

ECLECTIC EDUCATION SERIES

Barnes Elementary History of the United States

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BARNES'S
ELEMENTARY HISTORY
OF THE
UNITED STATES

TOLD IN BIOGRAPHIES

BY
JAMES BALDWIN



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PREFACE

A TEXT-BOOK of American history for beginners should aim to present a clear and somewhat comprehensive account of the chief influences that have shaped the destiny of our country and have given to it its preëminence among the nations of the earth. Educators are now quite generally agreed that this can be done in the most satisfactory manner through a series of biographies of the famous persons who have had most to do in connection with those influences. Men make history; and the telling of history in stories of the lives of its makers has a quality of concreteness very attractive to children, who usually fail to be interested in chronological narratives wherein the personal element is less prominent.

In this volume only such biographies are presented as are necessary to the continuity of the narrative as a whole. The story of no man's life is related merely because of the man, but because of its value as a link in our country's history. All the biographies in their order comprise a connected account of the discovery, settlement, and development of the United States. The plan of the

work has made some repetitions necessary; it has also obliged the omission of many details of secondary importance, which the pupil will learn in his later studies of the subject. There is a sharp line of distinction between a story-book and a history, — and yet the latter should scarcely fail to be as entertaining as the former. The narrative of the struggles and triumphs of the makers of America, and of the series of events which have culminated in the present commercial and political prosperity of our country, ought to be to young readers not only an interesting story, but an incentive to good citizenship and intelligent patriotism. To most American children a study of the “lives of great men” will scarcely fail to be a reminder that we also “can make our lives sublime.”

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CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

AND THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

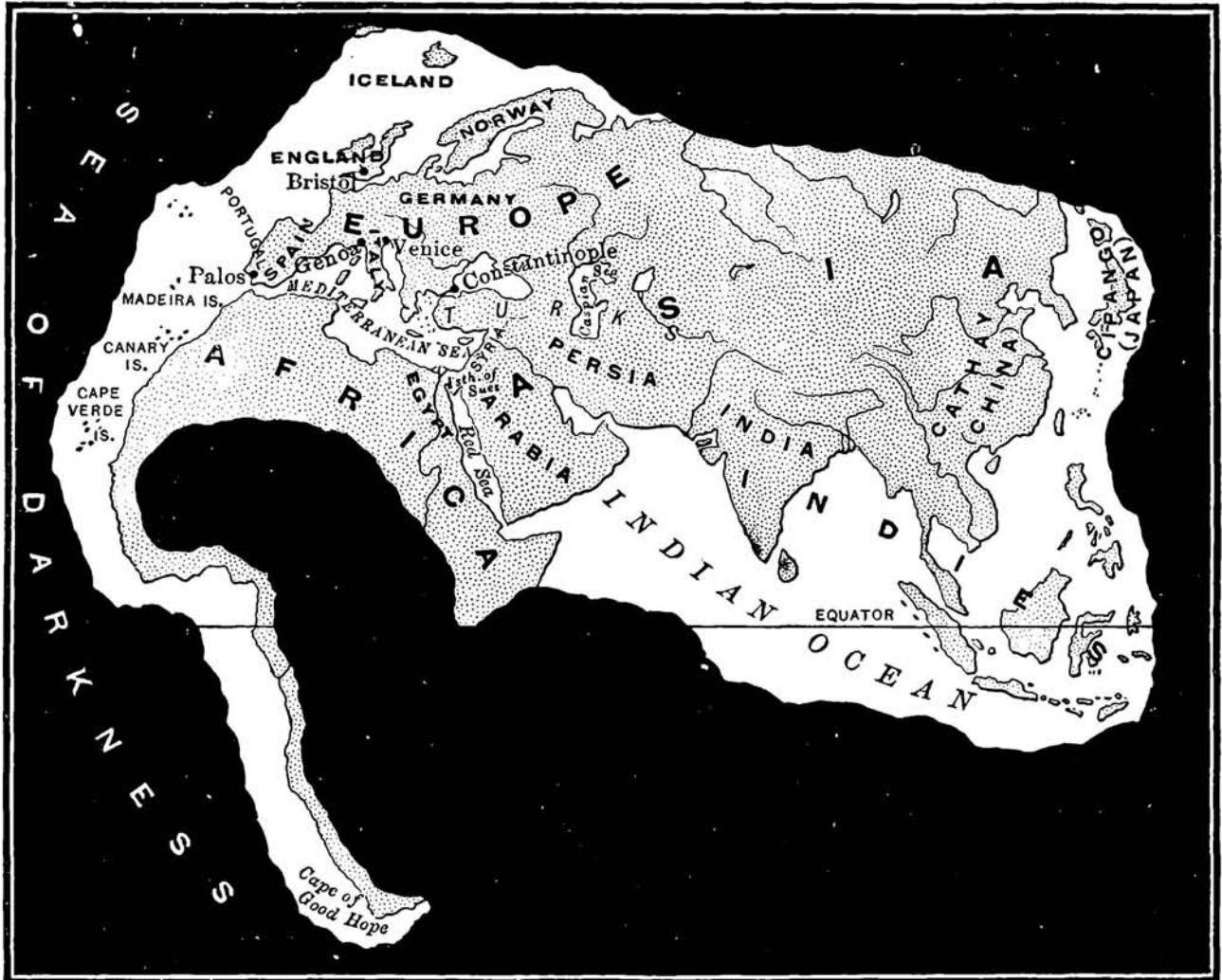
I. THE WAY TO INDIA

This country in which we live was not always the same beautiful land that it is now. It was once a **wild region** of woods and swamps and savage mountains and lonely prairies. There were no pleasant farms nor busy towns. There were no roads, no schoolhouses, no mills, no churches. The only people who lived here were Indians. No one can tell how long the land might have remained wild and unsettled had it not been for a wise, brave man whose name was Christopher Columbus.

Five hundred years ago the people of Europe had never heard of the continent which we call America. The wisest men among them had very little knowledge of the world. They knew a good deal about the countries which border the Mediterranean Sea. They knew something about England and Germany and Norway and even Iceland. A few travelers had visited Egypt and Arabia and Persia. But all the rest of the world was unknown.

Trade with India. — For a great many years the merchants of Arabia and Persia had been in the habit of sending rare and costly goods to Europe, — silks, pearls,

spices, and jewels of gold and precious stones. They said that these things came from a very far country called India. They brought them across the great deserts on the backs of camels. At Constantinople, or at some place in western Asia, they sold them to traders who sent them in ships



The world as known in Columbus's time

across the Mediterranean to sell to the rich people in Europe. At one time nearly all the trade of this kind was carried to Venice and Genoa, two cities of Italy. The merchants of those cities became very rich, and the cities themselves became very powerful.

The Turks. — Then, from unknown regions beyond the Caspian Sea, there came a warlike people called Turks. They overran all western Asia, they conquered Constantinople, and made themselves masters of the region in which their descendants live to this day. They held the sea-ports, the desert ways, and the mountain passes through which the trade of India had hitherto been brought.

How now could the wealthy people of Europe obtain the silks and spices and jewels which they prized so highly? The traders who supplied them must, if possible, find some other way to India, — some way that was not held by the dreaded Turks.

Seeking a new way to India. — It was known that India borders on the Indian Ocean which lies east of Africa. Why not send ships through the Red Sea and into this ocean? Ships from the Mediterranean could not reach the Red Sea, for there was then no canal across the isthmus of Suez as there is to-day.

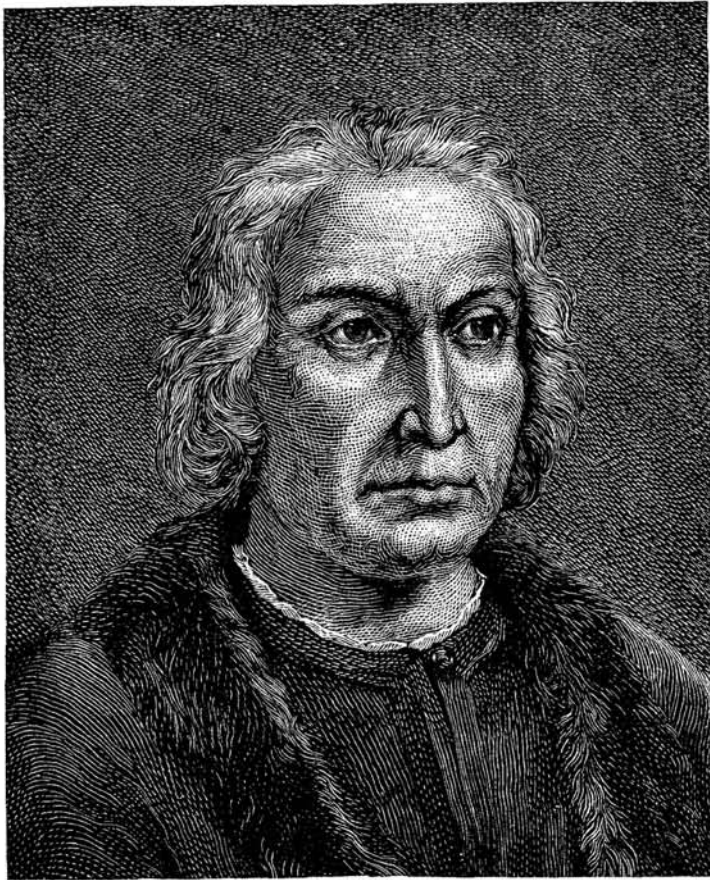
Why not, then, send ships around Africa? That is just what many men were thinking of; but nobody knew the way. No ship had ever ventured so far south. The sea captains of Venice and Genoa were bold enough on the Mediterranean; but they did not dare to go far out upon the ocean. They were afraid to sail their vessels upon strange waters.

Sailing around Africa. — In the little country of Portugal, in the southwest corner of Europe, many people were interested in trying to find the way to India. Ship after ship was sent out to see how far the west coast of Africa

extended. Each went a little farther than the one before it, but all were very cautious. The sea was unknown, and it was believed to be full of dreadful things. Year after year went by, and still no one had learned whether the long coast ever came to an end, or whether there was any way at all by which to reach the Indian Ocean.

“We shall never get to India by going around Africa,” said many.

II. WHAT COLUMBUS BELIEVED



Christopher Columbus

Just at that time Christopher Columbus came forward and said: “Even if we could reach India by sailing around Africa, it would be a very long voyage. I think there is a much better and shorter way.”

Who was Christopher Columbus?— Columbus was an Italian sailor then living in Portugal. He was born in Genoa, a famous seaport of Italy. He knew a great

deal about the sea. When a boy he had spent many a day on the wharfs, watching the ships coming and going. He had listened to many a wonderful story of India;

and he had made up his mind that when he became a man he would visit that country of gold and spices.

When he was fourteen he became a sailor. He afterwards visited all the great seaports on the Mediterranean. He sailed down the African coast as far as the boldest captain in Portugal dared to go. He lived for a time on one of the Madeira islands, and studied the ocean. He sailed to the Far North, to the frozen shores of Iceland. Then for a while he made his home in Portugal, where he busied himself making maps and charts.

Columbus in Portugal. — There were few men who knew more about the world than he. There was not a bolder sailor in Europe. And so, when he said, "I think there is a better way to reach India than by sailing around Africa," he was asked to explain what he meant.

"Well," he answered, "the world, as our wisest men agree, is round. It is round like an apple or a globe. On one side of it are Europe and Africa. Adjoining them, but reaching far over upon the other side, is Asia. The land, in fact, goes much more than halfway round the globe of the earth. The ocean, although broad, is like a vast river dividing the land on the east from the land on the west. On this shore is Europe, on that is Asia. To reach India, we have but to cross over. My plan, then, is to sail west instead of east."

People thought the plan a strange one. Some laughed, and said it was very foolish. But Columbus explained it so well that a few of the wiser men believed in it.

The king of Portugal. — Columbus explained his ideas

to the king of Portugal. Then he said: "If you will supply me with ships and sailors, I will make a voyage across the Atlantic. I will make known this new way to India. I ask only a fair share of the honor and profits that may be gained by the voyage."

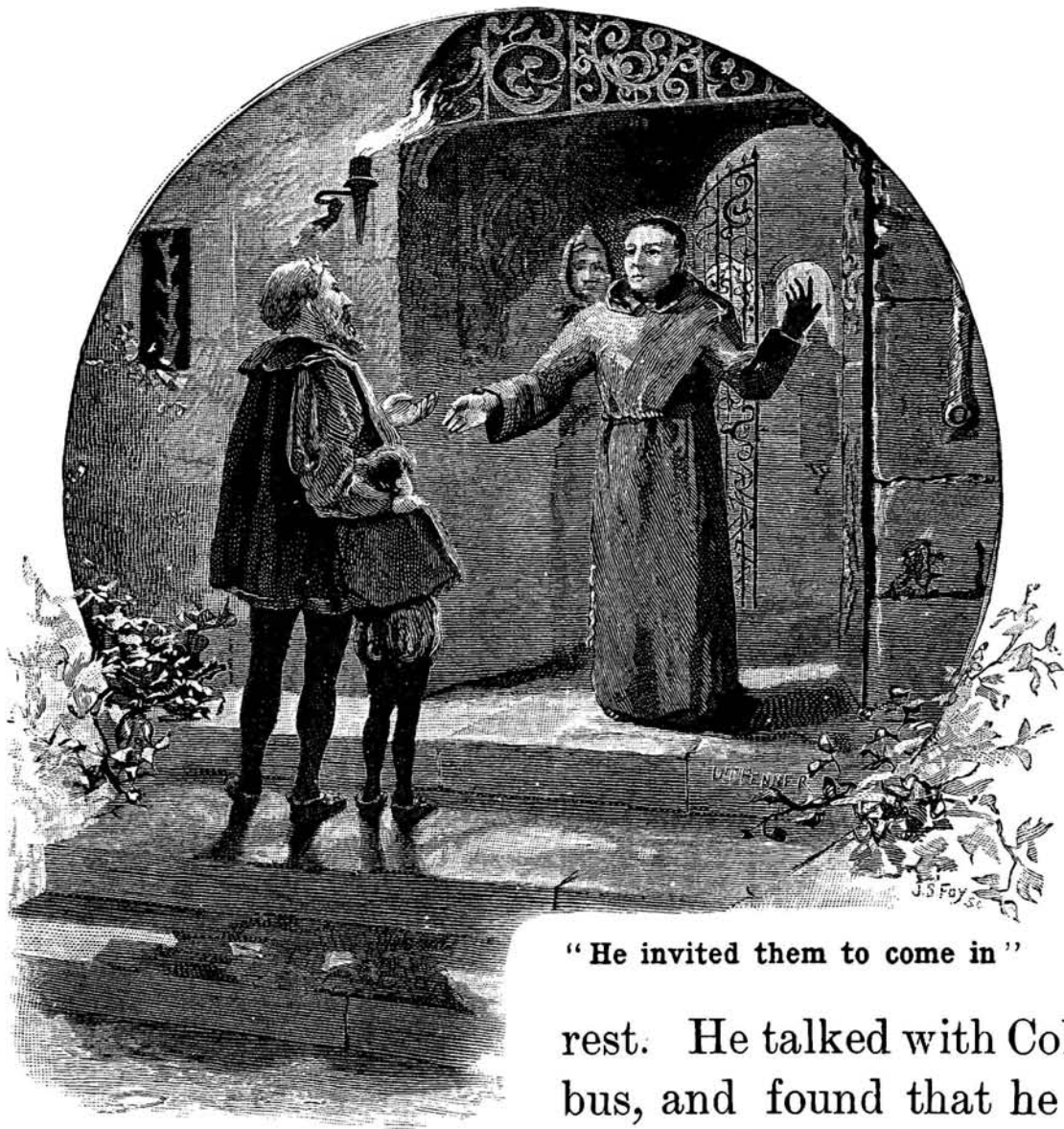
The king was more than half persuaded. He thought that the scheme might be worth trying. But he wanted all the honor and profits for himself.

So he sent out a ship secretly, to sail as far into the ocean as it could. But sailors at that time were afraid to venture to any great distance from the shore. They called the Atlantic the "Sea of Darkness." They believed that, as they sailed westward, they would encounter many dreadful dangers; that storms were raging there all the time; and that there was no farther shore.

Therefore the king's ship soon came back. The captain said that he had seen nothing but storm-tossed waves and a wilderness of waters.

Columbus in Spain. — When Columbus found that the king of Portugal would not help him, he went to Spain. He would ask Ferdinand and Isabella, the king and queen of that country, to give him the means to try his scheme. He took his little son Diego with him.

One evening, weary from long walking, he came to a small convent near the town of Palos. He knocked at the gate, and asked for a drink of water and a bite of bread for poor Diego. The prior of the convent saw the two travelers, and knew from their looks that they were no common beggars. He invited them to come in and



“ He invited them to come in ”

rest. He talked with Columbus, and found that he was a man of much intelligence.

He listened while his guest explained his ideas about the world and his plan for discovering a new way to India.

Encouragement. — Columbus told the prior his whole story. He told why he had left Portugal, how he had hoped to induce Ferdinand and Isabella to help him, and how nobody in Spain would listen to him. The king was busy carrying on a great war. The queen was not interested in his plan. People laughed when he tried to explain his ideas. He was discouraged.

“Cheer up, my friend,” said the good prior. “Persevere, and you will yet succeed. I myself will help you. I will use my influence with the queen. She will listen to me, for I was once her confessor.”

Perseverance. — Columbus did persevere. But it was yet a long time before he succeeded. Several years passed by, — years of disappointment and sore trials, — and then, just as he was getting ready to leave Spain, the queen was persuaded to favor his project. The king also agreed to give him the help that he asked.

Three ships were made ready. Two of these, the *Niña* and the *Pinta*, were very small and had no decks. The other, the *Santa Maria*, was a little larger; it was chosen by Columbus as his flagship.

III. THE FIRST VOYAGE

One morning in midsummer the little fleet sailed away from the harbor of Palos. The sailors scarcely expected ever to return. They wept as the land faded from 1492 sight. Most of them had been forced to go. The smaller ships, too, had been seized upon by the king's orders and taken without the leave of their owners.

The voyage was a long one. The sailors begged to be allowed to turn back. They even threatened the life of their commander. But Columbus was determined not to give up. He stood on the deck of the *Santa Maria* and watched for signs of land.

At length a green branch from a tree was seen floating in the water. Surely, land could not be far away. Then

some little birds, of a kind that live along the seashore, hovered around the ships. Surely, land was near at hand. At length, one night, a light was seen far over the water. It moved as if it were a torch being carried from place to



“ Columbus . . . went on shore with some of his men ”

place. When morning broke, the ships were near a pleasant island, green with trees and grass. How glad the sailors must have been !

The landing. — Columbus, dressed in scarlet and gold, went on shore with some of his men. All knelt upon the beach and thanked God for bringing them in safety across the dreaded sea. They planted a cross in the sand. They unfurled the banner of Spain. Columbus named the island “San Salvador,” and took possession of it for

the king and queen, Ferdinand and Isabella. It was one of the group which we now know as the Bahamas.

Indians. — Soon from among the trees strange men and women and children came shyly to look at the strangers. Columbus believed that he was on one of the islands of India, and so he called the people Indians. They were copper-colored; they had long, black hair and were finely formed; they seemed gentle and timid; they believed that the white men were beings come down from the sky to bless the earth.

It was on the 12th day of October, 1492, that Columbus landed on San Salvador. It was the first land seen on this side of the ocean; and it is common for us to say that America was discovered on that day. But Columbus thought that he was near the eastern coast of Asia.

Other discoveries. — Columbus sailed onward, hoping to reach the mainland, perhaps of India, perhaps of China, perhaps of Japan. He passed near many beautiful islands. He discovered Cuba and then sailed eastward, along its northern shore. Everywhere he was delighted with the pleasant land, the trees, the flowers, the fruits, the people. The natives — the Indians — were peaceable and kind, the air was mild, the sea was calm. Never was there a happier voyage than that first cruise among the islands which we now call the West Indies.

But when the voyagers reached Haiti, misfortunes befell them. The *Santa Maria* was driven ashore in a storm and wrecked. The captain of the *Pinta* had already disobeyed orders and sailed away. Columbus was left with

only the little *Niña*. He decided then that it was best to return to Spain and tell the story of his discoveries.

The homeward voyage was a hard one. Fierce storms threatened to overwhelm the tiny vessel. Scarcely a man hoped to see Spain again. Columbus wrote on a piece of parchment an account of his discoveries. He put the



“ The king and queen sent for Columbus ”

parchment in a cask, which he sealed and threw overboard. He thought that if the *Niña* should be lost, perhaps some day the cask would drift to shore and be picked up, the parchment would be found and read, and the world would know of what he had done.

But the ship weathered the storms, and, after many

weeks, sailed proudly into the harbor of Palos. What rejoicing there was that day! The king and queen sent for Columbus. They had him sit beside them and tell all about his voyage. They looked at the strange things he had brought from the islands beyond the sea. They honored him in every way they could. A happy man was Columbus.

IV. THE SECOND VOYAGE

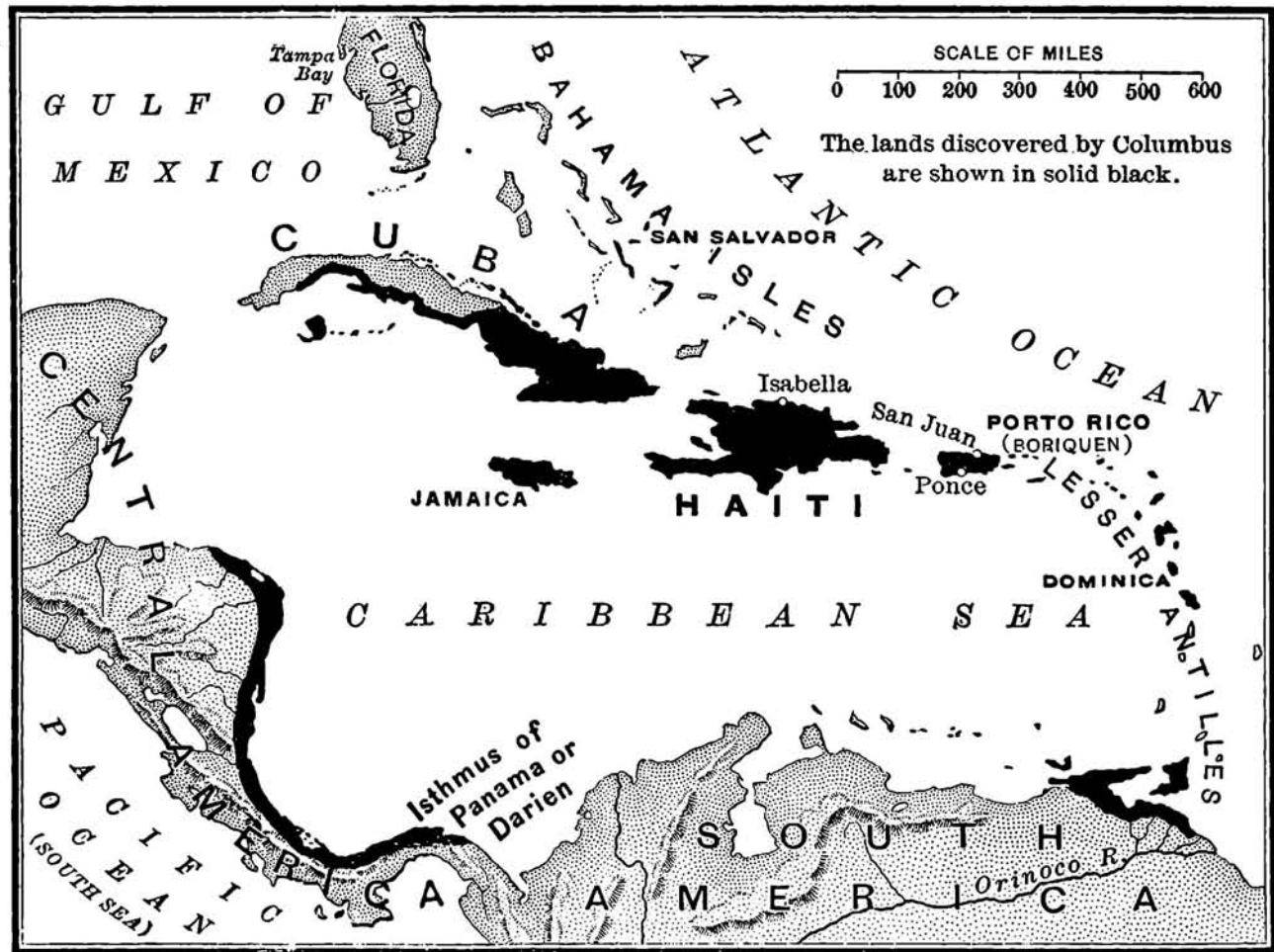
In a few months everything was ready for another voyage. Seventeen ships sailed from Spain with fifteen hundred men on board. This time there was no weeping as the land disappeared; but there were songs of joy and hope. All expected soon to reach the shores of India. They expected to visit the rich cities of the East; to load their vessels with gold and pearls and fine silks; and to return home carrying great wealth with them.

The voyage was a pleasant one. The first land seen was a mountainous island which Columbus called Dominica. Then he sailed northwesterly, cruising among what are now known as the Lesser Antilles. He discovered Porto Rico, which the natives called Boriquen, and finally reached Haiti, where he had stopped on his first voyage.

In Haiti the sky was as blue, the sea was as calm, the land was as beautiful as before. But the Spaniards with Columbus were dissatisfied and unhappy. They discovered no rich cities there. They saw no treasure houses filled with gold. The people whom they found were naked savages. Was this the India of their hopes?

A colony was formed. A town was laid out and named Isabella, after the queen. Twelve ships sailed back to Spain to bring other colonists and more supplies. Exploring parties were sent out to look for gold.

Further discoveries.—Columbus left the colony in charge of his brother and sailed away in three small



The West Indies—showing the discoveries of Columbus

vessels to make further discoveries. He coasted along the south shore of Cuba, thinking it was the mainland of Asia. Then changing his course he came to another large island which the natives called Jamaica.

Discouragement.—At length he returned to Haiti.