

direct access to India or Cathay, he had become ambitious of discovering a western route.

His first application for assistance was made to the Portuguese King, who unwisely refused the necessary help. He next turned his longing eyes on Spain; and in 1484, set out for Madrid to make Ferdinand and Isabella, then on the united throne of Castile and Arragon, the same proposals. He was for a long time unsuccessful; but during eight years of fruitless solicitations, though regarded as an impracticable visionary, he retained a firm confidence in the soundness of his own views, and the feasibility of his plans.

Their Spanish Majesties finally gave in to the project, and placed a flotilla of three small vessels at his disposal, with which he sailed from Spain in August, 1492; and on the 70th day, came in sight of land. This proved to be one of the group now known as the Bahamas, then called Guanahani by the natives, but named San Salvador by Columbus. He took possession of this and others, including St. Domingo and Cuba, in the name of the Spanish monarchs. On his return, the King and Queen received him at a Royal Sitting, and for a time both rulers and people delighted to do him honor. A patent of Nobility was at once made out for him and his posterity.

News of this discovery created an immense sensation throughout Europe, and roused the emulation of other nations. Columbus afterward made three voyages to the New World, each time adding to his discoveries;