

poraries of Columbus. The most talented among them foresaw the influence which the events of the latter years of the fifteenth century would exercise on humanity. "Every day," writes Peter Martyr de Anghiera,\* in his letters written in the years 1493 and 1494, "brings us new wonders from a new world—from those antipodes of the West—which a certain Genoese (*Christophorus quidam, vir Ligur*) has discovered. Although sent forth by our monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, he could with difficulty obtain three ships, since what he said was regarded as fabulous. Our friend Pomponius Lætus (one of the most distinguished promoters of classical learning, and persecuted at Rome for his religious opinions) could scarcely refrain from tears of joy when I communicated to him the first tidings of so unhopèd-for an event." Anghiera, from whom we take these words, was an intelligent statesman at the court of Ferdinand the Catholic and of Charles V., once ambassador at Egypt, and the personal friend of Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, Sebastian Cabot, and Cortez. His long life embraced the discovery of Corvo, the westernmost island of the Azores, the expeditions of Diaz, Columbus, Gama, and Magellan. Pope Leo X. read to his sister and to the cardinals, "until late in the night," Anghiera's *Oceanica*. "I would wish never more to quit Spain," writes Anghiera, "since I am here at the fountain head of tidings of the newly-discovered lands, and where I may hope, as the historian of such great events, to acquire for my name some renown with posterity."† Thus clearly did cotemporaries appreciate the

\* Compare *Opus Epistolarum Petri Martyris Anglerii Mediolanensis*, 1670, ep. cxxx. and clii. "Præ lætitia prosiliisse te vixque à lachrymis præ gaudio temperasse quando literas adspexisti meas, quibus de Antipodium Orbe, latenti hactenus, te certiores feci, mi suavissime Pomponi, insinuasti. Ex tuis ipse literis colligo, quid senseris. Sensisti autem, tantique rem fecisti, quanti virum summa doctrina insignitum decuit. Quis namque cibus sublimibus præstari potest ingeniis isto suavior? quod condimentum gratius? à me facio conjecturam. Beari sentio spiritus meos, quando accitos alloquor prudentes aliquos ex his qui ab ea redeunt provincia (Hispaniola insula)." The expression, "Christophorus quidam Colonus," reminds us, I will not say of the too often and unjustly cited "nescio quis Plutarchus" of Aulus Gellius (*Noct. Atticæ*, xi., 16), but certainly of the "quodam Cornelio scribente," in the answer written by the King Theodoric to the Prince of the Æstyans, who was to be informed of the true origin of amber, as recorded in Tacitus, *Germ.*, cap. 45.

† *Opus Epistol.*, No. cccxxxvii. and dlxii. The remarkable and intelligent Hieronymus Cardanus, a magician, a fantastic enthusiast, and, at the same time, an acute mathematician, also draws attention, in his "physical problems," to how much of our knowledge of the earth was