

THE FIRST LAND.

Landing of Columbus One October Day
Near 400 Years Ago.

By Washington Irving.

It was on Friday morning, the 12th of October, 1492, that Columbus first beheld the New World. As the day dawned he saw before him a level island, several leagues in extent, and covered with trees like a continual orchard. Though apparently uncultivated, it was populous, for the inhabitants were seen issuing from all parts of the woods and running to the shore. They were perfectly naked, and as they stood gazing at the ships, appeared by their attitudes and gestures to be lost in astonishment.

Columbus made signals for the ships to cast anchor, and the boats to be manned and armed. He entered his own boat, richly attired in scarlet, and holding the royal standard; while Martin Alonso Pinzon and Vincent Yanez his brother, put off in company in their boats, each with a banner of the enterprise emblazoned with a green cross, having on either side the letter F and Y, the initials of the Castilian monarchs Fernando and Isabel, surmounted by crowns.

As he approached the shore, Columbus, who was disposed for all kinds of agreeable impressions, was delighted with the purity and suavity of the atmosphere, the crystal transparency of the sea, and the extraordinary beauty of the vegetation. He beheld, also, fruits of an unknown kind upon the trees which overhung the shores. On landing, he threw himself on his knees, kissed the earth, and returned thanks to God with tears of joy. His example was followed by the rest, whose hearts indeed overflowed with the same feelings of gratitude.

Columbus then rising drew his sword displayed the royal standard, and assembling round him the two captains, with de Ercobedo, notary of the armament Rodrigo Sanchez, and the rest who had landed, he took solemn possession in the name of the Castilian sovereigns, giving the name of San Salvador. Having complied with the requisite forms and ceremonies, he called upon all present to take the oath of obedience to him, as admiral and viceroy, representing the persons of the sovereigns.

The feelings of the crew now burst forth in the most extravagant transports. They had recently considered themselves devoted men, hurrying forward to destruction; they now looked upon themselves as favorites of fortune, and gave themselves up to the most unbounded joy. They thronged around the admiral with overflowing zeal, some embracing him, others kissing his hands. Those who had been most mutinous and turbulent during the voyage, were now most devoted and enthusiastic. Some begged favors of him, as if he had already wealth and honors in his gift. Many abject spirits, who had outraged him by their violence, now cringed at his feet, begged pardon for all the trouble they had caused him, and promising the blindest obedience for the future.

The natives of the island, when, at the dawn of day, they had beheld the ships hovering on their coast, had supposed them monsters which had issued from the deep during the night. They had crowded to the beach, and watched their movements with awful anxiety. Their veering about, apparently without effect, and the furling of their sails, resembling huge wings, filled them with astonishment. When they beheld their boats approach the shore, and a number of strange beings clad in glittering steel, or raiment of various colors, landing upon the beach, they fled in affright to the woods.

Finding, however, that there was no attempt to pursue nor molest them, they gradually recovered from their terror, and approached the Spaniards with great awe, frequently prostrating themselves on the earth, and making signs of adoration. During the ceremonies of taking possession, they remained gazing in timid admiration at the complexion, the beards, the shining armor and splendid dress of the Spaniards. The admiral particularly attracted their attention, from his commanding height, his air of authority, his dress of scarlet, and the deference which was paid him by his companions; all which pointed him out as the commander.

When they had still further recovered from their fears, they approached the Spaniards, touched their beards, and examined their hands and faces, admiring their whiteness. Columbus was pleased with their gentleness and confiding simplicity, and suffered their scrutiny with perfect acquiescence, winning them by his benignity. They now supposed that the ships had sailed out of the crystal firmament which bounded their horizon, or had descended from above on their ample wings, and that these marvelous beings were inhabitants of the skies.

The natives of the island were no less objects of curiosity to the Spaniards, differing, as they did, from any race of men they had ever seen. Their appearance gave no promise of either wealth or civilization, for they were entirely naked, and painted with a variety of colors. With some it was confined merely to a part of the face, the nose, or around the eyes; with others it extended to the whole body, and gave them a wild and fantastic appearance.

Their complexion was of a tawny or copper hue, and they were entirely destitute of beards. Their hair was not crisped, like the recently discovered tribes of the African coast, under the same latitude, but straight and coarse, partly cut short above the ears, but some locks were left long behind and falling on their shoulders. Their features, though obscured and discolored by paint, were agreeable; they had lofty foreheads, and remarkably fine eyes. They were of moderate stature, and well shaped; most of them appeared to be under thirty years of age; there was but one female with them, quite young and beautifully formed.

As Columbus supposed himself to have landed on an island at the extremity of India, he called the natives by the general appellation of Indians, which was universally adopted before the true nature of his discovery was known, and has since been extended to all the aborigines of the New World. The islanders were friendly and gentle. Their only arms were lances, hardened at the end by fire, or pointed with a flint, or the teeth or bone of a fish. There was no iron to be seen, nor did they appear acquainted with its properties; for when a drawn sword was presented to them, they unguardedly took it by the edge.

Columbus distributed among them colored caps, glass beads, hawk's bells, and other trifles, such as the Portuguese were accustomed to trade with among the nations of the gold coast of Africa. They received them eagerly, hung the beads round their necks, and were wonderfully pleased with the bells. The Spaniards remained all day on shore, amusing themselves after their anxious voyage amidst the beautiful groves of the island, and returned on board late in the evening, delighted with all they had seen.

On the following morning, at break of day, the shore was thronged with the natives; some swam off to the ships, others came in light barks, which they called canoes, formed of a single tree hollowed, and capable of holding from one man to the number of forty or fifty. These they managed dexterously with paddles, and, if over-taken, swam about in the water with perfect unconcern, as if their natural element, righting their canoes with great facility, and bailing them with calabashes.

They were eager to procure more toys and trinkets, not apparently from any idea of their intrinsic value, but because everything from the strangers possessed a supernatural value in their eyes, as having been brought from heaven; they even picked up fragments of glass and earthenware as valuable prizes. They had but few objects to offer in return, except barter, of which great numbers were domesticated among them, and cotton yarn, of which they had abundance, and would exchange large balls of five and twenty pounds' weight for the merest trifle. They brought also cakes of a kind of bread called cassava, which constituted a principal part of their food, and was afterward an important article of provisions with the Spaniards. It was formed from a great root called yuca, which they cultivated in fields. This they cut into small morsels, which they grated or scraped and strained in a press, making a broad thin cake, which was afterward dried hard, and would keep for a long time, being steeped in water when eaten. It was insipid, but nourishing, though the water strained from it in the preparation was a deadly poison. There was another kind of yuca destitute of this poisonous quality, which was eaten in the root, either boiled or roasted.

The avarice of the discoverers was quickly excited by the sight of small ornaments of gold worn by some of the natives in their noses. These the latter gladly exchanged for glass beads and hawk's bells; and both parties exulted in the bargain, no doubt admiring the other's simplicity. As gold, however, was an object of royal monopoly in all enterprises of discovery, Columbus forbade any traffic in it without his express sanction; and he put the same prohibition on the traffic for cotton, reserving to the crown all trade for it, wherever it should be found in any quantity.

He inquired of the natives where this gold was procured. They answered him by signs, pointing to the south, where, he understood them, dwelt a king of such wealth that he was served in vessels of wrought gold. He understood, also, that there was land to the southwest, and the northwest; and that the people from the last mentioned quarter frequently proceeded to the southwest in quest of gold and precious stones, making in their way descent upon the islands, and carrying off the inhabitants. Several of the natives showed him scars of wounds received in battle with these invaders. It is evident that a great part of this fancied intelligence was delusion on the part of Columbus; for he was under a spell of the imagination, which gave its own shapes and colors to every object.

He was persuaded that he had arrived among the islands described by Marco Polo, as lying opposite Cathay, in the Chinese Sea, and he construed everything to accord with the account given of these opulent regions. Thus the enemies which the natives spoke of as coming from the northwest, he concluded to be the people of the mainland of Asia, the subjects of the great Khan of Tartary, who were represented by the Venetian traveler as accustomed to make war upon the islands, and to enslave the inhabitants. The country to the south bounding in gold, could be no other than the famous island of Cipango; and the king who was served out of vessels of gold, must be the monarch whose magnificent city and gorgeous palace, covered with plates of gold, had been extolled in such splendid terms by Marco Polo.

The island where Columbus had thus, for the first time, set his foot upon the New World, was called by the natives, Guanahani. It still retains the name of San Salvador, which he gave to it, though called by the English Cat Island.

While a young man was eating supper at a restaurant in New Bedford, Mass., he missed his watch. He at once searched his team for it, and just as he was about to give up the quest one of the horses lifted his foot and disclosed the watch imbedded in the hollow of the shoe. It had not sustained the slightest injury.

An old physician in Buffalo who lost his windpipe and larynx by cancer, and with them the power of speech, has had a silver tube inserted in his throat, by the aid of which he breathes freely and can articulate so as to be understood but with a tone of voice that has no variation.

Brigham and Amelia.

While the majority of the "faithful" are agitated and excited over the turn affairs have taken, and not a few of them are packing up preparatory to journeying to the new Mormon stronghold, wherever that may be, Amelia Young, the twenty-third and last wife of Brigham Young, goes quietly and serenely about her household duties as usual. She has no love for the Mormons, and she takes no trouble to conceal the fact. Her present residence is one of the most desirable and handsome in the city, and yet it cannot compare with the palatial mansion which old Brigham had built and presented to her, and which still bears the name "Amelia's palace." Old John Taylor holds forth in it at present. But his time, as well as that of the rest of them, bids fair to be short.

The story of Amelia's marriage to Brigham and a few incidents of after life are very interesting. An old lady who at one time was Amelia's school-teacher at Council Bluffs, Ia., tells the following tale:

Upon one occasion when Brigham Young was passing through Council Bluffs, on his way to Salt Lake, he caught sight of Amelia's pretty face and fine figure, and immediately resolved to add another one to his harem. The girl's parents were good Mormons and their consent to the union was joyfully given. Not so with the girl. She had a stout will as well as a handsome form and pretty face, and she declared that she would not marry "the ugly old heathen." Her parents, however, were determined not to lose the chance of getting so near heaven by such an alliance, and sternly commanded Amelia to don her robes and take the hand of the all-powerful Brigham. Seeing that she would be compelled to marry him if she staid at home, the girl made her way to a neighbor's, told them her story, and received her sympathy and protection.

Her parents instituted a search, during which Amelia hid in a root-cellar, over the door of which was a wood-house. The kind people carried her meals to her without attracting suspicion, until the third day one of the spies employed observed steam arising from a basket which the gentleman was carrying to the woodhouse.

This led to her discovery, and, as she was under age, her parents took charge of her.

After a hard struggle Amelia finally consented to marry the great Mormon, but declared: "If I do marry him, I'll have my own way, and he will find it out." He did.

Several years after their marriage, upon one occasion Amelia told Brigham to buy her a Singer sewing-machine. The old man promised to send it up that day, and walked off with his hand in his pocket, thinking, doubtless, how many fifties it would take to pay for it. By the time he got down-town he forgot what kind of a machine was wanted, consequently it was a Wheeler & Wilson that the men brought up-stairs to Amelia's sitting-room. As soon as that lady saw that her orders had not been obeyed to the letter she deliberately pulled the offensive machine to the head of the stairs, and giving it a push, down it went, bumpety-bump, until it reached the bottom, all broken to pieces.

The next day a "Singer" stood in the place allotted for it and nothing more was said of the affair. Upon another occasion, when Brigham had a number of distinguished guests, Amelia, who was present at the dinner-table, amused herself by hulling some nuts that were on the table and throwing the shells out of the window. Brigham manifested his annoyance at this proceeding without effect, when he exclaimed: "Amelia, my dear, I wish you would not throw those shells out upon the grass. They make such a noise."

"If you don't like to have them there you can pick them up," said the wayward favorite, as she arose from her chair and left the room.

When she had left Brigham turned to his guests and said:

"I hope you will excuse my wife. She is so headstrong that I cannot control her."

In the Confederacy's Last Days.

I visited Mobile in March, 1865, on official business, and, of course took a week to do one day's business in and spend a useless surplus of six months' pay. An invitation to dinner was an event in a soldier's life to be sought for by patient strategy, and the dinner if secured, treasured in memory for months after, to be related, item by item, to the boys in camp, who took great pleasure in listening to every detail of the feast. The staple food was corn bread with bacon and flour gravy; but wealthy families had a very few wheat biscuits on the table at dinner only. It was etiquette of home visitors to eat but one or two of these, on the polite supposition that the guests had such delicacies at home, but a soldier was urged and expected to eat his fill. I remember hearing an aside remark made by one wealthy and hospitable lady to another about their city's man's daughter, who was then visiting, or rather foraging, among the faithful. "She eats five biscuits, and flour \$400 a barrel!" The comical alliteration in this indignant protest caused it to stick in my memory. I remember buying a pair of red negro brogan shoes in a large store on Dauphin street for \$150. It was the only pair in the store, and the sole clerk a boy of 15, was perfectly indifferent whether I took them or not. One meal at a hotel cost \$5, and no one got as much as he could eat at that price. A regular allowance of corn meal, coffee, oat meal, biscuit, fried bacon, and in some cases fried chicken, were served. When consumed the waiters reported "all give out." Sometimes a hog at the table would take the last two biscuits, holding one in reserve while eating the other, but this was rare and apt to be rebuked by some spectator who was "heeled." The Confederate soldier was usually a gentleman, or desired to appear as such.—St. Louis Republican.

George Elliot's Private Life.

North American Review.

What some liberal critics would call the great mistake of her life, if not, as both England and American matronhood asserts, the great blot on her character, was her marriage to George H. Lewes. According to English law the marriage was illegal. The wife of Mr. Lewes abandoned him after committing adultery; she felt, or pretended to feel remorse at her conduct, and was received back into the house she had dishonored. Then some new seducer tempted her to fly away from her husband and children. The home became homeless. By a technicality of English law, Lewes had forfeited his right to be divorced from his faithless partner, because, in a moment of compassion, he had received her back as his "lawfully" wedded wife. In this condition, as a twice-dishonored husband, he met with Miss Evans. He was fascinated by her and she gradually became fascinated by him. There was no outward beauty on either side; Lewes was one of the handsomest men in Great Britain, and Miss Evans had no personal attraction, if we except the sweetness of her voice and the singular beauty of the expression of the eyes. Each saw the vision of the other "in the mind." Miss Evans, repudiating the technicality of the English law, consented to be united to Mr. Lewes, went abroad with him, was married to him, we think in some foreign city, and returned to England a kind of a social rebel, frowned upon by all women except those intimate friends who knew her motives and never faltered in their friendship. As she never sought "society," and rather disliked it, she bore with exemplary patience all the social disadvantages of her illegal rather than immoral conduct. Seven years before her union we find in one of her letters this remark about the novel of "Jane Eyre," then the literary sensation of the season: "All self sacrifice is good, but one would like it to be a somewhat nobler cause than that of a diabolical law which chains a man, soul and body, to a putrefying carcass." After her marriage she wrote to her friend Mrs. Bray that "any unworshipful, unsuperstitious woman who is sufficiently acquainted with the realities of life can pronounce my relations to Mr. Lewes immoral; I can only understand by remembering how subtle and complex are the influences which mould opinion."

Whatever may be thought of the legality or morality of the connection there can be no doubt it led to the happiest results to both parties. Lewes had been practically homeless for two years. There was danger that his children would grow up uneducated and uncared for. He was fast drifting into Bohemian habits. Four years after his new marriage Mrs. Lewes states in her journal that their "double life is more and more blessed—more and more complete." A few weeks after Lewes writes in his journal that he owes an intellectual debt of gratitude to Herbert Spencer. He says:

"My acquaintance with him was the brightest ray in a very dreary, wasted period of my life. I love him another and deeper debt. It was through him that I learned to know Maria—to know her was to love her—and since then my life has been a new birth. To her I owe all my prosperity and happiness. God bless her!"

A Gigantic Bank Safe.

From the London Globe.

A gigantic strong room, the largest ever constructed, measuring fifty feet in length, and weighing close upon 100 tons, has just been erected for the National Bank of Scotland by Messrs. Chubb. The entire structure is of hard steel. The plates were specially rolled, and after the boring had been completed, were again tempered to render them unassailable by tools of any kind. The safe consists of three rooms, each entered by a separate door and grille, measuring seven feet by three feet four inches, and the doors weigh a ton each, notwithstanding which they turn on their two pins with the greatest ease. The locks, of which no less than forty-eight are contained in the structure, are all of the latest pattern, having bolts all round, which shoot at angles of forty-five degrees, forming a powerful dovetail into the frames. The bolts in each door weigh two hundredweight, but by careful balancing they are shot with the greatest ease. In each partition dividing the rooms is a man-hole, also guarded by locks and bolts, for allowing access to the rooms in the event of the door key being mislaid. The doors are seven inches thick, and the plates are all treble, thus giving a practically adamant strength. The capacity of the safe is sufficient to contain 1,250 tons' weight of gold bullion, equal in value to £110,000,000 sterling. The safe will be taken to pieces previous to being shipped on board a steamer for Scotland, and will be removed in 600 sections. Each of these sections contains no less than 1,000 rivet holes, the bolt being in each case broken off and filed down close, when it has been driven home.

The late Emory Storrs used to tell of an incident which, he said, occurred in front of a hotel in Chicago. An English lord stood picking his teeth in an inconspicuous place beside a stone pillar. A man approached him stealthily and delivered a prodigious stage kick, which, while it did not hurt the lord, filled him with more astonishment than he had ever felt before. Then the assailant rushed forward to the lord, and with profound apologies, and expressions of contrition and inquiries as to my lord's condition of body and mind, explained that a mistake had been made. The valiant joker had supposed he was stealing unawares upon his dearest friend. "Ah! yes," said the Englishman quietly. "But tell me—is your friend fond of that sort of thing?"

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