

Cabots, and describes what he actually witnessed with his own eyes. Both these letters, it will be observed, were written only about three weeks after Cabot's return, and while all England was ringing with the wondrous news. Raimondi writes: "Some months since, his majesty sent a Venetian, who is a great navigator, and who has great skill in discovering new isles. He has returned safe and sound, after having discovered two isles, very large and very fertile. He places the discovery of the new land at four hundred leagues from the west coast of Ireland."

On December 18, 1497, Raimondo wrote another letter to the Duke of Milan, which gives some further particulars. He says that Cabot, having rounded the southwest coast of Ireland, "bent his course towards the north, and after a few days (*fra qualche giorni*) he left the north on his right hand and began to sail towards the east"—i.e., the west.\* After wandering a long time (*avendo errato assai*) he found *terra ferma*, where he planted the royal banner and took possession in the name of the king. He says that the sea in those parts was full of fish called *stocchi fisci* (stock fish, or cod), which are taken not only by means of nets, but by a sort of basket or pot immersed in the water."

All this he (Raimondo) says he had from the mouth of John Cabot himself. He says also that Cabot made a map and a globe, or solid sphere, "on which he shows where he landed." "He [Cabot] says that he went much farther *eastward* than *Tanaïs*,† and thinks that the land discovered is that where grows the Brazil wood and the silk tree; and now that they know where to go, they say it is a voyage of not more than fifteen days."

We have another letter touching this first voyage. It was written on July 25, 1498, while the explorers were still away on their second voyage. It is from Pedro de Ayala, protonotary and ambassador of Spain in England, to their majesties Ferdinand and Isabella. It reveals the jealousy with which the action of England was regarded by Spain at the time. De Ayala says he saw the map which Cabot had made, and on it the direc-

\* The writers of that day speak of the west as the east and *vice versa*. Believing in the roundness of the earth, they knew that if one could proceed far enough westward he would come to the east, and they believed the new lands discovered were the East Indies. So on the other hand this same Raimondo says elsewhere of John Cabot, that when on one of his journeys to Mecca, seeing the caravans of spices coming from the far east to Alexandria, he argued that they must come from the country of the *north towards the west* (i.e., east), or from China (Cathay) or Japan (Chipango).

† *Tanaïs* was the classical name for the River Don, separating Europe from Asia; it was supposed to divide the earth into two equal parts, east and west, as alluded to in the following line of Lucretius:

"*Mediæ dirimens confinia terræ,*"