

generous Isabella of Castile. With characteristic womanly impetuosity, she at once embarked upon the noble undertaking, pledging even the crown jewels to furnish the necessary means and ships; in which the genial ardour of the fair Castilian appears in pleasing contrast to the chilling reserve of the cold and politic Ferdinand.

Three small caravels, by no means equal to the undertaking, having at length been obtained and manned, after solemn confession and celebration of the holy sacrament, this great revelator set sail from the little port of Palos on the ever-memorable 3rd Aug. 1492.

As they lose sight of Peak Teneriffe, that farthest out-post of the Old World, the whole sky is seen to flame with wrathful fires, and the sea reflects the hue of blood. To the superstitious minds of the sailors this was an omen of the Almighty's anger—a portent of disaster—and it required all the eloquence of Columbus to rouse them from the prostration of spirit into which they were plunged.

Swiftly were they borne from their native shores and from all their hearts held dear by the mysterious trade-winds, which seemed with remorseless constancy to waft them onward to some dread unknown.

Day after day, on, on they plunged till Columbus alone dared to grasp the thought of the awful distance that they had traversed. That was a secret which he locked up in his own firm breast, while he sought to quiet the timorous mariners, whose minds recoiled beneath the thought, with a false reckoning of the progress of the fleet. But even this failed to allay their excited apprehensions, especially when the compass—their only guide in these untraversed wastes—began to waver and prove treacherous, as though nature's self were failing, and her laws becoming powerless. Amid the calms of tropics, when the very winds seemed dead, and they lay

"As silent as a painted ship,
Upon a painted ocean,"

it appeared that the very elements were combined to resent this invasion of their solitary domain, whose surface had never ploughed before. When near the end of their voyage, they entered a sea covered with floating weed, what was at first accepted as a joyful indication of land at length struck terror to their hearts when it became so dense as to impede and almost prevent their progress. Then it seemed as if they had indeed reached the Ultima Thule of Creation.

But we must not delay over these incidents of travel. The weary weeks of westward sailing amid the primal solitudes of hitherto untraversed, pathless seas—the awful silence brooding over the wide waste of waters, bounded only by the meeting of the sea and sky—the sad and dismal weeping of the rain—the moaning of the wind—the intolerably monotonous succession of garish day and stilly night, unmarked save by the waning of their hopes—the dreary midnight watches—the sinking beneath the wave of familiar constellations, that last seeming link that bound them to their native land—the rising of new, strange stars, and the superstitious dread of their supposed mysterious influences—the portents dire of wrath-presaging meteors flaming through the sky—the lurid splendour of the fiery southern sunsets—the false mirage upon the treacherous horizon's rim of

soft blue mountains, and of fertile vales, which ever-vanished into air—the sinking of the soul that followed—the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick—the dark conspiracies and turbulent mutinies of the disaffected crews—and the sublime majesty of a great spirit strong in the consciousness of right, and full of faith, overruling weaker minds, and cut off from human sympathy, still cherishing his noble purpose, and keeping in his mind the goal of his hopes; these, with the other associations of the voyage, with all their poetry, their pathos, and their grandeur, are no doubt familiar to most minds.

Let us for a moment revert to that solemn night of prayer, forever memorable in the annals of the world, upon which America was discovered. Many were the indications of land, but so often had they been deceived that in every heart but one all hope was well-nigh dead. Fear and expectation agitated every mind. The Church's holy prayers were said—her solemn rites performed. In sleepless vigils wore the night away. But shortly after midnight was a cry heard booming over the waves of "Land! land ahead!" With leaden wings the hours drag on, but with the early morning light the long-sought strand revealed itself to their delighted view, and the NEW WORLD was first seen by European eyes.

What tumultuous thoughts rushed upon the mind of Columbus—what deep emotions stirred his soul—what bright visions

"Passed like a glorious roll of drums"

through the triumph of his living dream, we know not. But such there were; for here was the realizing of the vision which had sustained his soul during long years of trial and privation; here was the solution of the problem of the age—he had wrested their mystery from the brooding centuries—he had plucked its secret from the bosom of the all-surrounding sea. Doubtless (for he was a devout man), gratitude to God filled his heart. Perhaps he also thought how his name would go sounding down the ages, and how the nations would rise up and call him blessed; but he never, even in his loftiest flight of fancy, comprehended half the importance of his discovery, nor the lasting influence it would have upon the destiny of the world.

In the meantime, preparations are made for debarking. The joyous cannon belch forth a glad "salvo," with their fiery breath—the boats are manned—an exultant "Te Deum" is sung—and the New World is taken possession of in the name of God and of Ferdinand and Isabella, and with the sacred rites of religion. It is consecrated with anthem and with prayer—the notes of "Gloria in excelsis Deo" awake unwonted echoes in the listening air, and the crucifix is overshadowed by the stately standard of Old Spain.

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The scene is changed. One bright sunny morning, in the spring of 1493, the quiet port of Palos is thrown into a state of unusual commotion by the appearance, in the offing, of a weather-beaten, spectral-looking vessel. Columbus and his fleet, by common consent, had long been consigned to the depths of central ocean; so they are not to be

thought of. Great, then, is the astonishment of the civic authorities, when he thus pertinaciously returns, notwithstanding their settled conclusions to the contrary; but their astonishment soon gives way to delight when they find him to be veritably in the flesh, especially since he is the bearer of such astounding tidings, and such priceless treasure.

We now behold Columbus elevated to the giddy height of power—made vice-king of a whole hemisphere, with all its seas and lands, yet still manifesting that piety towards heaven, that mildness and forbearance to his fellows, and that consummate prudence in action which had hitherto characterized his deportment. But soon a cloud obscured the sunshine of his prosperity. Hardly had he departed to assume the government of these new-found regions, when jealousy of his fame and fortune began to rankle in the minds of certain fawning sycophants of the court. Slander began to dart her snaky tongue; envy to instil her deadly virus, and coward malice foully to asperse the fair escutcheon of his fame, so that a servile underling is sent to supersede the noble-minded Admiral. Without opportunity for appeal or for explanation, the venerable old man was violently dispossessed of his command, heavily loaded with irons, and, in terror of his life, shipped away from the land which himself had plucked from the bosom of the sea, as though he were the vilest of felons.

"These are the whips and scorns of time—

The insolence of office and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes."

Most keenly did the sensitive spirit of Columbus feel the indignity; and, when touched by pity and remorse, his captors wished to relieve him from his irons, he persistently refused, scorning to be free by sufferance when his will was chained. Deep into his heart sunk the memory of that voyage, and to the day of his death he kept suspended in his cabinet these memorials of his country's ingratitude.

Intense was the feeling of indignation in the public mind, upon the return of Columbus, against his base calumniators, and deep the sorrow of his royal mistress for his undeserved, unwarranted, ill-treatment. The brave old Admiral presented himself before his King and Queen, his soul tingling with the sense of wrong and injustice; but when he beheld the sympathetic teardrops in his sovereign lady's eyes all resentment vanished—he threw himself at her feet—his great heart melted within him, and convulsive sobs shook his frame. Then was his leal-heartedness most fully vindicated, and even the frigid temperament of Ferdinand seemed moved.

We will now pass hastily to the close of his life, omitting all mention of his third voyage.

When almost seventy years of age, such was the restless activity and unconquerable energy of the mind of Columbus, that he set sail for a fourth time to explore the New World which he had discovered. After a prolonged voyage, during which he suffered much chagrin and disappointment, and was even refused permission to shelter his tempest-shattered fleet in the harbour of an island which he himself had revealed to the world, he returned with crushed spirit and a bleeding heart to lay his bones in that ungrateful land

upon which he had conferred wealth, honour and renown, but which gave to him but a birthplace and a grave.

Soon after this his noble-hearted patroness, the gentle Isabella, died, and, with the proverbial ingratitude of princes, the politic Ferdinand permitted him to drag out life in obscurity, and to drain the bitter dregs of poverty—him to whom fame has given one of the highest niches in her temple, and who enriched the world for ever with his life and labours.

At length, with a body enfeebled by exposure in the service of his country, sick at heart with hollow professions and broken promises, and with a soul sorrowful from indifference and neglect of conscious merit, relying on the atonement of his Saviour, and in the act of repeating in Latin the words: "Lord into Thy hands I commend my spirit," this great man died on the 20th of May, 1506.

He was buried at Seville, and over his tomb was placed a marble monument bearing the words in Spanish, "To Castile and Leon, Columbus gave a New World." But death did not end his voyages. His remains were transferred in 1513 to Las Cuivas, and in 1536 to the island of San Domingo, in the West Indies, and deposited in the Cathedral of that place. In 1796, with great pomp, the bones of the discoverer were removed to Havana, the capital of Cuba, and deposited in the Cathedral, where for nearly a hundred years they received the tribute of respect of generations of pilgrims to his tomb. It has recently been discovered, however, that the remains thus honoured were not those of Columbus, but of his brother, Diego, and the bones of the great Admiral still rest in his grave at San Domingo—one of the first islands which he visited.

Preparations have been made to have a magnificent celebration in 1892 of the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of this Continent, both in Spain, and Italy, and America. Thus do men build the tombs of the prophets whom, while alive, they stoned.

We will now, by way of conclusion, briefly advert to a few of the results of the discovery of America. No sooner was this startling fact known than all Europe was thrown into a fever of excitement. Every branch of industry was quickened. Each nation stretched forth her arm in conquest, and secured as much as possible of the newly-found territories. The teeming population of the great cities,

"—The serf and the hireling, the
down-trodden millions,
Felt that they, too, were created the heirs
of the earth, and claimed its division."

Old crumbling dynasties renewed their youth in the New World, and a lasting impetus was given to every moral reform, from the fact of a refuge from persecution having been found—a land whither those whose social or religious rights had been invaded might transport their household gods and build a new Troy, and construct for themselves an Utopia after their own hearts. And was that not a noble race that braved the perils of the wintry sea—that disembarked on Plymouth's storm-lashed rock, and made its home amid the primal wilds that skirt that iron-bound shore. And in those troublous times which tried men's souls, when the whole Continent was convulsed, and our hills, our valleys, and our waters, echoed to the booming of the cannon, our leal-