

# EMMA LAZARUS



”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-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

Emma Lazarus



**EMMA LAZARUS** (1849-1887), descended from an American colonial family, was still in her teens when she began publishing her poems. The young aristocrat formed a friendship with Emerson, who had recognized her talents and went out of his way to help her. Although not unaware of the sufferings of the Jews abroad, she did not concern herself with their problems until the year 1881, after the first pogroms in Russia. It was then that she began to write prose and poetry distinguished by Jewish content and an impassioned Jewish concern. She became completely absorbed by the plight of the East European immigrants who were flocking to American shores. Asked to compose a poem which might be auctioned off to provide a pedestal

for the Bartholdi Statue of Liberty, she composed her famous sonnet “The New Colossus,” depicted in this poster. Emma Lazarus never achieved the rank of great American writer, one to be numbered among the “immortals,” but the fourteen beautiful lines of her sonnet will always live on in American Jewish hearts. The sonnet is embossed on a bronze plaque attached to the base of the towering monument to Liberty Enlightening the World which is viewed every year by countless numbers of people from all over the globe. American Jewry is inordinately proud of Emma Lazarus because of her accomplishments as a writer and her exemplary devotion to her fellow Jews.