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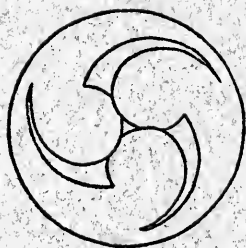
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POEM DELIVERED AT  
THE DEDICATION OF THE  
PAN-AMERICAN EXPOSITION

By ROBERT CAMERON ROGERS





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POEM DELIVERED AT  
THE DEDICATION OF THE  
PAN-AMERICAN EXPOSITION

BY

ROBERT CAMERON ROGERS



D. P. ELDER & MORGAN SHEPARD  
SAN FRANCISCO

1901

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SAN FRANCISCO



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I.

**G**REAT Sister of a peerless sisterhood,  
Dear Sovereign of a sovereign people's realm,  
Thou whose strong hand first gripped the waiting helm  
Of the bright ship whose chart reads — "Liberty" —  
And turned her prow into the Western sea,  
We, in thy name, and as thy people should,  
With arms extended, and the door wide thrown,  
Welcome thy sisters of the mighty name,  
To all that thou hast willed should be our own.  
To thee — to them — thy sisters, not in blood,  
But of one heart, of purposes the same,  
Throughout whose veins exults the untamed flood  
That drives the pulse of all who would be free,  
This labour of our hands and brains and hearts,  
Man's palm in Nature's struck and hers in Art's,  
At the chief Commonwealth's fair farthest gate  
We dedicate.

## II.

**E**NCHANTED city where the dreaming soul  
Conjures the minarets of far Cathay —  
And half expects along some waterway  
To hear all Venice in a barcarole ;  
Mistress of moods, across whose changing face  
Half of old Spain and half of Greece we trace ;  
Hither the nations of the West have brought  
Fruit of their labour, flower of their thought ;  
Best of their best beside our best finds place :  
The Saxon vigor vies with Latin grace ;  
And tithes are paid in product and in art.  
But in all this the past as well has part.  
The imperial cities of the world have shown  
Tributes as beautiful at worthy shrines ;  
Something is here that moves on different lines ;  
A master-thought that we would claim our own ;  
A magic word — a dominant that cries  
Insistent through this fugue of industries.

### III.

SOME magic word in all achievement lies—  
- What word is ours?

If for a moment one

Might quite undo all that man here has done,  
Should level to the earth these towers that rise  
Hued like an opal in the morning skies,  
And bid this radiant city's murmur cease;  
Should lull the distant town to silent peace,  
Still clanging engines and discordant cries,  
And hearken as this spot in long-gone years  
Harkened with Nature's myriad woodland ears,  
Out of the awful gorge whose throat pours forth  
The song of all the waters of the North,  
The magic word, from that vast consonance,  
Clear as the Voice that in the primal night  
Spoke to the waking world, "Let there be light!"  
Should greet his listening ear beyond perchance.

IV.

**A** FORCE—that from the daybreak of the years  
Has sent its voice above the roaring mist,  
Has flung this magic word to heedless ears,  
To savage, or to untaught colonist ;  
A Force—that knew its power yet could not gain  
Man's hand, and lacking this its power was vain,  
Linked with the knowledge of this later age  
Flashes at last into its heritage.  
A Force—whose voice acclaim to us today,  
“ Behold the Genius of the Century ;  
Whose beckoning hand as yet we only see  
Stretched from the unseen—pointing out the way.  
Yet not forever will she dwell apart,  
Follow her guidance with unflinching heart,  
With limbs in which no faltering finds place !  
So at the last perchance ye see her face ! ”

**T**YPE of the sprites whò wait before the throne  
Of the great kingdom, of the Great Unknown,  
To future ages winged messenger ;  
Old as God's lightning but to us whose ken  
Sees but the distance of the deeds of men,  
Youthful as yesterday, a child new born  
Just waking from its sleep, yet whose first stir  
Jars the old order from its groove outworn.

VI.

**Y**ET there is more that we would dedicate,  
Something that makes these great things doubly great,  
Outside the scope of Science and of Art,  
And labour's handiwork ; within the heart,  
O city beautiful, the heart of thee !  
Child of the sunset and the inland sea,  
Thou art the rainbow promise that we span,  
A glowing message to the heart of man,  
Across the threshold of the years to be !  
\*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*  
We saw him go, who is but lately sped,  
The old great century whose Fathers came  
Out of the smoke, that with his birth turned flame ;  
And still we almost seem to hear his tread,  
Slow, slow receding, firm unto the last,  
To see him dimly with his unbent head  
Leading his hundred years into the past,  
Among the great centurions of lesser fame.

VII.

**W**E know too well, with all his great emprise,  
His nervous grasp on power, unclouded eyes,  
His will to profit by free thought and speech,  
When sullen nations grappled each with each  
That he was only impotently wise.  
The great wars thundered in his infant ears,  
The great wars shook him in his later years ;  
Beneath the curtain of the stricken field  
By Glory's riddled banners, half concealed—  
He saw the tragedy and called it crime.  
But heir to all that was, last child of Time,  
He found no cure for what his soul abhorred,  
And when he passed, his right hand held the sword.

## VIII.

**N**OW swing the doors upon a threshold new :—  
The nations press in eager tumult through,  
And with wide, careless eyes about them peer.  
The pageant of the present fills the gate,  
The clamor of the instant holds the ear  
Till the brass portals to the echoes ring ;  
And man, contented with today's estate,  
Recks not the future, howsoever fraught.  
Almost it seems the steeds of action spring,  
Unreined by judgment, into mid-career,  
And drink no longer at cool springs of thought.  
But there come moments when resistless need  
To pause, to ponder what the new dawn brings,  
To what adventure the dim highways lead,  
Lies like a silence at the heart of things ;  
And who then listens with a will to heed  
Shall hear, from out the mist that like a ghost  
Hovers among the turnings of the way,  
The murmur of a great awaking host,  
The laugh of bugles in the breaking day,  
And nearer drawing, nearer, nearer yet,  
The trampling horse that bears the first Vidette.



IX.

**W**HAT do they bring to us, these marching years?  
- Come they as embassies, or with the sword?  
What legend on the pennons of their spears,  
Defiance or long peace and sweet accord?

X.

**A**LAS! the years with empty hands draw nigh,  
They do not come to give, but to demand ;  
And to the question we must make reply :  
“What do ye bring to our expectant band?”  
The right is theirs, and we are they who ought  
To meet them bearing gifts, with us it stands  
To set for good or ill, within their hands,  
The tools with which the present must be wrought.

XI.

O SISTERHOOD of all who bear the name,  
Ye do not seek alone a widened mart;  
A larger thought than trade is in the heart;  
There is a nobler and a truer aim!  
The "Know thyself" engraved above the door  
Of Delphi's oracle we alter here,  
To "Know each other" — better — more and more,  
Tenants in common of the hemisphere!  
For Prejudice, so near akin to Hate,  
Has Ignorance to serve him. Will ye wait  
A fairer time? What time so fair as now?  
What time so ripe? Clasp hand in hand, and thou,  
O herald year, bear witness to our vow!

XII.

“ **A** MONG ourselves, whatever fate may be,  
We will not strive — except for Liberty ;  
Of varied speech, of varied lineage sprung,  
Deep in our hearts we speak a common tongue.  
When clouds drift low across the sombre skies,  
When questions nettle and debate shall rise,  
This mother-tongue of all who would be free  
Shall seal our scabbards and unseal our eyes.”

XIII.

**A**ND thou, my Country, whom God's hand has made  
Greater of stature, heavier of blade  
Than these thy sisters, it must be for thee  
To give the password of the Century.  
For thee by thine ensample to illumine  
The road that stretches towards the marching years,  
And so to lead that there shall be no room  
For home-bred cavil, or for alien sneers.

XIV.

“O H, beautiful, my country,” so he wrote,  
Our Lowell, for whose peer we wait in vain,  
Art thou less beautiful because the stain  
Of tears is gone from off thy cheeks? Shall we  
Less freely all we have to thee devote  
Than did our Fathers, who gave all for thee?  
We hear the little prophets of no hope  
Whose eyes scarce reach the level of thy knee,  
Cast doubt upon thy splendid horoscope,  
Because thy robe’s hem only can they see.  
We know thy garments sometimes touch the mire,  
We know deep waters sometimes cross thy way,  
We know thy limbs must often bend and tire,  
But we have faith and stronger hearts than they.  
For well we know, though flood and mire be deep,  
Thy steadfast feet upon the causeway keep;  
And well we know that with unshaken will  
Undaunted in whatever quest may be,  
Above thy head, yet golden with thy youth,  
Thou bearest the sacred fire of the truth,  
The vestal of the great humanity  
And Virgin still!









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