

THE SINGER AND THE SONG

By LILIAN LEVERIDGE

Author of "Over the Hills of Home."

We present to our readers a poem written especially for The Ontario by Miss Lilian Leveridge, Toronto.

As the author of "Over the Hills of Home" and many other poems of rare beauty, Miss Leveridge is already well known to our patrons. In "The Singer and the Song" Miss Leveridge has made a successful venture into the field of narrative verse.

In this poem she tells the life-story of Joseph Scriven, author of that tenderest and most expressive of hymns, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," an echo indeed of a tragedy as well as of a philosophy of triumph by faith.

Of this evangel, scholar, humanitarian and poet-dreamer, the public has heard much the past year or two because of the appeal to have a suitable monument placed over his neglected grave near Bewdley, in the western extremity of Rice Lake.

The infinite paths of his bereavement because of the untimely death of the beautiful niece of Col. Penzance, is brought out by Miss Leveridge in lines that are powerful because of their simplicity and their compelling appeal to the heart.

The same exquisite craftsmanship and delicate imagination, as have made Miss Leveridge's previous work notable, are here seen in full fruition.

"The Singer and the Song" is appropriately written in the same metre as Scriven's immortal hymn.

In the purple vault of heaven, Just above the harbor bar, Touching rised waves to silver, Softly shone one limpid star.

Joseph Scriven gazed upon it— Gazed with gladness for its shining; As the ship put out to sea.

Dim and dimmer grew the outline Of the old familiar shore, Ireland, beloved homeland, Would he see it ever more?

Dear its blossoming fields and forests, Dear its skies, serene and clear; Dear its highways and its hamlets, And its homes surpassing dear.

Home and mother—words of beauty, Sacred words, divinely sweet! How the wandering winds of even Loved their music to repeat!

Mother—would she miss him, need him? In the days that were to be, Longing in the lonely dawning For her boy across the sea?

"Mother understands," he murmured, "How I love her, how I grieve. Her dear face and gentle presence Countless leagues behind to leave."

"Yet I know the blessed angels Will keep watch by day and night, Spread their sheltering wings above her, Gild earth glooms with heavenly light."

"Closer, tenderer than a brother, There's a friend, her friend and mine. Shall I not with faith untailing Leave her to His care divine?"

"Forward! Forward! be my watchword, Forward to the lands afar! Lo! there beckons like a beacon Yonder glory-beaming star."

"O that land beyond the sunset, How its myriad voices call! Come! In golden dawns they whisper 'Come!' they plead at eventide."

"Strange, sweet tones like far-off music Floating o'er a sea of dream: Shall I doubt their mystic message, Say they are not what they seem?"

"Nay! I know beyond all question There is somewhere need of me In that country vast and distant, Country of the brave, the free."

"There, perchance, are lost ones seeking Christ the Life, the Truth, the Way. There are little laughing children Who have never learned to pray."

"Souls that choose life's blossoming byways, Headless of their downward trend, Lonely, sorrowing hearts by thousands Who have never found my friend."

"His hand that points and beckons To that bourne across the deep: His still, small voice that whispers, 'If thou lovest Me, feed My sheep.'"

"Who am I that I should waver? Whosoever one lost lamb bleeds, Be the pathway smooth or thorny, Let me follow where He leads."

"Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee, Sweet it is Thy love to know, Gladly to the earth's last limit Hand in hand with Thee I'd go."

Thus in silent meditation Stood the youth upon the deck, Till the Emerald Isle had faded To a dim and misty speck;

Till the stars in silver clusters Hung above the silver sea, Silent in the silent spaces, Dreaming through eternity.

Day by day the ship, unswerving, Ploughed a pathway through the foam; Then at last, the voyage ended,

Anchored in the port of home. Home? Ah, yes! The "Isle of Beauty!"

Now no more her son might claim This vast land whose voice had called him.

Yearned to give the youth her name. "Canada!" 'Twas magic music; "Canada!" the streamlets murmured, "Canada!" replied the breeze.

Vast Laurentian forests chanted; Echoes waited down the stream; Joseph's soul responded, thrilling To the music of his dream.

For he felt his spirit folded In the country's welcoming arms; And he gave his love unstinted, Yielded to her thousand charms.

Westward through the land he journeyed— Summer smiled, from vale and height— While his heart awoke to gladness And an ever new delight;

Sailed her sunny inland waters, Learned the music of her streams; Saw her mighty cataraacts plunging 'Mid perpetual rainbow gleams.

Stepped his being in her sunshine, Broached her ozone-freighted air; In her vast, dim forest temples Lifted up his soul in prayer.

Passing from the sweet communion Of that secret, solemn hour, In the world of men he labored, Spent his store of love and power.

He, a man of noble presence, Cultured heart and hand and brain, Spent himself enriching others, Asking naught but love for gain.

Never task too mean and lowly If a brother it might bless, It was joy to bear the burden Of a sister in distress.

Many a time he fed the hungry, Clothed the naked, cheered the sad; Sympathized in all their sorrows, And rejoiced when they were glad.

For the little ones he labored, Called them to his cottage school; Taught them reading, writing, figures— Chief of all, the Golden Rule.

Precious precepts oft were woven Into golden threads of rhyme— Simple lines for little voices, Ringing like a fairy chime.

Joseph was a patient teacher, Wildest mood he could beguile With the kindness of his counsel And the sweetness of his smile.

Little feet ran forth to meet him, Little hands stole into his; In their calm, blue depths found bliss.

But his yearning, burning passion, Was to tell of Jesus' love, Pointing world-weary souls and weary To a happier home above.

Where by chance a crowd assembled— Street or market, camp or fair— There he told the Old Story, There he voiced his ardent prayer.

Some there were, perchance, who marvelled At his saintliness and grace, Knowing he had been with Jesus By the light upon his face.

Others scoffed, despised, or scorned him. Few there were who understood This lone soul who, like the Master, Spent his days in doing good.

Months grew into years of service, Joseph, solitary still, Journeyed from the city, guided By a restless, wandering will;

Till at last, in a wide valley Filled with sunshine to the brim, Where the fragrant flowers of spring time Seemed to nod and smile at him;

Where the welcoming winds blew softly, Redolent of forest balm, There he found a home, a refuge, A perpetual part of calm.

When that lovely road he travelled, Winding up among the hills, Where the songs of birds were mingled With the rippling of the rills.

Where a quiet lake lay dreaming, Blue as sacred Galilee, "This," he thought with silent gladness, "This, at last, is home for me."

Once again his heart was folded To the Northland's quiet breast, Wearied with his years of toiling, For a season he would rest.

Long he sat in contemplation There beside his lowly door, Listening to the forest voices, Calling, calling o'er and o'er.

Winds came rustling through the spruce trees, "Hush!" they whispered, "Hush! O hush! There's a song of singing grasses; You may hear it if you list."

"You may hear their fairy footfalls, While a velvet path nightly Making all your little pathways Fairer, softer to your tread."

Joseph listened till his spirit Heard the footstep of the grass, Heard the love-sighs of the flowers, Heard the shadows come and pass.

Hush! Across the brooding silence, While the sunset lights grew pale, One clear strain of thrilling cadence Filled with melody the vale.

'Twas the love-song of the wood thrush, Shy, wild, twilight-haunting bird. Soft his little mate made answer— Sweeter note was never heard.

In the listener's heart there kindled Sudden longings, strange and wild, For a true love warm and tender, For the laughter of a child.

Here, in this fair haven sheltered, Veiled curtains on his breast, Sharing all his dreams and visions, O for one fair face to rest!

He had seen her in the valley, Where caroling winds blew sweet, Seen her soft eyes glow with gladness When they chanced his own to meet.

"You may hear the bluebells ringing Vesper chimes at close of day, While the buttercups and daisies Told their fragile hands and pray."

"To each prayer I bring an answer; For I bear upon my wings Incessant from a thousand altars, Life and health from Love's own springs."

"You may hear the silver poplars Clap their slender hands in glee, When they hear my hushes blowing They arise and dance with me."

"I, the Wind, have many lovers— Wooer bold and blithe am I— Sturdy oak or frailtest blossom, Soft I answer sigh for sigh."

"I, the Wind, learn many secrets As I circle round the earth; Know the deep, dark wells of sorrow, Leaping lightly on its breast."

Joseph listened till his spirit Heard the footstep of the grass, Heard the love-sighs of the flowers, Heard the shadows come and pass.

Hush! Across the brooding silence, While the sunset lights grew pale, One clear strain of thrilling cadence Filled with melody the vale.

'Twas the love-song of the wood thrush, Shy, wild, twilight-haunting bird. Soft his little mate made answer— Sweeter note was never heard.

In the listener's heart there kindled Sudden longings, strange and wild, For a true love warm and tender, For the laughter of a child.

Here, in this fair haven sheltered, Veiled curtains on his breast, Sharing all his dreams and visions, O for one fair face to rest!

He had seen her in the valley, Where caroling winds blew sweet, Seen her soft eyes glow with gladness When they chanced his own to meet.

Tender as a star of twilight, Lovely as a woodland flower— O to see his beauty blooming, Planted in his beauty's hour!

Day had furled his crimson banners; Veiled curtains on his breast, Sharing all his dreams and visions, O for one fair face to rest!

He had seen her in the valley, Where caroling winds blew sweet, Seen her soft eyes glow with gladness When they chanced his own to meet.

Tender as a star of twilight, Lovely as a woodland flower— O to see his beauty blooming, Planted in his beauty's hour!

Day had furled his crimson banners; Veiled curtains on his breast, Sharing all his dreams and visions, O for one fair face to rest!

He had seen her in the valley, Where caroling winds blew sweet, Seen her soft eyes glow with gladness When they chanced his own to meet.

Tender as a star of twilight, Lovely as a woodland flower— O to see his beauty blooming, Planted in his beauty's hour!

Day had furled his crimson banners; Veiled curtains on his breast, Sharing all his dreams and visions, O for one fair face to rest!

He had seen her in the valley, Where caroling winds blew sweet, Seen her soft eyes glow with gladness When they chanced his own to meet.

Tender as a star of twilight, Lovely as a woodland flower— O to see his beauty blooming, Planted in his beauty's hour!

Day had furled his crimson banners; Veiled curtains on his breast, Sharing all his dreams and visions, O for one fair face to rest!

He had seen her in the valley, Where caroling winds blew sweet, Seen her soft eyes glow with gladness When they chanced his own to meet.

Tender as a star of twilight, Lovely as a woodland flower— O to see his beauty blooming, Planted in his beauty's hour!

Day had furled his crimson banners; Veiled curtains on his breast, Sharing all his dreams and visions, O for one fair face to rest!

He had seen her in the valley, Where caroling winds blew sweet, Seen her soft eyes glow with gladness When they chanced his own to meet.

Tender as a star of twilight, Lovely as a woodland flower— O to see his beauty blooming, Planted in his beauty's hour!

Day had furled his crimson banners; Veiled curtains on his breast, Sharing all his dreams and visions, O for one fair face to rest!

He had seen her in the valley, Where caroling winds blew sweet, Seen her soft eyes glow with gladness When they chanced his own to meet.

Tender as a star of twilight, Lovely as a woodland flower— O to see his beauty blooming, Planted in his beauty's hour!

Day had furled his crimson banners; Veiled curtains on his breast, Sharing all his dreams and visions, O for one fair face to rest!

He had seen her in the valley, Where caroling winds blew sweet, Seen her soft eyes glow with gladness When they chanced his own to meet.

Tender as a star of twilight, Lovely as a woodland flower— O to see his beauty blooming, Planted in his beauty's hour!

Day had furled his crimson banners; Veiled curtains on his breast, Sharing all his dreams and visions, O for one fair face to rest!

He had seen her in the valley, Where caroling winds blew sweet, Seen her soft eyes glow with gladness When they chanced his own to meet.

Tender as a star of twilight, Lovely as a woodland flower— O to see his beauty blooming, Planted in his beauty's hour!

Day had furled his crimson banners; Veiled curtains on his breast, Sharing all his dreams and visions, O for one fair face to rest!

He had seen her in the valley, Where caroling winds blew sweet, Seen her soft eyes glow with gladness When they chanced his own to meet.

Slowly fade before his sight, Till her face lay like a snowdrop On the pillow, wan and white.

Though his love was like a mantle And his every breath a prayer, Yet he knew he could not keep her— Death's dread angel hovered near.

"I am tired," she whispered faintly, "I am longing so for rest. Put your dear, strong arms around me— Let me lean upon your breast."

Poignant, awesomeness—love's crushed fragrance— Filled his heart. She murmured low, "Don't be grieving when I'm gone, A love, Jesus calls me. I must go."

Soon her pure and gentle spirit Homeward winged its starry flight, While the angels sang to welcome One more pilgrim of the night.

But the mourners in the valley Who had loved her well and long, Could not see the dawning glory, Could not hear the angel song;

And the world seemed lone and empty When her lifeless form they laid— By the blue lake's murmuring waters, Where the lovers oft had strayed.

Now in Joseph's memory floated Those sweet words which he had penned, Words of simple beauty, breathing Love of Jesus Christ, the Friend.

Written for his own dear mother In a dark and clouded hour, Little dreamed the humble poet Of his song's far-reaching power.

Like a breath of heavenly blossoms, Far it floated on the wind, Bringing rest to spirits weary, Ease to anguished heart and mind.

"What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer!"

Joseph's heart his treasure followed; All his thoughts were fixed above, Yet the winds of earth seemed ever Sighing, seeking his lost love.

And the blue lake missed and mourned, Lapping low a tender song; While the listening fir trees whispered, "Where does Sweetheart wait so long?"

Daisy, violet, rose and aster, Breathed her name in perfumes And with tears upon their faces Offered up their vesper prayer.

All the woodland ways seemed lonely, All their music out of tune; Gone the sweetness of the starlight, Gone the splendor of the noon.

Joseph's dreams had lost their magic, Lost their beauty and their light; Yet his soul with clearer vision Looked beyond the realms of night.

And he saw that earthly sorrows As a vapor pass away, All forgotten in the glances Of the everlasting day.

Weary, old, and heavy-laden, And with cares encompassed round, All his load he cast on Jesus, In His arms a solace found.

Nor alone o'er grief he triumphed— Was a heart oppressed and sad, Learned through Joseph's loving message To look up and to be glad.

In the little church on Sundays He with earnest tones and grave Told of One, the Friend unfailing, Swift to bless and strong to save.

Love for others was the impulse Of his soul from day to day; Wealth or fame he did not covet— What he had he gave away.

Was there child that faced the tempest? Or man whose life was woe? Minus shoes and tunic clad, Joseph's own scant store provided Warmth and comfort for the lad.

Did he find one old and lonely, Bent with toil and grief and care, Placed his shoulder 'neath the burden, Glad a brother's load to share.

Thus in acts of lowly service Joseph's long, lone years were passed, Till beside Love's quiet waters Peace and joy he found at last.

Keenest, parched with burning fever, He had thought his thirst to slake, And refresh his weary spirit, At the cool and limpid lake.

All the summer land lay dreaming In the calm and quiet night, And the harvest moon was flooding The blue lake with silvery light.

All the shadowy woods were silent, All the shimmering fields were still; Nectareous balms and odors floated Up the vale and o'er the hill.

Down beside the rippling waters, Kneelt the aged Christian there, While the mellow moonlight haloed Sainly face and silver hair.

To the hills his eyes he lifted, Where, beside the murmuring wave, "I am weary, Lord," he whispered, "I am lonely for my love."

When "Thou wilt, O come, Lord Jesus! Take me to Thy home above!" Was it but a dream, a vision— There above the glimmering foam? Was it his lost love that beckoned? Had she come to lead him home?

When the golden morning wakened, And they missed him from his bed, There his friends, sad-hearted, found

him— Murmured softly, "He is dead." For they wist not in their blindness Of the more abundant life Into which his soul had entered, Passing from earth's pain and strife.

But they took his lifeless body— Just an empty chrysalis Out of which a radiant being Had emerged to fields of bliss— And they laid him by his sweetheart In the hallowed plot of ground, Where through many a blossoming summer Rest and silence wrap't them round.

Let the hands that blessed the folded At the setting of the sun, Let the lips that sang half silent, For their mission now is done.

But the song, that song of Jesus! It goes singing round the world! Where the tropic islands blossom, Where the frigid snows are whirled;

From the West, where first its music Sounded like an angel's psalm, To the far-off, gleaming Orient, Flows that song of heavenly calm.

In the stately church or chapel, In the camp, the field, the street, In the cottage or the mansion, You may hear its cadence sweet.

Children sing its simple music; Youth and maid take up the strain; Aged lips and quavering voices Linger on its loved refrain.

"What a friend we have in Jesus! How this sad world needs a friend! One who never chides nor changes, But is faithful to the end."

"Hymn of love" were never harbored In the heart that knew His love; Peace above the lands that own Him Hovers like a brooding dove.

In the "Year of Peace" that followed Those long years of fearful strife, When the hearts of suffering millions Yearned for rest and love and life,

Came a little band of pilgrims To that lowly, unmarked shrine, Where he slept whose voice had waited On the winds that hymn divine.

And they strewed with sweetest blossoms Joseph's grave so low and lone, Softly telling one another, "All the good that he had done."

Telling how his memory lingered In the year's hallowed awe, Like the fragrant breath of flowers Washed in morning's early dew.

Then, hands clasped in loving token, Tenderly they sang his song, While, by church bells chimed, its music Wafted on the winds along.

Once again the Moon of Blossoms Buds the glad world anew, and fair buds are bursting, perfumes breathing.

Warm life springs everywhere, There in yonder hallowed awe, What is this to-day we find? Men and women massed in thousands Music pulsing on the wind.

Reverent voices in devotion Lead the hushed and silent throng, And they bless the love that blossomed In that sweet and simple song.

Once again they tell his story, Singing his hymn, their hymn, they sing, While the listening hills and valleys With the vibrant echoes ring.

Forest choirs take up the chorus, While the leader of the land, 'Neath the waving elm tree's shadow By that low grave takes his stand.

And unveils the stately pillar Marking Joseph's place of rest, Where who will may read engraven Those sweet words divinely blest:

"What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer!"

"O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer!"

"Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged, Take it to the Lord in prayer."

"Can we find a friend so faithful, Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness, Take it to the Lord in prayer."

"Are we weak and heavy-laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Saviour, still our refuge, Take it to the Lord in prayer."

"Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer, In His arms He'll take and shield thee, 'Thou wilt find a solace there.'"

Returning to the West Indies

Mr. H. D. Cole, of Barbados, West Indies, has completed the Business Course at Ontario Business College and left Belleville on Wednesday to return home.

Mr. Cole will sail from New York on December 9th and on arriving in Barbados he will open a business of his own. He was joined here a few days ago by his father, who is accompanying him to Toronto, New York and back to the West Indies.

Every successful man owes independence to individual energy and enterprise.

Train Crew Exercised Proper Precautions

Dr. J. Moore Seemed to Be Trying to Stop Car When Struck Said Engineer Barlow.

"We, the coroner's jury, called to inquire into the death of Dr. John Moore, of Shannonville, Ont., do hereby find after hearing the evidence submitted, that he came to his death on the 12th day of November, 1920, in the township of Thurlow, County of Hastings, Ont., by being struck by G.T.R. train No. 29, at the railway crossing on the Point Anne road and we find that the train crew exercised all proper precautions."

The above verdict was returned to Coroner Dr. H. A. Yeomans last evening at the close of the inquest into the Point Anne road fatality of last Friday morning. Crown Attorney Carnew conducted the examination of witnesses.

Eye-Witness of Accident.

Everett Smith, driver of a Packard truck for Mr. C. C. Walker, engaged in hauling crushed rock from Point Anne to Belleville, saw the train approaching and waited.

"I saw the approaching car coming down the hill very slowly," he testified. Smith expected the auto to stop and as it did not, he put his hand out to try and warn the driver of the motor.

The car came on to the crossing and was about half way across the track when the train struck it and carried it up to the switch. Dr. Moore's body was found east of the wrecked car in the ditch.

Smith heard the whistle of the train, but not the bell, which might have been ringing. The auto had the top up and the curtains down.

"How do you term that crossing?" asked the Crown.

"It is rather dangerous, going in to Point Anne, on account of the steep cut. There is a curve and there is a clump of cedars. The trouble is from the east, but not from the west, in which direction there is no obstruction."

Engineer Barlow's Story.

Engineer Jesse W. Barlow, of G. T. R. train No. 29, running from Kingston to Toronto, and from Napanee to Coburg over the C. N. R., testified that the train was on time. There was a flag stop at Thurlow Station. From the station to the Point Anne road the distance was less than a mile, a speed of 35 miles per hour having been attained by the time the crossing was reached.

At Thurlow station the bell was started ringing and was still ringing after the accident.

"On account of the slight curve, I saw the truck stop just before it got to the whistling-board." There is a cut there, and on the bank is a clump of cedars. This obscured the view to the north, but a little further on the view is clear for three-quarters of a mile.

Car Brakes Not Working.

The engineer then looked to the north and saw the car approaching at the rate of about 20 miles per hour. As he caught sight of the auto he saw the car slowing up. The engineer naturally thought the driver was going to stop. When about thirty yards from the crossing the car was slowed down to about 10 miles per hour. Mr. Barlow then looked to the switch on the west side of the crossing to see if it were all right and then looked to the car. It was about 10 or 12 feet from track