

offers. The ground was covered with wounded birds struggling in death. At our arrival a profound calm prevailed in this secluded spot; now, everything seemed to say: Man has passed this way.

The sky was veiled with reddish vapours, which however dispersed in the direction of south-west; we hoped, but in vain, to discern the heights of the island of Pinos. Those spots have a charm in which most parts of the New World are wanting. They are associated with recollections of the greatest names of the Spanish monarchy—those of Christopher Columbus and of Hernan Cortez. It was on the southern coast of the island of Cuba, between the bay of Xagua and the island of Pinos, that the great Spanish Admiral, in his second voyage, saw, with astonishment, “that mysterious king who spoke to his subjects only by signs, and that group of men who wore long white tunics, like the monks of La Merced, whilst the rest of the people were naked.” “Columbus in his fourth voyage found in the Jardinillos, great boats filled with Mexican Indians, and laden with the rich productions and merchandise of Yucatan.” Misled by his ardent imagination, he thought he had heard from those navigators, “that they came from a country where the men were mounted on horses,* and

* Compare the *Lettera rarissima di Christoforo Colombo, di 7 di Julio, 1503*; with the letter of Herrera, dated Dec. 1. Nothing can be more touching and pathetic than the expression of melancholy which prevails in the letter of Columbus, written at Jamaica, and addressed to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. I recommend to the notice of those who wish to understand the character of that extraordinary man, the recital of the nocturnal vision, in which he imagined that he heard a celestial voice, in the midst of a tempest, encouraging him by these words: “*Iddio maravigliosamente fece sonar tuo nome nella terra. Le Indie que sono parte del mondo cosi ricca, te le ha date per tue; tu le hai repartite dove ti è piaciuto, e ti dette potenza per farlo. Delli ligamenti del mare Oceano che erano serrati con catene cosi forte, ti donò le chiave,*” &c. [God marvellously makes thy name resound throughout the world. The Indies, which are so rich a portion of the world, he gives to thee for thyself; thou mayest distribute them in the way thou pleasest, and God gives thee power to do so. Of the shores of the Atlantic, which were closed by such strong chains, he gives thee the key.] This fragment has been handed down to us only in an ancient Italian tradition; for the Spanish original mentioned in the *Biblioteca Nautica of Don Antonio Leon* has not hitherto been found. I may add a few more lines, charac-