

That wondrous Strait, where close th' opposing hills  
 To build the stately portal of the West.  
 There! at the foot of that stupendous rock,  
 Which towers above a basin sheltered round  
 By mountains slowly stooping from their heights.  
 In terraces of verdure to the deep  
 And ever-tranquil water.—In that charmed spot  
 Of solemn beauty was the cradle placed  
 Of our Canadian Empire. Grand the site  
 And great the founder! Mark his forehead calm—  
 His serious eyes, but prone to gleam with mirth  
 As fit to gaze on danger—resolute mouth,  
 Adorned with trim moustache and courtly beard,  
 Showing a man as skilled and apt to tread  
 The gallant Bearnais' court as the slant deck,  
 Slippery with foam and ice, when northern storm  
 Swoops on the treacherous Gulf, and through the dark  
 Aloft the demons hurtle through the air  
 With hiss and shriek. The frozen cordage sticks  
 In the icy block, and struck by the impetuous seas,  
 The frail barque shudders to her lowest keel.  
 One little light, alone, in all that world  
 Of blackness, gleams to light the magic card  
 That points the course; and there his quiet eyes  
 Are fixed. But, in his heart, whether at sea  
 Or at the court or in the savage camp,  
 The light of duty ever shone supreme,  
 Nor swerved his steady course or here or there.  
 And such a site whereon to plant the tree  
 Of rising empire! Holds this varied world  
 No peer to its majestic beauty. Look!  
 Those solemn hills, which close the distance dim  
 Of the far horizon, how their contours, clothed  
 With summer foliage, smile as they slope down,  
 Bathed in the sunlight, to the rippling flood  
 Which laps their bases; and the azure vault  
 Mirrors its brightness with the changing hues  
 Of blue and purple in the dimpling waves.—  
 An amphitheatre, whose circles vast  
 Rise upwards from the central basin, reared  
 For high assembly of the earlier gods,  
 And Zeus' high seat might rest upon the Cape  
 And dominate the concourse. All the scene  
 Was clad in summer's livery. Blue in the sky  
 And water; on the hills a living green  
 Sheening to yellow in the twinkling birch