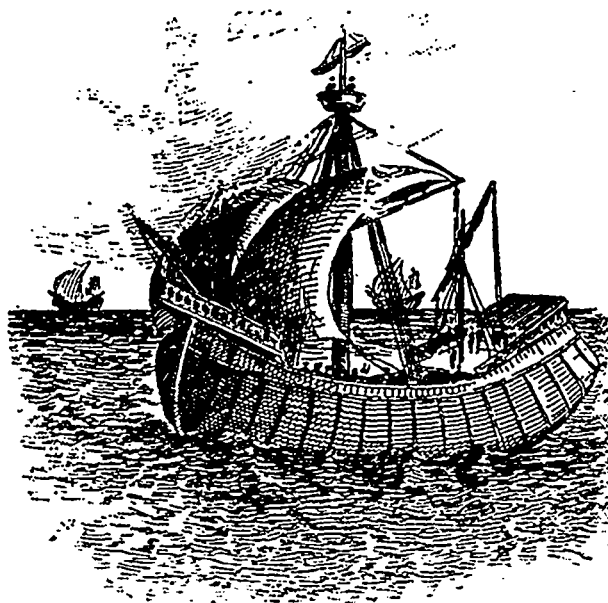




THE "SANTA MARIA."

only "sea and sky," waves and stars, that kept their own council.

Under the sudden and friendly beams of the moon there went from one of the ships accompanying the *Santa Maria* cries of "the land, the land!" and the booming of a gun as a signal of joy.

Giving orders to shorten sail and lie to for the few remaining hours of darkness, Columbus humbly gave thanks to the God in whom he had trusted through all his perils and adversities and waited with such patience as he could summon for daylight to expose the nature of his discovery.

What the rising sun of October 12, 1492, revealed can be truly pictured only by those familiar with the tropics. Columbus leaped ashore from the little boat and falling upon his knees kissed the longed-for land and gave thanks to Almighty God for His guidance and care. Then, rising with drawn sword and unfurled banner, and taking up a handful of earth and breaking off the twig of a shrub, he took formal possession of the land and all it held in the name of his Spanish sovereigns, christening the island for the Saviour, whose especial protection he had invoked on leaving Palos. He then uttered—in Latin, of course—this prayer which, it will be observed, is truly missionary:

"O Eternal and Omnipotent God, by Thy sacred word didst Thou create earth and sky and sea. May Thy name be blessed and glorified and Thy majesty be praised that at the hands of Thy humble servant it has been permitted that Thy holy name should be known and preached throughout this other part of the world."

Back on board his flagship that night, the admiral wrote concerning the natives, after describing them:

"They would make good labourers and seem to have a good disposition, because I observed that they quickly repeat whatever is said to them and I think they could easily be made good Christians for they do not seem to have any religion. If it please God, I shall take with me from here, when I leave, half a dozen of them for your Majesty in order that they may learn to speak our language."

Here again may be seen the spirit of the missionary; as indeed it has been asserted upon the best authorities that the great object of the hazardous voyage was to convert the new-found land to the Christian faith and "to gather the wealth of the Indies for the conquest of the Holy Sepulchre,"—those of adventure and discovery being but secondary.

The fact is that Columbus, though, of course, a Romanist, was particular in the outward forms of his religion. He and all his crew were confessed before undertaking each voyage. He never penned a letter nor began a chapter without at the head setting down this pious invocation: *Jesus cum Maria sit nobis in via.* He could recite the prayers and services of the Church like any priest before the altar.

On the island of San Domingo (West Indies) there still stands a Ceeba tree which is worthy to be classed with "Penn's elm," the "Charter Oak," and other historic trees. It is the tree under which, by order of Columbus, mass was first celebrated in the new world.

Of Columbus' squadron used on his first voyage Mac Kie says:

"Two of them, the *Pinta* and the *Nina* were stout coasting vessels of light draught, of the kind he thought best adapted for exploring purposes; the third, the *Santa Maria* was a heavier ship of greater size, which he chose to serve as a kind of floating fort or headquarters. In making his selection he was guided by his long experience on many coasts, and especially by what he had learned by sailing with the Portuguese along the western coast of Africa. It detracts neither from his fame nor his courage that, instead of venturing to cross an unknown sea in crazy skiffs, as some would have us think, he used his judgment and experience in choosing the vessels on which the safety of his crews and the success of his endeavour must necessarily depend."

Lieut. McCarty Little, one of the ablest officers of the United States navy, has been detailed by direction of the President of the United States to proceed to Spain to superintend the construction of an exact *fac simile* of the *Santa Maria*, in which Columbus sailed. It is proposed to have this caravel as nearly exact as possible. It will be manned by Spanish sailors in the costumes of the time of Columbus, and it will be rigged with the same sort of rigging he used. There will be on board copies of the same charts that he had; *fac similes* of