

The ancient Greeks imagined the torrid zone to be uninhabited; and modern authors, on the art of colonisation, have too hastily assumed that European agriculturists cannot exist in the tropics. We must remember that before the introduction of negro slavery in the sugar colonies they were chiefly cultivated by the Europeans who discovered them. Some of the West India Islands, it will be recollected, were used as penal colonies. In Louisiana a tract of land in the parishes of St. Charles and St. John the Baptist retains still the name of *La Côte des Allemands*, or German coast, from the industrious German labourers who were indentured to the planters there a hundred years ago.

The Board of Trade of Cuba, called the *real Junta de Fomento*, has always encouraged the immigration of European agriculturists into the island. The Spaniards being a very sober people make good labourers for the West Indies, but old Spain is too thinly peopled to permit of an extensive emigration. The *Junta de Fomento* offered a bounty for Spanish emigrants, and this was eagerly accepted. In a few months 187 families, composed of 772 souls, besides 700 single persons from 17 to 35 years of age emigrated from a single province of Spain. Seeing the people willing to leave Spain in such numbers, the local authorities took alarm, and put a stop to the emigration.\*

Thwarted by the mother country, the *Junta de Fomento* made a trial of Asiatic labourers from the Philippine Islands, at a cost of 170 dollars per head for the transport of those immigrants from Manilla to Cuba. Lord Palmerston gives the following opinion of this experiment in his evidence before the Sugar Planting Committee of 1848. "The result does not appear to have been very successful. Here is a despatch from the Acting Commissioner of the Havanna, dated 9th of October, 1847. He says:—

"Respecting the labourers recently introduced from Amoy, under the contract which was made by this Government and Mr. Zulucta, of London, I have the honour to acquaint your Lordship that the conditions as to maintenance, clothing, &c., entered into with Mr. Tait, the Spanish Consul at Amoy, have been faithfully performed. The Coolies themselves, it appears, are a worthless set, with very few exceptions, lazy, and of bad habits and propensities; they have refused to work. Some instances of coercion (although prohibited,) were had recourse to, and the result has been the murder of the overseers. In many instances the Coolies have been returned to the Junta, and I can safely assure your

\* "Pero las autoridades locales de aquellos distritos se alarmaron extraordinariamente, temiendo una despoblacion general muy funesta para la agricultura, y la industria peninsulares: esta alarma tuvo eco en los periódicos de la Côte y de otras provincias, hasta que la opinion publica, al cabo se declaro con razon ó sin ella, contraria acérrima de la referida emigracion."—*Memorial to the Queen of Spain.*

lordship that the importation of the 600 which have been brought from Amoy is a failure to all intents and purposes. The *Junta de Fomento*, nevertheless, has reported favourably of the measure in general, although this opinion is to be understood as applying to Asiatics of a better description. The Intendente has not encouraged the bringing of more labourers from Asia, whilst the Ayuntamiento of the city reports that 10 Europeans, whether Germans or Scotch, are better to be imported as labourers than 100 Asiatics, and proposed to authorize a contract at 125 dollars each for European labourers to a Mr. Goicouria, with a grant of land whereon to try an experimental colony of white labourers only, and to permit him to bring in as many as 500 a year for ten or twenty years, the whole to be under the inspection of the local government, and this, it is understood, will be carried into effect forthwith."

The *Junta de Fomento* has offered two premiums of 12,000 and 30,000 dollars each—*i.e.*, 1st, 12,000 dollars to any enterprising proprietor of the island who procures fifty families of free people locating themselves in Cuba. 2d, 30,000 dollars are to be given to any planter who performs all the work on a sugar estate by free immigrants alone, without the assistance of a single slave.

All these efforts on the part of the Cuban authorities to introduce free labourers seem to betray a conviction that slavery cannot last much longer in the Spanish dominions. But there is no doubt another motive for their anxiety to obtain free immigrants from Europe, in the fact that any great increase of the slave population of the island cannot be contemplated without alarm.

It is to be regretted that the inhabitant of the British islands is, in general, from his habits and tastes, by no means so well calculated to prove so useful a labourer in the tropics as the Spaniard; but we believe, that by a judicious selection of emigrants, as we stated on a former occasion,\* considerable benefit would be conferred on our West India colonies. One important consequence of this species of emigration would be a greater division of labour than at present; because, "*in every improved society the farmer is generally nothing but a farmer, the manufacturer nothing but a manufacturer.*" We shall consider this subject, as applied to our sugar colonies, in the next number of the Colonial Magazine.

\* State of Jamaica, Colonial Magazine for April 1849.

ARCTIC DISCOVERY.\*  
SEBASTIAN CABOT AND THE CORTEREALS.

ON the return of Sebastian Cabot to England, at the close of the year 1498, after making the daring attempt to penetrate to the north-west, which formed the subject of our last article, he found the whole kingdom in a state of uproar, occasioned by the rising in favour of the notorious Perkin Warbeck, and the preparations for a war with Scotland. His proposition, therefore, to undertake another voyage of discovery to the Arctic Regions, (and doubtless a man of his indomitable spirit would not let the matter rest after so favourable a beginning), was not very likely to receive much attention from a king who had his hands full of such serious matters.

It would seem, however, if we allow the following note to have any weight in the enquiry, that his love of adventure conquered all difficulties. At page 208, Vol. II., of the Rev. Mr. Seyer's "Memoirs Historical and Topographical of Bristol and its neighbourhood, from the earliest period to the present time," it is stated that some of the ancient Calendars of Bristol, under the date of 1499, contain the following entry:—"This yeare, Sebastian Cabot, borne in Bristoll, proffered his service to King Henry for discovering new countries; which had noe greate or favorable entertainment of the king, but he with no extraordinary preparation sett forth from Bristoll, and made greate discoveries." If we couple with this memorandum the extraordinary statement made by Ojeda,† "that he found certain Englishmen in the neighbourhood of Caquibacoa," we have probably a clue to the manner in which Cabot passed some portion of his time, from the period of his return from the Arctic Seas in 1498, to the date of his entering the service of Spain, 13th September, 1512. But as we have as yet no further evidence on this point, great faith must not be placed in this assertion.

For many succeeding years we look round in vain for an indication of any further attempt at a northern voyage out of England; but Portugal, at this period of history the greatest maritime nation of the world, and who subsequently became the most powerful of England's rivals on the sea, was not so unwise as to allow so promising a field of honour and emolument to remain unexplored. The daring intrepidity of her sons had opened out a passage round the tempestuous extremity of Africa,

\* Continued from page 246.

† Navarette, Tom iii. p. 41. Ojeda sailed from Spain 20th May, 1499.

while countless numbers of her adventurers were flocking to the luxuriant shores of the New World, and we may, therefore, imagine that she looked upon the proceedings of England, which threatened to wrest from her some of her brightest laurels, with no very favourable eye. Accordingly, Gaspar Cortereal, a member of the noble family of that name, with the sanction of King Emanuel, in whose household he had been educated while he was yet the Duke de Beja, fitted out two ships at his own expense, and sailed from Lisbon in the year 1500, with the intention of following up Sebastian Cabot's discoveries. He touched at the Azores, and then pursued a course which, as far as he knew, had never been traversed by any former navigator, until he made a land which he named Terra Verde. This was part of the coast of Labrador,\* and he proceeded to explore it for upwards of 600 miles. But we here insert a remarkably clear and minute account of this expedition, merely premising that it is derived from a letter (dated 19th October, 1501) written by Pietro Pasquiligi, the Venetian Ambassador at the Court of Portugal, to his brothers in Italy, *only eleven days after the return of Cortereal from his northern voyage.*†

“ On the 8th of the present month one of the two Caravels which his most Serene Majesty dispatched last year on a voyage of discovery to the North, under the command of Gaspar Corterat, arrived here, and reports the finding a country distant hence West and North-West two thousand miles, heretofore quite unknown. They proceeded along the coast *between six and seven hundred miles* without reaching its termination, from which circumstance they conclude it to be of the mainland *connected with another region which last year was discovered in the*

\* Carefully to be distinguished from Greenland.—(See Barrow, p. 39.)

† Memoir, p. 238—241. This valuable document is preserved (lib. vi., cap. cxxvi.) in the precious volume entitled “Paesi novamente ritrovati et Novo Mondo da Alberico Vesputio Florentino intitulato,” published at Vicenza in 1507, and now a work of the greatest rarity. The “Paesi” was translated into Latin by Madrignanon, in a book entitled, “Itinerarium Portugallensium é Lusitania in Indiam,” &c., and is perhaps one of the most deliberate frauds ever perpetrated. The misfortune is, also, that it has misled a host of ancient and modern writers, who have treated of Cortereal's voyage, until exposed by the author of the “Memoir of S. Cabot,” (p. 249—255.) Some of the principal perversions are as follows:—“Instead of ‘a region discovered last year,’ we have ‘a region formerly visited by our countrymen.’ The distance sailed along the coast becomes almost *eight* hundred miles. There is created amongst the natives a *preference* of Venetian manufactures. This region ‘very populous’ according to the original, is converted into one ‘admirably cultivated,’ and instead of the pine, &c., well suited for the spars of vessels, we have the natives actually engaged in ship building! The captives ‘adapted’ to labour become ‘habituated’ to it, and at length ‘born’ to it; and in speaking of the King of Portugal, the ambassador is made to call him ‘our King.’ And this is a professed translation, by an ecclesiastic, dedicated to a high public functionary!” It would be useless to offer any arguments to prove that the country further north which Cortereal could not reach, but of which he rightly conjectured he had found a continuation, was that discovered by Cabot.

*North*, but which the Caravel *could not reach* on account of the ice and the vast quantity of snow; and they are confirmed in this belief by the multitude of great rivers they found which certainly could not proceed from an island. They say that this country is *very populous*, and the dwellings of the inhabitants are constructed with timber of great length and covered with the skins of fishes. They have brought hither of the inhabitants, seven in all, men, women, and children, and in the other Caravel which is looked for every hour there are fifty more."

"They are of like colour, figure, stature, and aspect, and bear the greatest resemblance to the Gypsies; are clothed with the skins of different animals, but principally the otter; in summer the hairy side is worn outwards, but in winter the reverse; and these skins are not in any way sewed together or fashioned to the body, but just as they come from the animal are wrapped about the shoulders and arms: over the part which modesty directs to be concealed is a covering made of the great sinews of fish. From this description they may appear mere savages, yet they are gentle and have a strong sense of shame and are better made in the arms, legs, and shoulders, than it is possible to describe. They puncture the face, like the Indians, exhibiting six, eight, or even more marks. The language they speak is not understood by any one though every possible tongue has been tried with them. In this country there is no iron, but they make swords of a kind of stone, and point their arrows with the same material. There has been brought thence a piece of a broken sword which is gilt, and certainly came from Italy. A boy had in his ears two silver plates, which beyond question, from their appearance, were made at Venice, and this induces me to believe that the country is a Continent; for had it been an Island and visited by a vessel we should have heard of it. They have great plenty of salmon, herring, cod, and similar fish; and an abundance of timber, especially the *Pine, well adapted for masts and yards*, and hence His Serene Majesty contemplates deriving great advantage from the country, not only on account of the timber of which he has occasion, but of the inhabitants who are admirably calculated for labour, and are the best slaves I have ever seen."

Such are the terms of the original letter, and it will be seen how fraudulent has been the attempt to impose upon the world, and to set up a claim for priority of discovery.

The author of the "*Memoir, &c.*," maintains that the most northern point reached by Cortereal was the Gulf of St. Lawrence, or, at the utmost, the southern extremity of Labrador; but it appears to us that the arguments of the Edinburgh Cabinet Library, ("*Polar Seas, &c.*," pp. 185—187,) which go to prove that his voyage extended along the coast of Labrador, are conclusive on this point.

We can readily believe the triumph with which such a discovery would be received at the Court of Emanuel, independent of all considerations of a mercantile character, (which necessarily entered very largely into such projects,) it was very gratifying to the nation that their first attempt in the frozen north should have