

it became possible to persuade people that China and the East Indies might be reached by sailing across the Atlantic, on a westerly course.\*

Columbus, who was a native of Genoa, and who had served in the Portuguese ships on voyages to Africa, Madeira, the Canary Islands, and the Azores, became convinced that by sailing westwards he might arrive at the "Indies." He tried to procure aid to the undertaking from his countrymen the Genoese. These having refused, he applied to the courts of Portugal and Spain, while at the same time he sent his brother Bartholomew to ask the help of King Henry VII of England.

After meeting with many refusals and disappointments, the king and queen of Spain at length furnished the necessary means, and commissioned him, as their admiral, and their governor over all the new regions he might discover, to undertake the voyage. Columbus then conducted a squadron of three small vessels and 120 men across the Atlantic, and, after a voyage of seventy days, arrived at one of the Bahama Isles, named by him San Salvador, on October 12th, 1492. He also discovered and visited Cuba and Hispaniola, or Hayti. Between 1492 and 1504 he made, in all, four voyages from Europe. Besides discovering most of the islands off Mexico, he explored the coast of the main land, between Honduras and the gulf of Paria. But, although he saw and examined some of the coast, he does not appear to have attempted to found any establishment upon the continent of America, as he had done in the island of Hispaniola.

Amerigo Vespucci of Florence also made four voyages between Europe and America, and published narratives and charts of his own discoveries. This navigator claimed to be the first European who had reached the

\* Hitherto the rich products of those Eastern countries had been brought to Europe, overland, through Tartary, Persia, Asia-Minor and Turkey. China was then called Cathay, and the Eastern countries, generally the "Indies."