

**LIFE OF CHRISTOPHER
COLUMBUS, DISCOVERER
OF THE NEW WORLD. A
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

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Life of Christopher Columbus, discoverer of the New world. A biographical sketch by A. G. Knight

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A. G. KNIGHT

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OF
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS,

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A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

BY
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.,	9
CHAPTER II.,	57
CHAPTER III.,	98
CHAPTER IV.,	145
CHAPTER V.,	177





CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

CHAPTER I.

As long as Englishmen are sailors and merchants, and love enterprise and admire greatness of courage, they ought to hold in veneration the memory of Christopher Columbus. If anything could shake his popularity in England, it is to be feared that it might be the discovery that he was not only a daring seaman, who, despising all timid counsels and dark forebodings, gallantly sailed his little craft into a world of unknown waters, but moreover all the time a saint of Holy Church; and that when he departed this life he was ripe for canonization, and that he even miraculously aids those who commend themselves to his powerful intercession. This is at least a new idea for Englishmen, who have derived in nearly every case all their information about the character and work of the great admiral from the beautiful *Life* written by Washington Irving. The Protestant mind is impatient of the supernatural. Direct intervention of Heaven is conceivable in the case of

the ancient Jews, because they lived so long ago, but a fixed providential mission, more especially in the shape of actual voyages preordained and even prophesied, is surely not quite what men need be prepared to admit for the days of a Tudor prince. Our countrymen are honorably distinguished among the nations of modern Europe by their sense of religion. They are not ashamed to worship God. In London, Sunday is (often inconveniently so) a day of rest; in Paris for many years past, and lately in Rome under the puerile Italian Government, it has ceased to be so. But as in human things, so in divine, an Englishman is not demonstrative. His affections are deep rather than gushing. An English boy loves his sisters, but will not submit to be hugged and kissed before his schoolfellows. Affection and piety are for private use.* Respectable tradition requires that good Christians should put in a weekly appearance at church, but gorgeous ceremonial and vows and visions are out of date. Accordingly the proposal to canonize a man like Columbus, whose name has its established place in secular history, is an insult, they think, to common sense, and can only be regarded as one more indication of that aggressive spirit of the Roman Church which fills Mr. Gladstone's mind in the evening of life with generous alarm.

A petition for the introduction of the cause has been numerously signed by Fathers of the

Vatican Council, wherein it is declared that the services of Christopher Columbus of Genoa in the propagation of the faith are unparalleled; that his earthly recompense was calumny, insult, and personal ill-treatment; that the Holy See from the first befriended him; and that Pius IX. is the only Pope who has set foot in America. It is added that Count Rosely de Lorgues has vindicated the memory of Christopher Columbus, and has manifested his supernal vocation and high virtues, especially his Catholic zeal, and that an ardent desire is felt that the public honors of the Church should be decreed by the Holy See to the Christian hero. Cardinal Donnet is mentioned as having already sued for the introduction of the cause *exceptionali ordine*. It is stated that Europe, Asia, Africa, and America share the movement, that the lapse of time has interposed some technical difficulties, but that these ought to be overridden in a case which has no precedent.

An extract from a translation which appeared in the *Tablet* (August 19, 1876), of a letter addressed to the Holy Father by Cardinal Donnet, Archbishop of Bordeaux, writing, as he in the course of the letter says, in his character of "Metropolitan of part of the Antilles and member of the Sacred Congregation of Rites," will perhaps best explain the drift of the document and the state of the question. He says:

"Urged on by a secret inspiration from on high,