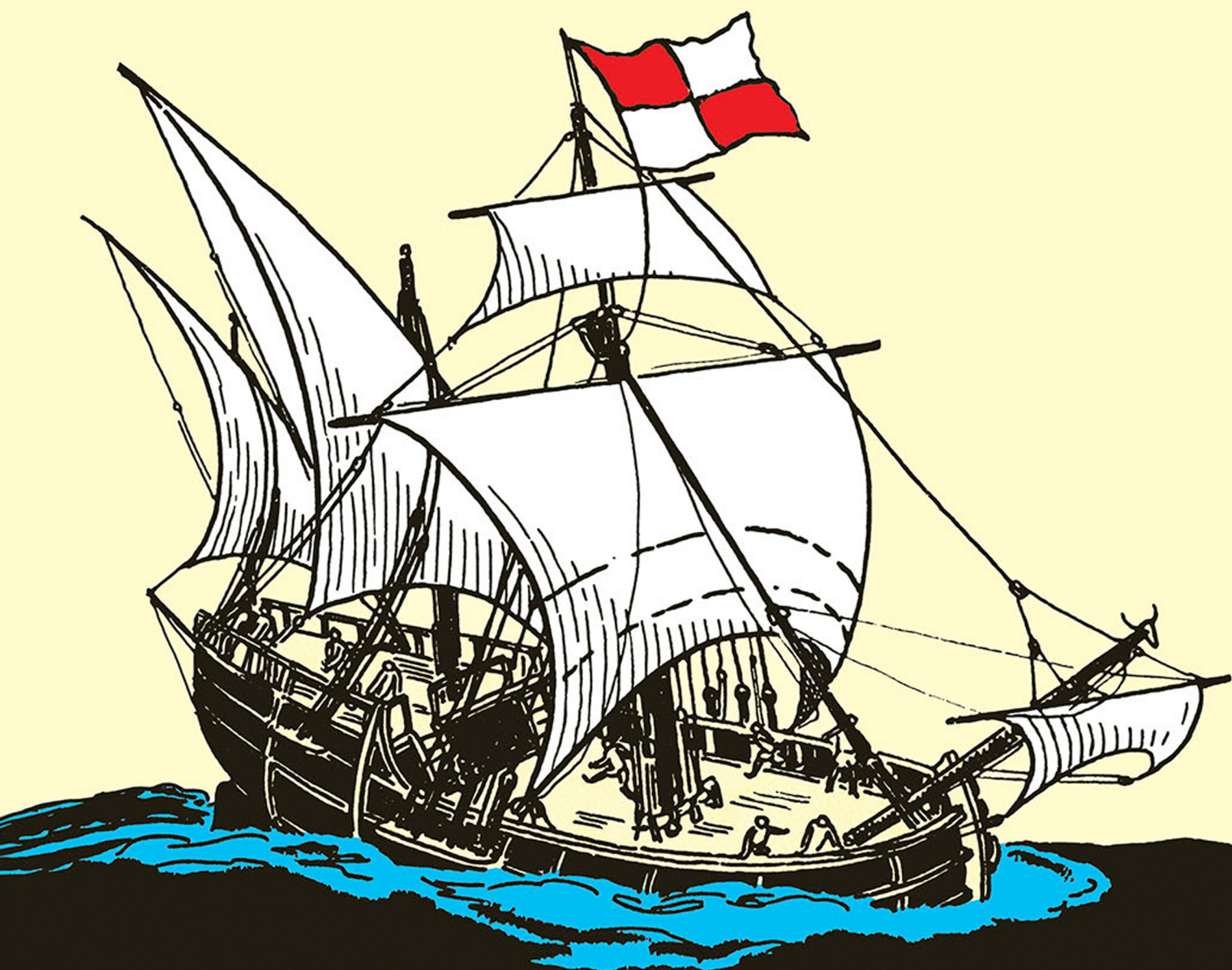


Christopher Columbus
**FIRST VOYAGE
TO AMERICA**

From the Log of the "Santa Maria"



NOTE TO THE DOVER EDITION

THE ORIGINAL COPY of the log of Columbus' first voyage to America, which would have been among the most priceless historical documents, has never been discovered. All we possess is an abridgment made a generation after the voyage. We possess it thanks to the labors of Bartolomé de las Casas (1474–1566), who made the abridgment¹ and used it as source material for his book *Historia de las Indias* (History of the New World), first published long after his death.

Las Casas left his native Spain for Hispaniola (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic) in 1502 and was ordained there in 1512 or 1513. Soon thereafter he became the foremost champion of the native people of the New World, who were mercilessly exploited by the Spaniards. Not only a humanitarian, Las Casas was also a major historian and proto-ethnologist.

It was Las Casas' *father*, Pedro de las Casas, who had known Columbus and had sailed with him on his *second* voyage. Bartolomé was a close friend of Columbus' *sons*. Aiding them in their suit against the crown for what they considered their rightful inheritance, he was given access to the family papers, including the precious log of the first voyage.²

The book reprinted here consists of a full translation (translator uncredited) of the Las Casas abridgment of the log through October 14, 1492. The log as we possess it, however, does continue through March 15, 1493 and the Admiral's return to Spain. The section of the present book beginning on page 11 ("Here Begin the Words . . . Addressed to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella") is an integral part (the opening) of the log, just as the section beginning on page 79 (" . . . the First Two Days in America") is an integral part of the log, following immediately upon the text on page 74. The illustrations created for the original 1938 edition of the present book are by John O'Hara Cosgrave II. New to the Dover edition, besides this Note, are the captions to the old illustrations from Columbus' letter, the table of contents and the page numbers.

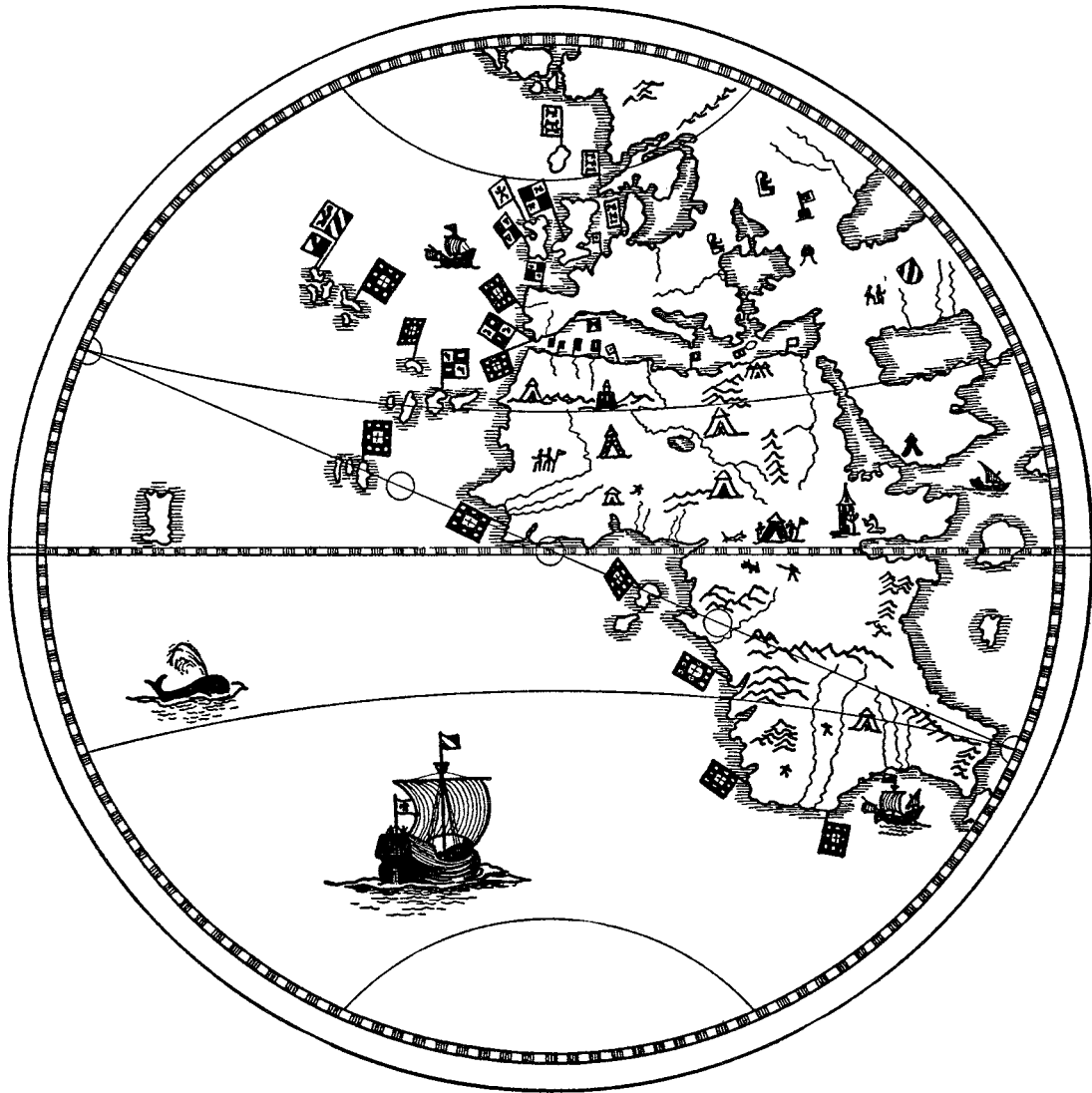
This book does not use Spanish accents. For the interested reader, the proper forms of the Spanish names herein (in order of appearance) are: *Santa María*, Saltés, Martín Alonzo Pinzón, *Niña*, Gutiérrez, Sánchez, Guanahaní and Yáñez.

¹Las Casas' autograph manuscript of the abridgment is in the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid. Its first publication (in Spanish) was in Martín Fernández de Navarrete's *Colección de los viajes y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los Españoles desde fines del siglo XV* (Madrid, 1825).

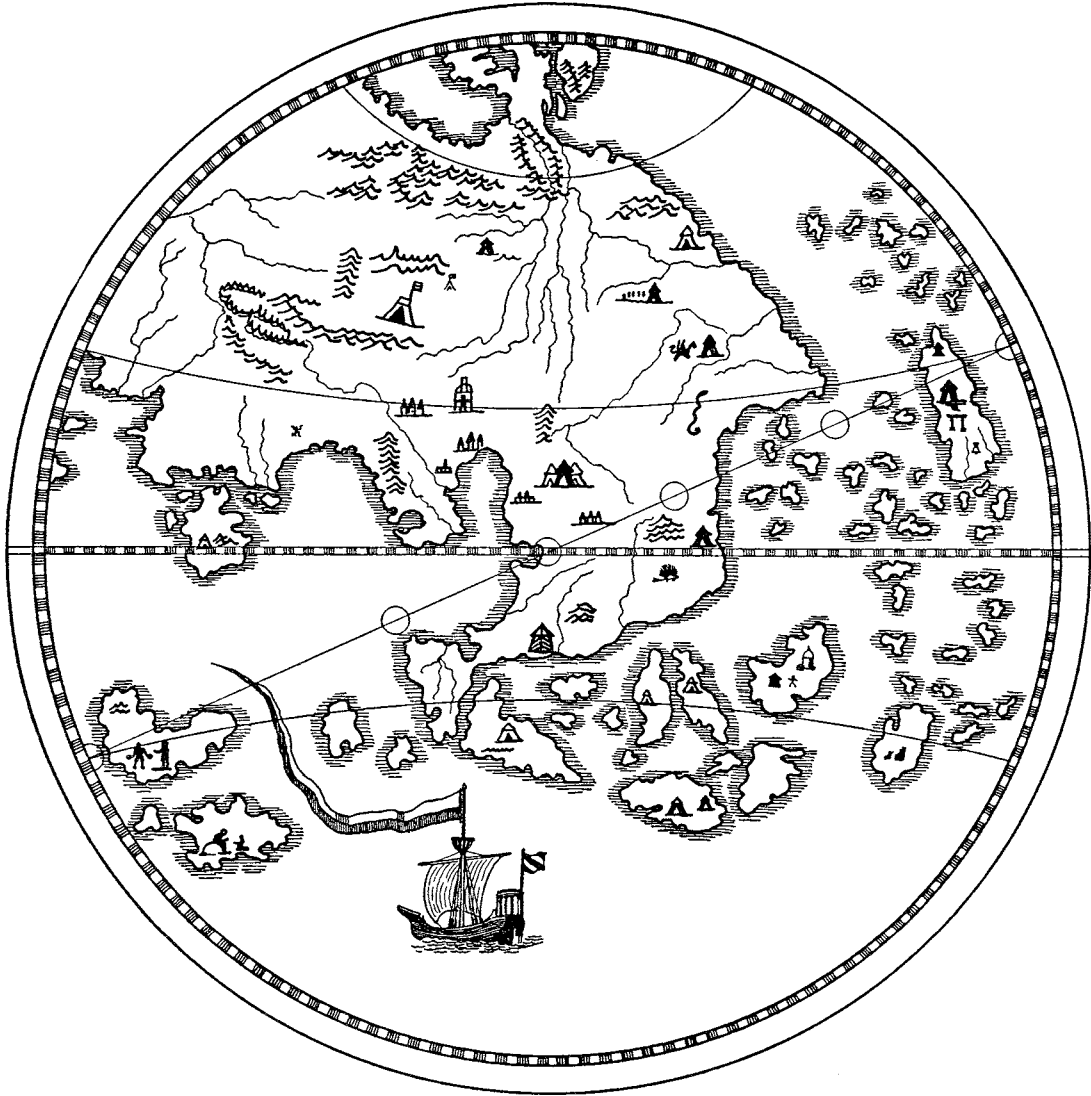
²The above information will indicate how many different errors or half-truths were contained in the original title of the present book, *The Log of Christopher Columbus' First Voyage to America in the Year 1492 as Copied Out in Brief by Bartholomew Las Casas, One of His Companions*: (1) Las Casas' name is mangled; (2) he was never a companion of Columbus; (3) the log as printed in the present book is not complete, but stops after October 14, 1492.

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MARTIN BEHAIM'S GLOBE



MADE IN THE YEAR 1490

Venient annis
Secula seris, quibus Oceanus
Vincula rerum laxet, et ingens
Pateat tellus, Tiphisque novos
Detegat orbis, nec sit Terris
Ultima Thule

*In the last days there will come
an age in which Ocean shall loosen
the bonds of things; a great country
will be discovered; another Tiphis
shall make known new worlds, and
Thule shall no longer be the extremity
of the earth.*

—SENECA: *Chorus to Medea*
[first century after Christ]

EVIDENCES OF LAND IN THE WEST

Martin Vincent, Pilot of the King of Portugal, relates that 450 leagues West of Cape St. Vincent, he picked up a log curiously carved, but not with iron, which had been brought there by a westerly wind.

Another carved fragment of wood which came from the West had been seen near Porto Santo by Pedro Correa, brother-in-law of Columbus.

Others reported "reeds of such bigness that a single joint would contain nine garrafas of wine." No such reeds grew in western Europe or Africa.

The inhabitants of the Azores related to Columbus that after a course of westerly winds the sea cast up pine trees which were not the growth of those parts, and at another time the sea brought the bodies of two men of strange race to the island of Flores. Still another time covered boats, or almadias, had been cast up on the shore.

HERE BEGIN
THE WORDS OF
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS,
HIGH ADMIRAL OF THE OCEAN SEA,
ADDRESSED TO KING FERDINAND
AND QUEEN ISABELLA

In the Name of Our Lord

JESUS CHRIST

Whereas, *Most Christian, High, Excellent and Powerful Princes, King and Queen of the Spains and of the Islands of the Sea, Our Sovereigns, in this year of Grace, 1492, after Your Highnesses had overthrown the powers of the Moors at the City of Granada, where in this present year on the second day of January, I saw the royal banners of your majesties planted by force of arms upon the battlements of the Alhambra, which is the fortress of that city, and saw the Moorish King come forth from the gates of the city and kiss the royal hands of Your Highnesses, and of my Lord the Prince; and in the present month, in consequence of the information which I had given Your Highnesses concerning the lands of India, ruled by a prince called the Grand Can, which in our language means King of Kings, and how he and his ancestors had often sent to Rome for learned men who might instruct him in our Holy Faith, and how the Holy Father had never complied, so that many believing in idolatry were lost to the doctrines of perdition; therefore, Your Highnesses, as Catholic Christians and defenders of the Christian Faith against the doctrines of Mohamet and all other idolatries, did*

THE LOG OF COLUMBUS

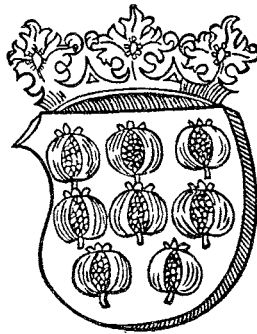
resolve to send me, Christopher Columbus, to these parts of India and to this prince and his people to learn their disposition and the proper means of converting them to the Christian Faith; and ordered that I should not go to the eastward as is customary, but by a westerly route, in which direction we have hitherto no certain evidences that anyone has gone.

Thus, after expelling the Jews from your domains in the same month of January, Your Highnesses ordered that I should go with sufficient fleet to this same part of India, and for that purpose most graciously elevated me to the title of Don, High Admiral of the Sea and perpetual Viceroy and Governor of all islands and continents that I should discover and gain both now and hereafter in the Ocean Sea, and that my son should succeed me and so on from generation to generation forever.

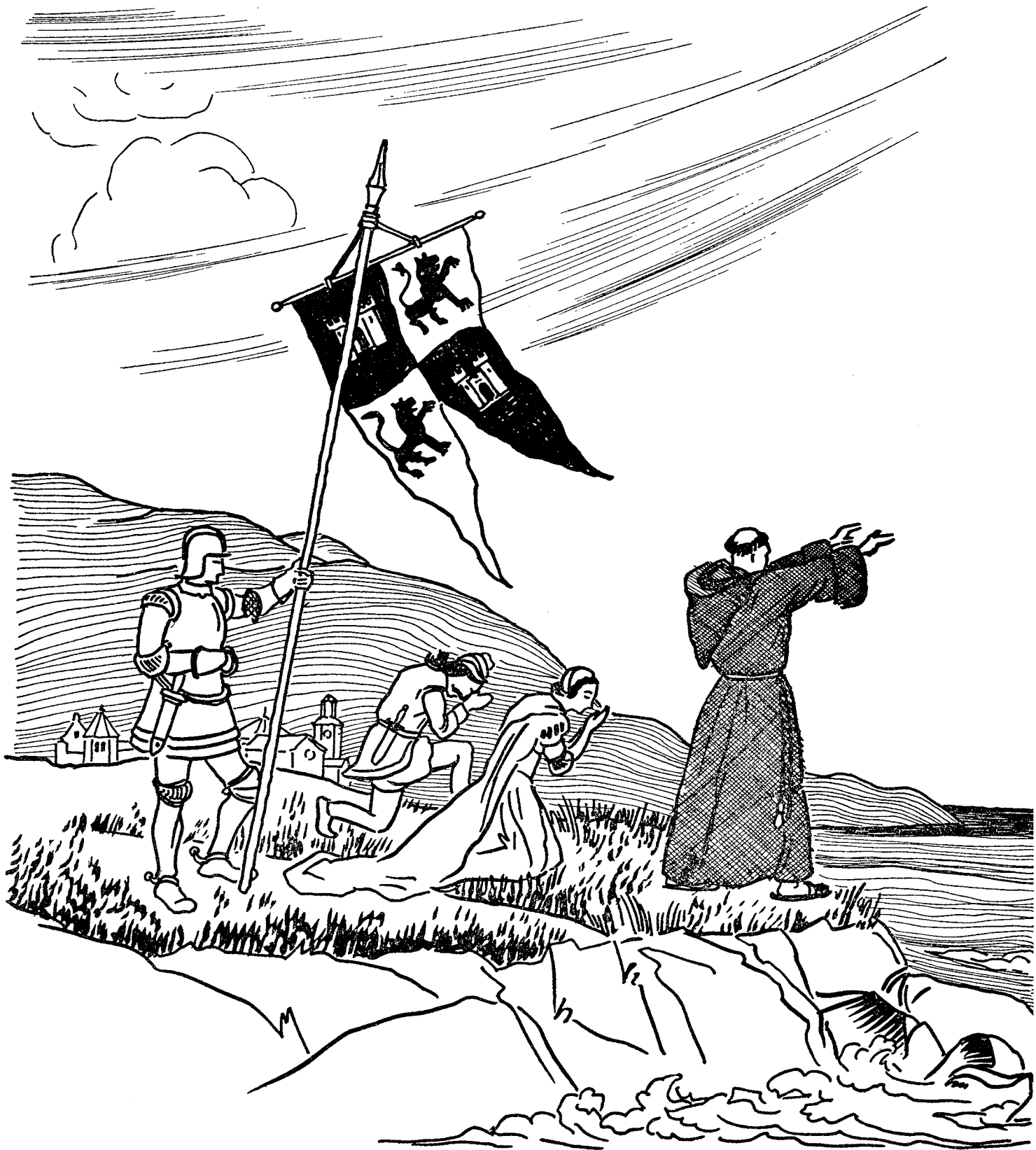
Hereupon, I left the city of Granada on Saturday, May 12, 1492, and came to the town of Palos which is a seaport, where I did arm three vessels for such enterprises; and departed from that port well supplied with provisions and with many sailors, on the 3rd day of August of the same year, being Friday, half an hour before sunrise. I steered for the Canary Islands of Your Highnesses, which are in the said Ocean Sea, that I might thence set out for the Indies to perform the embassy to the princes there, so as to comply with my orders. As

FIRST VOYAGE TO AMERICA

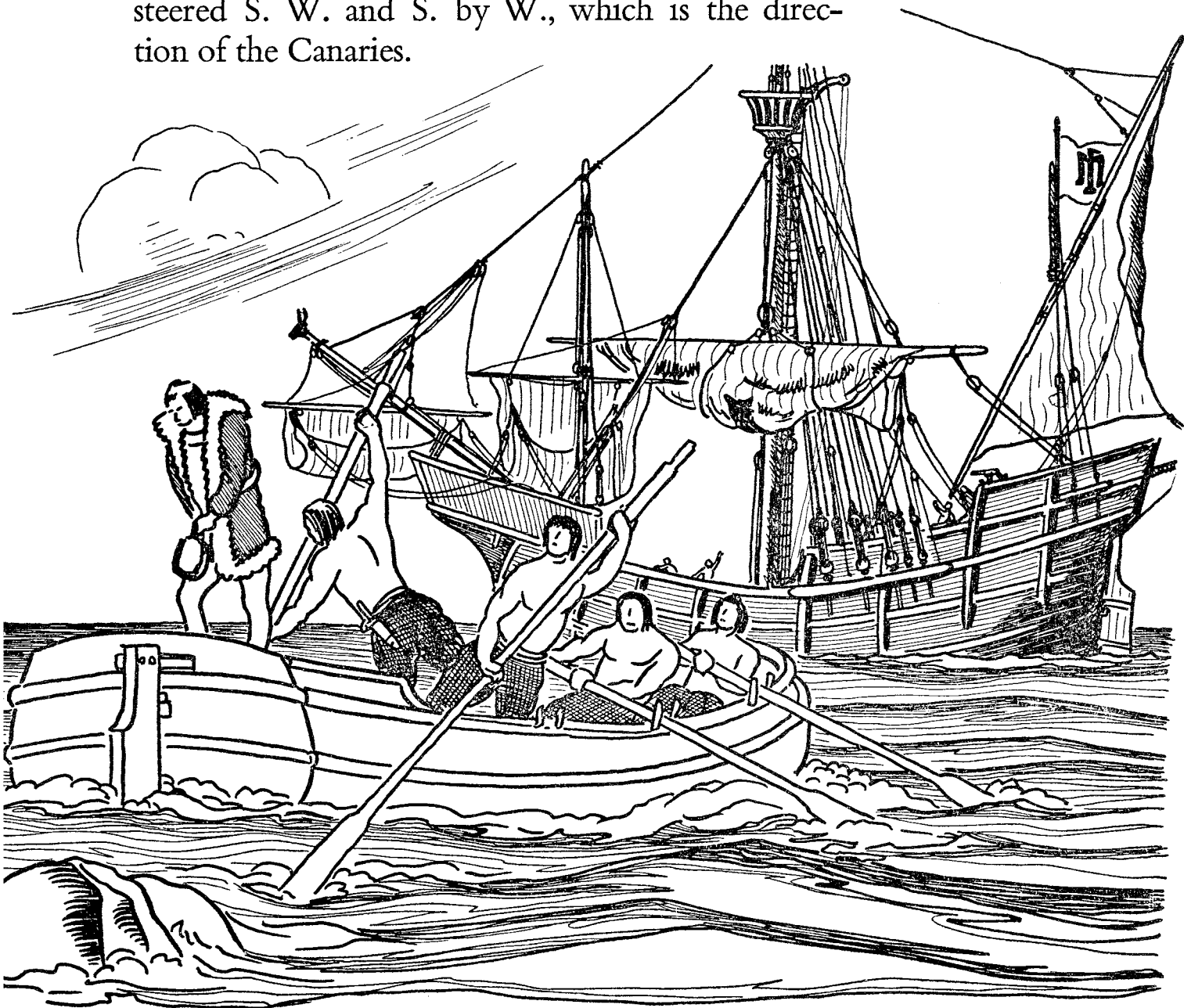
part of my duty, I thought it well to write an account of all the voyage most punctually, noting the happenings from day to day, as will hereafter appear. Moreover, I did resolve to describe each night what had passed in the day and to note each day how I had navigated at night. I intend to draw up a nautical chart which shall contain the several parts of the ocean and land in their proper situation; and also to compose a book to represent the whole by pictures with latitudes and longitudes, on which accounts it behooves me to abstain from my sleep and make many trials in navigation, which will demand much labor.



HERE BEGINS THE LOG OF
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS'
FIRST VOYAGE TO AMERICA,
AS COPIED OUT IN BRIEF

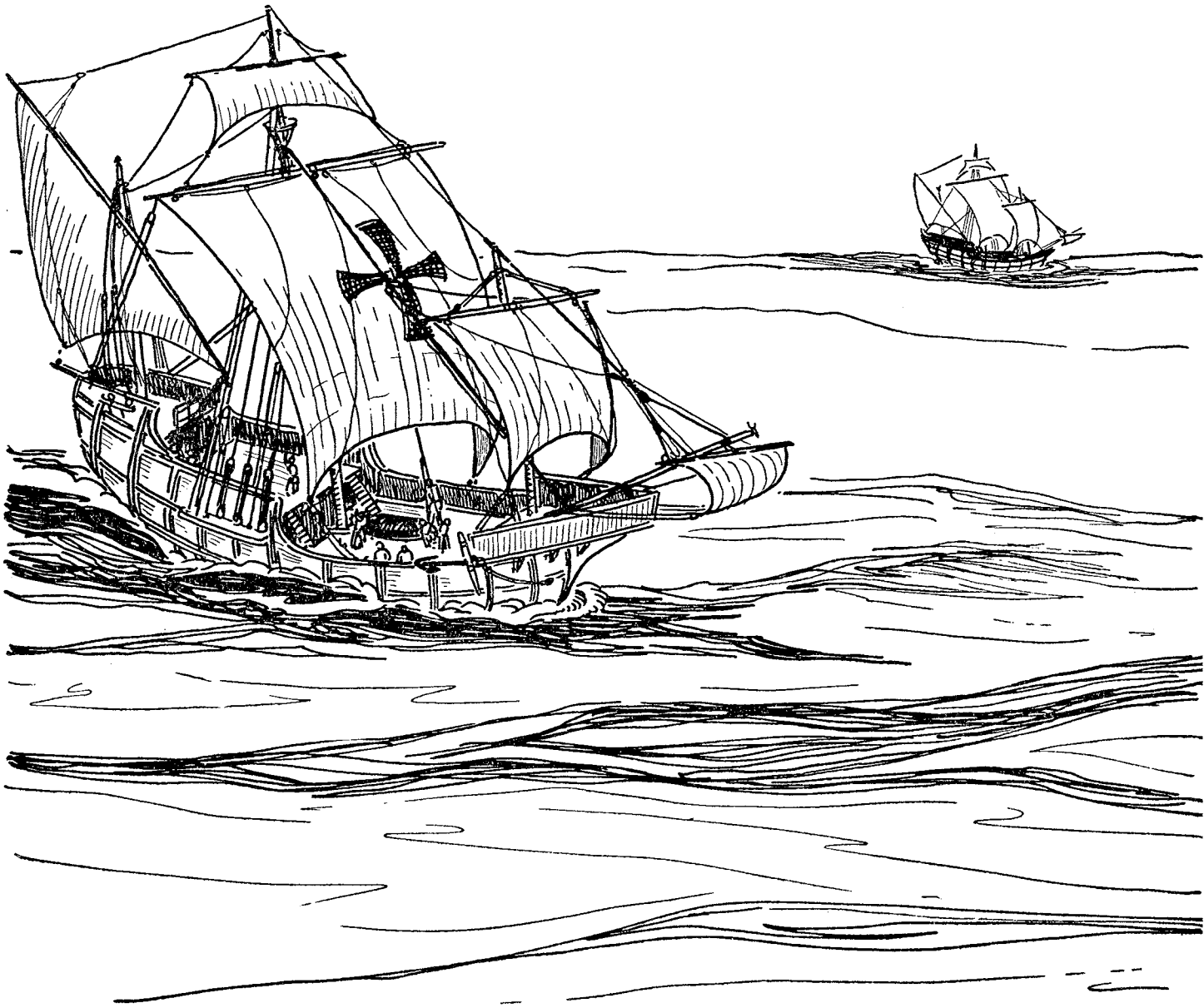


SET SAIL from the bar of Saltes at eight o'clock *Friday*
and sailed with a strong sea breeze till sunset *August 3, 1492*
towards the south for fifteen leagues. Afterwards
steered S. W. and S. by W., which is the direc-
tion of the Canaries.



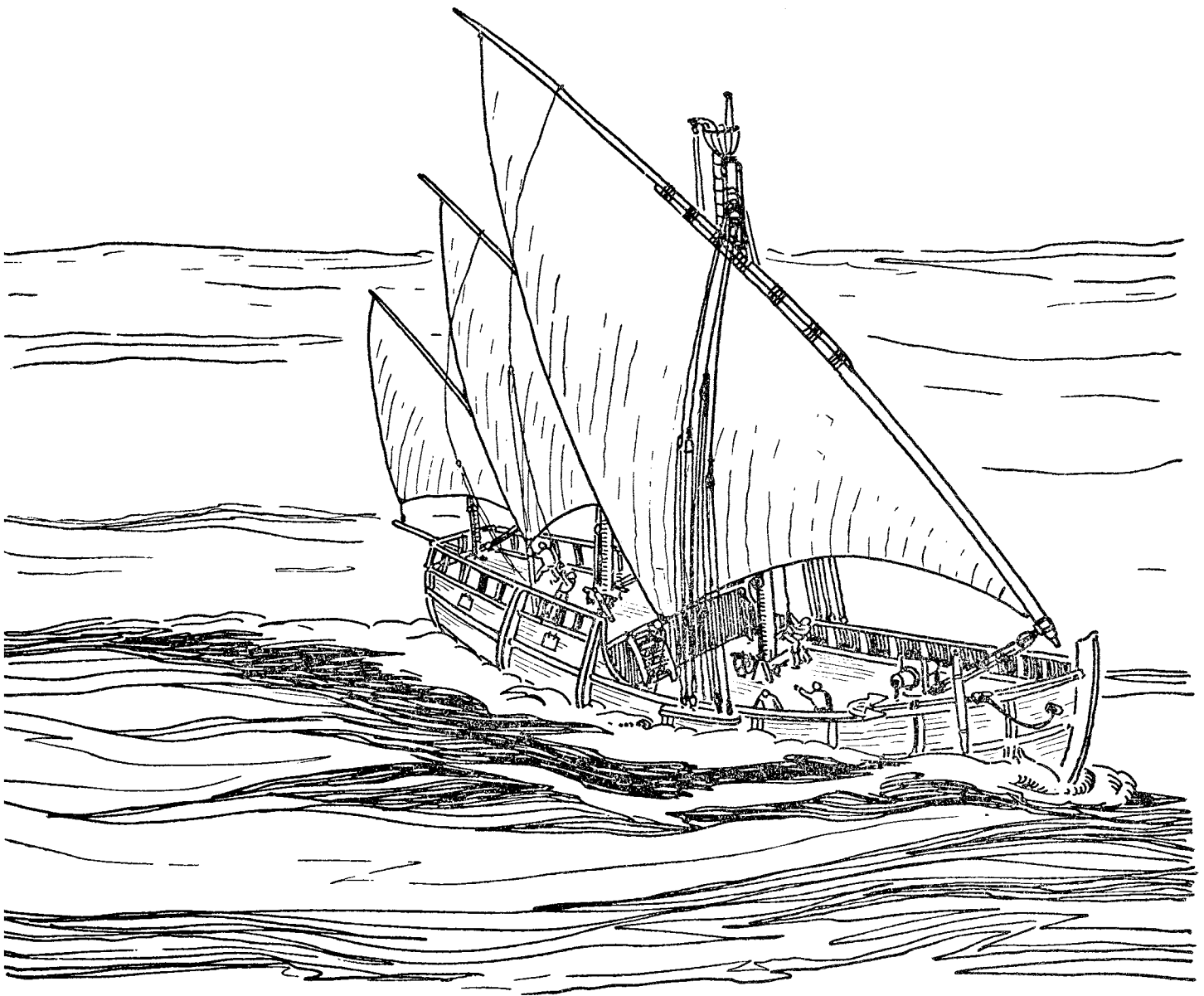
THE LOG OF COLUMBUS

Saturday Steered S. E. by S.
August 4, 1492



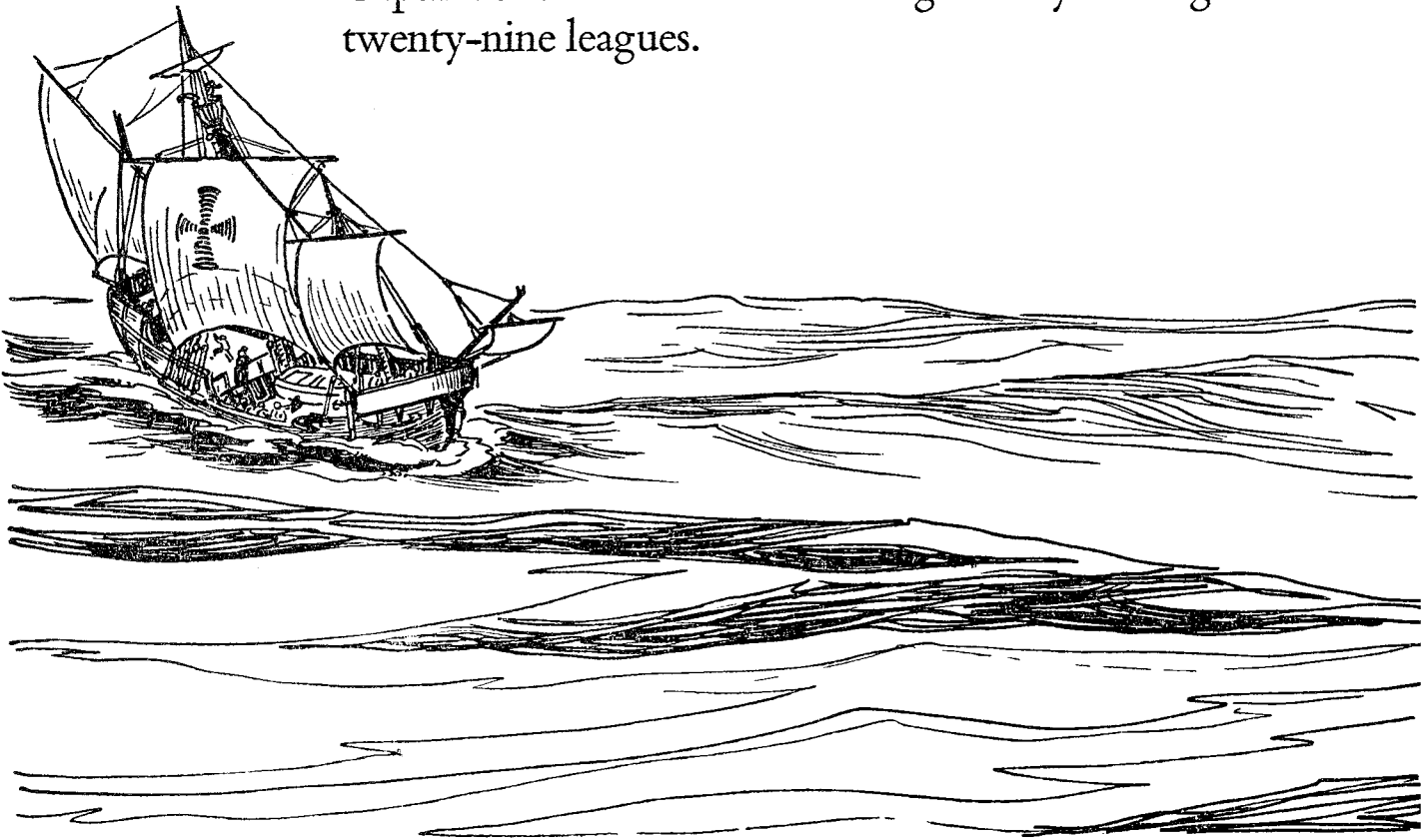
FIRST VOYAGE TO AMERICA
Sailed day and night more than forty leagues.

Sunday
August 5, 1492



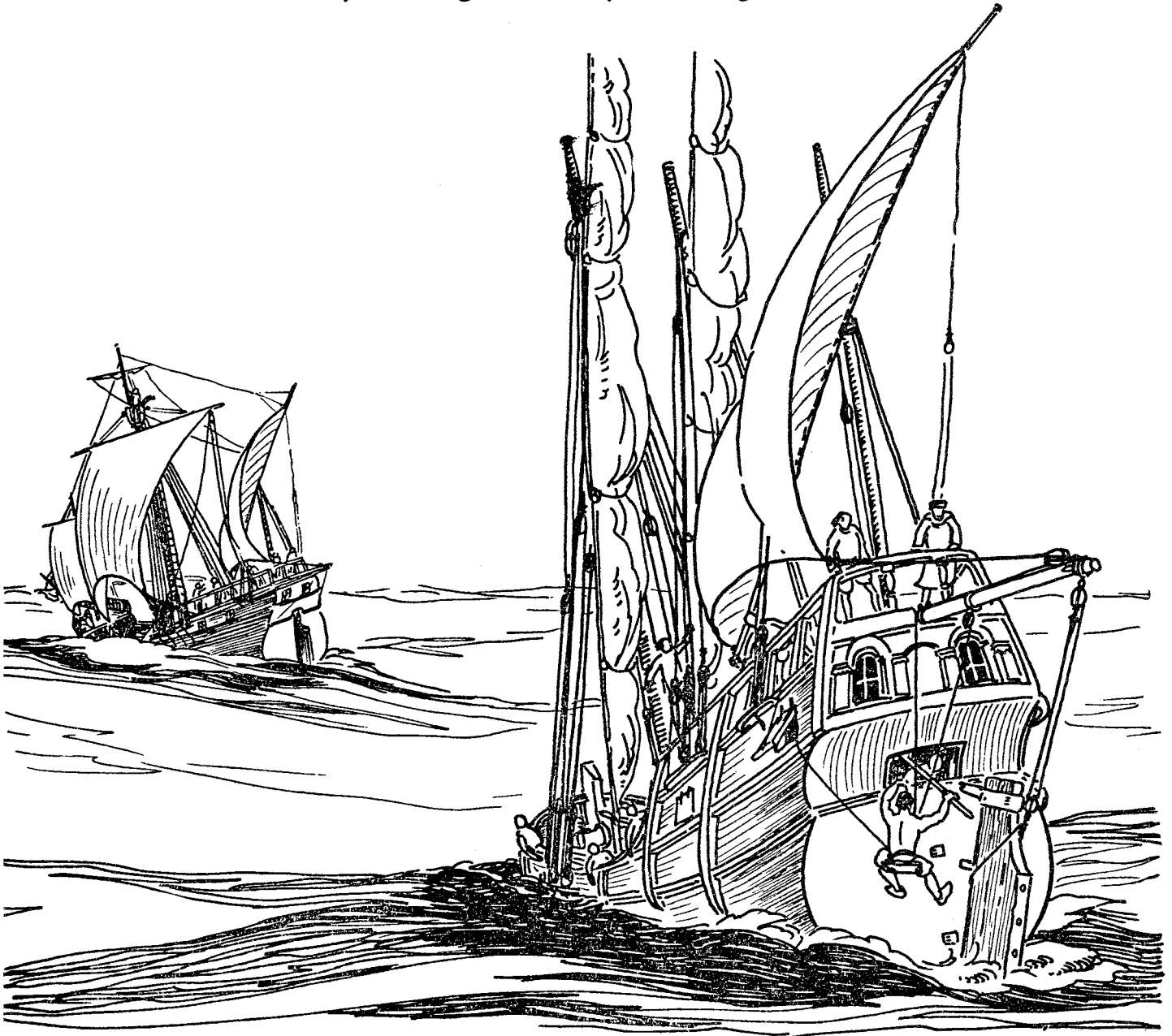
THE LOG OF COLUMBUS

Monday
August 6, 1492 The rudder of the caravel Pinta became unshipped making the steering most difficult. It was suspected that this had been planned by Gomez Rascon and Christopher Quintero, to whom the caravel belonged, for they dreaded to go on the voyage. The Admiral says that before setting out these men had been inclined to oppose and "pull holes," as they say. The Admiral was much disturbed at not being able to help the Pinta without danger, but he says he was somewhat quieted when he thought how brave and energetic a man was Martin Alonzo Pinzon, Captain of the Pinta. Made during the day and night twenty-nine leagues.



FIRST VOYAGE TO AMERICA

The Pinta's rudder again broke loose. Secured it, and *Tuesday*
made for the island of Lanzarote, one of the Cana- *August 7, 1492*
ries. Sailed, day and night, twenty-five leagues.



THE LOG OF COLUMBUS

Wednesday
August 8, 1492

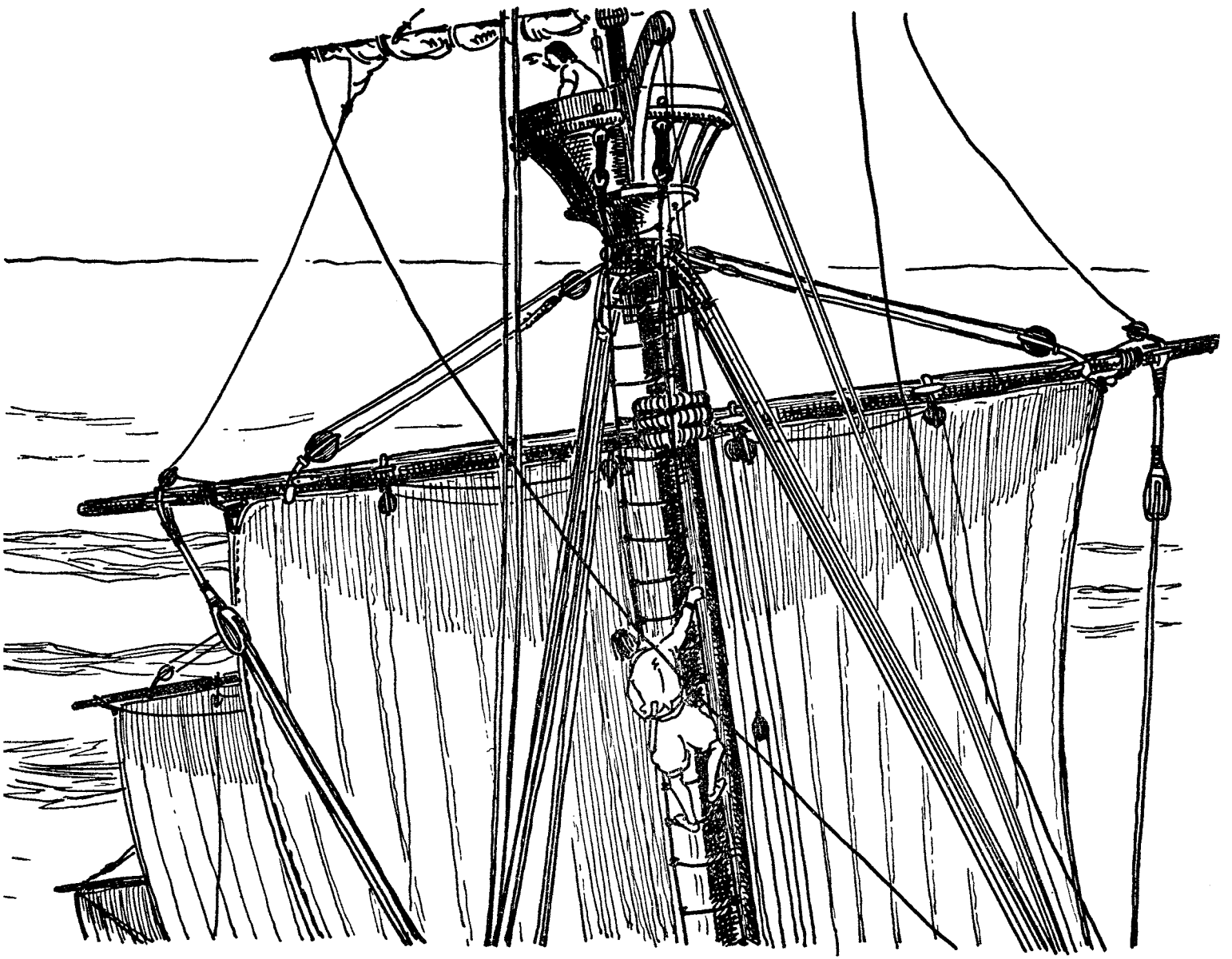
There were differing opinions among the pilots of the three vessels as to their true situation, but that of the Admiral proved to be nearer the truth. He was anxious to go to Grand Canary in order to leave the caravel Pinta there, since she was steering badly and making water, and he wished to secure another vessel if one were to be found. They were unable to reach the island that day.



FIRST VOYAGE TO AMERICA

The Admiral was not able to reach the island of Gomerá till Sunday night. Because the Pinta could not be navigated, Martín Alonzo remained at Grand Canary by command of the Admiral.

*Thursday
August 9, 1492*

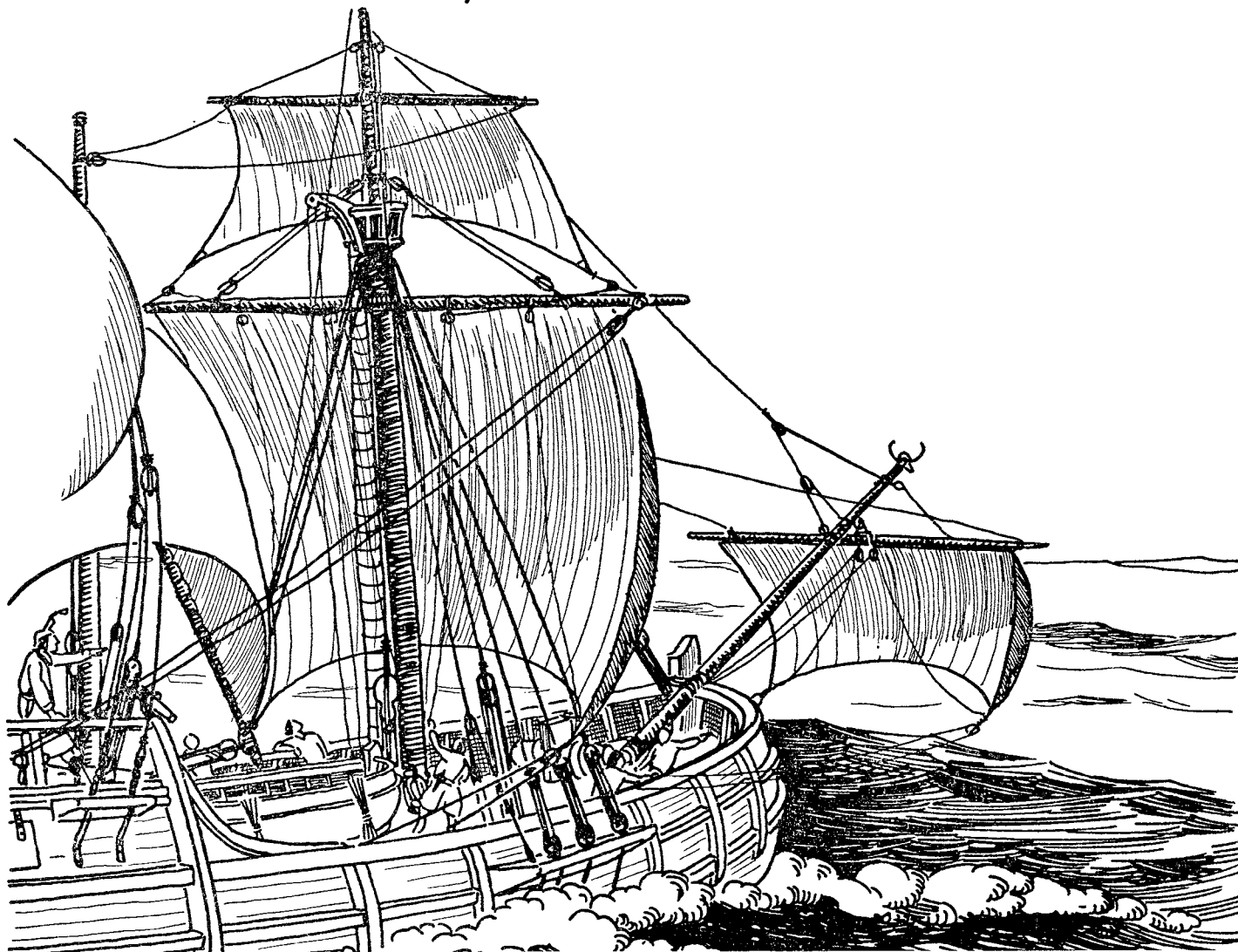


*Twenty-one days
August 10–31, 1492*

HERE THE VOYAGE IS INTERRUPTED
WHILE THE PINTA IS
REPAIRED



The Admiral returned to Grand Canary and there with great labor and the help of Martin Alonzo and the others repaired the Pinta. Rigged her with square sails instead of the lateen sails that she had carried before. Finally sailed to Gomera.



FIRST VOYAGE TO AMERICA

Saw great flames of fire burst from a high mountain
on the island of Teneriffe.

Saturday
September 1, 1492



THE LOG OF COLUMBUS

Three days
September 2-4, 1492

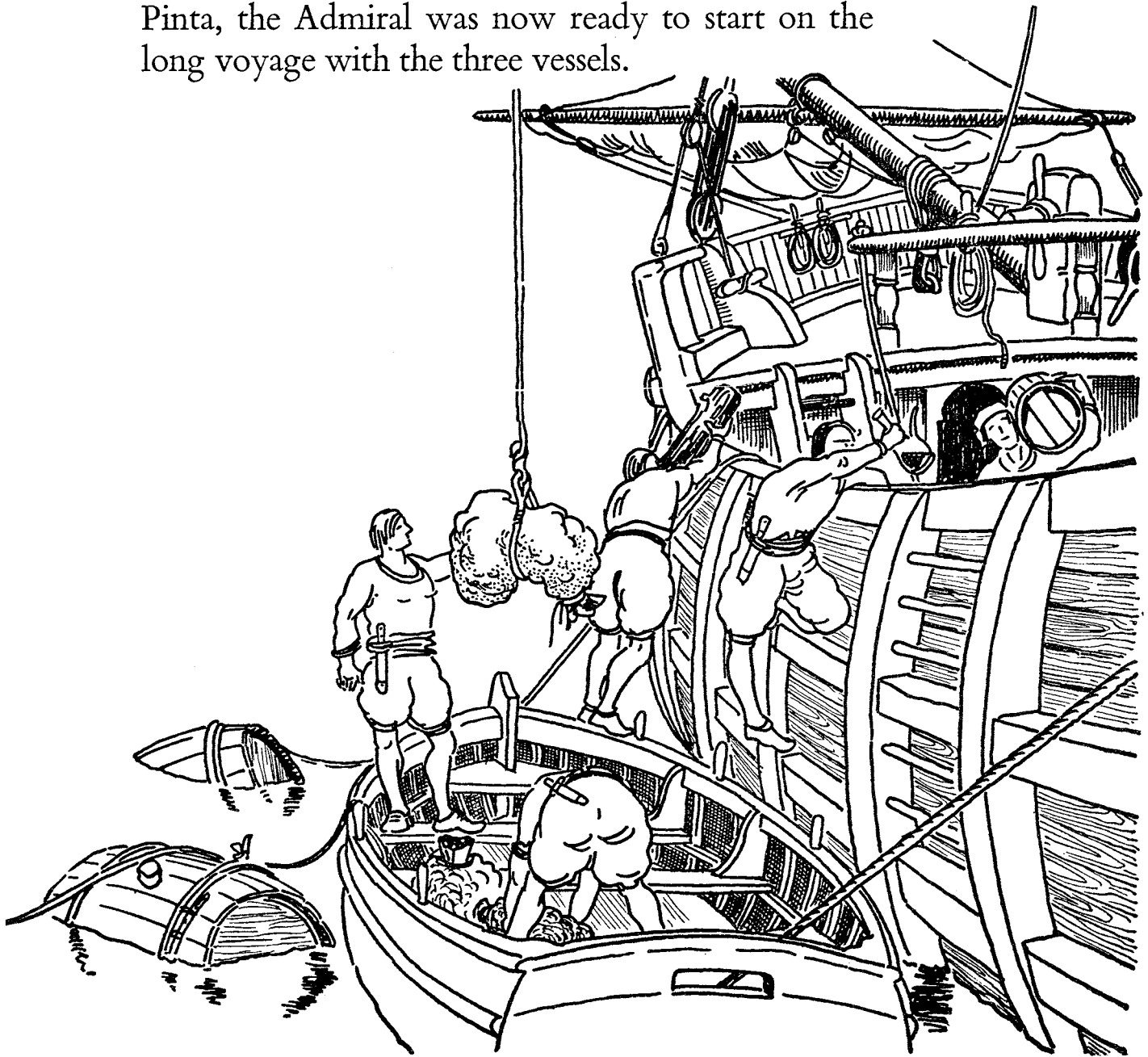
Returned to Gomera with the Pinta repaired. The Admiral says that many honorable Spanish gentlemen, inhabitants of the island of Hierro, declared that every year they saw land to the west of the Canaries. And others, natives of Gomera, confirmed the same on oath. The Admiral here says that he remembers, while he was in Portugal in the year 1484, that a man came to the King from the island of Madeira to beg for a caravel to search out this land that was seen. This man swore that it could be seen every year and always in the same way. The Admiral also says that he remembers that the same lands of the same shape and size and in the same direction had been seen by the inhabitants of the Azores.

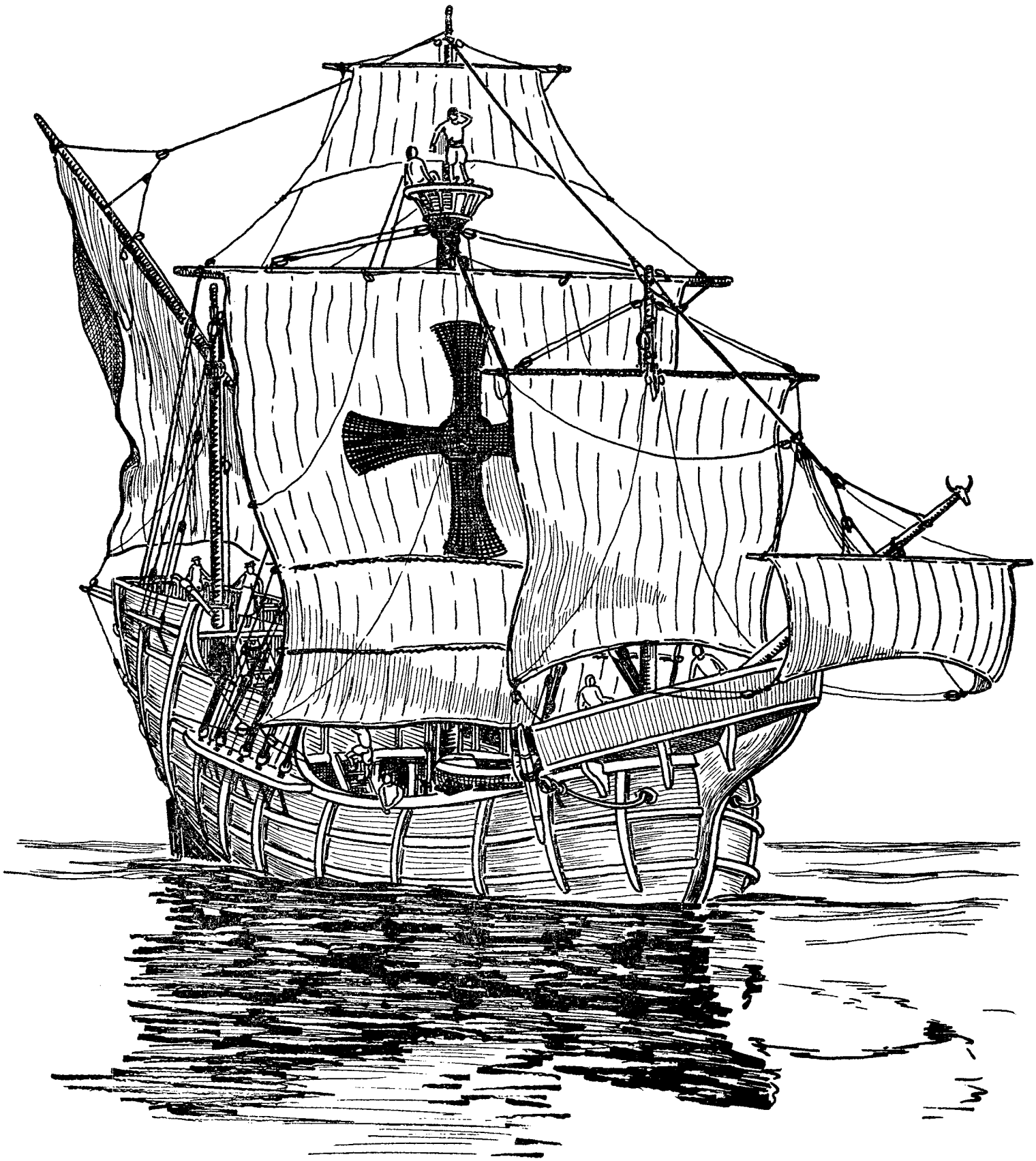


FIRST VOYAGE TO AMERICA

After taking in wood, water, meat, and other provisions which had been provided by the men left on shore when he went to Grand Canary to repair the *Pinta*, the Admiral was now ready to start on the long voyage with the three vessels.

Wednesday
September 5, 1492



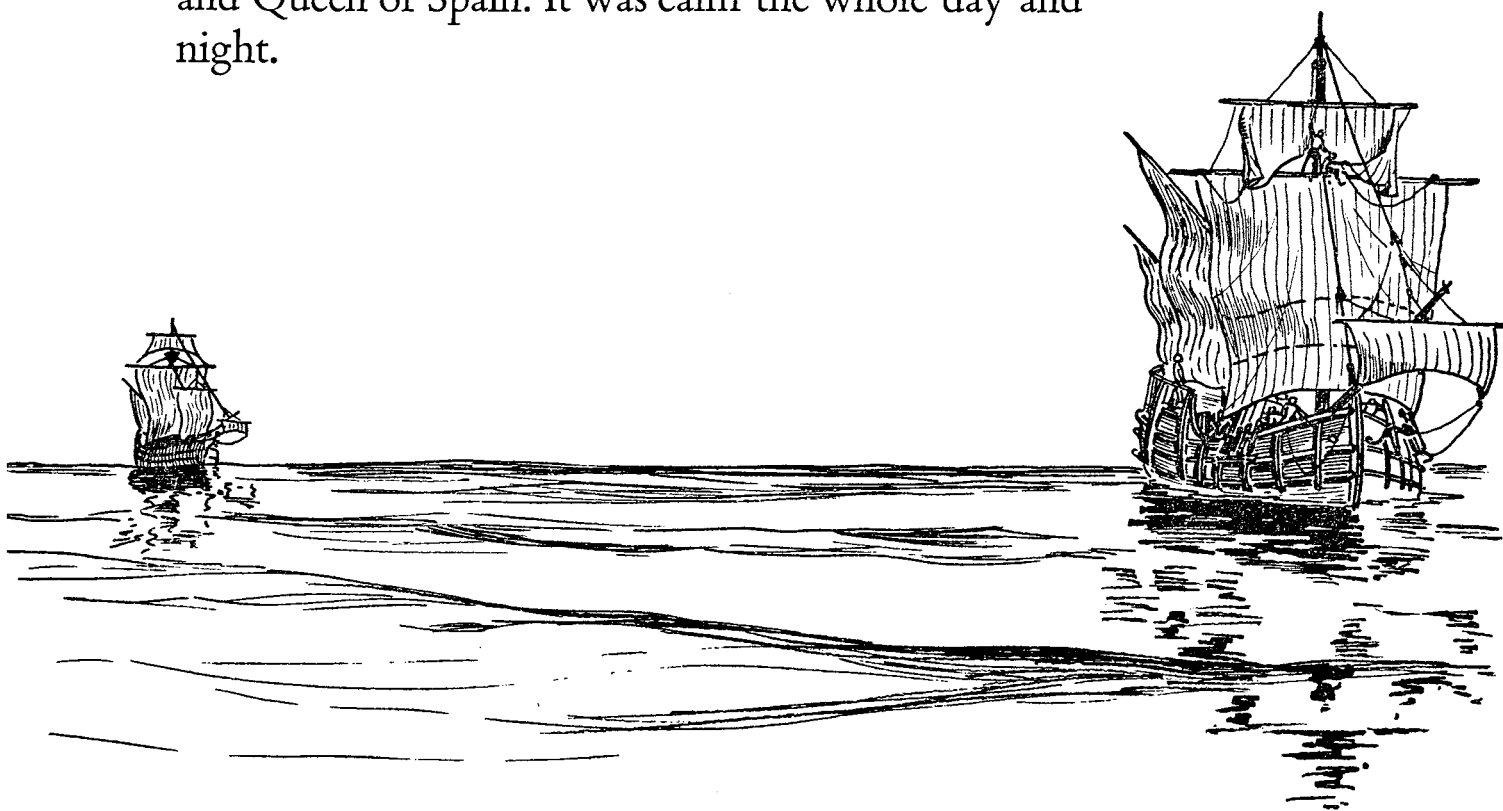


HERE BEGINS THE LONG VOYAGE
INTO UNCHARTED
WATERS



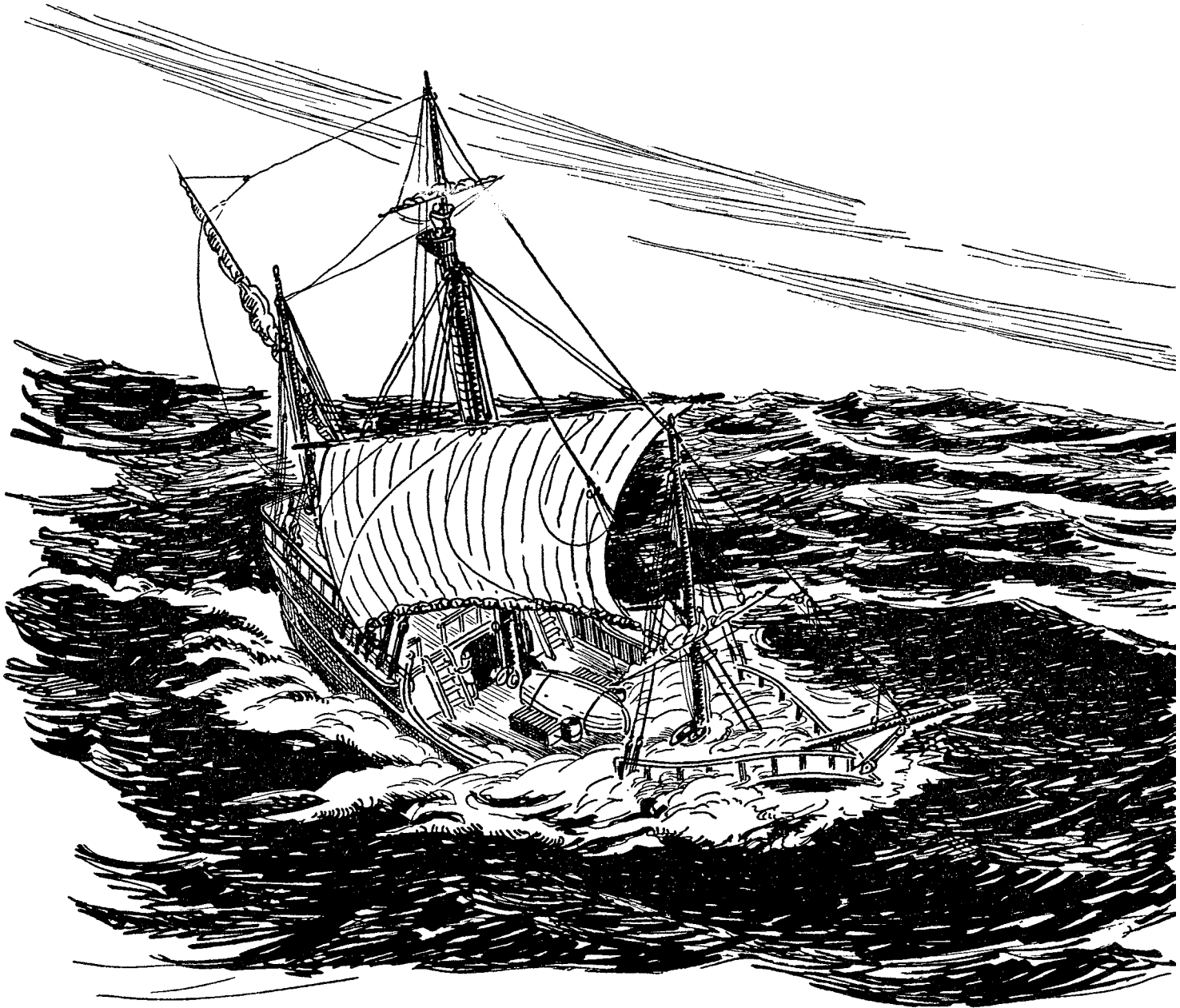
SET SAIL from the harbor of Gomera this morning and shaped the course for the voyage. The Admiral learned by a vessel from the island of Hierro that there were three Portuguese caravels cruising about with the object of taking him—this must have been the result of the King of Portugal's envy that Columbus should have gone to Castile to the King and Queen of Spain. It was calm the whole day and night.

Thursday
September 6, 1492



THE LOG OF COLUMBUS

Friday In the morning were between Gomera and Tener-
September 7, 1492 iffe. All Friday and Saturday until three o'clock at
night, becalmed.



FIRST VOYAGE TO AMERICA

Three o'clock at night it began to blow from the N. E. Shaped the course to the West. Shipped much sea over the bows which made progress slow. Day and night went nine leagues.

Saturday

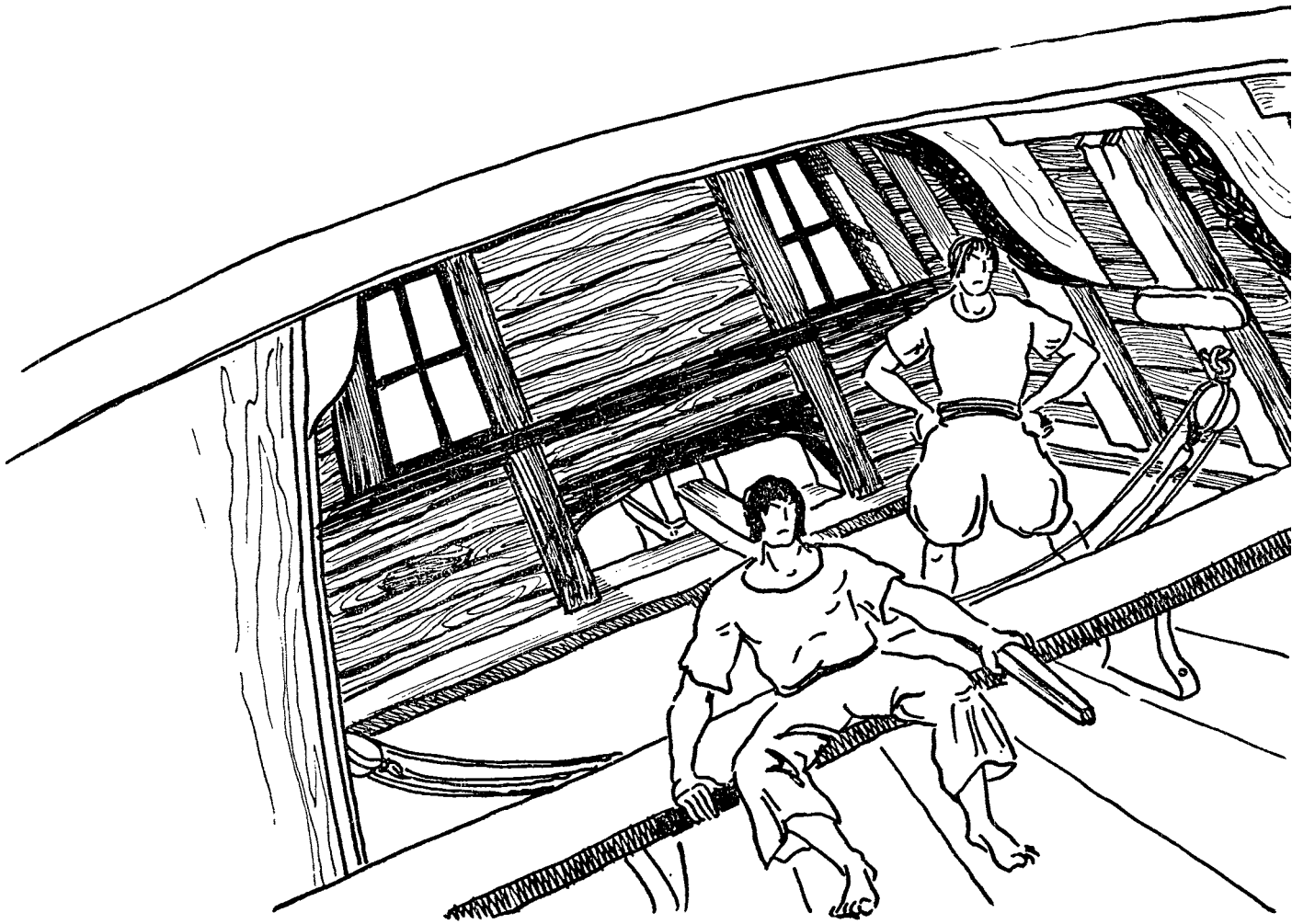
September 8, 1492



THE LOG OF COLUMBUS

Sunday
September 9, 1492

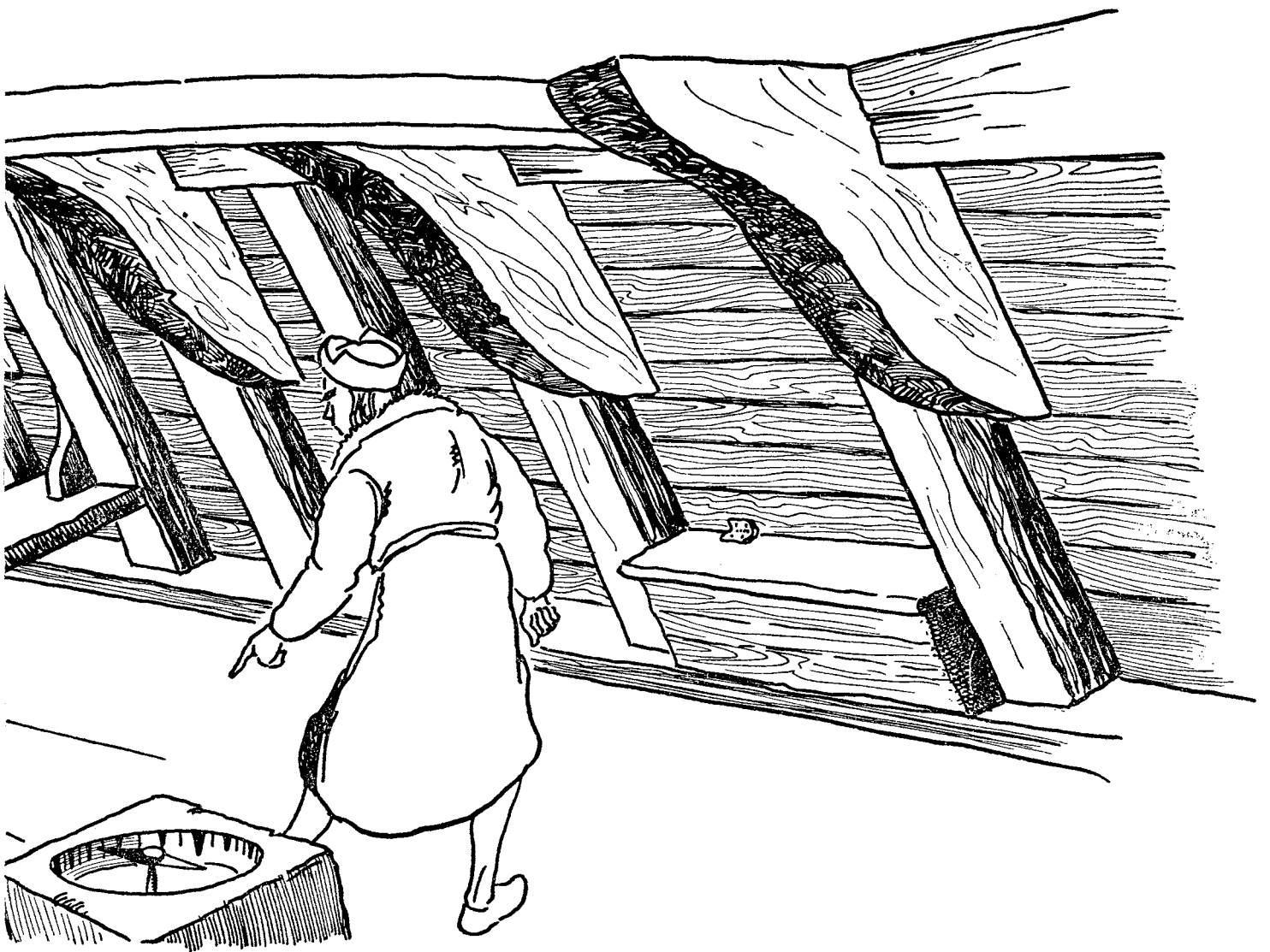
Sailed this day nineteen leagues, and determined to count less than the true number, that the crew might not be dismayed if the voyage should prove long. In the night sailed thirty leagues at the rate of ten miles an hour. The sailors steered badly, letting her fall away to the N. E. even to half a point; concerning this the Admiral many times rebuked them.



FIRST VOYAGE TO AMERICA

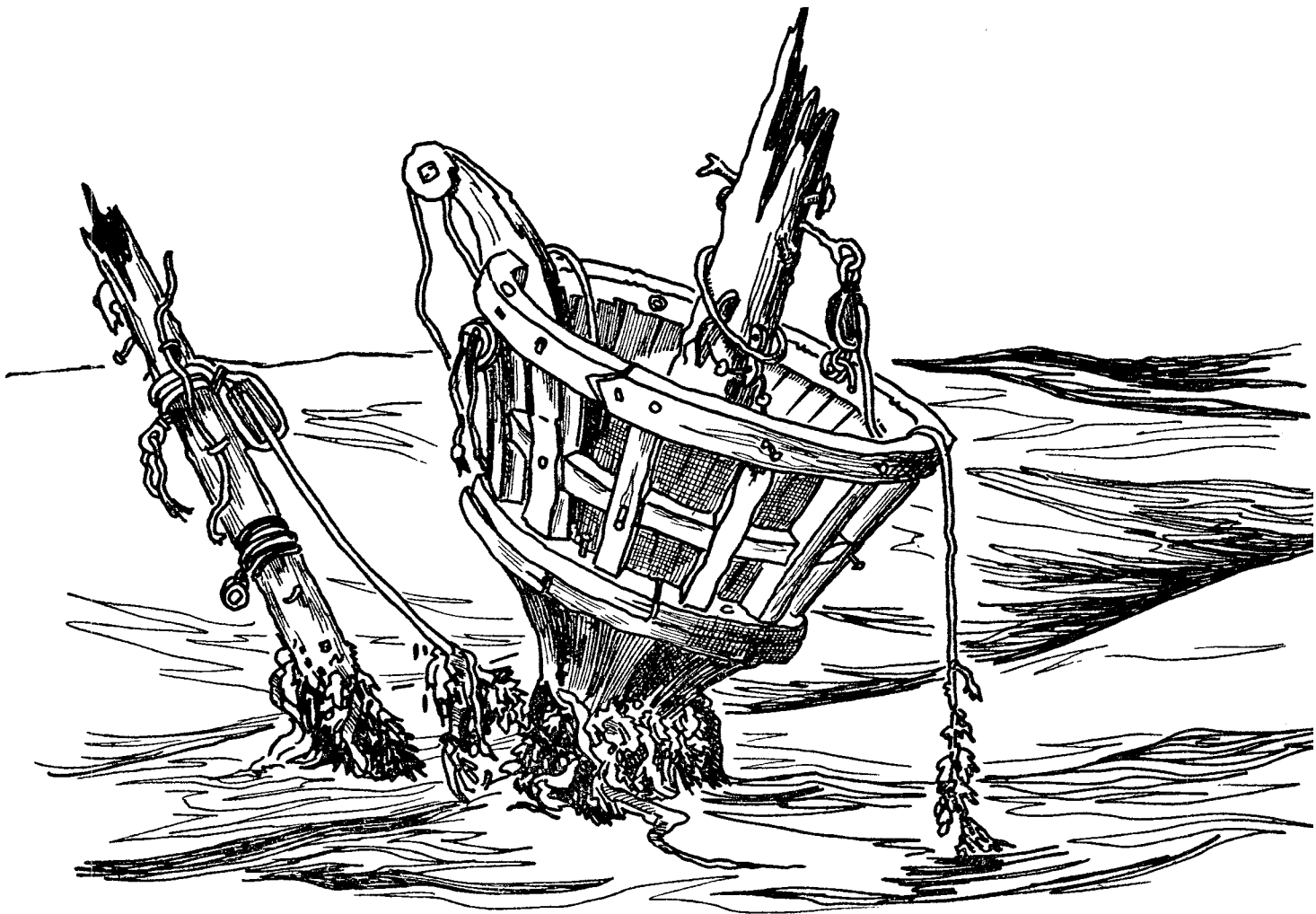
This day and night sailed sixty leagues at the rate of ten miles an hour. Reckoned only forty-eight leagues, that the men might not be terrified if they should be long upon their voyage.

*Monday
September 10, 1492*



THE LOG OF COLUMBUS

Tuesday Steered a course W. and sailed above twenty leagues.
September 11, 1492 Saw a large fragment of the mast of a vessel, apparently of a hundred and twenty tons, but could not pick it up. In the night sailed about twenty leagues, and reckoned only sixteen, for the reason already given.



FIRST VOYAGE TO AMERICA

From the Log of the “Santa Maria”

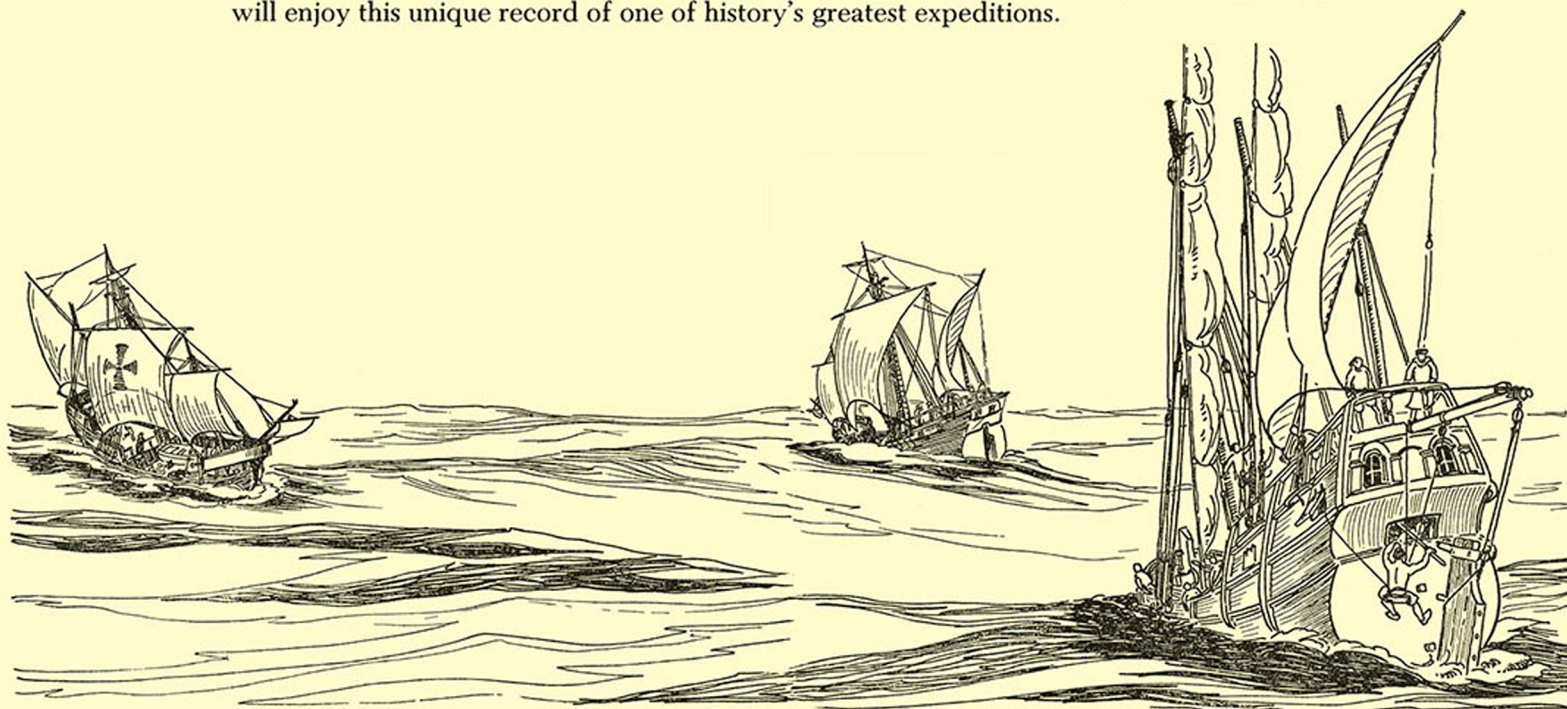
Christopher Columbus

On Friday, August 3, 1492, a half hour before sunrise, three ships slipped out of the harbor at Palos, Spain. It was the beginning of one of the great sea voyages of history—an attempt to reach the East Indies by sailing westward around the globe. The three ships were the *Niña*, the *Pinta* and the *Santa Maria*. The leader of the expedition, of course, was Christopher Columbus.

Although Columbus did not achieve his original objective, he accomplished something even greater—the discovery of the New World, a virtually unknown continent. His achievement is chronicled in this fascinating document, an abridgment of the ship’s log (the original has never been discovered) made a generation later by Bartolomé de las Casas (1474–1566), whose father had sailed with Columbus on his second voyage.

The log brings vividly to life the day-to-day experience of being aboard a ship sailing into the unknown. As the weeks dragged on, the crew became frightened and discouraged and wanted to turn back. Fortunately, Columbus was able to reassure the men and they sailed on. After nearly six weeks at sea, the crew reported seeing terns and other land-based birds. In the days following they sighted more birds, river weeds, crabs and other signs that their journey was near an end. Finally, on the morning of October 12, 1492, a lookout spied land—an island in the Bahamas. This edition of the log concludes here with the appearance of natives who welcomed Columbus and his men as messengers from heaven.

Forty-four illustrations, including a number from rare sources, enhance this absorbing text, translated into English and set into large type for young readers. However, readers of all ages will enjoy this unique record of one of history’s greatest expeditions.



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