

oreying upon the commerce between Spain and America; and it was probably in this occupation that he gained the notice and favor of Francis I. Late in 1523 he started on his voyage across the Atlantic, in the "Dauphine,"\* his object being, as he tells us himself in the cosmographical appendix to his letter, to reach Cathay (China) by a westward route. Of this voyage the famous letter here published is the record. It was in March, 1524, that he discovered the American coast, probably not far from the site of Wilmington in North Carolina. It will be interesting for the student to follow him in his course northward, remembering that he was the first European who explored this part of the coast. "A newe land," he exclaims in his letter, "never before seen of any man, either auncient or moderne." Among the places which he describes, New York Harbor, Block Island (which he named Louisa, in honor of the king's mother), Newport and other places have been identified. He continued along the Maine coast and as far as Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, which fishermen from Brittany had found twenty years before (the name of Cape Breton is a trace of them), thence returning to France. He reached Dieppe early in July, and it is from Dieppe, July 8, 1524, that his letter to the king is dated. It is the earliest description known to exist of the shores of the United States.

There are two copies of Verrazzano's letter, both of them, however, Italian translations, the original letter not being in existence. One was printed by Ramusio in 1556, and this was translated into English by Hakluyt for his *Divers Voyages*, which appeared in 1582. The other was found many years later in the Strozzi Library at Florence, and was first published in 1841 by the New York Historical Society, with a translation by Dr. J. G. Cogswell. This is the translation given in the present leaflet. The cosmographical appendix contained in the second version, and considered by Dr. Asher and other antiquarians a document of great importance, was not contained in the copy printed by Ramusio.

Verrazzano's voyage and letter have been the occasion of much controversy. There are those who believe that he never came to America at all, but that the letter was ingeniously prepared in France, with the connivance of the king, as the basis of a claim to American territory. Mr. Henry C. Murphy has been the ablest objector to the genuineness of Verrazzano's letter and voyage. See his book on *The Voyage of Verrazzano*, which affected Mr. Bancroft so deeply that he has left out all mention of Verrazzano in the revised edition of his *History of the United States*. The entire contro-

\*The *Delfina* was the name of Verrazzano's ship. Both Hakluyt and Dr. Cogswell render this by the word *Dolphin*. This is not correct. The Italian for dolphin is *delfino*, which also signifies the dauphin, or oldest son of the king of France so called because upon the cession of Dauphiny to the crown of France, he became entitled to wear the armorial device of the princes of that province, which was a dolphin. *Dauphine* is the feminine term.