

ness and security, at least so far, as the imperfection of human nature (and its most perfect state is imperfection) will allow. To whom shall we ascribe this great change—the glory and honor of peopling one half of this terrestrial globe? To the great and enterprising character, whose name will last when the kings and heroes of the earth shall sink into oblivion—to Christopher Columbus. As every circumstance relating to this wonderful man will meet with attention from the admirers of genius and enterprize, we publish with pleasure the following letter from him to the king of Spain, dated Jamaica, 1503. “It was extracted” says the Boston News-Letter, “from an old book of manuscript in the Island of Jamaica, containing also Venable’s Narrative, with colonial and political discussions and memoirs during the century.” This letter was written during his fourth and last voyage, when, in consequence of the rotten state of his vessels, he was forced to run them on shore, and portrays in vivid colors the miseries he suffered in body, from the gout and other infirmities, and from the hardships and privations to which his situation exposed him, and the afflictions of his mind, from the mutiny of many of his men, the dangers of his son, and sickness of his brother and his friends, and the ingratitude and persecution of the Spaniards. The letter with other papers was carried to St. Domingo, by a faithful servant, in an Indian canoe, the only means his enemies could not deprive him of to inform his friends of his melancholy situation.

“Sir,

“DIEGO MENDES, and the papers I send by him, will show your Highness what rich mines of gold I have discovered in Veragua; and how I intended to have left my brother at the river Berlin, if the judgments of Heaven, and the greatest misfortunes in the world, had not prevented it. However, it is sufficient that your Highness and successors will have the glory and advantage of all, and that the full discovery and settlement are reserved for happier persons than the unfortunate Columbus. If God be so merciful to me as to conduct Mendes to Spain, I doubt not but he will make your Highness and my great Mistress understand that this will not only be a castle and law, but a discovery of a world of subjects, lands, and wealth, greater than man’s unbounded fancy could ever comprehend, or avarice itself covet. But neither he, this paper, nor the tongue of mortal man, can express the anguish and afflictions of my mind and body, nor the misery and dangers of my son, brother, and friends. For here already we have been above ten months lodged on the open decks of our ships, that are run on shore and lashed together.—Those of my

men that were well, have mutinied under the Perras of Seville; my friends that were faithful are now sick and dying. We have destroyed the Indians’ provisions, so that they abandon us all; therefore we are like to perish by hunger; and these miseries are accompanied with so many aggravating circumstances, that it renders me the most wretched object of misfortune this world shall ever see; as if the displeasure of Heaven seconded the envy of Spain, and would punish as criminal these undertakings and meritorious services. Good Heaven, and you Holy Saints, that dwell in it, let the king Don Ferdinand, and my illustrious Mistress Donna Isabella, know, that I am the most miserable man living, and that my zeal for their service and interest hath brought me to it, for it is impossible to live and have afflictions equal to mine. I see, and with horror apprehend my own, and (for my sake) these unfortunate and deserving people’s destruction. Alas! Piety and Justice have retired to their regions above; and it is a crime to have done or have promised too much. As my misery makes my life a burthen to my myself, so I fear the empty titles of Perpetual