

Genoese by Stowe in his Chronicles, also by Pedro de Ayala, who says he was "a Genoese like Columbus." But in the charter or patent of Henry VII, given to the Cabots, John is styled "*Civis Venetianus*" (citizen of Venice). This puzzled some historians, until the archives of Venice being searched, the record was found dated 28th March, 1476, of the conferring on him of the freedom of the city of Venice, "after a continued residence of fifteen years." Hence we find that he went to settle in Venice in 1461, and as he must have been capable of fulfilling the duties of a citizen at that time, he would have been about twenty-one or twenty-two years of age. Hence he would have been born about the year 1439 or 1440, that is to say about the same time as Columbus, of whom he was a fellow-citizen, and probably a companion and school-fellow. He married in Venice, about the year 1470, and Sebastian, his second son, was born about 1472 or 3.

John Cabot was in Venice for at least three years after the birth of Sebastian, as it was not until 1476, as stated above, that he received the citizenship of Venice. During his stay in that city he made a journey to the East and went as far as Mecca. This was probably in 1478. There he met caravans of merchants, bringing loads of spices and gems from China and Japan. He learned from these merchants that the country whence these precious and coveted articles came, was "far away to the East, near the North"\* (Soncini). This information inspired Cabot with the idea which dominated his after life, namely, to find a passage to Cathay and Zipango, towards the northwest.

What time he came to settle in Bristol has not been exactly ascertained. All we know for certain is that he was there in 1491. Pedro de Ayala, prothonotary and ambassador of Spain at London, writing in 1498 (25th July) to Ferdinand and Isabella, says: "The citizens of Bristol, for the past seven years, have sent out every year, two, three, or four vessels, in search of the Isle of *Bresil*, and of the *Seven Cities*, at the inspiration of this Genoese," that is, John Cabot. Hence we conclude

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\*Da lontani paesi, al Septentrione verso l'occidente (i.e., Oriente. M. F. H.)