

to lie buried in oblivion. For it is my comfort, that if any fault be found in this my undertaking, it will not be that, which most historians are liable to, viz. that they know not the truth of what they write; for I promise to compose the history of his life of such matter only as I find in his own papers and letters, and of those passages of which I myself was an eye-witness. And whosoever shall imagine that I add any thing of my own, may be assured I am satisfied I can reap no benefit thereby in the life to come; and that the reader alone will have the benefit of it, if it be capable of yielding any.

The author having given this account of himself I have not much to add, but to inform the reader before he enters upon the work, that in it he will find all the reasons which induced the admiral to such an undertaking; he will see how far he proceeded in person upon the discovery in four several voyages he made; how great and honourable the articles were upon which he entered upon the discovery, and which were afterwards confirmed to him by those two famous Princes, King Ferdinand and Queen Isâbel, or Elizabeth; how basely they were all violated, and he, after such unparalleled services, most inhumanly treated; how far he settled the affairs of the island Hispaniola, the first place the Spaniards planted in; what care he took that the Indians should not be oppressed, but rather by good usage and example prevailed upon to embrace the Catholic faith; also the customs and manners of the Indians; their opinions and practice as to religious worship; and, in a word, all that can be expected in a work of this nature, the foundation whereof was laid by so great a man as was the admiral, and finished by his own son, who had all the education that could contribute to make him capable of writing so notable a life.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE WEST INDIES, &c. &c.

CHAP. I. — *Of the Country, Original, and Name of Admiral Christopher Colon.*

IT being a very material point in the history of any man of note to make known his country and original, because they are best looked upon who are born in noble cities and of illustrious parents; therefore some would have had me spent my time in shewing that the admiral was honourably descended, though his parents, through the peevishness of fortune, were fallen into great poverty and want; and that I should have proved they were the offspring of that Junius Colon, of whom Tacitus in his 12th book says, that he brought King Mithridates prisoner to Rome; for which service the people assigned him the consular dignity, the eagle or standard, and consular court. And they would have me give a large account of those two illustrious Coloni his predecessors, who, Sabellicus tells us, gained a mighty victory over the Venetians, as shall be mentioned in the 5th chapter; but I refused to undertake that task, believing he was particularly chosen by Almighty God for so great an affair as that was he performed; and because he was to be so truly his apostle as, in effect he proved it was his will he should in this part be like the others, who were called to make known his name from the sea and rivers, and not from courts and palaces, and to imitate himself, whose progenitors being of the blood royal of Jerusalem, yet it pleased him that his parents should not be much known. Therefore as God gave him all the personal qualities for such an undertaking, so he would have his country and original