

Asia, and Credulity in Europe, — it was then, that Columbus turned his piercing vision towards the West.

Domestic slavery existed very generally through Europe. The lords of the soil exacted the services, lives, and the very honor, of their serfs. The serf was chained to his district and predestined to his profession. There was no freedom of will, or mind, among the populace. A few trading towns had, indeed, wrung chartered privileges from their sovereigns, but these privileges were confined to the class of master workmen, who held in servitude the great body of the citizens and apprentices.

Chivalry had lost its charm, and was obsolete. The age of Commerce, which was felt to be approaching, was looked for exclusively in the East; so that, even in the knowledge of its own wants, Europe was in error.

Two great facts of this century precede Columbus, and only two. The science of government was being studied carefully in Italy, France, and Spain, and the science of reasoning in the great colleges, since called universities. The fall of Constantinople, in 1453, sent the learned of the East for refuge into Italy, and new classic schools began to assume a regular existence at Rome and Florence, Bologna and Ferrara.

While these mental possessions were beginning to accumulate in Europe, in the wisdom of Providence, a New World was about to become a sharer in their diffusion.

Let us be just to the European thinkers of those days. With much that seems absurd in the “schoolmen,” and