

therefore determined to sail back to Spain, make known his discovery to the king and queen, and fit out a larger expedition for trading.

On his way home he discovered and took possession Hai'ti, which he called His-pan-io'la, or "Little Spain." His best ship, the *Santa Maria*, having been wrecked, forty men were left behind in a fort there. Columbus bade them be good to the natives, and learn their language, so they could tell him all about the great king when he came back.



## XII. HOME AGAIN.

COLUMBUS set out on his return journey in January, but he was obliged to go very slowly, because the wind was often against him, and because one of his vessels was badly crippled. In the middle of February a terrible storm separated the two ships, and Columbus, fearing his vessel would sink, and the news of his discovery perish with him, wrote out two accounts of his journey. These were enclosed in cakes of wax, which were put into empty casks. One of them was cast into the sea, but the other was left on deck, so it could float off if the boat sank.

The storm grew so fierce that Columbus and his men vowed to go in procession to the first church they saw after landing, and return thanks, if they were only spared. When the storm-tossed navigators finally reached the Azores, therefore, they tried to keep this



The *Niña*.

promise; but the people were so unkind that they imprisoned those who landed. Columbus managed to recover his men, but on the way from those islands to Spain, another tempest overtook him, and it was only after much tossing that the *Niña* at last reached Portugal.

As soon as he landed, Columbus sent a messenger to Ferdinand and Isabella to announce his safe return, and the success of his undertaking. The very people who had once made fun of him now eagerly listened to all he had to say, and their hearts were full of envy at the thought that the newly discovered islands would belong to Spain, and not

to Portugal. It is even said that some one basely proposed to murder Columbus and send out ships to take possession of the land in the name of Portugal.



The *Pinta*.

The king, however, would not consent, and Columbus, sailing away again, finally entered the port of Palos, whence he had started many months before. As soon as the people heard that he had succeeded, they were almost wild with joy, and rang all the bells in the city. One of the Pinzons, who had hoped that Columbus' vessel had gone down in the storm, came into Palos just then with the *Pinta*. He had intended to claim all the honors of the new discovery, and was greatly disappointed when he found that Columbus had reached port before him.

As the court was at Bar-ce-lo'na, Columbus immediately went there, with his Indians, parrots, and other curiosities, and all along the road people came in crowds to stare at him. They gazed in wonder at the Indians, who, in their turn, were bewildered by all the strange sights they beheld.

The royal couple received Columbus in state, and, after he had bent the knee before them in homage, made him sit down in their presence—a great honor—and relate his adventures. Columbus gave them glowing descriptions of the new islands, told them he had found the road to India, and promised that they should soon be rich. This news caused such rejoicing that the royal couple went to give solemn thanks in the chapel.

Honors were now showered upon Columbus, who was welcomed and feasted everywhere. In fact, people made such a fuss over him that some of the courtiers became jealous. A story is told about one of these men who sneeringly remarked at a banquet that even if Columbus had not discovered the road across the ocean, there were plenty of brave Spaniards who could have done so. Columbus seemed to pay no special attention to this taunt, but quietly taking an egg from a dish placed in front of him, he asked the guests if they could make it stand on end. All tried, and failed. When they finally declared the feat impossible, Columbus struck the egg on the table hard enough to break its shell slightly. Then, leaving it standing there, he calmly said that everything was equally easy—after you knew how to do it.

The news brought by Columbus made a sensation everywhere; but while all the people were talking about his discoveries, he was actively preparing to cross the Atlantic again, intending this time to reach India. Instead of three miserable little ships, and very small crews, he now had a fleet of seventeen vessels, carrying about fifteen hundred men.

The second expedition set sail in September, 1493, and, after stopping at the Canary Islands, steered across the Atlantic to the eastern West Indies. There Columbus found a fierce tribe of Car'ibs, of whose attacks the Indians had complained to him the year before. The Spaniards explored these islands, lost their way at times in the forest, and once came to the homes of some cannibal Caribs. When they saw a heap of human bones, left over from a horrible feast, they shuddered with dread at the thought of falling into the hands of these cruel men.



### XIII. COLUMBUS ILL-TREATED.

**A**BOUT one year after leaving the colony at Haiti, Columbus came back, to find the place deserted. One of the Indians who had gone to Spain with him knew enough Spanish by this time to act as interpreter. Through him, Columbus learned that some of the colonists had fallen ill and died. The rest, disobeying his orders, had been cruel and unkind to the natives, and so anxious to get rich that the Indians, in self-defense, had fallen upon and killed them.

The site of the first colony having proved so unlucky, Columbus established the next on another spot, and called it Isabella, in honor of the queen. Here the Spaniards began to trade with the natives for gold, and Columbus sent this metal to Spain, asking that provisions should be sent out in exchange, because the Spaniards did not like the natives' food, and had not yet found time to grow crops for their own use.

Besides the gold, Columbus sent back a whole cargo of men, women, and children, to be sold as slaves. This was cruel and wicked; but Columbus believed, as most men did then, that it was far better for the Indians to be slaves among Christians than free among heathens.