

## DISCOVERY BY COLUMBUS.

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To the avarice of mankind, and the enterprise of the Portuguese, we owe the present abundance of the gold, the silver, the precious stones, the silks and the rich manufactures. To that same avarice we owe the discovery of the New World, the idea of whose very existence was for a long while held so absurd, that the love of gain itself could not prompt men to the undertaking, though the boldest navigator of all ages offered to risk his life and reputation in the attempt.

Christoval Colon, or, as he is commonly called, Christopher Columbus, to whom the high honor of this most important of discoveries is due, is generally held to have been a Genoese, though this has been disputed, and it has been alleged, on very plausible grounds, that he was an Englishman. Be that as it may, he was a navigator skilful and enterprising beyond his age, and a brave commander. Yet, at the age of forty, he was very little known to his compatriots. The idea of finding a new terrestrial hemisphere does not appear to have occurred to him, but, judging from the spherical form of the earth, he thought it practicable to reach the East-Indies by sailing directly west from Europe, an opinion that is evidently correct, supposing that our continent did not bar his progress. It seems singular that this idea never occurred to any one before him, and still more so that the most enlightened men of the age treated his proposals with contempt. As his means were small and the expenses of his enterprise must necessarily be great, he first submitted his views to the government of Genoa, in hope to obtain the requisite aid, but they were rejected as altogether chimerical. He next offered his service as an explorer of unknown regions to the court of Portugal ;