

igation, has exercised an important influence on the political institutions, the ideas and feelings of those nations who occu-

audience took place in the year 1496, and even that America was discovered in 1491. Gomara had the same printed, not in numerals, but in words, and placed the discovery of the *tierra firme* of America in 1497, in the very year, therefore, which proved so fatal to Amerigo Vespucci's reputation. (*Examen Crit.*, t. v., p. 196-202.) The wholly irreproachable conduct of the Florentine (who never attempted to attach his name to the New Continent, but who, in the grandiloquent accounts which he addressed to the Gonfaloniere Piero Goderini, to Pierfrancesco de' Medici, and to Duke René II. of Lorraine, had the misfortune of drawing upon himself the attention of posterity more than he deserved) is most positively proved by the lawsuit which the fiscal authorities carried on from 1508 to 1527 against the heirs of Christopher Columbus, for the purpose of withdrawing from them the rights and privileges which had been granted by the crown to the admiral in 1492. Amerigo entered the service of the state as *Piloto mayor* in the same year that the lawsuit began. He lived at Seville during four years of this suit, in which it was to be decided what parts of the New Continent had been first reached by Columbus. The most miserable reports found a hearing, and were converted into subjects of accusation by the fiscal; witnesses were sought for at St. Domingo, and all the Spanish ports, at Moguer, Palos, and Seville, and even under the eyes of Amerigo Vespucci and his nephew Juan. The *Mundus Novus*, printed by Johann Otmer, at Augsburg, in 1504; the *Raccolta di Vicenza* (*Mondo Novo e paesi novamente ritrovati da Alberico Vesputio Fiorentino*), by Alessandro Zorzi, in 1507, and generally ascribed to Fracanzio di Montalboddo; and the *Quatuor Navigationes* of Martin Waldseemüller (*Hylacomylus*), had already appeared. Since 1520, maps had been constructed, on which was marked the name of *America*, which had been proposed by Hylacomylus in 1507, and praised by Joachim Vadius in a letter addressed to Rudolphus Agricola from Vienna in 1512; and yet the person to whom widely-circulated writings in Germany, France, and Italy attributed a voyage of discovery in 1497, to the *tierra firme* of Paria, was neither cited by the fiscal as a witness in the lawsuit which had been begun in 1508, and was continued during nineteen years, nor was he even spoken of as the predecessor or the opponent of Columbus. Why, after the death of Amerigo Vespucci (22d February, 1512, in Seville), was not his nephew, Juan Vespucci, called upon to show (as Martin Alonso, Vicente Yañez Pinzon, Juan de la Cosa, and Alonso de Hojeda had done) that the coast of Paria, which did not derive its importance from its being "part of the main land of Asia," but on account of the productive pearl fishery in its vicinity, had been already reached by Amerigo, before Columbus landed there on the 1st of August, 1498? The disregard of this most important testimony is inexplicable if Amerigo Vespucci had ever boasted of having made a voyage of discovery in 1497, or if any serious import had been attached at that time to the confused dates and mistakes in the printing of the "*Quatuor Navigationes*." The great and still unprinted work of a friend of Columbus, Fra Bartholomé de las Casas (the *Historia general de las Indias*), was written, as we know with certainty, at very different periods. It was not begun until fifteen years after the death of Amerigo in 1527, and was finished in 1559, seven years before the death of the aged author, in his 92d year. Praise and bitter