

March 28, 1496, which contains the following significant passage: "You write that a person like Columbus has come to England for the purpose of persuading the king to enter into an undertaking similar to that of the Indies, without prejudice to Spain and Portugal. He is quite at liberty. But we believe that this undertaking was thrown in the way of the King of England by the King of France, with the premeditated intention of distracting him from his other business. Take care that the King of England be not deceived in this or in any other matter. The French will try as hard as they can to lead him into such undertakings, but they are very uncertain enterprises, and must not be gone into at present. Besides, they cannot be executed without prejudice to us and to the King of Portugal."

This last remark no doubt refers to the celebrated line of demarcation drawn by the Pope, and finally settled by the Treaty of Tordesillas, by which all lands discovered west of a line drawn 370 leagues west of the Azores were to belong to Spain, and those east of that line, to Portugal. The prolongation of this line on the other side of the globe was also to form a boundary between the possessions of the two countries, and in the then uncertain state of all calculations of longitude, it was not easy to say what lands lay on the Spanish side of this line and what on the Portuguese side. The Portuguese, for instance, who claimed Brazil, as being on their own side of this line, made the same claim with regard to the lands discovered by Cabot. They accordingly sent Cortereal to take possession of them in the name of Portugal; but his expedition came to

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