

CABOT'S VOYAGES.

It is but natural that a people, living upon the borders of the great ocean; looking out daily across its boundless waste, and seeing its mighty billows, breaking in ceaseless roar upon the rocks, should begin to wonder whence they came, and to picture to themselves some far-off land lying beyond—a land of legendry beauty, peopled by a strange race of beings. These thoughts have been embodied in that sweetest of all Moore's verses—

"How dear to me the hour when daylight dies,

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And as I watch the line of light, that plays
Along the smooth wave towards the burning West.

I long to tread that golden path of rays,
And think 'twould lead to some bright Isle of rest."

The tradition of this Western Isle or country is to be found in the folk-lore of all peoples dwelling on the Atlantic seaboard. In Ireland it is called the 'Tir-n'an-Og—the land of the Young Virgin, or the land of perpetual life. It is thought that a sight of this beautiful island is a presage of death. Thus, in the poem of Eleanor C. Donnelly, the dying boy addresses his mother:—

"And then I saw it—the fairy city,
Far away o'er the waters deep,
Towers and castles, and chapels glowing
Like blessed dreams that we see in sleep.

What is its name?—Be still Achushla!
Thy hair is wet with the mists, my boy,
Thou hast looked, perchance, on the Tir-n'an-og—
Land of eternal youth and joy."

In France, Britany, Spain, and the western sea-coast of Europe, this tradition was strongly developed, and entered into all the folk-lore. These *fabulous islands of the ocean* were