

Spain. Great was the agitation and excitement in the little town of Palos, when the well-known vessel of the admiral re-entered their harbour. Most of those who thronged to the shore had relatives or friends on board, and the previous winter had been one of the most severe and stormy within the recollection of the oldest mariners. They awaited the landing of Columbus and his crew, and then accompanied him to the principal church, where solemn thanksgivings were offered, and soon every bell in the village sent forth a joyous peal. His journey to Barcelona was one continued triumph. He was accompanied by several of the native islanders, arrayed in their simple barbaric costume, and decorated with rude collars, bracelets, and ornaments of gold. He exhibited in the principal towns quantities of gold dust, many quadrupeds, and gaily-coloured birds, then unknown in Europe, with numerous specimens of natural productions in the vegetable and mineral kingdoms. It was the middle of April when Columbus reached the Court at Barcelona. The nobility, courtiers, and city authorities, came to the gates to meet him, and escorted him to the royal presence. Ferdinand and Isabella, seated under a superb canopy of state, rose as he approached, and begged him to be seated—unprecedented marks of



ANCIENT GOLD-WASHING AT ST. DOMINGO. (After an Old Engraving.)

honour in that proud court. Columbus had triumphed; he had for the time silenced the sneers and cavils and specious arguments of courtiers and ecclesiastics. Prescott* has well described the interview. In reciting his adventures, "his manner was sedate and dignified, but warmed with the glow of natural enthusiasm. He enumerated the several islands which he had visited, expatiated on the temperate character of the climate, and the capacity of the soil for every variety of agricultural productions. . . . He dwelt more at large on the precious metals to be found in these islands. . . . Lastly, he pointed out the wide scope afforded to Christian zeal, in the illumination of a race of men, whose minds, far from being wedded to any system of idolatry, were prepared by their extreme simplicity for the reception of pure and uncorrupted doctrine. This last consideration touched Isabella's heart most sensibly; and the whole audience, kindled with various emotions by the speaker's eloquence, filled up the perspective with the gorgeous colouring of their own fancies, as ambition, or avarice, or devotional feeling, predominated in their bosoms. When Columbus ceased, the king and queen, together with all present, prostrated themselves on their knees in grateful thanksgivings, while the solemn strains of the *Te Deum* were poured forth by the choir of the royal chapel, as in commemoration of some glorious victory." All kinds

* "History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella."