

preceded him in it. The second is, whether he really was captain and commander of that fleet which was sent to America, or merely a passenger, sailing of his own accord. With regard to the first, the Canon Bandini affirms, that Columbus never went farther than Hispaniola, Cuba, Jamaica, and those other Islands adjoining the Mexican Gulf, whatever others may say to the contrary. As a proof of it, he quotes that same Francesco Giuntini, who lived towards the end of the sixteenth century; and, afterwards enumerating the honourable testimonials given to Amerigo by many writers, he adduces some who assert the same thing: all these, however, were very distant from the time of Vespucci, and treated of the subject only digressively. But that Columbus discovered also the continent, we have too many proofs to doubt. Leaving the testimony of Ferdinand, his son, which might appear questionable, and that of all the Spanish writers who ascribed such glory to Columbus, let us cite only two cotemporary monuments, which cannot possibly admit of objection. The first is Peter Martire, of Anghiera, who was then in Spain, and wrote the incidents as they successively happened; he therefore speaks of the landing of Columbus in the month of July, 1498, on the land of Paria, and says that he believed it to be terra firma; which, however, at the time that Peter Martire thus wrote, was not universally credited: *Hanc, that is, the land of Paria, qui postmodum accuratius utilitatis causa investigarunt Continentem esse Indicum volunt, non autem Cubam, uti Præfectus* (that is Columbus; and the meaning of these words is, that Columbus was amongst those who thought, that not only Cuba, but the land of Paria was the continent, as is clear from what follows:)

*Neque enim desunt, qui se circumfisse Cubam audeant dicere. An hæc ita sint, an invidia tanti inventi occasionem quærant in hunc virum, non dijudico: tempus loquetur, in quo verus judex invigilat: sed quod Paria, sit vel non sit, Continens, Præfectus non contendit: Continentem ipse arbitratur* (1)

The other monument is the account, at that time published, of the voyages of Columbus, printed in the beginning of the following century, and already quoted by me; in which it is said, that Columbus with his companions having reached a large tract of land:

*Exploratum habuere, regionem nuncupari Pariam.* (2)

It is therefore very certain, that Columbus was on the land of Paria, which was afterwards well known to belong to the continent; if all America be a continent, and not an island. It only remains to examine, which of these two Italians arrived there first, whether Columbus, or Vespucci. Columbus, by the testimony of all, never contradicted by any, arrived there in July, 1498. Vespucci in his account says, that he departed from Cadiz the 10th of May, 1497; and then, after having spoken of his arrival at the Canaries, adds, *at the end of 37 days we reached a land, which we considered to be terra firma.* If these dates are just, it is evident, that Vespucci reached terra firma a year before Columbus. But all the Spanish writers, followed by many others, particularly by Father Charlevoix, accuse Ves-

pucci

(1) Océan. Decad. I. i. 6. ad fin.

(2) Stanerarium Portugallense, &c. p. 61. Edit. Mediol. 8308.