

ANNALS  
OF  
COMMERCE.

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A. D. 1492.

IT is not our intention to transcribe all the relations, which have been so often published in every part of Europe on the subject of the discovery of America, nor to enter minutely into the motives which induced the Genoese navigator, Christopher Colon (commonly called Columbus), to attempt so great an enterprise. The opinion of most authors is, that he founded his scheme upon his knowledge of the structure of the globe, in which he certainly surpassed the navigators of his age. But others, with greater probability, tell us, that he was assisted by the discoveries actually made by preceding navigators, and particularly by those of Martin Behem of Nuremberg. It is asserted, that the whale-fishers of Biscay had discovered the cod banks near Newfoundland about a century before the age of Columbus, of which he was informed. Canes, canoes, and dead bodies, resembling none of the people of Europe, were found floating in the sea, and were sometimes driven on the shores of the Azores (or Western islands) by strong westerly winds. It is said, that Columbus met with a sailor, who informed him, that having been driven by a storm about 450 leagues to the westward of Cape St. Vincent, he had found a piece of timber floating on the water, curiously wrought, but apparently without the use of any tool made of iron; and that a Portuguese vessel had actually been driven on the coast of some part of America in the year 1484, the pilot of which afterwards lodged and died in the house of Columbus, who then lived in the Azores; and that from that man's conversation, and his charts and journals, Columbus found sufficient assurance of the existence of a western land. At any rate, he