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Part 11, by J. Jay Smith**

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AMERICAN HISTORICAL AND LITERARY
CURIOSITIES, PART 11 ***

**AMERICAN HISTORICAL
AND
LITERARY CURIOSITIES**

By John Jay Smith

Part 11.

Second Series

1860

AMERICAN
Historical and Literary Curiosities;

CONSISTING OF

Fac-Similes of some Plates, &c. Relating to

COLUMBUS,

AND

ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS of the REVOLUTION,

&c. &c.

WITH A VARIETY OF RELIQUES, ANTIQUITIES, AND AUTOGRAPHS.

EDITED AND ARRANGED,

WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF SEVERAL AUTOGRAPH COLLECTORS,

BY

JOHN JAY SMITH,

MEMBER OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA, ETC.

SECOND SERIES—COMPLETE IN ITSELF.

NEW YORK:

CHARLES B. RICHARDSON.

1860.

P R E F A C E.

THE First Series of "American Historical and Literary Curiosities," by John F. Watson, Esq. and myself, was commenced privately as a means of preserving many documents in the possession of our friends and ourselves; but they soon increased to such importance by contributions, that it was determined to publish them. Five editions were demanded by the public at home and abroad, and the work is now scarce and high-priced. The plates being worn out, no other edition of it is likely soon, if ever, to be issued.

This Second Series, complete in itself, owes its origin to the Commercial Panic, when it was desirable to employ several artists in want of work. It has been carried through by the assistance and contributions of various friends. I am particularly indebted to Ferdinand J. Dreer, Esq., Peter Force, Esq., Lewis J. Cist, Esq., Frank M. Etting, Esq., J. Wingate Thornton, Esq., Hon. George Folsom, Herman and Caleb Cope, Esqs., J. Francis Fisher, Esq., John Macalester, Esq., Charles J. Wister, Esq., Winthrop Sargent, Esq., Bushrod W. Adams, Esq. and others, and to the Philadelphia Library for the rare Broad-sides of the Revolution, and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, whose valuable collections have been opened to my use in the handsomest and most liberal manner.

It may be proper to copy here a portion of the Preface to the fifth edition of the First Series, explanatory of the object of the work:—

"The past has a charm for Americans, as well as for the inhabitants of countries whose history extends far into the shadowy and unknown. *Our* early and romantic past has the merit of being known and truly related. Every thing which adds to these truths is sought for with avidity by the curious and intelligent inquirer. We have now many autograph-collectors, who may be viewed in the light of preservers of documents which would otherwise perish or be dispersed. To few, comparatively, are their treasures revealed. It was suggested, therefore, that some of the most rare 'Historical and Literary Curiosities' in the possession of individuals, should be grouped for the amusement and instruction of the present and of future generations, who may well know from printed accounts *what* things were done, but who can also thus learn *how* they were done."

As in the First Series, nearly all the articles in the present collection have been taken by competent artists from the originals of which they purport to be fac-similes. Considerable labor and trouble have been expended in collecting together and adapting the varied materials here presented, but I have been rewarded by the pleasure of the pursuit.

JOHN JAY SMITH.

* * Fully to understand the work, it is necessary, in turning over the pages, to have constant reference to the Tables of Contents, where will be found many explanations for which there was not space on the plates.

Original Volume 2, Part One

CONTENTS.—No. I.

PLATE I.—Columbus and the Egg. He turns the laugh upon those who were making sport of him at a feast. (Copied from the very spirited picture in De Bry's *Voyages*.)

PLATE II.—Columbus, departing on his first voyage to the Indies, takes leave of the King and Queen. (From the same.)

PLATE III. FIG. 1.—Columbus standing on the deck of his ship, with an astrolabe in his hand. (From the same.)

(Figs. 2, 3, 4, and 5, are taken from a letter written by Columbus, March 9, 1493, and copied from a very rare edition now in the Imperial Library at Milan. This work, scarcely found in any other library, consists of but nine pages in octavo or small quarto.)

FIG. 2.—A caravel under sail, with its elevated deck. The pilot in a bateau.

FIG. 3.—The ship of Columbus, the *Ocean Wave*, with the islands San Salvador, Hispaniola, Isabella, Fernandina, and Conception. In front of this we find a city, with a gate and tower, and a wall with port-holes. The man on deck, with a sword by his side, is supposed—curiously enough—to represent Columbus in the act of meditation.

FIG. 4.—*Insula Hyspana*, or St. Domingo. A caravel with oars. A bateau, with two Spaniards; the first supposed to represent Columbus. Some of the natives present food, and others fly from him.

FIG. 5.—The building of a city, or Fort Isabella. The sea bathes the walls.

PLATE IV. FIG. 1.—Medal of Christopher Columbus, the Genoese. (Taken from De Bry.)

FIG. 2.—Medal of Americus Vesputius, the Florentine. (Likewise taken from De Bry, where it forms an accompaniment to that of Columbus.)

FIG. 3.—Portrait, which "may be relied on as the most genuine and accurate of Columbus." (Taken from a reduced copy of the larger one in De Bry, and accurately copied into "*Vita de Christoforo Colombo, scritta dal Cavaliere Luigi Bossi.*" Milano, 1818.) *In the possession of the Hon. George Folsom.*

Beneath the Portrait, Signatures of Columbus, taken from original letters formerly existing in Genoa, but now in the Royal Archives at Turin, and from the Codicil of his Will in the Corsini Library at Rome, discovered by accident, and diligently scrutinized by the Abbé Andres.

FIG. 4.—The Coat of Arms of Columbus. Inscription—"To Castile and Leon Columbus gave the New World."

PLATE V.—Introduction of Christianity into the New World. The Whale gives effectual support to the Missionaries. (Taken from a rare work printed in Italy, *in the possession of Charles B. Norton, New York.*)

†† 1

[Plate 1.](#)

[Plate 2.](#)

[Plate 3.](#)

[Plate 4.](#)

[Plate 5.](#)

Columbus suos cachinnatores lepidè in con- VII.
uiuio illudit.



From De Bry's *Voyages*.

N O v o illo orbe à Columbo detecto, quum forte celebri conuiuio cum multis Nobilibus Hispanis ipse adhibitus esset, & inter eos de India sermo ortus, vnus eorum ad Columbum conuersus, sic eum alloquitur. Tamen si Indiam non reperisses, non defuissent tamen in hac nostra Hispania, qui idem quod tu tentare potuissent: abundat enim ea magnis viris & ingeniosis. Ad ea nihil respondens Columbus, ouum inferri in mensam iubet, & omnes experiri monet, vt faciant id nullo adminiculo fultum, stans & erectum in mensa maneat: quam nulli succederet; ipse rationem qua id fieri posset demonstrat.

Columbus and the Egg.

Prima

Enlarge



From De Bry's Voyages

COLUMBUS nauibus à Ferdinando Rege impetratis, cum Bartholomæo fratre è Palos vrbe in Gomeram Insulam nauigat. Istic aqua & cateris necessarijs sumtis, Occidentem solem sequutus, iter instituit: quum porro emensa dierum aliquot nauigatione, nondum terra vlla in conspectu esset, milites in Columbum fremere incipiunt: ille mitigatis semel atq; iterum eorum animis, & suas rationes pro virili confirmans spemq; sibi esse, Deo bene iuvante, breui terram nouam in conspectu fore, nauigationem prosequitur. Sed quum aliquot dies preterea nauigassent, nec vlla tellus occurreret, fremitum redintegrant, & minitantur se illum in mare præcipitem daturos, si pertinacius ultra tendere vellet: itaq; postridie vela demitti iubet. At credibile est, Columbum, quum hec præciperet, haud procul terra absuisse, idq; ex cæli conspectu deprehendisse, aura, & nubeculis que circa Orientem solem in horizonte apparerent.

C Colum-

Columbus departs for America.

Enlarge

COLUMBUS.

[SEE PLATES III. and IV., AND THE TABLE OF CONTENTS.]

Translation from page 167 of "*Vita di Cristoforo Colombo scritta e corredata di nuove osservazioni, di note storico-critiche e di un'appendice di documenti rari o inediti dal Cavaliere Luigi Bossi.*" . . .
Milano, 1818.

APPENDIX No. II.

Letter written by Christopher Columbus to Don Rafaele Sausis, Treasurer of the King of Spain, on the 9th of March, 1493. Taken from the very rare edition now in the Imperial Public Library of Milan.

DESCRIPTION OF THE VOLUME.

This volume, truly precious, despite the smallness of its size and the fact that it is hardly to be found in any other library, (a copy, however, is believed now to be in the British Museum,) does not appear to be mentioned in the most copious catalogues of the most remarkable collections of bibliographical rarities. It is composed of only nine leaves, in octavo or small quarto, not exceeding in length 1 decimètre, 4 millimètres, and in breadth 1 decimètre only.

On the face of the first leaf appear the armorial bearings of Castile and Leon, (forming the kingdom of Spain,) cut in wood, and above them the inscription *Regnum Hyspanie*. On the reverse of the same page is found a woodcut, covering the whole page, (Plate III. Fig. 2,) and representing a caravel under sail, near which is seen a boat containing a pilot, or sailor, seated, with a cap, perfectly conical, on his head, and an oar in his hand. The ship is well drawn, the castle on the poop being well wrought out. Above, we read *Oceanica Classis*; but from the form of some of the letters it may be inferred that the characters are not cut in the wood, but doubtless printed from movable types inserted into a space prepared for them in the upper part of the block. This view is also confirmed by the observation that the letters project beyond the line of the woodcut, and in the same place the line surrounding it is broken.

On the face of the second leaf appears the inscription, printed in the same types as those of the preceding cut, *De insulis inventis*. After which we find, printed in types somewhat smaller, which continue through the entire volume, the other title, *Epistola Cristoferi Colom, &c.*, as is given in full in the reprint of the letter.

On the reverse of this page is found another engraving, representing the island of Hispaniola, or St. Domingo. (Plate III. Fig. 4.) The island is girded by rocks; but certain plants may be discerned, rudely designed. Near the island is seen the caravel, moved by oars, on which may be discovered certain animals which one hardly knows how to describe. A boat, with two Spaniards in it, the foremost of whom, covered with a cap more ornamented than that of the other, may perhaps be Columbus himself, draws near to the land in an inlet of the sea. A troop of Indians, of whom a part manifest fear and grief, and another make as if they wished to fly, whilst a third seems to issue from the throat of a mountain; and he who is nearest to the sea holds out, with both hands, a fruit—perhaps a cocoanut—to the more notable person who stands in the boat, and who, in turn, presents to the Indian a vase or a cup, perhaps full of some liquor. Rocks and mountains in the distance. Above may be read, printed likewise with movable types, *Insula Hyspana*.

The text of the letter is continued on the third leaf; and on the reverse is found another plate representing the islands St. Salvador, Hispaniola, Isabella, Fernanda, and Conception. (Plate III. Fig. 3.) In the foreground is represented, pretty roughly, the caravel under sail, and upon it a man standing with a sword by his side, who is probably Columbus himself, in the act of meditation. In a similar attitude Columbus is seen, far more nobly figured, in a plate of De Bry. In that which we are now describing, there is placed on the right an island, or a portion of an island, with the inscription *Salvatoris*; higher up, on the same side, another portion of an island, with the name *Hyspana*; another island in the middle, with the name *Isabella*. On the left side, at the upper part, is seen a portion of an island denominated *Fernanda*; and below it, another portion of an island, with the words *Conceptois Marie*. Before this latter is found a kind of city, with a gate, a tower, and battlemented walls. In all the islands may be observed indications of verdure and some vestiges of buildings. The letters representing the names of the different islands in this plate have no resemblance to those of the text, and seem cut in wood like the picture itself.

The fourth leaf is entirely occupied with text, even on the reverse side. But on the front of the fifth is seen again repeated the same plate printed on the reverse of the first leaf, with the title *Oceana Classis*. On the reverse of this leaf the text is continued, as also on the whole of the sixth succeeding, and on the first page of the seventh.

On the reverse of the seventh leaf we have another plate, (Plate III. Fig. 5,) representing the building of a city, (probably that of Isabella,) different edifices, and certain battlemented walls with a gate; certain workmen are raising, by means of a pulley, a large bucket, or box of materials. At the foot of the walls stand divers cubical blocks, probably stones prepared for the buildings. The sea bathes the walls of the new city. In the distance are two soldiers, who seem to be armed with halberds. Above may be read, as in the second plate, *Insula Hyspana*, which title is printed with movable types, the line being interrupted by a high tree, which rises as it were in the middle of the plate, and which may be conjectured to be of that species which the French naturalists have denominated *cbou palmiste*.

The eighth and ninth leaves contain nothing but text, which is finished on the reverse of the ninth, with the date *Pridie ydus Marcii*. and the subscription *Cristoforus Colom Oceane Classis Prefectus*.

This letter was the first authentic document which made known through Europe the discoveries made by Columbus.

Respecting the PORTRAIT of COLUMBUS, (Plate IV.,) De Bry, in his celebrated book, says, in the preface,—

“Theodore de Bry sends health to the reader :

“In a former part of the History of America, containing not only a written account of wonderful

and extraordinary matters relating to the recently-discovered New World, but also pictorial representations, by means of drawings, of many scenes, it was stated that the discovery had been made by the persevering industry of Christopher Columbus, a Genoese, contrary to the expectations of all those whom he had consulted on the subject. As Columbus was a man of intelligence, and endowed with great genius and spirit, the King and Queen of Castile, before his departure, directed his portrait to be painted by a skilful artist, that they might have a memorial of him in case he should not return from his expedition. Of this portrait I have had the good fortune to obtain a copy, since finishing the fourth book of this work, through a friend who had received it from the artist himself; and it has been my desire, kind reader, to share this pleasure with you; for which purpose I have caused it to be engraved, in a reduced form, on copper, by my son, with as much care as possible, and now offer it for your inspection in this book. And, in truth, the portrait of one possessing such excellence deserves to be seen by all good men; for he was upright and courteous, pure and noble-minded, and an earnest friend of peace and justice.” * * * * *



Fig 1.

Fig 1. Columbus on the Deck of his Ship taking an observation of the sun.

Fig. 2. A Caraval under Sail . . .

Fig. 3. The Ship of Columbus, the Ocean Wave.

Fig. 4. Insula Hyspana, or St. Domingo. A Caraval with oars.

Fig. 5. The Building of a city, or Fort Isabella

(See Contents.)



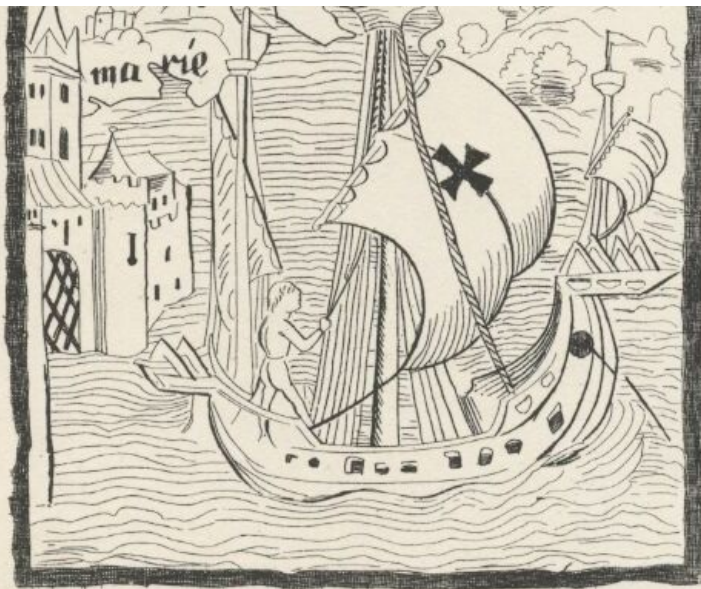


Fig 3



Fig. 2.





Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 2.

S. A. S.
X. M. Y.
XPO FERENS.

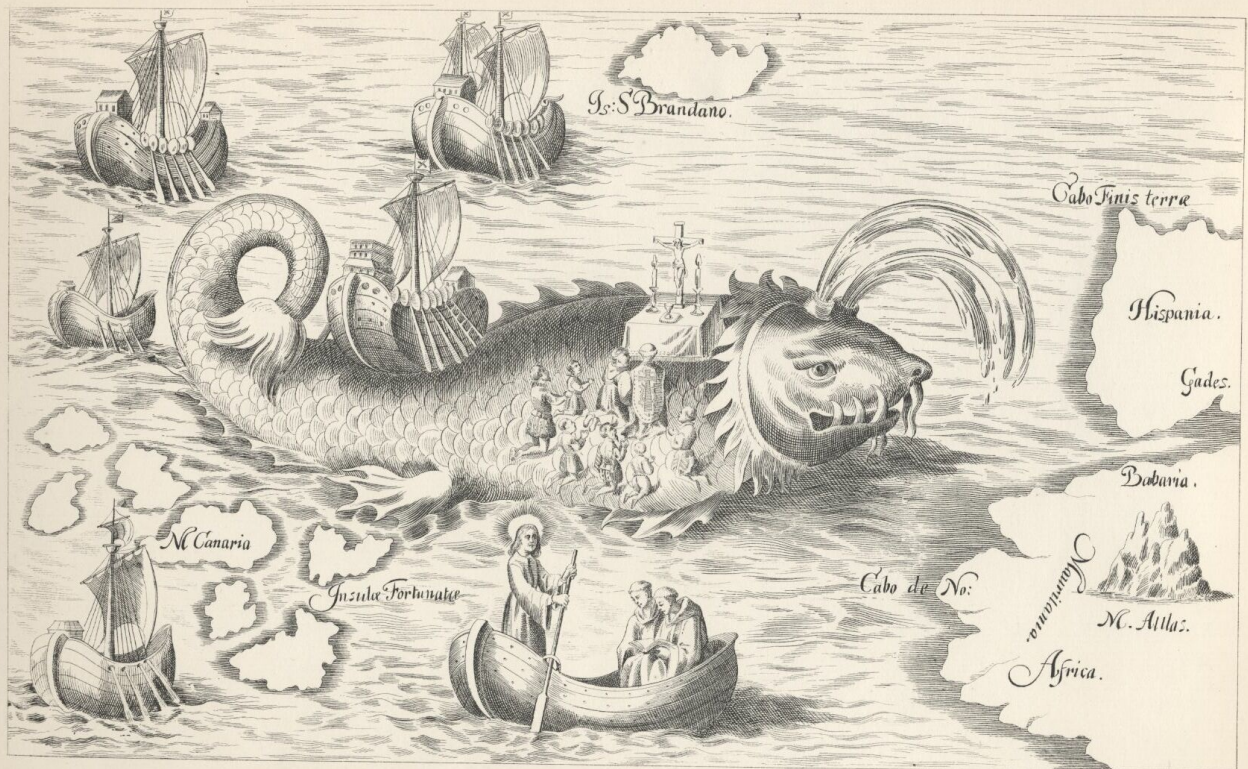
S. A. S.
X. M. Y.
XPO FERENS



Fig. 4.

- Fig. 1. Medal of Christopher Columbus.
- Fig. 2. " " Amerigo Vesputius.
- Fig. 3. Portrait of Columbus, with his Signature.
- Fig. 4. The Coat of Arms of Columbus.

Enlarge



The Whale assists in the Discovery of New Worlds.

[Enlarge](#)

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