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CHAMPLAIN.

[Written for the Montreal Pen and Pencil Club.]

A hundred years had rolled their changeful rounds  
Since Spain's bold sailors, following in the track  
Of him, the great revealer of the West,  
Sailed far into the sunset. Summer seas  
Of deepest azure, smiling islands clothed  
With densest verdure, cheered their course. The vines,  
Gay with strange flowers and twined from branch to branch,  
Gave shelter from the scorching rays of noon.  
A varied screen of brilliant hues concealed  
The rigid outlines of the lofty peaks  
From shore to summit, and their shadows sank  
Far down into serene translucent depths  
Of placid ocean, carrying hues of earth  
To deck the coral walls and shell-strewn floors  
Where sea-sprites dwelt. They sailed by long low shores,  
Which smoked with fatness in the generous sun ;  
And through the shady groves glanced graceful forms  
Of kindly natives—gentle-mannered, frank.  
With fearless steps and open child-like mien  
They came to meet the strangers—soon to be  
Their pitiless oppressors.

All the while,  
Far to the North, the lonely ocean surged  
'Gainst desolate shores, rock-bound—the summer haunt  
Of screaming wild fowl, and the winter home  
Of bears and wolves and foxes. Scanty tribes  
Of Indians hunted for their hard-won food,  
And gained a bare subsistence. Ocean raged  
Incessant 'gainst that battlemented shore ;  
And the winds wailed amid the forests black  
Of Markland<sup>1</sup>—moaning—weary with lament—  
In utter loneliness ; for no Christian soul  
As yet had dared to tarry in this wild,

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<sup>1</sup> Markland : The name given by the Northmen to the country now known as Nova Scotia.