

1494.

Columbus in the spring dispatched twelve vessels for Spain ; and after a prosperous voyage they arrived safely in April at Cadiz.¹

May 5.
Columbus
discovers
Jamaica.

Leaving Peter Margarite the command of three hundred and sixty foot and fourteen horse, to reduce Hispaniola under obedience to their Catholic majesties, he now sailed for Cuba, which he described on the 29th of April. Sailing along its southern shore, he discovered on the fifth of May another island, called Jamaica.² Here, on landing, he met with much opposition from the ferocious natives ; but, after repeated defeats, they became tractable, and even brought food to barter.³ Although Columbus appears to have made no settlement at Jamaica ; yet, so favourable was the opinion, that he entertained of the island, that he marked it out as an estate for his family.⁴

Terrible
hurricane.

A hurricane, more violent than any within the remembrance of the natives, occurred in June at Hispaniola. Without any tempest, or fluctuation of the sea, it repeatedly whirled around three ships, lying at anchor in port, and plunged them in the deep. The natives ascribed this disorder of the elements to the Spaniards.⁵

¹ P. Martyr, 10.

² Jamaica is probably an Indian word, for Oviedo mentions a river in Hispaniola, of that name. Univ. Hist. xli. 346.

³ Univ. Hist. xli. 346. "Pluribus in locis volenti Præfecto terram capere, armati ac minitantes occurrerunt, pugnasque sæpius attentârunt : sed victi semper, amicitiam omnes cum Præfecto inière." P. Martyr, p.29.

⁴ The son and family of Columbus, considering Jamaica as their own property, built upon it St. Jago de la Vega, and several other towns, that were abandoned on account of the advantages attending the situation of St. Jago, which increased so greatly, as in a short time to contain, according to report, 1700 houses, 2 churches, 2 chapels, and an abbey. The court of Spain, notwithstanding its ingratitude to the father, granted both the property and government of Jamaica to his family ; and his son Diego Columbus was its first European governor. But the descendants of Columbus degenerated from his virtues, and they, or their agents, murdered 60,000 of the natives. Univ. Hist. xli. 348.

⁵ P. Martyr, 45. "Gentem hanc perturbâsse elementa, atque portenta hæc tulisse, innumurabant insulares." Ibid.

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