

**TALES ABOUT  
AMERICA  
AND AUSTRALIA**

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Tales about America and Australia by Peter Parley

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# TALES ABOUT AMERICA

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### CHAPTER I.

PARLEY TELLS HOW AMERICA WAS FIRST  
DISCOVERED, AND ABOUT COLUMBUS.

WHEN I set out on my travels, of which I have given you an account in my "Tales about Europe," I told you I sailed from Boston in America; I will now give you some account of my native country, with its flourishing cities, and its multitude of ships, its fertile fields, its mighty rivers, its vast forests, and its millions of free and

happy and industrious inhabitants, of which I am quite certain you must be very curious to know something, when you are told that though the world has been created nearly six thousand years, and many powerful nations have flourished and decayed and are now scarcely remembered, yet it is only three hundred and fifty years ago, since it was known that such a country as America existed.

It was in the year 1492, which you know is only 350 years since, on the third of August, a little before sun-rise, that Christopher Columbus, undertaking the boldest enterprise that human genius ever conceived, or human talent and fortitude ever accomplished, set sail from Spain, for the discovery of the Western World.

I will now give you a short account of Columbus, who was one of the greatest men the world ever produced. He was born in the City of Genoa, in Italy; his family were almost all sailors, and he was brought up for a sailor also, and after being taught geography and various other things necessary for a sea

captain to know, he was sent on board ship at the age of fourteen.

His first voyages were short ones, but after several years, desiring to see and learn more of distant countries, and thinking there were still new ones to be discovered, he went into the service of the King of Portugal and made many voyages to the western coast of Africa, and to the Canaries, and the Madeiras, and the Azores, islands lying off that coast, which were then the most westerly lands known to Europeans.

In his visits to these parts, one person informed him that his ship, sailing out farther to the west than usual, had picked up out of the sea a piece of wood curiously carved, and that very thick canes, like those which travellers had found in India, had been seen floating on the waves; also that great trees, torn up by the roots, had often been cast on shore, and once two dead bodies of men, with strange features, neither like Europeans nor Africans, were driven on the coast of the Azores.

All these stories set Columbus thinking