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1892

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POEM

Columbus.





POEM

Columbus,

Mrs. Geo. Barnes,

Howell,

Michigan.

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by Mrs. Geo. Barnes.

35391 x'

A ray in the darkness shines out aglow
From the dim, dusty ages of long ago.
Hark! the voice of Columbus speaks once again
From his unknown tomb. No, from the hearts of men.
His chains are forgotton, his temper unknown;
Time o'er him charity's mantle has thrown.
Four centuries have passed with their loves and hates
And gratitude now has burst open the gates.
No voyages of peril, no mutinous band
Confronts the bold Admiral in any land.
'Tis the voice of nations gone forth in high praise,
To honor and glorify all his ways


PENURY, shame, discouragement and disgrace
No longer distort that honorable face.
Eighteen long years of beggarhood and toil
Have given fruits to be coveted by any soil.
Columbus, to-day, is king of the world,
All nations rejoice with his banner unfurled,
Honors now come to the great Spanish queen,
Who threw down her jewels for the voyager's scheme.
Rash was she counted, impolitic, vain,
To listen to theories so plainly insane.
Could men walk with heads downward like flies?
Why listen to such absurd, such foolish lies.


CAN we picture to-day those three lonely ships,
The adieus, the hand shakes, the prayer on his lips
As he leaves all on earth dear to his heart,
His manhood, his wisdom, all set apart
To the honor and glory of God, whate'er he may reap
From the unknown regions of the mighty deep?
The dread sea of "darkness" hissing his ears
As he gave the last look and loosed from the piers.
It was a day of lamentation, a day of tears,
Not known in Palos for hundreds of years.
Wives gave up husbands in terror and dread,
Mothers their sons, and mourned them as dead.
Columbus stood firm, inspired by his thought
Which in him a new being had wrought.

WAS it love of adventure, pelf or power,
That impelled him to brave death at every hour?
'Twas the voice of his God, speaking low and sweet,
And gently leading him through the dread deep.
'Twas the cross firmly set in his inmost soul
That braved storm and tempest to reach his goal.
What power but high heaven could do or dare,
What spirit but angel could temper the air,
Give courage and strength to a poor Genoese?
Yea, such faith, tranquility, absolute peace,
Mere greed for gain haunts the spirits of men,
And drives them to deeds of blackest porten;
Not so was Columbus, his heart was true,
Not alone to himself, but to all he knew.

His ships unseaworthy, his crew in dismay,
His old trusted magnet turned a strange way,
And yet he was confident all would be right
If he kept the dear Father closely in sight
How his heart wells up at the cry of land,
And he kisses the soil of that unknown strand,
And beholds a strange people in terror run
At the sight of the ship and the sound of the gun.
A monster washed up from the mighty deep,
To kill and destroy in their tranquil sleep.
No! 'twas the vision of a lifetime pure and sweet,
The hopes of a future now incomplete.
The joy of the lost given new birth,
The beauty of heaven fallen to earth,
The bud and the blossom of all his years,
The crystalized hopes of all his tears.

COLUMBUS was brave, Columbus was good.
In him we can trace the germ of true manhood.
How sad the picture, when, shackled with chains
He is led to his monarch to forfeit his claims.
Like the old Roman triumph we see the sad captive
Borne back in disgrace, in dishonor to live;
O! ingratitude, greatest of sins among men,
Repeated the world over again and again.
How strange the sums of mortal lives is made,
Our greatest deeds are cast in blackest shade,
The baubles which the world call fine
Are left to grow in broadest sunshine.
Great thought this man did write upon our soil,
"On and on," forever on through unremitting toil.

OULD Columbus stand on the portal to-day
And view the great world to which he led the way,
Methinks he would cry: Marvelous are thy ways
O! Lord God, and to thee be inscribed the praise!
Could his ear catch the sound of the saw and the ax,
Could his eye scan the Graphic and know the facts,
What surprise would enkindle those calm gray eyes,
What pearls to be gathered after one dies.
Columbian exposition do I read?
New Heaven, New Earth, New Creed.
Four hundred years have magnified my name
And placed me higher than the King of Spain,
Higher than the great and good Catholic queen;
O! the mysteries! the wonders of the unseen!

OLUMBUS' old bones are now burnished with gold
And his spirit is passed to the Master's fold.
Scarcely one can be found who would blot or smear
The name which inspires this present year.
Ah! such a legacy might crowned heads desire;
Such firm resolve might all the world inspire,
Such imagination, such regal power
Be counted as an heavenly dower.

MRS. Columbus nows claims a share
For her devotion, foresight and wifely care.
She furnished the charts in her father's name
That has led to her husband's unparalleled fame.
Let her reap all the honor that may be her due;
Enough yet remains, be he Italian, Greek or Jew.
Mysteries still cling to this wild son of the sea,
Vague are the records, and histories do not agree,
Some claim him a robber, a pirate, a knave,
While others recount only deeds that are brave.
Undoubtedly both are quite false or quite true,
As objects viewed by the same eye are red or blue.

IF we speak of results, what words can express
The grandeur, the beauty, the triumphant goodness.
If we seek to be critics and turn back to the past
We shall find crime, immorality and sights aghast.
Should Columbus be judged from our moral view?
Nay! as a type of his age he was just and true;
Progress has been shining along the whole line,
Making it difficult for us to define.
God give us charity as we view the last scenes
Of a life of hardships, of sorrows, of unrequited dreams.
The last agonizing wail comes forth, " Weep for Me!"
" Ye who have charity, truth and justice, weep for me."



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