

COLUMBUS DAY, OCT. 12.

A Message to the Public Schools of America.

LOCAL OBSERVANCES SUGGESTED.

The Day Should Be Signalized in Every Town and Village in the Republic by a Local Celebration of Which the Public School Is the Center.

To the scholars of the public schools of the United States the executive committee of the Columbian public school celebration sends the following message:

The 12th of October, 1892, the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America, ought to be observed everywhere in America.

The day will be marked in Chicago by the dedication of the Columbian exposition grounds. The day also may be signalized in every town and village in the republic by a local celebration of which the public school is the center.

The public schools of the republic will form the most fitting centers for all these local celebrations. A national public school observance simultaneous with the Chicago exercises will awaken a popular interest in the coming exposition. Far more important is the fact that the public school has the right to occupy the most prominent place in the celebration. The public school is the one characteristic institution which links all the neighborhoods together, and can thus furnish a common bond for a national celebration. The public school is the ripe fruit of the four centuries of American civilization. The public school of today sways the hundred years to come.

How It Came About.

The first approval of this suggestion came from the public school scholars themselves. When the plan was first proposed by The Youth's Companion, January, 1891, thousands of letters were received, testifying to the enthusiasm with which the scholars responded.

The world's congress auxiliary of the Columbian exposition then took up the proposal, calling upon all the people of the republic to observe the day in their own localities, and suggesting that the public schools be everywhere the centers of the celebration.

The superintendents of education were the next to recognize the fitness of giving to the public schools the first place in this Columbian anniversary. At their national convention in Brooklyn in February, 1892, they took charge of the movement, and appointed the undersigned an executive committee to lead the schools in their commemoration.

Appeal to the Scholars.

This executive committee now appeals to the scholars themselves to be the first to move. It is for you, scholars of the American public schools, to arouse a sentiment in your schools and in your neighborhoods for this grand day of celebrating the finding of America. Educators and teachers will meet you from their side. But it is for you to begin.

There are 13,000,000 now in the public schools. You have the chance to conduct a patriotic movement which will have a place in history, and will strengthen the republic through the coming century.

What to Do.

The first thing to do is to determine, when you read this message, that you will do all you can to induce your school to enter the celebration. Then show this message to your teachers; every patriotic teacher will be glad to help you if you show yourselves in earnest. Take the message to the school committee and the superintendent—their consent and aid are indispensable.

After you secure the support of all these, then let the school vote that it will enter the celebration.

The next thing after this public vote will be the appointment of a strong committee made up jointly from citizens, scholars and teachers to take charge. The committee should in all cases consist of those most in earnest, so that the work may not be checked by any possible change of teachers during the summer.

The Programme.

A programme of exercises will be furnished by the executive committee. It will be simple and adapted to any school, yet so arranged that more elaborate exercises may be added wherever desired. The aim of this official programme will be that certain leading exercises may be the same in every school in the republic, and that at least in one feature the Chicago programme and the school programme may be identical.

In due time this executive committee will make further suggestions.

The Local Committee.

The duty of your committee will first be to interest the citizens and to prepare the school. Processions may be arranged. The veterans, both north and south, will gladly be escorts for the schools. The other military, civic and religious organizations of each town will lend their aid if they see that the schools are determined that the celebration shall be worthy of the day. The local press will be the most valuable of all supports.

On Oct. 12 the stars and stripes should be floating from every school house in the republic. It is the hope of the friends of common school education that not one public school in the United States will allow itself to be left out in this most memorable celebration.

Executive Committee.

Francis Bellamy, chairman, representing Youth's Companion, Boston.

John W. Dickinson, secretary of Massachusetts board of education.

Thomas B. Stockwell, commissioner of public schools of Rhode Island.

W. B. Garrett, superintendent of public instruction of Tennessee.

W. C. Hewitt, superintendent of Michigan educational exhibit at World's fair.

THE SHIPS OF COLUMBUS.

A Description of the Great Discoverer's Little Squadron.

The approach of the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America cannot fail to awaken a reverence for the Genoese mariner whose intrepid daring and enthusiasm changed the destiny of mankind.

Columbus was by profession a sailor, and his great maritime knowledge won for him the command of many ships. During his numerous voyages he formed his purpose of sailing westward to find a nearer way to India. It was at the little Spanish port of Palos that Columbus prepared the expedition for which Ferdinand and Isabella had supplied the means.

Of his three ships the Santa Maria, the flagship of the little squadron, was the largest, the Pinta and Nina being



SANTA MARIA.

of about equal size. Columbus chose three small ships rather than one large vessel, with the hope that out of the three one at least would weather the stormy passage and live to return.

They were designed and constructed upon a model of the old type of craft known as the caravel, which included in its class all vessels from 50 to 100 tons, with or without decks.

The Santa Maria was no larger than the little schooners engaged in fishing on the Great Banks, or about equal in tonnage to the stanch pilot boats which cruise along our coast in all weathers. This vessel upon which Columbus sailed was eighty-five feet long, twenty-four feet wide and drew eight feet of water. Her bottom was made very flat, in order that she might be run upon the shore or sandy beach without undue strain to her timbers. Her extreme width was at the water line where the hull bulges out several feet beyond the upper structure at the deck. This form of "tumbling home," as it is termed in the vernacular of the sailor, is rarely seen in ships of modern design and construction, although this build can be seen in a modified degree in many of the old frigates now relegated to "ordinary" in our navy yards.

Ancient shipbuilders held that bulging out the sides of a vessel prevented her rolling in a heavy sea, and accordingly her decks would not be exposed to the sweep of heavy surges breaking close aboard.

The Santa Maria had but one deck. At the bow was a house called the forecastle, in which the petty officers slept and also a part of the crew. Across the stern of the ship was a second house called the after castle, above which ran a deck called the poop deck or quarter deck. A small watch tower was erected on the poop deck as the post of duty for the officer of the watch. The admiral of the fleet occupied the after cabin, the officers of high rank being permitted to share it with him, while the rest of the crew was quartered in the hold and in such parts of the ship as were not utilized for stowing provisions and ballast.

The after part of these ships towered many feet above the crest of the wave, and when running before heavy following seas the deckhouses were rarely swept by them, no matter how severe the gale before which the ship was driven.

The Pinta and Nina, sister ships of the squadron, were about seventy feet in length, the Nina, however, being a little smaller in tonnage than the Pinta. These vessels were not decked fore and aft like the Santa Maria, although each had deckhouses, or castles, at the bow and stern.

Today it would be a foolhardy venture to dispatch vessels without decks on a mission across a boisterous sea. Yet these ships were constructed so solidly of well seasoned oak timber, planked

with fir and secured by heavy iron bolts, as to withstand the battle of the elements during that long and weary journey over the trackless Atlantic. On account of these ships being built high at the ends and low amidships, high seas would often be taken upon the decks when sailing with a side wind, and to prevent this high stanchions or posts were inserted in the upper planks of the rails, to which screens of heavy canvas were laced, making a temporary bulwark, which proved to be very effective in keeping out the water. In the case of the two smaller ships heavy mats and large tarpaulins were stretched across the beams to keep the water from running into the holds and swamping them; the vessels of four centuries ago were not supplied with pumps.

The Santa Maria was rigged with four masts—the three foremost ones being fit-



PINTA.

ted with yards or square rigged, while the after mast was supplied with lateen sails. A long bowsprit projected from her bow, but carried no jibs or head sails. No sails were carried aloft above the topsails.

During favorable winds a sail was set under the bowsprit reaching to the water, and known as the watersail or spritsail. This sail fell into disuse over two centuries ago.

The Pinta and Nina were caravels, but rigged exclusively with lateen sails. The former, however, was partially square rigged prior to sailing, and the latter was similarly changed before the fleet left the Canaries from Palos. Ships in the days of Columbus were supposed to make headway through the water only when the wind blew in a favorable direction. The idea of tacking against a head wind was entirely unknown to the mariners of the past, notwithstanding the fact that ships have been propelled by sail power alone for thousands of years. Yet in spite of all these obstacles and disadvantages we find in the logbook of the Santa Maria that a speed of seven knots an hour was not an unusual occurrence.

As it was customary to employ oars against contrary winds, the crews of the ships were necessarily larger in proportion to their size than in modern ships. No less than 120 men were employed to sail the ships of Columbus.

The officers were known as the patron or captain, watchman or first mate, a counselor or navigator, the master of the deck, a scribe or secretary who wrote the ship's log, a steward and a surgeon.

The rigging consisted entirely of hemp. Their anchor cables were hemp hawsers, each following the old rule of four times the mainmast in length. Each ship was supplied with a boat called a launch, which was always towed astern. Refractory sailors were punished by being placed in the launch for many days upon short allowances and exposed to the heat of the sun and heavy drenching of the waves.

Although the compass was known to the Arabs long before Columbus and by the Chinese as far back as the beginning of the Christian era, yet this instrument was in itself not sufficient to navigate a vessel over an unknown sea. The quadrant, an instrument known to Columbus as the astrolabe, was supplied to each ship; by its use in astronomical observations the ship's position upon the high seas with respect to the equator could be readily ascertained, and also errors existing in the compasses causing the ships to deviate from their true courses were found and the proper adjustments accordingly made.

Thus Columbus was able to embark and sail away with that feeling of self reliance which had won him success on all his previous expeditions. The little town of Palos, then the greatest seaport on the Mediterranean, never sent out a grander marine spectacle than when Columbus embarked and weighed anchor and stood boldly down the Rio Tinto to sea, followed closely in his wake by the Pinta and Nina. The lavish golden carvings which decorated these ships, the red and yellow standards of Spain, the gay streamers floating in the breeze from every mast and spar, these altogether presented to the cheering crowds gathered on the wharves, house-tops and neighboring hills a picturesque sight. It was indeed the crowning spectacle of the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella.

LIEUT. R. H. UBERROTH, U. S. N. M.

A MEMORABLE ANNIVERSARY.

October 12 Unites Four Centuries of American Life.

October 12 will have a prominent place in history. It not only unites the four centuries of American life that are closing with the centuries that are before us, but it will be made memorable by a great national celebration. The signal for this demonstration will be the dedication of the World's Columbian exposition grounds in Chicago.

On that day our foremost American institution—the public school—will be the center of local celebrations in the cities and towns from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

By linking together all these local celebrations as parts of a systematic national demonstration the full significance of the day will be brought out.

The object for this movement for a national celebration is not only to interest the youth of the country in the World's Columbian exposition, but also to give to the American public school a fitting prominence as the fruit of four centuries of American life.

Both the World's congress commission of the Columbian exposition and the American superintendents of education have requested that the public schools of each city and town lead in the local celebration. These two bodies have also appointed a joint executive committee to direct the movement and to prepare a uniform and fitting programme for universal use.

Every wideawake boy and girl in our land has read or will read the message issued by the Columbian public school celebration commission with keen interest. It speaks a vigorous word to every one of the several million pupils in our public schools. How far the spirit of this message is carried out depends upon each individual boy and girl. We believe they will respond to it promptly and enthusiastically. They are too thoroughly imbued with the true spirit of American loyalty and patriotism to permit such an opportunity to be lost. They will enter into the spirit of this important event with characteristic American energy and determination.

It is an inspiring thought that on Oct. 12 all the loyal sons and daughters of our land will be united by one common purpose of such lofty conception. We believe that the pupils in our public schools will prove as enterprising and intelligently patriotic as those of any city or town in America. Don't wait until the eleventh hour. If our schools are to attempt to be the center of a local celebration which shall be worthy of the day there is none too much time for preparation. Let the schools begin at once. Teachers and scholars should make common cause.



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