

ter Columbus had communicated to him in 1474 the scheme he was preparing, answered and encouraged him, by arguments drawn from history and geography, to execute so noble an enterprize. Ferdinand Columbus has preserved these letters; and from them we see, that the first idea of Christopher was, to find out a shorter passage to China, by means of the Western Ocean; to which idea a second succeeded, which was executed, of discovering the lands, which in that immense Ocean appeared to him, might be found out. He therefore did not doubt but his design would be successful. Being very expert in navigation, and the use of the compass, he was a man the best calculated to carry it into execution; but he was not able alone to bear the expences, and it was necessary for him to find a Prince, who, from the hope of the great treasures that such a discovery might bring with it, might not be deterred from making the expensive preparations requisite for the expedition.

Columbus first of all proposed his scheme to Genoa, his native country, in preference to any other; but it was there considered as a mere dream. More favourable appeared the reception he had at the Court of Portugal, where King John II. appointed some commissioners to examine what was projected by Columbus. But they, whilst feigning to weigh every circumstance maturely, having secretly fitted out a caravel, and given the identical maps of Columbus to a pilot, ordered him to proceed to sea. He, however, being very inexperienced, and inadequate to so great an enterprize, at the first blast of contrary winds turned back to Portugal. Columbus, irritated by such a proceeding, privately quitted that kingdom; and having sent Bartholomew, his brother, to England, to propose to that Court the discovery of the new world, he went to Cordova, where the Court of Spain then resided. There was no method which he did not make use of, in order to bring many of those who had the greatest power there into his scheme, and some indeed undertook to favor him. But, notwithstanding this, he could obtain nothing; and after five years had no other answer, but that Spain was then too much engaged in the war against the Moors, to think of other expences. Rejected by this Court, he had recourse to that of France, where he proposed his plan in writing; but scarcely was there any one who deigned to think about it. He prepared to set out for England, from whence, for many years, he had received no news from his brother. But being detained by Fra John Perez de Marchena, a Franciscan, he was persuaded to propose it again to that Court. It then met with a reception less unfavourable; but as it appeared that he presumed too much, by requesting to be made an Admiral and Viceroy perpetual and hereditary of the countries which he might discover, it once more remained ineffectual. What fortitude was requisite to withstand such repeated repulses! He was more resolute than ever to quit Spain. Detained once more by the intreaties of the above-said monk, and of some other persons, it was again attempted to induce the Queen Isabella to favor the ideas of Columbus; and again the attempt was useless. He therefore reached the Port of Pinos, and was ready to depart, when Granada, in the mean while, falling into the hands of the Spaniards, amidst the joy of so glorious a conquest, the project of Columbus being renewed to the Queen, was at last adopted; and he being called back to the Court, and received with the greatest honour, finally obtained letters patent, by which he was declared