

## PART FIRST.

### CHAPTER I.

JOHN CABOT NOT A VENETIAN BY BIRTH.

IT is still a mooted question with certain writers whether John Cabot, the discoverer of the American Continent, was by birth a Venetian or a Genoese.

Henry VII. calls him in 1496 and 1498 "Civis Venetiarum :—Venetian citizen," and "Venetian." In the same years, when speaking of him, Lorenzo Pasqualigo, a native of Venice, uses the expression : "Nostro Venetiano :—Our Venetian [countryman]"; and Raimondo di Soncino, the Milanese ambassador, that of "uno popolare Venetiano :—a Venetian plebeian." Finally, he calls himself, in a petition addressed to the King of England, March 5th, 1496, "John Kabotto, citezen of Venes."<sup>1</sup>

In the 15th century, the term "Venetian citizen" applied to three descriptions of individuals, viz. : (a) a native of the city of Venice; (b) one born within the limits of the "Duchy," or *Dogado*, that is, the original territory of the Republic; and (c) a foreigner

<sup>1</sup> For those various designations, see RYMER, *Fœdera*, 1745, vol. v, part iv, p. 89; BIDDLE, *A Memoir of Sebastian Cabot*, Philadelphia, 1831, 8vo, p. 76; RAWDON BROWN, *Ragguagli Sulla vita e opere di Marin Sanuto*, Venet., 1837, 8vo, vol. i, p. 99; *Annuario scientifico* for 1865, Milano, 1866, p. 100; Cornelio DESIMONI, *Intorno a Giovanni Caboto*, Genova, 1881, 8vo, p. 47. In the course of the present work, when quoting, we shall spell the name strictly as it is in the document cited.