



Prince Henry the Navigator : The Hero of Portugal and of Modern Discovery (Illustrated)

C. Raymond Beazley

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This volume aims at giving an account, based throughout upon original sources, of the progress of geographical knowledge and enterprise in Christendom throughout the Middle Ages, down to the middle or even the end of the fifteenth century, as well as a life of Prince Henry the Navigator, who brought this movement of European Expansion within sight of its greatest successes. That is, as explained in Chapter I., it has been attempted to treat Exploration as one continuous thread in the story of Christian Europe from the time of the conversion of the Empire; and to treat the life of Prince Henry as the turning-point, the central epoch in a development of many centuries: this life, accordingly, has been linked as closely as possible with what went before and prepared for it; one third of the text, at least, has been occupied with the history of the preparation of the earlier time, and the difference between our account of the eleventh-and fifteenth-century Discovery, for instance, will be found to be chiefly one of less and greater detail. This difference depends, of course, on the prominence in the later time of a figure of extraordinary interest and force, who is the true hero in the drama of the Geographical Conquest of the Outer World that starts from Western Christendom. The interest that centres round Henry is somewhat clouded by the dearth of complete knowledge of his life; but enough remains to make something of the picture of a hero, both of science and of action.

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