

consent of the senate, expressed by one hundred and forty-nine votes, obtained from the doge (André Vandramino), on the 28th March, 1476, his naturalization as a citizen of Venice (*privilegium civitatis de intus et extra*). He had addicted himself, it appears, with great success, to the study of cosmography and the practice of navigation—perhaps he had sought the teaching of the celebrated Florentine cosmographer, Paul Toscanelli; and at all events he had doubtless adopted, with the avidity of a studious adept, the theories professed by that aged sage respecting the disposition of land and water on the surface of the globe—theories, the fame of which had reached even to the Court of Portugal, and had excited there a curiosity, which he satisfied in a well-known letter written from Florence, under date of June 25, 1474, to Canon Fernam Martins, an intimate of Alphonso V., to which there was annexed a nautical explanatory chart representing the Atlantic Ocean, bounded on the east by the shores of Europe and Africa, and on the west by those of oriental Asia, with a total interval of 136° of longitude between Lisbon and Quinsay, the magnificent capital of the mighty empire of Cathay. At 50° this side of Cathay lay the great island of Zipangu or Japan. At 30° distance from Lisbon, the great island Antilla, or the island of the ‘Seven Cities,’ was thrust forward, which the maps of the time placed beyond the Azores; with some other islands in a location less fixed, among which the island of Brésil occurred in different places. A direct way was thus boldly traced by the learned Florentine across the Western Ocean, even to that opulent country of the Grand Khan, whose incomparable riches had been seen and related, two centuries before, by the Venetian Marco Polo. The attention of Alonzo V. was diverted by cares nearer home, by a war with strange reverses, from these meditations about a maritime route to the Indies by the west. But Cabot, who in his travels in the East (*Ei dice che altre volte esso è stato a la Meeha*) had learned from the caravans of Arabia that the spices came from hand to hand from the remotest countries of the East, could not fail to revolve in his brain adventurous thoughts regarding the distant horizon, where that extreme Orient was distinctly indicated, toward which he saw ranged at due intervals, like successive station-houses, the islands of Brésil, of Antilla, and then Zipangu.

“The new citizen of Venice, taking his wife and sons with him, to go into foreign parts to found an establishment of maritime commerce, in accordance with the cosmopolitan habits of the Venetians, selected for this purpose the English port of Bristol, the channel of which opens exactly toward those western regions, where Toscanelli had pointed out, in the distance, the fortunate shores