

bred pedantry and orthodox conservatism as that fifteenth century could produce. Philosophical deductions were parried by a quotation from St. Jerome or St. Augustine, and mathematical demonstrations by a figurative text of Scripture; and, in spite alike of the science and the devout religious spirit of Columbus, the divines of Salamanca pronounced the idea of the earth's spherical form to be heterodox, and declared a belief in antipodes incompatible with the historical traditions of the Christian faith: since to assert that there were inhabited lands on the opposite side of the globe would be to maintain that there were nations not descended from Adam, it being impossible for them to have passed the intervening ocean.

It may naturally excite a smile to thus find the very ethnological problem of this nineteenth century dogmatically produced four centuries earlier to prove that America was an impossibility. But, in reality, this ethnological problem long continued in all ways to affect the question. Among the various evidences which Columbus adduced in confirmation of his belief in the existence of a continent beyond the Atlantic, was the report brought to him by his own brother-in-law, Pedro Correa, that the bodies of two dead men had been cast ashore on the Island of Flores, differing essentially from any known race, "very broad-faced and diverse in aspect from Christians." And, in truth, the more widely they differed from all familiar Christian humanity, the more probable did their existence appear to the men of that fifteenth century. Hence Shakespeare's marvellous creation of his Caliban. Upwards of a century and a half had then elapsed since Columbus returned with the news of a world beyond the western ocean; yet still to the men of Shakespeare's day, the strange regions of which Columbus, Amerigo Ves-

pucci, Gomara, Lane, Harriot, and Raleigh wrote, seemed more fitly occupied by Calibans and the like rude approximations to humanity, than by men and women in any degree akin to ourselves. Othello, in truth, only literally reproduces Raleigh's account of a strange people on the Caoro, in Guiana. He had not himself, indeed, got sight of those marvellous Ewaipanoma, though anxious enough to do so. Their eyes, as reported, were in their shoulders, and their mouths in the middle of their breasts; nor could the truth be doubted, since every child in the provinces of Arromia and Canuri affirmed the same. The founder of Virginia, assuredly one of the most sagacious men of that wise Elizabethan era; and with all the experience which travel supplies: reverts again and again to this strange new-world race as to a thing of which he entertained no doubt. The designation of Shakespeare's Caliban is but an anagram of the epithet which Raleigh couples with the specific designation of those monstrous dwellers on the Caoro. "To the west of Caroli," he says, "are divers nations of cannibals, and of those Ewaipanoma without heads." Of "such men, whose heads stood in their breasts," Gonsalo, in "The Tempest," reminds his companions, as of a tale which every voyager brings back "good warrant of;" and so it was in all honesty that Othello entertained Desdemona with the story of his adventures:—

"Of moving accidents by flood and field,
And of the cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders."

The idea of an island-world lying in some unexplored ocean, apart from the influences which affect humanity at large, with beings, institutions, and a civilization of its own, had been the dream of very diverse ages, and a fancy of widely dissimilar minds.