

PRIZE POEM, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, TORONTO.

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THE GREAT NORTH-WEST.

No fabled land of song and joy is this
 That lieth in the glow of eventide ;
 Nor sung by bards of old in minstrel strain ;
 Yet he who reads its history shall learn
 Of doughty deeds well worth all knightly fame.
 It is a land of rivers flowing free,
 Lake-mirrored mountains rising proud and stern,
 A land of spreading prairies ocean wide,
 Of mighty forests' dark majestic shades,
 Where harsh sounds slumber in the hush of gloom
 And peace hath brooded with outstretched wings.
 Upon the western shore soft breaks the wave,
 Rolling with measured pace upon the sands ;
 Far to the north the ocean washes cold
 Where reigneth icy solitude supreme.
 Here every season has its varied charm,
 Stern winter shrouds in snow each mountain side,
 Till spring sets free the captive bud and shoot,
 And wood and grove breaks out in joyous song
 Then summer suns bring forth a fuller bloom,
 While autumn gilds the green with flaming red,
 And reapers gather in the golden grain,
 Shouting in merriment the harvest home.
 But every mindful history repeats
 The tale of sons heroic of old France,
 Who came and with brave hearts no labour shunned :
 They pierced the tangled brake, they plied the axe,
 Encountering dangers, yet victorious,
 While lofty bulwarks and far-distant forts
 Mark their endeavour and enshrine their name.
 Here dwelt the Indian when the years were young,
 There lingers many a legend of his race
 Near reed-fringed lake and deep and dark ravine.
 But he has fallen as the autumn leaf,
 Yet not before the herald of great joy
 Bore to the farthest homes the cross of hope,
 And in the shades profaned by pagan rites
 The red man bowed his knee and worshipped God.
 Such was the past of this great Northern land,
 A past of stillness and of nature's reign,
 But lo ! a change. From far across the sea