

# The Canadian Epworth Era.

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## THE DISCOVERER OF AMERICA.

BY THE EDITOR.

MANY of our Reading Circles which commenced their work last October will now be entering upon their reading of "Out with the Old Voyagers," which will introduce them to the brave and adventurous spirits who sailed the unknown seas in search of unknown lands. Probably the story of Columbus will be found the most interesting of these thrilling sea tales, for although it has been told many times it is always attractive.

He must have been a man of great force of character and tremendous will power, as he had to meet all kinds of discouragements and rebuffs before his schemes were approved by Ferdinand and Isabella. In carrying out his project he was daunted by no obstacles. There never was a more remarkable or dramatic scene than that of Columbus standing upon the deck of his little vessel, and keeping her prow steadily onward day after day, and week after week, while terrible storms raged without, and fierce mutinies within. He himself was the only man of the crew who really had faith in the enterprise, but his faith was of the exalted type which "removes mountains" of difficulty. By conciliation, promises and threats he succeeded in holding his men to their work, and his perseverance and determination were rewarded, when on the 8th day of October, 1492, the joyful cry of "Land!" rang out, and a landing was effected upon the Island of San Salvador.

Upon his return to Spain he was received with every mark of consideration by the sovereigns, and with great rejoicings by the populace. He was admitted at all times to the royal presence, and everybody seemed anxious to lavish attention upon the man whom the King and Queen delighted to honor.

At one of the banquets which were given him, occurred the well-known incident of the egg. A shallow courtier present, impatient of the honors paid to Columbus, and jealous of him as a foreigner, abruptly asked him whether he thought that, in case he had not discovered the Indies, there would have been wanting men in Spain capable of the enterprise. To this Columbus made no direct reply, but, taking an egg, invited the company to make it stand on end. Everyone attempted it, but in vain;

whereupon he struck it upon the table, broke one end slightly, and left it standing on the broken part; illustrating, in this simple manner, that when he had once shown the way to the new world, nothing was easier than to follow it.

The joy occasioned by this great discovery was not confined to Spain, but the whole civilized world was filled with delight. Washington Irving tells us that "Everyone rejoiced in it as an event in which he was more or less interested, and which opened a new and unbounded field for enquiry and enterprise. Men of learning and science shed tears of joy, and those of ardent imaginations indulged in the most extravagant and delightful dreams."



COLUMBUS, IN CHAINS.

Perhaps there never was such a striking illustration of the fickleness of humanity or the transitory character of worldly applause as the case of Columbus. After several voyages had been made, jealousy and hatred began to manifest themselves among high officials in Spain who had great influence with Ferdinand and Isabella. False charges were made against the great discoverer, and the malice of his enemies pursued him everywhere. Even the sovereign became prejudiced against him, and an ambassador was sent out to the new world to investigate his conduct.

Columbus was finally degraded, arrested and sent to Spain. The illustration on this page represents him in chains, confined in the fortress by the orders of

his enemy Bobadilla. He was shackled like the vilest of culprits and departed from the scene of his great discoveries amidst the shouts and scoffs of a rabble crowd, who took a brutal satisfaction in heaping insults upon his head.

The officer who had charge of him on the homeward voyage kindly offered to take off his irons, but he would not allow it, saying, "By the authority of their majesties were these chains put upon me. I will wear them until they order them taken off, and I will afterward preserve them as relics and memorials of the reward of my services."

He did so, for they were always seen hanging in his room, and when he died he requested that they might be buried with him.

Upon arrival in Spain, Columbus was released by authority of Ferdinand and Isabella, who did what they could to atone for the injustice which had been shown to him. He was not, however, restored to his former position, as Ferdinand undoubtedly retained some dislike to him as a foreigner. Columbus was no longer necessary to him, and he greatly disliked to grant him the dignities and treasures which had been promised to the adventurous discoverer before he set sail from Palos.

His last days were full of care and sorrow, and he was greatly embarrassed during his old age by debt. He died on the 20th of May, 1506, being about seventy years of age. His last words were, "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit."

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A splendid statue was erected to his honor at Barcelona, Spain, but this cannot blot out the record of ingratitude and persecution which stands against his enemies.

By some strange irony of fate an obscure navigator named Amerigo Vespucci gave his name to the new world, an honor that really belonged to Columbus. The name of the pioneer discoverer is, however, kept green in the "District of Columbia," in the United States, and the "Province of British Columbia," in Canada.

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