

A New Poem for "O Canada."

By Hon. W. S. Fielding in the *January Canadian Bookman*.

I have heard the song "O Canada" criticized on the ground that for a national song it was too distinctly Canadian, that it lacked an Imperial note, and this point was deemed of some importance at a time when the whole Empire was straining every nerve in the war against a barbarous enemy. I am far from agreeing that the criticism was just. The Englishman, the Scot, the Welshman, or the Irishman is not deemed less loyal to the Empire when he sings of the beauty or the glory of his particular portion of the Kingdom; nor should anybody lack appreciation of the singing by Canadians of "O Canada!" either in the original French form of Hon. Mr. Justice Routhier, or in the form of one of the several English translations that have been made. Out of the criticism, however, this thought came to me: Why should not the stately music of Mr. Lavallee, with which all Canadians are now familiar, be the vehicle of a song at once Canadian and Imperial—a song of Canada, telling of the beauty of its scenery, the richness of its resources, the charm of its history, and, withal, the pride which Canadians feel in their citizenship in the British Empire? The accompanying song is presented as an endeavor to respond to the question:

A new "O Canada."

O Canada* 'neath Northland's brightest skies,
 From loving hearts our songs of praise arise.
 What grandeur in thy rugged heights,
 What charm in wood and stream,
 What beauty in the myriad lights
 That in thy heavens gleam!

Refrain:

O Canada! let heart and hand
 Yield loyal service in this freeman's land!
 For freemen's rights and freemen's duties stand!

O Canada! where health and wealth intwine,
 Where Northern blasts bear fragrance of the pine!
 From soil and mine and lake and sea
 Come riches for thy dower,
 Cascade and river joyously
 Bring wondrous gift of power.