

THE POETRY OF THE COLUMBIAN CELEBRATION.

ET NUEVO MUNDO :

A Poem, by LOUIS JAMES BLOCK, author of *Dramatic Sketches and Poems*. Chicago, 1893.

I OWE to the courtesy of the author a copy of the above poem ; and it seems to me to deserve a wider recognition than it has received, in Canada at least. Its title indicates that it forms part of the extensive literature called forth by the great historical celebration which has found its most popular form in the World's Fair. This will explain what might otherwise seem a mere affectation in the title ; for there is a certain propriety in giving this recognition to the language of the people to whom the discovery of Columbus was immediately due. As a poetical expression of the thoughts which the commemoration of that discovery appropriately suggests, Dr. Block's poem stands, so far as I know, without a rival : and it is worthy of the occasion.

The poet has complicated his task by the adoption of an intricate verse, the form of which will appear immediately in quotation, and it would be saying more than can be said of any long poem in the literature of the world, that the burden of the vesture in which it is clothed has not at times hampered the movement of thought or the even flow of its expression. Consequently poeti-

cal interest is apt to be attracted, not so much by the effect of the poem as a whole, but rather by isolated phrases with a peculiarly happy combination of language, or by isolated passages which haunt the memory afterwards with the delicious ring of their music. Dr. Block's poem is full of phrases and passages which are not easily forgotten. After opening with a Dedication to the Women of America, the poem divides into four parts : (1) The Old World ; (2) The Man ; (3) The Deed ; (4) The New World. The opening Dedication does not, perhaps, very obviously show any necessary connection with the body of the poem in the logical development of the poet's thought, but it contains some noble sentiment embodied in noble language, and it is just possible to contend, and we may certainly hope, that the evolution of humanity in the New World will give scope for the fuller play of those womanly virtues which have been dwarfed in the morality of the past, but which are constantly expanding with the growth of the moral life.

The four parts, into which the poem is divided, are, however, intimately con-