

THE BATTLE OF LANGEMARCK.

By T. A. Browne, Immigration Branch.

The Battle of Langemarck, where the Canadians saved the day and gained unfading glory, is the theme round which Mr. Browne has written this splendid poem, accurate in incident and action of that historic struggle. It is a fitting tribute to a glorious landmark in the history of Canadian patriotism.

When men shall say who saved the day in years that are to be;
When veterans back from war's grim track again abide with me;
When peace regains her throne and reigns and silent are the guns,
I'll think with pride of those who died and say "they were my sons."

I sent them from their peaceful tasks, those strong young sons of mine;
I saw them swinging down the street, I saw them stand in line.
My unbronzed of the counting-house, my sun-tanned from the farms,
I sent them forth, sons of the North, my gallant men at arms.

With summer's fading rose they went, I well recall the day;
The gold was on the maple leaf, the birds were on the spray,
And through the long white winter time I waited for the spring,
For word to tell me how they served their country and their King.

And then I heard the tolling bells and saw the flags half-mast.
Why should I weep in springtime with the long, white winter past?
And why are all the people stirred and what is it they say?
My boys have dared, have fought and shared the glory of the fray.

Across the sea, afar from me, they've met the dreaded Huns
At Langemarck, in Flanders, my gallant Northern sons.
Near Ypres, in the lowlands, three thousand miles away,
Across the wave, my children brave have died—but saved the day.

In grim array that April day, entrenched the Allies lay,
To bar the path of Prussian wrath that fumed to reach Calais;
And Ypres town, half battered down, they'd sought with longing eyes,
And they had sworn that very morn to take it as a prize.

And breathing there the battle air beneath the warm sunshine
From Peschendelle to Pollecapelle Canadians held the line;
Then, sudden as the avalanche that rips the mountain side,
The battle broke and through the smoke they met the German tide.

They watched the fume-filled cloudbank rise and spread its stifling rack;
They saw the Belgian veterans and gallant French fall back;
They heard them cry, they saw them fly as men by fiends pursued;
They heard the shout, they saw the rout before that cloud, hell-brewed.

In such a plight as veterans might have blanched before and failed,
They stood uncowed with spirits proud and hearts that never quailed.
Surprised, amazed, a moment dazed, in that tremendous hour,
Like living rocks they met the shocks of mad Germanic power.

They saw the wide breach wider grow, when men in terror fled;
They saw the eager foe leap on o'er the dying and the dead;
And by that foe and through that gap they saw an Empire fall;
Then, in the breach, to front the foe, they threw their living wall.

They threw their living breasts between to stem the German tide,
My volunteers of Canada—they fought as veterans tried.
They fought the boast of Wilhelm's host: they met them hand to hand,
My young men of the counting-house, my ploughboys from the land.