

COLUMBUS AND THE "SCIENTIFIC" SCHOOL.

IN this year of grace, America will offer, justly offer, tributes rich and many to the discoverer of the New World. Patient, earnest student of books and of nature, he deserves an especial tribute from American students, and above all from Catholic American students. How could, how should they honor him? By turning into English, word for word, and by editing in the most scholarly way his writings, the official documents referring to him before and after the discovery, and the *Historic*, attributed to his son, Don Fernando.

To-day, as when living, Columbus is the victim of "the perfidy of the envious, the calumny of the traducer." In the New World where, first of men, "he planted the sacred sign of the Cross," and where humbly,—proudly, first of men, he uttered "the Divine name of the Redeemer, name which, to the sound of the murmuring waves, he had so often sung upon the open sea"—even here, there are spiritless men who would again fasten upon him "the chains with which, though innocent, he was loaded." To the perfidious, the envious, the calumniator, Columbus made answer during his lifetime. His mind, heart, soul; his deeds, motives, habits, sufferings,—the man,—we know, intimately, from the records he made, and that have been happily preserved. "*Columbus is one of us.*" A Catholic, we owe him at least the love, the loyalty of brothers. From none else can he expect justice. In his deeds we have, ever shall have a part. The reflection of his glory shines upon each one of us, glorifies us. How great that glory is! "By his work a new world flashed forth from the unexplored ocean, thousands upon thousands of mortals were returned to the common society of the human race, were led from a barbarous life to peacefulness and civilization, and—what is of much more importance—were recalled from perdition to eternal life by the bestowal of the gifts which Jesus Christ brought to the world."

Truly, "no grander, no more beautiful work, has been ever accomplished by the hand of man. And to him who accomplished it, there are few who can be compared in greatness of soul and of genius." The calumniators, the traducers, are bold because all the proofs of the greatness of soul of Columbus, are not within reach of the people. With a show of learning—false show—the calumniators misstate facts. They misquote, mistranslate, garble the very words of the genius, whose shoe-lachets they are not worthy

to untie. Deliberately they smother his voice, "tear out his tongue,"—belie his thought. To him, as to the English speaking world, no more timely service could be done, no surer way of confounding his enemies could be devised, than by "popularizing" his writings and true history.

By the united action of all our Catholic historical societies, the work could be done. From South America, from Spain, from Italy, from France and England, help would freely come. The encouragement of our hierarchy would not be wanting. From the illustrious, the learned Pope, who has just spoken so justly of the great discoverer, something more than kind words would surely come. The task would be arduous, but not so arduous as that which Columbus performed. The pay could not be less than he received. Glory there would be, though not equalling his glory. Defending truth, our learned men would testify publicly, lastingly, to their mindfulness of the debt American Catholics owe to the great soul and great genius, who inspired by their faith, risked and suffered that he might "open access to the Gospel in new lands and in new seas."¹

Why the discoverer of the New World should have suffered from perfidy and from calumny during his lifetime, and why, immediately after his death, detractors should have sought to sully his fair fame, we can easily understand. The honors he won, the power he temporarily exercised, his very virtues embittered the Spaniard, hidalgo, pilot, seaman, colonist, official and cleric. Ambition foiled, greed repressed, criminality punished, disorder restrained, virtue and piety taught by example,—have ever excited the most virulent passions of the human heart, envy, hatred, the spirit of revenge. But to-day, when Columbus has been nigh four hundred years in the grave, why should men, with whose ambitions or vices he cannot interfere, pursue him as though he had shamed them by his example, or, by his grand actions, had made them feel their own littleness? Must we seek an answer in the fashionable and convenient "atavism." With a qualification, we answer: Yes, from father to son, hates are handed down that have not been caused by ambition, envy or greed—hates born of prejudice; and there are new hates daily born out of ignorance, out of conceit, out of the evil spirit of notoriety, and out of the prolific father of lies. How shall we classify our contemporary defamers of him who accomplished a work so grand and so beautiful that no man has ever surpassed it? Perhaps they do not admit of classification

¹ This quotation and the previous quotations, are taken from the "Letter of Leo XIII. to the Archbishops and Bishops of Spain, Italy and the two Americas, upon Christopher Columbus," dated July 16, 1892.

under any heading here suggested; and, if so, it may be to their credit.

Among recent book-makers who have chosen Columbus as a timely subject, Mr. Justin Winsor must be mentioned.¹ Were he as capable as he is pretentious, he might hope to become a historian, in the distant future at least. Beyond his pretensions he displays no quality more than common, if we except his humor. The only American historian who, in respect of humor, will bear a comparison with Mr. Winsor, is the famous Mr. Twain. Reading amusedly the Harvard Librarian's pages we say, again and again: The writer is making game of us. Evidently, an oddish mind has imagined a comic "Christopher Columbus." The idea is novel. And what a surprise for those who take the author seriously, when he acknowledges the whole thing to be a joke!

How varied, how spontaneous, how artful, Mr. Winsor's humor is, a few extracts from his tome will show. Writing of Columbus in Portugal, our author says: His wife's sister, by the accepted accounts, had married Pedro Correa, *a navigator* not without fame in those days, and a companion in maritime inquiry upon whom Columbus could naturally depend,—*unless, as Harrisse decides, he was no navigator at all.*² A Celt would have written: "at all, at all;" but even without the repetition, we estimate this as one of the choicest of American "bulls." And a "bull" is always humorous, especially if it be, as it is here, deliberate.

A few pages further on, the author is debating "whether or not," Columbus had ever sailed to the far north. "The only evidence that Columbus saw Tile," our author assures us, "is in what he further says, that he was able to ascertain that the tide rose and fell twenty-six fathoms, which observation necessitates the seeing of *some land, whether Tile or not.*"³ Those who do not see the humor in this passage may accuse Mr. Winsor of confusion of thought; but later quotations will make it evident that he can confuse thought without being knowingly humorous. Were we not convinced that we have presented an example of Winsorian humor, we should readily label the extract ludicrous confusion.

On page 160, we meet with a happy "hit," which, if we do not mistake, is at least a triple *entendre*. The author is portraying Ferdinand, and Mr. Winsor's portraits are never "the filling up of a scant outline with the colors of an unfaithful limner."⁴ No, indeed! However, let us hasten to see Ferdinand. "The king, perhaps, was good enough for a king as such personages went in the fif-

¹ *Christopher Columbus, and How He Received and Imparted the Spirit of Discovery*. New York, 1892.

² *Christopher Columbus*, p. 131. The italics are ours.

³ Winsor, p. 135. Italics ours.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

teenth century; "perhaps" and "went," you feel the art, surely; "but his *smiles* and *remorseless coldness* were *mixed* as few could mix them even in those days." Even in those days! Perfection itself! The limning has all the gleefulness of conviviality. Remark the mixing, "as few could mix them," of "smiles" with "coldness,"—remorseless coldness! And the conception of the expert king thus mixing *his* smiles! In filling up a scant outline with color—of a suspiciously ruby tinge—Mr. Winsor is unapproachable.

From a brilliant palette, the artist selects a charming combination of tints with which to fill in a scant outline of Isabella. He knows how to place, masterfully, a humorous dab. Santangel is in the queen's "cabinet." He is pleading with Isabella to recall Columbus. "A shade came over the queen's face. The others knew it was the thought of Ferdinand's *aloofness*."¹ In that one quaint, delightful, Twainish word, "aloofness," what a wealth of burlesque humor is safe-deposited! A shade of aloofness! Mr. Winsor is almost too funny.

Always catching, his humor is never forced. As an example of bubbling, natural fun, we shall quote from p. 276. Columbus, on the second voyage, arrives at Hispaniola, but finds no trace of those he had left behind. In quest of information, he visits Guacanagari. Only a master dare venture to be jocose at this moment. Mr. Winsor has no fear. "The interview did not end," he says, "without some strange manifestations on the part of the cacique, *which* led the Spaniards for a moment to fear that *a trial of arms* was to come. The chief was not indisposed to *try his legs enough* to return with the Admiral to his ship that very evening."² With this passage as a text, one might compose a volume on the science and art of humor. Note how the "which" happily prepares a reader for a surprise; and how the word "enough" restrains the risible propensities within due bounds "to try his legs enough!" Classical, indeed!

From the pages of "Christopher Columbus," we have culled more good things than are usually found in a sarsaparilla almanac. Regretfully we are compelled to retain the greater number of them for our own delectation. The reader will pardon us a word of caution. Read Mr. Winsor carefully. Be on the "alert" always. He is at times over-refined, and unless your attention be constant, you are sure to miss many of his nicest effects.

We hesitate to do our author an injustice by assuming that his work is wholly, or even partly, serious. If it were serious, then his pretentiousness would be more amusing than his humor. Re-

¹ Winsor, p. 178.

² We have used italics here, lest some one might miss any portion of the humor.

viewing the biographers of Columbus, Mr. Winsor finds them all inferior to himself. Washington Irving, especially, he contemns and condemns. It is true that Irving "produced a book that has long remained for the English reader a standard biography. Irving's canons of biography were not, however, such as the *fearless* and *discriminating* student of to-day would approve." "The learning which probes long-established pretenses and grateful deceits was not acceptable to Mr. Irving."¹ Alexander H. Everett said that the perfection of Irving's book was the despair of critics, but Mr. Everett "was forgetful of a method of critical research that is not prone to be dazed by the prestige of demigods."² The "fearless" champion of the "not prone to be dazed method" quiets our alarm with the soothing statement that, though "dangerously seductive to the popular sense," "Irving's book has lost ground in these later years among scholarly inquirers. They have by the collation of its narrative with the original sources discovered its flaccid character. They have outgrown the witcheries of its graceful style. They have learned to put at their value the repetitious changes of stock sentiment which swell the body of the text, sometimes provokingly."³ Humboldt evidences "a critical spirit, in which Irving was deficient;"⁴ "Irving, whose heedless embellishments of the story of these times may amuse the pastime reader, but hardly satisfy the student."⁵ "Irving at one time berates the biographer who lets "pernicious erudition" destroy a world's exemplar; and at another time he does not know that he is criticising himself when he says that "he who paints a great man merely in great and heroic traits, though he may produce a fine picture, will never present a faithful portrait."⁶ Thus the learned prober of "grateful deceits," the scholarly inquirer, swells the body of his text, to the amusement of the "pastime reader," with heedless "beratings" of the not unscholarly or uncritical Irving. The "witcheries" of Mr. Winsor's style may prove seductive to popular lovers of nonsense; but, on the whole, we imagine that the verdict of students will be that he is provokingly repetitious and altogether debarred from the prestige of a demigod.

Mr. Prescott, our critic graciously concedes, was "more independent in his views of the individual character round which *so much revolves*, and the reader is not wholly blinded to the unwholesome deceit and overweening selfishness of Columbus." And yet "Prescott shared something of the spirit of Irving in composing a history to be read as a pastime rather than as a study

¹ Winsor, p. 56. Italics ours.

² Winsor, p. 60.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 501.

of completed truth."¹ It is true that we find this independent student of the character, "round which so much revolves," saying that "whatever the defects of Columbus's mental constitution, the finger of the historian will find it difficult to point to a single blemish in his moral character." And "we find him further saying that whether we contemplate his character in his public or private relations, in all its features it wears the same noble aspects. It was in perfect harmony with the grandeur of his plans, and with results more stupendous than those which heaven has permitted any other mortal to achieve."² Mr. Prescott was something of a scholar and critic, and won the respect of several men of character, and yet Mr. Winsor charges him with flagrant untruthfulness. "It is certainly difficult," are Mr. Winsor's words, "to point to a more flagrant disregard of truth" than Prescott was guilty of, in the passage just quoted. We are more than ever positive that much of pastime revolves about the Cambridge "historian."

To Humboldt, as the student of "completed truth" calls von Humboldt, our author shows a patronizing spirit of consideration, though he is careful to advise us that even "the learned German" was unfitted to form any true estimate of Columbus. The great naturalist pays many a warm tribute to the Admiral's love of nature, and to his remarkable powers of observation and of description. But "the fact was that Humboldt transferred to his hero something of the superlative love of nature that he himself experienced in the same regions; there was all the difference between him and Columbus that there is between a genuine love of nature and a commercial use of it."³ In this sentence, the discrimination of the learned American is superlatively exhibited, and his critical acumen, as well as the lucidity of his expression, must appal those who are not snickering.

Without the aid of Mr. Henry HARRISSE's researches, Mr. Winsor says that it would have been quite impossible for him "to have reached conclusions on a good many mooted points in the history of the Admiral and of his reputation." Still, there are spots on some demigods, and HARRISSE, not being WINSOR, must have faults. "He is a good deal addicted to hypotheses, but they fare hard at his hands if advanced by others."⁴ Mr. HARRISSE deserves a criticism more severe than Mr. WINSOR is capable of writing. Rev. L. A. DUTTO has shown that the author of "Christophe Colomb" is addicted to more than hypotheses, and that there are many mooted points on which he has reached conclusions that are groundless.⁵ However, it will be satisfactory to unpastime readers

¹ Winsor, p. 58.

² *Ibid.*, p. 503.

³ See *Catholic World*, February, March, April, 1892.

⁴ Winsor, p. 501.

⁵ Winsor, p. 52.

to know that Mr. Winsor could not have done what he has done without the aid of one who is "a good deal addicted to hypotheses."

For Roselly de Lorgues, Mr. Winsor has so fine a contempt that he couples the Frenchman's name with Irving's. And here we feel bound to credit Mr. Winsor with a phenomenal power of sarcasm,—a power which he does not always use moderately. De Lorgues's character as a historian our American mental athlete annihilates under the crushing epithet of "canonizer," or the still more deadly term, "sympathizer." Indeed, he hurls these Titanic word-boulders at all those who, living vainly, differ with him. What an awful power may be stored in one puny hand! Mr. Winsor should be merciful.

Against M. de Lorgues he has a special grievance. The French writer said, "that if we cannot believe in the supernatural we cannot understand this worldly man."¹ M. de Lorgues should not have said this, and he did not say this. He may have said that if we cannot believe in the supernatural we cannot understand Columbus; and saying this M. de Lorgues stated a "completed truth." But Mr. Winsor, who perhaps wishes us to know that he is not a believer in the supernatural, or who perhaps is humorously posing as a "philosopher," makes an end of the "sympathizer" with one cutting sentence: "Columbus was a mundane verity." The conclusion draws itself. What has the supernatural to do with a "mundane verity?" And where is the mundane verity that Mr. Winsor, fearless of the daze of demigods, cannot understand?—unless, of course, Mr. HARRISSE should decide there are no mundane verities at all. Thus, with remorseless pestle, the critical researcher macerates contemporary and predecessor in his world-wide and inch-deep mortar. Behold the "scientific" school! he cries. Look ye upon the fearless, the only representative of historical research!

Taking Mr. Winsor seriously, a serious critic would surely set him down as not merely pretentious, but also as one of the most ludicrous pretenders that has ever written about Columbus. Reading laboriously his ill-ordered, ill-written book, we are reminded of his own words: "His arrogant spirit led him to magnify his importance before he had proved it; and he failed in the modesty which marks a conquering spirit." Mr. Winsor's deficiencies of intellect and of education are so apparent, that modesty would have been more becoming to him than this arrogant spirit of self-magnification. His importance he has proved sufficiently.

Mr. Irving, Mr. Prescott, could write their own language cor-

¹ Winsor, p. 54.

rectly. M. Roselly de Lorgues is equally well educated. Mr. HARRISSE, like von Humboldt, has a fair command of two languages. A critic who would compare with these men should be able to write at least one language as well as a dull school-boy of twelve. We have no stomach for the work, but perhaps some friend of good English will be tempted to gather from Mr. Winsor's book all the barbarous paragraphs and sentences with which it is "heedlessly embellished." The volume will be as great a curiosity as the famous "English, How She Is Spoke." A few choice selections we may quote here :

In 1492, Columbus, "a disheartened wanderer, his mule plodding the road to Cordoba, offered a sad picture to the few adherents whom he had left behind. They had grown to have his grasp of confidence, but lacked his spirit to clothe an experimental service with all the certainties of an accomplished fact." Their growth to his grasp we appreciate, but their fatal lack of spirit to clothe, we have not grown to grasp. However, it was with this lack of spirit that they visited the queen. Before her they proceeded to paint pictures: "The vision once fixed in the royal eye, spread under the warmth of description, into succeeding glimpses of increasing splendor. Finally the warmth and glory of an almost realized expectation filled the cabinet." Naturally, a messenger was forthwith sent after Columbus, and speedily grew to grasp him. "There was a moment's hesitancy, as thoughts of cruel and suspended feelings in the past came over him" Shaking off the suspended feelings of the past, he turned his plodding mule. "Columbus was sought once more, and in a way to give him the vantage which his imperious demands could easily use."¹ The condition of the "royal eye" the most unsympathetic reader will pity. Imagine a vision fixed in your plebeian eye, and spreading into succeeding glimpses; while the warmth and glory of an expectation filled your cabinet! But why, under any circumstances, should Columbus have been sought in a way to vantage imperious demands that he could easily use? The secret Mr. Winsor discloses years after the mysterious facts above narrated. "He had always reached a coign of vantage in his personal intercourse with the queen;"² carried a coign with him, we surmise. It is the "modest" architect of these sentences who says of Columbus: "He wrote as easily as people of rapid impulse do, when they are not restrained by habits of orderly deliberation. He has left us a mass of jumbled thoughts and experiences, which, unfortunately, often perplex the historian, *while they of necessity aid him.*"³ Heigh-ho! Let us be merry! All the perplexing jumlbers shall be duly restrained by orderly deliberation,—in good time.

¹ Winsor, p. 179.

² *Ibid.*, p. 409.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

In descriptive passages, Mr. Winsor is seductive, graceful, and often dangerously bewitching. Witness the psychologico-poetical description of the departure of Columbus on the second voyage. "There were cavalier and priest, hidalgo and artisan, soldier and sailor. The ambitious thoughts which animated them were as various as their habits. There were *those* of the adventurer There was the brooding of the administrators, with unsolved problems of *new communities in their heads*. There were ears that already caught the songs of salvation from native throats. There was Columbus himself. . . . To his ears the hymns of the Church soared with a militant warning, dooming the heathen of the Indies, and appalling the Moslem hoards that imperilled the Holy Sepulchre."¹ Shade of Irving! There *are* ears, indeed!

The scene changes. The anti-canonizer, on his way to welcome Bobadilla, whispers to us: "The queen had been faithful, but the recurrent charges had given of late a wrench to her constancy."² A member of the "scientific school" may yet find this historical wrench. If so, the Harvard Library will, perhaps, receive an addition to its treasures. Many lucid, logical, unimpulsive passages we evade, in order to quote Mr. Winsor's judgment on the well-known letter of Columbus to Doña Juana de la Torre. "While its ejaculatory statements are not well calculated to impose on the sober historian, there was enough of fervor laid against its background of distressing humility to work on the sympathies of its recipient, and of the queen, to whom it was early and naturally revealed."³ Of the foreground of this epistle, there is not a syllable. Is there somebody who can scientifically determine how much fervor must be laid against the background of an ejaculatorily humble, argumentative letter, in order to work on a recipient's sympathies? We question whether a sober historian could solve the problem. And yet there is such a thing as guessing; and Mr. Winsor knows more about it than most men. When the discoverer of America reached the line of no variation his attention was awakened. "To an observer of Columbus's quick perceptions," our critic says, "there was a ready guess to possess his mind."⁴ Argal, we maintain, there may be a ready guess to possess another's mind, and thus to observe the enoughness of the lay of fervor against the before-mentioned epistolary background.

Do we run the slightest risk of contradiction in saying that if Mr. Winsor is not humorous he is "verging on" idiocy, as he would put it, or idiotic, to speak plainly? The extracts we have made are not the most puerile in the book. And yet here is a man who cannot write a clear, correct sentence; who cannot logi-

¹ Winsor, p. 265.

² *Ibid.*, p. 393.

³ Winsor, p. 408.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

cally connect sentence with sentence; who does not know the meaning of words,—and therefore has no power of analysis,—and who, seriously presents himself before the public as a scientific, critical historian! Many of his defects could not be corrected in the most thorough school. His mind is confused, wobbling, by nature. This confusion is shown in the form of his sentences, in the collocation of the different parts of speech, in the inconsequences of which he is profuse, in the “flaccidity” of his statement, in the “body-swelling” rhetoric; in the vacuous judgments, in the laughable mixture of figures of speech. The history of American literature offers nothing so amusing as the attempt of Mr. Winsor to lift himself above Irving and Prescott, men of natural parts, rarely gifted, well educated, cultivated; men of taste, having an agreeable style; and, withal, modest men.

A reviewer in the “Catholic World,” honors our American “scientist” by suggesting that he is a second Froude. The name becomes him in one sense only. Mr. Froude always pleads a cause, regardless of the right or wrong involved. Facts he will misstate, suppress, if misstatement or suppression suit his purpose. Throughout the world, his name is a synonym for “a flagrant disregard of truth.” In fact his school is quite as scientific as Mr. Winsor’s.

From the first paragraph of the first page, we see Mr. Winsor’s case, and the methods he will adopt. The assumption of superiority, the claims to learning, to critical ability, to comprehensive study, to acquaintance with “original” sources, while they evidence the childishness of his mind, are at the same time a proof that, if he be in real earnest, he hopes to have only ignorant readers, and to carry them by his want of modesty.

In his book, there is not a single fact stated that is not known to every one who has an acquaintance with the Columbus literature. He has only hackneyed material at hand, and like a hack he uses it. There is not in his book a suggestion of any value; nor a thought of any value. Indeed, we do not hesitate to say that Mr. Winsor has never had, and will never have, a thought of any value. Against Columbus he has not devised a single new charge. Every one of the charges he repeats at second, third, tenth hand, has been answered by men of mind, of honesty, and of scholarship. From one end of his volume to the other there is no sign of scholarship. In the body of his text he mentions, and occasionally quotes authorities, but he gives no proof of having consulted any of them. He has not committed himself by reference to any page of any edition; and “there are ear”-marks,

¹ January, 1892.

as he might say, that whoever gathered his material did not always have "originals" open before him. A scholar does not work after this fashion. And no intelligent student wastes time on "histories" thus manufactured. Centuries will come and go before Mr. Winsor shall have evolved into an original authority.

Indeed, the author's assumption to be *the* representative of his school is not gracious. This honor belongs to Mr. Eugene Lawrence, and we are not surprised that, in an article,¹ which shows all the scholarship that could be expected from a "tertiary" man, the scientific Lawrence does not breathe the name of Winsor. The attempt to rob Mr. Lawrence of laurels hard-earned, deserved this timely, this scathing rebuke. How important Mr. Lawrence deems the controlling foot-note, his article shows. He will refer, with particularity, to books he has not read, and perhaps has never seen. Of course, this kind of "science" is sure to confound a man when least he expects it; but the scholarly habit is commendable, even when abused.

Through Mr. Lawrence, who has profitably exploited the field of "scientific" history for many years, we trace the development of Mr. Winsor back to Mr. Aaron Goodrich, the founder of the North American "scientifico-critical" anti-Columbus school. Of his historical grandfather, Mr. Winsor speaks slightly. Not only does he join Mr. Goodrich's name with that of the "canonizer," de Lorgues, but he says that Goodrich entered upon his work with the determined purpose of making a scamp of the *great* discoverer of America.² And pray what was Mr. Winsor's purpose?—unless Mr. Harris should discover that our author had no purpose at all. "They each" (de Lorgues and Goodrich) "in their twists, pervert and emphasize every trait and every incident to favor their views." And we add that "he each," in his twists, like Mr. Lawrence, in his twists, is chargeable with the same perversion. Goodrich's book, like that of de Lorgues, is "absolutely worthless as an historical record," and "has probably done little to make proselytes," writes Mr. Winsor. Poor Mr. Winsor forgets that he will say of Irving that "he does not know when he is criticizing himself."

Mr. Goodrich had more brains than Mr. Winsor, and perhaps, as nice a conscience. Saying all that his critic says against Columbus, Goodrich said something more. Mr. Winsor pictures a scamp for us; but he lacks the courage of Goodrich, who carried the "scientific" method to a logical conclusion. Were he to edit his critic's volume, he would cut out all the "seems" and "perhaps," leaving a thinner book, as well as the mean scamp that Mr.

¹ *Vide Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, May, 1892, pp. 728-740.

² Winsor, p. 60.

Winsor would have "limned," were he as "scientific" as either Goodrich, or Lawrence. As the school evolves, it is not, apparently, the fittest that survive.

The spirit which directed Mr. Winsor in his undertaking, and the peculiar qualities of his critical mind, will be the better appreciated through some helpful quotation. Speaking of the French biographies of Columbus, "which have been aimed to prepare the way for the canonization of the great navigator, in recognition of his instrumentality in carrying the cross to the New World," the American says that they emphasize the missionary spirit of Columbus. "That, in the spirit which characterized the age of discovery, the voyage of Columbus was, at least in profession, held to be one primarily for that end does not, certainly, admit of dispute. Columbus himself, in his letter to Sanchez, speaks of the rejoicing of Christ at seeing the future redemption of souls. He made a first offering of the foreign gold by converting a mass of it into a cup *to hold the sacred host*, and he spent a wordy enthusiasm in promise of a new crusade to wrest the holy sepulchre from the Moslems . . . Professions, however, were easy; faith is always exuberant under success, and the world, and even the Catholic world, learned as the ages went on, to look upon the spirit that put the poor heathen beyond the pale of humanity as not particularly sanctifying a pioneer of devastation. It is the world's misfortune when a great opportunity loses any of its dignity; and it is no great satisfaction to look upon a person of Columbus's environments and find him but a creature of questionable grace."¹ Incredible as it may appear, the author of the balderdash just quoted, criticizing Hubert Howe Bancroft's rehearsal of the story of Columbus, writes that: "It is, unfortunately, not altogether chaste in its literary presentation."² O vestal Winsor! Thou almost too chaste literary presentator! Would that thou hadst never compelled us to assault thy virginal coign of vantage!

The mission of Columbus is certain, indisputable, "at least in profession." The last four words are wholly "scientific." The discoverer mentioned Christ and the redemption of souls in one of his letters. This is true; but it is also true that he made the same mention in many of his writings; as it is also true that the sovereigns made like mention in several of their writings. These facts have to do with the question. Why does Mr. Winsor scientifically suppress them? Why the idiotic: "faith is always exuberant *under* success," and the drivel about the spirit that did not "particularly sanctify a pioneer of devastation?" From the whole

¹ Winsor, pp. 52-53.

² Winsor, p. 55.

quotation a ready guess possesses our mind that Winsor's Columbus is to be a hypocrite, a pioneer of devastation, and, like all scamps, a creature of questionable grace.

After a time we are told that "Columbus was chronically given to looseness of statement." Mr. Winsor does not tell the truth about Columbus in this sentence; but, inserting his own name in place of the name of Columbus, Mr. Winsor will have made an honest confession. We have passed over one of his falsifications. Now we call attention to it. The French biographies to which he refers have *not* "been aimed at preparing the way for the canonization of the great navigator." How could any one, other than Mr. Winsor, aim a biography at preparing a way? The French biographies were written to correct the misstatements, the calumnies which certain Americans would revive. The French writers could not but emphasize the missionary spirit of Columbus. That spirit is certain; and only a coward would try to rob the discoverer of the glory he has won through his apostolic zeal.

However, when Mr. Winsor aimed at preparing his own dreary way, he aimed around a corner, as we know from the following quotation: "In 1501, his mind—the mind of Columbus—was verging on irresponsibility. He had a talent for deceit, and sometimes boasted of it, or at least counted it a merit."¹ In the name of sense, what is the meaning of "verging on irresponsibility?" Let us answer for the author. In order to make a scamp of Columbus, it is necessary that Mr. Winsor should have the most perfect freedom in loose statement. To have this freedom, he feels it necessary to charge Columbus with looseness of statement and with deceit. Thus the author can accept or reject the words of Columbus, wherever the author pleases. Furthermore, the supernatural is especially emphasized,—and so emphasized that a "critic" cannot cover it, avoid it,—in the writings of Columbus after 1500. Hence the importance of "verging" him on irresponsibility in 1501 at least. The discriminating Mr. Winsor, as best suits his purpose, will thus be free, at the proper date, to make the discoverer responsible and irresponsible on the same page. Clever Mr. Winsor! This must be "science"; but suppose your critics should grow to grasp your scheme!

The maladroit author has, presumably, fixed upon 1501 as the date of the "verge" of Columbus; but, in fixing upon this date Mr. Winsor did not protect himself sufficiently. Telling the story of Columbus and the so-called Junta of Salamanca, he lauds the Genoese because he "stood manfully for the light that was in him."

¹ Winsor, p. 83.

Promptly, however, we are advised of "those pitiful aberrations of intellect which, *in the years following*, took possession of him, and which were constantly reiterated with painful and maundering wailing."¹ The Junta of Salamanca met in the winter of 1486-1487; and here we have a statement that the aberrations "took possession" of Columbus in the years following. We are no longer bound by the date 1501. Of course this method of writing history may be scientific; but it is not a common-sense method. It is the method of Mr. Lawrence as exemplified in his doomful "Mystery."

Notwithstanding the pitiful aberrations "of the years succeeding," Columbus won over the queen five years after the meeting at Salamanca. Listen to Mr. Winsor's blank verse: "The Christian banner of Spain floated over the Moorish palace. The kingdom was alive in all its provinces." What a kingdom it must have been! "Congratulation and jubilation, with glitter and vauntings pervaded the air."² We have a Milton among us. "Columbus was indeed to succeed; but his success was an error in geography, and a failure in policy and morals."³ The beautiful "but!" Need we add that Columbus never wrote a sentence that showed as great aberration of intellect, as does the sentence we have taken from Mr. Winsor.

"When," after the second voyage, "Columbus landed at Cadiz (June 11, 1496), he was clothed with the robe and girdled with the cord of the Franciscans. *His face was unshaven.* Whether *this* was in penance, or an assumption of piety to serve as a lure is not clear. Oviedo says it was to express his humility, and his humbled pride needed some such expression."⁴ At length we have some truly scientific history. To Mr. Winsor an apology is due. He has confounded us with an original idea,—the idea of an unshaven face in penance, or serving as a pious lure. The man whose success was an error in geography, undoubtedly "needed some such expression." True Science! unshaven, humbly, un-luringly, we beg your pardon.

After this experience we cannot feel surprised when Mr. Winsor repeatedly charges Columbus with wiliness. "His artfulness never sprang to a new device so exultingly as when it was a method of increasing the revenue at the cost of the natives."⁵ Now this is lucid, and the figure is sweet and lovable; but we opine that the character of Columbus would be more completely understood of the people, were some one of our artists to treat this subject in chiaroscuro, and exhibit his work at the coming Chicago Expo-

¹ Winsor, p. 164.

² Winsor, p. 176.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

⁵ Winsor, p. 371.

sition: "Columbus's Artfulness Exultingly Springing At a New Device." By the way, this is Mr. Winsor's second original thought. Penitentially unshaven, we must, we shall remain.

The aberration of Columbus we know something of; and it is now time that we learned of a worse disorder which the critical school has diagnosed. He was subject to hallucinations. Indeed, according to Mr. Winsor, when the discoverer was not aberrating, he was hallucinating. "His mind was not unfrequently, in no fit condition to ward off hallucination." Now, as we gather from our scientist, the agonies of such spirits are painful. How painful, he tells us in moving words: "It is far easier to let one's self loose into the vortex and be tossed with sympathy." And now, patient readers, may we not ask you to let yourselves loose into the vortex,—say for five minutes,—and be tossed with sympathy for the critical Mr. Winsor? He needs vortices of the most tossful sympathy. Were it not that he is so acutely discriminating, we should describe him, in his own dialect, as "in large part tumultuous, incoherent, harrowing, weakening and sad,"—"an exultant and bewildered being, singularly compounded."

Our critic considers it fortunate, as we do, that during the latter years of his life Columbus wrote a number of letters. Mr. Winsor values these letters because, with their aid, he can trace the various mental moods of the discoverer. How a great critic estimates these valuable documents may be inferred from the following sentence: "They have in their entirety a good deal of that haphazard jerkiness tiresome to read, and not easily made evident in abstract." If this be so, then Mr. Winsor is *the* man, among all men, fated to jerk the tiresomeness out of their entirety, and to make it haphazardly evident in abstract and in concrete. Honestly, we have labored to take Mr. Winsor seriously; but who could? No one, we are certain, unless it be the undazed historian's self.

Hoping for an "increase of revenue at the cost of the natives," many writers have ventured to compose "history" in the serious or in the comic vein. It would be unfair to suggest that the "scientific" school could be influenced by a motive so veritably mundane. What then could have tempted our author to write his book? If we except himself, Lawrence and Goodrich; if we consult those who, from Bernaldez to Goodrich, told the story of Columbus, we find among honorable, intelligent and studious men, a remarkable agreement as to the ability and character of the discoverer of America. He was a genius; a man of high mind, of great soul, of extraordinary sensibility, gifted with quick percep-

¹ Winsor, p. 461.

tion, with the imagination of a poet, with rare patience, with splendid courage. Add to these admirable qualities his earnest, humble faith in Christ, his devout habits, his zeal in the cause of religion, his loyalty to his adopted country, and certainly he grows not less but greater. And thus all men, who know in what true greatness consists, have judged. Why should Mr. Winsor have wasted effort, seriously or humorously—but in either case, mauderingly—in the attempt to fill in a scant outline with colors that limn a spirit-of-his-age hypocrite, an exuberant pioneer of devastation, a talented deceiver, of questionable grace, an unshaven lure, an aberrating hallucinator, and a successful geographical error? Only “science” dare answer: “True science, which places no gratulations higher than its own conscience.”

Quoting from Mr. Winsor, we shall let science speak for herself. “To find illustrations in any inquiry is not so difficult if you select what you wish, and discard all else, and the result of this discriminating accretion often looks very plausible.”¹ Discriminating! We think we have already heard the word out of Mr. Winsor’s mouth. And now that science is on our side, we feel encouraged to say that he is only an accretor and a selecting discarder—though not plausible. Let us follow the accretor as he “finds illustrations” in his “inquiry” about Columbus. De Lorges is the subject of Mr. Winsor’s criticism. Thus he writes: “Every act and saying of the Admiral capable of subserving the purpose in view are simply made the salient points of a career assumed to be holy. Columbus was in fact of a piece, in this respect, with the age in which he lived. The official and officious religious profession of the time belonged to a period which invented the Inquisition and extirpated a race in order to send them to heaven.”² This passage might be quoted under the “comicalities,” or the “idiocies” of Mr. Winsor. We quote it here to show his hatred of the faith of Columbus, his ignorance of that faith, and his calumniating spirit. In the age in which Columbus lived, calumniators often felt the lash, and fools, in or out of the court, were not always spared because they wore a cap and jingled bells.

And now let us “discriminate” with our scientist while he portrays in our presence a mundane verity who was “of a piece” with Columbus—a yard-stick figure!—and of the age in which he lived—King Ferdinand. “If the Pope regarded him from Italy, *that* Holy Father called him pious. The modern student finds him a bigot.” The modern “student,” be sure, is our accretor. “His subjects thought him great and glorious, *but* they did not see his dispatches, nor know his sometimes baleful domination in his cabi-

¹ Winsor, p. 177.

² Winsor, p. 129.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

net. The French would not trust him. The English watched his ambition. The Moors knew him as their conqueror." Great minds had the Moors! "The Jews fled before his evil eye. The miserable saw him in his inquisitors. *All* this pleased the Pope, and the papal will made him, in preferred phrase, His Most Catholic Majesty." . . . Discard the animus shown against the papacy, and the quotation is valueless, except as a further example of Mr. Winsor's painful maundering. But he will not cease until he has emphasized his ignorance as well as his prejudice. Ferdinand "did not extort money; he only extorted agonized confessions. He said masses, and prayed equally well for God's benediction on evil as on good things. He made promises, and then got the papal dispensation to break them." Justin! Justin! Is there a Justin Fulton? Then there are two of them.

Mr. Winsor's book, we judge, has been adapted so that, should the occasion offer, it may be advertised as a sequel to "Uncle Tom's Cabin." In and out of season, the question of slavery is made an excuse for another dreary page. An example of the rhetoric, we give with a purpose. "The contemporary history of that age may be said to ring with the wails and moans of such Negro and Moorish victims. A Holy religion had unblushingly been made the sponsor for such a crime. Theologians had proved that the Word of God could ordain misery in this world, if only the recompense came—or be supposed to come—in a passport to the Christian's heaven."¹ Perhaps "Science" can lie as fast as a horse can trot. If so, then "Science" wrote the words we have quoted.

We have some notion, now, of Mr. Winsor's measure of the age in which Columbus lived, and of the "light that was in him." The "completed truth" is yet to come. "That Columbus was a devout Catholic, according to the Catholicism of his epoch, does not admit of question, but when tried by any test that finds the perennial in holy acts, Columbus fails to bear examination. He had nothing of the generous and noble spirit of a conjoint lover of man and of God, as the higher spirits of all times have developed it. There was no all-loving Deity in his conception. His Lord was one in whose name it was convenient to practice enormities. He shared this subterfuge with Isabella *and the rest*."² And with due reverence to Our Lord, we ask, what kind of a Lord can he be, that this convenient utterer of shameless enormities claims as his? For him, it were a charity to say, what, calculatingly, he says of Columbus: "There is no excuse but the plea of insanity."⁴

The doltish ignorance of this perennial "higher spirit" of our

¹ Winsor, pp. 160, 161.

² Winsor, p. 505.

³ Winsor, p. 311.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 511.

time, was exhibited in the statement that Columbus made an offering of a cup to hold the sacred "host." For the sacraments of the Catholic Church, confession, the holy communion, extreme unction, he shows that unreasoning hate, which betokens a spirit less pardonable than ignorance. The clergy he calumniates, not hesitating to embody in his text suggestions that are basely made, because wholly unfounded.¹ To lie by suggestion, in the name of a Deity, is perhaps to be all-loving, in Mr. Winsor's conception; but in the conception of ordinary men, the lie suggestive is the meanest of lies. 'Mr. Winsor's "unstinted denunciatory purpose," to use his own eloquent words about Mr. Goodrich, is "much weakened by an inconsiderate rush of disdain";² but none the less should his purpose and his ignorance be exposed. He pretends to write the life of a Catholic, and to present a picture of an age wholly Catholic, while knowing of Catholicity no more than a Carib. Go to school, sir! and when you can write clean sentences, take, if you please, to cataloguing books! The ignorance and hate of Lawrence and of Goodrich will be perennial without you. The scientific Mr. Huxley, whose pretentiousness you affect, some Catholics may take seriously; but a counterfeit of his protoplasmic Bathybius even though it develop into the form of a librarian, they will remorselessly, smilingly stew into nothingness.

A passion for "completed truth" compels us to make still another extract from our "subterfugeous" author. The year 1501, he first fixed as the date of the discoverer's hallucination. Then the years following 1486-87 were mentioned as years of aberration. These aberrations and hallucinations were made out of whole cloth, by Mr. Winsor, in order that he might, in a wily way, diminish the credit of Columbus, and yet partly conceal Mr. Winsor's unbelief in the supernatural. However, a man of his little wits finds it much easier to be wily than to be wise, as the following paragraph demonstrates: "He naturally lost his friends with losing his manly devotion to a cause. I do not find the beginning of this surrender of his manhood earlier than in the will which he signed *February 22, 1498*, when he credits the Holy Trinity with having inspired him with the idea that one could go to the Indies by passing westward."³ The murder is out! And we have detected the motive that prompted a tame librarian to attempt to assassinate the character of Christopher Columbus. In his ignorant hate of the Catholic religion, he would make it appear, at one time, that an incomparable genius was mad, because he expressed his belief in the supernatural, and at another time, that this genius unmanned himself by crediting the Holy Trinity—that lives and

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 184, 362, 490, 508, among others.

² Winsor, p. 504.

³ Winsor, p. 511.

reigns forever, without end,—with having inspired him with the idea of seeking a new world. There we have the American scientific-critical school, body and bones, limned in truest proportion by one of its most learned, intellectual and artistic representatives! An abiding faith in the Holy Trinity unmans! On the same page with this atrocious expression of unbelief, it is fitting that a Catholic, in the name of believers, should laud the Trinity that the Catholic Columbus always venerated and loved: Praise be to the Most Holy Trinity, for the inspiration mercifully vouchsafed to the humble Genoese; and for the inspirations daily vouchsafed to men of faith!

Whether Mr. Winsor be a serious or a comic historian, we have his measure of bigotry, imbecility, impertinence, ignorance, williness, and "flagrant disregard of truth." The spirits of Irving, Prescott, von Humboldt, may rest peacefully. Paraphrasing his own words, true historical science has written Mr. Justin Winsor's epitaph: He was a blunderer; his blunder was a book; the book is his monument!

Mr. Charles Kendall Adams, formerly President of Cornell University, and who recently, we believe, was transferred to a western college, is responsible for a work, in every way more modest than Mr. Winsor's.² From the pages of Mr. Adams it would not be difficult to make a collection of sentences almost as laughable as Mr. Winsor's. However, the book is much less bad than the "scientist's," and, having said this, there is nothing more to be said in its favor. Indeed, without being brilliant, a writer could have made the "Christopher Columbus" of the ex-President of Cornell out of the Librarian's volume. The book shows signs of haste, not pardonable in a biographer who identifies himself with "modern research."³ We find a reference to a historian, Von Concelos by name. Perhaps modern research has modified the old form, Vasconcelles, or *ellos*. And we read at least ten times of one "Agnado." The antique school called this: Aguado. Of course, the proof-reader is to blame; but a writer who pretends to judge a great man should be careful lest, through evident carelessness in his work, he give a reader cause to doubt his thoroughness. Mr. Adams will acknowledge that, since Luther's coming, the world has grown more "critical." By the way, the friar who befriended Columbus was known to his contemporaries as Perez, and not as Parez. Finical, if you please; but then there are "eternal verities," as Mr. Adams suggests. Shall we not apply them to him?

¹ Winsor, p. 512.

² *Christopher Columbus, His Life and His Work*. New York. 1892.

³ Adams, p. 73.

Mr. Adams is clumsy, but not bitter. He is not so illogical as Mr. Winsor, though his mind was evidently formed in the same school. In statement and in judgment, he is apt to be contradictory. The religious motive of Columbus he does not hide; yet he quietly puts it aside and seeks to minimize it and him by the stock suggestion of "a distracted, if not an unbalanced mind." Indeed, we are inclined to enter the name of Mr. Adams on the roll of the "scientific" school. Mr. HARRISSE has claimed that if Columbus had not discovered America in 1492, some one else would have discovered it on a certain day some eight years later. Mr. Winsor's mind saltated at this charmingly critical and logical argument, and Mr. Adams also makes it his own. Through an oversight, we neglected to say that, like Mr. Winsor, Mr. Adams is his own authority. He mentions other writers, but always without reference. This method facilitates historical composition, as it permits the composer to introduce quotations from authorities, regardless of the application which the quoted texts have in the original. A shrewd Frenchman said that, having eight lines of anybody's handwriting, it was an easy matter to ruin the writer. How easy it should be then to ruin Columbus, out of a "haphazard" compilation from eighty volumes written by other men! Mr. Adams sins particularly in his quotations from Las Casas, an author who has been sadly abused by all the "scientists." Beyond the misapplication of quotations, we regret to say that, in the translation of texts, Mr. Adams occasionally violates the "eternal verities." However, as we understand the matter, he is their private keeper, and doubtless is entitled to handle them according to his own sweet will.

As evidence substantiating our view that Mr. Adams belongs to the "scientific" school, and as proof that we do not misjudge his logical powers, we shall make a few short extracts from his volume. Having set forth, somewhat weakly, a certain number of hypotheses which lead him to think that Columbus did only what some one else might have done afterwards, Mr. Adams says: "But none of these facts should detract from the credit of Columbus. The great man of such a time is the one who shows that he knows the law of development, and, bringing all possible knowledge to his service, works with a lofty courage and an unflinching persistency and enthusiasm for the object of his devotion, in accordance with the strict laws of historical sequence. Such was the method of Columbus."¹ Mr. Adams may be able to develop sense out of this curious concatenation of the different parts of speech; but others will not be so fortunate. What is the "law of development" of "*such* a time?" And how is a man to know

¹ Adams, p. 33.

this law, which we may imagine to be in the same box with the "eternal verities," and thus hidden from profane eyes? The use of the term "law of development" marks Mr. Adams as an evolutionary factor in the American school of "scientific" historians—a school easily distinguishable by its use of meaningless terms and by a splendid contempt for the great "law of intelligibility." What are "the strict laws of historical sequence," of which Mr. Adams makes mention? They must also be in the "verities" box. Why will not our "historian" favor the world with an English version of these important laws? The idea of Columbus knowing the law of development and then working methodically according to the laws of historical sequence, is worthy of Mr. Winsor himself. There is a law of common sense, which, if Mr. Adams will master it, may keep him from writing "bosh."

And there is another law, the great law of logical sequence, of which this keeper of the eternal verities has never heard, perhaps. A test of his logical power, critical acumen, and hence of his fitness for the office of an historian, can be made by analyzing a few sentences taken from his book. "It is not easy to establish a standard by which to judge of a man whose life was in an age that is past. In defiance of all scholarship, the judgments of critics continue to differ in regard to Alexander, Julius Cæsar, and even Frederick the Great and Napoleon."¹ Why, in the second of these sentences, does Mr. Adams put the words "and even?" In the first sentence he has stated a general proposition: "It is not easy to fix a standard by which to judge a man who died before our time. To this proposition we agree, with many qualifications. The argument, however, is that of Mr. Adams. Frederick, Napoleon, are as dead as Julius Cæsar. Their ages have passed. Therefore, it is not easy to fix a standard by which to judge "of" them. The "and even" is out of place; it means nothing more than that the thought of Mr. Adams is not clear. Next we take the words: "In defiance of all scholarship." They are out of place. The general proposition of Mr. Adams implies that, with or without scholarship, it is not easy to judge a man of a past age, and hence that critics will differ about dead men. Therefore, the differences of the critics are not "in defiance of scholarship." It is Mr. Adams who is defiant of logic. Several trains of thought were running through his mind. He should have switched them on to their respective tracks. Not doing so, a collision occurred and a wreck, not creditable to him.

However, at times, the best of men will make a mistake. To judge "of" the logical or illogical habits of Mr. Adams from two

¹ Adams, p. 251.

sentences only would not be fair. We shall quote the sentence following the two quoted above: "On the one hand, nothing can be more unjust than to bring to the judgment of the present age a man whose activities were exerted amid surroundings and influences that have long since changed and passed away; while, on the other, nothing is more unsafe than to regard the opinions of contemporaries as the just and final judgment of humanity." Between this sentence and the preceding sentence, beginning, "In defiance of scholarship," there is no connection. Nor is there a logical connection between it and the sentence beginning, "It is not easy." Probably, Mr. Adams imagined that he was developing his original proposition, but his error is apparent. Now, if we take the new sentence as it is, and analyze it, we find a form that implies the balancing of things alike or unlike: "On the one hand," "On the other hand." And yet there is no resemblance or contrast, between "injustice" and "unsafeness." A backward child might be pardoned for writing after this fashion, using forms regardless of sense and words regardless of their meaning or relation, but a "scientific" historian should do better.

The ideas expressed in the sentence last quoted deserve a moment's attention. We shall try to state them clearly. First, it is unjust to judge a man of a past age by the judgment of our age. We guess at the writer's meaning, and we might reasonably say yes, or no, to the proposition. Coming, however, to the "other hand" clause of the sentence, we cannot pass it without exposing its unsafeness. To regard the opinions of contemporaries as the just and final judgment of humanity is not safe, says Mr. Adams. An opinion is not a certainty, we agree; but, Mr. Adams has been speaking of judgments, and the word "opinions" is out of place. Let him stick to his text. If he meant to say that it is unsafe to accept the judgments of contemporaries as just and final, not only did he mean to state an untruth, but we shall prove his error by his own words. It *is* safe to regard as just and final the judgments of informed, honest, disinterested contemporaries who knew the person about whom, and the facts about which, they express a judgment. With his little hatchet, Mr. Adams would surreptitiously cut down the primeval oaks of tradition, and with a lean pen-handle he would overturn the rock of certitude, firm-based in the testimony of men and of the senses. It is always unsafe to accept as just and final the judgment of one not competent to judge; and safely we claim that Mr. Adams is too "scientific," and not logical enough, to form sound judgments "of" facts or thoughts.

The author continues: "Between these two dangers we must seek the basis of a judgment in those eternal verities which are

applicable to every age. Since civilization began, good men have ever recognized certain principles of right and justice as applicable to all men and all times."¹ Here we have another bit of "scientific" phraseology: "Since civilization began," and it is meaningless. We are not surprised that Mr. Adams, unsuspectingly, upsets his own nice little illogical argument. It is unsafe, he said, to regard the "opinions" of contemporaries as just and final. And now he tells us that there are "eternal verities" applicable to every age. These eternal verities, we presume, are the principles of right and wrong, which good men have, for an indefinite period, considered applicable to all men and all times. The eternal verities have necessarily existed in each age, and have been applicable in each age. And good men have applied them in each age. Perhaps Mr. Adams holds that, in certain ages, there were no good men; but, until he establishes the fact, we shall maintain that, by his own thoughtless words, he proves that contemporary opinions, based on the principles of right and wrong, may be just and final. How can it, then, be unsafe to regard just judgments as just and final judgments as final? However good Mr. Adams may be, according to the standard of his age, he is a loose reasoner, too illogical, too confused, to be a safe judge of men of any age.

The "eternal verities" of Mr. Adams are summed up in three questions, applicable to all men and all time: "Did his life and his work tend to the elevation of mankind? If so, did these results flow from his conscious purpose? If temporary wrong and injustice were done, were these accessory to the firmer establishment of those broad principles which must underlie all security and happiness?" What a mean set of eternal verities Mr. Adams had in the box! Good enough, no doubt, for an evolutionary "scientist"; but imagine a Christian historian thus poorly equipped with "principles of right and wrong!" Not a word of God, of law, of duty! The first "If" reminds one of Mr. Winsor's "successful error" in geography, and might be remodelled in this way: If his life and work tended to the elevation of mankind, was it not by mistake? The second "If" evidences a sublime conception of the principle of right and wrong; and is, neither more nor less than an affirmation that: The end justifies the means. The "conscious purpose" of the previous question might well have been transferred to this one. Neither conscious wrong, nor conscious injustice, can be construed as right under any circumstances, or in any age; even if a claim be made that the wrong or the injustice were "necessary to the firmer establishment of those *broad* principles which must underlie all security and happiness."

¹ Adams, p. 252.

We need not be surprised if we find this "broad-principle" historian freely applying his three "eternal verities" to Columbus. In a halting, uncertain way, he adopts the story so handsomely told by Mr. Eugene Lawrence, of the discoverer's early career as a pirate. Speaking of the French Vice-Admiral Coulom,¹ called by the Venetians, Colombo, Mr. Adams shows his lack of acquaintance with the matter, by saying that "the state-papers of the time uniformly refer to the elder of these commanders as "the Pirate Columbus."² We challenge Mr. Adams to prove this statement. Mr. Harrisse puts the whole case so clearly that no respectable historian can mention the piratical tale except to deny it. However, if Mr. Adams prefers to stand with those learned authorities, Lawrence and Goodrich, the eternal verities will be in good company.

Of the Catholic religion, Mr. Adams is quite as ignorant as Mr. Winsor. Fortunately, the limits of his book do not allow him full play. His judgment of Columbus is "of a piece" with that of the chaste New England stylist. The discoverer was greedy; a wicked slave-trader; indeed, quite "a man of his time." This is the cant of the whole "scientific school." And yet, compared with Mr. Winsor, the ex-president of Cornell University is kind to Columbus. Twice he calls him a "harbinger." We quote one of these tributes on account of its beauty: 'Columbus kindled a fire in every mariner's heart. That fire was the harbinger of a new era, for it was not to be extinguished.'³ Lest the new era may be casually extinguished, we suggest to Mr. Adams that, presently, he drop his eternal verities, with the other rubbish, into the fires of several mariners' hearts,—as a harbinger.

From Irving and Prescott to Goodrich, Lawrence, Winsor and Adams, the descent is painfully notable. The older men were not Catholics, and therefore studied the great Catholic genius, and a Catholic age and country, under serious disadvantages. But being honest men, who recognized the truth of Christian principles, they approached their work with honest intent, with a due sense of responsibility, and with a measure of justice, which though imperfect, was but a little short of the true measure. The judgment of Prescott,—a judgment which every unprejudiced and intelligent student of the life of Columbus must accept,—Mr. Winsor has politely quoted for us. Comparing it with the drivel of Winsor, or the obfuscations of Mr. Adams, Americans must blush for shame that, among them, the name "historian" should be to-day so unwarrantably misused and abused.

¹ Called also Coulon, Colon, and Coullon; his true name was Guillaume de Casenove. See Harrisse, *Les Colombo de France et d'Italie*, pp. 180 et seq.; and *Major's Letters*, p. xxxviii.

² Adams, p. 9.

³ Adams, p. 257.

Mr. Irving's "Observations on the character of Columbus," based as they are on serious and unbiased study, and agreeing, as they do, with Mr. Prescott's conclusions, will always deserve and receive credit.¹ If Mr. Irving accused the discoverer of "superstition and bigotry," we feel that the writer's error was chargeable to a defect of vision, of which he was not conscious, and for which therefore, he should not be harshly condemned. As, with much learning, patience and art, Mr. Irving established, Columbus was a great man, in whom "the practical and the poetical were singularly combined;" a man of learning and a daring genius "whose conclusions even when erroneous were ever ingenious and splendid;" a sagacious man, quick of mind and lucid. He was unselfish. He was not avaricious. Ambitious he was, "with an ambition truly noble and lofty, instinct with high thought, and prone to generous deed." His views were grand, his spirit was magnanimous. A wise ruler, with a sound policy and liberal views, he desired to be a civilizer of men. By nature a sensitive, a passionate man, he trained himself to patience, to forbearance. Forgiving, he forgot. Nature he loved with the enthusiasm of a poet; and poetlike, he was frank in the expression of all the emotions that swept over his impressionable soul. "He was devoutly pious, religion mingled with the whole course of his thoughts and actions, and shone forth in his most private and unstudied writings." "His language was pure and guarded." "An ardent and enthusiastic imagination threw a magnificence over his whole course of thought"; and yet his nature "was controlled by powerful judgment and directed by an acute sagacity." From "the cares of penury, the neglect of a fickle public, the injustice of an ungrateful king, this wonderful man suffered bitterly." But the grandeur of his work is visible to all men. "Nations and tongues and languages have filled the earth with his renown; and to the latest posterity his name shall be revered and blessed."

In Washington Irving's analysis of the character of Columbus, there is not one word of exaggeration. To know the discoverer of America, is to admire him, to love him, to sympathize with him. How can one admire and love without warmly defending him against enemies old or new? Admirable and lovable, he deserves not only defense but also praise. Not even an honest pagan could refuse him laudation. To youth and age he may, he should be presented as an exemplar of manhood; and, with deliberation, we have called his calumniators "spiritless men."

The glory of Columbus was greater than Prescott or Irving

¹ *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*. Hudson edition, vol. ii., pp. 584-596.

could appreciate. Only a Catholic can know, can feel the greatness of the Discoverer's soul. In the face of the American "scientific" school of historians, it is not important that we should state the claims of Leo XIII. to intellectuality, to learning, to a rare knowledge of men's minds and hearts. Perhaps the librarian, or the ex-university President, or even Mr. Lawrence might concede that the Pope was neither aberrated nor hallucinated. In Columbus he sees all that Irving saw and something more. What the Pope sees, he states precisely. "Columbus aimed first of all to propagate the name of Christian and the benefits of Christian charity in the West. As a fact, as soon as he presented himself to the sovereigns of Spain, he explained the cause for which they were not to fear taking a warm interest in the enterprise, as their glory would increase to the degree of immortality if they decided to carry the name and the doctrines of Jesus Christ into such distant regions." "Certain as he was of tracing out and of preparing the way of the Gospel, and fully absorbed in his thought, he caused all his actions to converge to it, not undertaking anything of any kind but under the shield of religion, and with the escort of piety." Doubling the world, spreading civilization and riches, and benefits innumerable, he is worthy of all honor; but honorable above all because "of his subservience and knowing obedience to the *divine project*."¹ "Elevation of heart, the spark of genius come from God only, their author and preserver." The Discoverer's acknowledgment that the Holy Trinity had inspired his work, was a Christian's humble acknowledgment of a patent fact.

The contemptible books recently written about Columbus make plain the defective scholarship, the lamentable want of logic, the low order of mind, the imperfect education of certain writers, who push themselves upon or who are pushed upon the public. Among the educated their books can do no harm; but among the uneducated, among the young, the evil they may cause is incalculable. In the field of history, Catholics should work more earnestly, more laboriously. There the cockle is sown by night. There the seeds of sham science, of false philosophy, of infidelity, are watered and tended as though they were valuable plants. And growing, they kill the fine wheat of truth. To uproot the weeds of error is to do good work. To plant the seed of truth is to do noble work. Awaken, ye sleepers!

JOHN A. MOONEY.

¹ See the letter already referred to.