

SAYS COLUMBUS WAS FAKER LIKE DR. COOK

Henry Vignaud Brands Discoverer of America as Impostor and Humbug.

PARIS, April 1.—Simultaneously with the erection of a colossal statue in honor of Christopher Columbus at Buenos Ayres will be published here Saturday two volumes of a work by Henry Vignaud, first secretary of the American embassy, in which the discoverer of America is branded an impostor and a humbug and placed in a class with explorers like Dr. Cook.

Mr. Vignaud retired from the American embassy two years ago and has since devoted his entire time to the completion of a study of Columbus, which has consumed in all fifty years. The author is now 81 years of age. He is celebrated as a historian and was recently consulted by the pope when it was proposed to canonize Columbus. At that time Mr. Vignaud showed that the explorer was anything but a saintly man.

In his study of Columbus Mr. Vignaud undertakes to prove the explorer's

discovery of America was not the result of his own genius; that the expedition was not based upon scientific data, but that Columbus actually learned of the existence of America from an ignorant sailor who had been there ahead of him. In a word, that America was discovered long before Columbus ever organized his expedition, and that he merely took the credit from another man unknown to history.

The story that Toscanelli wrote a letter to Columbus inclosing a chart showing the route across the Atlantic, and that it was with this in hand that Columbus started out to find the new world, is disposed of by Mr. Vignaud. He declared the Toscanelli letter was a forgery perpetrated possibly by Columbus himself, but more probably by the explorer's brother, Bartholomew Columbus.

Mr. Vignaud says that in 1871 a copy of the forged letter was found in a blank page of a book once the explorers' property. This is undoubtedly in Columbus' writing, says Mr. Vignaud. A fac simile of the document is published in Mr. Vignaud's work. Mr. Vignaud further undertakes to prove the map used by Columbus could not have come from Toscanelli because it contained exact information which no amount of scientific thinking could have adduced, but which could only have been learned from actual experience.

Mr. Vignaud says that Columbus not infrequently acted in a manner which renders it possible to suspect him of deception. He says that the explorer concealed the lowness of his origin; that he boasted that he was descended from other admirals by the name of Columbus, though it had been discovered that the men in question were not even of his nationality, one being a Greek and one a Frenchman, that he boasted of having served under King Rene of Anjou, while modern critics prove that he did not; that he often referred to wonderful voyages he made in his youth, while facts show these statements to be wholly untrue.