

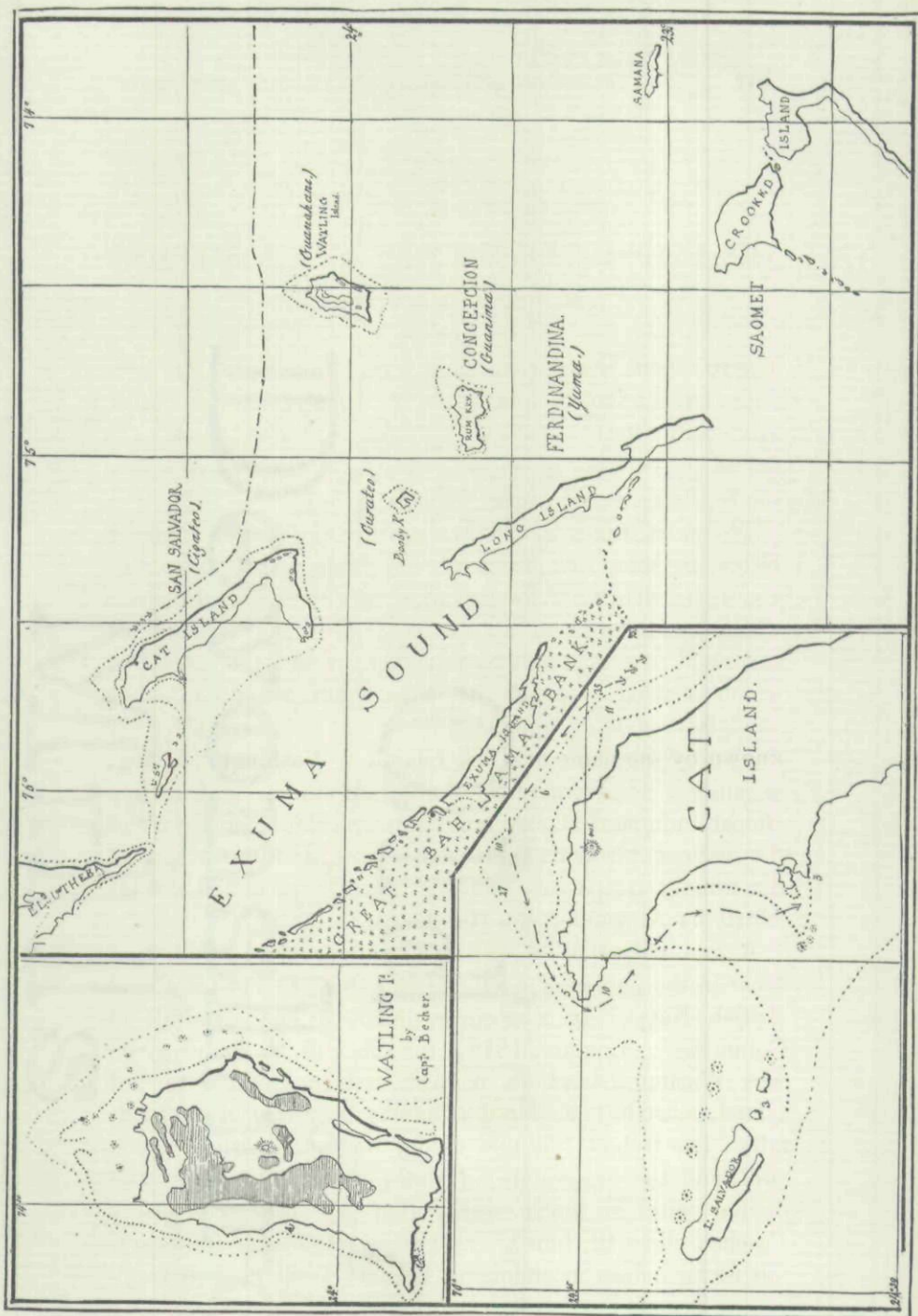
## THE LANDFALL OF COLUMBUS AT SAN SALVADOR.

BY PHILLIPP J. J. VALENTINI.

UNTIL about sixty years ago, no doubt had ever been entertained as to the location of the island of the first landfall of Christopher Columbus. San Salvador, to-day Cat Island, was always given in the maps the third place within the southeast range of the Bahama group.

It was in the year 1829, that the well-known Spanish historian, Martin de Navarrete, began to open a discussion about the identity of this island of the landfall, a discussion which has not ceased up to the present day. Navarrete surprised the students by advancing a certain theory by which he tried to prove that the historic event had taken place farther down, southeast of Cat Island, on a little cay known by the name of Turk Island. Washington Irving, in answer to Navarrete's feeble argument, and feeling almost indignant at such an "unwarranted disturbance of the ancient historic landmarks," stood boldly up against the unholy trespasser, and was eagerly seconded in his efforts by Alexander von Humboldt.

A new disturber of the peace apparently established, arose in the person of A. B. Becher, a captain of the Royal British Navy. In a stout volume, "The Landfall of Columbus" (London, 1858), reasons will be found given why Watling Island, in nearest eastern vicinity to Cat Island, must be considered as having been that of the landfall. The web of this new theory was spun with so much skill, and the arguments advanced in its favor were conducted with so much spirit, that the scholarly Oscar Peschel, and with him his numerous pupils and followers, felt no hesitation in endorsing Captain Becher's discovery.





In addition to these two controversial claims, various new ones have since been made in favor of some other little Bahama islands. So, for instance, Varnhagen imagines that the little island Mariguana must have been Columbus's San Salvador. Fox favors Samana; Harrisse, Acklin Island. Eugen Gelcich, with all the aid afforded by the science of navigation, has subjected Columbus's oceanic course to a thorough analysis, and arrives at the perplexing result, that if the great discoverer had actually followed the course as written in his journal, he could not have reached any of the islands named, nor any continent at all, but some floating point in the solitude of the Atlantic waters.

In Justin Winsor's new work on Christopher Columbus you will find still more names connected with the discussion of the landfall. After having given an instructive synopsis of the various methods followed by the students for the purpose of defining the oceanic track and the embarrassing cruise of Columbus along the outskirts of the Bahama archipelago, the author draws a sum from which we learn that the majority appears to drift toward the opinion of Watling Island being that of the landfall.

So does also Rudolph Cronau, to whose recent publication of a work on the Discovery of America my attention was called at the completion of this paper. I am aware that Mr. Cronau's statements, in regard to the controversy, have left considerable impression on the minds of his readers. He explored Watling Island in person, and found the description given of it and especially the description of one of its western harbors that was visited and emphatically recommended by Columbus, applied with remarkable exactness to this island, and to no other. But knowing of the controversy, I think that under the circumstances given, Mr. Cronau should have extended his exploration also to the much contested San Salvador. It is this comparison between the two, that we looked for. He ought

to have crossed over from Watling to San Salvador—only a forenoon's cruise—and have returned with full evidences in hand that Columbus never trod it, before he so summarily decided in favor of the former.

I shall now lay before you the literal text of the Columbus journal in the form delivered by Bishop Las Casas, which form, as you know, is an abstract made by him from the original, and the only exhaustive document which we possess of this memorable voyage. The description of the island of the landfall and of its further exploration, fortunately has been rendered in Columbus's own words, as is expressly stated by Las Casas. Furthermore, I shall discuss the text referring to the map of the two islands, which is a section taken from the last chart issued by the Hydrographic Bureau of Washington. At the hand of this chart and the mentioned text, you will now be enabled to follow Columbus's presence in those waters, step by step, hour by hour, and I invite you to compare his words descriptive of the physical features and the harbor visited by him on the island of the landfall, with those delineated by the hydrographers of our navy. Your mind's eye will thus be impressed with all those elements necessary to form your own judgment, whether it was Watling on which Columbus landed and of which he took possession on the morning of October 12, 1492, or Cat Island, the San Salvador as it stands inscribed on all the modern maps. You must always bear in mind that there is no other document in existence to inform us about the incidents of this first landfall. Columbus is the sole witness to this event; none of his companions have left any oral or written testimony serving the purposes of identification. All the evidences *pro* and *contra*, brought into this controversy are of a circumstantial nature. Should any doubt arise as to the words or the meaning of Columbus's text, I think we may be allowed to consult the *Historie del Almirante*, a work written by his son Fernando, who for its



composition avowedly availed himself of the manuscripts of his father. It is to be regretted that this work, also, is not extant in its original Spanish wording. However, its Italian translator, Alfonso Ulloa, is known from other work he did, having translated, also, the Portuguese De Barros' *Decadas da Asia*, to be a consummate and trustworthy interpreter.

“On Thursday, October 11th,” says Las Casas's abstract, “the signs of approach of land had multiplied. He (the Admiral) had been sailing west southwest and in a rough sea. On this day, at sunset, he counted twenty-seven leagues (108 miles). After sunset he resumed his former course, which had been due west, and stuck to it until two o'clock after midnight, thus having run (in this direction) ninety miles, which are twenty-two and one-half leagues. For it was at this hour that the caravel *Pinta*, which was a fast sailer, had struck land. Meanwhile, however, and at ten o'clock before midnight, the Admiral when spying from the fore-castle, had noticed some light flickering, but on account of the darkness of the night he was not certain whether this light shone from land or not. Therefore he called for the officer Pedro Gutierrez and asked him to look and spy whether this was actually a light or not; and so Gutierrez did, and saw the light. Also Rod. Sanchez de Segovia was asked, but he did not see it because he was standing on a place where it was impossible for him to see. The Admiral had scarcely addressed this man, when one light or two again were noticed. It was as though a wax candle was lifted up and down, but there were very few to whom it appeared to be indicative of land. But the Admiral insisted that he was now near land. Therefore he had the whole crew sing the *Salve* and exhorted them to be vigilant to the utmost. Then, at two o'clock after midnight land was descried, at a distance of about two leagues. They took in all sails, and remained under square sail, lying to and lingering (*temporizando*) until daybreak, which was Friday, when they arrived at the Lucayan Island, which, in the language of the Indians, is called Guanahani.”

The contents of this portion of the journal I consider to be of an importance higher than all the remaining para-

graphs still to be laid before you, and it will be worth the while to bring again the data, dispersed in the abstract, before your mind's eye. I will try to arrange them for you in a more synoptic way. According to my best understanding I will also try to comment on them. You remember the journal records, that on Thursday, at six o'clock before sunset, the Admiral ordered the ships to take a course due west. After eight hours' sail on Friday, at two o'clock in the morning, Columbus perceived a signal from Pinzon's ship, that she had struck land. The Pinta was a good sailer and had been somewhat ahead of the other ships. She had kept strictly to the ordered course. If she had not, it would have been impossible for the Admiral to hear or see the signal agreed upon. The reckoning showed that in these eight hours they had made  $22\frac{1}{2}$  leagues. The journal expressly adds that this number of leagues is equivalent to ninety miles. We moreover learnt that during this sailing due west, from six to two o'clock, an intermediate event had happened. At ten o'clock, four hours after ordering the new course west, or, if you choose, four hours before meeting Pinzon, Columbus had observed some lights starting up from the surface of the ocean, which lights he insisted upon not to be meteoric lights, but managed by people on some neighboring island. The night was too dark to discover anything more particular to disprove this theory of his. Had *he* been ahead of the other ships, or had they been sailing in company and in the range of mutual communication, he probably would have given orders to lie-to, and await what kind of revelation the break of morning would bring. But, doing so, he would have remained out of communication with Pinzon, of whom he knew he was ahead. I also think he had some foreboding that this bad genius of his, because he left his company, was bent upon some independent work, in the midst of the darkness of this night.

From all these specified data one important fact can be



gathered, that no interruption of sailing took place during the eight hours afore-described.

We are now entitled to argue as follows: If Watling had been the island of Pinzon's landfall, the spot on which Columbus observed the lights on a presumed island, must be sought for forty-five miles backward on the sailing-track and due east of Watling. I need not say that nowhere in this direction, south or north of it, had any land or island ever been found. East of Watling stretches the unbounded sheet of the Atlantic Ocean. Therefore we are led to the conclusion, that Columbus, at ten o'clock, and in that night of utter anguish and excitement, had been seeing sights, or been haunted by a vision. However, let us not be biassed. If Watling has its advocates, Cat Island has also. It must have the same chance of discussion, and the same method of arguing must be also applied to this rival island.

Therefore we put it thus: If *Cat Island* was that of the landfall, and if we are desirous to ascertain on what spot Columbus saw the lights, this spot must be sought for backward on the sailing-track, forty-five miles *due east of Cat Island*. If in this direction and at this distance some island is struck, it necessarily must be considered as that of the lights. And if we now apply the scale and measure, *it is Watling Island that we strike*. This discovery, of course, requires still further confirmation, and will come from no less authority than the lips of King Fernando of Castile himself. But I shall not quote the king's words at this section of the paper, but will resume the text of Columbus's journal, in order to learn what points of identification the *discoverer* furnished us for recognizing Cat Island as that of the landfall. The text was left at the words, that after joining Pinzon, at a distance of about eight miles from the coast, the fleet took in all minor sails and was tacking until dawn, when they noticed the natives assembling on the shore. What course was taken within these four hours, the journal does not express. Washing-

ton Irving makes the fleet shift south and drop anchor at the southern cape of the island. It will be presently shown that they chose the course north, profiting by a current running that way. What view the place presented, on which the landing took place, is not expressed. The journal only says, that when invited and hailed by the natives, three boats were manned, Pinzon, his brother, and the Admiral commanding them in person. They reach the shore and after a solemn service take possession of the island. Let me pass over the often-told tale of this first meeting of Europeans with natives of America, and only quote those words which are descriptive of the physical features of the island of the landfall. I must still remark, those words were not written on the eve of the day of landing. Columbus made no entry at all, on this Friday, in his journal. You find them dated, Saturday, October 13, and after having experienced an unexpected visit *en masse*, from the natives, in their canoes, on board his ship. These words, therefore, represent the impression, gathered from the aspect of the island, during two days, Friday and Saturday. After having recorded that he had elicited from his guests that the golden earrings and nose rings they wore, were manufactured by the king living in some island of the South, he says: "The island (before us) is pretty large (*bien grande*), very level; has very healthy trees, many places of water (*muchas aguas*), and a large lake in the midst of it. It has no mountains; but all is so verdant, that it is a pleasure to see it."

The statement, as you will have noticed, is commonplace. It bears not on its face such individual traits as are desirable for our purposes of identification, and the traits presented could be applied as well to any of the Bahama coral-islands, as was done by those students who pleaded in favor of Mariguana, Turk Island, Acklin and Samana. The advocate of Watling, Captain Becher, and its latest visitor, Mr. Cronau, have laid great stress upon the fact that Cat Island



lacks the important characteristic of "a lake in the midst," as Columbus put it, while such a lake is actually in existence on Watling Island. Now, this island is pretty well explored, it is the residence of many English settlers, and Cat Island is not. If the lake in question was not put down on the map of the latter by the hydrographers, it does not necessarily follow that there is no lake at all in that place, or that none has ever there existed. It may have dried up in the course of these four hundred years. Moreover, the map of Watling does not show a large lake; it shows six, nay, seven of them. Captain Owen, a visitor of Watling, describes it as "more than half eaten with lakes and ponds, all of them of salt water." It is this unusual ratio of the water to the land-area that struck his eye as very uncommon, and ought to have struck, also, the observing eyes of Columbus and been mentioned in the journal, if he had ever cast anchor before Watling and trod its soil. My opinion in regard to this lake is as follows: Columbus makes mention of it in connection with the great amount of fresh water, as I think that *muchas aguas* must be translated from the Spanish. To learn where this supply of water which the natives brought him to fill the empty casks, came from, was of highest interest to him, not only for his information, but particularly because when coasting, he must have noticed the island showed no creek or river. Upon his inquiry, then, very probably, the natives tried to tell or to explain to him the presence of many artificial or natural reservoirs, filled with rainwater, such as are found on all those coral islands, and which enabled them to live out the dry season. To them and to their limited conceptions, some of these large reservoirs existing somewhere in the middle of the island may have appeared of enormous extent, although in fact, they may have been as small as any of the eight we notice on the chart lying near the coast and observed by the surveying parties. You see the argument is not so strong and plead-

ing so vigorously for Watling as it appears at first sight. On the other hand, there is one characteristic mentioned by Columbus, but overlooked by Becher as well as Cronau, that is very indicative of the island of the landfall. He said, "The island is pretty large." In itself, this expression is vague and tells almost nothing. But no doubt Columbus must have left some estimate of its length, and if he did not put it in the journal, or if Las Casas inadvertently dropped it, the son Fernando did preserve it. The XXII. chapter of the "Historie" begins with these words: "At dawn they saw it was an island of fifteen leagues length, level, without mountains, stocked with many healthy trees, with beautiful water-places and a large lake in the middle." These are the very same words read in the journal, with the addition, only, that the island was fifteen leagues in length, which are equivalent to sixty miles. When measured, the island in reality is not longer than forty-five miles. This is a pretty large dimension for an island. The length of Watling, however, is only fifteen miles. I do not think Columbus would have called Watling a large island. This much is certain: no helpful material, no definite conclusion for the purposes of identification can be drawn from these words.

Far more suggestive, because interpretative of a positive locality, and like a picture drawn on the spot by a tourist will appear the following passage of the journal. It connects with the words expressing Columbus's resolve to sail south to the island where a king was said to be the manufacturer of golden trifles. However, before sailing, on the morning of October 14th, Tuesday, the Admiral suddenly decides upon a closer reconnoitering of the island. The boats are made ready for the trip. I now translate literally:—

"I rowed along the coast, north-north-east, to learn something of the other side of the island. Here, too, I was received by the natives in the most pleasant manner.



They invited me by signs to come on land. But I was afraid to do this. For I noticed an extensive reef of rocks surrounding the whole island. However, between it and the beach the water is deep, thus forming a harbor for the ships of all Christendom. But the outer entrance-channel is very narrow. Nevertheless, inside of this belt of reefs, there are certain shallows. And on the whole surface the water does not stir more than in a well. In order to survey all these things, and to report to Your Highness, and to decide where a fort could be built, I was busy during this whole morning. While thus engaged in the survey, I noticed a strip of land, that looks like an island, although it is not. I found six huts built on it. It could easily be cut off from the land, with two days work, but I do not see the necessity, because these people are peaceful and without weapons. I also saw close to this island gardens planted with the most beautiful trees. I examined every thing about this harbor, and then returned to the ships and made sail. I had seen so many islands that I did not know which to go to first. But the natives whom I had picked up, made me understand by signs, that there were many islands, so many that one could not count them, and they told me the names of more than a hundred of them. However I determined to make for the biggest, which is about 5 or 7 leagues distant from this island of S<sup>an</sup> Salvador." (a. s. o.)

You will notice on the chart that none of the Bahama islands, at least on their northern end, show a trend to the north-north-east. Like the veins of precious metals in Mexico and Central America, the tendency of all these coral islands is always in the direction of the north-west. The larger ones, as Watling, San Salvador, Long Island and Crooked Island, show this trend conspicuously. If the land proper does not express it, the reefs and bank lines do. Thus, any skipper coming from the east, who, after striking the land, wants to round it on the north side, cannot help sailing or rowing first in the direction north-north-west. I must call your attention to this physical fact, because the journal prints the course taken by the boats north-north-east. This indicates that a mistake

has been committed either by Las Casas, or his printers. That this was so, also, is proved from Fernando's text, who, in the description of this trip (again made in his father's phraseology) shows the course north-north-west.

Let us now follow on the chart the boats rowing around the cape. No doubt they will have secured from the natives a pilot to guide them through the reefs. They will have hugged the shore to save time. When arriving at the western point, they seem to have found the channel marked on the chart with ten fathoms depth, a passage marked in the journal as considerably narrow and very deep. At this place the eye of the attentive leader must quickly have perceived that the surface of water to the starboard was but slightly rippled, the manifest reason being that this portion of the water-sheet was sheltered against the violence of the sea by a line of reefs (see chart). On his further progress south, he moreover will have observed the same expanse of water being girt by another and second line of reefs. He found himself moving in the secure lap of a natural basin of a dock built up by coral walls, or as he put it "of a harbor whose surface was rocking as smoothly as in a well, and so spacious that in its precincts the ships of all Christendom could anchor." Advancing in the direction south, the chart shows that the curved shore-line runs out in a pointed headland. This headland is formed by a coral-spit, at the root of which and quite near the shore a small island makes its appearance. When seen from a distance, this little islet must appear belonging to the main. So Columbus supposed. But when approaching, he saw it was detached. Of this he writes, "When looking out where a fort could be built, I noticed a strip of land that looks like an island, although it is not." And of the silt accumulated between the two bodies, he calculated that it could be removed by two days digging, so as to isolate the islet and build a fort on it. Now, this phenomenon of little islands separating from a coral headland, is a feature com-



mon to the tropical waters. Thus I am not at all astonished that Mr. Cronau found the like on the west shore of Watling Island, and that he points to it as the one met with by Columbus on the described trip. I only wish he had expressed this feature with all its details on his map. Nor do I find it on the hydrographic chart of Watling, but only on that of Cat Island, and there conspicuously facing the waters of a harbor protected on all sides by a bastion of coral-reefs. The above-mentioned Captain Owen would not have failed in detecting such an opportunity. He tells us of his having rounded the whole island of Watling for the purpose of espying a safe anchorage for a craft larger than a boat or a canoe. His intention was to establish, somewhere on the shores of Watling, a salt-work, drain the neighboring lagoons and export the product, but for the reason alleged, he abandoned his plans. It is only by a careful comparative surveying of the two islands that this point will be definitely settled.

Thus far, the discussion has been directly from the chart. As the characteristics displayed there seem to speak strongly in favor of Cat Island, allow me to extend the discussion by seeking for further explanation of some points of interest that are not directly expressed in the journal, but which, with the help of the chart may be determined.

One of these points is in regard to the anchorage on the morning of October 12. We already learned that it took place at the northern part of the island. But possibly we may employ the data given by the journal for verifying the spot with greater certainty and accuracy. You remember Columbus started for the inspection of the other side of the island, October 14, Sunday, at dawn. He was busy with the survey of the harbor during the whole forenoon (*toda la mañana*), and finally he was back to his ships at night-time. Now, assuming the boats to leave the anchor-place about 5 o'clock in the morning, they must at the latest, have stood before the entrance-channel at 8 o'clock,

because the other hours of the forenoon, as Columbus expressly says, were taken up in making the trip around the inner harbor-line as far as to the little peninsula-islet. He would have been through this work in six hours, more or less, and have been at the entrance, on his return, between 2 and 3 o'clock of the afternoon, and then would have spent the remaining hours in reaching the ships, so as to be on board at night-time. When leaving the ships, in the morning, we may further assume the oarsmen had a good breeze, on account of the constancy of the trade-winds, and could thus accomplish the trip in much less time than on their return. On their way back, however, the crew had to struggle against the drift, an effort dwelt upon by Fernando, expressed by the words: "and tired indeed were the crew from rowing so much." If we now measure on the chart the distance from the entrance (fathom 10) back to the place where you see marked three anchors, we find it to be about thirty miles, a distance which in the morning could be done in three hours, and in twice that time in the afternoon. Had the anchorage been much farther south, they would not have been able, between dawn and dark, to accomplish such a task. Furthermore, it will be admitted that the Admiral, if anchored much farther south, would not have gone in boats, but would have chosen the ships for this purpose. Therefore, this very interesting spot must be sought for pretty near the northern turn of the island.

The same conclusion will be reached when examining the course the fleet had taken on the morning of the memorable Friday. From the meeting-point up to the anchorage it took nearly four hours. Its former rate of sailing had been twelve miles an hour. After meeting they reduced sail, feeling cautiously their way north, along the shore line of the island. Let us say their rate of sailing was now not more than six miles an hour. When measuring these twenty-four miles from the meeting point up to the northern anchorage, you will find the latter coinciding



with the same point that was reached by the previous calculation.

Having arrived at this stage of my argument you will find it pardonable that I should venture making a certain suggestion. If I did not go wrong in all my deductions, I think there will not be any difficulty at all in the identification of the very spot on which, at dawn, Columbus met the native fishermen assembled, the beach to which he had been rowing in his four boats, and therefore that remarkable place on which he took possession of his long-sought-for Western Continent. He will have met them where they had their huts, and above all, where they could beach their small canoes unharmed by surf or breakers, under the lee of some natural jetty, a nook, or a cove. The charts cannot be expected to show every small accident of this kind occurring along the coast-line of a solitary island, or trace the narrow coral clefts through which to slip with safety across the banks to the shore. Such details are only known to the born islanders. But should Cat Island be surveyed for the special purposes of identification, somewhere and opposite the spot confined to the anchorage, a place of this description will be detected. They are, so to speak, stations of privilege, inherited from generation to generation, and although the old Lucayan piscatory tribe has died out, some new tribe will be found there to-day hauling their boats under the same shelter.

This much and not more is all that I found pleading in favor of the landfall at Cat Island, at the hands of the hydrographic chart from the scanty record left by the discoverer. I wish you to admit the fact that my arguing was only from data positively expressed and that I have refrained from introducing any circumstantial evidence. My contribution to the controversy does not reach farther than to show, also, the other side of the question, and the strength of the position that may be taken in its defence.

As to the ultimate decision it can only be given after a

conscientious and unbiassed investigation to be made of both islands, for this special purpose.

To conclude—there is no record that either of the two islands was ever visited from motives of historic curiosity or from desire of verification, during Columbus's lifetime. It is only Ponce de Leon, of whom we read that he pretended having visited "Guanahani," on his Florida expedition, in 1513. Which of the Bahamas he meant cannot be ascertained with any certainty. To judge from the charts of the Bahama Islands, up to the year 1601, this hydrographic section of the Spanish domain seems to have remained without any accurate survey—mere drawings from hearsay and fancy. Antonio de Herrera's little map (1601) is the first somewhat satisfactory attempt to group the islands according to their situation in nature. As incomplete as all these Spanish charts had been, nevertheless, their reading as well as that from the globes yields one fact, which briefly expressed is this: that all of them persistently ignore San Salvador, and under the name of Guanahani bring Watling Island instead into prominence, which makes its conspicuous appearance in its correct natural position, namely, farthest outside east of all the other Bahamas. On the contrary, when inspecting the maps published after 1601 and in the ensuing centuries down to the present day, we shall observe the name Guanahani supplanted by that of Watling, and west of it Cat Island looming up in its leg-formed shape, inscribed with the name San Salvador. These maps are all of French, of Dutch and of English manufacture.

By what reasons these foreign geographers were prompted to consider this alteration of the Spanish maps to be necessary and indicated, I have been unable to fathom and would be thankful to learn. But the observation in itself was of great interest to me, because the study of this subject began to teach me that, to put it modestly, Cat Island has a claim as strong as Watling has, a claim that is



hallowed by tradition. For it must be owned that the Spaniards, in the epoch immediately following their discoveries, ought to have been more correctly informed in matters of their national history, than any foreigner some centuries later.

Here is a dilemma. But there is also an escape from it. If looking at both sides of the controversy and considering the divergent statements of cartographic expression, we may finally incline toward the conciliatory conclusion, that they represent nothing more than two different views taken of the same historic event. *The Spaniards seem to have given prominence to the fact that the first light was seen on Watling Island,—the foreigners, that the first land was sighted at Cat Island.* For the alleged Spanish preference of Watling there is positive proof extant. Both the journal of the Admiral and the "Historie" written by his son tell us that a reward of thirty *scudi* had been offered by the Crown to the one who on this voyage across the ocean should first see "land." No doubt a generous and liberal interpretation would have awarded poor Roderigo de Triana the prize. He was the mate on Pinzon's ship that first descried the hazy outlines of San Salvador. On the return to Castile, however, the monarchs decided the Admiral to be the indisputable winner of that life-pension. Fernando clothes the monarchs' sentence in the records, as follows: "because the Admiral had seen the light in the midst of the darkness, denoting the Spiritual Light that he was to introduce into those dark countries."

I am quite well aware that this sentence does not carry all the light that is required. It lacks the confirmation that the *light shone on an island*. Nevertheless, can we presume the king would have decided against the poor sailor without being fully satisfied of the fact that the island really had been seen on the ensuing days, by all the crew and officers? No doubt that some dispute about the Admiral's claim must have arisen in the very moment of his meet-

ing with Pinzon. The natives will have been questioned, yet found unable to understand what they were asked for. Under these circumstances, and before Columbus left these waters, he will have taken care to set at rest the minds of all the doubters. On Monday morning, October 15, we find him spreading sail to the south and reaching Conception at noon. He sought this island by its eastern side, as is expressly stated. Therefore, by ten or eleven o'clock in the forenoon he must have been able to descry the outlines of Watling Island. They must have been visible at a distance of about ten miles, because the southern shore of Watling is not flat, but heaves "rocky breasts" toward the sky. None of the disputant companions will then have denied that this island was the spot on which the Admiral had seen the lights.

It is in this way that I understand the monarchs could have given their sentence, and so sanction Watling Island as that of the discovery. The landing or the landfall at San Salvador sank in oblivion before the halo surrounding the island of the lights.



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