

SOME FACTS ABOUT JOHN AND SEBASTIAN CABOT.

BY GEORGE PARKER WINSHIP.

A CREW of English sailors, in the midsummer of the year 1497, brought their little craft up the Severn and alongside one of the old Bristol wharves. In reply to the greetings of those who welcomed them home, they announced that they had sailed through shoals of countless fish to a land on the further side of the North Atlantic.¹ Ten months later their commander, the Italian merchant adventurer John Cabot, sailed away again from these same Bristol wharves, in charge of five ships carrying men and goods suitable for the exploration and settlement of the western lands he had visited a year before. Three or four years after this, in 1502, an expedition was fitted out by some Bristol merchants and sent to the new world. Almost nothing is known about this adventure,—as to why it was projected, its intended destination, or what came of it; but it is a reasonable surmise that the expedition was sent to search for some traces of the fleet which John Cabot had led

¹ Al ditto messer Zoanne.... li compagni chi sono quasi tutti inglesi, et da Bristo.... et affermano che quello mare è coperto de pessi li quali se prendeno non solo cum la rete, ma cum le ciste, essendoli alligato uno saxo ad ciò che la cista se impozi in laqua, et questo io l'ho oldito narrare al dicto messer. Zoanne. Et ditti Inglesi suoi compagni dicono che portaranno tanti pessi che questo regno non haverà più bisogno de Iskanda, del quale paese vene una grandissima mercantia de pessi che si chiamanno stochfissi. From the second dispatch regarding Cabot sent by Raimondo di Soncino to the Duke of Milan, dated from London, 18 December, 1497, as printed in HARRISSE, *J. et S. Cabot*, pp. 324, 325. It has frequently been translated into English, and may be found in most modern books about the Cabots. There is repeated evidence of the impression made upon the earliest English visitors by the vast shoals of fish which frequented the western Atlantic from Cape Cod to Labrador. See note *post*, p. 425. The descriptions in Peter Martyr, Ramusio, and even in the legends to the Cabot 1544 map, were probably derived from the experiences of voyages subsequent to this one of 1497.

westward in 1498, and from which no news had then, nor has since, been received.¹

Eighty years later, in 1580-84, Dr. John Dee and Richard Hakluyt undertook to stir up the English people,

¹ The statement in the contemporary *Cronicon regum Angliae*, that the fleet of 1498 "departed from the West Cuntrey in the begynnyng of Somer, but to this present moneth came nevir knowlege of their exloyd," is as true now as when it was first written. Information in regard to the voyage of 1502 or 1503 consists at present of little besides the charters which authorized the undertaking. Letters patent were granted by Henry VII., dated 19 March, 1501-2, to three Bristol merchants—Ward, Ashelhurst and Thomas—and three Portuguese from the Azores, authorizing them in the usual terms to venture whithersoever they pleased: plenam ac liberam auctoritatem, facultatem et potestatem committimus navigandi et se transferendi ad omnes partes, regiones et fines Maris Orientalis, Occidentalis, Australis, Borealis et Septentrionalis.... ad inveniendum, recuperandum, discoperiendum et investigandum Insulas, patrias, Regiones sive provincias quasque Gentilium et Infidelium in quacunque Mundi parte posita quae Christianis omnibus ante haec tempora fuerunt et in presenti sunt incognita. In the similar grant to John Cabot and his three sons, dated 5 March, 1495-6, they are given authority: navigandi ad omnes partes, regiones et sinus maris Orientalis, occidentalis et Septentrionalis....etc. Frequent attention has been called to the probably significant omission in the charter of 1496 of permission to explore towards the south, the region in which Spain had already found the way to her new world empire. See the text, carefully transliterated from the original manuscript, in WEARE, *Cabot's Discovery*, pp. 96-97. In the draft of the charter of 1501-2 occurs the curious passage, the meaning of which has been often discussed, securing to the Anglo-Portuguese syndicate possession in whatever they might discover: "Et quod nullus... eos eorum aliquem de et super possessione et titulo suis.... aqualiter contra voluntatem suam expellat quovis modo seu aliquis extraneus aut aliqui extranei virtute aut colore alienius concessionis nostrae sibi Magno Sigillo Nostro per antea factae." See BIDDLE, *Memoir of Sebastian Cabot*, p. 318, where this charter was first printed. It is a reasonable supposition that the strangers referred to, who had previously received grants, were the Cabot family.

The evidence that a voyage was made in accordance with this patent of 1502 consists of an entry, under date 1502, in FABYAN'S *Chronicle*, as quoted by STOW, *Chronicle*, 1580 edition, p. 875: "Thys yere were brought vnto the Kyng three men taken in the new founde Ilands, by Sebastian Gabato, before named in Anno 1468 [misprinted for 1498], these men were clothed in Beastes skinnies, and eate raw Flesh, but spake such a language as no man could vnderstand them"... This evidence is apparently confirmed by the fact that, on 9 December, 1502, a second charter was issued to the same persons, with the addition of another Bristol merchant, Hugh Elliott. The venturers returned about the middle of September, for Fernandez and Gonsalvez received pensions from the English crown by a grant dated 26 September, 1502. The entries in the Privy Purse expenses record payments on 24 September, 1502, "to the merchants of Bristol that have been in the New-found-land, £20"; and on 7 January, 1502-3, "to men of Bristol that found the Isle, £5." There is also a warrant, dated 6 December, 1503, for the payment of the pension of £10 yearly to each granted in September, 1502, to Fernandez and Gonsalvez, or Guidisalvus as his name was now spelt, "in consideration of the true service they have done to us to our singular pleasure as captains unto the New Found Land." See BEAZLEY, *Cabot*, pp. 118-122. Mr. Beazley overlooks the obvious possibility that the young Sebastian Cabot may very likely have accompanied Fernandez or Gonsalvez, in some minor station. There is nothing improbable in the statement of Fabyan that Sebastian was selected to present the American natives to the King.

and especially England's Virgin Queen, to take an interest and a share in the exploitation of America. As the basis of all their arguments, after the obvious opportunities for a profitable adventure, they set forth the fact that the northern portions of the continent belonged to England by right, because they had been discovered by John Cabot.¹ Three hundred years after this, in 1889, one of the Justices on the bench of the Superior Court of the City of New York ordered the Manhattan Elevated Railroad Company to pay heavy damages for the depreciation in the value of property along its lines on the Bowery, because John Cabot brought the English civil law to this part of the world before the arrival of Henry Hudson, in the hold of whose vessel lurked the Dutch Roman Law.²

¹ Dr. Dee's map, which was prepared, apparently, for the eye of the queen, is in the British Museum. The only reproduction of which I am aware is a photographic copy, the size of the original, made for Mr. Fred W. Lucas of London, and very generously placed by him at my disposal. On the back of the map is written: "A brief Remembrance of sundry forein Regions, Discovered, inhabited, and partly Conquered by the Subjects of this Brytish Monarchie." Two of the reasons justifying the British claim are: "2. Circa an. 1494. Mr Robert Thorn his father, and Mr Elliot of Bristow discovered Newfownd Land.... 4. Circa an. 1497. Sebastian Caboto, sent by King Henry the seventh did Discover the Newfownd Land, so far along and about the Coasts next to Laborador tyll he came to the Latitude of .67½. And styll fownd the Seas open before him." A short time before writing this, on 28 November, 1577, according to his Diary, which was printed by the Camden Society in 1842, Dr. Dee "Spake with the Quene hora quinta.... declared to the Quene her title to Greenland, Estotiland, and Friseland."

Hakluyt's "particular discourse concerning.... Westerne discoveries" was written in 1584, "at the requeste and direction of the righte worshipfull Mr Walter Raghly now Knight." It was not printed until 1877, when Dr. Leonard Woods and Charles Deane edited it for the Maine Historical Society. In the third chapter, p. 19, Hakluyt wrote that "the contries therefore of America where unto we have just title, as beinge firste discovered by Sebastian Gabote, at the coste of that prudent prince Kinge Henry the Seaventh." Mr. Deane also notes, on p. 194, that "in Chapter XVIII of this Discourse, Hakluyt examines the title of England to this territory, and, as will be seen, relies principally on the discovery by the Cabots." The chapter in question contains an extract from Ramusio, which refers to Cabot's discovery of the Northwest passage. Another instance is referred to in the following note.

² The decision of Justice C. H. Truax in the case of *Mortimer et al. v. New York Elevated Railroad Company et al.*, which was recalled to my notice by Dr. K. C. Babcock of the University of California, is in the *Reports of Cases in the Superior Court of the City of New York*.—*New York*, 1890, lvi. (*Jones and Spencer*, xxv.) 259-271. It appears that the counsel for the Elevated companies had been in the habit of pleading, in suits for damages brought by owners of property along the lines of the Elevated structure, that prior to 1664 the land of the Bowery street was owned absolutely in fee by the Dutch government of Manhattan island. It would seem as if the court made up its mind to produce a decision which should

In the summer of 1497, when John Cabot came back from his successful westward voyage, there were several Italian and Spanish gentlemen, diplomatic agents and active, intelligent merchants, residing in England. These gentlemen heard the news of the town, and they promptly despatched to their masters, patrons and brethren, letters containing long accounts of the stories which were circulating in regard to the new discovery, and of their efforts to learn the truth in regard thereto. These letters were filed away in due course in the public and private archives at Seville, Venice and Milan, where they awaited the curious researches of modern historical investigators.¹

John Cabot disappeared from sight in 1498, but he left behind him a son, Sebastian, who talked freely, and perhaps not always discreetly, about his own and his father's exploits. The men who knew Sebastian personally—

put an end to this very bothersome argument. Judge Traux stated that "the English always claimed this portion of North America by right of prior discovery of this country by John and Sebastian Cabot.... The English claimed, and began to claim shortly after this time, that the Cabots had visited the whole coast from Florida up to Labrador"; the cited authority being Edward Hayes' account of Gilbert's voyage, written in 1583 and copied from Hakluyt in Payne; *Elizabethan Seamen*. "In 1498 Sebastian Cabot sailed westward until he came to what is now Newfoundland. From there he proceeded to the mainland, made several landings, dealt with the natives, and followed the coast southward, probably as far as Chesapeake Bay." Bancroft, Valentine's *History of New York*, and Harris's, *Voyages*, 1705. Supplementary authorities cited are Lossing's *Encyclopaedia*, Roberts in the American Commonwealth Series, Fernow in the *Narrative and Critical History*, Mr. Gerard in his *Titles to Real Estate*, and the Supreme Court of the United States in *Martin v. Waddell*, 16 Peters, 408.

¹ It is most unlikely that the few letters which have been brought to light during the last fifty years are all that were written about the Cabot discovery in the autumn of 1497. Of the letters now known, that of Lorenzo Pasqualigo to his brothers in Venice, dated in London, 23 August, 1497, was first printed, in Italian, in 1837, and in English in 1856; the dispatch of Raimondo di Soncino to the Duke of Milan, dated 24 August, 1497, was first printed in English in 1864, and in Italian, said to be translated from the earlier English version, in 1880; another dispatch from Soncino to Milan, dated 18 December, 1497, was printed in Italian in 1866, and translated into English by Professor Nash, for Winsor's, *Narrative and Critical History*, in 1884; a report by Pedro de Ayala to the Spanish government, dated 25 July, 1498, together with the covering dispatch by Ayala's superior, Ruy Gonzales de Puebla, was first deciphered and turned into English in 1862, and a Spanish-text, presumably worked out from the original cipher dispatch, was printed in 1882; there is record of an earlier dispatch from Gonzales de Puebla to Ferdinand and Isabella, dated 21 January, 1496, in which he mentioned Cabot, but this document has not yet been found.

Peter Martyr of Angleria, Francisco Gomara, Giovanni Ramusio and Richard Eden—recorded in their published volumes the impressions which they received from their conversations with him. Some of these conversations, we have reason to suspect, were held over the nuts and raisins of a good dinner; others took place, we know, in the course of social chat at a house party in Northern Italy; still others we may fancy on the comfortable benches of some cheery Spanish tap-room.¹ A certain amount of

¹ Raimondo di Soncino's delightful account, at the end of his December, 1497, letter, recounting what he had found out about John Cabot's plans, is printed in most books about Cabot. He tells of the ten and twelve course dinners, keeping him at table three hours at a stretch, which he was obliged to endure in order to find out what his master wished to know. The tantalizing "conversation with an anonymous guest at the house of Hieronimo Fracastor" at Caphi near Verona, is in the first volume of Ramusio's Collection of Voyages, ll. 414 D - 415 A. It has been discussed more elaborately, and with less appreciation of the actual value of the information afforded, than any other single piece of Cabotian literature. As I have said in my *Cabot Bibliography*, p. 85; the style in which this conversation is recorded, the apparently direct personal intercourse between the several communicants of the information, the use of the rhetorical present tense which seems to give the exact words used by Cabot, the evident respectability and authority of the unnamed gentleman, and even the ostentatious disavowal of any pretensions to exact recollection—all these tend to obscure the absolute unreliability of the entire passage. The length of time that had elapsed, the absence of anything that might have fixed the specific details clearly in the memory, the very eminence of individuals which has so often been held to relieve them from the necessity of detailed exactness, the essential levity of the occasion when Ramusio received the information, all these considerations need to be kept clearly in mind, together with the most important fact of all, that Cabot, the Mantuan gentleman, and Ramusio, were each, on every occasion when the information was transmitted, chiefly interested in something—the best way to reach the Spice Lands from Europe—which had only the slightest connection with the details about Sebastian's birth-place, his share in the voyage of 1497, and the other Cabotian questions over which modern historical controversies have raged.

Another glimpse of social life, on the outskirts of the Spanish Court, is afforded by Gaspar Contarini's letters to the Council of Ten at Venice, written in 1522 and 1523, in which he tells of trying to find out whether Sebastian Cabot was in attendance on the court at Valladolid, and where he was living, and of Cabot's subsequent call upon him, while he was at dinner on Christmas Eve. Contarini's letters have been translated into English by Sir Clements Markham, for the Hakluyt Society, and may be consulted in Mr. Raymond Beazley's Cabot volume in the series of "Builders of Greater Britain."

Ramusio corresponded with Sebastian Cabot in regard to certain geographical questions, and also, in all probability, about some property said to have been left by Cabot's mother, the settlement of which was entrusted by the Venetian Council of Ten to Ramusio (see note *post*, p. 420). Peter Martyr (see note 1 *post*, p. 424), and Gomara were both engaged in duties about the Spanish Court for several years when Cabot was in the Spanish service. All of Eden's books contain evidence of his intimate acquaintance with the "woorthy owlde man yet lying Sebastian Cabote," at whose deathbed he attended.

confusion resulted in the subsequent recollections.¹ Toward the end of the fifteenth century, Richard Hakluyt noticed this lack of agreement in the published sources of information about Cabot, and when he set about the preparation of his great Collection of Voyages, one of his first tasks was an attempt to straighten out these contradictory narratives. He was misled into several erroneous statements at first, but in the end he succeeded in finding out very nearly what we now recognize as the truth in regard to the English discovery of America. The important facts are stated by Hakluyt, in nearly every instance correctly.² For a hundred and fifty years there was no

¹ The best illustration of this confusion is in Ramusio's report of the conversation at Caphi. Ramusio wrote that his informant quoted Sebastian as saying that his father, John Cabot, died about the time that the English court began to discuss the news of Columbus's discovery, and that as he felt a desire to achieve something equally great, he induced Henry VII. to furnish him with two small ships, with which in the early summer of 1496, he followed the American coast northward to 56° where it turned toward the east, and that he thence turned back and sailed down the coast as far as Florida. Returning to England, he found the country in the throes of civil rebellion and war with Scotland, so that he offered his services to Ferdinand and Isabella, who sent him on a voyage of discovery to the coast of Brazil. It is supposed that this last sentence contains references to Perkin Warbeck's rebellion in June, 1497; to the truce with James IV. of Scotland in September of the same year; to Sebastian's arctic expedition of 1509; to his employment by Ferdinand of Spain, Isabella having died in 1504, in 1512; and his voyage to La Plata in 1526. It is comparatively easy to understand how this confusion arose; it is far more difficult to understand how men of considerable historical reputations have convinced themselves that this narrative is an important source whence they might derive exact and accurate information.

² In his *Divers Voyages*, imprinted at London in 1582, Hakluyt published the Letters Patent of 5 March, 1495-6 (misprinted 1594 in the side-note to the English translation); the "note out of Fabyan" referring correctly to the 1498 voyage and to the three savages presented to the King in 1502; and Ramusio's abstract of a letter from Sebastian Cabot regarding his voyage to 67½° north; together with the important information that Cabot's papers were then extant in the possession of William Worthington. In addition to these documents and extracts, he printed in the *Principall Navigations* of 1589 an abstract of the patent granted by the King in February, 1498, the text of which was not recovered until Biddle published it in 1831, thereby proving the probability that there was a Cabot voyage immediately following the discovery; an extract from the Cabot map, giving the date 1494 for the discovery; the conversation with Ramusio's anonymous gentleman; the accounts of Cabot's Arctic Voyage, written by Peter Martyr and Gomara; and the account of the voyage of Cabot and Pert in 1516. In the "note out of Fabyan," the text is corrected by inserting the name of John Cabot as the leader of the expedition, although in this and also in the enlarged edition of 1600, the name of Sebastian is carelessly retained in the heading. These passages are all reprinted in the third volume of the *Voyages*, published in 1600, with the correction of the date to 1497 in the extract from the Cabot, 1544 map. Hakluyt did not pretend to

occasion to question the accuracy of the facts as placed on record by Hakluyt.

In 1753, the British Commissioners appointed to confer with the French representatives, in accordance with the Treaty of Utrecht, drew up a plain, straightforward statement of facts upon which, by the right of discovery, England based her claim to North American territory. They set out, clearly and without thought of guile, so far as can be judged, the facts in regard to the discovery made by John Cabot in 1497. Their report was based merely, and entirely, upon Hakluyt and the authors whom Hakluyt had used. The facts as given in this report are the facts which, after another century and a half of prolonged interest in Cabotian problems, are now thought to be the actual truth as to John Cabot's achievements. A careful reëxamination of the report reveals almost nothing which has since been proven to be untrue in connection with the discovery of 1497. In reply to this Memoir, however, the French Commissioners, in 1757, published some Remarks, in the form of a commentary, which are a model of diplomatic argumentation and logical subtleties. Making use of all the devices of argumentation and sophistical logic, the Frenchmen pointed out that there are conflicting statements in regard to what John Cabot actually accomplished. They observed that the various early treatises do not always agree in the date of the discovery. They made much of the fact that there is confusion in some of the narratives in assigning the credit for the successful voyage to John or to Sebastian. In brief, the French negotiators undertook to depreciate the value and the effect of the English argument. They succeeded, as Frenchmen are apt to succeed, and the reader of their commentary finishes it with a strong im-

provide a connected narrative in any of his publications, but he merely set forth the sources of information as he found them, editing them so as to assist the reader, and, as will be seen in a subsequent note, *post*, p. 424, correcting errors which seemed to him obvious.

pression that everything is exactly the reverse of what the Englishmen had said it was.¹

The work of the French diplomats of 1757 naturally met with approval on the continent. French historical

¹ Three volumes of the *Mémoires des Commissaires ... Sur les Possessions & les droits respectifs des deux Couronnes en Amérique* were printed in 1755, and, in several editions, are frequently met with. The fourth volume, the Cabotian interest of which was brought to my attention by Mr. Henry N. Stevens of London, was published in 1757, and is found only in the original official French quarto edition. This volume contains the "Second Mémoire des commissaires Anglois, Sur les Limites de l'Acadie, Du 23 Janvier, 1753. Avec Les Observations des Commissaires du Roi, en Réponse." This is signed, p. 513, at "Paris, 23d January, 1753," by Mildmay, Ruvigny, de Cosne; and the French commentary is, p. 538, "Fait à Paris le premier juin mil sept cent cinquante-six. Signé De Silhouette." The remainder of the volume, pp. 539-654, is occupied by a list of authorities cited by the English commissioners and illustrative documents added by the French representatives. Article XXIV., pp. 458-470, is a reply by the English side to the "historical summary Account of the first Voyages made by the English and French for the Discovery and Settlement of North-America," which formed part of the first French Mémoire, in this official edition, 1755, vol. 1., pp. 10-37. Several paragraphs in this Article are devoted to establishing the significance of the discovery made in 1497 by John Cabot, a Venetian in the service of England, accompanied by joint Adventurers, native Subjects and Merchants of England. "It is admitted that England did not set a great value at first upon the discovery made in 1497, nor was it for many years carried any farther." It is shown that the north-west passage is not so much as mentioned in the commission under which Cabot sailed, and the discovery is claimed to confer a right to the territory from Florida to 58° northern latitude. In their observations, pp. 470-496, the French commissioners begin by discussing the navigation and discoveries of Sebastian Cabot, whose name was not mentioned by the Englishmen. They then proceed: "On peut, avec raison, élever plus d'un doute, tant sur l'époque de ce voyage que sur les terres qu'on prétend avoir été aperçues par Cabot dans le cours de sa navigation. Peut-être même n'est-il pas bien certain qu'il soit le premier qui les ait découvertes. Pour se former de justes idées sur cette matière, il est nécessaire de discuter les différentes pièces & les différentes autorités." The spirit in which they went about their examination is admirably shown by the very first argument. The authorities, they say, are collected by Hakluyt in his third volume, in the section which is entitled "Voyages, etc. (intended for the finding of a Northwest passage) to the North parts of America, to Meta incognita, and the backe-side of Gronland, as farre as 72 degrees and 12 minuts: performed first by Sebastian Cabota...." "Ce titre n'annonce le voyage de Cabot, que comme un projet de navigation pour découvrir le passage du nord-ouest, & non comme un projet pour établir des colonies dans de nouvelles terres:"—as if Hakluyt's heading settled the whole question. As a matter of fact, as will be seen, the statements in the heading are probably exactly true, because an arctic voyage was made by Sebastian, although neither Hakluyt nor the negotiators of 1755 were aware of it. This titular argument is followed by one even more curious and ingenious, to wit, that the abstract of the Letters Patent of 3 February, 1497-8, "apprend deux faits importants: le premier, qu'en 1498, Jean Cabot, père de Sébastien Cabot, n'était point encore mort; le second, que Cabot n'avoit point abandonné l'idée de son projet, mais qu'il ne l'avoit pas encore exécuté au commencement de 1498; que par conséquent on n'en peut placer la date, ni en 1496, ni en 1497." These two illustrations fairly represent the skilful ingenuity with which the next twenty pages of the volume are filled.

writers and makers of biographical dictionaries patriotically took up the work, and gave wider circulation to the views, positive and negative, set forth in this historical *coup d'état*. These views, becoming the accepted historical tradition in France, spread across the channel, and exerted a considerable influence on English writers of the early part of the nineteenth century. Eventually, one of the French works fell into the hands of Richard Biddle, a Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, lawyer, who had taken up his residence in England for the purpose of pursuing historical investigations preparatory to writing a treatise on the progress of early discovery. Mr. Biddle read the account of the Cabots in the *Biographie Universelle*, and he immediately recognized that many of its statements were incorrect. He determined to right a great historical injustice. He gathered authorities, drew up his brief, and in 1831 published his *Memoir of Sebastian Cabot*.¹ This volume corrected many of the errors in the earlier works, but Mr. Biddle, with a lawyer's acumen, having once started out to correct, kept at it until he had revised very nearly everything in his predecessors, whether it was right or wrong before he touched it. The confusion of 1755 became worse confounded. Biddle's work, however, was of the masterly, masterful sort, obviously one of those publications known technically as "an important contribu-

¹ Biddle's *Memoir* was published in Philadelphia and London in 1831, and reissued in London in 1832 with one leaf cancelled. It immediately attracted much attention from the Reviews, and its influence is plainly seen in the increased space accorded to Cabot in historical and geographical treatises which appeared in the succeeding years. One statement in his preface, p. ii., is, if possible, even more true of what was published in consequence of his work than of what preceded it; that "amidst a great deal of undeniably fine writing on the subject, (of the Cabots).... it would seem to have secured to itself less than any other of patient and anxious labor. The task of setting facts right has been regarded as an unworthy drudgery, while an ambitious effort is witnessed to throw them before the public eye in all the fantastic shapes, and deceptive colouring, of error." Biddle lavished an immense amount of painstaking research upon his volume, which is a mine of information from which succeeding writers have drawn material for which they have rarely given him due credit. The hopelessly confused manner in which Biddle presented his argument, the absence of chronological arrangement in the narrative and of any index, renders it extremely difficult to discover specific statements in his text, or to check the appropriations of other writers.

tion," and a due attention to preliminaries resulted in the acceptance of his argument by the reviewers, who published *résumés* of his opinions in the quarterlies and the principal magazines of that day. A powerful influence was thus created, which effectually dominated the historical traditions of the succeeding generation. This influence culminated in the *Remarkable Life* of Sebastian written by Mr. Nicholls of the English Bristol, who carried the glorification of Sebastian Cabot almost to the point of sanctification.¹ Naturally, Mr. Nicholls's book produced a reaction, which received an impetus from the finding, not long before its appearance, of the news letters and diplomatic despatches sent from England to Spain and Italy in the year of John Cabot's discovery.² This reaction found its first expression in an article published under the heading of "Our Golden Candlesticks" in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, in March, 1871, being Henry Stevens's effective little critique reprinted with the title "Sebastian Cabot—

¹ This effort to "clear away the misrepresentations with which ignorance, prejudice, and malignity have overlaid his life and actions, and to bring out the man from the shroud in which oblivion had partially enwrapped him," was published in 1869. It was, Mr. Nicholls says, "a labor of love; for, like some glorious antique in an acropolis of weeds, he grew in beauty as we lifted off the aspersions which had been cast upon him, until, as the last stain was removed, and our loving work was done, he stood before us in the majesty of his true manhood." An interesting passage is that in which Mr. Nicholls, on p. 187, explains Eden's account of Cabot's death bed, on which "the good olde man, in that extreme age, somewhat doted, and had not yet euen in the article of death, vterly shaken of all worldlye wayne glorie": Eden's *Taisnierus, A very necessaric . . . Booke concerning Navigation*, sig. l. 3. "Perchance Eden understood him not . . . In the infinite ocean of the love of his Saviour he found no variation, but a solid data, from which neither length, or breadth, or depth, or height could separate him; which, passing all human understanding, was partially revealed in the glimpse which his dying eye caught of the Spirit World, beyond the river, and so, joyously and trustfully, like a child in his old age he sank to his rest."

² See note, *ante*, p. 412. Most of these first attracted attention when published in the Rolls Series of State Papers and Manuscripts relating to English Affairs, from foreign archives. Mr. Bergenroth's Spanish series began in 1862, and the first volume of Mr. Rawdon Brown's collections from the libraries of northern Italy appeared in 1864. "The recent discovery in the Bibliothèque Imperial of a map of Cabot, dated 1544," in which Mr. Nicholls found the key to the Cabotian enigma, which apparently justified his volume, took place in 1843, although Mr. Nicholls's remark is justified by the fact that it was twenty years later before historical students began to realize the real significance of the information afforded by this cartographic record.—See Mr. Charles Deane's remarks in the *Proceedings* of this Society for April, 1867, pp. 43-50.

John Cabot = 0." Not long after this, Henry Harrisse took up the subject, and produced his valuable *Jean et Sébastien Cabot*. A portion of this volume was expanded into that superb piece of work, Harrisse's *Discovery of North America*, and the remainder, the biographical portion, grew into his *John Cabot and Sebastian his Son*, which appeared in season to add materially to the excitement of the Cabot quadricentennial celebrations.¹ If Mr. Harrisse had lost his interest in the Cabots when he finished proof-reading this last volume, it is probable that it would have remained for a very long while the definitive work on the subject—a most desirable situation. In it, Mr. Harrisse expressed decided opinions in regard to Sebastian's character and achievements, but there was not sufficient evidence of personal animus to discredit seriously Mr. Harrisse's judgment of that over-rated personage. As it happens, however, Mr. Harrisse had grown in fame, and in years, during the interval between his two Cabot volumes. Realizing his dominant position as the foremost authority on all that concerns the period of discovery, it may be that Mr. Harrisse was nettled by the knowledge that certain writers of standing as scholars had not accepted his *dicta* as definitively determining the judgment of posterity. At any rate, his Cabot book soon gave birth to a flock of lesser writings, scattered in the periodicals of England, Germany, France and America, in which Mr. Harrisse asserted with increasing vehemence that Sebastian Cabot was one of the most unmitigated rascals of all history. It is, he contends, "proved beyond cavil and sophistry that Sebastian Cabot was only an unmitigated charlatan, a mendacious and unfilial boaster, a would-be traitor to Spain, a would-be traitor to England."² Such talk as

¹The dates of publication are, respectively, 1882, 1892, and 1896.

²These are the closing words of an article on "The Outcome of the Cabot Quatercentenary," in the *American Historical Review* for October, 1898, Vol. IV., p. 61. I am aware of few more instructive studies than that of the way in which the views of this master of historical learning gradually took shape, at first from increasing

this naturally counteracts itself. It is time for some effort to set things right once more, as they have not been right since 1755.

John Cabot's earlier life is, so far as historical students are concerned, fairly well established. He was born in or near Genoa, somewhat before the middle of the fifteenth century. He moved to Venice, probably while still a young man, and there he married a woman whose property has occasioned her son considerable trouble.¹ This son,

information, as his studies for his successive volumes made him more and more familiar with every intricacy of the subject, and then under increasing provocation when, his studies completed, he began to realize that he had not succeeded in convincing the scholarly world of the justness of his conclusions. Mr. HARRISSE entered upon this second state of mind with the preparation of a series of articles, expanded from chapters in his *John Cabot and Sebastian his Son*, which were printed in Drapeyron's *Revue de Géographie* in 1894-97. He next challenged the date June 24, declaring that the landfall could not have taken place on that day, in the *Forum* for June, 1897, XXIII., 462-475. Then came an animated controversy with Messrs. G. E. Weare and G. R. F. Prowse in *Notes and Queries*, for 26 June and 14 August, 1897, 8th Series, XI. 501 and XII. 129-132, in which he convinced himself that the name Mathew as that of Cabot's ship was a forgery of Chatterton. His opinion that the landfall must have been on the Labrador coast was set forth in the *Nachrichten* of the Göttingen kgl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften for 1897, pp. 326-348. He found support for the belief that Cabot returned from his second voyage, in the so-called "Cabot Roll," which proves that Cabot's pension was paid in 1499, in an article printed in the *American Historical Review* for April, 1898, III., 449-455. The latest of his Cabot publications of which I am aware is in the *Transactions* of the Royal Society of Canada for 1898, 2d Series, IV., Sec. II., 103-106, in rectification of some statements in which Dr. S. G. Dawson had disagreed with him.

¹ Sebastian's supposed treachery to Spain and to England is inextricably mixed up with his efforts to secure from the Venetian authorities some acknowledgment of his claims to property derived from his mother: fu dato bona speranza de recuperar la dote di vostra madre, et ameda, according to the letter written from Venice in the name of Cabot's Rhagusan friend, 28 April, 1523, in HARRISSE'S *J. et S. Cabot*, 353. Nearly thirty years later the Council of Ten at Venice wrote to their ambassador in England, under date of 12 September, 1551, *J. et S. Cabot*, 361: quanto alla richiesta che vi è stata fatta da quei Signori circa li crediti che pretende, e ricuperatione de beni, li risponderete che noi desideramo in tutto quello che potemo far cosa grata a quella Maestà, e a loro Signorie ma che non essendo il detto Caboto conosciuto da alcuno de qui, saria necessario che esso medesimo venisse per giustificare la sua persona et le ragioni sue, essendo quelle cose di che si parla molto vecchie. The same despatch bearer probably carried a letter of similar date from the Reverend Peter Vannes, the English Ambassador at Venice, to the Council of Edward VI.; "Touching Sebastian Cabot's matter, concerning which the Venetian Ambassador has also written, he has recommended the same to the Seignory, and in their presence delivered to one of their secretaries Baptista Ramusio, whom Cabot put in trust, such evidences as came to his hands. The Seignory were well pleased that one of their subjects by service and virtue should deserve the [English] Council's good will and favour; and although this matter is about 50 years old, and by the death of men, decaying of houses and perishing of writings, as well as his own absence, it were hard to come to any assured knowledge thereof, they have commanded Ramusio to ensearch with diligence any way and

Sebastian, was born in Venice about 1475, being one of a family which contained at least three sons. The father, Giovanni or Zuan, was engaged in mercantile affairs, and made voyages to Mecca and to the cities of Spain. Eventually he went to England, where he established himself at London and Bristol.¹ In Bristol, his plans for adventuring into the unknown world took shape, and he was enabled to put his ideas to the test of trial. Apparently, he persisted for nearly a decade in his efforts to find land westward from Ireland. At last, one morning in June, 1497, he succeeded, and a few weeks later, he received from the English King the reward for his discovery.²

The story of Cabot's voyage of discovery is told in a great many books, and there is no occasion for rehearsing

knowledge possible that may stand to the said Sebastian's profit and obtaining of right."—in Turnbull, *Foreign Calendar*, 1861, p. 171. It is not easy to believe that a person as inefficient and unsuccessful as the Cabot described by Mr. HARRISSE could have deceived successfully the representatives of both Spain and England in a matter of this sort. As will be seen by the quotation from Pasqualigo in the next note, John Cabot's Venetian wife accompanied him to Bristol, England.

¹ Soncino wrote in December, 1497, "messer Zoanne.... dice che altre volte esso è stato alla Meccha." Ayala described him, in July, 1498, as "otro genoves como Colon que ha estado en Sevilla y en Lisbona." Pasqualigo, in August, 1497, spoke of Cabot as being "con so moier venetiana e con so fiolla Bristo." It is unfortunate that there is no means of proving the truth or error in Strachey's interesting allusion to John Cabot as "a Venetian indenzed his (Henry VII.) Subject & dwelling wthin the Black friers," London, in 1495: Strachey; *Historie of Trauaile*, edited by R. H. Major, for the Hakluyt Society, London, 1849, pp. 6-7.

² Soncino stated that Cabot was influenced by what Spain and Portugal had accomplished: "el quale visto che li Serenissimi Re prima de Portugallo poi de Spagna hanno occupato isole incognite, delibero fare uno simile acquisto per dicta Maestà." He goes on to describe the discovery: "li compagni chi sono quasi tutti inglesi, et da Bristo....li principali dell' impresa sono de Bristo, grandi marinari." Ayala, in his letter of July, 1498, makes the statement in regard to the preliminary efforts during the preceding six or seven years: "Los de Bristol, ha siete años que cada año an armado dos, tres, quatro caravelas para ir a buscar la isla del Brasil y las siete ciudades con la fantasia deste Ginoves." The Cabot 1544 map is the authority for the date, early morning of 24 June, as that of the discovery. The dates, 2 May and 6 August, 1497, for the departure and return of the Cabot ship, rest upon a manuscript chronicle, known as the Fust or Toby chronicle, which was destroyed by fire in 1860, and which Mr. HARRISSE has ingeniously imagined might have been a forgery by Chatterton; see note 2, *ante*, p. 419. This same chronicle is the authority for the name Mathew as that of Cabot's craft. No doubt has yet been thrown upon Mr. Craven Orde's copy, from the original entries of the privy purse expenses of Henry VII., of the entry, under date of 10 August, 1497, "to hym that founde the new Isle, £10." It is merely an assumption of probabilities which connects this entry with Cabot's voyage of discovery.

familiar details.¹ A single point is all that calls for consideration. Countless paragraphs have been written about Cabot's voyage up and down the American coast, ranging in and out of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, southward to the point of Florida and north to Cape Chidleigh in Labrador. As a matter of fact, I see no reason for supposing that John Cabot spent more than a few hours on American soil during his first visit to this continent. The mission of the voyage was accomplished as soon as land was discovered westward from Europe. Cabot had fulfilled his purpose as soon as he had stepped on shore. Further exploration could add nothing of comparable significance to what he already knew, and this knowledge might easily be lost to Europe by any attempt to increase it. There is no convincing reason why Cabot and his companions need have spent more than a few hours on shore or along the American coast. The stories which they told after their arrival home, so far as these have been preserved to the present day, suggest only the shortest possible delay at the goal of the voyage, and a hurried return with the news.²

¹ The essential details are all derived from two documents, which are mutually contradictory in a most important point. Every student of these documents must have his own explanation, which will, in the majority of cases, commend itself to his favor just in proportion as it differs from every other elucidation of the puzzle. Pasqualigo wrote on 23 August, 1497, that Cabot said he had sailed for 300 leagues along a coast 700 leagues distant: "e dice haver trovato lige 700 lontano de qui Terraferma el paexe del Gran Cam andato per la costa lige 300. On the following day Raimondo di Soncino wrote that Cabot had discovered the seven cities 400 leagues from England: ed ha scoperto due isole fertili molto grandi, avendo del pari scoperto le sette città quattrocento leghe dall' Inghilterra dalla parte verso occidente." This distance is confirmed by Ayala, who, writing on 25 July, 1498, implies that the King told him that the new lands were 400 leagues distant. "El Rey de Ynglaterra me ha fablado algunas vezes sobre ello. Spero aver muy gran interesse. Creo no ay quatro cientos leguas."

² In Pasqualigo's letter, the passage quoted in the preceding note continues: e che e desmontato e non a visto persona alguna, ma a portato qui al re certi lazi ch'era tesi per prender salvadexine, e uno ago da far rede e a trovato certi albori tagiati, si che per questo iudicha che ze' persone. Viene in nave per dubito et e stato mexi tre sul viazo e questo e certo.... Sto inventor de queste cose a impiantato sulli terreni a trovato una gran + [cross] con una bandiera de Ingeltera e una de San Marco." Soncino's account of Cabot's landing and exploration reads: "infine capitoe in terra ferma, dove posto la bandera regia, e tolto la possessione per questa Alteza, et preso certi segnali, se ne retornano.... Et dicono che la è terra optima et temperata, et estimanno che vi nasca el brasilio et le sete.... Ma

John Cabot set about preparing for his second recorded voyage very soon after his return from the discovery.¹ Early in 1498 he received the royal authorization, and it was doubtless Eastertide before he was ready to depart. When at last the five ships were ready, they cast off, dropped down to the Severn, out through the Bristol Channel, and so around the southern point of Ireland, where they ran into a furious storm, which drove one of the vessels back on to the Irish coast in serious distress.² This is the last that has ever been heard of the fate of that expedition. Not one word has yet become known which throws any further light on what happened to John Cabot and his fleet. There are, in the sixteenth century books, a number of undated accounts of Cabot voyages. It was supposed that these described the voyage of 1494 or 1497, until fifty years ago, when the accounts of what actually took place in the latter year were found at Venice. Thereupon these undated accounts were all fitted on to this 1498 voyage. The hopeless confusion which resulted may perhaps be disentangled by applying certain of these narratives to a voyage made in 1508.

Sebastian Cabot in 1508 tried to find a way to Cathay across the Arctic circle. He sailed into the north until his progress was blocked by bergs and field ice at 58° or 60° north latitude, and then, being forced to turn back, he

messer Zoanne... pensa da quello loco occupato andarsene sempre a Riva Riva più verso el Levante." The Cabot 1544 map merely states the time of the discovery, and then goes on with an account of what was known about the country half a century later.

¹ Pasqualigo, 23 August, 1497, reports that the King had promised Cabot ten ships and all the prisoners, except traitors, to man his fleet. "The English run after him like mad people, so that he can enlist as many of them as he likes, and a number of our own rogues beside." Soncino, 24 August, had heard that the King meant to send him out next spring with fifteen or twenty ships.

² The letters patent are dated 3 February, 1498. The Fabyan Chronicle, quoted by Hakluyt, gives the departure as the "beginning of May." The payment of Cabot's pension, for the half year ending 15 April, 1498, is of little definite value, as will be seen. Ayala, in July, reports that the five ships were provisioned for a year, but were expected back in September. He also tells of the storm: Ha venido nueva, la una en que iba un otro Fai Bull [*cf.* the phrase "otro como Colon" as descriptive of Cabot] aporato en Irlanda con gran tormento rotto el navio. El ginoves tiro su camino.

kept on toward the west until he reached a coast line which he followed southward for some distance.¹ A few of the details of this voyage have been preserved in a report from Marc Antonio Contarini to the Venetian Senate in 1536, in which he stated that Cabot was authorized by Henry VII. to take two ships and that "with three hundred men he sailed so far that he found the sea frozen, and he was compelled to return without having accomplished his object."² Peter Martyr furnishes the additional information that when the immense icebergs forced Cabot to turn back he was so far north that there was continual daylight in the month of July, and that he afterwards made land at a point where the sun had melted the snow, leaving the ground bare. As he followed down the coast, he encountered vast shoals of large fish, whose countless masses actually stayed the free progress of his little craft. Along

¹ Peter Martyr gave the date of this voyage in his Seventh Decade, *De Orbe Novo*. This was written in 1524, and in the second chapter he speaks of a voyage made by Cabot sixteen years before: anno ab hinc sexto decimo ex Anglia. Unluckily Richard Hakluyt corrected this statement, so that in the edition of the *Decades*, which he published in Paris in 1587, this same passage reads, p. 471, Bacchalaos anno abhinc vigesimo sexto ex Anglia per Cabotum repertos. Hakluyt's statement is the more nearly correct, according to what is now known, but the important fact remains equally true that Martyr, at whose table Sebastian was a welcome and a frequent guest, associated his northwestern voyages with the year 1508. This date is confirmed by a passage, which was first made public in 1893, from Marc Antonio Contarini's report to the Venetian Senate regarding his diplomatic mission in Spain. Contarini stated that Cabot made a voyage of exploration under the auspices of Henry VII. of England, but that on his return he found that his royal patron was dead. Henry VIII. died on 21 April, 1509. As I have shown in the *Geographical Journal*, London, February, 1899, XIII., 204-209, the date of this voyage was comparatively widely known during the second half of the sixteenth century. In 1578 George Beste described a Cabot voyage of 1508, with considerable detail, in his *True Discourse of the late Voyages of Discoverie, for the finding of a passage to Cathaya by the Northwest*. A year later, at Geneva, Urbain Chauveton published a French version of Benzoni's "New World," to which he made extensive additions, including an account of Cabot's voyage, dated 1507, with details which were evidently not derived from Beste, nor from Ramusio's *Summario* of Peter Martyr, to which it apparently gives a reference. Chauveton's additions were translated into Latin and German for De Bry's editions of Benzoni, in the "Grands Voyages," part IV., issued in 1593 and 1594.

² Cum 300 homeni navigò tanto che trovò il mare congelato, ande convenne al Caboto ritornarsene senza havere lo intento suo, cum presupposito però di ritornarsene a quella impresa a tempo che il mare non fosse congelato. Trovò il re, morto, ed il figlio curarsi poco di tale impresa: Berchet, *Fonti Italiani per la storia della scoperta del nuovo mondo*, in the *Raccolta di documenti* published by the Italian royal Columbian commission, Rome, 1893, pt. III., vol. I., p. 137.

the shores large bears were observed, which lay in wait for the fish, leaping into the shallow water, as they saw their chance and drawing their prey to land after much spattering and struggling.¹ The main facts about this voyage were confirmed, also, to a certain extent, by Richard Eden, who states in a note to one of the narratives of the expedition, that "Cabot touched only in the north corner and most

¹ Mr. Harrisse pointed out in his *Cabot*, p. 150, the connection between Contarini's report and the undated narrative in Martyr's *Decades*, Dec. III., lib. VI., which reads: primo tendens cum hominibus tercentum ad septentrionem donec etiam iulio mense vastas repererit glaciales moles pelago natantes: & lucem fere perpetuam: tellure tamē libera gelu liquefacto. Quare coactus fuit uti ait vela nertere & occidentem sequi . . . Baccallaos cabottus ipse terras illas appellavit: eo que in eorum pelago tantam reperit magnorum quorundam piscium; . . . multitudinem: ut etiam illi navigia interdum detardarent . . . ipsi piscibus nescantur. Inter densa nanque piscium florum agmina sese immergūt ursi: & singulos singuli complexos: unguibusque inter squamas inmissis in terram rapiāt & commedant; Martyr, *De orbe novo*,—*Alcala*, 1516, l. 52. Another and much more realistic account of these fish and bears is contained in the perplexing *Summario* of the *Decades* and other earliest treatises on the new world, which appears to have been compiled by Ramusio, and was printed at Venice in 1534. On l. 65 ("59") there is an Italian version of the passage from Martyr, the latter portion of which reads, in English: "And on account of that ice he was compelled to turn about, and make his way along the coast which at first ran for a ways toward the south, then changed to westward, and because he found vast numbers of very large fish in that region, which swam in shoals near the shore, and as he understood that the inhabitants called them Baccalai, he called that the country of the Baccalai (or codfish?). He had a little intercourse with those inhabitants, whom he found to be fairly intelligent and who covered their whole body with skins of different animals. In that place, and for the rest of the voyage, which he made along that coast toward the west, he said that he found the water always ran toward the west, toward the gulf that the mainland is said to make there. We must not omit a sport which Sebastian Cabot said he had seen together with his whole company, to their great amusement, when the numerous bears that are found in that country come to catch these baccalai fish in this way. All along the shore there are many large trees whose leaves fall down into the sea, and the Baccalai come in shoals to eat them. The bears, who like these fish better than anything else, hide themselves upon the banks, and when a lot of these fish, which are very large and have the appearance of tunnies, have come near, they dash into the water and seize one of them, sticking their claws under their scales so as not to let them go, and strive to drag them on to the shore. But the Baccalai, which are very strong, rush about and plunge into the sea, so that, as the two creatures are fastened together, it is very great sport to see them, now one under the water and now the other above, splashing the water in the air. But in the end the bear drags the baccalao to the shore, where he eats it. This is thought to be the reason why such a large number of bears do not make any trouble for the people of the country."

Gomara in 1552, *Historia general de las Indias*, cap. XXXIX., and Galvano in 1563, *Tratado de todos os descobrimentos*, l. 25. or pp. 87-89 of the Hakluyt Society, 1862, edition, recorded the main facts regarding this voyage, but without giving any additional details, except the degree of north latitude, which they state was 58° or 60°.

barbarous parte" of the new world "from whence he was repulsed with Ise in the moneth of July."¹

Sebastian Cabot may have made another attempt, beside the voyage of 1508-9, to find a way through the northern seas. In a letter to Ramusio, Cabot mentioned the fact that he had once sailed for a long time west and north, until he reached latitude $67\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ north on June 11. The sea was still open before him, and there seemed to be nothing to prevent him from proceeding onward to Cathay, when he was forced to stop and turn back on account of some trouble with the ship-master and mutinous sailors.² There are two other accounts of an English arctic voyage made during the early years of the sixteenth century, which was interfered with by a mutiny of seamen. One is in the fascinating "Interlude of the iiii. Elements," in which the author, Rastell, describing America, tells how

But yet not longe a go
Some men of this contrey went
By the Kynge's noble consent
It for to serche to that entent
And coude not be brought therto.
But they that were the venteres
Haue cause to curse their maryners
Fals of promys and dissemblers
That falsly them betrayed.
Which wold take no paine to saile farther
Than their own lyst and pleasure."³

The other is in Eden's dedicatory epistle to his translation of Munster's *Treatyse of the Newe India*,—London, 1553, where he remarks that "manlye courage, yf it had not been wating in others, at suche time as our souereigne Lord of noble memorie, Kinge Henry the VIII. about the

¹"Rycharde Eden to the reader" on l. sig. c. j., in his translation of Martyr's *Decades of the Newe Worlde*,—London, 1555.

²"Come mi fu scritto, gia molti anni sono, dal Signor Sebastian Gabotto," in the preliminary discourse to Ramusio's *Terzo Volume delle Navigazioni et Viaggi*,—Venetia, 1556, l. 4.

³Printed probably between 1510 and 1520, and reprinted in Dodsley's *Old English Plays*, Hazlitt's edition, I., 1-50, and by the Percy Society.—London, 1848, vol. XXII., pp. 28-33.

same yere of his raygne, furnished & sent forth certen shippes under the gouernaunce of Sebastian Cabot yet liuing, & one syr Thomas Perte, whose faynt heart was the cause that that viage toke none effect." This passage suggests Robert Thorne's statement, in connection with some adventure of the two old Bristol merchants, his father and Hugh Eliot, that "if the mariners woulde then haue been ruled, and folowed their pilots mind, the lands of the west Indies, from whence all the gold commeth, had been ours."¹

In 1512 Sebastian Cabot left England and entered the service of the King of Spain. There he continued for thirty-five years, enjoying, so far as the extant evidence shows, the unbroken confidence of those in supreme authority in the Spanish empire. In 1530 their faith in him was tested to the breaking point, after his return from La Plata, whither he had conducted a costly expedition which ended in complete disaster. A bitter attempt was made to ruin him, and he suffered legal condemnation for

¹ From the "Book" or letter written by Thorne in Seville about 1527, and printed in Hakluyt's *Divers Voyages*,—London, 1582. Shortly before the date of the letter, Thorne had sent two of his agents on one of the vessels which accompanied Sebastian Cabot on his unlucky expedition to La Plata, toward the expenses of which Thorne and his partners made a considerable contribution.

No convincing indication of the date of this voyage has yet been discovered. Chauveton, as previously noted, tells of a voyage by Cabot to 67° north in 1507. The date 1517 would seem at first thought to be implied by Eden's "King Henry the VIII., about the same year of his reign," were it not that Richard Eden was far too serious and too sensible a student to juggle with words in the fashion needed to obtain the eighth year of Henry VIII. There are many reasons for doubting the possibility of an English voyage having been made in 1517 by Sebastian Cabot, who had entered the service of the Spanish crown five years earlier. Mr. HARRISSE has devoted much skillful research to proving that Sir Thomas Perte or Spert could hardly have engaged in any voyage away from England at that time. Dr. ERRERA of Turin—an Italian student who is doing some very excellent work in the line of geographical history—suggests with a good deal of reason that the obvious interpretation of Eden's statement is "about the first year of Henry VIII." This takes us back to 1509-10, and implies a probable connection between the events of the mutinous voyage and those of the iceberg expedition of 1508-9. An open sea at 67° north on June 11, and icebergs in July at 60° are by no means mutually impossible. The two narratives are, however, so clearly distinct in nearly every respect, that it seems much safer to consider them as referring to separate adventures, and to confess frankly that we have no means for determining the date of the June voyage to 67° north, unless we accept Chauveton's 1507, for which the most that can be said is that it has not been disproven.

his share in the failure. But he was immediately restored to his position at the head of the Spanish navigation bureau, and the sentence of temporary banishment, which would have interfered with the performance of his official duties, was not enforced. Little is known about the details of his career during the next few years, but that his services were valued by those who were most interested in what he was doing, may fairly be inferred from the fact that the emperor made repeated efforts to induce Cabot to return, after he retired fifteen years later. In 1547 Sebastian Cabot went back to England, and there he assumed a position of influence, which he retained for the next ten years, as the recognized leader in the maritime affairs of the kingdom. He inspired and supervised the preparations for the voyages undertaken by Chancellor, Willoughby and Burrough, who opened to England the northeastern route to the markets of Russia. The story of these voyages is told in many books, and there is no occasion for repeating the details, or for analyzing the significance of facts about which there is no dispute. It is sufficient if the preceding pages show that the story of the Cabots contains some elements of actual human interest, and that what they did, in 1497, 1508, and 1553-55, justifies the reputation which John and Sebastian Cabot have enjoyed for three hundred years, as two of the most eminent of England's sea-faring men.

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