

but it was not from these islands, which lie between the coasts of Spain and Maryland, and only at $\frac{3}{5}$ ths the distance from the latter, that America was discovered. The preconception of this event is celebrated with rich poetical fancy in those stanzas of Tasso, in which he sings of the deeds which Hercules ventured not to attempt.

Non osò di tentar l'alto oceano:
 Segnò le mete, en troppo breve chiostri,
 L'ardir ristrinse dell'ingegno umano,
 Tempo verrà che fian d'Ecole i segni
 Favola vile ai naviganti industri
 Un uom della Liguria avrà ardimento
 All' incognito corso esporsi in prima.

Tasso, xv. st., 25, 30, et 31.

And yet it was of this "*uom della Liguria*" that the great Portuguese historical writer, Johannes Barros,* whose first decade appeared in 1552, simply remarked that he was a vain and fanciful babbler (*homem fallador e glorioso em mostrar suas habilidades, e mais fantastico, e de imaginações com sua Ilha Cypango*). Thus, through all ages and through all stages of civilization, national hatred has striven to obscure the glory of honorable names.

The discovery of the tropical regions of America by Christopher Columbus, Alonso de Hojeda, and Alvarez Cabral, can not be regarded in the history of the contemplation of the universe as one isolated event. Its influence on the extension of physical science, and on the increase of materials yielded to the ideal world generally, can not be correctly understood without entering into a brief consideration of the period which separates the epoch of the great maritime expeditions from that of the maturity of scientific culture among the Arabs. That which imparted to the age of Columbus its peculiar character of uninterrupted and successful efforts toward the attainment of new discoveries and extended geographical knowledge, was prepared slowly and in various ways. The means which contributed most strongly to favor these efforts were a small number of enterprising men, who early excited a simultaneous and general freedom of thought, and an independence of investigation into the separate phenomena of nature; the influence exercised on the deepest sources of mental vigor by the renewed acquaintance formed in Italy with the works of ancient Greek literature; the discovery of an art which lent to thought at once wings of speed and powers of

* *Da Asia* de Joao de Barros e de Diego de Couto, dec. i., liv. iii cap. 11 (Parte i., Lisboa, 1778, p. 250).