

Compliments of Mr O'Hagan.

CANADIANA

Two  
Occasional  
Poems



By Thomas O'Hagan

CANADIAN

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## Vestigia Retrorsum:

*A Poem read at the Golden  
Jubilee of St. Michael's College,  
Toronto, Ontario, April 28th,  
1903.*

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Gather we here to-night, O comrades dear,  
To greet with love and joy this Golden Year !  
We bring to crown thee, Alma Mater fond,  
The flowers our hearts so long have held in  
bond.

For fifty years thy faith has led the way  
And filled each night with splendor of the day ;  
For fifty years thy kind and gentle hand  
Has led our wayward footsteps thro' the land.

Here then to-night we cluster round thy feet  
And storm with love the old maternal seat,  
Where Faith and Science shed their radiant  
light,  
And Truth has reared for us an altar bright ;  
Students of long ago, grey-bearded boys,  
With increment of love if not of noise,  
We meet across the years that bind our brow,  
Some captains, pilots, watchers on the prow.

What glorious vision ours ! A Golden Jubilee  
Spreads every sail that swells upon life's sea ;  
What ventures bold amid the stress and storm !  
What gallant souls ! How rare each beauteous  
form !

God's battleship is mann'd from stern to prow,  
And faithful is each seaman to his vow.  
Each cruiser knows full well the channel mined  
And every season fraught with dangerous wind.

All this thy labor, Alma Mater dear,  
Through every fortune of each ripening year ;  
In Church and State thy voice is wisdom's call  
Ringing along Time's academic hall,  
A trumpet blast, a summons to each soul,  
To do the things of God—whate'er the goal.  
Because of this thy work is truly great,  
The season of thy fruitage never late.

But pause we here beside life's altar fire  
To strike the chords of Memory's golden lyre ;  
It seems but yesterday 'neath murmuring pine  
Enrolled we stood and drank thy classic wine ;  
It seems but yesterday, and yet how far  
Between life's morning and its evening star ;  
Then saw we but the footlights on the stage,  
Now dreams are turned to deeds on every page.

*Vestigia retrorsum!* Backward we trace  
Thy altar-light, a guiding gift of grace ;  
Around thy shrine we kneel in faith and prayer  
And greet thee, Alma Mater, ever fair ;  
And when God's love has filled thy lap with  
flowers,  
And Truth and Duty builded well the hours,  
May that great saint who triumphed in the fight  
Record the names of those who joy to-night !



## The Twilight of the Cross:

*A Poem read at the Dedication, on  
December 11th, 1902, of St. Anne's  
Memorial Church, Penetanguishene,  
Ontario, commemorative of the Martyr-  
dom of the Jesuit Fathers, Brebeuf  
and Lalemant.*

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Build high to God, and not to fame,  
The shaft that marks a sainted name;  
For fame is but the dust of earth—  
A meteor blaze of sudden birth;  
But faith hath root in heavenly things  
And bears God's world upon its wings;  
It fears not death nor Cæsar's frown,  
Its test and truth a martyr's crown.

And so we build and bless to-day,  
Here, by this quiet historic bay,  
Where once Loyola's sons had trod,  
A goodly temple to our God.

Well nigh three hundred year have sped  
And sentinell'd the saintly dead,  
Since from their homes in sunny France,  
From Norman vale with its romance,  
There came that strong heroic band,  
With cross of faith to bless our land,  
Following God's finger through the wild  
To snatch from death each savage child.

Their arms the breviary and the cross,  
Aught else but faith they count as dross ;  
And kneeling seek God's will on high  
Within St. Mary's on the Wye.

The seed of faith has blazed within,  
The triumphs of the cross begin :  
Where death and darkness filled the land,  
The rays of truth, showered from God's  
    hand,  
Blot out the stain of sin and shame  
And leave the perfume of God's name ;  
Through dark Huronia's forests wild  
The savage chief becomes a child.

But Calvary and Thabor's height  
Are linked in glorious beams of light,  
As torch and stake and burning coal  
Release from earth each martyr'd soul.

O great, strong souls of faith and love !  
Captains of truth for God above !  
Heroic priests of twilight days  
Who pierc'd our forests, bless'd our bays,  
Sons of Ignatius, saint of God,  
Faith's perfume follows where ye trod :  
To-day we bless and dome with prayer  
This Church memorial chaste and fair !

