

1498. the first of August he discovered the continent at Terra Firma. Sailing along the coast westwardly, with the continent on the left, he discovered Margarita. The Spaniards, finding that the oysters, brought by the inhabitants of this island on board the ship of Columbus, contained pearls, were inexpressibly delighted; and, hastening to the shore, found all the natives decked in these rich ornaments, which they disposed of to the Spaniards for mere trifles.

Columbus, having discovered many other islands for two hundred leagues to Cape Vela, anchored on the twentieth off Hispaniola.¹ On the thirtieth he entered the harbour at that island, where the lieutenant, agreeably to his brother's advice, had appointed a new city to be built.² Until this year, Isabella had been the chief place of the residence and government of the Spanish colony; but the capital was now transferred to this new city;³ which was long the most considerable European settlement in the New World.⁴

St. Domingo becomes the capital.

In the absence of the admiral, Roldan, a man of obscure birth,⁵ and of base character, though now high in office, had separated himself from Bartholomew Columbus, and formed a faction. He had virulently aspersed the characters, and misrepresented the designs, of the two brothers. He had sent his scandalous charges in writing to the court of Spain; intending to prevent, if possible, the return of Christopher Columbus, and to destroy the autho-

¹ Univ. Hist. xli. 527.

² Life of Columbus, c. lxxv—lxxiii. Purchas, i. 823, 827. Prince Chron. Introd. 30. Europ. Settlements, i. 140.

³ Life of Columbus, c. lxxiii.

⁴ Purchas, i. 731. Though Isabella was chosen in 1493, as a situation more healthful and commodious than that of Navidad, yet its abandonment is ascribed to the unhealthiness of the air, and the badness of the soil: "Ce qui a fait abandonner cette ville, c'est que l'air en étoit malsain et les terres mauvaises." Encyc. Methodique, Geog. Art. ISABELLE.

⁵ Robertson, i. book ii.

⁶ "Roldanum quendam—quem fossorum et calorum ductorem ex famulo suo, deinde justitiæ præsidem, Præfectum crexerat." P. Martyr, 56.

rity of
consi
had
seized
deavo
It rec
bus, t
ed;
made
gents,

Col
tenant
the isl
la, and
tention
to mal
their C
tions.

The
widely
stimula
lumbus
Among
so de C
accomp
by the
tained
op, at
minal's
the cou
Ojeda's

1 P. M
2 Robe
3 Life
to have tw
them migh
4 Life