

Pales. Never had hero such wretched tools wherewith to work. Let us look at him as he embarks. He has under his command three small vessels, the crews in all numbering about 120 men, most of them pressed into the service, all hating it, and expecting no other issue than death in such a mad venture. With heavy hearts and dreary forebodings they bade adieu to their friends. The three ships, called *caravels* in the language of the day, were of the poorest description, about 50 or 70 tons burden, not much better than our river craft: two of them with oars and no deck—crazy, leaky, scarcely sea-worthy. In these frail craft, with nothing but compass and quadrant to guide him, with sullen, terror-stricken, disheartened crews, our hero has to brave the Atlantic's billows, and penetrate the shoreless, unexplored waste of water, darkness and danger before him, faithless, cowardly hearts around, and no alternative to success but failure, scorn and dishonour. Courage, brave heart! Thou hast need of all thy patient fortitude and stern resolve. Thou art alone—no sympathising soul with thee; “the beating heart of this great enterprise.” and wanting thee it falls in ruins. These black billows, leaping madly under pressure of the tempest's wing, thou hast to tame and make helping ministers to bear thee on. These rude winds, pursuing their wild revels from pole to pole, thou hast to watch and render subservient to thy designs. With strong hand and resolute heart, thou hast to beat down mutiny, rebuke cowardice, and rouse the weak and timid. Courage, my hero! The invisible calls thee; the voice that errs not whispers in thine ear; thy triumph gleams over the blank ocean from afar, beckoning thee onward. Bravest of ocean rangers, thou art greater than all this tumultuous world of waters around thee, with thy strong heart and trust in God!

Never in this world's history was there a grander sight than that of Columbus, with his little *caravels*, sailing boldly to the west. See him as he paces the deck, resolute of heart, his white hairs tossing in the wind, his eyes kindling with the fires of faith and hope; his resolution inexorable as doom. See him, as “fortune's full sail strains onward,” blessing the heaven-sent breezes that waft him away from the habitations of civilized men, and bear him into the unknown; reckoning up with grateful heart, each hour, the increasing leagues that separate him from Spain. Vigilant, cheerful, joyous, triumphant at times, he is ready for any emergency: his quick eye takes in every movement, marks every change. Onward the crazy *caravels* career over the waves—mere specks upon the waters—far beyond the bounds where the most daring have ever ventured before; onward they glide, and still the brief word to the helmsman is “westward.” Is it wonderful that the terrified sailors begin to collect in groups on the deck, and to whisper their suspicions that their captain is wholly mad, or a reckless desperado, to carry them into these abysses, provisions failing, and hope of return each day lessening? Or that their muttered threats of throwing him overboard and returning to Spain are heard? But, somehow, a glance from that calm, clear eye quells the mutinous spirits; and as the commanding voice thunders out orders, they reluctantly obey. But what new horror is this that is whispered round the decks with white lips? Their only guide, the compass, begins to forsake them; and, for the first time, points no longer to the Polar Star, in this region of terrors, but declines to the north-west! Surely the reckless commander will now turn back! But no!—onward, “westward” still. And now they enter that portion of the ocean called afterwards the Saragossa Sea, covered with sea-weed, looking, to the frightened sailors, like a vast inundated meadow. There is little wind, and the clotted masses of sea-weed seem likely to