

**A Winter's Day in California**

BY JAMES ALEXANDER TUCKER, B.A.

This afternoon upon the hills  
The Winter sun rests strangely sweet;  
The valley dreaming at their feet,  
With murm'rous music thrills.

Music of zephyrs in the palms,  
And scattered eucalyptus trees;  
And chattering of shrill killdees  
Round distant ready dams;

And where the pine's dark flag unfurls,  
And blood-red holly berries shine,  
And bay and chaparral intertwine,  
The chirruping squirrels.

Far off, in the mountains, lapped in haze,  
High-throned, like hoary kings of old,  
Girt in their purple and their gold—  
Look forth with lofty gaze;—

Forth o'er dominions rich in stores  
Of corn and oil, and gold and wine,  
And flocks of sheep and herds of kine,  
Clasped round by shining shores.

But sitting at the casement here,  
Where swims the tremulous rich del-  
light  
Of slumb'rous sound and smell and  
sight,  
This last day of the year:—

What son of Canada could forget,  
'Mid all the sensuous charm and glow,  
That frugal land of sun and snow  
That holds his heart-strings yet?

That land where first he heard the song  
Of Robin Redbreast on the tree,  
When the late grass sprang tenderly  
And days were waxing long;

That land of river, forest, rock,—  
Stern country! hallow'd by the tears  
And toils of simple pioneers,  
The blood of Wolfe and Brock!

No, 'mid this lavish, rare display  
Of Nature's bounties, rich and free,  
My heart, dear country, turns to thee  
In love this Winter's day;

And would not give one foot of thy  
Rude soil, one white December blast,  
For all these valleys, verdant, vast,  
For all this languid sky!

These make not nations; only hearts  
Strong as the basal rocks, and pure  
As limpid northern streams, endure  
When all else sinks and parts.

And such may flourish where the year  
Is chill, and Nature's iron hand  
Rules sternly o'er the sluggish land,—  
As vigorously as here:—

Yea more: for strength is born of toil,—  
In bitter sweat man eats his bread;  
And where the sweets too thick are  
spread  
The virtues rot and spoil.

O Canada! think not thy creed  
Must rest on cities, factories, gold;  
If rich in men of liberal mould  
Thou hast no further need.

Pray, therefore, for true men and  
strong—  
Men who would dare to die for right,  
Who love and court God's searching  
light  
Because they shield no wrong.

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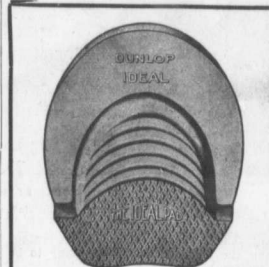
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