

and romance. History carefully chronicled every incident of the great undertaking, and eloquent pens have told the thrilling story in every variety of picturesque detail. But no note was taken of Sebastian Cabot's voyage, though on his discoveries England's claims in the New World were to rest, and from them was to flow the first impulse towards colonization. But for this intrepid mariner, the Spaniards might have monopolized discovery in North as well as in South America and Mexico, and the English tongue might not have been spoken over the northern half of the continent. And yet in the little fleet, manned by such bold spirits, no one kept a journal, and the records we have of the voyage, written long afterwards, are of the most meagre and unsatisfactory description. "The English," says Carlyle, "are a dumb people. They can do great acts, but not describe them. Like the old Romans and some few others, *their* Epic Poem is written on the earth's surface: England, her mark!" "Commend me to the silent English, to the silent Romans." Without flourish of trumpets, Sebastian Cabot and his English sailors departed from Bristol; but of their difficulties and trials in crossing the Atlantic, in much stormier latitudes than those in which Columbus's course lay, we know nothing. We only know that on the 24th day of June, 1497, the glad cry of "land ho!" was heard, and that the commander, in gratitude, named the newly-discovered headland *Bona Vista*, happy sight, which Italian designation is still borne by Cape Bonavista and the Bay of the same name, on the eastern shores of Newfoundland.¹ Cabot brought away with him three of the natives, which were, on his return, presented to the English king. It would seem from the further records of the voyage which we possess, that he must have pursued a north-west course until he reached the coast of Labrador; then turning south, he made the coast of Nova Scotia, and, it is affirmed, sailed along the Atlantic shore of the continent as far south as Florida. Thus Cabot has the honour of first discovering the *Continent of America*, for, at that time, only *some of the Islands* were discovered by Columbus, and it was not till fourteen months afterwards that the Genoese navigator, without being aware of it, touched the continent in the neighbourhood of Verague and Honduras. At the period of Cabot's discovery, Amerigo Vespucci, whose name was to overspread the New World, had not made his first voyage across the Atlantic. Yet no bay, cape or headland recalls the memory of him who first sighted the shores of Continental America; and England has raised no monument to her intrepid sailor who laid the foundation of her dominion in the New World. No one knows the resting place of the great seaman who did so much for English Commerce, and gave to England half a continent. The parsimonious Henry VII rewarded his services with a gift of ten pounds; and, as a just retribution, the entry of this item in the account of his privy purse expenses, is still preserved in the archives of the British Museum, thus posting his niggardliness for the scorn of posterity. The entry referred to is brief and explicit: "To hym that found the New Isle, £10." In the same record, under date October 17th, 1504, the following occurs: