

JOHN AND SEBASTIAN CABOT

I

John Cabot, generally known as the discoverer of North America, was not a Venetian by birth, as some writers say, but a Genoese. In fact, he had been naturalized as a Venetian, in consequence of a residence of fifteen years, by a unanimous vote of the Senate of Venice, on the 28th March, 1476. Some writers presume that he was born at Castiglione, in Liguria, others say Chioggia, one of the lagoon islands, but these two assertions are based upon documents of no value. Dr Puebla, the ambassador of Ferdinand and Isabella to England, also Pedro de Ayala, Puebla's adjunct in the embassy, write that Cabot was a Genoese by birth.

John Cabot was married to a Venetian woman, who followed him to England, and we find it recorded that on the 27th of August, 1497, she was living at Bristol, England, with her children Lewis, Sebastian and Sanctus. At that time they were apparently all of age, Sebastian having attained at least the age of twenty-three. Sebastian, therefore, was born in 1474. According to certain English biographers, Sebastian Cabot's native place was England; this statement carries but little weight, as it seems pretty sure that he was born in Venice. When his father was naturalized a Venetian in 1476, as already stated, in consequence of a constant residence of fifteen years in Venice, Sebastian must have then been not less than two years old. Many authors say that he was a Venetian, specially Ramusio, Andrea Navajero, Contarini, Oviedo, Peter Martyr, etc.