

And so thro' all these years the New World lay unknown, watching for ships from the eastward, waiting to be discovered, a grand opportunity for any man, a grand reward for even a king.

He saw an opportunity. How did he see it? Born of humble parents, encompassed by scanty means, educated only in the rudiments of letters and of science, and living in an age so near the close of the Dark Ages that Europe itself was only just awaking from her sleep, what could you expect of him? But tho' born of low degree, he was a genius. Tho' surrounded by difficulties, he possessed heroic courage. And his education, scant and imperfect tho' it was, worked upon his imaginative mind like a charm and filled him with zeal for more learning. And besides he loved the sea, and having once set sail upon its waters he was possessed of a passion for geographic knowledge. And tho' he must study in the hard school of life to acquire it, yet no task was too hard to attempt. And thus for years he labored on towards a self-appointed end, which, people said, was but a fancy.

He saw an opportunity. What did he do with it? He had dreamed of a great possibility. He had studied the facts of nature till he knew it must be a reality. And now that it needed but the proving to the world he resolved that he would do it.

But he was not in a position to accomplish it alone. So after years of labor he thought to secure the patronage of royalty. But the people laughed, the sages scoffed at his theory, and the royal courts turned him away. He asked for aid, he received rebuke. But still undaunted by adversity he labored on to convince men of the truth. Passing from one court to another, persisting at each one so long as there was hope, for ten years he toiled without reward, he hoped but in vain, and yet he met the severest tests which try the mettle of a man without flinching.

But at last a queen, herself a dreamer, heard and believed and secured for him what he desired—pledging her