

its most striking characteristics. We can easily infer this from the peculiarly tender affection which in after years, Columbus manifested for his relatives as well as for his old home in the Via Mulcento. The devotion which he showed towards his parents in particular, has in it something exquisitely touching, which can hardly be expressed in words. It was full of all that openness and confidence, that unquestioning spirit of obedience, and that perfect abandonment of expression, which lend such a charm to the love of little children. An example of his deep sense of filial duty will not be out of place here.

About the year 1476, Columbus came from Portugal to Italy in search of patrons for his scheme of discovery. His mission was unsuccessful, as the reader knows. He determined, therefore, to return to Lisbon as soon as possible, after having first visited his relatives at Savona, whither they had retired in 1469 from Genoa. The meeting was a joyous one, yet not unmixed with sorrow. He found his parents infirm, and harassed, once more, by pecuniary difficulties. Their fortunes had not prospered during the five years of his absence in Portugal, and the sums of money which he had sent from time to time out of his own scanty purse had been barely sufficient to satisfy the demands of their creditors. Through motives of delicacy they had not informed him of their trouble; and he himself never suspected it, for he had left the family in a condition of comparative ease before setting out on his last expedition.

He was at this time full of his great scheme of discovery. It was the constant food of his thought by day and of his dreams by night. He considered it as an inspiration from heaven, and he felt certain of its ultimate success; and hence he longed most anxiously to enter at once on its accomplishment. But the promptings of his affection as well as the voice of filial duty—for in Columbus all the emotions of the heart were supernaturized—pointed out to him the path he should pursue.

He at once relinquished his dearly-loved project, and took upon himself the management of his father's affairs, working at the loom, during the day, like an ordinary journeyman. The evenings he devoted to drawing maps and copying books, which he carried to Genoa, where they brought extraordinary prices on account of their fidelity and the rare excellence of his penmanship. He labored thus for over a year. During this time he acquired, by his untiring industry, a sum of money sufficient to