

beneath the horizon the timid and superstitious seamen were filled with terror. Already there were indications of mutiny.

On the third day out, one of the vessels was disabled by the unshipping of the rudder, which was supposed to have been intentionally done by some one on board. The injury was soon repaired sufficiently to allow the crippled vessel to keep pace with the rest of the fleet by their shortening sail. At the close of the week they arrived at the Canaries, about one thousand miles from the port of Palos. Here they were detained three weeks, obtaining a new vessel for the disabled one, which was found in many respects unfit for service, and in making repairs.

On the sixth of September, Columbus again spread his sails. He was now fairly embarked on his voyage. The Canaries were on the frontier of the then known world. All beyond was a region unexplored. A calm kept the vessels rolling for three days within sight of the islands, but on the ninth a wind sprung up, and in a few hours the peaks of the Canaries disappeared beneath the horizon. It was a sunny, serene, and beautiful Sabbath; but on board the vessels there were discord and loud murmurings.

Many of the seamen had been compelled, by a royal decree, to embark on this expedition. As the last traces of the known world vanished from their sight they gave such loud expression of their discontent that it reached the ears of the admiral. He did everything in his power to inspire them with his own enthusiasm, but in vain. Both threats of punishment and promises of large reward were requisite to hold in check the rising spirit of insubordination. To allay the fears of the ignorant crew, Columbus resorted to the artifice of keeping two daily records, one correct, for himself, and one in which he made the distance which separated them from Spain much less than it really was.

Slowly the days came and passed away as the intrepid admiral incessantly combating the mutinous disposition of his crew, pressed all sail, and from the bows of his ship kept an eager lookout toward the west, while every change in the weather and every object was examined with the keenest scrutiny. A weed floating upon the

water, a sea-bird of unusual plumage, any change in the color of the sea or the aspect of the clouds, was subjected to the closest inspection. The lead was frequently thrown but no bottom could be found.

By the first of October, the little fleet had traversed two thousand three hundred miles of the ocean, in a direction almost due west. But, according to the reckoning which Columbus exhibited to the crew, they had only reached the distance of seventeen hundred miles. It was delightful autumnal weather, and a gentle breeze wafted them over a smooth sea. They had fallen in with the trade winds, hitherto an unknown phenomenon. But this incessant blowing of the wind in the same direction day after day, with no variation, increased the alarm of the seamen. It seemed to them that they were being driven into regions where there could be no possibility of return.

The crew became more and more mutinous. Those on board the admiral's ship had formed a conspiracy to throw him overboard and immediately to turn their bows towards home. No ordinary man could have controlled such elements of disorder. But Columbus, ever calm, dignified and just, by his presence alone overawed these turbulent spirits.

While sternly engaged in this moral struggle, another week of intense anxiety passed away.

To inspire the seamen with something of his own zeal, he offered a reward, amounting to about one hundred and twenty-five dollars, to the one who should first catch sight of land. This gave rise to many false alarms. Every cloud in the western sky which could be thought to veil a mountain peak would give rise to the exciting shout of "Land! Land!" Columbus consequently found it necessary to issue the order that whoever should give a false alarm should forfeit all claim to the reward. The clouds were often so massed in the western sky in forms so strikingly resembling mountain peaks as to deceive the most practiced eye.

Still the weary days came and went, and no land appeared. The alarm of the crew was continually increasing. At length their murmurs became so loud that the situation of Columbus was almost desperate. He was com-

pelled to assume the attitude of defiance. Thoroughly arming himself, he declared that no consideration should induce him to abandon the enterprise upon which he had entered. At the same time he declared his undoubting faith that their voyage would prove successful.

The very morning after this exciting interview with the crew there were indications of their approach to the land which inspired all with hope. They picked up from the water a branch of fresh seaweed, a piece of a shrub, with leaves and berries upon it, and a block of wood curiously carved.

Sixty-seven days had now passed since the highlands of Spain had sunk beneath the eastern horizon. It was the eleventh of October, 1492. It was a brilliant tropical night, with a cloudless sky and cool breeze. The events of the day electrified with hope every man on board the three vessels. Not an eye was closed. All were on the alert. Columbus stood on the poop of his vessel, with anxious glance, scanning the horizon before him.

About ten o'clock he was startled by apparently the gleam of a torch far away in the distance. For a moment it burned with a clear flame, and then suddenly disappeared. Soon it was again seen, distinct and indisputable.

Columbus was intensely agitated. He called to some of his companions, and pointed out the torch to them. They also saw it gleaming for a moment, when again it disappeared. Four hours passed away, while every eye was strained to catch a glimpse of the shore. At two o'clock in the morning, a seaman from the mast-head of the Pinta, which was in the advance, shouted, "Land! land!" Every voice echoed the cry, as almost immediately clearly defined mountains, sombre and majestic, apparently rose from the sea, about two miles before them. The vessels all hove to to await the morning. A new world was discovered.

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