

In that fifteenth century it had not occurred to the boldest scientific adventurer to conceive of the possibility of men who were not of the race of Adam. Speculative philosophy and science were, indeed, venturing boldly on many novel courses; yet St. Augustine's demonstration, which had satisfied the men of the fourth century of the impossibility of antipodes, was reproduced with undiminished force to those of the fifteenth century: since to assert the existence of inhabited lands on the opposite side of the earth, and beyond impassable oceans, would be to contradict the Bible, by maintaining that the world was occupied in part by nations not descended from Adam. From this it naturally resulted that when, in spite of such demonstration, antipodes were discovered; and an inhabited continent had been explored beyond the Atlantic, presenting to the gaze of the Old World social and political institutions, arts, and sciences, the growth of unknown centuries of progress: the only question discussed was, from what centre of the Eastern hemisphere were those derived? Egypt, Phœnicia, Carthage, India, China, Spain, Denmark, Ireland, and Wales, each found its advocates: The lost Atlantis of Plato and Seneca; the Ophir of Solomon; the nameless Atlantic islands of Hanno, Pharaoh-Necho, and other early explorers; 'the sanctuary of the lost Ten Tribes; the Vinland of Leif Ericson; the Huitramannaland of the Norse rovers from Iceland; and the western retreat of Madoc, son of Owen Gwyneth, King of North Wales: have all been sought in turn, and have stimulated the ingenious fancy of sanguine explorers among the traces of America's unwritten history.

That nations, possessed of language, arts, and government, were in occupation of America, was proof enough that the human race—the unity of which was then unquestioned,—had diffused itself into the western hemisphere; and this idea presented itself at first in a less startling form, from the belief, in which Columbus died, that only a new route had been opened up to eastern Asia. The conviction of ancient intercourse between the eastern and western hemispheres, fostered by such means, has accordingly furnished fruitful themes for speculation, almost from the first landing of Europeans on the American continent. Exaggerated resemblances have been traced out in the arts and architecture of Mexico and Peru to those of Egypt and India. Their hieroglyphics and picture writing have been hastily pronounced to be the undoubted offspring of those of the Nile. Philological resemblances, astronomical chronology, and religious rites, have all been