

wore crowns of gold on their heads." "Catayo (China), the empire of the Great Khan, and the mouth of the Ganges," appeared to him so near, that he hoped soon to employ two Arabian interpreters, whom he had embarked at Cadiz, in going to America. Other remembrances of the island of Pinos, and the surrounding Gardens, are connected with the conquest of Mexico. When Hernan Cortès was preparing his great expedition, he was wrecked with his *Nave Capitana*, on one of the flats of the Jardinillos. For the space of five days he was believed to be lost, and the valiant Pedro de Alvarado sent (in November, 1518,) from the port of Carenas* (the Havannah) three vessels in search of him. In February, 1519, Cortès assembled his whole fleet near cape San Antonio, probably on the spot which still bears the name of Ensenada de Cortes, west of Batabano, and opposite to the island of Pinos. From thence, believing he should better escape the snares laid for him by the governor, Velasquez, he passed almost clandestinely to the coast of Mexico. Strange vicissitude of events! the empire of Montezuma was shaken by a handful of men who, from the western extremity of the island of Cuba, landed on the coast of Yucatan; and in our days, three centuries

terized by great simplicity, written by the discoverer of the New World: "Your Highness," says Columbus, "may believe me, the globe of the earth is far from being so great as the vulgar admit. I was seven years at your royal court, and during seven years was told that my enterprise was a folly. Now that I have opened the way, tailors and shoemakers ask the privilege of going to discover new lands. Persecuted, forgotten as I am, I never think of Hispaniola and Paria without my eyes being filled with tears. I was twenty years in the service of your Highness; I have not a hair that is not white; and my body is enfeebled. Heaven and earth now mourn for me: all who have pity, truth, and justice, mourn for me (pianga adesso il cielo e pianga per me la terra; pianga per me chi ha carità, verità, giustizia)."—*Let. rar.* pp. 13, 19, 34, 37.

* At that period there were two settlements, one at Puerto de Carenas, in the ancient Indian province of the Havannah, and the other—the most considerable—in the Villa de San Cristoval de Cuba. These settlements were only united in 1519, when the Puerto de Carenas took the name of San Cristoval de la Habana. "Cortès," says Herrera, "pasó á la Villa de San Cristoval que á la sazón estaba en la costa del sur, y despues se pasó á la Habana." [Cortès proceeded to the town of San Cristoval, which at that time was on the sea-coast, and afterwards he repaired to the Havannah.]