

HOW AMERICA CAME TO BE DISCOVERED.

THE voyage of Columbus in 1492 was in many respects the greatest event which had occurred in the world since the birth of Christ. Politically and socially it was the beginning of an entirely new chapter in human history, and it wrought effects upon men's speculative thinking which, though perhaps less conspicuous, were not less real or remarkable. In much more than the mere geographical sense was it the discovery of a New World. It was the first in a complicated series of events which four centuries have not yet fully rounded into a period: the foundation of a new Europe in America, in Africa, in Australia, and in the islands of the Pacific; the rise of the English race to political and commercial supremacy, and the advance of the English language toward what may become universal dominion; the reorganization of government upon a higher plane than the Middle Ages had even been able to foreshadow; the renovation of society in the old Europe through countless subtle influences; the permanent triumph of the industrial over the predatory spirit; the successful assertion of individual freedom against the paralyzing absolutism inherited from the Roman Empire; the overthrow of sacerdotalism, and the Christianization of the world. It would probably be too much to assert that some of these desirable results might not have been attained, so far as the old Europe is concerned, even if the lands beyond the sea had never been explored and colonized. It is unquestionable, however, that the progress would have been much slower and much more subject to interruption. The part performed by England, for example, in the work of European civilization since the age of Elizabeth has been so immense and so complicated that no elaborateness of analytic description can do it justice. Yet England in Elizabeth's time was hardly a first-class power, and but for the colonization of America in the seventeenth century it is difficult to see in what way she would so surely or so soon have gained the commercial supremacy which gave her in the eighteenth the dominion of the ocean, and thus secured her the foremost position in the world. To those—and there are many such in America—who are in the habit of regarding American history as a dry and uninteresting study, it may be a profitable matter of reflection that since the begin-

ning of the seventeenth century it is impossible to follow intelligently the affairs of the old Europe through a single generation without constant reference to the New World.

In view of all the wide-spread changes which were inaugurated by the voyage of 1492, it is curious to consider that Columbus died without ever learning that he had discovered a new continent, and it is further worthy of note that he was not the first European who had sailed to the shores of America. Five centuries before his memorable voyage a hardy band of Norwegians had wintered in tents by the Pocasset River; and at Point Alderton, or some neighboring spot below Boston Harbor, the gallant Thorvald Eriesson had been slain by the arrows of the natives—first of Europeans, so far as history tells us, whose bones were laid beneath the soil of Massachusetts, and hallowed with Christian burial. There are vague traditions, indeed, of voyages to America undertaken by the Irish in the days when the cloisters of sweet Innisfallen were a centre of piety and culture for Northwestern Europe. Some have even maintained that long before the Christian era the Phœnicians, who undoubtedly colonized the Canaries, proceeded boldly onward and visited the coast of Florida. But in the absence of anything like historic testimony, we may safely dismiss these claims as unworthy of credit. It is quite otherwise with the Northmen, whose simple and interesting narratives, comprising unmistakable descriptions of the New England coast, form a consistent portion of the authentic history of Iceland. This island, which appears to have been settled as early as the sixth century by Irish monks, was overrun about the middle of the ninth by the worshippers of Wodan and Thor, who were, however, readily converted to Christianity. A large sea-faring community soon grew up in Iceland, organized as an aristocratic republic, owning but slight and doubtful allegiance to the Kings of Norway. The growth of the new community in wealth and culture was rapid. In the eleventh century, before literature had dawned in the modern speech of France or Spain or Italy, there was a flourishing prose literature in Iceland; and the *Landnamabok*, or statistical and genealogical account of the first settlers, was the most complete and thoroughgo-

ing work of the kind which had ever been undertaken by any people down to quite recent times. From various Icelandic sagas and chronicles we learn that in 876 one of the early settlers named Gunnbiorn was driven by foul weather to the coast of Greenland, where he passed the winter. In 983, Eric the Red-haired, a man of high consideration, was outlawed for a murder, and took refuge with a few followers in Greenland. Three years after, in 986, Eric ventured home for reinforcements, and brought back with him a considerable number of settlers, who founded the colony of Ericsfiord. In this same year 986, Bjarne Herjulfson, following Eric to Greenland, was driven far to the southwest by a storm, and saw thickly wooded shores, along which he appears to have coasted back toward Davis Strait without attempting to land. Bjarne's account, however, stimulated the curiosity of Leif Ericsson, eldest son of the adventurous outlaw, and in the autumn of the year 1000 Leif started from Ericsfiord with one ship and a crew of thirty-five men. Leif coasted by Labrador, which he called Helluland, from its abundance of flat stones, and passed by Nova Scotia, which he called Markland, from its thick woods. Sailing around the peninsula of Cape Cod, of which the chronicle gives an excellent description, the little company went into winter-quarters at Mount Hope Bay, where they caught abundance of salmon, and cut timber for a return cargo. The time of their landing must have been the Indian summer, for they found wild grapes in such quantities that Leif named the country Vinland on this account; and those who know what the New England climate is at that favored season can sympathize with the enthusiasm of the Northmen over the beautiful country which they had found. Even the winter seemed mild and pleasant to these visitors from Greenland, and they did not fail to comment on the great length of the winter days, when the sun rose at half past seven and did not go down until half past four.

Leif returned to Ericsfiord the following spring, and the next year (1002) his brother Thorvald came to Vinland with thirty men. This expedition wintered in the same place as the former. During the cold weather they cut wood and caught fish, and in the summer-time they appear to have explored parts of Long Island

Sound. On their return, in the spring of 1004, stormy weather off Cape Cod drove them inward toward Boston Harbor, and they landed again near Point Alderton. Here occurred the skirmish with the natives in which Thorvald was killed; but these natives do not appear to have been Indians such as our own forefathers found on these shores six centuries afterward. From the descriptions it has been supposed that New England may at that time have been inhabited by Esquimaux, who afterward retreated to the north before the advancing Indian.

On the return of Thorvald's expedition without its leader, his brother Thorstein Ericsson refitted the vessel and started for a new cruise, but after beating about in a frightful storm for several weeks without knowing where they were, the little company of explorers were driven back upon the coast of Greenland, where Thorstein and most of the others were carried off by disease.

In the following year Thorstein's widow, Gudrid, was married to Thorfinn Karlsefne, a bold navigator who had just come over from Iceland to Ericsfiord, and a fourth expedition was planned on a larger scale than the others. In 1007 Karlsefne set out with three ships and one hundred and sixty men, several taking their wives with them, apparently with some intention of making a permanent settlement in Vinland the Good. In the course of that year Karlsefne's son Snorro was born, the first white man born in America, so far as history knows, and the chronicle tells us that he was three years old before the explorers turned their faces homeward. During this interval the coasts of Massachusetts and Rhode Island seem to have been quite thoroughly explored, and inland excursions were made from Narragansett Bay to the Blue Hills of Milton. There were several encounters with the savages, in which considerable blood was shed on both sides, and it seems to have been the persistent hostility of the natives which at last determined Karlsefne to abandon the project of founding a colony here. In leaving this bold explorer, it may be interesting to observe that from Snorro, the son of Karlsefne and Gudrid, born in New England, there has come a very numerous family of famous men, including many bishops, university professors, Governors of Iceland, and Ministers of State in Norway and Denmark. The

learned antiquarian Finn Magnusson and the celebrated sculptor Thorwaldsen were both descended from the explorer Karlsefne. A fifth expedition is mentioned as coming to Vinland in 1011, and here our information stops. All the voyages above enumerated seem to have been made in the interest of the Eriessons and their friends, and the chronicler drops the subject as soon as it ceases to be connected with the fortunes of this family. It is nevertheless quite probable that other similar voyages were made from time to time, as they are said in general terms to have been both honorable and profitable. Mention is made, indeed, of a voyage to Markland, or Nova Scotia, for timber, in the middle of the fourteenth century, and in Icelandic works on geography current in the Middle Ages the positions of Vinland, Markland, and Heluland are described correctly, though there is no suspicion of the fact that they form part of a new continent. The Northmen, who reached these places by creeping along the coasts, only now and then crossing narrow intervals of open sea, could not have been expected to form any idea of the enormous expanse of water which intervenes directly between Massachusetts and the Spanish peninsula. They looked upon Greenland as a prolongation of Europe, and so indeed it was generally regarded until after the time of Columbus. The American coast south of Greenland was not unnaturally conceived as a further extension of Europe, and some held on theoretical grounds that Vinland stretched so far southward as to join Africa, thus making the Atlantic a land-locked sea except at Baffin Bay, which was supposed to lead out into an outermost ocean surrounding the entire earth.

We do not hear that any one ever tried to verify this curious hypothesis, which well illustrates the crudeness of the geographical knowledge of the Northmen. There is no evidence that Leif Ericsson's discovery ever produced any result among the Northmen themselves other than perhaps a few voyages for timber. No indisputable traces of their former presence in New England have ever been discovered, and there is no reason for supposing that they ever made any permanent settlement there. Nor is it in any way strange that such a discovery, made under such circumstances, and in that age of the world, should not have been fol-

lowed up by colonization. The first obstacle in the way of any such result was the immense difficulty of the voyage. The mariner's compass did not come into use until the middle of the thirteenth century, and this circumstance, while it heightens our admiration of the skill and boldness of Leif and his followers, shows at the same time how narrowly limited in their day were the possibilities of maritime adventure. Systematic navigation of the broad ocean between Norway and Vinland was not among the possibilities; and from a colonization which could only take place by way of a country like Greenland not much was to be expected. The little colony in Greenland itself maintained a precarious existence until the middle of the fourteenth century, when it was destroyed by that same terrific visitation of the Black Death which in the course of twenty years slew one-fourth of the inhabitants of Europe. When Greenland was rediscovered in 1721 by Hans Egede, nothing remained of Eric's colony save the ruins of several villages, and the massive walls of Kakortok church, supposed by some to be the old cathedral church of Gardar, where seventeen Norwegian bishops had successively officiated.

But besides the practical difficulty of reaching the New England coast, there were yet stronger reasons why a voyage of remote discovery in the eleventh century was not likely to be followed by colonization. The state of Europe at that time was not one which afforded surplus energy for distant enterprise. In the year 1000, when white men first wintered in Massachusetts, the Dane Swegen Forkbeard was wresting the lordship of England from the feeble grasp of Æthelred the Unready. Robert the Debonair, unwarlike son of the sagacious and valiant Hugh Capet, King of the French in name, but in reality master of very little territory beyond the immediate neighborhood of Paris, was waging a doubtful struggle with unruly vassals, some of whom quite surpassed the crown in wealth and power. The youthful Otto III., the "wonder of the world," had just made his weird visit to the tomb of his mighty predecessor at Aachen before starting on that last journey to Rome which in less than two years was to cost him his life. Gerbert, most erudite of popes—too learned not to have had dealings with the devil—Gerbert, elected through Otto's influence to the

headship of the Church, was but beginning to raise the papacy out of the abyss of infamy into which the preceding age had seen it sink, and so to prepare the way for the far-reaching reforms of Hildebrand. In this year Stephen, first Christian King of the Hungarians, began to reign, and the power of heretical Bulgaria, which had threatened to overwhelm the Eastern Empire, was broken by the attack of the Macedonian Basil. In this year Olaf Tryggvesson was overthrown, and the kingdom of Norway divided for a time between Swedes and Danes. In this year the Christians of Spain met defeat at the hands of Almansur, and the Mohammedan dominion there still seemed destined to endure. From end to end Europe was a scene of dire confusion, and though to us, looking back upon it, the time seems not devoid of promise, there was no cheering outlook then. Nowhere were the outlines of kingdoms or the ownership of crowns definitely settled. Private war was both universal and incessant: even the Truce of God had not yet been proclaimed. As for the common people, their hardships were well-nigh incredible. There was no commerce worthy of mention, and but little tilling of the soil, except in serfage, and famines were frequent and terrible, as to-day in India. In the chronicles of the time we find many reports of cannibalism, and even of ghoulishness, the horrid accompaniments of a season of starvation. Amid all this anarchy and misery, at the close of the thousandth year from the birth of Christ, the belief was general throughout Europe that the Day of Judgment was at hand—that the world, grown old in wickedness, was at length ripe for destruction.

A period like this was not fitted for colonial enterprise, because all the vital energy in Europe was consumed in efforts for the adjustment of European affairs. Before a people can found colonies, it must have solved the problem of political life at home, at least so far as to secure stability of trade. It is the mercantile spirit which has supported modern colonization, aided by the spirit of romantic adventure and the spirit of intellectual curiosity. In the eleventh century there was no intellectual curiosity outside of the monastery walls; nor had this feeling become anywhere enlisted in the service of commerce. Romantic adventure, such as there was, consisted most-

ly in brutal buccaneering. There was no such thing as a commercial marine, and on land the career of the trader was restrained by the robber baron. In those days the fashionable method of compounding with your creditors was, not to offer them thirty cents to a dollar, but to inveigle them into your castle and broil them over a slow fire.

During the four centuries which followed the eleventh, events occurred which wrought immense changes in European society. Foremost among these events were the Crusades, which began at the end of the eleventh century, and lasted two hundred years. Considered merely as a series of wars for the recovery of the Holy Land from the Mussulmans, the Crusades were of course a failure; but, like many other failures in this complicated world, the ends which they unconsciously achieved were vastly more important than the one which they consciously strove for. Even from a military point of view they fully justified themselves. For if Christendom had not gone out to attack the Mussulman in Asia and Africa, it would have had to receive his attack in Europe. One side was as actively aggressive as the other, and it was sound policy to conduct the war on the enemy's soil. But for the Crusades it would most likely have been the Seljukian Turks of the twelfth century, instead of the Ottomans of the fifteenth, who would have taken Constantinople; and this in itself would have been a frightful calamity. Though the Crusaders had a very odd way of showing their friendship for the Eastern Empire, they certainly protected it as against the Turk. But these wars did much more than merely to protect Europe from invasion. They increased the independence of the Church, which at that time was equivalent to putting a curb upon the propensities of the robber baron, and increasing the security of labor and traffic. In another way they aided this good work, by carrying off the robber baron in large numbers to Egypt and Syria, and killing him there. In this way they did much toward ridding European society of its most turbulent elements. By renewing intercourse with the Greek culture of Constantinople they revived intellectual curiosity, and brought about that thirteenth-century renaissance which is associated with the names of Giotto and Dante and Roger Bacon. They developed the spirit

of romantic adventure, and connected it with something better than vagrant freebooting. In these ways they widened men's minds wonderfully. Finally, they revived the commercial intercourse with the Oriental world, and by destroying the naval supremacy of the Mohammedans in the Mediterranean they established the current of trade between the Indies and the great free cities of Italy.

Thus in the five centuries which intervened between the voyage of Leif Ericson and that of Columbus the progress of European society had been great indeed. In the principal kingdoms the question of internal politics had gone far toward a conclusion. The distance is enormous in English history between Swegen Forkbeard and Henry VII., and in French history between the son of Hugh Capet and the son of Louis XI. Still greater seems the distance in the history of Spain between the triumphant career of Mohammedanism under Almansur and its final overthrow in 1492 under Ferdinand and Isabella. Socially the change had been perhaps greater than even this dramatic contrast of famous names would imply. Men's minds had begun to be turned from warfare to industry. The struggle was no longer for bare existence, but for the attainment of a certain standard of comfortable living. The great industrial movement which distinguishes modern society, and which is characterized by the systematic application of trained intelligence to the various processes whereby subsistence is secured—this great movement had made some beginnings in Italy and Flanders, and in the German towns which lay on the highway of trade between these countries.

It would be very extravagant to ascribe all this progress to the Crusades, but these wars contributed largely to every phase of it. My purpose in citing them so conspicuously is to point out how in various ways they had been instrumental in developing in European society a vast quantity of surplus energy, which was now ready to pour itself out through any new channel that circumstances might happen to open. If there had been no such outlet afforded by maritime discovery—if, for example, there had been no American continent and no passage by sea around the south of Africa—I believe this surplus energy would again have assumed a crusading form, and discharged itself upon

Asia. In such case the tide of Turkish invasion would have been rolled back, the holy places of Mecca might have become the prey of the Spaniard, and Venice might have remained the mistress of the sea.

Spain and Portugal never joined the other European nations in warfare against the Turks, because they had enough to occupy them in their own domestic struggle against the Moors. The Portuguese were the first people, since the old Northmen, who engaged in distant maritime adventure, and in this connection it is interesting to observe that Portuguese seamanship had its origin in naval warfare with the Mohammedans. Of all the black chapters in the history of mankind there is none more hideous than that which records the horrors of Moorish piracy. It was in attempting to put down this intolerable nuisance that the Portuguese became accustomed to sail down the west coast of Africa; and these voyages, begun for military purposes, were kept up in the interest of commerce, and served as a mighty stimulus to geographical curiosity. In 1394 was born Prince Henry of Portugal, afterward known as Henry the Navigator. He was first cousin to King Henry V. of England, and equalled his kinsman in genius, while the laurels which he obtained were far more glorious than those of Agincourt. He was one of the greatest astronomers and mathematicians of his age, and his services to geography were more important than those of any other modern before Columbus. It is a pity that so fair a fame should have been soiled by association with the beginnings of such an odious thing as negro slavery. When only fifteen years of age, Prince Henry commanded an expedition into Morocco, and defeated the Moorish army at Ceuta. His fleets soon after began to harass the coast, and crept by degrees farther and farther to the south. By 1434 his captains had passed Cape Boyador. In 1442, gold and negro slaves were brought from the Rio del Oro. In various expeditions between 1430 and 1460 the Azores and Cape Verd Islands, nearly a thousand miles distant from the continent, were reached, and men began to grow somewhat less afraid of venturing out upon the broad Atlantic—the "sea of darkness," as people then used to call it. In those days the unknown regions of the earth were invested with strange imaginary terrors. Sometimes there was an

appearance of rationality in the curious opinions which were current. It had been a matter of observation that in the extreme North the ocean freezes, and the country is rendered uninhabitable through cold. It was not an unnatural inference that in the far South the ocean is boiling hot, and the country inhabitable only by gnomes and salamanders. This notion was exploded in 1462, when Henry's sailors passed beyond Sierra Leone. Another prejudice had to be overcome before the voyage to India could be definitely undertaken. Hipparchus, the greatest of the ancient Greek astronomers, had maintained on theoretical grounds that the continent of Africa extended to the south pole, and reached around, inclosing the Indian Ocean, until it joined Asia beyond the Ganges. These views, adopted by Ptolemæus, held their own until the fifteenth century, but Prince Henry did not accept them. He may, perhaps, have learned from Herodotus that in 610 B.C. a Phœnician ship started from the Red Sea and coasted all around Africa, returning home through the Straits of Gibraltar. At all events he maintained, in defiance of Ptolemæus, that Africa was circumnavigable, and it was one of the chief ends of his life to prove this point. At his instigation one Portuguese captain after another crept along down the Guinea coast, and after his death, in 1463, the search was kept up, until finally in 1487 Bartholomew Dias reached the Cape of Good Hope, and looked out with wistful triumph upon the broad Indian Ocean, but did not venture to cross its untravelled waters.

Before this great enterprise was carried any farther an entirely new solution of the problem had been carried into operation by Christopher Columbus. For many years Columbus had resided in Lisbon, and had married a Portuguese wife; and as a native of Genoa, the traditional rival of Venice, he may naturally have felt an interest in the plans of Portugal for supplanting Venice in the control of the opulent trade between Europe and India. But however this may have been, the mind of Columbus moved upon a far higher plane than this. His was a grand and poetic soul, and he had a large-minded way of looking at things. He was not afraid of a great idea. Instead of confining his attention to some especially promising coast-line, his powerful imagination

sought to grasp the space relations of the entire earth. The conception of the earth's spherical form was in no way original with him. It had been maintained by Aristotle, and adopted by Hipparchus and Ptolemæus, and among the ancient philosophers Strabo and Seneca had suggested the theoretical possibility of a westerly passage from Spain to India. These views had been reiterated in the thirteenth century by Roger Bacon, and again in the fifteenth by Pierre d'Ailly, whose great book, *Imago Mundi*, had in those days a similar reputation, as a description of natural phenomena, to that which Humboldt's *Cosmos* has enjoyed in our own time. Columbus was perfectly familiar with these views, and the work of Pierre d'Ailly was his constant companion. His originality consisted in reducing the theoretical suggestion to a practical problem. It was one thing to suggest as a theoretical possibility that India might be reached by sailing westward; it was quite another thing to estimate the length of voyage requisite for the attainment of this object, and to show that the attempt was feasible with the ships and instruments then at command. In dealing with this problem Columbus fell far short of a correct solution. The problem was too great for his scientific resources. But the solution which he reached was, at any rate, sufficiently definite to be put to a trial, and the result of the trial was the discovery of a New World.

And now we come to one of the most curious points connected with the discovery of America. I refer to the singular mistake of Columbus in his estimate of the size of the earth. In the thirteenth century Marco Polo had described an island of Cipango, lying beyond China. This was no doubt one of the islands of Japan. Now in aiming at the eastern coast of Asia—known at that time only through the descriptions of Marco Polo—Columbus estimated the distance from Spain to Japan at about the figure which actually expresses the distance from Spain to the West Indies. This, I think, was an extremely fortunate mistake. When we consider how very difficult Columbus found it to obtain men and ships for a three months' voyage in such a new and untried direction, we must admit that his chances would have been poor indeed if he had proposed to sail for a year or two upon the "sea of darkness" before coming to the

promised land. Indeed, the great commercial value of Columbus's proposal to the sovereigns lay in this, that he advocated the new westerly route to India as a shorter route than that which men were seeking to discover by circumnavigating Africa. As the Portuguese adventurers kept on revealing newer and newer stretches of the West African coast, even beyond the equator, it became apparent that the voyage to India in this direction was going to be a very long one, even if it should ever prove practicable at all. It was while men's minds were occupied with this phase of the question that Columbus came forward with his plausible argument that India might be reached much more speedily by steering directly across the Atlantic.

The proposals of Columbus were not handsomely received by the King of Portugal. His terms were thought to be unreasonably high, and after much circumlocution the king unwisely decided that honesty was not the best policy. He obtained Columbus's plans, and sent out a ship secretly to carry some goods to the Cape Verd Islands, and then to try the experiment of the westward voyage. But the pilots, having no grand idea to urge them forward, lost heart before the vast expanse of waters which confronted them, and beat an ignominious retreat to Lisbon; and the trick being discovered, Columbus departed in high dudgeon, and carried his proposals to the sovereigns of Spain. This was in 1484, and after eight years of heavy solicitation, the great business of conquering Granada having been disposed of, Queen Isabella decided to furnish the necessary means for trying the bold experiment.

Into the details of the wonderful voyage, from the 3d of August to the 12th of October, 1492, it is not necessary for us now to enter, as doubtless every reader has been familiar with them from childhood. It was a prosperous voyage over a calm sea, quite devoid of such hardships as Da Gama and Magellan had afterward to encounter. It was an auspicious voyage, in which even false prognostications and errors of reckoning worked happily together toward the successful issue. Yet so great is the dread of the unknown in uncultivated men that during these short ten weeks the sailors were with difficulty restrained from mutiny. The heroism with which Columbus at last carried out his purpose was great, but not greater

than has been manifested by many other explorers on land and sea. It is in its historic position as determined by its results that this expedition was so wonderful, and when considered from this point of view it stands without a parallel. It is not simply the greatest voyage that has ever been made, but nothing equal to it in this line of human work can ever be done again, because now the earth's surface is so well known that no sea of darkness remains to be traversed by brave hearts struggling with hope deferred, no worlds are left for the future Columbus to conquer. The era of which this great Italian was the most illustrious representative has closed forever.

But this era did not close with Columbus, nor did Columbus complete the discovery of America. When we speak of America as discovered in 1492, we must not forget that a century has barely elapsed since geographers were enabled to delineate the western coast of North America. The full discovery of America was really a very gradual process. Columbus himself, after four eventful voyages, in which he had stopped at various West India islands, and sailed along the coast of Venezuela and Guiana, died in the year 1506, in the full belief that all these lands were a part of Asia. In his letter of February, 1493, he speaks of the "islands of India beyond the Ganges" which he had lately discovered. In 1497, John Cabot, sailing in the service of Henry VII. of England, and reaching the Gulf of St. Lawrence, supposed himself to be off the coast of China. On May 30, 1498, Columbus first touched the South American continent in Venezuela. It is still quite doubtful whether Vespucci had reached it in the preceding year, but it is certain that he came to Brazil in 1499, and by 1502 he had explored the South American coast below the mouth of the La Plata, even approaching within two or three degrees of the Straits of Magellan. It was this vast expanse of coast, stretching much farther south than men had ever dreamed of Asia, which first suggested the idea that a new world had been found. In 1507, within a year after the death of Columbus, an account of Vespucci's voyages was published at St. Dié, in Lorraine, the very town where the celebrated cosmographer D'Ailly had a century before been principal of the ecclesiastical college. Now the poet Mathi-

as Ringman, with some half-dozen other students at this college, suggested that Vespucci's new world "should be named *America*, after a man, inasmuch as Europe and Asia had been named after women."* Nevertheless, for a long while South America was conceived as a vast peninsula jutting southward from the Asiatic continent, and parallel, so to speak, with the peninsulas of Hindostan and Farther India. On the globe of Orontius Fines, made in 1531, it is so depicted; and we may safely say that for half a century after 1492 it was generally believed that Christopher Columbus had made a western passage to India, while Amerigo Vespucci had made out the coast-line of a third Indian peninsula, to which it was quite natural and reasonable that his name should be given. In such a complicated group of misconceptions originated the familiar names by which our New World and its aboriginal inhabitants will to all future ages be known.

Data for the rectification of these misconceptions had, however, begun to accumulate some time before 1531. The globe of Orontius, like many maps and books published nowadays, did not really represent the latest results of discovery. Let us observe how it gradually began to dawn upon men's minds that there was a farther side to the lands discovered by Columbus and Vespucci.

The successful expedition of Columbus in 1492 awakened fierce heart-burnings between Spain and Portugal, inasmuch that in the following year Pope Alexander VI. undertook to pacify these two most Catholic and most chivalrous nations by summarily dividing between them all the heathen precincts of the earth. After more or less diplomatic wrangling, an imaginary line was drawn from pole to pole, three hundred and seventy leagues west of the Azores. All newly discovered lands to the east of this line were for evermore to belong to the King of Portugal, while everything to the west was to be the undisputed property of the Spanish crown. In 1497, within four years after the promulgation of this extraordinary decree, Vasco da Gama accomplished his arduous voyage of thirteen months duration around the Cape of Good Hope to Calicut in India; and now the commercial rivalry

between the two most Catholic kingdoms began in earnest. The bull of Pope Alexander had indeed set matters at rest on the Atlantic, but on the opposite side of the globe everything was really left in dispute, for the line antipodal to the papal line of demarkation was by no means determined. The Molucca Islands were commercially of great importance, and it was by way of showing that these islands belonged properly to Spain and not to Portugal that the glorious Magellan set sail in 1519 on his westward voyage around the world.

Following the path marked out by Vespucci, Magellan searched along the coast of South America for a western passage, and at last entered the treacherous strait which bears his name. Nearly a century was still to elapse before the Dutchman Van Horn gave a name to the cape which terminates the continent. For fifteen months Magellan had persevered, and his sailors were already mutinous, when he entered the Pacific Ocean and stood for the north-west, with the view of regaining the equator. Terrible was the four months' struggle which now ensued. The huge size of our planet began at last to reveal itself; no one had ever dreamed of so vast an ocean as the Pacific. The ships had not been victualled for such a voyage, and besides their agonies of doubt and fear, the crews had soon to contend with the torments of starvation. They ate pieces of leather torn from the rigging and soaked in the sea; they appeased their raging thirst with bilge-water. Loud were their curses of the infatuated captain—the bold heretic who in defiance of the Church insisted that the earth was round, and was now leading them off into the everlasting sea which extended into the fathomless abyss of space—a sea with no welcoming shore beyond, yet from which it was now too late to hope to retrace their course. But in spite of hunger and perplexity and mutiny the indomitable hero kept on his way unflinching. The immensity of the ocean was a puzzle to him too, who, like all the geographers of the time, had greatly underestimated the size of our globe. The doubt whether the earth might not be flat, after all, sometimes came up; but against such unseemly skepticism "he comforted himself when he considered that in the eclipses of the moon the shadow cast of the earth is round, and as is the shadow such in like manner is the

* Stevens: *Historical and Geographical Notes*, p. 24.

substance." The very depth of their despair, too, no doubt worked in his favor, for while it seemed fatal to advance, it seemed no less fatal to retreat, so far away had they come from the known world. At last, after incredible hardships, they made the Ladrone Islands, and met with traders from Sumatra. In the hour of victory the heroic conqueror perished—slain in a skirmish with some worthless savages. But his lieutenant, Elcano, took possession of the Moluccas in the name of Charles V., and making southwesterly for the Cape of Good Hope, came finally into a port of Spain in the autumn of 1522. Of the five gallant ships which had set out three years before on this unparalleled voyage, but one remained afloat to tell the proud story of the first circumnavigation of the earth.

It was this voyage of Magellan's which first made it clear that the calculations of Columbus were wrong, and that the continent of America was something else than a portion of India beyond the Ganges. Geographers were slow, however, in outgrowing the old conceptions, and the belief in a connection between America and Asia was long in disappearing. Maps made at the close of the sixteenth century

give a large space to the Pacific Ocean, but show very little knowledge of the configuration of North America. It was not until 1725 that Behring discovered the strait which bears his name; and it was not until 1778—the year of Washington's encampment at Valley Forge—that Captain Cook, the most illustrious of navigators since Magellan, explored our western coasts from the Columbia River northward. The voyages of Cook may be regarded as concluding the era of maritime discovery which began with Prince Henry of Portugal—the era of discovery in the grand style, when new worlds awaited the patient explorer, and vast areas of the earth's surface were laid open for colonization at a single blow. The surface of our globe is now so well known that no room is left for mystery, and most of the savage portions of it have been appropriated, although not precisely in the manner decreed by Alexander VI. And however admirable the endurance, however valuable the achievements, of arctic voyagers and African path-finders, we can never again expect to see anything like the wonders of that heroic age of adventure, of which the discovery of America was the crowning glory.

A CRISIS.

MR. JONATHAN T. WARD, or, as his card more modernly expressed it, "J. Templeton Ward, Jun.," looked like a man supremely satisfied with his fortune and himself.

He had just received a particularly gratifying letter from his sister in New York, calling him to the city on a flattering errand, and as he entered the cars this pleasant October morning the universe seemed irradiated with his own private sense of happiness. The only drawback to his perfect enjoyment was the fact that on this train there was no parlor-car. It was vexatious to be obliged to breathe the same atmosphere with the common herd, and to submit his scented personality to the contamination of proximity to pea-nut-eating rustics, travel-worn cine-reous pilgrims, not overmannerly children, and the inevitable baby. He adapted himself to circumstances, however, with the ready *savoir-faire* of an experienced man of the world, turning a seat, and elongating his finely proportioned

form after the manner of the heraldic "bend"—an honorable ordinary which crosses an escutcheon in a diagonal direction—taking up as much space as possible. He dropped his hand-bag, cane, and light overcoat carelessly in the vacant corners, and thus comfortably extended, even the public car seemed bearable, and he found himself able to contemplate his plebeian and more crowded neighbors with urbane condescension.

After a few moments his fingers instinctively sought an inner pocket, and he re-read the letter which had so contributed to his self-gratulation. It was from his favorite sister Rose, who had married Henry Molineux, a wealthy broker, and whose happy married life had caused no diminution in her home affection. The Molineux were in their way very grand people, grander than the Wards, for they counted larger store of shekels and lands and antique heirlooms, and Rose's alliance had been fully approved by her brother. Rose herself was