

of our river and coasting vessels. Only one of them was decked. The others were open, save at the prow and stern, where cabins were built for the crew. The sailors went unwillingly and in much fear—compelled by an order from the King. With such ships and such men Columbus left the land behind him and pushed out into these unknown waters. To him there were no dangers, no difficulties—God, who had chosen him to do this work, would sustain him for its accomplishment. He sailed on the 3rd of August 1492. On the 12th of October, in the dim light of early morning, he gazed out from the deck of his little ship upon the shores of a new world. His victory was gained; his work was done. How great it was he himself never knew. He died in the belief that he had merely discovered a shorter route to India. He never enjoyed that which would have been the best recompense for all his toil—the knowledge that he had added a vast continent to the possessions of civilized men.

The revelation by Columbus of the amazing fact that there were lands beyond the great ocean, inhabited by strange races of human beings, roused to a passionate eagerness the thirst for fresh discoveries. The splendours of the newly-found world were indeed difficult to be resisted. Wealth beyond the wildest dreams of avarice could be had, it was said, for the gathering. The sands of every river sparkled with gold. The very colour of the ground showed that gold was profusely abundant. The meanest of the Indians ornamented himself with gold and jewels. The walls of the houses glittered with pearls. There was a fountain, if one might but find it, whose waters bestowed perpetual youth upon the bather. The wildest romances were greedily received, and the Old World, with its familiar and painful realities, seemed mean and hateful beside the fabled glories of the New.

Europe then enjoyed a season of unusual calm—a short respite from the habitual toil of war—as if to afford men leisure to enter on their new possession. The last of the Moors had taken his