

PRE-COLUMBIAN DISCOVERY OF AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

A GENERAL REVIEW.

It is generally conceded that the greatest achievement recorded in the annals of history was the discovery of America by Columbus. It has been fraught with incalculable benefits to the human race. To the genius of Columbus must be ascribed all the honor and glory.

It is unnecessary in this place to narrate the great difficulties which Columbus was forced to surmount in order to accomplish his purpose. These have been so often set forth that all students of American history have become familiar with them. The world has deservedly accorded unbounded praise to the Genoese mariner, having called him the greatest of discoverers, and inscribed his name among the most illustrious of men.

Men being more or less inclined to theorize, and to a certain extent governed by race prejudice and religious rancor, it would not be surprising that there should be those who would attempt to pluck the laurel from the great explorer's brow. It is a shame that calumny and strong epithets should be resorted to in the discussion of a purely historical question. Upon the face of it there is a countenance of weakness in the cause of those who resort to such methods. Mere theories will arise and their associates will demand attention, however much facts may be distorted in order to substantiate their views. The weaker the cause the louder the contention.

There is quite an extensive literature relating to the so-called pre-Columbian discovery of America, and claims have been put forth in behalf of various persons more or less mythical. It would be a work of supererogation to enter into a discussion of all the views that have been proclaimed and the reasons therefor. When sifted none of them will bear a critical analysis, although documentary evidence is assumed to support ten or more of these hypotheses.

The one that takes rank in priority is that of Hoci-Shin, a Buddhist monk, who, in the year 499 A. D., returned from an extensive journey to the east and reported that he had visited a country lying about 6,600 miles to the east of Japan, and an