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NOTICE.

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HOW CANADA WAS SAVED.

PRIZE POEM BY GEORGE MURRAY, B.A.

Late Lusby Scholar and Lucy Exhibitor of the University of Oxford; and formerly Senior Classical Scholar of King's College, London.

The following poem gained the \$50 prize for the best ballad on a Canadian subject offered by the publishers of the WITNESS some time ago. It has been extensively reprinted and generally commented on. The illustrations accompanying the poem were designed by Mr. Harrington Bird of Montreal.

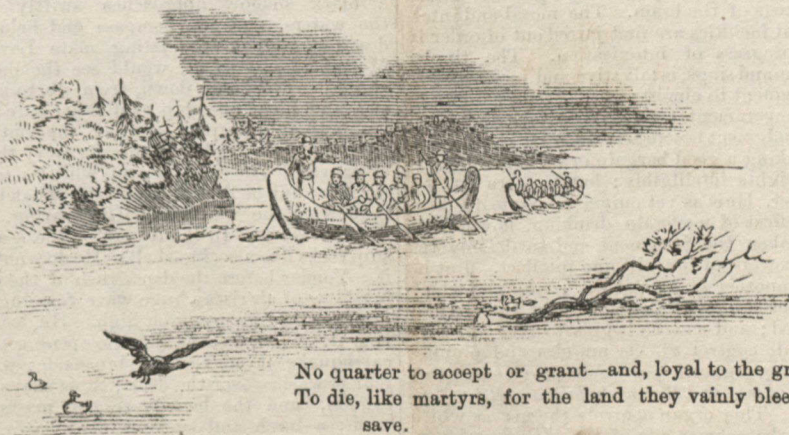
(Time: May, 1660)

"Il faut ici donner la gloire à ces dix-sept François de Montréal et honorer leurs cendres d'un éloge qui leur est due avec justice, et que nous ne pouvons leur refuser sans ingratitude. Tout estait perdu, s'ils n'eussent péri, et leur malheur a sauvé ce pais."—*Relations des Jesuites. Relation, 1660, p. 17.*

Beside the dark (1) Utawas' stream, two hundred years ago,
A wondrous feat of arms was wrought, which all the world should know:
'Tis hard to read with tearless eyes that record of the past—
It stirs the blood, and fires the soul, as with a clarion's blast.
What though no blazoned cenotaph, no sculptured columns tell
Where the stern heroes of my song, in death triumphant, fell;
What though beside the foaming flood un-tomb'd their ashes lie—
All earth (2) becomes the monument of men who nobly die!

A score of troublous years had passed since on Mount-Royal's crest
The gallant Maisonneuve upreared the Cross devoutly bless'd, (3)
And many of the saintly Guild that founded Ville-Marie
With patriot pride had fought and died—determined to be free.
Fiercely, the Iroquois had sworn to sweep, like grains of sand, (4)
The sons of France from off the face of their adopted land,
When, like the steel that oft disarms the lightning of its power,
A fearless few their country saved in danger's darkest hour.

Daulac, the Captain of the Fort—in manhood's fiery prime—
Hath sworn by some immortal deed to make his name sublime, (5)
And sixteen "Soldiers of the Cross," his comrades true and tried,
Have pledged their faith for life and death—all kneeling side by side:
And this their oath—on flood or field, to challenge face to face
The ruthless hordes of Iroquois, the scourges of their race—



No quarter to accept or grant—and, loyal to the grave,
To die, like martyrs, for the land they vainly bleed to save.

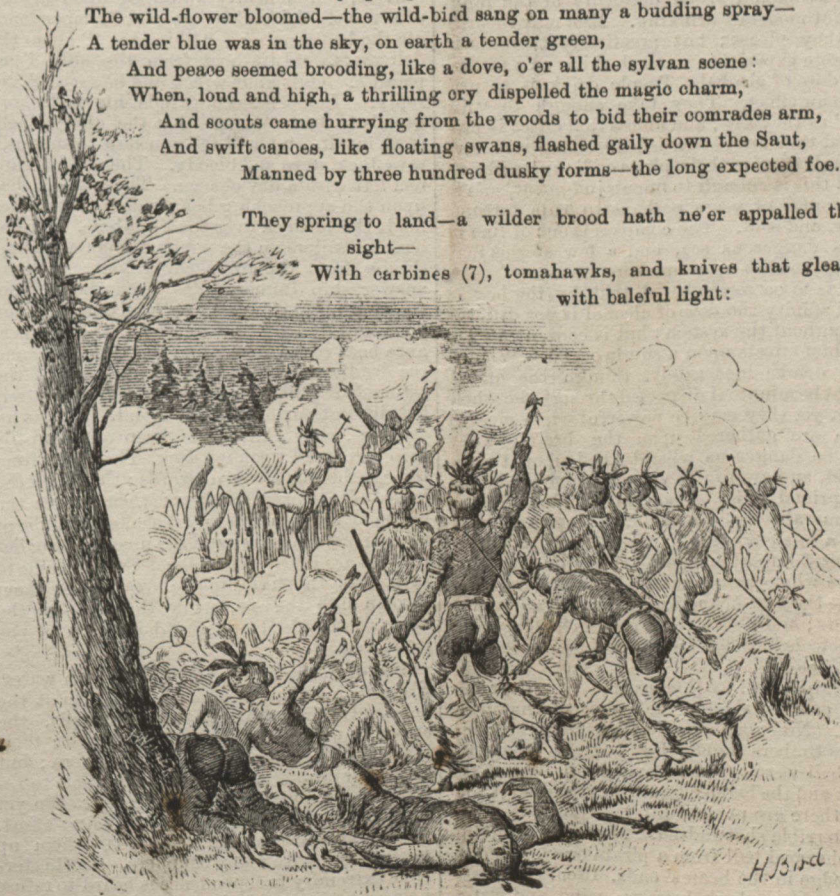
Shrived by the priest within the church where oft they had adored,
With solemn fervor they receive the supper of the Lord:

And now those self-devoted youths from weeping friends have pass'd,
And on the Fort of Ville-Marie each fondly looks his last.
Unskilled to steer the frail canoe, or stem the rushing tide,
On through a virgin wilderness, o'er stream and lake they glide,
Till, weary of the paddle's dip, they moor their barks below
A rapid of Utawas' flood—the turbulent Long Saut. (6)

There, where a grove of gloomy pines sloped gently to the shore,
A moss-grown palisade was seen—a fort in days of yore—
Fenced by its circle they encamped, and on the listening air
Before those staunch Crusaders slept arose the voice of prayer.
Sentry and scout kept watch and ward; and soon, with glad surprise,
They welcomed to their roofless hold a band of dark allies—
Two stalwart chiefs and forty "braves"—all sworn to strike a blow
In one great battle for their lives against the common foe.

Soft was the breath of balmy spring in that fair month of May,
The wild-flower bloomed—the wild-bird sang on many a budding spray—
A tender blue was in the sky, on earth a tender green,
And peace seemed brooding, like a dove, o'er all the sylvan scene:
When, loud and high, a thrilling cry dispelled the magic charm,
And scouts came hurrying from the woods to bid their comrades arm,
And swift canoes, like floating swans, flashed gaily down the Saut,
Manned by three hundred dusky forms—the long expected foe.

They spring to land—a wilder brood hath ne'er appalled the sight—
With carbines (7), tomahawks, and knives that gleam with baleful light:



Dark plumes of eagles crest their chiefs, and brodered deerskins hide
The blood-red war-paint that shall soon a bloodier red be dyed.
Hark! to the death-song that they chant—behold them as they bound,
With flashing eyes and vaunting tongues, defiantly around—
Then, swifter than the wind they fly the barrier to invest,
Like hornet-swarms that heedless boys have startled from a nest.

As Ocean's tempest-driven waves dash forward on a rock,
And madly break in seething foam, hurl'd backward by the shock,
So onward dashed that surging throng, so backward were they hurl'd,
When, from the loopholes of the Fort, flame burst, and vapor curl'd.
Each bullet aimed by bold Daulac went crashing through the brain,
Or pierced the bounding heart of one who never stirred again—
The trampled turf was drenched with blood—blood stained the passing wave—
It seemed a carnival of death, the harvest of the grave.

The sun went down—the fight was o'er—but sleep was not for those,
Who, pent within that frail redoubt, sighed vainly for repose:
The shot that hissed above their heads—the Mohawks' taunting cries—
Warned them that never more on earth must slumber seal their eyes.
In that same hour their swart allies, o'erwhelmed by craven dread, (8)
Leaped o'er the parapet like deer, and traitorously fled;
And, when the darkness of the night had vanished, like a ghost,
Twenty and two were left—of all—to brave a maddened host.

Foiled for a time, the subtle foes have summoned to their aid (9)
Five hundred kinsmen from the Isles, to storm the Palisade;
And, panting for revenge, they speed, impatient for the fray,
Like birds of carnage from their homes allured by scent of prey.
With scalp-locks streaming in the breeze, they charge—but never yet
Have legions in the storm of fight a bloodier welcome met
Than those doomed warriors, as they faced the desolating breath
Of wide-mouthed musketoons that poured hot cataracts of death. (10)

Eight days of varied horror passed: what boots it now to tell
How the pale tenants of the Fort heroically fell?
Hunger and thirst and sleeplessness—Death's ghastly aids—at length