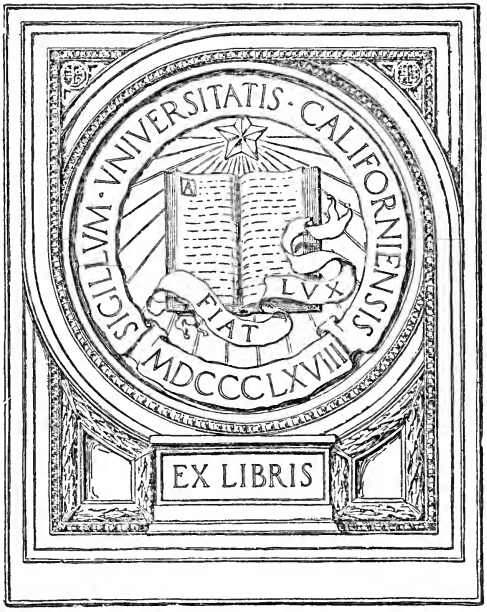
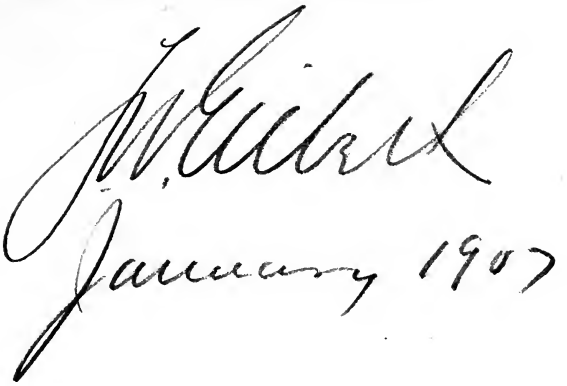
FOUR CENTURIES OF THE PANAMA CANAL

WILLIS FLETCHER JOHNSON




January 1907

FOUR CENTURIES OF THE PANAMA CANAL

Vaughan & Keith, Photo.

WILLIAM H. TAFT,
UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF WAR.

FOUR CENTURIES OF THE PANAMA CANAL

BY

1851-1931

WILLIS FLETCHER JOHNSON, A.M., L.H.D.

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WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO

WILLIAM H. TAFT,

SECRETARY OF WAR, JURIST, ADMINISTRATOR, DIPLOMAT,
AND, UNDER THE PRESIDENT, CHIEF BUILDER OF
THE PANAMA CANAL; IN SINCERE THOUGH IN-
ADEQUATE COMMEMORATION OF ESTEEMED
FRIENDSHIP AND INVALUABLE AID;
THIS VOLUME IS GRATEFULLY
AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDI-
CATED BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

I SHALL try in this book to tell the story of the Panama Canal, and incidentally that of Panama itself so far as the latter is necessary to the completeness of the former. It will be impossible for me to do so with any great elaboration of detail. The vastness of the topic forbids it; unless indeed this single volume were to be multiplied into many. The story is more than four centuries long, and it implicates, literally, mankind from China to Peru. Any one of half a dozen of its phases might well monopolise a volume. But I shall hope to give in these pages some account of all the really salient and essential features of the story, and especially to make clear the relationships of cause and effect among them, and to show how, by virtue of a somewhat devious train of incidents and circumstances leading from Christopher Columbus to Theodore Roosevelt, this country, in opportunity and privilege, in authority and responsibility, has become at Panama the "heir of all the ages." It will also be impossible for me to give much detailed description of the Isthmian country, of its conditions of resources, soil, and climate, of its people, or of the technical features of the canal and its auxiliary works. To each of half a dozen such topics, also, a volume might well be given. If I touch upon these more lightly and briefly than upon historical matters, that will be because this is to be a history rather than a descriptive treatise.

It is now more than a quarter of a century since I became, as a student of affairs and as a writer upon them, interested in the chief proposals and problems of Isthmian transit. Ferdinand de Lesseps had then achieved his splendid success at Suez, and was beginning his grandiose but fatuous undertaking at Panama; an American company was

planning the final and fruitless essay at Nicaragua; and James B. Eads was elaborating for Tehuantepec the most ambitious scheme of his engineering genius. In those projects, applied to routes which had been selected by Cortez, I became absorbed, and in all the years since that time I have striven to keep myself in touch with them, as long as two of them lasted, and with the one triumphant survivor down to the present. It was also my privilege, through the courtesy of the Government of the United States, and especially of its Secretary of War, the Hon. William H. Taft, to spend some time at Panama and there to study historical data, political and social conditions, and the various problems of the canal enterprise, under exceptionally favourable conditions of authority and intimacy, at what was probably the most important formative period thus far in the career of the Isthmian Republic and of our relations to it. The result will be found in this volume, in which I shall embody information acquired through personal investigation at Panama as well as in Washington and New York, and through inquiry of authoritative sources at Paris and Bogotá—the five cities, in four lands and three continents, in which the modern history of Panama and the Panama Canal has been chiefly made.

Much more might be said, not only than I shall have space to say, but also than it would be fitting for me to say. Much has been imparted to me which is of indispensable value to me in preparing this work, in directing me to other data, and in enabling me to judge correctly among diverse opinions and reports, but which confidence forbids me to reveal. I am deeply indebted, for information, opportunity, and aid, to Dr. Amador, the President of Panama, and to his son, Dr. R. A. Amador, the Panaman Consul-General in New York; to Dr. Arosemena, then First Designate of Panama; to Señor Obaldia, the Panaman Minister, and to Señor C. C. Arosemena, the Secretary of Legation, at Washington; to Señors J. A. Arango, Tomas Arias, Ramon M. Valdes, and other gentlemen at Panama; to the lamented John Hay,

then Secretary of State; to Mr. William H. Taft, Secretary of War; to Mr. F. B. Loomis, then Assistant Secretary of State; to Mr. John Barrett, then American Minister, and to Mr. Joseph Lee, then Secretary of Legation, at Panama; to Mr. Charles E. Magoon, then counsel to the Canal Commission and since Governor of the Canal Zone; to Rear-Admiral John A. Walker, then Chairman of the Canal Commission; to Mr. John F. Wallace, then Chief Engineer of the Canal; to Colonel William C. Gorgas, Chief of the Sanitary Staff of the Canal Zone; to Mr. William Nelson Cromwell, Counsel to the French Panama Canal Company; and to many others. I desire also to make grateful acknowledgments to the Editors of *The Forum* magazine and of *The Tribune* newspaper, of New York, for permission to use in this volume portions of various articles contributed by me to the pages of those publications.

With all its shortcomings,—which I sincerely trust no reader will realise as keenly as the writer,—this book will be offered to the public with a hope that it will in some measure, by suggesting inquiry and stimulating study as well as by imparting information, increase appreciation and right knowledge of an undertaking which is not only the greatest in our history but also the greatest of its kind in the history of the world, and which is to be completed not only for the immeasurable advantage of the American nation but also for the promotion of the welfare of all mankind.

WILLIS FLETCHER JOHNSON.

NEW YORK, *October*, 1906.

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CHAPTER I

THE QUEST OF COLUMBUS

THE design of Spanish adventurers in the fifteenth century is being fulfilled by American engineers in the twentieth century. That, in epitome, is the story of the Panama Canal, as it came vividly to mind during a recent visit to the Isthmus. There were present on that historic ground the associates and agents of President Roosevelt, and there were also those whose family names were on the rolls of Columbus's and Balboa's companies, and some whose ancestors probably came to the American shores with those discoverers. Such meeting of the representatives of the new and the old was suggestive, and it recalled the fact that Columbus was the practical founder of the Panama Canal enterprise, which, after four centuries of delay, President Roosevelt has undertaken to complete. Columbus was the first to propose a water highway from Europe to Asia, westward, by way of the Atlantic. It was such a highway that he sought, and not the new world which he actually found. The pre-Columbian voyages and explorations of the Northmen had given Europe no knowledge of America, and down to the time of the illustrious Genoese, Europe stood, figuratively, with its face toward Asia, and with its back turned toward the "Sea of Darkness," as the Atlantic was often called. So Columbus had no thought of finding a new continent, and no notion that one existed; nor indeed did he ever fully realise that he had found one. The lands which he dis-

covered he regarded to the end of his life as merely some outlying islands or fringes of the Asian continent, and as impediments or obstacles to be passed by in some way, in order to reach the mainland empire of Cathay. His theory was not that such a land as America existed, but that by crossing the Atlantic Ocean he would come directly to the shores of China and Japan; for he clung to the old fallacy that whatever was not Europe or Africa must be Asia. (Isidore of Seville had taught more than eight centuries before, concerning the globe: "Divisus est autem trifarie; e quibus una pars Asia, altera Europa, tertia Africa.")

It is true that his theory had been held by others, long before. Aristotle, Seneca, and Pliny had written the belief that one might reach the Indies of Asia in a few days by sailing westward from Spain. Strabo had put upon record the same theory, adding that Menelaus, after the fall of Troy, sailed past the Pillars of Hercules, around Africa, and so reached India. It is not impossible that some adventurous navigators in those early days had actually crossed the Atlantic, and, like Columbus, had mistaken America for Asia. Hanno of Carthage is, not incredibly, declared by Pliny to have sailed around Africa to Arabia, thus anticipating the plans of Henry the Navigator and the achievements of Vasco da Gama. Antonio Galvano, the Portuguese historian, citing Berosius, Gonsalvo Ferdinand de Oviedo, and Pliny, tells us that "in the six hundred and fiftieth year after the Flood there was a king in Spain named Hesperus, who in his time, as it is reported, went and discovered as far as Cape Verde, and the Island of St. Thomas, whereof he was Prince; and Gonsalvo Ferdinand de Oviedo affirmeth that in his time the Islands of the West Indies were discovered, and called somewhat after his name, Hesperides; and he allegeth many reasons to prove it, reporting particularly that in forty days they sailed from Cape Verde unto those Islands." Again, upon the authority of Aristotle ("Lib. de Mirandis in Natura Auditis"), Galvano relates:

"In the year 590 before the incarnation of Christ, there went out of Spain a fleet of Carthaginian merchants, upon their own proper costs and charges, which sailed toward the west through the high seas, to see if they could find any land; and they sailed so far that they found at last the islands which we now call the Antilles and New Spain; which Gonsalvo Ferdinand de Oviedo saith were then discovered; although Christopher Columbus afterwards, by his travel, got more exact knowledge of them and hath left us an evident notice where they be. But all these historians which wrote of these Antilles before, as of doubtful and uncertain things, and of places undiscovered, do now plainly confess the same to be the country of New Spain."

Coming down to a much later date, the same scribe tells us that "in the year 1344, King Peter, the fourth of that name, reigning in Aragon, the chronicles of his time report that one Don Lewis, of Cerda, grandson of Don Juan of Cerda, craved aid of him to go and conquer the Canary Islands, standing in 28 degrees of latitude to the north, because they were given to him by Pope Clement the Sixth, who was a Frenchman; by which means, in those days, there grew a great knowledge of those islands in all Europe, and particularly in Spain; for such great Princes would not begin nor enterprise things of such moment, without great certainty. . . . About this time also," continues our author, "the Island of Madeira was discovered by an Englishman named Macham; who, falling out of England into Spain, with a woman of his, was driven out of his direct course by a tempest, and arrived in that island and cast anchor in that haven which is now called Machico, after the name of Macham. And because his lover was then seasick, he went on land with some of his company; but in the meantime his ship weighed, and put to sea, leaving him behind; which accident occasioned his lover to die of grief. Macham, who was passionately fond of her, erected a chapel, or hermitage, in the island, to deposit her remains, naming it Jesus Chapel, and engraved on the stone of her tomb both their names and the occasion that brought them there.

After this he made himself a boat out of a tree (trees being there of a great circumference), and went to sea in it, with those men of his company that were left with him, and fell in with the coast of Africa, without sail or oar. The Moors, among whom he came, took it for a miracle, and presented him to the King of the country, who, also admiring the accident, sent him and his company to the King of Castile. In the year 1395, King Henry III reigning in Castile, the information Macham gave of this island and also of the ship wherein he went thither, moved many of France and Castile to go and discover it and the Great Canary." Still later, in 1428, "it is written that Don Peter, the King of Portugal's eldest son, who was a great traveller, went into England, France, Germany, and from thence to the Holy Land and other places; and came home by Italy, taking Rome and Venice in his way; from whence he brought a map of the world which had all the parts of the world and the earth described. The Strait of Magellan was called in it The Dragon's Tail. . . ." Who was the author of this extraordinary map, and what became of it, are unknown. There are many other chronicles of early voyages to the Canary and Madeira Islands, and of voyages along the African Coast, even to and around the Cabo de Bona Speranza, or Cape of Good Hope.

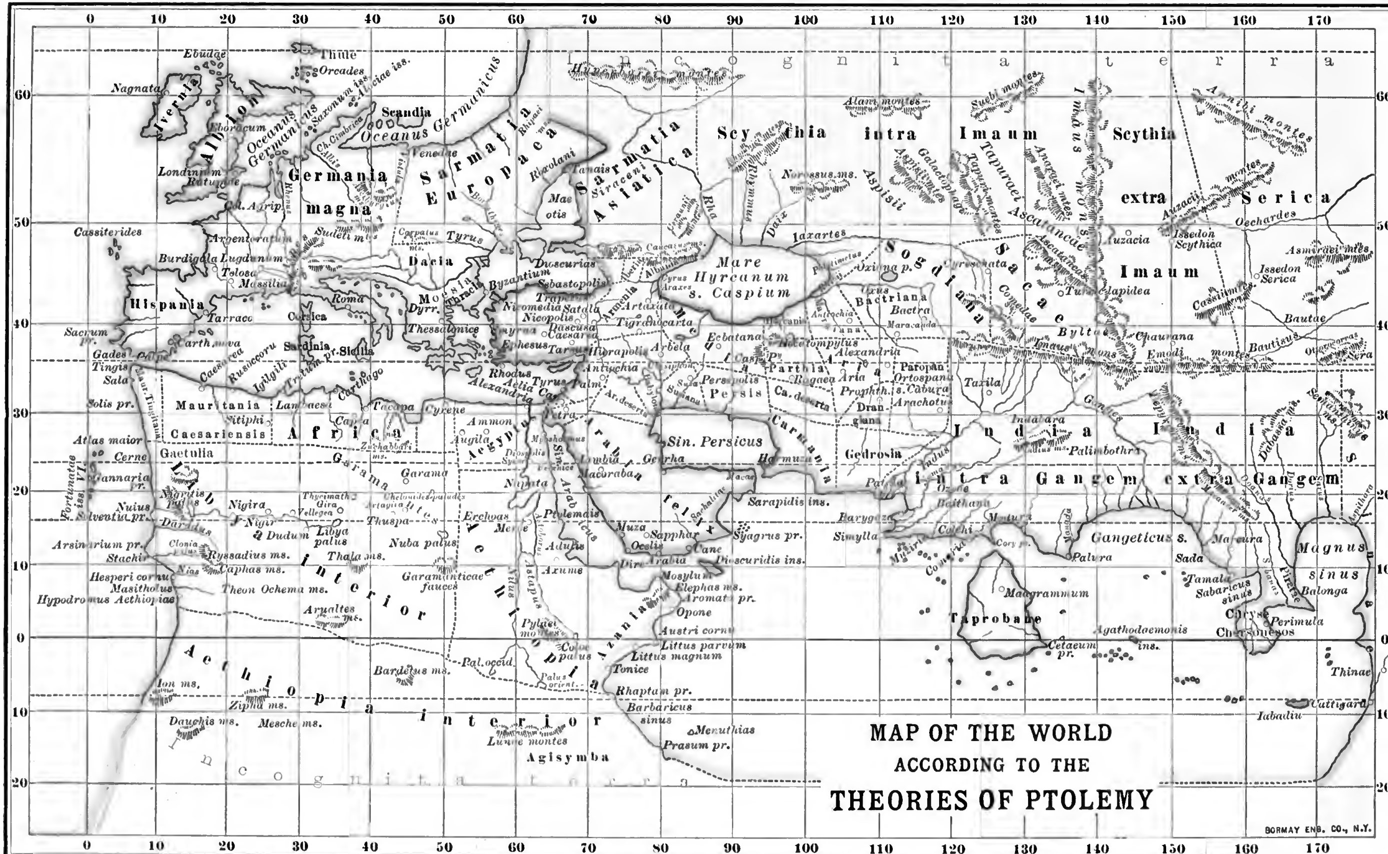
One of the most important steps toward the enterprise of Columbus was taken in 1245 and 1253. In the former year Friar John, of Plano Carpini, was sent by Pope Innocent IV as a missionary to the Great Khan, and in the latter year William of Rubruquis, a monk, was sent by King Louis (St. Louis) of France on a similar errand. These pious and observant men learned much from the Chinese whom they met about their empire of Khitai, or Cathay, and especially that at the east it bordered upon a great sea. This was the first definite information to that effect which Europe had received since classical times, and it set philosophers and geographers to thinking. Since Europe fronted upon an ocean at the west, and Asia fronted upon an ocean at the

east, it seemed probable—nay, it seemed certain—that those oceans were one and the same, and by sailing due west from Europe the eastern shore of Asia would be reached. But though this theory was thus revived and discussed in the thirteenth century, it was not for two hundred years adopted as a rule of action; and, with all these preliminaries, it seems to be pretty well established that in the latter part of the fifteenth century there was only one man who practically believed in a westward waterway from Europe to the Indies, or who was sufficiently earnest in his belief to put it to the test.

It was about 1474 that the great enterprise was definitely conceived. Columbus was then at Lisbon, upon the very brink of the unexplored Atlantic. For aid and encouragement in his scheme he is said to have entered into correspondence with his countryman, Paolo Toscanelli. Whether he really did so or not, whether the famous map and letter of Toscanelli were what they were said to be or were mere forgeries, and indeed whether Columbus had, in advance of his first voyage, any definite scientific theory, are questions immaterial to the present argument, which need not be considered here. The recent researches and writings of Mr. Harrisse, Mr. Vignaud, and their contemporaries have thrown much light upon the early career of Columbus, and have placed it in a somewhat different aspect from that familiar to readers of Irving and other early historians. It is sufficient for our purpose to note that grave doubt has been thrown upon the whole story of Toscanelli's aid and encouragement to Columbus, but to note, also, that whatever be the truth of that matter, the theory and the aim of Columbus's venture remain indisputable; and they are all with which this writing is concerned.

According to the old story, then, Toscanelli, a Florentine and one of the foremost geographers of his time, sent to Columbus two documents, priceless for information. One was a map which he had prepared, partly according to the theories of Ptolemy, but somewhat more according to the

reports of Marco Polo. The other was a copy of a letter which Toscanelli is said to have written to Ferdinand Martinez, or Martins, of Lisbon, in answer to some questions which King Alfonso V of Portugal had asked. The map was a map of the world, showing the eastern coast of Asia to be at the western side of the Atlantic Ocean, about 4,000 miles west from Europe. The northern part of China was called Cathay, and the southern part Mangi, or Mangu. Off the coast were two great islands, one of which, Cipango, or Zipangu, may be identified with Japan, and the other, Antilla (which had been mentioned by Aristotle), corresponding with Formosa. There was also some indication of the Philippine Archipelago. The letter to Martinez was an explanation of the map and an argument of the practicability of sailing from Lisbon due west to China, a distance, as Toscanelli believed, of only 4,000 miles; for King Alfonso had asked whether in Toscanelli's opinion the Indies and China could be reached by sailing across the Atlantic more readily than by circumnavigating Africa. In after years Arias Perez Pinzon, son of Martin Alonzo Pinzon, the fellow-voyager of Columbus, testified that he and his father had seen in Rome, in the Vatican library, a manuscript written by a historian "contemporary with Solomon," in which it was set forth that by sailing due westward from the Pillars of Hercules a distance of 95 degrees of longitude, one might reach the "Land of Cipango," a country equal in size to Europe and Africa united. The identity of that alleged manuscript has not been certainly determined. That it was of Solomon's time seems most improbable. That it was the work of Marco Polo is by no means impossible, or even improbable. The chief interest of it, if Pinzon's report was true, is that it seems to have hinted at a new continent, instead of merely the eastern part of Asia, and that it makes the distance from Spain to Cipango about the same as that which Toscanelli and Columbus reckoned—their figures being 120 degrees from the Azores to Thinae, the latter being probably a considerable distance west of Cipango. It


MAP OF THE WORLD
ACCORDING TO THE
THEORIES OF PTOLEMY
BORMAY ENG. CO., N.Y.
Incognita terra
Ivernia
Albion
Germania magna
Sarmatia Europaea
Sarmatia Asiatica
Scythia intra Imaum
Scythia extra Imaum
Serica
Sogdiana
Sacae
Mare Hyrcanum s. Caspium
Hispania
Mauritania Caesariensis
Africa
Libya interior
Aethiopia interior
Aegyptus
Arabia felix
Sin. Persicus
Persis
Carmania
Gedrosia
India intra Gangem
India extra Gangem
Gangeticus s.
Taprobane
Magnus sinus
Scandia
Dacia
Roma
Byzantium
Alexandria
Agisymba
Lunae montes
Imaus montes
Fortunatae ins.

may be noted, by the way, that 95 degrees of longitude westward from the Pillars of Hercules bring us a little beyond the extreme western shore of the Gulf of Mexico.

These geographical details of the Pacific coast of Asia are said to have been derived by Toscanelli chiefly from the reports of Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville—travellers who were once ignorantly denounced, as was Herodotus, as great liars, but who have since been vindicated, as he was, in their remarkable and substantial accuracy. Aristotle had mentioned Antilla, from sources of information which seem to have been lost soon after his time. Ptolemy knew nothing of Asia further east than Thinae, if indeed he can be said to have known anything of that legendary place. Just what or where Thinae was is matter of conjecture. It may have been a province of China, or China itself. It may have been the old Chinese capital of Si-Ngan, in Shen-Si, in east longitude 109°; or Tai-Yuan, in Shan-Si, in east longitude 112°30′; or yet Lo-Jang, in east longitude 113°. Ptolemy, following Herodotus, put it in what is now east longitude 150°, and two or three degrees south of the equator; that is to say, in the Pacific Ocean northeast of New Guinea. That was only one of many similar inaccuracies. Thus he placed the mouth of the Ganges midway between Hainan and Luzon; the Golden Chersonesus just northwest of New Guinea; the great island of Taprobane (Ceylon) west of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula; and the Chinese city of Sera, now Cha-Ngan, which really is in east longitude 110°, he put in east longitude 147°, or in the Pacific Ocean east of Japan.

Ptolemy, moreover, supposed Asia and Africa to be connected at the south as well as at Suez, and the Indian Ocean to be an inland sea resembling the Mediterranean. According to his mind, beyond the Golden Chersonesus, or Malay Peninsula, lay a great gulf, which we know as the Gulf of Siam. Its further shore, instead of ending at Cape Cambodia, he carried southward, making it continuous with Borneo and the western end of Australia, and then, about

20 degrees south of the equator, brought it due westward so as to join Africa at Zanzibar or Mozambique. How access was had to this inland Indian Ocean from the Atlantic does not appear, though, as we have seen, Aristotle, Seneca, Pliny, and others had held that there was such access. Of the southern shore of the land south of the Indian Ocean, and of the eastern shore of the land east of the Gulf of Siam, Ptolemy professed no knowledge.

Of course this over-extension of the Asian continent eastward correspondingly restricted the remaining space in the circuit of the globe, between the east coast of Asia and the west coast of Europe; and this error in reckoning was further exaggerated by under-estimating the size of the earth itself. Perversely enough, the discovery of facts in some measure increased the error. For Marco Polo and Mandeville, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, explored the remainder of the Asian continent, clear to the Pacific coast, and confirmed the reports of Friar John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruquis in describing its frontage upon a great ocean, which was forthwith assumed to be the Atlantic. As they showed Thinae to be far inland from that coast, it was assumed that the Asian continent extended much further eastward than the longitude which had been attributed to Thinae, and that there was therefore only a small part of the earth's circle left between Asia and Europe.

In constructing his scheme of geography, then, Toscanelli clung to the old error of supposing there to be only one ocean; and the still greater error of vastly underestimating the distance across it from Europe westward to China. Ptolemy had known the world, or had thought he did, from Thinae in the east to the Canary Islands in the west, and the Portuguese under Henry the Navigator had advanced knowledge westward to the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands. Working from these data, Toscanelli divided the circuit of the globe into 360 degrees, subdivided into 24 hours of 15 degrees each. Then he reckoned that the distance from Thinae to the Azores was 16 of the 24 hours, or 240 of the

360 degrees, or two-thirds of the circumference of the globe. There remained, then, between the Azores and Thinae, going westward, only eight hours or 120 degrees, or one-third the circumference of the globe. Moreover, as Thinae was a considerable distance inland from the eastern coast of Asia, there was thus left between Asia and Europe room for only a comparatively narrow ocean, about the actual width of the Atlantic. He is said to have written to Columbus in 1474 that from Lisbon westward to Quisai—now Hang-Chow—then the capital of China, was only 6,500 miles. Practically, Toscanelli eliminated the American continents and the Pacific Ocean, and vastly exaggerated the extension of Asia toward the east, putting the eastern coast of Asia near where the western coast of America is. These incorrect estimates prevailed for a long time. Antonio Galvano, writing as late as 1555, and reviewing all the records of his predecessors, said:

"I gather by all the precedent discoveries that the whole earth is in circuit 360 degrees, and to every degree ancient writers allow seventeen leagues and a half, which amount to 6,300 leagues; yet I take it that every degree is just seventeen leagues. However it be, all is discovered and sailed from the east to the west, almost even as the sun compasseth it; but from the south to the north there is great difference; for towards the north pole there is discovered no more than 77 or 78 degrees, which come to 1,326 leagues, and towards the south pole there is discovered from the equinoxial to 52 or 53 degrees, that is, to the Strait Magellan passed through, which amounts to about 900 leagues; and putting both these said sums together, they amount to about 2,026 leagues. Now, take so many out of 6,300 leagues, there remaineth as yet undiscovered, north and south, above the space of 4,000 leagues."

Accepting Toscanelli's erroneous reckoning of the width of Asia, Columbus estimated that he would reach China and Japan at just about the distance from Spain, and in just about the longitude, in which he actually found America. With the legends of Atlantis, St. Brandan, and the Island

of the Seven Cities, we need not now concern ourselves. Columbus appears to have put no faith in them. His aim was to reach the Indies, to wit, Cathay, Mangi, Cipango, and Antilla, and to do so by means of an unbroken waterway westward across the Atlantic. In this it was providential that he did make the error which we have noted concerning the distance, for he would scarcely have ventured to set out upon a supposed journey of more than 12,000 miles across an unknown sea.

This aim appeared in almost every part of his great work. When he set forth on his first voyage in 1492, he carried, according to his subsequent statement, letters from the sovereigns of Leon and Castile to the Great Khan of Tartary. In his Journal, on the very opening page, he recorded that he was being sent to India, to "a Prince who is called the Great Khan," and that he was about to sail westward, on and on, until he should "arrive at the Indies." There was not a word nor a thought about the seeking of a new continent. His maps and charts indicated the coasts of Europe and Africa, from the British Isles to Guinea, and, directly opposite them, in the same latitude, at the west side of the Atlantic Ocean, the coast of Asia, with Cathay at the north and Mangi at the south, and with Cipango lying almost exactly where Florida really was. Toward Cipango he directed his course, and kept it so well that he arrived at the Bahamas, off the Florida coast. It was a part of his mission to convert the Great Khan of Tartary to Christianity, wherefore he called the first island he reached San Salvador, the Land of the Holy Saviour, and, supposing it to be a part of the Indies, he called the inhabitants Indians. When the natives spoke of the mainland lying north and west, he assumed it to be Cathay, and when they told of a greater island at the south, called Cuba, he supposed it to be Cipango. Sailing southward among the Bahamas, he thought himself among the Philippines, or other Asian islands described by Marco Polo, and on reaching Cuba he had no doubt that it was Cipango. When, however, Marco

Alonzo Pinzon reported to him that the natives were speaking of a place called Cubanacan, he identified that name with Kublai Khan, and assumed that he was on the mainland of Cathay, and about only 100 leagues from the capital of the Great Khan. This practice of confusing native names in the American islands with those in Asia of which he had heard, was continued, with further misleading results. Thus, when he heard the island of Santo Domingo called Quisqueya, he identified it with Quisai, the Chinese metropolis mentioned by Marco Polo; and when the natives named the place as Cibao he supposed that name to be a corruption of Cipango. Constantly, as Lamartine observed, the phantom of Asia interposed itself between Columbus and America, to rob him, for a chimera, of a great reality. Finally, on his return from this voyage, Columbus explicitly reported to the King of Portugal that he had not been to any of the African lands claimed by that monarch, but to Cipango and to India; the Spanish sovereigns addressed him as "Viceroy and Governor of the Islands discovered in the Indies"; and the general supposition in Europe was that he had reached the eastern coast of Asia, and that Cuba was a part of the mainland of Cathay. The letter of Columbus to Ferdinand and Isabella, reporting the result of his voyage, was entitled a "letter . . . concerning the Islands discovered in the Indian Sea," or, "the Islands of India beyond the Ganges," and in the opening passages of that letter Columbus said: "On the 33rd day . . . I came to the Indian Sea."

This delusion was not corrected but rather confirmed by his second voyage. He then explored the many islands of the Caribbean Sea, and believed himself to be among the 7,440 islands near Cipango, described by Marco Polo, who probably referred to Formosa and the Loo Choos, or possibly the Philippines. Marco Polo, following Aristotle's nomenclature, had named an island in that region Antilla, whence Columbus—or else Peter Martyr—gave to these islands the name of the Antilles. Thence Columbus revisited Cuba,

skirting its southern coast for a long distance. Natives assured him that nobody had ever travelled so far as its western extremity, wherefore he was confirmed in his belief that it was indeed the mainland of Asia. Again the native nomenclature led him into self-deception, for hearing of a province named Mangon, he unhesitatingly identified it with the Mangi of Marco Polo. When he was told it was inhabited by people with tails, who wore long garments to conceal those appendages, he found in that report further confirmation of his belief; for he recalled that Sir John Mandeville had mentioned the alleged existence of such a tribe in Asia. Thus encouraged, he kept on, expecting to reach the Golden Chersonesus, or Malay Peninsula, and thus circumnavigate the world, returning to Europe by way of the Indian Ocean. He in fact went as far as the Bay of Philippina, or Cortez, and then turned back, still confident in his belief that Cuba was Cathay, and that Hispaniola, or Santo Domingo, was Cipango. Nor did he learn the truth on his third voyage, but instead added to his stock of errors. Directing his course further southward than before, in order to ascertain whether the people of equatorial Asia (which he supposed South America to be) were like those of Africa, he reached the Island of Trinidad, and the coast of Venezuela. He correctly judged the land at the south and west of the Gulf of Paria to be part of a great continent, though he persisted in the error of supposing it to be either Asia or a continent lying just south of Asia. But he cherished the extraordinary notion that it occupied the "highest part of the globe," and was the seat of the Garden of Eden, and that the great torrent of fresh water which flowed into the Gulf of Paria proceeded from the fountain which fed the Tree of Life!

The fourth and last voyage of Columbus was dominated by the same erroneous conceptions, and was in addition marked with the beginning of that quest for the "Secret of the Strait" which so greatly occupied the attention of his successors for many years, and which has scarcely yet been

wholly relinquished. Says the historian and explorer Galvano, citing Gomara:

"In this same year, 1502, Christopher Columbus entered the fourth time into his discovery, with four ships, at the command of Don Ferdinand, to seek the Strait which, as they said, did divide the land from the other side. . . . They went first to the Island of Hispaniola, to Jamaica, to the river Azua, to the Cape of Higueras, to the Islands Gamares, and to the Cape of Honduras, that is to say, the Cape of the Depths. From thence they sailed towards the east, unto the Cape Gracias á Dios, and discovered the province and river of Veraguas, and Rio Grande, and others which the Indians called Hiemra; and from thence he went to the River of Crocodiles, which is now called Rio de Chagres, which hath its springs near the South Sea, within four leagues of Panama, and runneth into the North Sea; and so he went unto the island which is called Isla de Bastimentos, that is, the Isle of Victuals; and then to Porto Bello, that is, the Fair Haven; and so unto Nombre de Dios, and to Rio Francisco, and so to the Haven of Retreat; and then to the Gulf of Cabesa Cattiva, and to the Islands of Caperosa; and, lastly, to the Cape of Marble, which is 200 leagues upon the coast; from thence they began to turn again to the Island of Cuba."

Thus is the story briefly told by the old historian, with some terminology strange to modern ears. To paraphrase the narrative, and to amplify it in the light of other knowledge, we may say that, being refused entrance to the harbours of Hispaniola, Columbus directed his course westward, passing completely by Cuba without realising the fact and its significance, and reached Roatan, the Bay Islands, and the coast of Honduras. There, on the mainland of Central America, he found native tribes more civilised than any he had seen before, and accordingly assumed that at last he was approaching the capital of the Great Khan. The mainland of Honduras he believed to be continuous with Cuba and to be Cochin China, the southeastern part of Asia; and he supposed that if he went northward he would presently reach that south coast of Cuba, along which he had sailed on his

second voyage, and would thus be compelled to return eastward. Thus, to our lasting regret, he was deterred from going on to Yucatan and visiting that country while it was yet in the glories of Mayan civilisation. Instead, he turned southward, to seek the Golden Chersonesus, and to go home to Europe by way of the Strait of Malacca, which he believed was to be found somewhere between Honduras and Venezuela—between Cochin China, Cathay, and Mangi at the north, and the Garden of Eden at the south. That "Secret of the Strait" thereafter engaged his chief attention. He rounded Cape Gracias á Dios, and so went down the Mosquito Coast, along Costa Rica, to the Chiriqui Lagoon, and along the coast of Veraguas, the western part of the Caribbean coast of Panama. There he reckoned that he was only ten days' journey from the mouth of the Ganges River. The natives told him he was nearing what they called "a narrow place between two seas." They meant, of course, a narrow strip of land, the Isthmus of Panama. But Columbus, always believing that which he wished to be true, confidently assumed it to be a narrow strip of water—the much desired Strait. No such Strait appearing, however, he pressed on to the eastward along the Panama coast, entering the Bay of Limon and the mouth of the Chagres River. On November 2, 1502, he entered the Bay of Porto Bello, east of Colon, and thence proceeded to Nombre de Dios. Finally at El Retrete, on December 5, he abandoned for a time the quest of the Strait in that direction and turned back to the westward, to explore more carefully the coast of Panama along which he had already sailed. He spent the winter there, chiefly on the coast of Veraguas, which, because of its gold mines, he firmly believed to be a part of the Golden Chersonesus. He vainly sought to plant a permanent colony on the Belen River. At the end of April he set out again in quest of the Strait. Reaching the Mulatas Islands, near Point Blas, he identified them with a part of Mangi, or southeastern Asia. Past them he proceeded as far as the entrance to the Gulf of Darien, and then, instead of entering it and exploring its

waters and shores, the very native habitat of the Legend of the Strait, he turned northward and eastward, and on May 1 started back for Hispaniola, never again to approach the mainland of the American continent.

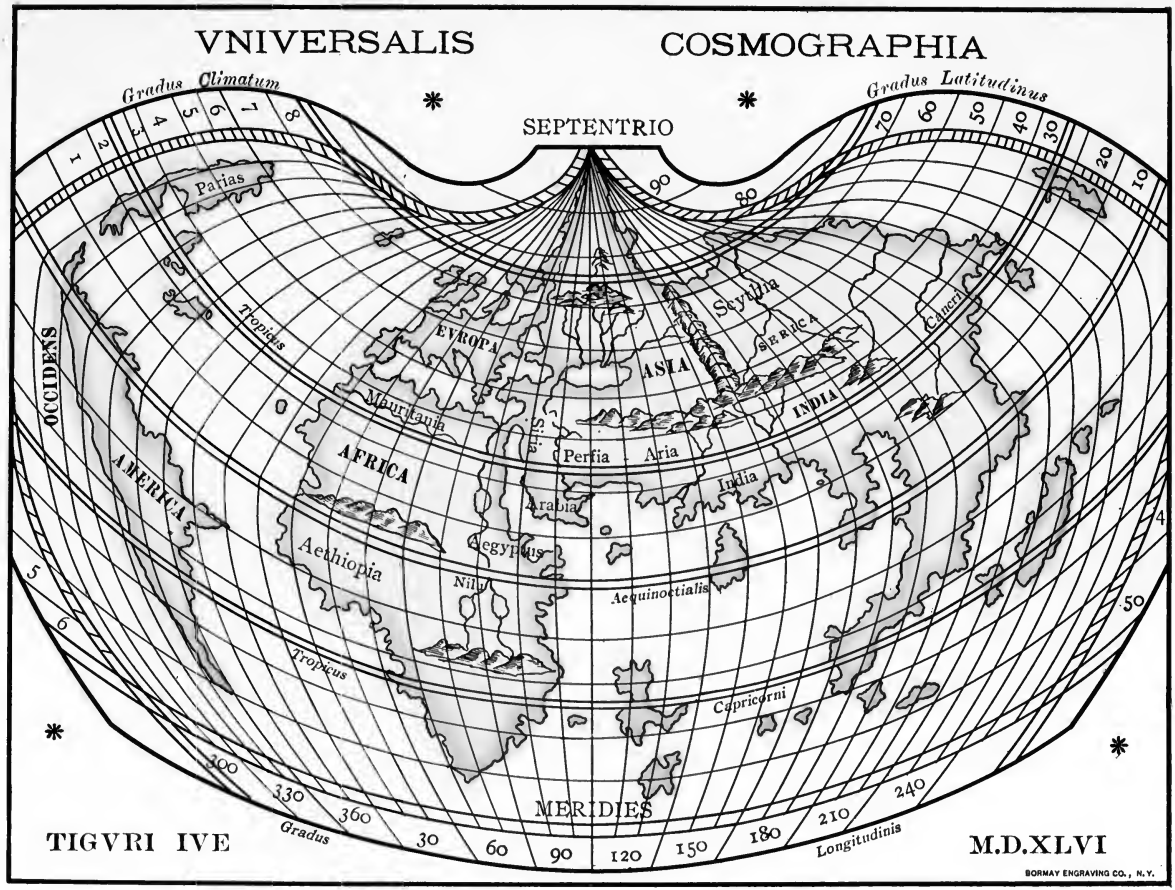
Thus he ended his career under the same delusion which had marked its beginning, and left his actual aim unaccomplished, though in the unconscious fulfilment of a far greater aim. He died in the unshaken belief that he had reached the Asian coast, and in ignorance of his real discovery of a thitherto unknown continent, and without finding the mythical Strait for which he sought. He had indeed "builded better than he knew." In his will he reaffirmed the error he had cherished, declaring that "It pleased the Lord Almighty that in the year 1492 I should discover the Continent of the Indies and many islands, among them Hispaniola, which the Indians call Ayte and the Monicongos, Cipango." It was not until 1508, two years after his death, that Cuba was circumnavigated, and thus found not to be a part of the mainland; though it may be that Amerigo Vespucci, in 1497-8, practically achieved that enterprise without realising its significance, by sailing around the Gulf of Mexico from Yucatan to Florida.

It is true that upon the Admiral's coat-of-arms was placed the well-merited inscription, "A Castilla y á Leon, Nuevo mundi dio Colon"—To Castile and Leon, Columbus gave a New World. But it is not certain that Columbus himself was the author of that inscription, or of the phrase "New World." Peter Martyr seems to have been the first to speak of the lands discovered by Columbus as the "New World," in a letter written by him in 1494, while Amerigo Vespucci, in 1503, was probably the first to use the phrase in a published book; but Vespucci cherished the same delusions that Columbus did. Writing to Lorenzo de Medici, on July 18, 1500, after his voyage to America, he reported that about a month before he had "arrived from the Indies;" of the Venezuelan and Colombian coast, which he had explored, he said he had concluded that "this land was a continent, which might be

bounded by the eastern parts of Asia, this being the commencement of the western part of the continent;" he spoke of having discovered "a very large country of Asia;" and he promised in his next voyage to discover "the Island of Taprobane, between the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of the Ganges." Orontius Finæus, in 1531, upon a geographical globe, indicated Florida as the eastern coast of Asia, and Mexico, Central America, and South America as an enormous peninsula extending south and east from the continent of Asia.

Centuries afterward, the illustrious scientist, Alexander von Humboldt, in his "Personal Narrative," spoke of the oldest existing map of America as that of John Ruysch; a map of the world, annexed to a Roman edition of Ptolemy in 1508. "We there," said Humboldt, "find Yucatan and Honduras figured as an island, by the name of Culicar. There is no Isthmus of Panama, but a passage, which permits of a direct navigation from Europe to India. The great southern island bears the name of Terra de Parias." That map was dated two years after the death of Columbus, and probably embodied the best conception of American geography which he and his contemporaries had been able to form.

Since Humboldt's time, however, there has come to light another map, of an earlier date. This is a map of the world drawn by Martin Waldseemüller (also known as Ilacomilus, or Hylacomylus, his own translation of his name into Greek), in 1507. This map follows in general the theories of Ptolemy, but of course shows much that was unknown to that earlier geographer. It is especially interesting in connection with the subject now in hand, for the reason that it indicates North America and South America as entirely separate continents, with a broad seaway between them, connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific. The North American continent is called on it Parias, and the southern continent bears the name of America. This map apparently accompanied a little Latin book, written by Waldseemüller and published in April, 1507, in which it was suggested that the New World



THE WORLD ACCORDING TO WALDSEEMÜLLER.

should be named for Amerigo Vespucci. "Quarta orbis pars, quam quia Americus invenit Amerigen, quasi America terram, sive American, nuncupare licet;" or, "the fourth part of the world, which it is proper to call America, or American Land, since Amerigo discovered it." Again, in another chapter: "Alia quarta pars per Americum Vesputium, ut in sequentibus audietur, inventa est: quare non video, cur quis jure vetet ab Americo inventore sagacis ingenii viro Amerigen, quasi Americi terram, sive Americam, dicendam;" or, "the other fourth part (of the world) was discovered, as will appear in what follows, by Amerigo Vespucci; wherefore I do not see why any one can lawfully object to its being called the Land of Amerigo, or America, after Amerigo or Americo, the man of genius who discovered it by his sagacity." (It will be recalled that Amerigo Vespucci is said to have accompanied Ojeda to the Isthmus of Panama in 1499, and to have been the first European to set foot upon Terra Firma, as the mainland of the American continent was then called.)

Nevertheless, the error of his conceptions and of his conclusions in no way detracts from the glory of Columbus. He went to seek a new road to a known continent. Instead, he found two hitherto unknown continents, and to their colonised inhabitants in after centuries he left the lesser work of creating by artifice the water highway which he had sought, but which he had sought in vain because nature had failed to create it.