



Engraved according to note of Conger in the probate of C. Edwards Lester in the clerk's office of the District Court of the Southern District of New York.

From the celebrated Portrait of the Discoverer painted from life by Verrochio - always preserved by the family and by them committed to C. Edwards Lester Esq. U. S. Consul to Genoa - 1840

Engd by C.

THE
LIFE AND VOYAGES
OF
AMERICUS VESPUCCIUS;
WITH
ILLUSTRATIONS CONCERNING THE NAVIGATOR,
AND
THE DISCOVERY OF THE NEW WORLD.

Agit grates, peregrinaque oscula terrae
Figit, et ignotos montes agrosque salutat.
Ovid, Met. lib. v. 14.

BY C. EDWARDS LESTER,

AND
ANDREW FOSTER.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE

REV. T. WOODBRIDGE,

OF AUSTERLITZ, N. Y.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

I should long ago have inscribed to you some one of my books, if I had written one worthy of being dedicated to my earliest and latest Teacher, and my truest Friend. Long study and calm reflection have made you familiar with almost every department of learning: and I am happy in the thought that, while you read this volume as a scholar, you will judge it as a friend.

One of my earliest recollections is of leading you through the gardens, and maple groves, and green fields of the home of my childhood; when I looked up and saw serene cheerfulness always beaming from your face, and heard you talk about all my little sports, I could not then solve the mystery that one whose eyes the holy light of heaven never visited, could sympathize so warmly with everything around him.

Since then the lights and shadows of more than twenty-five years have fallen upon our path—nor have I ever, in all my wanderings, found a fellow-man, to whom you could not say,

"I see a hand you cannot see;
I hear a voice you cannot hear."

If I have accomplished any thing in life worthy of your approbation, I owe it chiefly to your sage counsels and generous encourage-

ther of Piero towards his family, than the more recent doings of the son. At the pontifical court he was received with much distinction, although he never wavered in his attachment to the rights of his countrymen and the cause of liberty. He ended his days at Rome, and died regretted and respected by all the intelligent and patriotic men of the day.¹

Letter of Americus to Piero Soderini, Perpetual Gonfaloniere of the Republic of Florence, giving an account of his First Voyage.²

MOST EXCELLENT SIR:—

(After my humble reverence and due commendation)—It may be that your Excellency, with your well-known wisdom, will be astonished at my temerity, in that I have been so absurdly moved to address you my present very prolix letter, knowing that your Excellency is continually occupied in the arduous duties and pressing business of State. I may be termed not only presumptuous, but idle, in writing things neither convenient nor pleasing to your state, and which were formerly written in barbarous style, destitute of the polish of literature, and directed to Don Ferdinand, king of Castile; but the confidence I have in your virtues, as well as in the truth of what I write, concerning things

¹ Biog. Universelle, tom. xlii. p. 567, 568.

² The direction of the letter in the edition of Gruniger, which is followed by Navarréte, reads as follows: To the Most Illustrious, the King of Jerusalem and Sicily, the Duke of Lorraine and Bar.

—Navarréte, tom. iii. p. 191.

described neither by ancient nor modern authors, has emboldened me in my undertaking.

The principal reason why I am induced to write, is the request of the bearer, Benvenuto Benvenuti, the devoted servant of your Excellency, and my very particular friend. He happened to be here in this city of Lisbon, and requested that I would impart to your Excellency a description of the things seen by me in various climes, in the course of four voyages which I have made for the discovery of new lands, two by the authority and command of Don Ferdinand VI., the King of Castile, in the great Western Ocean, and the other two by order of Don Emanuel, King of Portugal, towards the south. So I resolved to write to your Excellency, and set about the performance of my task, because I am certain that your Excellency counts me among the number of your most devoted servants; remembering that in the time of our youth, we were friends, going daily to study the rudiments of grammar, under the excellent instruction of the venerable and religious Brother of St. Mark, Friar Georgio Antonio Vespucchi, my uncle, whose counsels, would to God I had followed! for then, as Petrarch says, I should have been a different man from what I am.

However that may be, I do not complain, inasmuch as I have always delighted in those things which are virtuous, and in literary pursuits; and now that these my trifling affairs may not be disagreeable to your virtuous mind, I will say to you, as Pliny said to Mæcenas, "You were once accustomed to be

pleased with my prattling."¹ However constantly employed you may be in public affairs, you can snatch some hours of relaxation, for the purpose of reading those things which, however trifling, will amuse by their novelty; for with the cares and engrossment of business, these letters of mine will mingle, as it is customary to mingle fennel with savoury viands, to dispose them for better digestion. And if perchance I am more prolix than I ought to be, I ask your Excellency's pardon.

Your Excellency will please to observe, that I came into the kingdom of Spain for the purpose of engaging in mercantile affairs, and that I continued to be thus employed about four years, during which time I saw and experienced the fickle movements of fortune, and how she ordered the changes of these transitory and perishing worldly goods; at one time sustaining a man at the top of the wheel, and at another returning him to the lowest part thereof, and depriving him of her favours, which may truly be said to be lent.² Thus having experienced the continual labour of one who would acquire her favours, subjecting myself to vastly many inconveniences and dangers, I concluded to abandon mercantile affairs, and direct my attention

¹ He meant to have said, "as Catullus said to Cornelius Nepos." This mistake goes but little way to prove a want of classical information, which Navarréte seems inclined to impute to the navigator.

² These four years may be considered to be the four which preceded his departure on his first voyage in 1497, embracing the time of his connexion with Berardi, and his management of the business after his partner's death.

to something more laudable and stable. For this purpose I prepared myself to visit various parts of the world, and see the wonderful things which might be found therein. Time and place were very opportunely offered me.

King Ferdinand of Castile had ordered four ships to go in search of new lands, and I was selected by his highness to go in that fleet, in order to assist in the discoveries. We sailed from the port of Cadiz on the tenth day of May, A. D. 1497, and steering our course through the great Western Ocean, spent eighteen months in our expedition, discovering much land, and a great number of islands, the largest part of which were inhabited.¹ As these are not spoken of by ancient writers, I presume they were ignorant of them. If I am not mistaken, I well remember to have read in one of their books which I possessed, that this ocean was considered unpeopled; and our poet Dante also held this opinion, judging by the twenty-sixth canto of *L'Inferno*, where he sings the fate of Ulysses.² In

¹ Giuntini writes 17 as required by the departure on 10th May, 1497, and return on 15th October, 1498. But Giuntini also has the departure on the 20th of May, and arrival on 25th of October. It is easy to infer that the first translator of this voyage took from his manuscript the figure 2 for the figure 1.—*Canovai, Viaggi, &c.*, tom. i. p. 49, note. Navarréte cavils unnecessarily at this very natural inaccuracy. The voyage ac-

tually took seventeen months and five days, but in his introductory remarks, Vespucci speaks approximately.—*Navarréte*, tom. iii.

² Oh! brothers, I began, who to the west
Through perils without number now
have reached
To this the short remaining watch,
that yet
Our senses have to wake, refuse not
proof
Of the unpeopled world, following the
track
Of Phœbus.
Carey's Dante, Canto xxvi. p. 181, 182.

this voyage I saw many astonishing things, as your Excellency will perceive by the following relation:

VOYAGE THE FIRST.

Departure
from Cadiz,
May 10th,
1497.

In the year of our Lord 1497, on the tenth day of May, as before stated, we left the port of Cadiz with four ships in company.¹ The first land we made was that of the Fortunate Islands, which are now called the Grand Canaries, situated in the Western Ocean, as far as the habitable world was supposed to extend, being located in the third climate, where the North Pole is elevated twenty-seven and a half degrees above the horizon, and distant from the city of Lisbon (where this letter is written) two hundred and eighty leagues. Having arrived here, with south and southerly winds, we tarried eight days, taking in wood and water and other necessities, when, having offered up our prayers, we weighed anchor and set sail, steering a course west by south.

We sailed so rapidly, that at the end of twenty-

¹ Giuntini, Canovai, and Navarrete, all introduce this with the following heading, which is omitted in the text. "Description of various lands and islands not spoken of by ancient authors found in the year 1497, and thereafter in four voyages, that is, two in the Western Ocean under the authority of Ferdinand, King of Castile, and the other two in the South Sea, in

the name of Emanuel, King of Portugal. Americus Vesputius, one of the principal pilots and sea captains, sending the following account of them to the aforesaid Ferdinand, King of Castile."

² The addition of Gruniger gives the date of the departure as 20th of May. On comparison with other editions, this appears to be an error.

seven days we came in sight of land, which we judged to be a continent, being about a thousand leagues west of the Grand Canaries, and within the Torrid Zone, as we found the North Pole at an elevation of six degrees above the horizon, and our instruments showed it to be seventy-four degrees farther west than the Canary Islands.¹ Here we anchored our ships at a league and a half from the shore; and, having cast off our boats; and filled them with men and arms, proceeded at once to land.

Before we landed we were much cheered by the sight of many people rambling along the shore. We found that they were all in a state of nudity, and they appeared to be afraid of us, as I supposed from seeing us clothed, and of a different stature from themselves. They retreated to a mountain, and, notwithstanding all the signs of peace and friendship we could make, we could not bring them to a parley with us; so, as the night was coming on, and the ships were anchored in an insecure place, by reason of the coast being exposed, we agreed to leave there the next day, and go in search of some port or bay where we could place our ships in safety.

We sailed along the coast with a northwest

¹ The degrees of which he speaks were, as mariners then calculated, fifteen leagues each.—Navarrete, tom. iij. 199, note. The true longitude or distance from the Canaries to the land which he reach-

ed is fifty-four or fifty-five degrees. The instruments of the sailors of that day were so very inaccurate, and it was almost impossible to measure correctly with them.—Canovai, tom. i. 53.

First land-
ing on the
Continent.

wind, always keeping within sight of land, and continually seeing people on shore; and having sailed two days, we found a very safe place for the ships, and anchored at half a league from the land, and the same day we landed in the boats—forty men leaping on shore in good order. The people of the country, however, appeared very shy of us, and for some time we could not sufficiently assure them to induce them to come and speak with us; but at length we laboured so hard, in giving them some of our things, such as looking-glasses, bells, beads, and other trifles, that some of them acquired confidence enough to come and treat with us for our mutual peace and friendship. Night coming on, we took leave of them and returned to our ships.

Received in
a friendly
manner by
the natives.

The next day, as the dawn appeared, we saw on the shore a great number of men, with their wives and children; we landed, and found that they had all come loaded with provisions and materials, which will be described in the proper place. Before we reached the land, many of them swam to meet us, the length of a bow shot into the sea (as they are most excellent swimmers), and they treated us with as much confidence as if we had had intercourse with them for a long time, which gratified us much.

All that we know of their life and manners is, that they go entirely naked, not having the slightest covering whatever; they are of middling stature, and very well proportioned; their flesh is of a red-

dish colour, like the skin of a lion; but I think that if they had been accustomed to wear clothing, they would have been as white as we are. They have no hair on the body, with the exception of very long hair upon the head—and the women especially derive much beauty from this: their countenances are not very handsome, as they have large faces, which might be compared with those of the Tartars: they do not allow any hair to grow on the eyelids or eyebrows, or any other part of the body, excepting the head, as they consider it a great deformity. Both men and women are very agile and easy in their persons, and swift in walking or running; so that the women think nothing of running a league or two, as we many times beheld, having, in this particular, greatly the advantage of us Christians.

They swim incredibly well—the women better than the men—as we have seen them many times swimming without any support, fully two leagues at sea. Their arms are bows and arrows beautifully wrought, but unfurnished with iron or any other hard metal, in place of which they make use of the teeth of animals or fish, or sometimes substitute a slip of hard wood, made harder at the point by fire. They are sure marksmen, who hit wherever they wish, and in some parts the women also use the bow with dexterity. They have other arms, such as lances and staves with heads finely wrought. When they make war they take their wives with them, not that they may fight, but because they carry

Character-
istics of the
natives.

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their provision behind them; a woman frequently carrying a burden on her back for thirty or forty leagues, which the strongest man among them could not do, as we have many times witnessed.

Their motives in making war.

These people have no captains, neither do they march in order, but each one is his own master; the cause of their wars is not a love of conquest or enlarging their boundaries, neither are they incited to engage in them, by inordinate covetousness, but from ancient enmity which has existed between them in times past; and having been asked why they made war, they could give us no other reason, than that they did it to avenge the death of their ancestors. Neither have these people kings nor lords, nor do they obey any one, but live in their own entire liberty, and the manner in which they are incited to go to war, is this: when their enemies have killed or taken prisoners any of their people, the oldest relative rises and goes about proclaiming his wrongs aloud, and calling upon them to go with him and avenge the death of his relation. Thereupon they are moved with sympathy, and make ready for the fight.

They have no tribunals of justice, neither do they punish malefactors; and what is still more astonishing, neither father nor mother chastises the children when they do wrong; yet, astounding as it may seem, there is no strife between them, or, to say the least, we never saw any. They appear simple in speech, but in reality are very shrewd and cunning in any matter which interests them.

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They speak but little, and that little in a low tone of voice, using the same accentuation that we use, and forming the words with the palate, teeth, and lips, but they have a different mode of diction. There is a great diversity of languages among them, inasmuch that within every hundred leagues we found people who could not understand each other. Their mode of life is most barbarous; they do not eat at regular intervals and as much as they wish at stated times, but it is a matter of indifference to them, whether appetite comes at midnight or mid-day, and they eat upon the ground at all hours, without napkin or table-cloth, having their food in earthen basins, which they manufacture, or in half gourd shells.

They sleep in nets of cotton, very large, and suspended in the air, and although this may seem rather a bad way of sleeping, I can vouch for the fact, that it is extremely pleasant, and one sleeps better thus, than on a mattress. They are neat and clean in their persons, which is a natural consequence of their perpetual bathing.

* * * * *

[It is deemed inexpedient to translate certain passages which occur at this stage of the letter, referring to personal habits of the natives, which are unfit for publication at the present day.]

We are not aware that these people have any laws. Neither are they like Moors or Jews, but are worse than Gentiles and Pagans, because we

Their villages and houses.

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have never seen them offer any sacrifice, and they have no houses of prayer. From their voluptuous manner of life, I consider them Epicureans. Their dwellings are in communities, and their houses are in the form of huts, but strongly built, with very large trees, and covered with palm leaves, secure from wind and storms; and in some places they are of such great length and breadth that in a single house we found six hundred people, and we found that the population of thirteen houses only amounted to four thousand.¹ They change their location every seven or eight years, and on being asked why they did so, they said that it was on account of the intense heat of the sun upon the soil, which by that time became infected and corrupted with filthiness, and caused pains in their bodies, which seemed to us very reasonable.

Their ideas
of wealth.

The riches of these people consist in the feathers of birds of the most magnificent colours, of pater-nosters, which they fabricate of fish bones, of white or green stones, with which they decorate the cheeks, lips, and ears, and of many other things which are held in little or no esteem with us. They carry on no commerce, neither buying nor selling, and, in short, live contentedly with what nature gives them. The riches which we esteem so highly in Europe and other parts, such as gold, jewels, pearls, and other wealth, they have no regard for at all, and make no effort to obtain any

¹ The edition of Gruniger says, eight houses and ten thousand inhabitants.

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thing of this kind which exists in their country. They are liberal in giving, never denying one any thing, and, on the other hand, are just as free in asking. The greatest mark of friendship they can show, is to offer you their wives and daughters, and parents consider themselves highly honoured by an acceptance of this mark of favour.

* * * * *

In case of death, they make use of various funeral obsequies. Some bury their dead with water and provisions placed at their heads, thinking they may have occasion to eat, but they make no parade in the way of funeral ceremonies. In some places, they have a most barbarous mode of interment, which is thus: when one is sick or infirm, and nearly at the point of death, his relatives carry him into a large forest, and there attaching one of their sleeping hammocks to two trees, they place the sick person in it, and continue to swing him about for a whole day, and when night comes, after placing at his head water and other provisions sufficient to sustain him for five or six days, they return to their village. If the sick person can help himself to eat and drink, and recovers sufficiently to be able to return to the village, his people receive him again with great ceremony; but few are they who escape this mode of treatment; most of them die without being visited, and that is their only burial.

Their funeral rites.

They have various other customs which, to avoid prolixity, are not here mentioned. They use in

Medical treatment.

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their diseases various kinds of medicines, so different from any in vogue with us, that we were astonished that any escaped. I often saw, for instance, that when a person was sick with a fever, which was increasing upon him, they bathed him from head to foot with cold water, and then making a great fire around him, they made him turn round within the circle for about an hour or two, until they fatigued him, and left him to sleep. Many were cured in this way. They also observe a strict diet, eating nothing for three or four days; they practise bloodletting, but not on the arm, unless in the armpit; but generally they take blood from the thighs and haunches, or the calf of the leg. In like manner they excite vomiting with certain herbs, which they put into their mouths, and they use many other remedies, which it would be tedious to relate.

Cannibal-
ism.

Their blood and phlegm is much disordered on account of their food, which consists mainly of the roots of herbs; of fruit and fish. They have no wheat or other grain, but instead, make use of the root of a tree, from which they manufacture flour, which is very good, and which they call Huca; the flour from another root is called Kazabi, and from another, Ignami.¹ They eat little meat except hu-

¹ "The Castilians found there very large parrots, honey, bees' wax, and an abundance of those plants which the islanders called Cazabi, from which the French Cassavé is derived."—*Hist. Gen. des voy.* tom. xlv. p. 167. "They brought much Cazabi, which is the name of the bread."—*Ferd. Col.* p. 117. Alvarez Cabral, speaking of the Igname of the Brazilians, says, "A root called

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man flesh, and you will notice that in this particular they are more savage than beasts, because all their enemies who are killed or taken prisoners, whether male or female, are devoured with so much fierceness, that it seems disgusting to relate, much more to see it done, as I with my own eyes have many times witnessed this proof of their inhumanity. Indeed, they marvelled much to hear us say that we did not eat our enemies.

And your Excellency may rest assured that their other barbarous customs are so numerous that it is impossible herein to describe all of them. As in these four voyages I have witnessed so many things at variance with our own customs, I prepared myself to write a collection, which I call "The Four Voyages," in which I have related the major part of the things which I saw, as clearly as my feeble capacity would permit. This work is not yet published, though many advise me to publish it. In it every thing will appear minutely, therefore I shall not enlarge any more in this letter, because in the course of it we shall see many things which are peculiar. Let this suffice for matters in general.

In this commencement of discoveries we did not see anything of much profit in the country, owing, as I think, to our ignorance of the language, except

Igname, and their bread which when it is of middling size, it is they eat."—*Ram.* t. i. p. 121. boiled whole, and it serves sometimes also to make bread of."—*Linnæus* calls this plant, 'Dioscorea oppositi folia,' the root of which is eaten, or cut in pieces and baked under the coals, or, *Cook*, vol. i. p. 90. *Canova*, tom. i. p. 67, 68.

some few indications of gold. In whatever relates to the situation and appearance of the country, we could not have succeeded better. We concluded to leave this place and go onward, and having unanimously come to this resolution; we coasted along near the land, making many stops, and holding discourses with many people, until after some days we came into a harbour, where we fell into very great danger, from which it pleased the Holy Spirit to deliver us.

Arrival at
Venezuela
and battle
with the na-
tives.

It happened in this manner. We landed in a port where we found a village built over the water, like Venice.¹ There were about forty-four houses, shaped like bells, built upon very large piles, having entrances by means of drawbridges, so that by laying the bridges from house to house, the inhabitants could pass through the whole. When the people saw us, they appeared to be afraid of us, and to protect themselves, suddenly raised all their bridges, and shut themselves up in their houses. While we stood looking at them and wondering at this proceeding, we saw coming toward us by sea about two and twenty canoes, which are the boats they make use of, and are carved out of a single tree. They came directly toward our boats, appearing to be astonished at our figures and dresses, and keeping at a little distance from us. This being the case, we made signals of friendship, to induce them to come nearer to us, endeavouring

¹ The natives called this place Coquibacoa: it is the modern Venezuela.

to reassure them by every token of kindness; but seeing that they did not come, we went toward them. They would not wait for us, however, but fled to the land, making signs to us to wait, and giving us to understand that they would soon return.

They fled directly to a mountain, but did not tarry there long, and when they returned, brought with them sixteen of their young girls, and entering their canoes, came to our boats and put four of them into each boat, at which we were very much astonished, as your Excellency may well imagine. Then they mingled with their canoes among our boats, and we considered their coming to speak to us in this manner, to be a token of friendship. Taking this for granted, we saw a great crowd of people swimming toward us from the houses, without any suspicion. At this juncture, some old women showed themselves at the doors of the houses, wailing and tearing their hair, as if in great distress. From this we began to be suspicious, and had immediate recourse to our weapons, when suddenly the girls, who were in our boats, threw themselves into the sea, and the canoes moved away, the people in them assailing us with their bows and arrows. Those who came swimming toward us brought each a lance, concealed as much as possible under the water. Their treachery being thus discovered, we began not only to defend ourselves, but to act severely on the offensive. We overturned many of their canoes with our boats, and making considera-

ble slaughter among them, they soon abandoned the canoes altogether and swam to the shore. Fifteen or twenty were killed and many wounded on their side, while on ours five were slightly wounded, all the rest escaping by favour of Divine Providence, and these five being quickly cured. We took prisoners two of their girls and three men, and on entering their houses found only two old women and one sick man. We took from them many things of little value, but would not burn their dwellings, being restrained by conscientious scruples. Returning to our boats and thence to our ships, with five prisoners, we put irons on the feet of each, excepting the young females, yet when night came, the two girls and one of the men escaped in the most artful manner in the world.

Continue
their voyage
along the
coast.

These events having occurred, the next day we concluded to depart from the port and proceed further. Keeping our course continually along the coast, we at length came to anchor at about eighty leagues distance from the place we had left, and found another race of people, whose language and customs were very different from those we had seen last. We determined to land, and while proceeding in our boats, we saw standing on the shore a great multitude, numbering about four thousand people. They did not wait to receive us, but fled precipitately to the woods, abandoning their things. We leaped ashore, and taking the way which led to the wood, found their tents within

the space of a bow-shot, where they had made a great fire, and two of them were cooking their food, roasting many animals and fish of various kinds.

We noticed that they were roasting a certain animal that looked like a serpent; it had no wings, and was so filthy in appearance, that we were astonished at its deformity. As we went through their houses or tents, we saw many of these serpents alive. Their feet were tied, and they had a cord round their snouts, so that they could not open their mouths, as dogs are sometimes muzzled, so that they may not bite. These animals had such a savage appearance, that none of us dared to turn one over, thinking they might be poisonous. They are about the size of a kid, about the length and a half of a man's arm, having long coarse feet armed with large nails. Their skin is hard, and they are of various colours. They have the snout and face of a serpent, and from the nose there runs a crest, passing over the middle of the back to the root of the tail. We finally concluded that they were serpents, and poisonous; and, nevertheless, they were eaten.¹

Remarkable
Animal.

¹ The navigator has perhaps drawn somewhat upon his imagination in his description of this animal, although Canovai adopts it seriously, and says in a note that "this is the serpent Tuana which is spoken of in Ramus, tom. iii. p. 130."—*Canovai, Viaggi, &c.* tom. i. p. 75. Navarréte mentions this as one of the absurdities of Vespu-

cius.—*Navar. Collection*, tom. iii. p. 225. But though it is rather hard to believe in a domestic serpent as large as a kid, yet the whole difficulty vanishes, if for the word serpent, which seems to have been misapplied by the navigator, we substitute reptile or animal.

We found that this people made bread of small fish which they caught in the sea, by first boiling them, then kneading together and making a paste of them, which they baked upon the hot coals; we tried it, and found it good.¹ They have so many other kinds of eating, chiefly of fruits and roots, that it would be very tedious to describe them minutely. Seeing, then, that the people did not return, we resolved not to meddle with or take away any of their things, in order to reassure them; and, having left in their tents many of our own things, in places where they might be seen, returned to our ships for the night. Early the next morning we saw a great number of people on the shore, and landed. Though they seemed fearful of us, they were sufficiently confident to treat with us, and gave us all that we asked of them. Finally they became very friendly; told us that this was not their place of dwelling, but that they had come there to carry on their fishery. They invited us to go to their villages, because they wished to receive us as friends—their amicable feelings toward us being much strengthened by the circumstance of our having the two prisoners with us, who were their enemies. They importuned us so much, that, hav-

¹ "The ancient fish-eaters also dried their fish, and made flour out of them. A large quantity of dried fish was presented to him (Nearchus); these people eating fish as their common food."—*Ramus*, t. i. p. 271, B. In our times the same custom prevails in those

countries." Barbosa writes, "In this country they attend much to fishing, and catch very large fish, which they salt, and also feed their horses with them."—*Ramus*, t. p. 295. *Canovai*, tom. i. p. 75, 76, note.

ing taken counsel, twenty-three of us Christians concluded to go with them, well prepared, and with firm resolution to die manfully, if such was to be our fate.

After we had remained here three days, we accordingly started with them for a journey inland. Three leagues from the shore we arrived at a tolerably well-peopled village, of a few houses—there not being over nine—where we were received with so many and such barbarous ceremonies, that no pen is equal to the task of describing them. There was dancing and singing, and weeping mingled with rejoicing, and great feasting. Here we staid for the night, when they offered us their wives, and solicited us with such urgency, that we could not refrain. After having passed the night, and half of the next day, an immense number of people visiting us from motives of curiosity—the oldest among them begging us to go with them to other villages, as they desired to do us great honour—we determined to proceed still further, inland. And it is impossible to tell how much honour they did us there. We visited so many villages, that we spent nine days in the journey; having been so long absent, that our companions in the ships began to be uneasy on our account.

Being now about eighteen leagues inland, we deliberated about returning. On our return, we were accompanied by a wonderful number of both sexes; quite to the seashore; and when any of us grew

Americus journeys inland and reaches a village.

Return to the ships.

weary with walking, they carried us in their hammocks much at our ease; in passing rivers, which were numerous and quite large, they conveyed us over with so much skill and safety, that we were not in the slightest danger. Many of them were laden with the presents they had made us, which they transported in hammocks. These consisted in very rich plumage, many bows and arrows, and an infinite number of parrots of various colours. Others brought loads of provisions and animals. For a greater wonder, I will inform your Excellency, that when we had to cross over a river, they carried us on their backs.

A ludicrous
incident.

Having arrived at the sea, and entered the boats which had come on shore for us, we were astonished at the crowd which endeavoured to get into the boats to go to see our ships; they were so overloaded that they were oftentimes on the point of sinking. We carried as many as we could on board, and so many more came by swimming, that we were quite troubled at the multitude on board, although they were all naked and unarmed. They were in great astonishment at our equipments and implements, and at the size of our ships. Here quite a laughable occurrence took place at their expense. We concluded to try the effect of discharging some of our artillery, and when they heard the thundering report, the greater part of them jumped into the sea from fright, acting like frogs sitting on a bank, who plunge into the marsh on the approach of any thing that alarms them. Those who re-

mained in the ships were so timorous that we repented of having done this. However, we reassured them by telling them that these were the arms with which we killed our enemies. Having amused themselves in the ships all day, we told them that they must go, as we wished to depart in the night. So they took leave of us with many demonstrations of friendship and affection, and went ashore.

I saw more of the manners and customs of these people, while in their country, than I wish to dwell upon here. Your Excellency will notice, that in each of my voyages, I have noted the most extraordinary things which have occurred, and compiled the whole into one volume, in the style of a geography, and entitled it "The Four Voyages." In this work will be found a minute description of the things which I saw, but as there is no copy of it yet published, owing to my being obliged to examine and correct it, it becomes necessary for me to impart them to you herein.

This country is full of inhabitants, and contains a great many rivers. Very few of the animals are similar to ours, excepting the lions, panthers, stags, hogs, goats, and deer, and even these are a little different in form. They have neither horses, mules, nor asses, neither cows, dogs, nor any kind of domestic animals. Their other animals, however, are so very numerous, that it is impossible to count them, and all of them so wild, that they cannot be employed for serviceable uses. But what shall I say of their birds, which are so numerous and of so

CHAPTER
VII.The country
and its cli-
mate.

many species and varieties of plumage, that it is astounding to behold them!

The country is pleasant and fruitful, full of woods and forests, which are always green, as they never lose their foliage. The fruits are numberless, and totally different from ours. The land lies within the Torrid Zone, under the parallel which describes the Tropic of Cancer, where the pole is elevated twenty-three degrees above the horizon, on the borders of the second climate. A great many people came to see us, and were astonished at our features and the whiteness of our skins. They asked us where we came from, and we gave them to understand that we came from heaven, with the view of visiting the world, and they believed us. In this country we established a baptismal font, and great numbers were baptized, calling us, in their language, Carabi, which means men of great wisdom.

The natives called this province Lariab.¹ We left the port, and sailed along the coast, continuing in sight of land, until we had run, calculating our advances and retrogressions, eight hundred and seventy leagues towards the northwest, making many stops by the way, and having intercourse with many people. In some places we found traces of gold, but in small quantities, it being sufficient for us to have

¹ This name is read Lariab, in the same region. The change of the edition of Valori, and also in one name for the other was simply that of Gruniger. Giuntini substitutes Paria, which is, doubtless, a corruption.

CHAPTER
VII.Prepara-
tions for the
return voy-
age.

discovered the country and to know that there was gold in it.

We had now been thirteen months on the voyage, and the ships and rigging were much worn, and the men weary. So by common consent we agreed to careen our ships on the beach, in order to calk and pitch them anew, as they leaked badly, and then to return to Spain. When we took this resolution, we were near one of the best harbours in the world, which we entered, and found a vast number of people, who received us most kindly.¹ We made a breastwork on shore with our boats and our casks, and placed our artillery so that it would play over them; then having unloaded and lightened our ships, we hauled them to land, and repaired them wherever they needed it. The natives were of very great assistance to us, continually providing food, so that in this port we consumed very little of our own. This served us a very good turn, for our provisions were poor, and the stock so much reduced at this time, that we feared it would hardly last us on our return to Spain. Having stayed here thirty-seven days, visiting their villages many times, where they paid us the highest honour, we wished to depart on our voyage.

Before we set sail, the natives complained to us, that at certain times in the year, there came from the sea into their territory, a very cruel tribe, who, either by treachery or force, killed many of them,

¹ This was probably the modern port of Mochina, on the coast of Cumana.

and eat them, while they captured others, and carried them prisoners into their own country, and that they were hardly able to defend themselves. They signified to us that this tribe were islanders, and lived at about one hundred leagues distance at sea. They narrated this to us with so much simplicity and feeling, that we credited them, and promised to avenge their great injuries; at which they were highly rejoiced, and many offered to go with us. We did not wish to take them for many reasons, and only carried seven, on the condition, that they should come back in their own canoes, for we would not enter into obligations to return them to their own country. With this they were contented, and we parted from these people, leaving them very well disposed toward us.

Our ships having been repaired, we set sail on our return, taking a northeasterly course, and at the end of seven days, fell in with some islands. There were a great many of them, some peopled, others uninhabited. We landed at one of them, where we saw many people, who called the island Iti. Having filled our boats with good men, and put three rounds of shot in each boat, we proceeded toward the land, where we saw about four hundred men and many women, all naked, like those we had seen before. They were of good stature, and appeared to be very warlike men, being armed with bows and arrows, and lances. The greater part of them carried staves of a square form, attached to their persons in such a manner that they were not prevented

from drawing the bow. As we approached within bow-shot of the shore, they all leaped into the water, and shot their arrows at us, to prevent our landing.

They were painted with various colours, and plumed with feathers, and the interpreters who were with us told us that when they were thus painted and plumed they showed a wish to fight. They persisted so much in their endeavours to deter us from landing, that we were at last compelled to fire on them with our artillery. Hearing the thunder of our cannon, and seeing some of their people fall dead, they all retreated to the shore. We, having consulted together, forty of us resolved to leap ashore, and if they waited for us, to fight with them. Proceeding thus, they attacked us, and we fought about two hours with little advantage, except that our bowmen and gunners killed some of their people, and they wounded some of ours. This was because we could not get a chance to use the lance or the sword. We finally, by desperate exertion, were enabled to draw the sword, and as soon as they had a taste of our arms, they fled to the mountains and woods, leaving us masters of the field, with many of their people killed and wounded. This day we did not pursue them, because we were much fatigued, but returned to our ships, the seven men who came with us being very highly rejoiced.

Severe battle and defeat of the natives.

The next day we saw a great number of people coming through the country, still offering us signs of battle, sounding horns and various other instru-

ments which they use in war, and all painted and pluméd, which gave them a strange and ferocious appearance. Whereupon, all in the ships held a grand council, and it was determined that since these people were resolved to be at enmity with us, we would go to meet them, and do every thing to engage their friendship; but in case they would not receive it, we resolved to treat them as enemies; and to make slaves of all we could capture. Having armed ourselves in the best manner possible, we immediately rowed ashore, where they did not resist our landing, from fear, as I think, of our bombardment. We disembarked in four squares, being fifty-seven men, each captain with his own men, and engaged them in battle.

After a long battle, having killed many, we put them to flight; and pursued them to a village, taking about two hundred and fifty prisoners.¹ We burned the village, and returned victorious to the ships with our prisoners, leaving many killed and wounded on their side, while on ours not more than one died, and only twenty-two were wounded. The rest all escaped unhurt, for which, God be thanked. We soon arranged for our departure, and the seven men, of whom five were wounded, took a canoe from the island, and with seven prisoners, four women and three men that we gave them, returned to their own country, very merry and greatly aston-

¹ The edition of Gruniger reads, "ber was so small, and the text is 'twenty-five slaves;'" but it does in accordance with Canova. not appear probable that the num-

ished at our power. We also set sail for Spain, with two hundred and twenty-two prisoners, slaves, and arrived in the port of Cadiz on the fifteenth day of October, 1498, where we were well received, and found a market for our slaves. This is what happened to me, in this my first voyage, that may be considered worth relating.¹

¹ The edition of Gruniger makes an error of print, one would think, the date of the return of Americus ought not to have afforded any the 15th of October, 1499, and, ground from which to argue the immediately after, gives as the incredibility of the writer, yet date of his departure on his second Navarrete makes use of it for this voyage, May, 1499. So manifest purpose.