

## *The New Colossus* by Emma Lazarus, New York City, 1883

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glowes worldwide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame,  
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she  
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Lazarus' sonnet was hardly noticed until after her death, when a patron of the New York arts found it in a small portfolio of poems written in 1883 to raise money for the construction of the Statue of Liberty's pedestal. The patron, Georgina Schuyler, arranged to have its last five lines become a permanent part of the statue itself.

Lazarus contrasts the soon-to-be installed Statue of Liberty with the symbol of the Greek and Roman era, the Colossus of Rhodes. Bartholdi himself created the Statue of Liberty with the well-known Colossus in mind. What Bartholdi did not intend, however, was for the Statue of Liberty to become a symbol of welcome for thousands of European immigrants.

The Statue of Liberty was first intended to be a path of enlightenment for the countries of Europe still battling tyranny and oppression. Lazarus' words, however, turned that idea on its head: the Statue of Liberty would forever on be considered a beacon of welcome for immigrants *leaving* their mother countries.

Lazarus' poem gave new meaning to the statue and for the United States. Liberty did not only mean freedom from the aristocracy of Britain that led the American colonists to the Revolutionary War. *Liberty also meant* freedom to come to the United States and create a new life without religious and *ethnic persecution*.

Through Lazarus' poem, the Statue of Liberty gained a new name: She would now become the "Mother of Exiles," torch in hand to lead her new children to American success and happiness.