

refutation of the Cape North theory till afterwards, as it follows almost like a corollary from the former. The following are the only facts we know concerning the first voyage of Cabot (1497). We must carefully avoid applying to the first voyage facts and statements belonging to the second. The confounding of these data has hitherto been the cause of much confusion among writers, not only concerning Cabot, but all early navigators.

The patent or commission of Henry VII. to John Cabot and his three sons, Louis, Sebastian, and Sanctius, is dated March 5, 1495, old style, as this was previous to the correction of the calendar by Pope Gregory XIII. (1582). The year, according to the Julian calendar, began on March 25, hence this patent was given in the spring of 1496, as we would now call it. The expedition, however, did not, for some reason or other, set out that year, perhaps owing to the intrigues of De Puebla, Spanish ambassador in England, at the instigation of Ferdinand and Isabella, who were jealous of this new English enterprise, and feared an encroachment on the realms so lately acquired for their crown by Columbus. At all events the expedition did not start from Bristol till May 2, 1497, and the voyagers returned August 6. There was but one small ship, the *Matthew*, with eighteen men, principally sailors from Bristol.

The accounts of the voyage extant, or at least which have yet been discovered, are very meagre. We have a letter, dated August 23, 1497, from a certain Lorenzo Pasquaglio, a Venetian merchant living in London, to his brothers, Aloisio and Francesco, in Venice. The letter contains the popular error, not then exploded, that the land newly discovered was the eastern shore of Asia, the land of the Grand Kham described by Marco Polo. "The Venetian, our countryman," writes Pasquaglio, "is returned, and says that seven hundred leagues from this he discovered land. He followed the coast for three hundred leagues, and landed. He did not see any human being; but he brought to the king certain nets or snares for taking game, and a needle for making nets. He also found some felled trees, wherefore he supposed there were inhabitants, and returned to his ship in alarm. He was three months on his voyage, and on his return he saw two islands to starboard, but he did not land, time being too precious. He says that the tides are slack, and do not flow as they do here. He planted on his new-found land a large cross, with one flag of England and another of St. Mark, by reason of his being a Venetian, so that our banner has floated very far afield."

Next we have a letter, written almost at the same date, August 24, 1497, from Don Raimondo Soncini, envoy of the Duke of Milan, at the court of Henry VII. of England. He was well acquainted with the