

Such was the arrogant and precipitate entrance into office of Francisco de Bobadilla. He had reversed the order of his written instructions, having seized upon the government before he had investigated the conduct of Columbus. He continued his career in the same spirit, acting as if the case had been prejudged in Spain, and he had been sent out merely to degrade the admiral from his employments, not to ascertain the manner in which he had fulfilled them. He took up his residence in the house of Columbus, seized upon his arms, gold, plate, jewels, horses, together with his letters, and various manuscripts, both public and private, even to his most secret papers. He gave no account of the property thus seized, and which he no doubt considered already confiscated to the crown, excepting that he paid out of it the wages of those to whom the admiral was in arrears.\* To increase his favor with the people, he proclaimed, on the second day of his assumption of power, a general license for the term of twenty years, to seek for gold, paying merely one-eleventh to government, instead of a third as heretofore. At the same time he spoke in the most disrespectful and unqualified terms of Columbus, saying that he was empowered to send him home in chains, and that neither he nor any of his lineage would ever again be permitted to govern in the island.†

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\* Hist. del Almirante, cap. 85. Las Casas. Herrera, ubi sup.

† Letter of Columbus to the Nurse of Prince Juan.

[PART ONE OF "LIFE AND VOYAGES OF COLUMBUS"]

END OF VOLUME SIX