

victorious deed—the unity of action that swerves not from its purpose till it is fully realised—rarely exist but in the fancy of the dramatist. To struggle and be beaten back, and painfully renew the conflict; to gain a little by sore toil, and to be humbled at times by shameful failure; to stumble on, amid “broken lights” and foiled endeavours, and to die at last with a great hope burning in the soul, but unfulfilled,—this is too frequently the fate of humanity.

So it was with Columbus. He was truly one of earth's great ones, with less intermixture of human weakness and littleness than usually falls to the lot of mortal greatness. Not because he discovered a world is he to be reckoned great, for a fisherman driven westward in a storm might possibly have done that by accident; but because in the depths of his own soul he conceived the great idea that, by sailing westward into the unexplored abysses of ocean, he would reach land: and having struck out the daring project, he held to it with a grasp like that of gravitation, and accomplished it in spite of mountains of difficulties and yawning dangers, and all the obstacles that ignorance and stupidity could fling in his path. In realising his great design, he cheerfully sacrificed self, renounced ease and pleasure, chose laborious days and sleepless nights, and bore patiently the world's scorn, in order that he might benefit the world. This is the truest moral greatness. In itself, his work was great beyond all comparison. History has crowned him as the completer of the globe—the conqueror who threw open the gates of ocean, and subjected to us mighty realms; who scattered the dark phantoms that brooded over the watery abysses, and gave us the waves for our ships, and the greatest of the continents as a home for the crowded populations of Europe: laying open vast fields for human energy and enterprise, widening the thoughts of men, and enlarging immensely the materials on which they were to work. But great as was the man's work, the spirit in which he wrought was greater still. No ignoble motive animated the heroic soul of Columbus; no base, selfish end led him on to victory. His enthusiasm was pure and profoundly religious. He believed himself to be marked out by Heaven to perform a high, spiritual work—to open up new realms, then blind and pagan, before the onward march of christianity. In the profoundest depths of his being dwelt the conviction that he was God's appointed minister for a mighty, beneficent purpose to the race of man. He read this in the solemn whispers of his own solitary soul, and also in the pages of the Bible, of which he was a diligent student. In its far-reaching prophecies he saw the shadow of that future whose curtain he was to raise. It was this faith in the invisible that scattered all doubt, and enabled him to see “the land that was very far off.” This infused a solemn enthusiasm into his soul, cast out doubt and fear, gave a lofty dignity to the whole man, made him a poet in feeling and thought, and marked his actions with sublimity and energy. This firm conviction, that he was God's appointed servant, enabled him to front a scoffing, opposing world with his cherished thought, and to brave difficulty and danger on its behalf. And when envy and malice pursued him, and he was sent back in chains from his own New World, and an old age of poverty, disease and neglect became the lot of the world's benefactor, this faith sustained him still, and enabled him to depart in the calm consciousness of having accomplished a noble deed, leaving a priceless legacy to the world, and to after ages the memory of a heroic, religious soul, who faithfully served God and man. Among all his noble qualities, therefore, the profound religiousness of his nature stands foremost. According to the light he had, he was under all circumstances a devout, worshipping man. On whatever new soil he landed, his first act was to worship