

all those passages of Aristotle, Strabo, and Seneca, on the proximity of Eastern Asia to the Pillars of Hercules, which, as his son Fernando says, were the means of inciting him to discover the Indian lands (*autoridad de los escritores para mover al Almirante á descubrir las Indias*), were gathered by the admiral from the writings of the cardinal. He must have carried these works with him on his voyages; for, in a letter which he addressed to the Spanish monarchs from the island of Haiti, in the month of October, 1498, he translated word for word a passage from Alliacus's treatise, *De Quantitate Terræ habitabilis*, which appears to have made a deep impression on his mind. Columbus probably did not know that Alliacus had also transcribed *verbatim*, from an earlier work, the *Opus Majus* of Roger Bacon.* Singular age, when the combined testimony of Aristotle and Averroes (Avenryz), of Esdras and of Seneca, regarding the small extent of the ocean in comparison with continental masses, could serve to convince monarchs of the expediency of a costly enterprise!

I have already drawn attention to the marked predilection manifested at the close of the thirteenth century for the study of natural forces, and the progressive and philosophical direction assumed by this study in its scientific establishment on the basis of experiment. It still remains briefly to consider the influence exercised by the revival of classical literature, at the close of the fourteenth century, on the deepest sources of the mental life of nations, and, therefore, on the general contemplation of the universe. The individuality of certain highly-gifted men had contributed to increase the rich mass of facts possessed by the world of ideas. The susceptibility of a freer intellectual development already existed when Greek literature, driven from its ancient seats, acquired a firm footing in Western lands, under the favoring action of apparently accidental relations.

The Arabs, in their classical studies, had remained strangers to all that appertains to the inspiration of language, their studies being limited to a very small number of the writers of antiquity, and, in accordance with their strong national predilection for natural investigation, principally to the physical books of Aristotle, to the *Almagest* of Ptolemy, the botanical

Helico. These essays remind us of some very recent ones on the Mosaic Geology, published four hundred years after the cardinal's."

* Compare Columbus's letter, Navarrete, *Viages y Descubrimientos* t. i., p. 244, with the *Imago Mundi* of Cardinal d'Ailly, cap. 8, and Roger Bacon's *Opus Majus*, p. 183.