

of other authors, convinced me it would be no easy task to reconcile their conflicting opinions, and separate history from fiction. But the very obstacles I found in my way only served to show the claims of the subject upon the historian. I wished to publish the result of my studies before my return to Europe, but this would have been impossible without essential aid from some one familiar with the subject. For this purpose, I applied last autumn to my friend, Mr. Andrew Foster, of Boston, whose acquaintance with the languages and literature of Modern Europe rendered his assistance invaluable. He kindly complied with my request, and for several months has devoted himself entirely to this work. It was but an act of simple justice to insist that his name should appear on the title-page, and to make this grateful acknowledgment, which I do with unmixed pleasure.

It has been remarked of Petrarch, that "his verses and his letters, when read together, furnished a sort of running history of the man." Though this remark cannot be applied in its fullest force to Americus, yet it may be said to be partially true with regard to him. His letters carry us through the scenes which he visited during the most interesting part of his life, and though seldom alluding to himself personally, it is easy to place him in the imagination in every position he describes. I thought it advisable to adopt a new arrangement of these documents, or rather to follow the arrangement partially laid out by Canovai, and to divide the letter to Soderini into four parts, placing the different accounts of each voyage together.

In preparing the translation of the letters many different editions in Italian, Latin, and Spanish, have been consulted and compared. The letter to Soderini follows principally the text of the Gruniger