



CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

THE
CITIZEN READER

H. O. Arnold-Forster

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

Publisher's Note

The Citizen Reader by H. O. Arnold-Forster was originally written in the late 19th century as an educational book for British schoolchildren. It reflects the values, beliefs, and perspectives of its time, particularly regarding government, empire, and national identity. While much of the book provides valuable insights into civic duty, governance, and history, some passages express outdated and unfortunate views on race and colonialism that do not align with modern understanding.

These aspects serve as a reminder of how perspectives on society and culture have evolved. Rather than dismissing the work entirely, we encourage readers to approach it with a critical eye—appreciating its useful lessons while recognizing its historical limitations. Thoughtful engagement with historical texts allows us to learn both from their strengths and their shortcomings.

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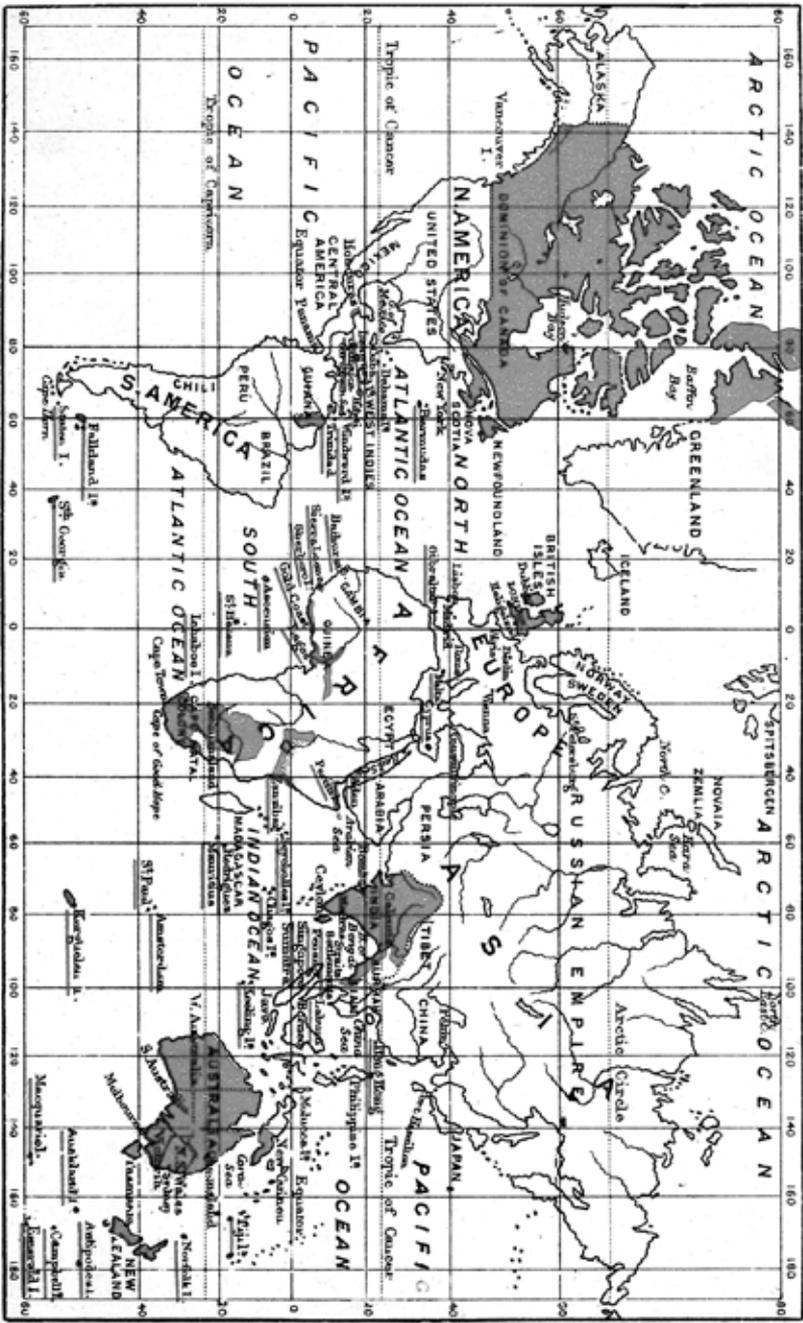
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The Citizen Reader

by

ARNOLD FORSTER





MAP OF THE WORLD
(British Possessions Coloured Red)

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PREFACE.

THIS "Citizen Reader" seems to me a successful attempt to fill a gap in school books which I am surprised has not been filled before. There is no doubt that the enormous majority of school children will have public as well as private duties to perform—the boys, in most cases, by direct action, and the girls by indirect but powerful influence. They will be called upon not only to lead an upright life and to do what they rightly can to help those who are bound to them by family ties, but it will also be their duty to serve their country as patriotic citizens; and the fulfilment of this duty will be greatly aided by some knowledge of the institutions of their country.

The object of this book is to describe, in language which a child can understand, the principles and purpose of our institutions, the machinery of our administration, and also to tell children what ought to be the principles which should actuate them as patriotic citizens.

The last aim is, without doubt, a difficult one. It is not easy to fulfil it without affronting prejudices or, indeed, honest convictions. But I think any unbiased reader will admit that there is little, if anything, in this book which will not be accepted by men of all creeds and parties.

It is well known that our English educational system is almost alone in the refusal of Government either to prescribe or to authorise school books. There is much to be said for and against this course, but, on the other hand, the Education Code, by permitting the use of a variety of Readers in our elementary schools, gives ample opportunity for the introduction of works such as this. Already much has been done by the issue of specially prepared books to instruct children with regard to history, science, and other branches of learning. Why should not a similar effort be made to instruct them in the duties of citizenship? I need not dwell upon what must be apparent to all, namely, that there is special fitness in the appearance of a book of

this kind at a time when we have just added millions to the citizens who have the right of electing representatives.

I can, therefore, commend the "Citizen Reader" to the consideration of those who are interested in education, as a fair and, in my opinion, not unsuccessful attempt to supply a deficiency which has remained too long unfilled.

W. E. FORSTER.

London, 1885.

NOTE TO SEVENTH EDITION:

SOME fresh illustrations have been inserted in the present edition, and the statistics of population corrected up to date, Jan. 1887.

NOTE TO EIGHTH EDITION:

FOUR pages of new matter have been added in this edition to the chapter on Taxation.

NOTE TO TENTH EDITION:

THE present edition contains a considerable number of fresh illustrations prepared especially for this work.

NOTE TO FOURTEENTH EDITION:

THE institution of County Councils under the Act of 1888 has made it necessary to insert a few pages explaining the nature and functions of these important bodies.

INTRODUCTION

THIS work is intended to instruct boys and girls in our elementary schools with regard to their rights, duties, and privileges as British citizens. It contains an account, in simple and popular language, of the principles of the legislative and administrative arrangements of the country, explains the meaning and value of our chief popular liberties, and describes the duties owed by British citizens to their country, their countrymen, and themselves.

“The life of a people grows; it is knit together and yet expanded, in joy and sorrow, in thought and action. It absorbs the thought of other nations into its own forms, and gives back the thought as new wealth to the world. It is a power and an organ in the great body of the nations. But there may come a check, an arrest; memories may be stifled, and love may be faint for the lack of them; or memories may shrink into withered relics—the soul of a people—whereby they know themselves to be one, may seem to be dying for want of common action. But who shall say, ‘The fountain of their life is dried up; they shall forever cease to be a nation’? Who shall say it? Not he who feels the life of his people stirring within his own. Shall he say, ‘That way events are wending; I will not resist’? His very soul is resistance and is as a seed of fire that may enkindle the souls of multitudes and make a new pathway for events.”

GEORGE ELIOT

CHAPTER I.
WHAT IS MEANT BY BEING
A GOOD CITIZEN

“I am a citizen of no mean city.”

I.
The Country We Belong To.

1. THE words taken as the motto of this chapter were used by St. Paul, and the city of which he spoke was Tarsus, in Asia Minor.

2. The words which he uttered may certainly be repeated by every one of us; and if St. Paul was proud of being a citizen of Tarsus, we who live in England or in any part of the great British Empire may indeed say with pride that we, too, are “citizens of no mean country.”

3. Look at the map at the beginning of this book, and think what is meant by all those red patches which you will see dotted over every part of it.

4. They mean that, in every part of the world so marked, there are countrymen of ours living and working; that in every continent and in every climate there are men and women who read the same English Bible that we read, who enjoy the same great books that we enjoy—Shakespeare, Milton, Burns; men and women who look back to the same history that we look back to, who speak our language, who use our laws, and who are ready to share our dangers and to rejoice in our good fortune.

5. Some of you, perhaps, have friends across the sea, and in that way, you may have learnt to understand that there are Englishmen

far away from England who live lives like ours at home. And all of you ought to remember that the great nation to which you belong, and of which I hope you are all proud, is far bigger than the two little islands which make up the kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and that it extends everywhere where the English language is spoken by men who live under English law and under the English flag.

Why We Are Proud of Our Country.

6. I said that I hoped you were all proud of your country, but I trust you did not think that I wished you to be proud of it only because it was big. That would be a great mistake. It would be just as sensible to say that a man was a good man simply because he was a big one, as to say that a country was to be admired because it covered a great many square miles. You know that what makes a man great and honourable is what he does and not what he looks like.

7. Some of the weakest and smallest men have yet been the noblest and the most useful. St. Paul himself, whose words we read just now, was a man who had no great strength; he tells us, indeed, that he was "in bodily presence weak, and in speech contemptible." It is the spirit and mind of a man that give him his power; and so it is with England or with any other country: it will be truly great and honourable only if it does things which in themselves are honourable and worthy. If England does wrong, and uses its power to injure others unjustly, then, however big and strong the country may be, however victorious in war, however prosperous in peace, there will be no reason to be proud of it.

England Is What We Make It.

8. But I have been talking to you about England doing right and England doing wrong, and I think it is time you should ask me what I mean by England and how it is that I can speak about a great country as if I were speaking of a man or a woman.

9. When we speak of a country doing right and wrong, we mean that the people who live in it, and who decide how it shall be governed, have chosen the good way or the bad way. Who is it, then, that makes England do right or wrong? Who is it that makes it a country to be proud of or a country to be ashamed of? Think for yourselves a moment, and you will see that it is you and I, and all of us who take any part in governing the country, who decide the matter. And remember that all of you who grow up to be men will have votes, and will help to send members to Parliament, so that you will really and truly help to govern the country.¹

10. But giving votes for members of Parliament is not by any means the only way in which you will be able to make a difference. Nor is it the men only who help or harm the country. The women are just as much bound to think of the part they ought to play in making England great and happy as the men. If they care about doing it, there will always be plenty of ways in which they can set to work.

11. You will see now that it is no good talking about the greatness of the country or pretending to be proud of it unless we who live in the country really do something to make it great, and of which we, and those who come after us, have a right to be proud.

II.

How to Become a Good Citizen

1 At the time *The Citizen Reader* was written, voting rights were generally restricted to men in many countries. Women's suffrage movements around the world fought for equal voting rights, leading to significant changes in the 20th century. Below are key dates when women gained the right to vote in various countries:

New Zealand – 1893 (first self-governing country to grant women voting rights)

Australia – 1902 (excluding Indigenous women in some states until 1962)

United Kingdom – 1918 (for women over 30); 1928 (equal voting rights with men at 21)

Canada – 1917–1918 (gradual; full voting rights for Indigenous women in 1960)

United States – 1920 (19th Amendment)

South Africa – 1930 (for white women; full voting rights for all women in 1994)

1. I am going to try in this book to explain to you what are the ways in which this country is governed, and to show you how our laws are made, and why we should obey them, to point out the best ways in which you can serve the country, and how you can become really good and useful citizens.

2. It is perhaps hard to understand at first how there can be any difference between being a good citizen and being a good man or woman. And in one sense, it is true, there is no difference; for a bad man or a bad woman will never be a really good citizen. But while I want you not to forget this, I want you to give your special attention to those things which people have to do for the sake of others, quite apart from their own family and friends, in order that the country may be wisely and justly governed, and may be respected and honoured by foreign nations.

Private Duties

3. You will easily see what I mean if I give you an example. Suppose you or I were to be living, like Robinson Crusoe, alone on an island. Although we were quite alone, we should still be just as much bound to try and do right, as far as we were able, as if we lived in a busy town.

4. We should not be cruel to animals; we should try and keep our body in health, so that our mind might be clear and healthy too; and you may be sure there are other ways also in which we should find opportunities of choosing the right or the wrong way. But if we were asked to do the duties of a good citizen, I certainly think we should be puzzled about how to set about it.

5. And so, too, in our own families, there are hundreds of ways in which we may do our duty or avoid doing it. But whether we do it or not will depend upon how we have been taught by our parents, how much we love those who are near to us, and will have very little to do with our duties as citizens.

6. But when we come to live in a great and busy country like this,

where there are millions of people all working in different ways and for different ends, when we have to act in such a way that we shall do no injustice to others nor suffer injustice ourselves, then we must directly begin to think about what I will call public duty, and we must make up our minds how we should behave so that not only we in our own homes shall be happy and prosperous, but that all our fellow countrymen, rich and poor, high and low, may be happy and prosperous too. To learn how to do this is to learn how to become a good citizen.

The Common Rule

7. But though the things we may have to do as citizens are different from what we have to do as private people among our own family and friends, there is no difference in the rules which ought to guide us in the one case and in the other, and that is why it is worthwhile to begin thinking about these questions while we are young and still at school.

8. The very same lessons of kindness, truth, honour, and obedience which you learn at home from your parents, at school from your teachers, and in church or chapel from your clergymen, ministers, and priests, have to be remembered and acted upon when you grow up, and become voters, or taxpayers, soldiers, sailors, or jurymen; in fact, in all the things which you may ever have to do for the good of your country and the welfare of your countrymen.

9. Just as at home it is sometimes your duty to deny yourself some amusement or advantage for the sake of your mother and sisters or friends, or, again, as you may possibly have to suffer some pain or inconvenience for their good; so it often becomes the duty of men and women, when they grow up, to deny themselves advantages, to suffer loss or pain, not that their own friends and relations among whom they live may be the better, but that all the people of this country may gain, that England may do what is just and right—that England may help, and not injure, those who live in foreign countries.

How Lancashire Did Its Duty

10. I will give you one or two examples of men and women doing their duty in this way as citizens, which will show you what I mean better than I can explain it to you. Not very long ago, in the year 1861, a great war broke out across the Atlantic, in the United States of America. It was one of those terrible wars which are called “civil wars,” that is to say, those who fought on either side belonged to the same nation and were really one people.

11. The war began about a dispute between the States in the North and the States in the South as to their exact rights of interfering with each other in the making of laws. But before long, it became quite clear that the real question which both sides were determined to settle was a very different one—it was the question of whether there should be any more slaves in the United States or not.

12. The Northern States had given up slavery themselves, and they were determined that it should come to an end in the South too. The “Southerners,” who employed the slaves to cultivate their cotton plantations, were equally determined not to give up their right to buy and sell the negroes and to make them work for them for nothing. But you will perhaps ask what all this has to do with English citizens and their duties. I am coming to that, and when I have told you a little more, I think you will see that it has a great deal to do with it.

13. I said that the “Southerners” required their slaves to cultivate the cotton for them. The cotton, as you know, is a plant from the pod of which is taken the material which is spun into calico to make shirts and handkerchiefs, and a hundred other things which we use every day.

14. At the time of the war in the United States, nearly all the cotton grown in the South was sent to Lancashire and there spun and woven in the mills by English factory hands. No less than 800,000 people were employed in the various mills. But before the war had been going on long, it became clear that the cotton would be prevented from reaching Liverpool, for in order to conquer the Southern States, the Northern

States ordered their ships to stop all vessels carrying cotton from the Southern harbours. What is called a blockade was declared, and the different ports were soon really blocked.

15. This all happened thousands of miles away, but its effect was very soon felt near home. In Lancashire, the supply of cotton ran short, the mills were compelled to stop running, and the thousands of people who were employed in them were thrown out of work. To be out of work was to be out of wages, and before long, many were actually starving, while very many more were supported by charity only. The distress increased even faster than the means of relief, and although nearly three million pounds were given by the Government, or subscribed by friends of the sufferers, the greatest misery prevailed.

16. It was plain to everybody that if the South were to be victorious, or if the North were made to give up the blockade, the cotton would soon begin to pour into Liverpool again, and there were many people in England at the time who did all they could to help the South and to try and make Parliament take their part.

17. But in spite of their suffering, the working men of Lancashire would never consent to help the cause of slavery. They knew that across the Atlantic the Northerners were fighting in the cause of freedom and justice against the bullets of the enemy. They were determined that they, at least, would not make the battle harder for the friends of right, and that, at any rate, as far as they were concerned, our country should do its duty, even though they had to suffer for it.

18. And so, as good citizens, they put into practice the rule of right which they had learnt to be a just one in their own families and their own business, and they stood up all through the war for the cause of liberty. Lancashire would not join in the cry against the North, and thus the Government were able to keep up their friendship with the United States and avoid the terrible consequences of a great war. This is an instance of how we can do our duty as citizens in big things, but

I could give you plenty of examples of how needful it is to do it in small things too.

III.

How We Can Help the Country

1. Every time one of us is courteous and civil to a foreigner, he is doing his part as a good citizen, for he is helping to make his country liked and respected abroad. Every time a man walks to the polling place and gives his vote honestly for a member of Parliament, he is doing his part as a good citizen in helping to make the Government of the country honest and fair.

2. Every time a mother sends her child to school, she is doing her duty as a good citizen, for the law says that all children must be educated, and it is the part of a good citizen to obey the law. And lastly, every boy or girl who goes to school willingly and cheerfully is doing his or her duty as a good citizen, for of course it would be no good at all for the law to send children to school if the children themselves wasted their time and neglected their work when they got there.

3. So you will see that there are many ways, both great and small, in which we may all of us show that we are good citizens and are willing to serve our country.

4. And lastly, there is one other and most important way in which we may help our country, help our neighbours, and help ourselves, and that is to be careful in our own lives to live honestly and well, for no amount of good laws, no great victories, and no great riches will make a country great if the people who live in it do not try themselves to be true and just in all their dealings, remembering that to rule oneself is the first step to being able to rule others.

Two Ways of Doing Our Duty

5. These and all the other things which I shall have to mention to you are matters with which every one of you may at some time or another have to do when you grow up. Some of them, indeed, you have a good deal to do with now.

6. There will always be two ways of doing your duty as good citizens. The one way is to do it because you are obliged, and because you cannot help it. The other, and the better way, is to do it because you understand it, and because you feel that in doing it well you are helping at the same time your country, your countrymen, and yourself. We very often have to do things during our lives of which we do not understand the reasons, but the more clearly we understand the work we have to do, depend upon it, the better the work will be done.

7. And now I must come to the real lessons I want you to learn in order that you may become good and useful citizens. There are some rules we must all learn and some things we must all be able to do; but the most important thing of all is to learn what we have to learn and to do what we have to do in the proper spirit.

8. And that is why, before I tell you anything about laws and law-making, and voting, and other very important matters, I am going to give up a chapter to explaining to you what is meant by *Patriotism*, because if you understand that, you will see also how in all that we do as citizens we can serve our country as well as ourselves.

CHAPTER II.
PATRIOTISM

“Not once nor twice in our rough island story
The path of duty was the way to glory.” – *Tennyson*

IV.
What the Word Means

1. PATRIOTISM comes from the Latin word *Patria*², and means love of one’s country or of one’s fatherland. The words patriotism and patriotic are often misused and misunderstood, but when properly and truly understood, they describe a great and worthy feeling, which ought to fill the mind of every man and woman. It is right that every man and woman should love the country in which they live, and on whose good fortune their own happiness depends. You all know that the first love which we have is for our own family and our own friends: we wish them to succeed, and we wish them to be happy; nay, more, we try to make them so.

2. And what is true of the small circle of our friends and relations is true also of the larger circles into which we are brought as we grow older. Boys and girls, when they go to school, are nearly always proud of their school and are anxious for its credit and good name. A boy wishes his own school to be the best at cricket, at football, at examinations, in winning scholarships, in work, and in play; and you will see just the same thing among grown-up people: each county,

2 *Pater* means father; *Patria*, fatherland.

each regiment, each district will be proud of its own history and anxious to add to its own good fame.

3. If it be rightly understood and rightly acted upon, this feeling is a very good and a very helpful one, for a man who tries to do better than his neighbour must needs do well himself. A schoolboy who tries to keep up the credit of his school, a soldier who longs to add to the fame of his regiment, will always feel that much is expected of him by others, and as a rule, a boy or a man will do more the more you expect of him.

4. And so it is with patriotism and the love of country: those who really love their country and are truly proud of its great history will be particularly careful not to do anything by which it may be dishonoured. On the other hand, they will always try with all their power to place their country before all others in every right and noble work, and so it comes about that they will often give up their lives and their fortunes, not that their own immediate friends and families may be the gainers, but in order that their country may be saved from danger, and that others may think well of it.

5. There are many instances in our long history in which countrymen of ours have given up life and wealth for their country, and we who are alive now owe much to what they have suffered and sacrificed.

The True Patriot

6. Every British citizen ought to remember one very important thing about the patriotism which has made our country what it is. Those who love their country best are content to serve it without the hope of immediate reward or even the encouragement of praise.

7. Sometimes it may be that the very act which is performed for the sake of England is done far away from any friendly eye, with no certainty that friends at home will ever even know of it, and yet, for the sake of duty and love of country, the deed will be done.

The Magazine at Delhi

8. There is a story of a brave action, done during the great mutiny in India, which will show you very clearly what I mean. It was at the time when the Sepoys, or native soldiers, in a great part of India had risen against the English. In many places, all the white people had been killed; in others, they had been shut up and besieged in different forts and towns. There were very few English soldiers ready, and it seemed at one time as if every Englishman would be killed or driven out of India.

9. The great city of Delhi, in the north of India, was surrounded by the Sepoys, and had they taken it, the danger would at once have increased tenfold, for at Delhi was the great magazine in which were kept the gunpowder, the arms, and the stores which the English Government had provided for the use of the army. If once the Sepoys had got possession of the powder and arms, they would doubtless have been able to beat our small armies and to gain a complete victory.

10. But into the magazine at Delhi the Sepoys never got, for in it were a handful of English soldiers who were determined that, if the sacrifice of their lives could prevent it, the danger to their fellow-countrymen should not be increased. The enemy surrounded the magazine. Lieutenant Willoughby and his brave comrades knew well that to defend it was impossible, but they were determined that it should not be taken.

11. A train of gunpowder was laid down to the magazine, and as the enemy began to swarm over the walls, Willoughby gave the signal to light the match. "A roar followed as if the earth were splitting asunder, and while all Delhi, from the bank of the Jumna to the Cashmere Gate, shook and trembled, the mighty magazine exploded, and for a time a dark cloud overhung the palace and the city. Hundreds of the mutineers were blown into the air, but none of the brave defenders escaped without injury.

12. "Conductor Scully was so dreadfully wounded that for him

escape was impossible. Willoughby and Forrest succeeded in reaching the Cashmere Gate. The latter escaped, and the former was murdered on the road to Meerut; but Buckley and another reached headquarters in safety.”

13. Such is the story of the Magazine of Delhi. What I want you to notice in it is that these men, who thus risked their lives for their country, did so far away from the eye of friends and without any of the encouragement which cheers those who do their duty in the sight of friends, and with the hope of reward.

V.

The Story of Columbus, and Its Lesson

1. Sometimes men and women may act in what they believe the best way for their country, even though at the time the wisdom and usefulness of what they are doing is not seen by those among whom they live, and their only reward at the time is hatred and mistrust. Not till long after is the good work they have done seen and understood by their countrymen.

2. Some of you will perhaps remember the story of Columbus, the great discoverer of America. What a difference to the world Columbus's discovery has made, it is impossible to exaggerate. Yet at the time, neither was the importance of his work understood by his countrymen, nor did he himself receive the honour and encouragement which his bravery and perseverance deserved. The story of Columbus and his adventures is a very sad one.

3. Four times did Columbus cross the Atlantic Ocean in the service of his country. The wonders of the New World were, for the first time, thrown open to those who lived in the Old World by his courage, his perseverance, and his skill. And what was the reward which he received during his lifetime for what he had done? Abandoned in his old age by King Ferdinand of Spain, to whose power



COLUMBUS DISCOVERING AMERICA.

and wealth he had added so much, he was refused not only generous treatment but even a fair hearing for his claims.

4. Suffering from a painful illness and worn out with the hardships of a life of danger and exposure, he tried in vain to gain the favour of the Court, if not for himself, at least for his son whom he was leaving behind him. The king was deaf to his appeal, and the greatest discoverer whom the world has ever known was left to die in sorrow and pain by those upon whom he had the greatest claim.

5. Let me give you an account of the death of Columbus by the great American writer, Washington Irving: -

“The cares and troubles of Columbus were drawing to a close. The momentary fire which had reanimated him was soon quenched by accumulating infirmities. His last voyage had shattered beyond repair a frame already worn and wasted by a life of hardships; and continual anxieties robbed him of that sweet repose so necessary to remit the weariness and debility of age.

6. “The cold ingratitude of his sovereign chilled his heart. The continued suspension of his honours, and the enmity and defamation experienced at every turn, seemed to throw a shadow over that glory which had been the great object of his ambition. This shadow, it is true, could be but of transient duration, but it is difficult for the most illustrious man to look beyond the present cloud which may obscure his fame, and anticipate its permanent lustre in the admiration of posterity.”

7. We who have seen the cloud lifted, and who know that in our day Columbus's great work is fully understood, and that he himself is remembered not only by his own country of Spain but by all countries both in Europe and America as one of the noblest of the world's heroes, can feel true sorrow for the poor dying man, to whom the injustice of his lot was so clear, and who could not know what honour would be paid to his name when he was dead.

8. More than this, we may find in his story an example of how