privileges bestowed upon him by the capitulation of one thousand four hundred and ninety-two. Ferdinand amused him with fair words and unmeaning promises. Instead of granting his claims, he proposed expedients in order to elude them, and spun out the affair with such apparent art, as plainly discovered his intention that it should never be terminated. The declining health of Columbus flattered Ferdinand with the hopes of being soon delivered from an importunate suitor, and encouraged him to persevere in this illiberal plan. Nor was he de-

^y Life of Columbus, c. 108. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 12.

ceived in his expectations. Disgusted with the ingratitude of a monarch whom he had served with such fidelity and success, exhausted with the fatigues and hardships which he had endured, and broken with the infirmities which these had brought upon him, Columbus ended his life at Valladolid on the twentieth of May one thousand five hundred and six, in the fifty-ninth year of his age. He died with a composure of mind suitable to the magnanimity which distinguished his character, and with sentiments of piety becoming that supreme respect for religion which he manifested in every occurrence of his life^z.

B O O K

II.

1504.

Death of
Columbus.

^z Life of Columbus, c. 108. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 13, 14, 15.