

but though that nation was then distinguished above all others by its spirit of enterprise, and the reigning king, John the second, was a wise and sagacious prince, the prejudice of his counsellors, to whom the project of Columbus was referred, defeated his views in that quarter also. His next application was to Ferdinand and Isabella, reigning sovereigns of Castile and Arragon, but they were too much occupied in wresting the kingdom of Grenada from the Moors, to give his plans the consideration due to their importance. About the same time, he sent his brother Bartholomew to England, to solicit the assistance of Henry the seventh. That mean prince, though he rejected the proposals of the Genoese, determined to profit by them, and despatched an expedition on his own sole account, on the track Columbus had marked out. The courage of its commanders failed them, and they returned to England as they went.

Columbus passed many years in fruitless applications to the Court of Ferdinand and Isabella, but at last, Grenada being conquered and the war with the Moors at an end, Isabella had leisure to attend to Columbus. Possessed of a mind of no common order, she was not slow to see that his project was at once reasonable and of the highest importance, and she openly avowed herself his patroness. Her husband, a cautious and narrow minded, though sagacious prince, would not commit himself. All the aid he lent the adventurer was the sanction of his name. It is with a woman, therefore, that the world finder must divide the fame of his discovery.

Three vessels, two of them not larger than our ordinary fishing smacks, were thought sufficient for this important expedition. Expense, had long been the sole obstacle to the success of the adventurer's solicitations, yet the whole cost of his armament when equipped, and furnished with a twelvemonth's provision, was no more than 17,600 dollars. It must be remembered, however, that the value of the dollar was much greater then than it is now.

Columbus sailed from Palos, in Andalusia, on the 3d of August, 1492. He made the Canary Islands, and then stretched boldly westward into an unknown ocean,