



EXPLAINING AN ECLIPSE TO THE NATIVES.

## PANORAMIC VIEWS OF HISTORY.

## NO. 4.—THE NEW WORLD—SOUTH AMERICA.\*

IT is said that the old Knight of St. Alban's, Sir John de Mandeville, in the reign of Edward III, (A. D. 1327), propounded the theory that the world was round, and stated that a man with a properly equipped vessel could sail "around it, both above and under it," and discoursed rather pleasantly upon the fact that the people of the northern hemisphere stood feet to feet with those of the southern hemisphere, pointing out that to "simple and unlearned rustics" this suggested the idea that *men would fall off!* Still, whatever ideas may have been held by occasional far-seeing men regarding this question, it does not seem to have suggested practical action in the direction of it until the time of Christopher Columbus, who was born at Genoa, in the year 1435, and carefully educated there. In his mind no doubt existed as to the rotundity of the earth and the existence of far off lands as yet undiscovered. The history of his struggles in the direction of getting suitable aid in order to carry out his great project of discovery is most touching. The learned men of King John II of Portugal declared the ideas of Columbus absurd; the courts

of Genoa and Venice refused to aid him; the ecclesiastical council of Spain pronounced his project impious and unscriptural. In despair he was about to turn to France for aid, when news of his struggles reached Queen Isabella of Spain. Her quick intellect gave the expectant voyager hope. Her memorable words made him begin to feel some reward for long and weary waiting. "I undertake the enterprise for my own crown of Castile, and will pledge my jewels to raise the necessary funds." In the early dawn of October the 12th, 1492, after an anxious voyage of seventy-one days, land was sighted, and an island discovered and named by Columbus San Salvador.

The history of the New World takes us first to the West Indies and to South America, and perhaps nothing presented a greater curiosity to the various discoverers, who from time to time visited these shores, than the tribes of people who inhabited them. It is a much vexed question as to how these people came to live in an undiscovered land, and South America presents many an interesting study both for the historian and the antiquary. The people as found by Columbus were peaceable and simple-minded. To explain to them such a matter as an eclipse was an undertaking at once pleasing and novel, and numerous, no doubt, were the experiences which the navigators had with them.

But apart from these natives another study pre-

\* The illustrations used in this article are from Ridpath's Cyclopædia of Universal History, furnished through the kindness of Messrs. Balch Bros., Toronto.