

the western hemisphere. Columbus was not the first to conceive of a western way around the world. "These ideas," says Professor Fiske, "were in the air." What Columbus did was not to originate them, but to incarnate them in facts and breathe into them the breath of life." From the time of Aristotle, the theory had been entertained, it was Columbus that realized it as a fact. It was he who made the egg to stand on end.

STORY OF COLUMBUS.

The stirring story of this great navigator is told with picturesque vividness. We are shown the stately figure passing along the streets of Seville and Cordova, "his white hair streaming in the breeze, his countenance aglow with intensity of purpose, or haggard with disappointment at some fresh rebuff, the ragged urchins of the pavement tapping their foreheads and smiling with mingled wonder and amusement at this madman." The oft told tale finds a new beauty in the graphic record by this new biographer.

To furnish recruits for his voyage, criminals were released from jail, and among the ninety persons who formed the crew of his three caravels, were some precious unchanged ruffians. It was a thrilling moment, when, straining his eyes through the dark, the admiral saw the light of the distant shore, and the gun-shot of the *Pinta* at daybreak next morning chronicled the opening of a new act in the drama of time. "Yet," says Professor Fiske, "the grandeur of the achievement was quite beyond the ken of the generation that witnessed it, for we have since come to learn that in 1492 the contact between the eastern and western halves of our planet was first really begun, and the two streams of human life which had flowed on for countless ages apart, were thenceforth to mingle together. The first voyage of Columbus is thus a unique event in the history of mankind. Nothing like it was ever done before, and nothing like it can ever be done again. No worlds are left for a future Columbus to conquer. The era of which this great Italian mariner was the first illustrious representative, has closed forever."

It is said that Columbus was avaricious and ambitious. If it were so, it was a noble ambition and an unselfish avarice. Before and again after the great discovery, he vowed to heaven to equip at his own expense a crusading army of 50,000 foot and 4,000 horse to rescue the holy sepulchre from the control of the infidel, and that five years thereafter he would follow the first army with a second of like dimensions. Enthusiastic and visionary as he perhaps was, this fact relieves him from the charge of vulgar, personal ambition and sordid avarice.

Like some strange liad of disaster, reads the story of the finding of these strange coasts. Of the colony of forty left at La Navidad, not one was living when Columbus returned in 1493. The treatment of the admiral by his ungrateful country is one of the saddest in history. Says Professor Fiske: "The sight of the admiral's stately and venerable figure in chains, as he passed through the streets of Cadiz, on a December day of that year 1500, awakened a popular outburst of sympathy for him and indignation at his persecutors. The scene in the Alhambra, when Columbus arrived, is one of the most touching in history. Isabella received him with tears in her eyes, and then this much-enduring old man, whose proud spirit had so long been proof against all wrongs and insults, broke down. He threw himself at the feet of the sovereigns in an agony of tears and sobs."

The last eighteen months of the admiral's life were spent in sickness and poverty. Accumulated hardship and disappointment had broken him down, and he died on Ascension Day, May 20th, 1506, at Valladolid. So little heed was taken of his passing away, that the local annals of that city, "which give almost every insignificant event, from 1333 to 1539, day by day, do not mention it."

POST-COLUMBIAN EXPLORATION.

In the second volume, Professor Fiske treats the successive stages by which the discoveries of Columbus became, in the conception of mankind, separated from the Old World, and realized as indeed a New World.