



THE recent celebration of the Four Hundredth Anniversary of the discovery of the Continent of North America by the explorers in the good ship "Matthew," of Bristol, under the command of John Cabot,—although not so popular nor so widely observed as that of Columbus in 1892,—has called the attention of many thousands of people, both in England and America, to a subject which has caused much controversy in the past, and is still far from settled, namely, the voyages of the Cabots in search of the New World.

This revived interest has led to the publication of several books and pamphlets on the subject, among the most important of which may be named the work by Mr. Henry Harrisse, entitled "John Cabot the discoverer of North America, and Sebastian his son," and Mr. G. E. Weare's volume, "Cabot's discovery of North America," which have brought to light an immense amount of information of great interest to students.

Though some of the doubtful points about these voyages have thus been cleared up, others remained,—among these the fate of John Cabot. From the date of the sailing of the second expedition, which left Bristol early in the summer of the year 1498, nothing has hitherto been discovered respecting the fate of John, and it has been generally supposed that he died on the voyage. "The fate of John Cabot and of his co-adventurers has been enshrouded in mystery," says Mr. Weare (p. 165). And again, "Did John Cabot and his expedition, or any persons connected therewith . . . ever return to England?" (*Id.* 301). "We do not know when they returned to England, nay, whether John Cabot survived the expedition," writes Mr. Harrisse (p. 134). John's son, Sebastian, whom Bristol has long claimed, and (notwithstanding his little failings) is still proud to claim as a citizen, seems to have taken to himself much of the credit of the results of both ventures; but if the father returned, still in command of the 1498 expedition, to him belongs the chief responsibility and credit for both voyages.

The document which, through the kindness of Mr. Edward Scott, M.A., Keeper of Manuscripts in the British Museum, we are now enabled to reproduce in facsimile, was recently discovered by that gentleman among the muniments of the Chapter House, Westminster Abbey. It was brought to the notice of the present writer by Mr. Coote, of the British Museum, who, with Mr. Scott, obtained the consent of the authorities at Westminster for the production of the original manuscript at the Cabot Celebration at Bristol, on Thursday, June 24th, 189, where it was examined with much interest by the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, who presided, and by many other gentlemen present, several of whom expressed a wish to obtain copies, should the owners allow it to be published. This consent having been obtained, the manuscript has been autotyped, translated, and printed, under the care of Mr. Scott, to whom much credit is due for the great amount of time and care he has given to the work.

It is of great interest, not only as a contemporary document, but also as showing the payment of the annuity of £20 to John Cabot, in the 13th and 14th years of the reign of King Henry VII,—that is between 29th September, 1497, and the same date, 1499. This shows, what we did not previously know, that John Cabot returned to Bristol, and received his pension after the second voyage, which sailed from Bristol in 1498. The payment of the pension is thus entered in the account of disbursements from Michaelmas, 1498, to the same date, 1499,—"*in thesaurario in una tallia pro Johanne Cabot, xx. li.*"

There can therefore be no doubt that the pension was paid to John after his return to England.