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The Journal of Christopher Columbus

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The Journal of Christopher Columbus

This is the First Voyage, and the courses and the way, that the Admiral Don Christopher Columbus pursued when he discovered the Indies, set forth in the form of a summary, save for the Prologue, which he addressed to the Sovereigns and which is given in full, and which begins in this manner:

“IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

“Most Christian and most exalted and most excellent and most mighty princes, King and Queen of the Spains and of the islands of the sea, our Sovereigns: Forasmuch as, in this present year of 1492, after that Your Highnesses had made an end of the war with the Moors who reigned in Europe, and had brought that war to a conclusion in the very great city of Granada, where, in this same year, on the second day of the month of January, I saw the royal banners of Your Highnesses placed by force of arms on the towers of the Alhambra, which is the citadel of the city, and I saw the Moorish king come out of the gates of the city and kiss the royal hands of Your Highnesses and of the Prince, My Lord, and afterwards in that same month, on the ground

of information which I had given to Your Highnesses concerning the lands of India, and concerning a prince who is called 'Grand Khan,' which is to say in our Romance tongue 'King of Kings,' how many times he and his ancestors had sent to Rome to beg for men learned in our holy faith, in order that they might instruct him therein, and how the Holy Father had never made provision in this matter, and how so many nations had been lost, falling into idolatries and taking to themselves doctrines of perdition, and Your Highnesses, as Catholic Christians and as princes devoted to the holy Christian faith and propagators thereof, and enemies of the sect of Mahomet and of all idolatries and heresies, took thought to send me, Christopher Columbus, to the said parts of India, to see those princes and peoples and lands and the character of them and of all else, and the manner which should be used to bring about their conversion to our holy faith, and ordained that I should not go by land to the eastward, by which way it was the custom to go, but by way of the west, by which down to this day we do not know certainly that any one has passed; therefore, after having driven out all the Jews from your realms and lordships,¹ in the same month of January, Your Highnesses commanded me that, with a sufficient fleet, I should go to the said parts of India and for this accorded to me great rewards and ennobled me so that from that time henceforward I might style myself 'don' and be high admiral of the Ocean Sea and viceroy and perpetual governor of the islands and continent which I should discover and gain and which from now henceforward might be discovered and gained in the Ocean Sea, and that my eldest son should succeed to the same position, and so on from generation to generation. And I departed from the city of Granada on the twelfth day of the month of May in the same year of 1492, on a Saturday, and came to the town of Palos, which is a port of the sea, where I made ready three ships, very suited for such an undertaking, and I set out from that port, well furnished with very many supplies and with many seamen, on the third day of the month of August of the same year, on a Friday, half an hour before the rising of the sun, and I steered my course for the Canary Islands of Your Highnesses, which are in the Ocean Sea, thence to set out on my way and to sail until I should arrive in the Indies, and deliver the embassy of Your

Fernād^o rex byspania



Ferdinand of Spain; in the illustrated edition of the Columbus letter, 1493.

Highnesses to those princes and perform all that you had commanded me to do. To this end, I thought to write all this journey very carefully, from day to day, all that I might do and see and experience, as will be hereafter seen. Moreover, Sovereign Princes, in addition to writing each night that which the day had brought forth and each day how I had sailed at night, I design to make a new chart for navigation, in which I will set all the sea and lands of the Ocean Sea in their true places, under their bearings, and moreover to compile a book and to set down all, picturing everything by latitude from the equinoctial line and by longitude from the west; and above all it is very fitting that I should forget sleep and give much attention to navigation, because it should be so. And these things will be a great labour.

“FRIDAY, AUGUST 3rd / On Friday, the third day of August, of the year 1492, at eight o'clock, we set out from the bar of Saltés.² We went with a strong sea-breeze sixty miles to the southward, that is, fifteen leagues, before sunset;³ afterwards, to the south-west and south by west which was the course for the Canaries.”

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4th / They went to the south-west by south.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 5th / They went on their way, day and night together, more than forty leagues.

MONDAY, AUGUST 6th / The rudder of the caravel *Pinta*, in which was Martin Alonso Pinzón,⁴ jumped out of gear; this was believed or suspected to be due to the action of a certain Gomez Rascón and Cristóbal Quintero, to whom the caravel belonged,⁵ because that voyage was irksome to him. And the admiral says that, before they set out, these men had been found to be inclined to oppose and pick holes, as they say. The admiral was then much disturbed because he could not help the caravel without danger to himself, and he says that his anxiety was somewhat relieved because he knew that Martin Alonso Pinzón was a man of courage and of good understanding. Eventually, day and night together, they went twenty-nine leagues.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 7th / The rudder of the *Pinta* again was unshipped and they repaired it, and they went on a course for the



The departure of Columbus from Palos; an engraving by Theodore de Bry.

island of Lanzarote, which is one of the Canary Islands. And they made twenty-five leagues, day and night together.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8th / Among the pilots of the three caravels there were different opinions concerning their position, and the admiral proved to be nearest the truth. He was anxious to go to Grand Canary, in order to leave the caravel *Pinta* there, since she was steering badly

ened them as best he could, holding out to them bright hopes of the gains which they could make, and he added that it was vain for them to complain, since he was going to the Indies and must pursue his course until, with the help of Our Lord, he found them.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11th / He navigated to the west-south-west; they had a rougher sea than they had experienced during the whole voyage. They saw petrels and a green reed near the ship. Those in the caravel *Pinta* saw a cane and a stick, and they secured another small stick, carved, as it appeared, with iron, and a piece of cane, and other vegetation which grows on land, and a small board. Those in the caravel *Niña* also saw other indications of land and a stick loaded with barnacles. At these signs, all breathed again and rejoiced. On this day, to sunset, they went twenty-seven leagues. After sunset, he steered his former course to the west; they made twelve miles an hour, and up to two hours before midnight they had made ninety miles, which are twenty-two leagues and a half. And since the caravel *Pinta* was swifter and went ahead of the admiral, she found land and made the signals which the admiral had commanded. This land was first sighted by a sailor called Rodrigo de Triana,¹⁷ although the admiral, at ten o'clock in the night, being on the sterncastle, saw a light. It was, however, so obscured that he would not affirm that it was land, but called Pero Gutierrez, butler of the King's dais, and told him that there seemed to be a light, and that he should watch for it. He did so, and saw it. He said the same also to Rodrigo Sanchez de Segovia, whom the King and Queen had sent in the fleet as *veedor*,¹⁸ and he saw nothing since he was not in a position from which it could be seen. After the admiral had so spoken, it was seen once or twice, and it was like a small wax candle, which was raised and lowered. Few thought that this was an indication of land, but the admiral was certain that they were near land. Accordingly, when they had said the *Salve*, which all sailors are accustomed to say and chant in their manner, and when they had all been gathered together, the admiral asked and urged them to keep a good look out from the forecastle and to watch carefully for land, and to him who should say first that he saw land, he would give at once a silk doublet apart from the other rewards which the

Sovereigns had promised, which were ten thousand maravedis annually to him who first sighted it. Two hours after midnight land appeared, at a distance of about two leagues from them. They took in all sail, remaining with the mainsail, which is the great sail without bonnets, and kept jogging, waiting for day, a Friday, on which they reached a small island of the Lucayos, which is called in the language of the Indians "Guanahaní."¹⁹ Immediately they saw naked people, and the admiral went ashore in the armed boat, and Martin Alonso Pinzón and Vicente Yañez, his brother, who was captain of the *Niña*. The admiral brought out the royal standard, and the captains went with two banners of the Green Cross, which the admiral flew on all the ships as a flag, with an F and a Y, and over each letter their crown, one being on one side of the ✠ and the other on the other. When they had landed, they saw very green trees and much water and fruit of various kinds. The admiral called the two captains and the others who had landed, and Rodrigo de Escobedo, secretary of the whole fleet,²⁰ and Rodrigo Sanchez de Segovia, and said that they should bear witness and testimony how he, before them all, took possession of the island, as in fact he did, for the King and Queen, his Sovereigns, making the declarations which are required, as is contained more at length in the testimonies which were there made in writing. Soon many people of the island gathered there. What follows are the actual words of the admiral, in his book of his first voyage and discovery of these Indies.

"I," he says, "in order that they might feel great amity towards us, because I knew that they were a people to be delivered and converted to our holy faith rather by love than by force, gave to some among them some red caps and some glass beads, which they hung round their necks, and many other things of little value. At this they were greatly pleased and became so entirely our friends that it was a wonder to see. Afterwards they came swimming to the ships' boats, where we were, and brought us parrots and cotton thread in balls, and spears and many other things, and we exchanged for them other things, such as small glass beads and hawks' bells, which we gave to them. In fact, they took all and gave all, such as they had, with good will, but it seemed to me that they were a people very deficient in everything. They

all go naked as their mothers bore them, and the women also, although I saw only one very young girl. And all those whom I did see were youths, so that I did not see one who was over thirty years of age; they were very well built, with very handsome bodies and very good faces. Their hair is coarse almost like the hairs of a horse's tail and short; they wear their hair down over their eyebrows, except for a few strands behind, which they wear long and never cut. Some of them are painted black, and they are the colour of the people of the Canaries, neither black nor white, and some of them are painted white and some red and some in any colour that they find. Some of them paint their faces, some their whole bodies, some only the eyes, and some only the nose. They do not bear arms or know them, for I showed to them swords and they took them by the blade and cut themselves through ignorance. They have no iron. Their spears are certain reeds, without iron, and some of these have a fish tooth at the end, while others are pointed in various ways. They are all generally fairly tall, good looking and well proportioned. I saw some who bore marks of wounds on their bodies, and I made signs to them to ask how this came about, and they indicated to me that people came from other islands, which are near, and wished to capture them, and they defended themselves. And I believed and still believe that they come here from the mainland to take them for slaves. They should be good servants and of quick intelligence, since I see that they very soon say all that is said to them, and I believe that they would easily be made Christians, for it appeared to me that they had no creed. Our Lord willing, at the time of my departure I will bring back six of them to Your Highnesses, that they may learn to talk. I saw no beast of any kind in this island, except parrots." All these are the words of the admiral.

"SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13th / As soon as day broke, there came to the shore many of these men, all youths, as I have said, and all of a good height, very handsome people. Their hair is not curly, but loose and coarse as the hair of a horse; all have very broad foreheads and heads, more so than has any people that I have seen up to now. Their eyes are very lovely and not small. They are not at all black, but the colour of Canarians, and nothing else could be expected, since this



The landing on Española; an engraving by Theodore de Bry.

is in one line from east to west with the island of Hierro in the Canaries. Their legs are very straight, all alike; they have no bellies but very good figures. They came to the ship in boats, which are made of a tree-trunk like a long boat and all of one piece. They are very wonderfully carved, considering the country, and large, so that in some forty or forty-five men came. Others are smaller, so that in some only a solitary

man came. They row them with a paddle, like a baker's peel, and they travel wonderfully fast. If one capsizes, all at once begin to swim and right it, baling it out with gourds which they carry with them. They brought balls of spun cotton and parrots and spears and other trifles, which it would be tedious to write down, and they gave all for anything that was given to them. And I was attentive and laboured to know if they had gold, and I saw that some of them wore a small piece hanging from a hole which they have in the nose, and from signs I was able to understand that, going to the south or going round the island to the south, there was a king who had large vessels of it and possessed much gold. I endeavoured to make them go there, and afterwards saw that they were not inclined for the journey. I resolved to wait until the afternoon of the following day, and after that to leave for the south-west, for, as many of them indicated to me, they said that there was land to the south and to the south-west and to the north-west, and that those of the north-west often came to attack them. So I resolved to go to the south-west, to seek the gold and precious stones. This island is fairly large and very flat; the trees are very green and there is much water. In the centre of it, there is a very large lake; there is no mountain, and all is so green that it is a pleasure to gaze upon it. The people also are very gentle and, since they long to possess something of ours and fear that nothing will be given to them unless they give something, when they have nothing, they take what they can and immediately throw themselves into the water and swim. But all that they do possess, they give for anything which is given to them, so that they exchange things even for pieces of broken dishes and bits of broken glass cups. I even saw one give sixteen balls of cotton for three *ceotis* of Portugal, which are a Castilian *blanca*, and in these balls there was more than an *arroba* of spun cotton.²¹ I should forbid this and should not allow anything to be taken, unless it be that I command all, if there be a quantity, to be taken for Your Highnesses. It grows here in this island, but owing to lack of time, I can give no definite account; and here is also produced that gold which they wear hanging from the nose. But, in order not to lose time, I wish to go and see if I can make the island of Cipangu. Now, as it was night, they all went to land in their boats."

"SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14th / At dawn, I ordered the ship's boat and the boats of the caravels to be made ready, and I went along the island in a north-north-easterly direction, to see the other part, which lay to the east, and its character, and also to see the villages. And I soon saw two or three, and the people all came to shore, calling us and giving thanks to God. Some brought us water, others various eatables: others, when they saw that I was not inclined to land, threw themselves into the sea and came, swimming, and we understood that they asked us if we had come from heaven. One old man got into the boat, and all the rest, men and women, cried in loud voices: 'Come and see the men



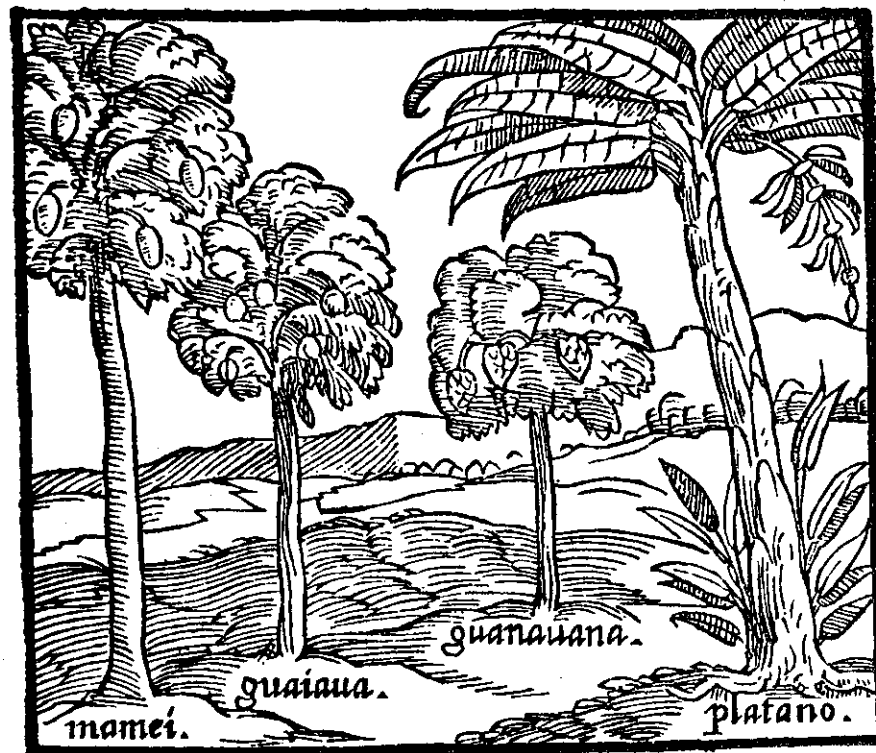
Indians flee in fear of Columbus; in Dati's version of the Columbus letter, 1493.

who have come from heaven; bring them food and drink.' Many came and many women, each with something, giving thanks to God, throwing themselves on the ground and raising their hands to the sky, and then shouting to us that we should land. But I feared to do so, seeing a great reef of rocks which encircled the whole of that island, while within there is deep water and a harbour large enough for all the ships of Christendom, the entrance to which is very narrow. It is true that inside the reef there are some shoals, but the sea is no more disturbed than the water in a well. And in order to see all this, I went this morning, that I might be able to give an account of all to Your Highnesses and also say where a fort could be built. I saw a piece of land, which is formed like an island although it is not one, on which there were six houses; it could be converted into an island in two days, although I do not see that it is necessary to do so, for these people are very unskilled in arms, as Your Highnesses will see from the seven whom I caused to be taken in order to carry them off that they may learn our language and return. However, when Your Highnesses so command, they can all be carried off to Castile or held captive in the island itself, since with fifty men they would be all kept in subjection and forced to do whatever may be wished. Near the said islet, moreover, there are the loveliest groups of trees that I have ever seen, all green and with leaves like those of Castile in the month of April and May, and much water. I examined the whole of that harbour, and afterwards returned to the ship and set sail. I saw so many islands that I could not decide to which I would go first. Those men, whom I had taken, made signs to me that there were very many, so many that they could not be counted, and they mentioned by name more than a hundred. Finally I sought for the largest and resolved to steer for it, which I am doing. It is five leagues away from this island of San Salvador, and of the others, some are more and some less distant. All are very flat, without mountains, and very fertile; all are inhabited and they make war upon one another, although these people are very simple and very well formed men."

"MONDAY, OCTOBER 15th / I stood off that night, fearing to come to anchor before daylight, as I did not know whether the coast was free

from shoals. At daybreak, I hoisted sail. And as the island was more than five leagues distant, being rather about seven, and the tide was against me, it was about midday when I arrived at the island. I found that the side which lies towards the island of San Salvador runs north and south for a distance of five leagues, and that the other side, which I followed, runs east and west for more than ten leagues. And as from this island I saw another and larger to the west, I set sail to go all that day until night, since otherwise I should not have been able to have reached the westerly point. To this island I gave the name *Santa Maria de la Concepción*,²² and about sunset, I anchored off the said point to learn if there were gold there, because those whom I had caused to be taken in the island of San Salvador told me that there they wore very large golden bracelets on the legs and arms. I can well believe that all that they said was a ruse in order to get away. It was nevertheless my wish not to pass any island without taking possession of it, although when one had been annexed, all might be said to have been. And I anchored and was there until to-day, Tuesday, when at dawn I went ashore in the armed boats and landed. The people, who were many, were naked and of the same type as those of the other island of San Salvador; they allowed us to go through the island and gave us what we asked of them. And as the wind blew more strongly across from the south-east, I was unwilling to wait and went back to the ship. A large canoe was alongside the caravel *Niña*, and one of the men of the island of San Salvador, who was in her, threw himself into the sea and went off in it, and during the evening before midnight the other threw himself overboard . . .,²³ and went after the canoe, which fled so that there was not a boat that could have overtaken it, since we were a long way behind it. In the end it reached land and they left the canoe, and some of my company went ashore after them, and they all ran off like chickens. The boat which they had abandoned we brought on board the caravel *Niña*. To her, there now came from another direction another small canoe with a man who wished to barter a ball of cotton, and some sailors jumped into the sea and took him, because he would not come on board the caravel. I was on the poop of the ship and saw everything, and I sent for him and gave him a red cap and some small beads of green glass, which I put on his arm, and

two hawks' bells, which I put in his ears, and ordered his canoe, which was also in the ship's boat, to be given back to him and sent him ashore. After that I set sail to go to the other large island which I saw to the west. I commanded that the other canoe, which the *Niña* was towing astern, should be set adrift also. Afterwards, on land, when the other, to whom I had given the things mentioned and from whom I had refused to take the ball of cotton, although he wished to give it to me, reached it, I saw that all the rest clustered round him and that he was dazzled and quite sure that we were good people and that the one who had run away had somehow wronged us and that accordingly we had carried him off. It was to create this impression that I had so acted with him, ordering him to be set free and giving him the presents, in order that we may be held in his esteem so that when Your Highnesses again send here, they may not be unfriendly. All that I gave to him was not worth four maravedis.²⁴ So I departed at about ten o'clock, with a south-east wind that veered southerly, in order to pass over to the other island. It is very large and there all these men, whom I carry with me from the island of San Salvador, make signs that there is much gold and that they wear it as bracelets on their arms and on their legs, and in their ears and noses and around their necks. From this island of Santa Maria to the other was some nine leagues, from east to west, and all this side of the island runs from north-west to south-east. It seems that on this side the coast may extend for some twenty-eight leagues or more; the island is very flat, without any mountains, as are San Salvador and Santa Maria, and all the coasts are free from rocks, except that they all have some reefs near the land under water, on which account it is necessary to keep a sharp look out when it is proposed to anchor, and not to anchor very near the shore, although the waters are always very clear and the depth can be seen. At a distance of two lombard shots from land, the water off all these islands is so deep that it cannot be sounded. These islands are very green and fertile and the breezes are very soft, and it is possible that there are in them many things, of which I do not know, because I did not wish to delay in finding gold, by discovering and going about many islands. And since these men give these signs that they wear it on their arms and legs, and it is gold because I showed them some pieces of gold which



Fruit trees found in the New World; in Benzone's *Historia del Mondo Nuovo*, 1563.

I have, I cannot fail, with the aid of Our Lord, to find the place whence it comes. Being in the middle of the channel between these two islands, that of Santa Maria and this large island, to which I gave the name *Fernandina*,²⁵ I found a man alone in a canoe on his way from the island of Santa Maria to that of Fernandina. He was carrying with him a piece of their bread, about as large as the fist, and a gourd of water and a piece of brown earth, powdered and then kneaded, and some dried leaves, which must be a thing highly prized among them, since already at San Salvador they presented me with some of them. He also carried with him a basket of their make, in which he had a string of glass beads and two blancas, through which I knew that he came from the island of San Salvador and had crossed to that of Santa Maria and was on his way to Fernandina. He came alongside the ship. I made

him come on board, as he asked to do so, and caused him to bring his canoe on board also and all that he had with him to be kept safe. I commanded that bread and honey should be given to him to eat, and something to drink, and thus I will carry him to Fernandina and will give him back all his belongings, in order to give him a good opinion of us, so that when, please God, Your Highnesses send here, those who come may receive honour and the Indians will give to us of all that they have."

"TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16th / I departed from the islands²⁶ of Santa Maria de Concepción when it was already about midday for that of Fernandina, which loomed very large to the westward, and I navigated all that day in a calm. I could not arrive in time to be able to see the bottom in order to anchor in a clear place, for it is necessary to exercise great care in this matter so as not to lose the anchors, and accordingly I stood off and on all that night until day when I came to a village, where I anchored and from which had come the man whom I had found the day before in that canoe in the middle of the channel. He had given so good a report of us that all that night there was no lack of canoes alongside the ship; they brought us water and what they had. I ordered something to be given to each of them, that is to say, some small beads, ten or a dozen of glass on a string, and some brass timbrels, of the kind which are worth a maravedi each in Castile, and some leather thongs;²⁷ all these things they regarded as most excellent. When they came on board the ship, I also commanded molasses to be given to them to eat. And afterwards, at the hour of terce,²⁸ I sent the ship's boat ashore for water, and they with good will showed my people where the water was and themselves carried the full casks to the boat, and they were delighted to give us pleasure. This island is very large, and I am resolved to round it, because, as far as I can understand, there is in it or near it a gold mine. This island is distant from that of Santa Maria about eight leagues, almost from east to west, and this point, where I came, and all this coast runs north-north-west and south-south-east; I saw quite twenty leagues of it, but it did not end there. Now, as this is being written, I have set sail with a south wind in order to try to round the

whole island and go on until I find Samoet, which is the island or city where there is gold, for so say all those who came on board the ship here, and so those from the island of San Salvador and from that of Santa Maria have told us. These people are like those of the said islands and have the same speech and manners, except that these here seem to me to be somewhat more domesticated and tractable, and more intelligent, because I see that they have brought here cotton to the ship and other trifles for which they know better how to bargain than the others did. And in this land also I saw cotton cloths made like mantillas, and the people are better disposed and the women wear in front of their bodies a small piece of cotton, which scarcely hides their secret parts. This island is very green and flat and very fertile, and I have no doubt that all the year they sow and reap Indian corn, and equally other things. I saw many trees very unlike ours, and many of them had many branches of different kinds, and all coming from one root; one branch is of one kind and one of another, and they are so unlike each other that it is the greatest wonder in the world. How great is the difference between one and another! For example: one branch has leaves like those of a cane and another leaves like those of a mastic tree, and thus, on a single tree, there are five or six different kinds all so diverse from each other. They are not grafted, for it might be said that it is the result of grafting; on the contrary, they are wild and these people do not cultivate them. No creed is known to them and I believe that they would be speedily converted to Christianity, for they have a very good understanding. There are here fish, so unlike ours that it is a marvel; there are some shaped like dories, of the finest colours in the world, blue, yellow, red and of all colours, and others painted in a thousand ways, and the colours are so fine that no man would not wonder at them or be anything but delighted to see them. There are also whales. I saw no land animals of any kind, except parrots and lizards. A boy told me that he saw a large snake. I did not see any sheep or goats or other animals, but I have been here a very short while, as it is now midday. None the less, if there had been any I could not have failed to see one. I will describe the circuit of this island when I have rounded it."

mentioned. They are of the same type and as naked and of the same height, and they give what they have for whatever is given to them. And here I saw that some boys from the ships exchanged some little pieces of broken dishes and glass for their spears. The others, who went for the water, told me how they had been in their houses and that inside they were thoroughly swept and clean, and that their beds and coverings are like nets of cotton. They, that is the houses, are all like tents and very high and with good chimneys," but among the many villages which I have seen, I have not seen one of more than from twelve to fifteen houses. Here they found that married women wore cotton drawers, but girls did not, except some who were already eighteen years old. There are here mastiffs and small dogs, and here they found a man who had in his nose a piece of gold, which might have been half the size of a castellano, on which they saw letters." I was angry with them because they had not bargained for it and given whatever might be asked, in order that it might be examined and seen what money it was, and they replied to me that they had not dared to bargain for it. After the water had been taken, I returned to the ship and set sail, navigating so far to the north-west that I discovered all that part of the island until the coast runs east and west. And afterwards all these Indians repeated that this island was smaller than the island of Samoet and that it would be well to turn back in order to arrive at it sooner. There the wind presently fell and then began to blow from the west-north-west, which was contrary for the course which we had been following. I therefore turned back and navigated all that night in an east-south-easterly direction, sometimes due east and sometimes south-east; this was done in order to keep clear from the land, because there were very thick clouds and the weather was very heavy. There was little wind and this prevented me from coming to land to anchor. Then this night it rained very heavily from after midnight until near daybreak, and it is still cloudy with a threat of rain. We are at the end of the island to the south-east, where I hope to anchor until the weather clears, so that I can see the other islands to which I propose to go. So it has rained, more or less, every day since I have been in these Indies. Your Highnesses may believe that this is the best and most fertile and temperate and level and good land that there is in the world."

"THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18th / When the weather had cleared, I sailed before the wind and continued the circuit of the island when I could do so, and anchored when it was not well to navigate. But I did not land, and at dawn I set sail."

"FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19th / At dawn I weighed anchor and sent the caravel *Pinta* to the east-south-east, and the caravel *Niña* to the south-south-east, while I in the ship went to the south-east. I gave orders that they should follow these courses until midday, and that both should then change their course and rejoin me. And presently, before we had sailed for three hours, we saw an island to the east, towards which we steered, and all the three vessels reached it before midday, at its northern point, where there is an islet and a reef of rocks on its seaward side to the north and another between it and the main island. These men from San Salvador, whom I have with me, called this island 'Samoet,' and I named it *Isabella*." There was a north wind, and



A Spanish ship; a woodcut of 1496.

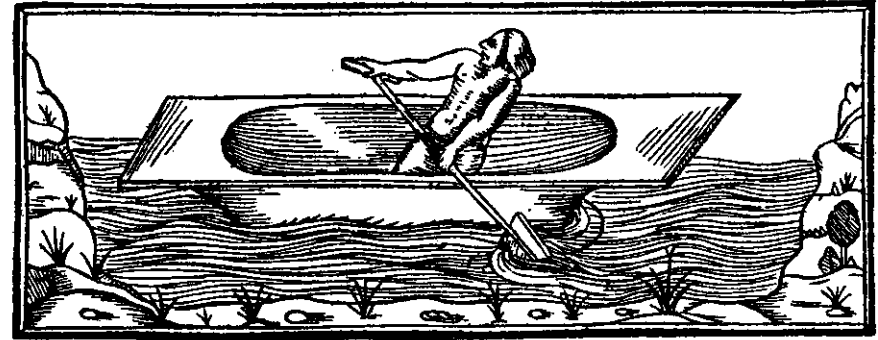
the said islet lay on the course from the island of Fernandina, from which I had navigated from east to west. Afterwards the coast ran from that islet to the west and extends for twelve leagues to a cape, which I named *Cape Hermoso*.³² It is on the west coast and it is indeed lovely, round and in deep water, with no shoals off it. At first the shore is stony and low, and further on there is a sandy beach which is characteristic of most of that coast, and there I anchored this night, Friday, until morning. All this coast, and the part of the island which I saw, is mainly a beach; the island is the loveliest thing that I have seen, for, if the others are very lovely, this is more so. It has many trees, very green and tall, and this land is higher than the other islands which have been discovered. There is in it one elevation, which cannot be called a mountain, but which serves to beautify the rest of the island, and it seems that there is much water there in the centre of the island. On this north-eastern side, the coast curves sharply, and is very thickly wooded with very large trees. I wished to go to anchor there, in order to land and to see such beauty, but the water was of little depth and I could only anchor at a distance from the shore, and the wind was very favourable for reaching this point where I am now lying at anchor, and which I have named Cape Hermoso, because such it is. So I did not anchor within that curve and also because I saw this cape, so green and lovely, at a distance. All the other things and lands of these islands are so lovely that I do not know where to go first, and my eyes never weary of looking at such lovely verdure so different from that of our own land. I believe, moreover, that here there are many herbs and many trees which will be of great value in Spain for dyes and as medicinal spices, but I do not recognise them and this causes me much sorrow. When I arrived here at this cape, there came from the land the scent of flowers or trees, so delicious and sweet, that it was the most delightful thing in the world. In the morning, before I go from here, I will land to see what there is here at this point. There is no village, except further inland, where these men, whom I have with me, say that there is a king and that he wears much gold. To-morrow I wish to go so far inland to find the village and to see or have speech with this king, who, according to the signs which these men make, rules all these neighbouring islands and is clothed and wears on his person much gold, although I do not

put much trust in what they say, both because I do not understand them well and because they are so poor in gold that any small amount which this king may wear would seem to be much to them. This point here I call Cape Hermoso. I believe that it is an island separated from that of Samoet, and even that there is another small island between them. I make no attempt to examine so much in detail, since I could not do that in fifty years, because I wish to see and discover as much as I can, in order to return to Your Highnesses in April, if it please Our Lord. It is true that, if I arrive anywhere where there is gold or spices in quantity, I shall wait until I have collected as much as I am able. Accordingly I do nothing but go forward in the hope of finding these."

"SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20th / To-day, at sunrise, I weighed anchor from the place where I was with the ship, anchored off the south-west point of this island of Samoet, to which point I gave the name *Cape de la Laguna*³³ and to the island that of Isabella, in order to steer to the north-east and east from the south-east and south. For there, as I understood from these men whom I have with me, was the village and its king. I found the water everywhere so shallow that I could not enter or navigate to that point, and I saw that, following the route to the south-west, it would be a very great detour. Therefore I determined to return by the way which I had come, to the north-north-east from the west, and to round this island in that direction, and the wind was so light that I was unable ever to proceed along the coast except in the night, and as it is dangerous to anchor off these islands except in daytime, when it is possible to see with the eye where to let go the anchor, since the bottom varies everywhere, some part being clean and some not, I proceeded to stand off under sail all this Sunday night. The caravels anchored, because they found themselves near land earlier, and they thought that from the signals which they were in the habit of making, I should come to anchor, but I did not wish to do so."

"SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21st / At ten o'clock I arrived here at this *Cape del Isleo*³⁴ and anchored, as did the caravels. After having eaten, I went ashore, and there was there no village but only a single house, in which I found no one, so that I believe that they had fled in terror, because

in the house were all their household goods. I allowed nothing to be touched, but only went with these captains and people to examine the island. If the others, which have been already seen, are very lovely and green and fertile, this is much more so, and has large and very green trees. There are here very extensive lagoons, and by them and around them there are wonderful woods, and here and in the whole island all is as green and the vegetation is as that of Andalusia in April. The singing of little birds is such that it seems that a man could never wish to leave this place; the flocks of parrots darken the sun, and there are large and small birds of so many different kinds and so unlike ours, that it is a marvel. There are, moreover, trees of a thousand types, all with their various fruits and all scented, so that it is a wonder. I am the saddest man in the world because I do not recognise them, for I am very sure that all are of some value, and I am bringing specimens of them and also of the herbs. As I was thus going round one of these lagoons, I saw a snake, which we killed, and I am bringing its skin to Your Highnesses. When it saw us, it threw itself into the lagoon and we went in after it, for the water was not very deep, until we killed it with our spears. It is seven palms in length;” I believe that there are many similar snakes here in these lagoons. Here I recognised the aloe, and to-morrow I am resolved to have ten quintals brought to the ship, since they tell me that it is very valuable. Further, going in search of very good water, we arrived at a village near here, half a league from where I am anchored. The inhabitants, when they saw us, all fled and left their houses and hid their clothing and whatever they had in the undergrowth. I did not allow anything to be taken, even the value of a pin. Afterwards, some of the men among them came towards us and one came quite close. I gave him some hawks’ bells and some little glass beads, and he was well content and very joyful. And that this friendly feeling might grow stronger and to make some request of them, I asked him for water; and, after I had returned to the ship, they came presently to the beach with their gourds full, and were delighted to give it to us, and I commanded that another string of small glass beads should be given to them, and they said that they would come here to-morrow. I was anxious to fill all the ships’ casks with water here; accordingly, if the weather permit, I shall presently set out to



An Indian canoe; in Oviedo's *La hystoria generale de las Indias*, 1547.

go round the island, until I have had speech with this king and have seen whether I can obtain from him the gold which I hear that he wears. After that I wish to leave for another very large island, which I believe must be Cipangu, according to the signs which these Indians whom I have with me make; they call it 'Colba.' They say that there are ships and many very good sailors there. Beyond this island, there is another which they call 'Bofio,' which they say is also very large.” The others, which lie between them, we shall see in passing, and according to whether I shall find a quantity of gold or spices, I shall decide what is to be done. But I am still determined to proceed to the mainland and to the city of Quisay” and to give the letters of Your Highnesses to the Grand Khan, and to request a reply and return with it.”

“MONDAY, OCTOBER 22nd / All this night and to-day I have been here, waiting to see if the king of this place or other personages would bring gold or anything else of importance. There did come many of these people, who were like the others in the other islands, just as naked and just as painted, some white, some red, some black, and so in various ways. They brought spears and some skeins of cotton to exchange, and they bartered these with some sailors for bits of glass from broken cups and for bits of earthenware. Some of them wore some pieces of gold, hanging from the nose, and they gladly gave these for a hawks’ bell, of the kind made for the foot of a sparrow-hawk,

and for glass beads, but the amount is so small that it is nothing. It is true that whatever little thing might be given to them, they still regarded our coming as a great wonder, and they believed that we had come from heaven. We took water for the ships in a lagoon which is here near Cape del Isleo, for so I named it. And in the lagoon, Martin Alonso Pinzón, captain of the *Pinta*, killed another snake, like that of yesterday, seven palms long; and here I caused to be collected as much aloe as was found."

"TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23rd / I wished to-day to set out for the island of Cuba, which I believe must be Cipangu, according to the indications which these people give me concerning its size and riches. I did not delay longer here or . . . round this island to go to the village, as I had determined, to have speech with this king or lord, in order not to delay too long, since I see that here there is no gold mine, and since to round these islands there is need of various winds, and it does not blow just as men may wish, and since it is well to go where there is much business. I say that it is not right to delay, but to go on our way and to discover much land, until a very profitable land is reached. My impression, however, is that this is very rich in spices, but I have no knowledge of these matters, which causes me the greatest sorrow in the world, for I see a thousand kind of trees, each one of which bears fruit after its kind and is as green now as in Spain in the months of May and June, and a thousand kind of herbs, also in bloom. And in all this I recognise only the aloe, of which I have ordered much to be brought to the ship to carry to Your Highnesses. I have not set nor am I setting sail for Cuba, because there is no wind, but a dead calm, and it is raining heavily and it rained heavily yesterday, without being at all cold. On the contrary, the day is hot and the nights mild as in May in Spain in Andalusia."

"WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24th / This night, at midnight, I weighed anchor from the island of Isabella, from Cape del Isleo, which is on the north side where I had stayed, for the island of Cuba, which I hear from these people is very large and has much trade, and has in it gold and spices and great ships and merchants, and they

indicated to me that I should steer west-south-west to go there. This I am doing, for I believe that, if it be as all the Indians of these islands and those whom I carry with me in the ships give me to understand by signs, for I do not know their language, it is the island of Cipangu, of which marvellous things are recounted; and in the spheres which I have seen and in the drawings of mappemondes, it is in this region. And I navigated until day to the west-south-west, and at dawn the wind fell and it rained, and so it was almost all night. I was thus with little wind until after midday, and then it began to blow very gently, and I set all my sails on the ship, the mainsail and two bonnets, and the foresail and spritsail, the mizen, main topsail and the boat's sail on the poop. So I went on my course until nightfall, when Cape Verde, in the island of Fernandina, which is on the south side in the western part, lay to my north-west, and was seven leagues distant from me. And as it now blew hard, and I did not know what distance it was to the island of Cuba, and in order not to go in search of it at night, because all these islands lie in very deep water, so that no bottom can be found beyond two lombard shots' distance, and then it is all patchy, one part being rocky and another sandy, and hence it is impossible to anchor safely, except when it is possible to see, I decided to take in all sail, except the foresail, and to proceed under it. After a short while, the wind became much stronger and I made a considerable distance, at which I felt misgivings, and as there were thick clouds and it was raining, I ordered the foresail to be furled, and that night we went less than two leagues," etc.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25th / After sunrise, until nine o'clock, he navigated to the west-south-west. They made five leagues. Afterwards he changed the course to the west. He went eight miles an hour, until an hour after midday, and from then until three o'clock, and they went forty-four miles. Then they sighted land and it was seven or eight islands in a row, all lying north and south. They were five leagues distant from them, etc.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26th / He was to the south of the said islands. It was everywhere shallow water for five or six leagues. He anchored there; the Indians whom he carried with him said that from these

islands to Cuba it was a journey of a day and a half for their boats, which are small vessels of a single piece of wood, carrying no sail. These are canoes. He set out from there for Cuba, because from the signs which the Indians made to him concerning its greatness and its gold and pearls, he thought that it was that land, that is to say, Cipangu.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27th / They weighed anchor at sunrise from those islands, which he called *Las Islas de Arena*,³⁸ on account of the little depth of water which there was to the south of them for a distance of six leagues. He made eight miles an hour to the south-south-west until one o'clock and they went about forty miles, and by nightfall they had gone twenty-eight miles more on the same course, and before night they saw land. They spent the night on watch while it rained heavily. On Saturday, up to sunset, they went seventeen leagues to the south-south-west.

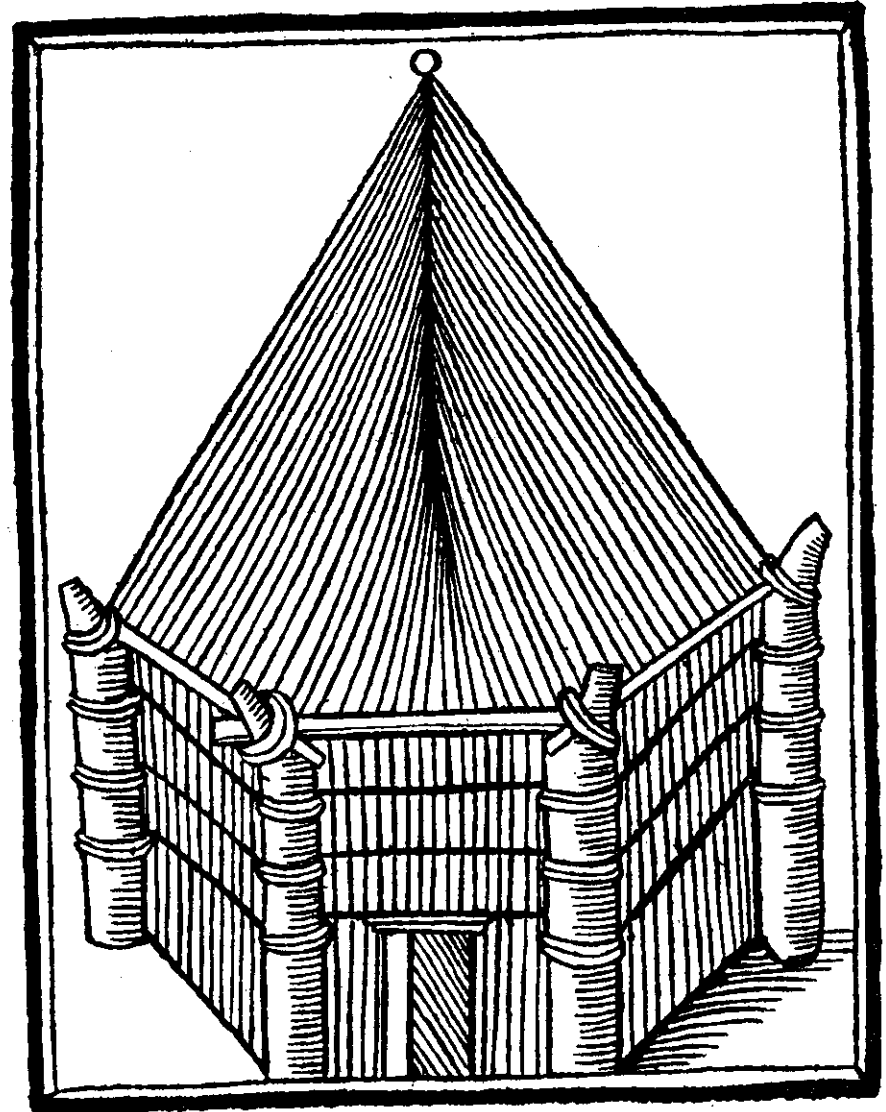
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28th / He went from there in search of the nearest point in the island of Cuba to the south-south-west, and he entered a very lovely river, very free from danger of shoals or of other obstacles, and the water all along the coast, where he went, was very deep and clear up to the shore. The mouth of the river was twelve fathoms deep, and it is fully wide enough to beat about. He anchored, as he says, a lombard shot within it. The admiral says that he had never seen anything so beautiful. All the neighbourhood of the river was full of trees, lovely and green, and different from ours, each one with flowers and fruit after its kind; there were many birds and small birds, which sang very sweetly. There were a great number of palms, different from those of Guinea and from ours, of moderate height, and their feet had no bark, and the leaves were very large; they cover their houses with them. The land is very flat. The admiral jumped into the boat and went to shore, and he came to two houses, which he believed to be those of fishermen, who fled in terror. In one of them he found a dog that never barked, and in both houses he found nets of palm fibre and lines and horn fish-hooks, and bone harpoons, and other fishing-tackle, and many fires in the houses. He believed that in each one of the houses many persons lived



together. He commanded that none of these things should be touched, and so it was done. The vegetation was as abundant as in Andalusia in April and May. He found much purslane and wild amaranth. He returned to the boat and went a good distance up the river, and it was, as he says, so great a joy to see that verdure and the trees and to hear the singing of the birds that he could not leave it to return.

He says that the island is the most lovely that eyes have ever seen; it is full of good harbours and deep rivers, and it seems that the sea can never be stormy, for the vegetation on the shore runs down almost to the water, which it does not generally do where the sea is rough. Up to that time, he had not experienced a high sea among all those islands. He says that the island is full of very beautiful mountains, although there are no very long ranges, but they are lofty, and all the rest of the land is high like Sicily. It is full of many waters, as he was able to gather from the Indians whom he carried with him and whom he had taken in the island of Guanahani; they told him by signs that there are ten large rivers, and that they cannot go round it in their canoes in twenty days. When he went near the shore with the ships, two boats or canoes came out, and as they saw that the sailors entered the boat and rowed about in order to see the depth of the river, to know where they should anchor, the canoes fled. The Indians said that in that island there are gold mines and pearls; the admiral saw that the place was suited for them, and that there were mussels, which are an indication of them. And the admiral understood that the ships of the Grand Khan come there, and that they are large; and that from there to the mainland it is ten days' journey. The admiral called that river and harbour *San Salvador*.³⁹

MONDAY, OCTOBER 29th / He weighed anchor from that harbour and navigated to the west in order, as he says, to go to the city where he thought that the Indians told him that the king resided. One point of the island ran out six leagues to the north-west; from there another point ran out to the east ten leagues. He went another league, and saw a river with a smaller mouth, to which he gave the name *Rio de la Luna*.⁴⁰ He went on until the hour of vespers. He saw another river, much larger than the former, and so the Indians told him by signs, and near it he saw fair villages of houses. He called the river the *Rio de Mares*.⁴¹ He sent two boats to a village to have speech, and in one of them an Indian of those whom he carried with him, because by now they understood something and showed themselves to be well pleased with the Christians. All, men, women and children, fled from these houses, abandoning them with all that they had, and the admiral



An Indian habitation; in Oviedo's *La hystoria generale de las Indias*, 1547.

commanded that nothing should be touched. The houses, so he says, were quite the most lovely that they had seen, and he believed that the nearer they came to the mainland, the better they would be. They were made in the manner of tents, very large, and they looked like

tents in a camp, with no regular streets, but one here and another there. Inside, they were well swept and clean, and their furnishing very well arranged; all were made of very beautiful palm branches. They found many images made like women and many heads like masks, very well worked. He did not know if they had them for their beauty or whether they worship them. There were dogs that never bark; there were wild birds, tamed, in their houses; there were wonderful outfits of nets and hooks and fishing-tackle. They did not touch any of these things. He believed that all those on the coast must be fishermen who carry the fish inland, for that island is very large and so lovely, that he was never weary of speaking well of it. He says that he found trees and fruit with a very wonderful taste, and he says that there should be in it cows and other herds, since he saw skulls which seemed to be those of cows.⁴³ There are birds, large and small, and the chirping of the crickets went on all night, at which all were delighted; the air all night was scented and sweet, and neither cold nor hot. And further, on the voyage from the other islands to that island, he says that there was great heat, and that in this island there was not, but it was as temperate as May. He attributes the heat of the other islands to the fact that they are very flat and that the wind there blows from the south and is thus warm. The water of those rivers was salt at the mouth; they did not know where the Indians found drinking water, although they had fresh water in their houses. In this river the ships could turn to go in and go out, and they have very good signs or landmarks. The water was seven or eight fathoms deep at the mouth and five within. All that sea, as he says, seems to him to be always as calm as the river of Seville, and the water suited for the cultivation of pearls. He found large periwinkles, tasteless and not like those of Spain. He described the character of the river and the harbour, which he mentioned above and which he named *San Salvador*, as having lovely mountains near and lofty as la Peña de los Enamorados.⁴⁴ One of them has on its summit another peak, like a beautiful mosque. This river and harbour, in which he then was, has on the south-east side two quite round mountains and on the west-north-west side a lovely flat cape which projects outwards.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30th / He went from the Rio de Mares to the north-west and saw a cape full of palms, and he named it *Cape de Palmas*.⁴⁵ After having gone fifteen leagues, the Indians who were in the caravel *Pinta* said that behind that cape there was a river, and that from the river to Cuba it was four days' journey. The captain of the *Pinta* said he understood that this Cuba was a city, and that land was a very extensive mainland which stretched far to the north, and that the king of that land was at war with the Grand Khan, whom they called "cami," and his land or city they called "Saba" and by many other names. The admiral resolved to go to that river and send a present to the king of the land, and send him the letter of the Sovereigns. For this purpose he had a sailor who had gone to Guinea in the same way, and certain Indians from Guanahani who were ready to go with him, on condition that afterwards they might return to their own land. In the opinion of the admiral, he was distant from the equinoctial line forty-two degrees to the north, if the text from which I have copied this is not corrupt; and he says that he must attempt to go to the Grand Khan, for he thought that he was in that neighbourhood, or to the city of Catay, which belongs to the Grand Khan, which, as he says, is very large, as he was told before he set out from Spain. He says that all this land is low-lying and lovely, and the sea deep.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31st / All night, Tuesday, he was beating about, and he saw a river where he could not enter because the mouth was shallow, and the Indians thought that the ships could enter as their canoes entered it. And navigating farther on, he found a cape which jutted very far out and was surrounded by shallows, and he saw an inlet or bay, where small vessels might enter, and he could not make it, because the wind had shifted due north and all the coast ran north-north-west and south-east. Another cape which he saw jutted still farther out. For this reason and because the sky showed that it would blow hard, he had to return to the Rio de Mares.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1st / At sunrise, the admiral sent the boats to land, to the houses which were there, and they found that all the people had fled, and after some time a man appeared, and the admiral

ordered that he should be allowed to become reassured, and the boats returned to the ships. After eating, he proceeded to send ashore one of the Indians whom he carried with him and who, from a distance, called out to them, saying that they should not be afraid, because these were good people and did harm to no one, and were not from the Grand Khan, but in many islands to which they had been, had given of what they possessed. And the Indian threw himself into the water and swam ashore, and two of those who were there took him by the arms and brought him to a house, where they questioned him. And when they were certain that no harm would be done to them, they were reassured, and presently there came to the ships more than sixteen boats or canoes, with spun cotton and their other trifles, of which the admiral commanded that nothing should be taken, in order that they might know that the admiral sought nothing except gold, which they call "nucay." So all day they were going and coming from the land to the ships, and they went to and fro from the Christians to the shore with great confidence. The admiral did not see any gold among them. But the admiral says that he saw on one of them a piece of worked silver, hanging from the nose, which he took to be an indication that there was silver in that land. They said by signs that within three days many merchants would come from the interior to buy the things which the Christians brought there, and that they would give news of the king of that land, who, as far as he could understand from the signs which they made, was four days' journey from there, because they had sent many men through the whole land to tell of the admiral. "These people," says the admiral, "are of the same character and have the same customs as the others who have been found, having no creed that I know, since up to this moment I have not seen those whom I carry with me offer any prayer, but they say the *Salve* and the *Ave Maria* with their hands raised to heaven, as they are shown, and they make the sign of the cross. There is, moreover, one language for them all, and they are all friends, and I believe that all these islands are so and that they are at war with the Grand Khan, whom they call 'cavila,' and his province 'Basan'; and they all go naked like the others." This the admiral says. He says that the river is very deep and at its mouth they could bring the ships alongside the

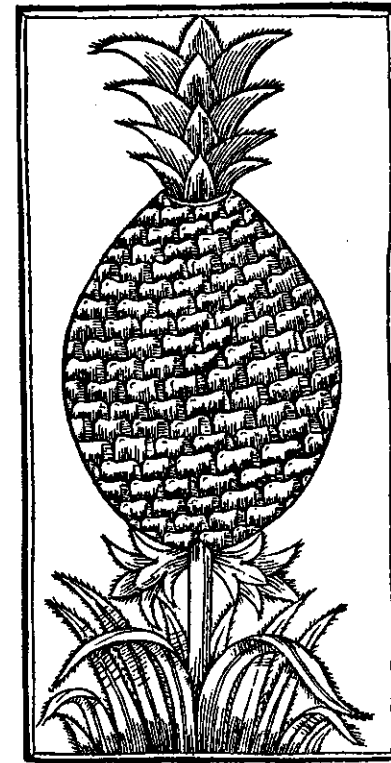
land. The fresh water does not come within a league of the mouth and it is very fresh, and, "It is certain," says the admiral, "that this is the mainland, and that I am," he says, "before Zayto and Quisay, a hundred leagues, a little more or less, distant from one and the other, and this appears clearly from the sea, which is of a different character from what it has been to the present, and yesterday, going to the north-west, I found that it was becoming cold."

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2nd / The admiral decided to send two men, Spaniards: one was called Rodrigo de Jerez, who lived in Ayamonte, and the other was a certain Luis de Torres, who had lived with the adelantado of Murcia and who had been a Jew, and who, as he says, understood Hebrew and Chaldee and even some Arabic.⁴⁵ With these, he sent two Indians: one from among those whom he brought with him from Guanahani, and the other from those houses which were situated on the river. He gave them strings of beads with which to buy food, if they were in need of it, and appointed six days as the time within which they must return. He gave them specimens of spices to see if they found any, and instructed them how they were to ask for the king of that land, and what they were to say on behalf of the Sovereigns of Castile, how they had sent the admiral to present letters on their behalf and a gift. They were also to learn of his estate, establish friendship with him, and favour him in whatever he might need from them, etc.; and they should gain knowledge of certain provinces and harbours and rivers, of which the admiral had information, and learn how far they were from this place, etc. Here the admiral took the altitude on this night with a quadrant, and found that he was forty-two degrees from the equinoctial line,⁴⁶ and he says that according to his estimate, he found that he had gone from the island of Hierro one thousand one hundred and forty-two leagues, and he still affirms that this is the mainland.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3rd / In the morning, the admiral entered the boat, and as the river at its mouth forms a great lake, which makes a very remarkable harbour, very deep and free from rocks, with an excellent beach on which to careen ships and with much wood, he went up the river until he came to fresh water, which was a distance

of some two leagues. And he ascended an eminence, in order to see something of the land, and he could see nothing, owing to the large groves, luxuriant and odorous, on which account he did not doubt that there were aromatic plants. He says that everything he saw was so lovely that his eyes could not weary of beholding such beauty, nor could he weary of the songs of birds, large and small. That day there came many boats or canoes to the ships, to barter articles of spun cotton and the nets in which they sleep, which are hammocks.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4th / Immediately at dawn, the admiral entered the boat and went ashore to hunt some of the birds which he had seen on the previous day. After his return, Martin Alonso Pinzón came to him with two pieces of cinnamon, and said that a Portuguese, whom he had in his ship, had seen an Indian who was carrying two large handfuls of it, but that he did not dare to barter for it, owing to the penalty which the admiral had imposed upon anyone who should barter. He said further that this Indian was carrying some bright red things like nuts. The boatswain of the *Pinta* said he had found cinnamon trees. The admiral immediately went there and found that they were not cinnamon. The admiral showed to some Indians of that place cinnamon and pepper—I suppose some of that which he had brought from Castile as a specimen—and they recognised it, as he says, and indicated by signs that there was much of it near there, towards the south-east. He showed them gold and pearls, and certain old men replied that in a place which they called “Bohio”⁴⁴ there was a vast amount, and that they wore it round the neck and on the ears and legs, and also pearls. He further understood that they said that there were large ships and merchandise, and that all this was to the south-east. He also understood that far from there were men with one eye, and others with dogs’ noses who ate men, and that when they took a man, they cut off his head and drank his blood and castrated him. The admiral determined to return to the ship to await the two men whom he had sent, intending himself to go in search of those lands if they did not bring some good news of the things they sought. The admiral says further: “These people are very mild and very timorous, naked, as I have said, without arms and without law; these lands are



A pineapple; in Oviedo's *La Hystoria generale de las Indias*, 1547.

very fertile; they are full of *mames*, which are like carrots and which have the taste of chestnuts;⁴⁴ and they have beans and kidney beans very different from ours and much cotton, which they do not sow, and it grows wild in great trees; and I believe that the season for gathering it is all the year round, since I saw bolls open and others about to open and flowers, all on one tree; and there are a thousand other kinds of fruit, which it is impossible for me to write down; and all must be of value.” All this says the admiral.

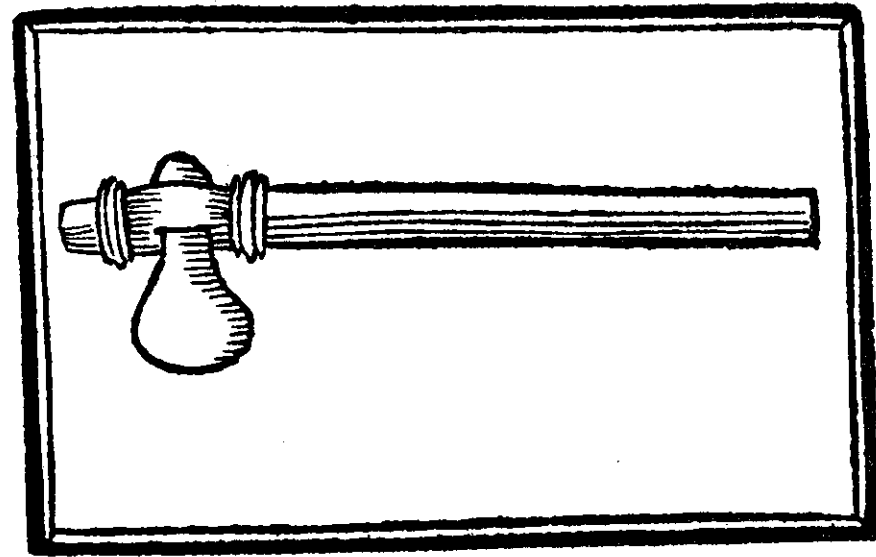
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5th / At dawn, he ordered the ship beached for careening, and the other vessels, but not all at the same time, so that two should always be at the place where they were for safety, although he says that those people were very confiding and that they might have beached all the vessels at one time without fear. While

flesh and bone like themselves; they asked them to stay there with them for at least five days. They exhibited the cinnamon and pepper and other spices which the admiral had given to them, and the others told them by signs that there was much of it near there, to the south-east, but they did not know if there was any in that place. Having found that there was no indication of any city, they returned, and it was so that if they had been willing to admit those who wished to come, more than five hundred men and women would have come with them, because they thought that they were going back to heaven. There came with them, however, a chief man of the village and his son, and a servant. The admiral spoke with them, doing them much honour. The Indian indicated to him many lands and islands which there were in that neighbourhood. The admiral thought of bringing him to the Sovereigns, and he says that he does not know what the chief imagined—I suppose that he was afraid—and in the darkness of the night he was anxious to go ashore. And the admiral says that since he had the ship on dry land, not wishing to offend him, he let him go; the Indian said that he would return at dawn, but he never came back. On the way the two Christians found many people, who were on their way to their villages, men and women, with a brand in their hands, the herbs for smoking which they are in the habit of using.⁵⁰ They found no village of more than five houses on the way, and all gave them the same reception. They saw many kinds of trees and plants and scented flowers; they saw birds of various kinds, different from those of Spain, with the exception of partridges and nightingales which sang, and geese, of which there were many. They saw no four-footed beasts, save dogs which do not bark. The land is very fertile and very cultivated with “mames” and beans and kidney beans very unlike ours; they saw the same Indian corn and a great quantity of cotton gathered and spun and worked, and in one single house they had seen more than five hundred arrobas, and they considered that it would be possible to get four thousand quintals every year. The admiral says that it seems to him that they do not sow it, and that it gives fruit all the year; it is very fine and has a large boll. He says that those people give everything they have for a very low price, and that a great bundle of cotton is given for a lace end, or anything else which

is given for it. “They are,” says the admiral, “a people very free from wickedness and unwarlike; they are all naked, men and women, as their mothers bore them. It is true that the women wear only a piece of cotton, large enough to cover their privy parts and no more, and they are of very good appearance, and are not very black, less so than those of the Canaries. I hold, most Serene Princes,” the admiral says here, “that having devout religious persons, knowing their language, they would all at once become Christians, and so I hope in Our Lord that Your Highnesses will take action in this matter with great diligence, in order to turn to the Church such great peoples and to convert them, as you have destroyed those who would not confess the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and after your days, for we all are mortal, you will leave your realms in a most tranquil state and free from heresy and wickedness, and you will be well received before the eternal Creator, Whom may it please to give you long life and great increase of many kingdoms and lordships, and the will and inclination to spread the holy Christian religion, as you have done up to this time. Amen. To-day I refloated the ship and I am preparing to set out on Thursday in the name of God, and to go to the south-east to seek for gold and spices and to discover land.” All these are the words of the admiral, who thought to set out on the Thursday, but, as he had a contrary wind, he was not able to set out until the twelfth day of November.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12th / He left the harbour and river of Mares at the end of the quarter of dawn, in order to go to an island which the Indians, whom he carried with him, vigorously affirmed was called “Babeque,”⁵¹ where they said, according to the signs which they made, that the people of the place gather gold on the shore at night with candles, and afterwards, as he says, with a mallet they make bars of it. To go there, it was necessary to steer to the east by south. After having gone eight leagues farther along the coast, he found a river, and, having gone on from there another four leagues, he found another river, which seemed to be of great volume and larger than any of the others which he had found. He did not wish to wait or enter any of them for two reasons: the first and principal was because the weather

and wind were favourable for going in search of the island of Babeque; the other, because, if in it there were some populous or important city near the sea, it would be seen, and to ascend the river small vessels were needed, and those which he had were not, and so much time would be lost, and such rivers are a thing to be explored separately. All this coast was inhabited, especially near the river to which he gave the name *Rio del Sol*.²² He said that on the previous Sunday, the eleventh of November, it had appeared to him that it would be well to take some persons from that river, in order to carry them to the Sovereigns, that they might learn our language, in order to discover what there is in the land, and that, on their return, they might be tongues for the Christians and adopt our customs and the things of our faith: "Because I saw, as I recognise," says the admiral, "that these people have no creed and they are not idolaters, but they are very gentle and do not know what it is to be wicked, or to kill others, or to steal, and are unwarlike and so timorous that a hundred of them would run from one of our people, although they jest with them, and they believe and know that there is a God in Heaven, and they are sure that we come from Heaven, and they are very ready to repeat any prayer that we say to them and they make the sign of the cross. So Your Highnesses should resolve to make them Christians, for I believe that, if you begin, in a little while you will achieve the conversion of a great number of peoples to our holy faith, with the acquisition of great lordships and riches and all their inhabitants for Spain. For without doubt there is a very great amount of gold in these lands, so that it is not without reason that these Indians, whom I carry with me, say that there are places in these islands where they dig gold and wear it around their necks, in the ears, and on the arms and legs, and that there are very large bracelets, pearls of great value and an infinite amount of spices. And by this river of Mares, from which I departed this night, there is without doubt a very great quantity of mastic,²³ and more can be had if more be desired, for the same trees, being planted, readily take root, and they are many and very large and they have a leaf like the mastic and fruit, except that it is larger, as are both the trees and the leaf, as Pliny says, than I have seen in the island of Chios in the archipelago.



An Indian hatchet; in Oviedo's *La hystoria generale de las Indias*, 1547.

And I ordered many of these trees to be tapped, in order to see if they would give resin to bring back, and as it rained continuously during the time that I was in the said river, I was unable to get any of it, save a very small amount, which I am bringing to Your Highnesses, and it may also be that it is not the season for tapping them, for I believe that the suitable time is when the trees begin to recover from the winter and are about to flower, and here they had fruit which was already almost ripe. And there is also a great amount of cotton here, and I believe that it would be marketed very well here, without bringing it to Spain, taking it only to the cities of the Grand Khan, which will doubtless be discovered, and to the many other cities of other lords who will delight to serve Your Highnesses, and where other things can be supplied from Spain and from the lands of the east, since these lands are to the west of us. And here there is also an infinite amount of aloe, although that is not a thing to produce great gain, but from the mastic much may be expected, since there is none save in the island of Chios, and I believe that they derive from it quite fifty thousand ducats, if my memory does not play me false. And there is

here at the mouth of this river the best harbour that I have seen so far, clear and wide and deep, and a good place and situation for making a town and fort, and such that any ships whatever could lie alongside the walls, and the land very temperate and high, and very good waters. It was so that yesterday there came to the side of the ship a boat with six youths, and five came on board the ship; I ordered them to be kept and I will bring them with me. And afterwards I sent to a house which is near the river to the west, and they brought seven head of women, small and large, and three children. I did this, in order that the men might conduct themselves better in Spain, having women of their own land, than if they had not, because already it has many times occurred that men were brought from Guinea, that they might learn the language in Portugal, and afterwards when they had returned it was thought that use might be made of them in their own land, on account of the good company which they had had and the gifts which had been given to them; but when they reached their own land this result never appeared. Others did not so act. So that, having their women, they will be willing to do what is laid upon them, and also these women will do much to teach our people their language, which is one and the same throughout these islands of India, and they all understand one another, and they go all about them in their canoes, which is not the case in Guinea, where there are a thousand differing languages, so that one does not understand the other. This night there came to the side in a canoe the husband of one of these women and father of three children, one male and two female, and asked if I would allow him to come with them and implored me greatly, and they are now all consoled, so that they must all be related. And he is a man of already forty-five years." All these are the exact words of the admiral. He also says above that it was somewhat cold, and for this reason it would not be wise in winter to navigate northwards to discover. On this Monday he sailed before sunset eighteen leagues to the east by south as far as a cape, which he named *Cape Cuba*.⁶⁴

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13th / The whole of this night he stood "a la corda," as sailors say, which is to beat to and fro and to make no

progress, because he had seen a pass, which is an opening in the mountains, as between one range and another, which began to show at sunset, where two very lofty mountains appeared. It seemed that this was the parting between the land of Cuba and that of Bohio, and this the Indians, whom he carried with him, said by signs. The dawn having come, he made sail for land and passed a point, which at night seemed to him to be some two leagues away, and entered a great gulf, five leagues to the south-south-west, and there remained another five before reaching the cape, where midway between two large mountains there was a cutting, and he could not decide whether or not it was an entrance to the sea." He wished to go to the island which they called "Beneque," where he understood from information he had received, that there was much gold; and that island lay to the east. And since he saw no great centre of population, where he could find shelter against the violence of the wind which rose higher than ever before, he decided to run out to sea and go to the east before the wind which was from the north; and he went eight miles an hour, and from ten o'clock when he took that course until sunset, he went fifty-six miles, which are fourteen leagues, to the east, from Cape Cuba. And of the other land of Bohío, which he left to the leeward, beginning from the cape of the above-mentioned gulf, he discovered, in his opinion, eighty miles, which are twenty leagues. And all that coast runs east-south-east and west-north-west.

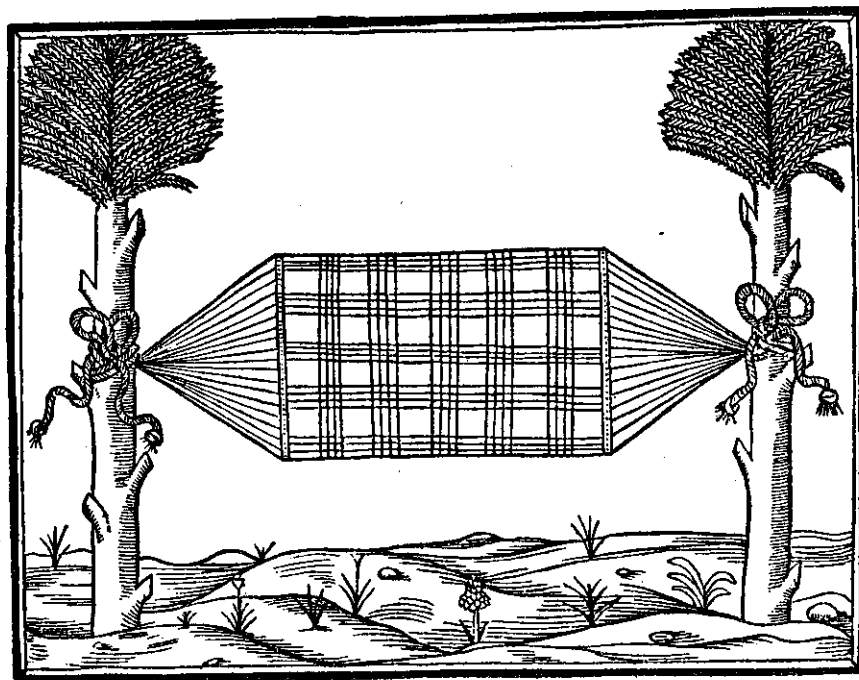
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14th / All the night of yesterday he went cautiously and beating about, because he said that it was not wise to navigate among these islands by night, until they have been examined. For the Indians, whom he had with him, told him yesterday, Tuesday, that it was three days' journey from the Rio de Mares to the island of Baneque, by which must be understood days' journey for their canoes, which are able to go seven leagues. The wind also failed him, and having to go eastward, he could only go east by south, and owing to other obstacles, which he mentions there, he had to wait until morning. At sunrise, he resolved to go in search of a harbour, since the wind had changed from north to north-east, and if he did not find a harbour, it would be necessary for him to go back to the harbours

and he navigated north-north-east. At sunset, Puerto del Principe lay to the south-south-west, and was seven leagues distant. He saw the island of Baneque due east, from which he was distant sixty miles. He navigated all this night to the north-east; he made rather less than sixty miles, and up to ten o'clock on the next day, Tuesday, another twelve, which in all amounts to eighteen leagues, and that to the north-east by north.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20th / Baneque, or the islands of Baneque, lay to the east-south-east, from which direction the wind blew so that it was contrary. Seeing that it did not change and that the sea was rising, he resolved to return to Puerto del Principe, whence he had set out, which was twenty-five leagues away. He did not wish to go to the islet which he called *Isabella*, which was twelve leagues from him, where he might have reached anchorage that day, for two reasons: the one, because he saw two islands to the south, which he wished to examine; the other, because the Indians whom he carried with him, whom he had taken in Guanahani, which he called San Salvador and which was eight leagues from that *Isabella*, might get away, and he says that he needed them and wanted to take them to Castile, etc. They had understood, so he says, that, gold being found, the admiral would allow them to return to their own land. He reached the neighbourhood of Puerto del Principe, but he was unable to make it, as it was night and as the currents carried him away to the north-west. He went about and steered to the north-east, with a high wind. The wind lessened and changed at the third quarter of the night; he steered to the east by north. The wind was south-south-east, and at dawn it changed to due south, and veered towards south-east. At sunrise he was off Puerto del Principe, and it lay to the south-west and almost south-west by west and he was distant forty-eight miles from it, which are twelve leagues.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21st / At sunrise, he steered to the east with a south wind; he made little progress, because the sea was against him. Up to the hour of vespers, he had gone twenty-four miles. Afterwards, the wind changed to the east, and he went to the south by east,

and at sunset he had gone twelve miles. Here the admiral found that he was forty-two degrees from the equinoctial line, to the north, as he had been in the harbour of Mares. But here he says that he has abandoned use of the quadrant until he reaches land, in order that he could repair it. It was accordingly his opinion that he was not so far distant, and he was right, since it was impossible, these islands being only . . . degrees. He was led to believe that the quadrant was correct, as he says, because the north star was as high as in Castile, and if this be true, he had come very near and was as high as Florida. "But then where are these islands now which he had close at hand? To this he added that it was, as he said, very hot. But it is clear that if he were off the coast of Florida, he would not have had heat but cold, and it is also manifest that at forty-two degrees it is not to be believed that there is heat in any part of the earth, unless it be for some



An Indian hammock; in Oviedo's *La historia generale de las Indias*, 1547.

accidental reason, and this I do not believe has been known up to the present. From this heat, which the admiral says that he experienced there, he argued that in these Indies and there where he was, there must be much gold. This day Martin Alonso Pinzón, with the caravel *Pinta*, went away, without the permission and against the wish of the admiral, through greed, as he says, thinking that an Indian, whom the admiral had ordered to be placed in that caravel, would give him much gold; and he went away without waiting, without the excuse of bad weather, merely because he wished to do so; and the admiral says here: "He had done and said many other things to me."

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22nd / On Wednesday, in the night, he steered to the south by east, with an east wind, and it was almost calm; at the third quarter, it blew from the north-north-east. He was still going southward, in order to examine the land which lay in that direction from him, and when the sun rose, he found himself as far from it as on the previous day, owing to the contrary currents, and the land lay forty miles away from him. On this night, Martin Alonso followed an easterly course, in order to go to the island of Baneque, where the Indians say that there is much gold; he was within sight of the admiral and might have been some sixteen miles away. The admiral sailed within sight of land all night, and he caused some sail to be taken in and kept a lantern alight all night, because it seemed that [Martin Alonso] was coming towards him and the night was very clear and the wind light and good for him to come to him, if he wished.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23rd / The admiral steered all day towards the land to the south, always with a light wind, and the current never permitted him to reach land, but he was to-day as far from it at sunset as he had been in the morning. The wind was east-north-east and satisfactory for going to the south, except that it was light; and beyond this cape there stretched out another land or cape, which also trended to the east, which those Indians whom he had with him called "Bohio." They said that this land was very extensive and that in it were people who had one eye in the forehead, and others whom they called "Canibals." Of these last, they showed great fear, and when they saw that

this course was being taken, they were speechless, he says, because those people ate them and because they are very warlike. The admiral says that he well believes that there is something in this, but that since they were armed, they must be an intelligent people, and he believed that they may have captured some men and that, because they did not return to their own land, they would say that they were eaten. They believed the same of the Christians and of the admiral, when some first saw them.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24th / He navigated all that night and at nine in the morning he made land at the level island, the same place to which he had come in the previous week, when he was going to the island of Baneque. At first he did not dare to approach the land, because he thought that the sea broke heavily at that opening in the mountains. Finally he reached the Sea of Nuestra Señora, where there were many islands, and entered the harbour which is near the mouth of the entrance among the islands. And he says that if he had known of that harbour before and had not spent his time in examining the islands of the Sea of Nuestra Señora, "it would not have been necessary for him to go back, although he says that he felt that the time was well spent, since he had visited the said islands. So, having come to land, he sent the boat and sounded the harbour, and found a very good bottom, at six fathoms' depth and sometimes as much as twenty, and clean, sandy everywhere. He entered it, steering to the south-west, and afterwards going to the west, the flat island lying to the north. This island, with another near it, forms a bay in which all the ships of Spain could lie and could be safe from all winds without anchors. And this entrance on the south-east side, which is made steering south-south-west, has a way out to the west, very deep and very wide, so that it is possible to pass between the islands if one knows them, as it is the direct course along their shores for any one who comes from the open sea to the north. The islands lie at the foot of a big mountain, which stretches away from east to west and which is of great length and loftier and longer than any other on this coast, where there are innumerable mountains. Seaward, a reef extends the whole length of the said mountain, like a bar, which reaches as far as the entrance;

all this is on the south-eastern side. On the side of the flat island there is also a reef, although it is small, and so between the two there is a wide space and much depth of water, as has been said. Immediately at the entrance, on the south-eastern side, within the same harbour, they saw a large and very lovely river, and of greater volume than those which they had hitherto seen, and the water was fresh as far as the sea. At the entrance, it has a bar, but afterwards, within, it is very deep, eight and nine fathoms. It is all surrounded by palms and many trees, like the others.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25th / Before sunrise, he entered the boat and went to examine a cape or point of land to the south-east of the flat island, a matter of a league and a half, because it seemed to him that there should be a good river there. Directly at the beginning of the cape, on the south-eastern side, having gone two crossbow shots, he saw a large stream of very fine water flowing; it came down from the mountain and made a great noise. He went to the river and saw some stones shining in it, on which were some veins of the colour of gold, and he remembered that in the river Tagus, at the mouth of it, near the sea, gold is found, and it seemed to him to be certain that there must be gold here, and he ordered some of those stones to be collected to take them to the Sovereigns. While they were there, the ships' boys shouted that they saw pines. He looked towards the mountain and saw them, so tall and wonderful that he could not overstate their height and straightness, like spindles, thick and slender. From these he realised that ships could be built, and a vast quantity of planks secured and masts for the largest ships in Spain. He saw oaks and strawberry trees, and a good river, and means for constructing saw-mills. The land and the breezes were more temperate than any so far, owing to the height and beauty of the mountain ranges. He saw on the beach many other stones, the colour of iron, and others which some said came from silver mines. All these were brought down by the river. There he secured a yard and a mast for the mizzen of the caravel *Niña*. He reached the mouth of the river and entered a creek, at the foot of that cape, on the south-east, very deep and large, in which a hundred ships could lie, with no cables or anchors. The



A wonderful tree with three trunks; in Ramusio's *Navigazioni et Viaggi*, 1606.

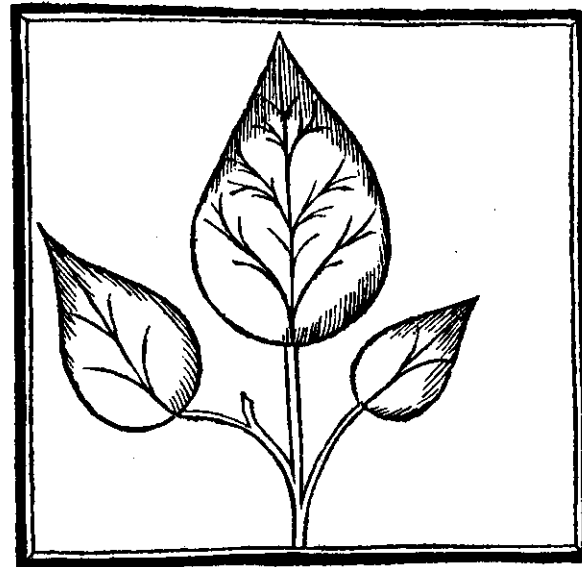
harbour was such that eyes never saw another like it; the mountains were very lofty and from them descend many very fine streams; all the high ground was full of pines, and everywhere were very diverse and very lovely groves of trees. Two or three other rivers lay behind.

say that they live in this island of Bohio, which must be very large, as it appears, and he believes that those of Caniba take these people, since they are very cowardly and know nothing of arms, from their lands and houses. It seems to him that for this reason those Indians, whom he has with him, are not accustomed to settle on the coast of the sea, because their land is near Caniba. He says that when they saw that he was going in the direction of that land, they were speechless, fearing that they would be eaten, and he could not calm their terror; and they said that the people there had only one eye and the face of a dog. The admiral believed that they were lying, and he thought that they must be under the dominion of the Grand Khan who captured them.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27th / Yesterday, at sunset, he arrived near a cape which he called Campana, and as the sky was clear and the wind slight, he did not wish to go to land to anchor, although to the leeward he had five or six marvellous harbours. Because he had delayed more than he had intended, owing to the desire which he had and the pleasure which he derived from seeing and wondering at the beauty and freshness of those lands, wherever he approached them, and in order not to delay the execution of his projects, for these reasons he remained that night beating about and standing off until day. As the drift and currents had carried him during that night more than five or six leagues to the south-east, beyond the point where he had been when night fell, and where the land of Campana had come in sight, and as beyond that cape a big opening appeared, which seemed to part one land from another and make as it were an island in the midst, he decided to go back with the wind south-west, and he came to the place where the opening had appeared. And he found that it was only a large bay, and at the end of it, on the south-east side, there was a cape, on which there was a mountain, lofty and square, which seemed to be an island. "The wind veered to the north, and he again turned to a south-easterly course, in order to run along the coast and to discover all that was there. Presently he saw at the foot of that Cape Campana a marvellous harbour and a large river; and a quarter of a league from there another river; and half a league from there another river; and a further half-

league on another river; and a league from there another river; and another league from there another river; and another quarter of a league from there another river; and another league from there another large river, from which to Cape Campana was some twenty miles, and they were to the south-east of him. Most of these rivers had large entrances, wide and clear, with wonderful harbours for the very largest ships, without bars of sand or rocks, or reefs. Coming so along the coast, on the south-east, from the last-named river, he found a large village, the largest that he had found up to this time, and he saw an infinite number of people come to the seashore, shouting loudly, all naked, with their spears in their hands. He wished to have speech with them, and lowered the sails, and anchored, and sent the boats of the ship and of the caravel, in an ordered manner, that they should do no damage to the Indians and should receive none, commanding them to give them some trifles from their articles of barter. The Indians made a show of not allowing them to come ashore and of resisting them, and then seeing that the boats came nearer to the shore and that they were not afraid, they drew off from near the sea. And believing that, if two or three men landed from the boats, they would not be frightened, three Christians went on shore, telling them in their own language that they should not fear, for they knew something of it from intercourse with those whom they had with them. Eventually the Indians all took to flight, neither large nor small remaining. The three Christians went to the houses, which are of straw and of the form of the others which they had seen, and they did not find anyone or anything in any one of them. They returned to the ships and they hoisted sail at midday to go to a beautiful cape which lay to the east, at a distance of some eight leagues. Having gone half a league through the same bay, the admiral saw toward the south a very remarkable harbour, and on the south-east some marvellously beautiful lands, as it were a hilly tract of land in the midst of these mountains, and much smoke and large villages appeared among them, and the lands seemed to be very cultivated. Accordingly, he determined to run into this harbour and to make an attempt to have speech or dealings with them. The harbour was such that if he had praised the other harbours, he says that he praised this the most, with its lands and temperate climate and its

surroundings and populousness. He says wonders of the beauty of the land and of the woods, where there are pines and palms, and of the great plain, which, although it is not entirely flat and stretches away to the south-south-east, but is undulated with smooth and low elevations, is the most lovely thing in the world, and through it flow many streams of water, which come down from these mountains. After the ship had been brought to anchor, the admiral jumped into the boat to take soundings in the harbour, which is like a bowl. When he was opposite the entrance to the south, he found the mouth of a river, which was wide enough for a galley to enter it, and of such a nature that it was invisible until it was reached. Entering it a boat's length, he found five and eight fathoms' depth of water. Proceeding by it, it was a marvellous thing to see the trees and the verdure and the very clear water and the birds, and its attractiveness, so that, as he says, he felt that he did not wish to leave it. He went on, telling the men whom he had in his company that, in order to give an account to the Sovereigns of the things which they had seen, a thousand tongues would not suffice for the telling nor his hand to write it, for it seemed to him that he was enchanted. He wished that many other persons, prudent and creditable, could see it, he says, being certain that they would not praise it less than he does. Here the admiral continues in these words: "How great will be the benefit which can be derived from this land, I do not write. It is certain, Sovereign Princes, that where there are such lands, there must be innumerable things of value, but I do not delay in any harbour, because I wish to see as many lands as I can, in order to give an account of them to Your Highnesses, and moreover I do not know the language, and the people of these lands do not understand me, nor do I or anyone I have with me understand them. These Indians also, whom I carry with me, I often misunderstand, taking one thing for the contrary, and I have no great confidence in them, because many times they have attempted to escape. But now, please Our Lord, I will see as much as I can, and little by little I shall come to understand and know, and I will cause persons of my household to learn this language, for I see that all, so far, have one language. And afterwards the benefits will be known, and an effort will be made to make all these peoples Christian, for that will be easily achieved, since they have no



A plant found in the New World; in Oviedo's *La hystoria generale de las Indias*, 1547.

creed and are not idolaters. And Your Highnesses will command that in these parts a city and fortress be established, and these lands will be converted. And I certify to Your Highnesses that nowhere under the sun do I think that there can be found lands superior in fertility, in moderation of cold and heat, in abundance of good and healthy water, and the rivers are not like those of Guinea, which are all pestilential. For, praise be to Our Lord, up to the present among all my people I have not had one who has had a headache or who has been in bed from illness, except one old man through pain from gravel, from which he has suffered all his life, and he was speedily well at the end of two days. This I say is the case in all the three vessels. So may it please God that Your Highnesses send here or that there come here learned men, and they will then see the truth of all. And since above I have spoken of the situation for a town and fortress on the river Mares, on account of the good harbour and of the surrounding district, it is certain that what I said is true, but it has no comparison with this place, nor has the Sea of Nuestra Señora. For here inland there must be great centres of population and innumerable people and things of great value, so that

I declare that here and in all else that I have discovered and which I have hopes of discovering before I go to Castile, all Christendom will find trade, and more especially Spain, to which all must be subject. And I say that Your Highnesses must not allow any stranger, except Catholic Christians, to trade here or set foot here, for this was the alpha and omega of the enterprise, that it should be for the increase and glory of the Christian religion and that no one should come to these parts who was not a good Christian." All these are his own words. There he went up the river and found some branches of the river, and going round the harbour he found that at the mouth of the river were some very lovely groves, like a very delectable orchard, and there he found a boat or canoe made of a single piece of wood, as large as a fusta of twelve seats, "very lovely; it was beached under a boat-house or shed made of timber and covered with large palm leaves, in such a way that neither the sun nor the rain could injure it. And he says that there was a suitable place for building a town or city and fortress, on account of the good harbour, good water, good land, good surroundings and abundance of wood.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28th / He remained in that harbour that day, because it rained and was very cloudy, although he could have run all along the coast before the wind, which was south-west and would have been astern. But because he would not have been able to see the land well and because, not knowing it, it is dangerous for ships, he did not set out. The people from the ships landed to wash their clothes. Some of them went a certain distance inland; they found large villages and the houses empty, because all had fled. They returned down another river, larger than that in which they were harboured.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29th / As it rained and the sky was accordingly overcast, he did not set out yesterday. Some of the Christians went to another village, near the north-western side, and in the houses they found no one and nothing. On the way they came up with an old man who was unable to run away from them. They took him and told him that they did not wish to hurt him, and gave him some trifling articles of barter, and let him go. The admiral would have liked to have seen him, in order to clothe him and have speech with him, because the



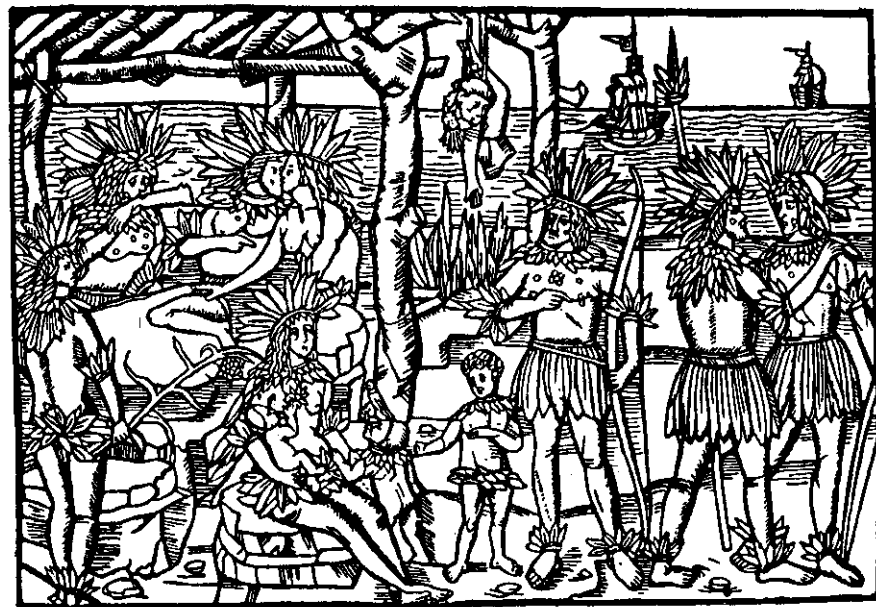
Indians at work; in Oviedo's *La hystoria generale de las Indias*, 1547.

felicity of that land and its suitability for the formation of a settlement greatly contented him; and he judged that there must be large centres of population. In one house they found a lump of wax which he brought to the Sovereigns, and he says that where there is wax, there must also be a thousand other good things. The sailors also found in one house a man's head in a small basket, covered with another basket, and hanging to a post of the house. They found another of the same kind in another village. The admiral believed that they must be the heads of some principal ancestors, because those houses were of a kind so that many persons find shelter in one house, and they could only be relations, descendants of one common ancestor.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30th / He was not able to set out because the wind was east, very contrary to his course. He sent eight well-armed men, and two Indians with them, from among those whom he carried with him, to visit some villages inland and have speech. They reached many houses, and they found no person or thing, for they had all fled. They saw four youths who were digging in their fields. When they saw the Christians, they turned at once in flight, and the Christians could not overtake them. They went, he says, a considerable distance; they saw many villages and very fertile land and all cultivated, and large streams of water. Near one they saw a boat or canoe, ninety-five palms long, made of a single piece of wood, very beautiful, and in which a hundred and fifty persons could be contained and navigate.

like Cape St. Vincent in Portugal; it was twelve miles east of Cape del Enamorado. After he had come abreast of Cape del Enamorado, he saw between it and the other cape a very large bay, which had a breadth of three leagues, and in the middle of it a tiny islet.¹²¹ The depth is great at the entrance near the land; he anchored there in twelve fathoms. He sent the boat to land for water and to see if they could have speech, but the people all fled. He also anchored in order to see if all that land was one with Española and if what he called a gulf did not form a separate island. He was amazed that the island of Española was so large.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 13th / He did not go out of this harbour because there was no land breeze with which to do so. He was anxious to leave it in order to go to another better harbour, since that was somewhat exposed and because he wished to observe the conjunction of the moon with the sun, which he expected on the seventeenth, and the moon in opposition with Jupiter and in conjunction with Mercury, and the sun in opposition to Jupiter, which is the cause of great winds. He sent the boat to land at a beautiful beach, in order that they might take *ajes* to eat, and they found some men with bows and arrows, with whom they paused to talk, and they bought two bows and many arrows, and asked one of them to go to speak with the admiral in the caravel, and he came. The admiral says that he was more ugly in appearance than any whom he had seen. He had his face all stained with charcoal, although in all other parts they are accustomed to paint themselves with various colours; he wore all his hair very long and drawn back and tied behind, and then gathered in meshes of parrots' feathers, and he was as naked as the others. The admiral judged that he must be one of the Caribs who eat men and that the gulf, which he had seen yesterday, divided the land and that it must be an island by itself. He questioned him concerning the Caribs, and the Indian indicated to him that they were near there to the east, and the admiral says that he sighted this land yesterday before he entered that bay. The Indian told him that in that land there was much gold, and pointing to the poop of the caravel, which was very large, said that there were pieces of that size. He called gold "tuob," and did not understand



Man-eating Indians; a sixteenth century woodcut.

it by "caona," as they call it in the first part of the island, or by "nozay," as they name it in San Salvador and in the other islands. In Española they call copper or gold of poor quality "tuob." Of the island of Matinino,¹²² the Indian said that it was entirely peopled by women without men, and that in it there is very much "tuob," which is gold or copper, and that it is farther to the east of Carib. He spoke also of the island of "Goanín," where there is much "tuob." Of these islands, the admiral says that he had been told some days before by many persons. The admiral says further that in the islands which he had passed they were in great terror of Carib: in some islands they call it "Caniba," but in Española "Carib"; and they must be a daring people, since they go through all the islands and eat the people they can take. He says that he understood some words, and from them he says that he gathered other things, and the Indians whom he carried with him understood more, although they found a difference of languages, owing to the great distance between the lands. He ordered food to be given to the Indian, and gave him pieces of green and red

cloth, and glass beads, to which they are very much attached, and sent him back to shore. And he told him to bring him gold, if there was any, which he believed to be the case from certain small ornaments which he was wearing. When the boat reached the shore, there were behind the trees quite fifty-five men, naked, with very long hair, as women wear their hair in Castile. At the back of the head, they wore tufts of parrot feathers and feathers of other birds, and each one carried his bow. The Indian landed and caused the others to lay aside their bows and arrows and a short stick, which is like a very heavy . . . and which they carry in place of a sword.¹²³ Afterwards they came to the boat and the people from the boat landed, and they began to buy from them their bows and arrows and other weapons, because the admiral had ordered this to be done. When two bows had been sold, they would not give more, but prepared rather to assault the Christians and capture them. They went running to collect their bows and arrows, where they had laid them aside, and came back with ropes in their hands, in order, as he says, to bind the Christians. Seeing them come running towards them, the Christians, being on guard, as the admiral always advised them to be, fell upon them, and they gave an Indian a great slash on the buttocks and they wounded another in the breast with an arrow. When they saw that they could gain little, although the Christians were not more than seven and they were fifty and more, they turned in flight, so that not one remained, one leaving his arrows here and another his bow there. The Christians, as he says, would have killed many of them, if the pilot who went with them as their captain had not prevented it. Afterwards the Christians returned to the caravel with their boat, and when the admiral learned of it, he said that on the one hand he was sorry, and on the other hand not, since they would be afraid of the Christians, for without doubt, he says, the people there are, as he says, evil-doers, and he believed that they were those from Carib and that they eat men; accordingly, if the boat which he had left with the thirty-nine men in the fortress and town of La Navidad should come there, these would be afraid to do any ill to them. And he says that if they were not Caribs, at least they must be neighbours of them and have the same customs, and they are a fearless people, not like the others of the other islands, who are



Cannibals attacking Spanish ships; detail of an engraving of 1621.

cowardly beyond reason and without weapons. All this the admiral says, and that he wished to take some of them. He says that they made many smoke signals, as they were accustomed to do in that island of Española.

MONDAY, JANUARY 14th / He wished to send this night to look for the houses of those Indians, in order to take some of them, believing that they were Caribs, and owing to the strong east and north-east wind and to the high sea running, he did not do so. But as soon as it was day, they saw many Indians on land, and the admiral therefore ordered the boat to go there with people well equipped. And immediately they saw them, they all came to the stern of the boat and especially the Indian who had come to the caravel the day before and to whom the admiral had given some articles of barter. He says that with him there came a king, who had given some beads to the said Indian to present