



CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

THIS COUNTRY  
OF OURS

---

H. E. Marshall

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

COLOR EDITION

# This Country of Ours

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H.E. MARSHALL



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## PREFACE

DEAR PEGGY,

Four years have come and gone since first you asked me to write a Story of the United States “lest you should grow up knowing nothing of your own country.” I think, however, that you are not yet very grown up, not yet too “proud and great” to read my book. But I hope that you know something already of the history of your own country. For, after all, you know, this is only a play book. It is not a book which you need knit your brows over, or in which you will find pages of facts, or politics, and long strings of dates. But it is a book, I hope, which when you lay it down will make you say, “I’m glad that I was born an American. I’m glad that I can salute the stars and stripes as my flag.”

Yes, the flag is yours. It is in your keeping and in that of every American boy and girl. It is you who in the next generation must keep it flying still over a people free and brave and true, and never in your lives do aught to dim the shining splendour of its silver stars.

Always your friend,

H. E. MARSHALL.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

During my residence in California the Trustees of the A. K. Smiley Library, Redlands, with charming hospitality procured for me (sometimes sending the whole breadth of the continent for them) the many books necessary for the writing of this sketch of American history. Without this courtesy and kindness on their part it would have been impossible for me to continue my work while in California, and it gives me much pleasure thus publicly to acknowledge my indebtedness to them.

H. E. MARSHALL.



PART I

**STORIES OF EXPLORERS AND PIONEERS**

CHAPTER 1

**HOW THE VIKINGS OF OLD SOUGHT AND FOUND NEW LANDS**

**I**N days long long ago there dwelt in Greenland a King named Eric the Red. He was a man mighty in war, and men held him in high honour.

Now one day to the court of Eric there came Bjarni the son of Heriulf. This Bjarni was a far traveller. He had sailed many times upon the seas, and when he came home he had ever some fresh tale of marvel and adventure to tell. But this time he had a tale to tell more marvellous than any before. For he told how far away across the sea of Greenland, where no man had sailed before, he had found a new, strange land.

But when the people asked news of this unknown land Bjarni could tell them little, for he had not set foot upon those far shores. Therefore the people scorned him.

“Truly you have little hardihood,” they said, “else you had gone ashore, and seen for yourself, and had given us good account of this land.”

But although Bjarni could tell nought of the new strange land, save that he had seen it, the people thought much about it, and there was great talk about voyages and discoveries, and many longed to sail forth and find again the land which Bjarni the Traveller had seen. But more than any other in that kingdom, Leif the son of Eric the Red, longed to find that land. So Leif went to Eric and said:

“Oh my father, I fain would seek the land which Bjarni the Traveller has seen. Give me gold that I may buy his ship and sail away upon the seas to find it.”

Then Eric the Red gave his son gold in great plenty. “Go, my son,” he said, “buy the ship of Bjarni the Traveller, and sail to the land of which he tells.”

Then Leif, quickly taking the gold, went to Bjarni and bought his ship.

Leif was a tall man, of great strength and noble bearing. He was also a man of wisdom, and just in all things, so that men loved and were ready to obey him.

Now therefore many men came to him offering to be his companions in adventure, until soon they were a company of thirty-five men. They were all men tall and of great strength, with fair golden hair and eyes blue as the sea upon which they loved to sail, save only Tyrker the German.

Long time this German had lived with Eric the Red and was much beloved by him. Tyrker also loved Leif dearly, for he had known him since he was a child, and was indeed his foster father. So he was eager to go with Leif upon this adventurous voyage. Tyrker was very little and plain. His forehead was high and his eyes small and restless. He wore shabby clothes, and to the blue-eyed, fair-haired giants of the North he seemed indeed a sorry-looking little fellow. But all that mattered little, for he was a clever craftsman, and Leif and his companions were glad to have him go with them.

Then, all things being ready, Leif went to his father and, bending his knee to him, prayed him to be their leader.

But Eric the Red shook his head. "Nay, my son," he said, "I am old and stricken in years, and no more able to endure the hardships of the sea."

"Yet come, my father," pleaded Leif, "for of a certainty if you do, good luck will go with us."

Then Eric looked longingly at the sea. His heart bade him go out upon it once again ere he died. So he yielded to the prayers of his son and, mounting upon his horse, he rode towards the ship.

When the sea-farers saw him come they set up a shout of welcome. But when Eric was not far from the ship the horse upon which he was riding stumbled, and he was thrown to the ground. He tried to rise but could not, for his foot was sorely wounded.

Seeing that he cried out sadly, "It is not for me to discover new lands; go ye without me."

So Eric the Red returned to his home, and Leif went on his way to his ship with his companions.

Now they busied themselves and set their dragon-headed vessel in order. And when all was ready they spread their gaily-coloured sails, and sailed out into the unknown sea.

Westward and ever westward they sailed towards the setting of the sun. For many days they sailed yet they saw no land: nought was about them but the restless, tossing waves. But at length one day to their watching eyes there appeared a faint grey line far on the horizon. Then their hearts bounded for joy. They had not sailed in vain, for land was near.

"Surely," said Leif, as they drew close to it, "this is the land which Bjarni saw. Let it not be said of us that we passed it by as he did."

So, casting anchor, Leif and his companions launched a boat and went ashore. But it was no fair land to which they had come. Far inland great snow-covered mountains rose, and between them and the sea lay flat and barren rock, where no grass or green thing grew. It seemed to Leif and his companions that there was no good thing in this land.

"I will call it Helluland or Stone Land," said Leif.

Then he and his companions went back to the ship and put out to sea once more. They came to land again after some time, and again they cast anchor and launched a boat and went ashore. This land was flat. Broad stretches of white sand sloped gently to the sea, and behind the level plain was thickly wooded.

"This land," said Leif, "shall also have a name after its nature." So he called it Markland or Woodland.

Then again Leif and his companions returned to the ship, and mounting into it they sailed away upon the sea. And now fierce winds arose, and the ship was driven before the blast so that for days these seafarers thought no more of finding new lands, but only of the safety of their ship.

But at length the wind fell, and the sun shone forth once more. Then again they saw land, and launching their boat they rowed ashore.

To the eyes of these sea-faring men, who for many days had seen only the wild waste of waters, the land seemed passing fair. For the grass was green, and as the sun shone upon it seemed to sparkle with a thousand diamonds. When the men put their hands upon the grass, and touched their mouths with their hands, and drank the dew, it seemed to them that never before had they tasted anything so sweet. So pleasant the land seemed to Leif and his companions that they determined to pass the winter there. They therefore drew their ship up the river which flowed into the sea, and cast anchor.

Then they carried their hammocks ashore and set to work to build a house.

When the house was finished Leif called his companions together and spoke to them.

"I will now divide our company into two bands," he said, "so that we may explore the country round about. One half shall stay at home, and the other half shall explore the land. But they who go to explore must not go so far away that they cannot return home at night, nor must they separate from each other, lest they be lost."

And as Leif said so it was done. Each day a company set out to explore, and sometimes Leif went with the exploring party, and sometimes he stayed at home. But each day as evening came they all returned to their house, and told what they had seen.

At length, however, one day, when those who had gone abroad returned, one of their number was missing, and when the roll was called it was found



THE LANDING OF THE VIKINGS

that it was Tyrker the German who had strayed. Thereat Leif was sorely troubled, for he loved his foster-father dearly. So he spoke sternly to his men, reproaching them for their carelessness in letting Tyrker separate from them, and taking twelve of his men with him he set out at once to search for his foster-father. But they had not gone far when, to their great joy, they saw their lost comrade coming towards them.

“Why art thou so late, oh my foster-father?” cried Leif, as he ran to him. “Why hast thou gone astray from the others?”

But Tyrker paid little heed to Leif’s questions. He was strangely excited, and rolling his eyes wildly he laughed and spoke in German which no one understood. At length, however, he grew calmer and spoke to them in their own language. “I did not go much farther than the others,” he said. “But I have found something new. I have found vines and grapes.”

“Is that indeed true, my foster-father?” said Leif.

“Of a certainty it is true,” replied Tyrker. “For I was born where vines grow freely.”

This was great news; and all the men were eager to go and see for themselves the vines which Tyrker had discovered. But it was already late, so they all returned to the house, and waited with what patience they could until morning.

Then, as soon as it was day, Tyrker led his companions to the place where he had found the grapes. And when Leif saw them he called the land Vineland because of them. He also decided to load his ship with grapes and wood, and depart homeward. So each day the men gathered grapes and felled trees, until the ship was full. Then they set sail for home.

The winds were fair, and with but few adventures they arrived safely at home. There they were received with great rejoicing. Henceforth Leif was called Leif the Lucky, and he lived ever after in great honour and plenty, and the land which he had discovered men called Vineland the Good.

In due time, however, Eric the Red died, and after that Leif the Lucky sailed no more upon the seas, for his father’s kingdom was now his, and he must needs stay at home to rule his land. But Leif’s brother Thorvald greatly desired to go to Vineland so that he might explore the country still further.

Then when Leif saw his brother’s desire he said to him, “If it be thy will, brother, thou mayest go to Vineland in my ship.”

At that Thorvald rejoiced greatly, and gathering thirty men he set sail, crossed the sea without adventure, and came to the place where Leif had built his house.

There he and his company remained during the winter. Then in the spring they set forth to explore the coast. After some time they came upon a fair country where there were many trees.

When Thorvald saw it he said, “It is so fair a country that I should like to make my home here.”

Until this time the Norsemen had seen no inhabitants of the land. But now as they returned to their ship they saw three mounds upon the shore. When the Norsemen came near they saw that these three mounds were three canoes, and under each were three men armed with bows and arrows, who lay in wait to slay them. When the Norsemen saw that, they divided their company and put themselves in battle array. And after a fierce battle they slew the savages, save one who fled to his canoe and so escaped.

When the fight was over the Norsemen climbed upon a high headland and looked round to see if there were signs of any more savages. Below them they saw several mounds which they took to be the houses of the savages, and knew that it behooved them therefore to be on their guard. But they were too weary to go further, and casting themselves down upon the ground where they were they fell into a heavy sleep.

Suddenly they were awakened by a great shout, and they seemed to hear a voice cry aloud, "Awake, Thorvald, thou and all thy company, if ye would save your lives. Flee to thy ship with all thy men, and sail with speed from this land."

So Thorvald and his companions fled speedily to their ship, and set it in fighting array. Soon a crowd of dark-skinned savages, uttering fearful yells, rushed upon them. They cast their arrows at the Norsemen, and fought fiercely for some time. But seeing that their arrows availed little against the strangers, and that on the other hand many of their braves were slain, they at last fled.

Then, the enemy being fled, Thorvald, turning to his men, asked, "Are any of you wounded?"

"Nay," they answered, "we are all whole."

"That is well," said Thorvald. "As for me, I am wounded in the armpit by an arrow. Here is the shaft. Of a surety it will cause my death. And now I counsel you, turn homeward with all speed. But carry me first to that headland which seemed to me to promise so pleasant a dwelling-place, and lay me there. Thus it shall be seen that I spoke truth when I wished to abide there. And ye shall place a cross at my feet, and another at my head, and call it Cross Ness ever after."

So Thorvald died. Then his companions buried him as he had bidden them in the land which had seemed to him so fair. And as he had commanded they set a cross at his feet and another at his head, and called the place Cross Ness. Thus the first white man was laid to rest in Vineland the Good.

Then when spring came the Norsemen sailed home to Greenland. And there they told Leif of all the things they had seen and done, and how his brave brother had met his death.

Now when Leif's brother Thorstein heard how Thorvald had died he longed to sail to Vineland to bring home his brother's body. So once again

Leif's ship was made ready, and with five and twenty tall, strong men Thorstein set forth, taking with him his wife Gudrid.

But Thorstein never saw Vineland the Good. For storms beset his ship, and after being driven hither and thither for many months, he lost all reckoning, and at last came to land in Greenland once more. And there Thorstein died, and Gudrid went home to Leif.

Now there came to Greenland that summer a man of great wealth named Thorfinn. And when he saw Gudrid he loved her and sought her in marriage, and Leif giving his consent to it, Thorfinn and Gudrid were married.

At this time many people still talked of the voyages to Vineland, and they urged Thorfinn to journey thither and seek to find out more about these strange lands. And more than all the others Gudrid urged him to go. So at length Thorfinn determined to undertake the voyage. But it came to his mind that he would not merely go to Vineland and return home again. He resolved rather to settle there and make it his home.

Thorfinn therefore gathered about sixty men, and those who had wives took also their wives with them, together with their cattle and their household goods.

Then Thorfinn asked Leif to give him the house which he had built in Vineland. And Leif replied, "I will lend the house to you, but I will not give it."

So Thorfinn and Gudrid and all their company sailed out to sea, and without adventures arrived safely at Leif's house in Vineland.

There they lived all that winter in great comfort. There was no lack of food either for man or beast, and the cattle they had brought with them roamed at will, and fed upon the wide prairie lands.

All winter and spring the Norsemen dwelt in Vineland, and they saw no human beings save themselves. Then one day in early summer they saw a great troop of natives come out of the wood. They were dark and little, and it seemed to the Norsemen very ugly, with great eyes and broad cheeks. The cattle were near, and as the savages appeared the bull began to bellow. And when the savages heard that sound they were afraid and fled. For three whole weeks nothing more was seen of them, after that time however they took courage again and returned. As they approached they made signs to show that they came in peace, and with them they brought huge bales of furs which they wished to barter.

The Norsemen, it is true, could not understand the language of the natives, nor could the natives understand the Norsemen; but by signs they made known that they wished to barter their furs for weapons. This, however, Thorfinn forbade. Instead he gave them strips of red cloth which they took very eagerly and bound about their heads. Thorfinn also commanded his men to take milk to the savages. And when they saw it they

were eager to buy and drink it. So that it was said many of them carried away their merchandise in their stomachs.

Thus the days and months passed. Then one summer day a little son was born to Thorfinn and Gudrid. They called him Snorri, and he was the first white child to be born on the Continent which later men called the New World. Thus three years went past. But the days were not all peaceful. For quarrels arose between the newcomers and the natives, and the savages attacked the Norsemen and killed many of them.

Then Thorfinn said he would no longer stay in Vineland, but would return to Greenland. So he and all his company made ready their ship, and sailed out upon the seas, and came at length safely to Greenland.

Then after a time Thorfinn sailed to Iceland. There he made his home for the rest of his life, the people holding him in high honour. Snorri also, his son who had been born in Vineland, grew to be a man of great renown.

Such are some of the old Norse stories of the first finding of America. The country which Leif called Helluland was most likely Labrador, Markland Newfoundland, and Vineland Nova Scotia.

Besides these there were many other tales of voyages to Vineland. For after Leif and his brothers many other Vikings of the North sailed, both from Greenland and from Norway, to the fair western lands. Yet although they sailed there so often these old Norsemen had no idea that they had discovered a vast continent. They thought that Vineland was merely an island, and the discovery of it made no stir in Europe. By degrees too the voyages thither ceased. In days of wild warfare at home the Norsemen forgot the fair western land which Leif had discovered. They heard of it only in minstrel tales, and it came to be for them a sort of fairy-land which had no existence save in a poet's dream.

But now wise men have read these tales with care, and many have come to believe that they are not mere fairy stories. They have come to believe that hundreds of years before Columbus lived the Vikings of the North sailed the western seas and found the land which lay beyond, the land which we now call America.



## THE SEA OF DARKNESS AND THE GREAT FAITH OF COLUMBUS

**I**N those far-off times besides the Vikings of the North other daring sailors sailed the seas. But all their sailings took them eastward. For it was from the east that all the trade and the riches came in those days. To India and to far Cathay sailed the merchant through the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, to return with a rich and fragrant cargo of silks and spices, pearls and priceless gems.

None thought of sailing westward. For to men of those days the Atlantic Ocean was known as the Outer Sea or the Sea of Darkness. There was nothing to be gained by venturing upon it, much to be dreaded. It was said that huge and horrible sea-dragons lived there, ready to wreck and swallow down any vessel that might venture near. An enormous bird also hovered in the skies waiting to pounce upon vessels and bear them away to some unknown eyrie. Even if any foolhardy adventurers should defy these dangers, and escape the horror of the dragons and the bird, other perils threatened them. For far in the west there lay a bottomless pit of seething fire. That was easy of proof. Did not the face of the setting sun glow with the reflected light as it sank in the west? There would be no hope nor rescue for any ship that should be drawn into that awful pit.

Again it was believed that the ocean flowed downhill, and that if a ship sailed down too far it would never be able to get back again. These and many other dangers, said the ignorant people of those days, threatened the rash sailors who should attempt to sail upon the Sea of Darkness. So it was not wonderful that for hundreds of years men contented themselves with the well-known routes which indeed offered adventure enough to satisfy the heart of the most daring.

But as time passed these old trade-routes fell more and more into the hands of Turks and Infidels. Port after port came under their rule, and infidel pirates swarmed in the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean until no Christian vessel was safe. At every step Christian traders found themselves hampered and hindered, and in danger of their lives, and they began to long for another way to the lands of spice and pearls.

Then it was that men turned their thoughts to the dread Sea of Darkness. The less ignorant among them had begun to disbelieve the tales of dragons and fiery pits. The world was round, said wise men. Why then, if that were so, India could be reached by sailing west as well as by sailing east.

Many men now came to this conclusion, among them an Italian sailor named Christopher Columbus. The more Columbus thought about his plan of sailing west to reach India, the more he believed in it, and the more he longed to set out. But without a great deal of money such an expedition was impossible, and Columbus was poor. His only hope was to win the help and friendship of a king or some other great and wealthy person.

The Portuguese were in those days a sea-faring people, and their ships were to be found wherever ships dared go. Indeed Prince Henry of Portugal did so much to encourage voyages of discovery that he was called Henry the Navigator. And although he was by this time dead, the people still took great interest in voyages of discovery. So at length Columbus determined to go to King John of Portugal to tell him of his plans, and ask for his aid.

King John listened kindly enough, it seemed, to what Columbus had to say. But before giving him any answer he said that he must consult his wise men. These wise men looked upon the whole idea of sailing to the west to reach the east as absurd. So King John refused to give Columbus any help.

Yet although most of King John's wise men thought little of the plan, King John himself thought that there was something in it. But instead of helping Columbus he meanly resolved to send out an expedition of his own. This he did, and when Columbus heard of it he was so angry that he left Portugal, which for more than ten years he had made his home. He was poor and in debt, so he left the country secretly, in fear of the King, and of those to whom he owed money.

When Columbus thus fled from Portugal, penniless and in debt, he was a man over forty. He was a bitterly disappointed man, too, but he still clung to his great idea. So he sent his brother Bartholomew to England to beg King Henry VII to help him, while he himself turned towards Spain. Bartholomew, however, reached England in an evil hour for his quest. For Henry VII had but newly wrested the crown from Richard III, and so had no thought to spare for unknown lands. Christopher also arrived in Spain at an unfortunate time. For the Spaniards were carrying on a fierce warfare against the Moors, and King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella had little thought or money to spare for any other undertaking. Therefore, although Ferdinand listened to what Columbus had to say, for the time being he could promise no help.

So years passed. Columbus remained in Spain. For in spite of all his rebuffs and disappointments he did not despair. As the court moved from place to place he followed it, hoping always that the day would come when the King and Queen would listen to him, and believe in his great enterprise.

Meanwhile he lived in want and misery, and just kept himself from starvation by making and selling maps. To the common people he seemed a madman, and as he passed through the streets in his worn and threadbare garments children jeered and pointed fingers of scorn at him.

Yet in spite of mockery and derision Columbus clung to his faith. Indeed it burned in him so strongly that at length he made others share it too, and men who were powerful at court became his friends.

At last the war with the Moors ended victoriously for Spain. Then these friends persuaded Queen Isabella to listen again to what Columbus had to say. To this the Queen consented, and when she heard how poor Columbus was she sent him some money, so that he might buy clothes fit to appear at court.

When Columbus heard the good news he was overjoyed. As quickly as might be he bought new clothes, and mounting upon a mule he rode towards Granada. But when Columbus arrived he found the court still in the midst of rejoicings to celebrate victory. Among the light-hearted, gaily dressed throng there was no one who had a thought to spare for the melancholy, white-haired dreamer who passed like a dark shadow amidst them. With his fate, as it were, trembling in the balance, Columbus had no heart for rejoicing. So he looked on "with indifference, almost with contempt."

But at length his day came. At length all the jubilation was over, and Ferdinand and Isabella turned their thoughts to Columbus. He came before them and talked so earnestly of his great project that they could not but believe in it. The day was won. Both King and Queen, but more especially the Queen, were willing to help the great enterprise. Now however Columbus himself all but wrecked his chances. He had dreamed so long about this splendid adventure, he was so filled with belief in its grandeur, that he demanded conditions such as would hardly have been granted to the greatest prince in the land.

Columbus demanded that he should be made admiral and viceroy of all the lands he might discover, and that after his death this honour should descend to his son and to his son's son for ever and ever. He also demanded a tenth part of all the pearls, precious stones, gold, silver and spices, or whatever else he might gain by trade or barter.

At these demands the grandees of Spain stood aghast. What! This shabby dreamer, this penniless beggar aspired to honour and dignities fit for a prince! It was absurd, and not to be thought of. If this beggarly sailor would have Spain assist him he must needs be more humble in suit.

But not one jot would Columbus abate of his demands. So the Council broke up, and Columbus, with anger and disappointment in his heart, mounted his mule and turned his face towards the Court of France. All the seven long years during which he had waited, and hoped, and prayed, in Spain had been wasted. Now he would go to the King of France, and make his last appeal there.

But Columbus had left friends behind him, friends who had begun to picture to themselves almost as vividly as he the splendours of the conquest

he was to make. Now these friends sought out the Queen. In glowing words they painted to her the glory and the honour which would come to Spain if Columbus succeeded. And if he failed, why, what were a few thousand crowns, they asked. And as the Queen listened her heart beat fast; the magnificence of the enterprise took hold upon her, and she resolved that, come what might, Columbus should go forth on his adventure.

Ferdinand, however, still looked coldly on. The war against the Moors had been long and bitter, his treasury was empty. Whence, he asked himself, was money forthcoming for this mad scheme? Isabella, however, had done with prudence and caution. "If there is not money enough in Aragon," she cried, "I will undertake this adventure for my own kingdom of Castile, and if need be I will pawn my jewels to do it."

While these things were happening Columbus, sick at heart, was slowly plodding on the road to France. But he only went a little way on his long journey. For just as he was entering a narrow pass not far from Granada, where the mountains towered above him, he heard the thud of horses' hoofs.

It was a lonely and silent spot among the hills, where robbers lurked, and where many a man had been slain for the money and jewels he carried. Columbus, however, had nothing to dread: he carried with him neither gold nor jewels. He went forth from Spain a beggar, even as he had come. But if fear he had any, it was soon turned to incredulous joy. For when the horsemen came up they told Columbus that his friends had won the day for him, and that he must return.

At first Columbus hesitated. He found it hard to believe that truly at last he had his heart's desire. When, however, the messenger told him that the Queen herself bade him return, he hesitated no longer. Joyfully turning his mule he hastened back to Granada.

At last Columbus had won his heart's desire, and he had only to gather ships and men and set forth westward. But now a new difficulty arose. For it was out upon the terrible Sea of Darkness that Columbus wished to sail, and men feared to face its terrors.

Week after week went past and not a ship or a man could Columbus get. He persuaded and implored in vain: no man was brave enough to follow him to the unknown horrors of the Sea of Darkness. Therefore as entreaty and persuasion proved of no avail, Columbus sought help from the King, who gave him power to force men to go with him.

Even then all sorts of difficulties were thrown in the way. Columbus, however, overcame them all, and at length his three ships were ready. But it had taken many months. It was February when he turned back so gladly to Granada; it was the third of August before everything was in order.

Before dawn upon the day he sailed Columbus entered the church, in the little sea-faring town of Palos where his ships lay at anchor. There he humbly confessed his sins, received the Sacrament, and committed himself

to God's all-powerful guidance. The crew, wild, rough fellows, many of them, followed his example. Then Columbus stepped on board his ship, the *Santa Maria*, and turned his face westward.

He was filled with exaltation. But all Palos was filled with gloom, and upon the shore a great crowd gathered to bid a last farewell to these daring adventurers. And as the ships spread their sails and sped forth in the morning light the people wept and lamented sorely, for they never thought again to see their loved ones, who were about to adventure forth upon the terrible Sea of Darkness.

## HOW COLUMBUS FARED FORTH UPON THE SEA OF DARKNESS AND CAME TO PLEASANT LANDS BEYOND

**A**T first the voyage upon which Columbus and his daring companions now set forth lay through seas already known; but soon the last landmark was left behind, and the three little vessels, smaller than river craft of today, were alone upon the trackless waste of waters. And when the men saw the last trace of land vanish their hearts sank, and they shed bitter tears, weeping for home and the loved ones they thought never more to see.

On and on they sailed, and as day after day no land appeared the men grew restless. Seeing them thus restless, and lest they should be utterly terrified at being so far from home upon this seemingly endless waste of waters, Columbus determined to keep them from knowing how far they had really gone. So he kept two reckonings. One, in which the real length of the ships' daily journey was given he kept to himself: the other, in which the journey was given as much shorter, he showed to the sailors.

A month went past, six weeks went past, and still there was no trace of land. Then at length came signs. Snow birds which never ventured far to sea flew round the ships. Now the waves bore to them a rudely carved stick, now the ships ploughed a way through masses of floating weeds. All these signs were at first greeted with joy and hope, and the sailors took heart. But as still the days went past and no land appeared, they lost heart again.

The fields of weeds which they had at first greeted with joy now became an added terror. Would they not be caught in this tangle of weeds, they asked, and never more win a way out of it? To their fearful and superstitious minds the very breeze which had borne them softly onward became a menace. For if the wind always blew steadily from the east how was it possible ever to return to Spain? So Columbus was almost glad when a contrary wind blew. For it proved to his trembling sailors that one at least of their fears was groundless. But it made little difference. The men were now utterly given over to gloomy terrors.

Fear robbed them of all ambition. Ferdinand and Isabella had promised a large sum of money to the man who should first discover land. But none cared now to win it. All they desired was to turn home once more.

Fear made them mutinous also. So they whispered together and planned in secret to rid themselves of Columbus. It would be easy, they thought, to throw him overboard some dark night, and then give out that he had

fallen into the sea by accident. No one would know. No one in Spain would care, for Columbus was after all but a foreigner and an upstart. The great ocean would keep the secret. They would be free to turn homeward.

Columbus saw their dark looks, heard the murmurs of the crews, and did his best to hearten them again. He spoke to them cheerfully, persuading and encouraging, "laughing at them, while in his heart he wept."

Still the men went sullenly about their work. But at length one morning a sudden cry from the *Pinta* shook them from out their sullen thoughts.

It was the captain of the *Pinta* who shouted. "Land, land, my lord!" he cried. "I claim the reward."

And when Columbus heard that shout his heart was filled with joy and thankfulness, and baring his head he sank upon his knees, giving praise to God. The crew followed his example. Then, their hearts suddenly light and joyous, they swarmed up the masts and into the rigging to feast their eyes upon the goodly sight.

All day they sailed onward toward the promised land. The sun sank and still all night the ships sped on their joyous way. But when morning dawned the land seemed no nearer than before. Hope died away again, and sorrowfully as the day went on the woeful truth that the fancied land had been but a bank of clouds was forced upon Columbus.

Again for days the ships sailed on, and as still no land appeared the men again began to murmur. Then one day when Columbus walked on deck he was met, not merely with sullen looks, but with angry words. The men clamoured to return. And if the Admiral refused, why, so much the worse for him. They would endure no longer.

Bravely the Admiral faced the mutineers. He talked to them cheerfully. He reminded them of what honour and gain would be theirs when they returned home having found the new way to India, of what wealth they might win by trading. Then he ended sternly:

"Complain how you may," he said, "I have to go to the Indies, and I will go on till I find them, so help me God."

For the time being the Admiral's stern, brave words cowed the mutineers. But not for much longer, Columbus knew right well, would they obey him if land did not soon appear. And in his heart he prayed God that it might not be long delayed.

The next night Columbus stood alone upon the poop of the *Santa Maria*. Full of anxious thoughts he gazed out into the darkness. Then suddenly it seemed to him that far in the distance he saw a glimmering light appear and disappear once and again. It was as if some one walking carried a light. But so fearful was Columbus lest his fervent hopes had caused him to imagine this light that he would not trust his own eyes alone. So he called to one of his officers and asked him if he saw any light.

"Yes," replied the officer, "I see a light."



THE VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS



Then Columbus called a second man. He could not at first see the light, and in any case neither of them thought much of it. Columbus, however, made sure that land was close, and calling the men about him he bade them keep a sharp look-out, promising a silken doublet to the man who should first see land.

So till two o'clock in the morning the ships held on their way. Then from the *Pinta* there came again a joyful shout of "Land! Land!"

This time it proved no vision, it was land indeed; and at last the long-looked-for goal was reached. The land proved to be an island covered with beautiful trees, and as they neared the shore the men saw naked savages crowding to the beach.

In awed wonder these savages watched the huge white birds, as the ships with their great sails seemed to them. Nearer and nearer they came, and when they reached the shore and folded their wings the natives fled in terror to the shelter of the forest. But seeing that they were not pursued, their curiosity got the better of their fear, and returning again they stood in silent astonishment to watch the Spaniards land.

First of all came Columbus; over his glittering steel armour he wore a rich cloak of scarlet, and in his hand he bore the Royal Standard of Spain. Then, each at the head of his own ship's crew, came the captains of the *Pinta* and the *Nina*, each carrying in his hand a white banner with a green cross and the crowned initials of the King and Queen, which was the special banner devised for the great adventure. Every man was dressed in his best, and the gay-coloured clothes, the shining armour, and fluttering banners made a gorgeous pageant. Upon it the sun shone in splendour and the blue sky was reflected in a bluer sea: while scarlet flamingoes, startled at the approach of the white men, rose in brilliant flight.

As Columbus landed he fell upon his knees and kissed the ground, and with tears of joy running down his cheeks he gave thanks to God, the whole company following his example. Then rising again to his feet, Columbus drew his sword, and solemnly took possession of the island in the name of Ferdinand and Isabella.

When the ceremony was over the crew burst forth into shouts of triumph and joy. They crowded round Columbus, kneeling before him to kiss his hands and feet praying forgiveness for their insolence and mutiny, and promising in the future to obey him without question. For Columbus it was a moment of pure joy and triumph. All his long years of struggle and waiting had come to a glorious end.

Yet he knew already that his search was not finished, his triumph not yet complete. He had not reached the eastern shores of India, the land of spice and pearls. He had not even reached Cipango, the rich and golden isle. But he had at least, he thought, found some outlying island off the coast of India, and that India itself could not be far away. He never discovered

his mistake, so the group of islands nowhere near India, but lying between the two great Continents of America, are known as the West Indies.

Columbus called the island upon which he first landed San Salvador, and for a long time it was thought to be the island which is still called San Salvador or Cat Island. But lately people have come to believe that Columbus first landed upon an island a little further south, now called, Watling Island.

From San Salvador Columbus sailed about and landed upon several other islands, naming them and taking possession of them for Spain. He saw many strange and beautiful fruits: "trees of a thousand sorts, straight and tall enough to make masts for the largest ships of Spain." He saw flocks of gaily coloured parrots and many other birds that sang most sweetly. He saw fair harbours so safe and spacious that he thought they might hold all the ships of the world.

But of such things Columbus was not in search. He was seeking for gold and jewels, and at every place he touched he hoped to find some great eastern potentate, robed in splendour and seated upon a golden throne; instead everywhere he found only naked savages. They were friendly and gentle, and what gold they had—but it was little indeed—they willingly bartered for a few glass beads, or little tinkling bells.

By signs, however, some of these savages made Columbus understand that further south there was a great king who was so wealthy that he ate off dishes of wrought gold. Others told him of a land where the people gathered gold on the beach at night time by the light of torches; others again told him of a land where gold was so common that the people wore it on their arms and legs, and in their ears and noses as ornaments. Others still told of islands where there was more gold than earth. But Columbus sought these lands in vain.

In his cruising Columbus found Cuba, and thought at first it must be the island of Cipango, but finding himself mistaken he decided at length that he had landed upon the most easterly point of India. He could not be far, he thought, from the palace of the Grand Khan, and choosing out two of his company he sent them as ambassadors to him. But after six days the ambassadors returned, having found no gold; and instead of the Grand Khan having seen only a savage chieftain.

These ambassadors found no gold, but, had they only known it, they found something quite as valuable. For they told how they had met men and women with firebrands in their hands made of herbs, the end of which they put in their mouths and sucked, blowing forth smoke. And these fire-brands they called *tabacos*.

The Spaniards also discovered that the natives of these islands used for food a root which they dug out of the earth. But they thought nothing of these things. For what were roots and dried herbs to those who came

in search of gold, and gems, and precious spices? So they brought home neither potatoes nor tobacco.

So far the three little vessels had kept together, but now the captain of the *Pinta* parted company with the others, not because of bad weather, says Columbus in his diary, but because he chose, and out of greed, for he thought "that the Indians would show him where there was much gold." This desertion grieved Columbus greatly, for he feared that Pinzon might find gold, and sailing home before him cheat him of all the honour and glory of the quest. But still the Admiral did not give up, but steered his course "in the name of God and in search of gold and spices, and to discover land."

So from island to island he went seeking gold, and finding everywhere gentle, kindly savages, fair birds and flowers, and stately trees.