

much that was ephemeral, there is combined the vital principle of all human history, — Does man, under God, suffice for himself? Can he justify his own intellect? — can he self-govern his own life? — this was their great problem through all their studies. Doubtless, they did not know whither their own theories ultimately led; doubtless, they, too, attempted to set limits to faith and to science; but, with all that can be said against them, there they stand, — the ferrymen plying between ancient and modern civilization, bringing over to us the most precious products of distant times, and teaching us how to start in our new career.

The long and painful preparatory efforts of Columbus to interest the old world in his project, would seem almost to be permitted, in order to prove the inefficiency of the age he was to electrify on his return from the first voyage.

He besought Genoa and Venice for a ship or two, to find his world, and they refused him; he petitioned the wise kings of Portugal and England, and they refused to risk a single sail in such a quest; he sojourned long about the courts of France and Spain, appealing to the wisdom of the wise, the judgment of the learned, the ambition of the brave, and the avarice of the acquisitive; but he argued, appealed, petitioned in vain! No one believed in his theory, or hoped in his adventure. Nay, the wise smiled scornfully, the learned laughed in their academic sleeves, and even the brave had no stomach for