

Occasional Papers

Early and Late

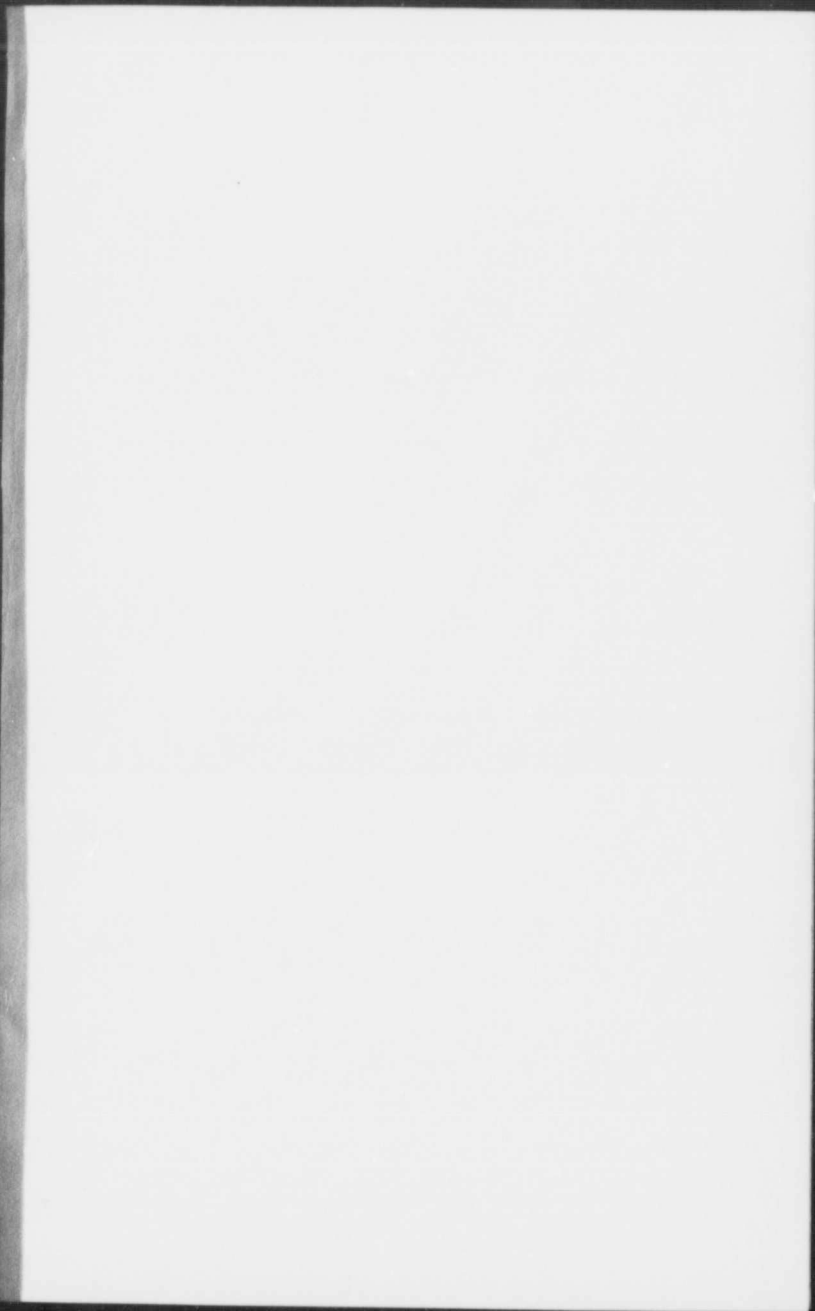


Wm. Critchlow Harris

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Occasional Poems

EARLY AND LATE

BY

WM. CRITCHLOW HARRIS, JR., A.R.C.A.

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION



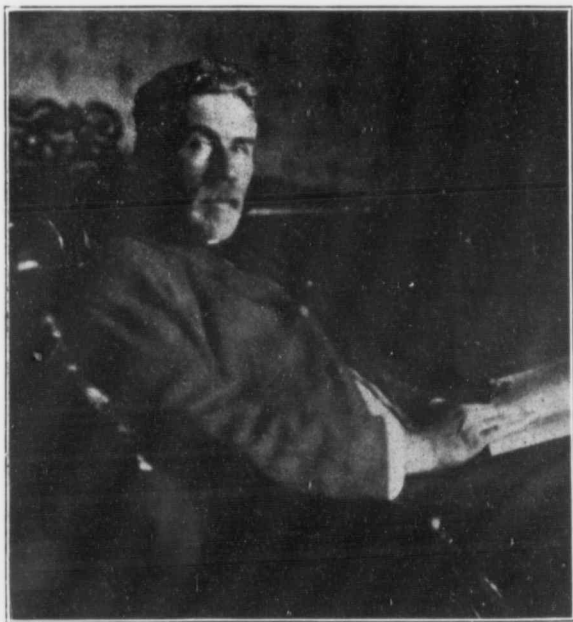
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WM. CRITCHLOW HARRIS, JR., A. R. C. A.

1854 - 1913

The poems here printed as a memorial are a record of one of the many ways in which the unceasingly active mind of their author expressed itself apart from his own profession. Their production was one of the many loved occupations of leisure hours, and in most cases they were the outcome of feelings which deeply affected him at various times. During his life he had made no collection of what he had written. When, therefore, those who loved him wished to bring together what he had done in verse, they had to include much which he had not revised, to rely on poetry of his which they themselves had preserved, on the manuscripts found scattered amongst his papers at his death, and such poems as had appeared in newspapers at the time he wrote them.

October, 1915,





OCCASIONAL POEMS.

UNDER THE STARS

While night envelops with her tender shade
The loveliness of earth, and tree and flower
Are hid from mortal view, and silent all
The songs of birds and sounds of busy life,
Again I seek the sweet companionship
Of quiet stars that ever kindly shine ;
Again from earth and all its sweet delights,
And all its sorrowing and anxious pain,
Its selfish aims and wild, ambitious hopes,
And from the restless fever of my life,
O quiet stars, I wander forth to thee.
In the sweet music of your moving spheres,
Obeying nature's laws ye calmly glide,
Forever bright, and beautiful, and free.
O teach us e'er to find in Nature's voice
The voice of God, tranquility and love,
E'en though we mortals feel the grinding wheel
Of nature's ever unrelenting laws
Pass o'er our heads when we have disobeyed.
How many a wanderer through the changeful world
Have ye, O quiet stars, looked down upon
With silent, quiet, sympathizing eyes,
And changed the surging passion of their lives
To patient hope and firm tranquility?

So look on me, O brilliant, shining orbs,
Shed on my life the secret of your calm,
That through the daily pathway of the world,
With willing feet I e'er may tread the way
Where duty leads, through pleasure or through pain.
This morn the sun arose with glorious light,
And sweet was labour through the beauteous day ;
The strong man toiled, the poet sadly dreamed,
The artist fashioned some fair delight,
And in the eventide the golden sun
Filled all the land with glowing witchery,
And birds sang sweetly on the woodland bough.
Then darkness settled on a wearied world,
And one by one the beacon fires on high
Began to glimmer from the depths profound
Of vast, illimitable, unknown realms,
Like gleams of inspiration to the brain
Of finite man from the great fatherhood
Of the Supreme Creator of the spheres.
O stars above, ye tell of that great power
To us, poor selfish creatures of the dust,
Immortal calm, supreme tranquility.



WANDERERS FROM OTHER WORLDS

There, in a dim, uncertain, shadowy realm,
Where sombre twilight ever seemed to reign,
I wandered on by lone, mysterious shores,
Whose dark and gloomy headlands loomed among
The long, low line of ocean's rolling mists ;
And, as I wandered on, pale, ghostly forms
Came floating from the billowy gulf afar.
So sad they seemed, so quietly they came,
So wonderful the light in their strange eyes,
That oft I wondered whence those spirits came,
And oft I looked towards the gloomy sea.
And once the sound of far-off circling storms,
Like bellowing thunder and the sound of war,

Came faintly to my eager, listening ear;
And then my pale companions answered me:

"O we were mortal once; the sound afar,
So harsh and terrible, is from the realm
Of that far distant home, where first began
For us in misty childhood's glimmering years,
This wondrous germ of immortality.
So terrible was life in that wild world,
So full of sorrow all the struggling throng,
So sharp the tongue of slander, and so sad
The voice of hunger, moaning to be fed,
That oft we wondered why and what we were,
And then if aught were after gloomy death;
But never any voice to us did come
From these faint shores beyond the lonely sea,
As unto that small twinkling earth afar,
Where dwell the evil sons of godlike man,
To tell of hope and immortality."

Then onward did my pale companions glide,
And up toward the mountain regions far
They vanished from the shadowy ocean shores.

December 6, 1881.



ON THE THIGHBONE OF A MASTODON AND
THE BOOT OF A CAPE BRETON
GIANT IN THE HALIFAX
MUSEUM

O venerable bone, what ages vast
Have come and gone since thou wast wrapped in life;
Wrapped in thick flesh, warm veins and leathery skin,
When thou wast portion of a living hulk,
Huge and enormous? Where it walked, the earth
Trembled and shuddered, like the dying shock
From some deep earthquake centre far remote

That wakes the fearful sleepers from their dream.
 How strange an essence, that weird life that gave
 To thee the power of motion and of will!
 Who knows but in thine ancient wanderings, far
 O'er regions now perchance beneath the sea,
 The bulk of thine enormous carcase huge
 May have been gazed upon by human eyes,
 Wild, wondering human eyes of the rude family
 Of some old Palæolithic giant grim,
 Who called his children in the evening light,
 From out the depths of his old hillside cave,
 To watch thee crossing o'er the plains below?
 How weirdly strange that even must have seemed—
 The gorgeous western sky aflame with light
 That flung its ruddy glare about the hills,
 And gave those wondering eyes a look of witchery,
 While to the God on high the curling smoke
 Like incense sweet from dying embers rose!

O mammoth, where didst thou lie down to die?
 Where didst thy last great puff raise up the dust?
 Wast thou pursued by flesh-devouring beasts?
 Did fierce hyenas find thee in the night,
 And sink their yowling fangs within thy leathery hams?
 And in the morning grey the lions wild
 Hearing thy thundering tramp, joined in the chase,
 And late at eve thy wearied bones sank down
 Upon the gravel ridge of a wild, sea-swept coast,
 And thou didst drop thy blood and roar to death,
 Mayhap the last of thine enormous race.
 Then keen-eyed vultures came, and starving beasts
 From out the forests drear, and tore thy flesh,
 Thy tough red flesh and steaming, leathery hide,
 And scattered all thy bones about the land,
 And then a furious storm as dark as Erebus,
 Came tearing on o'er ocean's inky breast;
 While bellowing thunder howled thy funeral dirge,
 And raging, foaming waves did bury deep
 Thy great thigh bone, and threw a gravel mound
 High o'er the strand in memory of thee.

What vast, dim ages lone have passed away
Since thy dark brethren roamed about the earth!
So far remote that all thy race were dead
Ages before that hoary pile did throw
Its first long shadow o'er the silent plain
Of moonlit Egypt and the royal stream
Of ancient Nile's dark waters flowing by;
Ages remote, e'er first the rapt Chaldee,
Waking from out his midnight slumbering
Upon some far Arabian slope, did send
His spirit wandering to the quiet stars?

Angus McAskill!!—O'er the ages vast
The word transports us at a single bound
Here 'mong the pleasant faces of our friends.

Angus McAskill's boot!! In fancy vague
The enormous shadow of the man I see
Who wore thee up and down the country side.
No Palæolithic he, but braw Canadian Scotch,
Who swore in Gaelic when he was profane,
Sprung from some chieftain old 'mong Scotia's wilds.
How many a journey has he tramped with thee?
Through many a blinding snowstorm has he gone,
When furious blasts against his solid front
Beat, and the rushing drifts obscured his way.
But far ahead, amid the gathering night,
The cheerful gleam from his rude cottage home
Appeared, and strength and courage still were his,
Till, at his cottage door, the frosty latch
He raised and entered like a Christmas King,
Ah boot! and then the roaring fire
Leaps in the ingle wide, while on a chair
McAskill sits and draws thee from his foot
With many a struggling tug, then quietly
Stands thee before the mellow flame to dry,
And like a Persian Magi from his crag
Low kneeling to the golden orb of morn,
Thy leathery flap bends down before the fire;
The spruce logs crack and send their golden sparks

In showery splendour up the murky flue,
 While, with a sober buzz of boiling sap,
 The yellow birch delays his lingering death.
 Then to the sweet oblivion of powerful sleep,
 That none but those who labour e'er enjoy,
 McAskill nods, until the cheerful wife
 Taps his broad shoulder, and with a merry laugh
 Cries "Angus, are ye too far gone to sup?"

At fair and market oft was Angus seen
 Towering above his fellows in the throng,
 Like Saul the son of Cush in Ramah old.
 Sometimes to town would Angus drive his truck,
 Piled up with oat-bags or with fragrant hay
 From off the fields where with his strong right hand,
 Back in his early years, he laid the forest low.

O boot! some rough-shaped ancestor of thine
 Was 'neath his ponderous body in the days
 Of lusty youth, when, as a pioneer,
 He changed the ancient solitary reign
 Of shade primeval in the forest gloom
 For that of vernal sunshine and the breeze
 O'er meadows broad and waving cornfields fair,
 When through the lonely woods the crushing blow
 Of his huge axe went sounding far and wide,
 Re-echoing oft among the fearful trees.

No bear, I ween, however fierce, would face
 McAskill as he wandered o'er the hills
 Of fair Cape Breton, where the seabirds wild
 Sweep o'er the dizzy heights from crag to crag—
 Hills that are grandly beautiful as those
 That Ossian praised of yore in Caledonian song.

Say, leather boot, that Angus loved his friends,
 And that they found in him a kindly man,
 Honest and sober in his simple way,
 Though once he went upon a roaring spree
 With that rum dog, McDonald of Bras d'Or,
 Sometime to Judique, as they went to fish.

Ah! leather boot, and thou thyself didst live
Perchance upon the very meadows broad
Of stout McAskill's farm, where oft at eve
Thy voice came lowing through the twilight air,
While, from the distant homestead, o'er the fields
The singing milkmaid came to fill her pail.

Angus McAskill's boot, now take thy rest!
Here among bones and fossils of old earth,
For thou a tinge of strange oddfellowship
Hast with the lonely mammoth thighbone got.

Halifax, December 19, 1881.



THE GREAT LONE LAND

Vastness and silence, ye have borne from eld
O'er this lone land your solitary reign,
Along the swelling circle of the glorious breasts
Of a great Continent, whose massive brain,
Reclining far 'mong bergs of Arctic ice,
Cools its huge brow, aflame with electricity,
And, nightly, among winter solitudes
Is glorified by bright Aurora's circling light.

Vastness and silence! o'er the summer plains
And rolling prairies ye have held your sway,
Along the lost, unknown, unnumbered centuries,
Far to the gloomy shades and ever-fearful realms
Of forest loneliness and mountain solitude,
Where grandly from Pacific depths profound
The Rockies rise in proud magnificence.

O silence! from thy sacred, golden realm
The shadowing veil of dim oblivion,
Like scattering mists before the orb of morn,
Glides slowly onward, and the Great Lone Land,
With vistas broad of rivers numberless
And flowery meads, invites the pioneer.

Here in the mellow after-glow I stand.
The sun has sunk below the shadowy verge
Of the vast prairie's dim horizon slope,
And, gloriously, the sky is all aflame with light.
Far from the West, the hurried, rumbling sound
Of busy locomotives comes upon the breeze
And slowly dies among the twilight shades.
O silence! now the lordly iron king
Invades thine ancient, solitary reign;
And, snorting in their onward-rolling march,
With breath of fire, his mighty steeds sweep on
And scare the bittern from her lonely haunts
Among the distant fen-lands' reedy lakes.

Far off, among Assiniboia's fertile plains,
From many a camp-fire slowly smouldering,
The curling smokewreaths climb the twilight air,
And patiently the oxen idly stand
With melancholy eyes about the fire,
While, hateful of the suffocating fumes,
The insects envious lose the imagined feast.
The sturdy settler lights his evening pipe,
And, peacefully before his cabin door,
He rests from labour in the bounteous field,
Chatting of harvest to his lively friend,
And filling each the other with enkindling hope.

Yet, sadly, do they think of their old home
Beyond the rolling wave; and oft they sigh
For wife or lover pining far away,
Till twilight fades from out the western sky
And, one by one, the starry sentinels appear
And marshal on the shining hosts of night
Over the sleeping plain.
Peaceful, and calm, and silent are the hours,
Save when, at intervals, the wakeful fox,
With smothered howl, invites her wandering mate,
Or, flying low along the shadowy earth,
The famished owl lifts up her lonely voice.

O peaceful stars of night! could I ascend
Up to your quiet realms, how glorious
To downward look upon the sleeping continent,
Washed by an ocean dark on either side,
And cooled by wandering breezes from the wave,
To see far in the north the shadowy belt
Where, in gradations broad, old Nature's brush
The eternal whiteness of the Arctic realms
With ever-varying tone joins gradually
To shadowy gloom of nightly summer plains;
Far in the west to see the rugged chain
Of mountain, chasm and awful precipice,
With gloomy valley and the dismal home
Of that fierce denizen of wilds, the grizzly bear,
Extend from regions of eternal snow
Where Mount Elias rears its venerable head
Along the vernal slopes of a Pacific sea,
Far to the windy heights of ancient Mexico,
Where fierce volcanoes belch, whose lurid flames
Oft guide the Caribbeans from their lonely isles
Across the wide expanse of midnight wave.

O stars above! and ye are looking down,
Down o'er the white fields of the Arctic zone,
Where, here and there, small clustering, snowy domes
Proclaim the dwellings of the peaceful Esquimaux;
Or, farther north, beyond the ocean storms
Of Hudson's rolling sea, where, as of yore,
The ocean mammoth breeds her ponderous race,
Ye look in pitying silence o'er the lonely graves
Of Arctic wanderers who perished in their prime,
Where oft, on hills of desolation drear,
At night the famished wolf howls piteously,
And from vast Arctic seas the ceaseless dash
Of billowy waves and ever-sounding moan
Of grinding ice-floes, as they southward sweep,
Forever chant a solemn funeral dirge.

Or, far beyond, O stars of heaven! ye shine
Through the cold air o'er some lone voyageur,

Whose helmsman shrinks before the bitter night,
 And eyes grow dim with gazing upon mountain bergs
 That float forever among Arctic shores,
 Range after range, in glorious magnificence.
 O cold and uninviting is the North ;
 We will return to where the day is warm
 And summer twilight long upon the plains,
 Where mighty rivers sweep through flowery meads
 And the kind earth, with laughter on his face,
 Returns a bounteous harvest to the labouring swain.

O fair Qu'Appelle! let me again behold
 Thy winding streams and beauteous valley, spread
 In glorious panorama far below
 The upward sweep of thy copse-covered banks,
 On whose flat crests the future yet may see
 The glory of a well-set capital,
 Whose blest inhabitants may come at eve
 From out their city avenues to walk
 Along the breezy ridge, and downward look
 O'er river valley in the plain below.

Far in the West there is a paradise
 Of waving meadows, and of wandering streams
 And quiet lakes, about whose sedgy marge
 The pelican oft makes her peaceful home,
 Where the vast prairie's ever-rolling plains
 Adjoin the swelling hills that upward sweep
 To the blue mountains that appear beyond.
 There opening flowers, the earliest of the year,
 Shed their unnoticed fragrance on the balmy air,
 The summer breeze from the far ocean wave,
 Sweeping o'er mountain heights, glides through the vale
 Where autumn's lingering days prolong the harvest tide,
 And winter's boisterous wind blows wildly there.

Oft in the future by the farmhouse door,
 Sitting with her fair children round her knee,
 Watching perchance a brood of eaglets wild,
 Far in the distance, fly from crag to crag,

The happy matron then will bless the day
When her young lover found so dear a home.

Lonely and silent are the flowery vales,
Save where the dusky warriors of the chase,
The straight-limbed Blackfeet or deep-chested Sioux,
Like eagles fly across the stretching plain
And pitch their wandering tents upon the mead.
Sprung from some ancient race were they of yore,
Whose wave-washed home was Europe's rocky strand,
Sea kings of old, ere Saxon, Dane or Norse,
Went plundering o'er the wild Atlantic main.

Lonely and silent are the vernal meads,
Save when the shaggy, huge-limbed buffalo,
Mad with the summer insect's stinging bite,
Rolls his wild eyes, and fiercely shaking oft
The clotted hair upon his ponderous throat,
Sends his voice bellowing to the distant hills;
And soon, from upland fields, the answering roar
From his brethren wakes the echoing land.
At eve, by thousands, o'er the stretching plain
The enormous herd begins its onward march,
To seek new pastures where the winds are cool,
Far in the North, where winter's mantling snow,
Melting beneath the summer sunlight warm,
Dampens the turf, and forth luxuriantly
There springs the juicy grass the bovine loves.

O Great Lone Land! Thy hills and vales invite
The wearied toilers of old Europe's fields.
Wealth to the willing arm and happiness
For those who labour are thy sure reward.
Already, through the sounding land, is heard
The voice of many toilers, and the year
Now glads the heart of many a labouring swain
With wealth of golden harvest from the field.

Blow, sweetly blow, O soft, clear western wind,
Far from Columbia's mountains fringing blue,

The western bound'ry of the Great Lone Land,
 Among whose unknown passes may my wandering feet
 Upon some glorious summer morn halt suddenly,
 When from the riven mountain's western brow,
 Where screeching eagles fly from crag to crag,
 The glory of the bright and vast expanse
 Of blue Pacific wave shall light my brain
 With sudden fire of thrilling ecstasy.

Blow, sweetly blow, O soft, clear western wind!
 Shine, stars of light! shine brightly from above,
 As when, of yore, ye looked in silence down
 Upon the lonely Indian of the plain.
 So in the future may ye proudly look
 O'er glorious cities and o'er hamlets fair,
 O'er seats of learning and o'er palaces of wealth;
 And never may thy quiet look be dimmed
 By deadly smoke of battle belching from
 The hellish fangs of war's artillery,
 But, to the end, may ye look kindly down
 Upon a land of peace and of prosperity.

Winnipeg, November 27, 1882.



IN THE EMIGRANT SHED, WINNIPEG

Old and poor and weary, life seemed very wretched.
 In the bitter weather on a bench outstretched,
 There an old man moaning lay, in bitter hunger,
 On the planks' hard surface, vainly tried to slumber.
 Other waifs of fortune on the floor together,
 Supperless, despairing, felt the cruel weather.
 Round the shed the blizzard raged in fury blindly,
 Through the chinks and crannies whirled the snow unkindly,
 Fell in cloudy flurries o'er those sleepers weary,
 O'er their dark despairing, o'er their fate so dreary.
 Young and old were clustered in the shed together,
 starving, moaning, shivering. O the bitter weather!

But the old man weary, when I saw his features,
Filled my heart with pity, more than these sad creatures.
Nature there had written courage with her fingers;
Courage yet, but little strength about him lingers.
O'er his breast a beard, ancient, white and hoary,
Showed the strength where youth had flourished in its glory.

Garments thin and patchy, too old for repairing,
Clung around his body; years they'd been in wearing.
Like their owner, growing out of date and usage,
Weather-marked, storm-beaten, like his ancient visage.

Goodness here and wildness, moulded all together,
By the suns in youth, in age by stormy weather.
Fierce in furnace flames, Time the bronze had cast
And this statue of an old man had produced at last.

Old man, poor and weary, on the bench outstretched,
Tell us all the story of thy life so wretched.
Old man, poor and needy in life's cold December,
Tell us all the story, all that you remember.
Lonely here and hungry! old! thy sons, where are they?
All thy kith and kindred, not one caring for thee!

Now the old man slumbers—in the land of dreams
Glowing shafts of morning spread in magic beams;
All the shadows dreary from the bitter night
Sink in dark oblivion! See, the beaming light
Of joy illumines his features, for his thoughts have flown
Back to early years, his childhood's pleasant home,
Back to woodland paths in sweet Avoca's vale,
Where, in days of youth, he told the pleasant tale
To willing ears that heard and eyes that answered clear.
O willing eyes and lips and clasping arms, how dear!
Dream, thou ancient traveller on the bench outstretched,
Life with such a dream is not truly wretched,
Thus his dream flowed on: "My dear lass I married.
"Long in my hill cottage love and quiet tarried
"Many a happy year, till reaper Death did come
"And stole away my treasure from the peaceful home.

"So lonely then was life, so drear with gloomy thinking
 "Of joys forever gone, I wildly took to drinking.
 "One son still at home, the other three had started
 "Out into the world and left me broken-hearted.
 "My sailor lad was lost on wild Newfoundland's shore
 "And Jack, the soldier, perished 'mid the deafening roar
 "Of Isandula's battle; and I know not where
 "My other son is wandering o'er the world afar.

"Soon to ruin went my ivy-covered home,
 "And through the lonely world I started forth to roam
 "With Tom, my youngest lad. I came across the sea,
 "And, O 'twas bitter grief his death brought unto me;
 "For the fever caught him, ten short weeks ago,
 "And they laid his body underneath the snow."
 Then the old man wakened from his dream of life,
 Shivered in the coldness, thought of his sweet wife,
 And in accents tender, thus I heard him musing,
 As he fell again fond memory's book perusing:
 "Ah, for those sweet mornings in Avoca's plain,
 "The fiercest storms of life I'd gladly meet again;
 "I have had my sunshine, though my night is dark,
 "Let the dogs of hunger prowl around and bark,
 "Gnaw my very vitals, all will soon be o'er,
 "And I'll meet my loved ones on the other shore."

February 1, 1884.



IN MEMORY OF W. J. KITTSO

(Written in Winnipeg)

Not in the legends of the days of eld,
 When Philoctetes wept o'er his sad wound,
 In lonely agony, about the streams
 And sounding shores of his wild prison isle;
 Nor in the poems old of Jewish lore,
 Where Mizpah watched her dead, unburied sons
 And drove the hungry beasts of night away
 Back to the shadows of the gloomy wood;

Nor 'mong the bloody tragedies of Rome,
When Mars' fierce fortune turned 'gainst Hannibal
And blanched horror seized his warrior frame,
When like a missile from the Roman ranks
His brother's gory head flew o'er the walls
And told the silent tale of bitter fate.
Nor in the dim, dark ages that have gone,
When wild delirium drove the Assyrian king
From out the glorious city of his power,
And 'mong the beasts of earth at dewy night,
Through many a long, revolving year of gloom,
He wandered o'er the Babylonian plains;
Nor 'mong the bitter yieldings up of life
In Shakespeare's tragedy, can we behold
A fate so sad, a death so desolate
As that of him we mourn in bitter grief.

O it was very lonely there to die,
No human eye to see, no tender arm
To ease and pillow up the dying head.
The stars looked silently from heaven above,
The wind swept listlessly about the earth,
And to the dying ears, far-distant sounds
Came creeping o'er the prairie's vast expanse.

O brother dear, in bitter loneliness,
Death overpowered thee in the quiet night.
What strange, wild thoughts passed through thy wandering
mind,
When the delirium led thee o'er the plain,
Far from the dwellings of thy fellow-men;
And, when returning reason came to thee,
A few short moments ere the silent death,
What were the last sad thoughts that filled thy brain?
Ah, but the agony was over soon—
The tightening fist—and then thy spirit fled
Far from the shadows of the prairie land.
How bitter seemed the fate that gave thy youth
Up to a death so wildly desolate!
Thy glowing face, that but a month ago
Was flushed with health and many a kindly smile,

Now in the silence of the fearful night
Awaits the cruel vulture of the dawn.

Ah, I have heard of deaths upon the shore,
After the rolling storm has swept the sea,
When women wailed o'er forms that heeded not,
And clasped their arms round breasts that felt no warmth
And I have heard of deaths within the zone
Of Arctic winters, where the wandering ones
From cold and hunger died, and, one by one,
The sad companions bade the last farewell;
And I have heard of deaths upon the field—
The father mourning o'er his patriot sons
Out in the dawn, where peace had followed war—
Yet none so sad as thine, O brother dear;
These had companionship, but thou, unseen
By mortal eye, didst meet thy tragic fate.



SEA MEMORIES

(Written in Winnipeg)

No more for us the seaward breeze at eve
And surging wave shall sigh along the twilight shores
Of fair Prince Edward, in the billowy gulf.

No more at eve for us the sea-gull wild,
Drifting on idle pinions in the balmy air,
Shall landward come from the far-rolling wave.

No more for us shall the great sun descend
In gorgeous splendour to his ocean bath,
Beyond the far horizon slowly dipping down.

No more at eve for us to wander far
In quiet meditation o'er the gleaming sands,
Towards the distant headland's hoary base.

No more for us to see along the strand
Flotsam and jetsam from the ocean strewn,
And here and there the white-ribbed, shattered hulk

Of some old merchantman that oft had spread
Her flapping canvas to the favouring breeze,
Till storm and wave and ever-weakening age,

In some tempestuous, awful, moonless night,
Amid the sullen roar of Heaven's artillery,
Had laid her groaning on the sands to die.

No more for us to watch the driving storm
Pass terribly along the inky breast
Of furious ocean's thunder-echoing wave.

No more for us the fisher folk, at eve
Homeward returning from the far-off wave
With heavy creels, shall ply the labouring oar.

Farewell, dear Island home! Thy wandering sons,
Here, in the centre of a glorious continent,
Shall ever cherish in their loyal hearts
The sweetest memories of thine and thee.



YULETIDE!

(Written in Winnipeg)

So far away, O brothers, do ye hear
The clanging joy-bells ringing wild again
Along the distant shores of memory,
As erst they did in childhood's happy days?
Ah, we were kings of old in our small shoes—
Kings, when we heard the clanging joy-bells ring,
Kings in a realm of great and full delight,
With all our elders kindly bowing down
And yielding homage to our reign of joy.
O merry Christmas, all thy cheerful realm
Is a fair land where childhood reigns supreme—
Supreme in bliss of pleasure and delight.
Thy fabled saint, with ancient, snowy beard,
And ruddy cheeks and jolly smiling eyes,
Impersonates the adorations paid
From kindly age to sweet light-hearted youth.

O brothers, we have wandered far by sea,
Where storms have often lowered upon our path;
And we have wandered far by twilight shores,
Where friendly hearts have sadly said farewell;
And we have wandered far upon the land;
And here, within a wondrous continent,
From various climes, O brothers, now we meet,
Far from the pleasant places of our youth.
Here let us form dear friendships o'er again,
And let the wanderer's hand clasp wanderer's hand;
And let the wanderers' hearts in joy unite,
Forgetful of the gloom of ocean storms
That darkened o'er their lives in other days.
And may the clanging bells ring in again
A merry season through the joyful land.
Far, far away, beyond the sighing main,
Our dear old friends of other years abide,
And it is sweet, sweet joy to know that they
Will think of us in kindness and love,
Now in the Christmastide, when hearth-fires glow,
When the night-lamps are lit, and pleasantly
The light streams over walls we knew of yore,
And over faces that we loved so well.

O Christmas! dearest season of the year,
How pleasant are thy gatherings round the hearth,
How joyful is the commune there of friends
Who knew each other up from childhood's years,
And understood and loved each varying shade
Of character—that to a stranger mind
Oft smothers up the beauty of a life.
O Christmas! now among thy festive halls
May Merriment unto the pleasant dance
Lead forth her laughing children, all in joy;
And may the sweet-lipped maidens, 'neath the bough
Of hanging mistletoe, receive the pledge
Of favour from the dear, light-hearted boys—
And if the boy is bashful, O sweet maid,
Think it a tribute to thy loveliness,
And give him one sweet, lingering moment more.

O Christmas! all thy jovial merriment
Is the inheritance of Northern climes.
And I will sing the various jollities
That Northern winters give unto their sons.
Here let the joyous maid, with easy grace,
Along the ice glide as on feathered wing,
While her companion holds the finger tips,
And thus they float away, like summer birds.
There let the tinkling sleigh-bells merrily
Sound far and wide upon the wintry air,
While hearts aglow with health and happiness,
Warm in their circling robes, fly o'er the snow.
Here from the jovial souls of bachelors
Let many a jolly song ring to the stars,
As homeward from the snowshoe tramp they come
With humour and good-fellowship aglow.

O Christmas, may thy joys extend to all!
Give to the simple labourer in his cot,
Where laughing children share the hard-earned toy,
As full a heart of joy and happiness
As to the millionaire in his bright home
Aflame with brilliant light and joyous guests;
And may thy joy pierce through the darkling shades
Of those whose lives are gliding to despair,
And fill their coming year with happiness,
And their despairing hearts with manly strength.



SONG

There was never in the wildwood
Any rose upon the tree,
Bursting from its budding childhood,
Like unto sweet Dorothy,

For her beauty is more tender
Than the rose in wildwood dell,
Bursting out in youthful splendour
In some vale of asphodel.

OCCASIONAL POEMS

There was never in their glory
 Any stars in midnight skies,
 Shining in celestial splendour,
 Could compare to her bright eyes;

For her glance is kind and tender,
 And the light that lingers there
 Is too sweet and too ethereal
 To compare to midnight star.

There was never in the forest
 Any graceful birchen tree,
 To the summer breezes bending,
 Could compare with Dorothy.

For one evening in the woodland
 'Mong the roses red as wine,
 One I plucked, and for a moment
 Bent her sweet lips unto mine.

For her grace of every movement
 Fills my being with delight—
 Fall of foot or touch of fingers,
 She is like an elfin sprite.

For the touch of her sweet fingers
 And the falling of her feet
 Harp-tones seem, where music lingers,
 Faint and shadowy, pure and sweet.



"BLOMIDON"

NOVA SCOTIA

I climbed the mighty steep of Blomidon,
 While night her sable mantle slowly rolled
 Mysteriously o'er all the underworld
 Of vale and far-off hamlet, and the vast
 Far-stretching ocean, weltering in the night,
 And in the lonely forest on thy brow,
 Among the spectral, moss-drooped hemlock trees.

Dread Blomidon! I heard the moaning storm,
And looking downwards o'er the sleeping world,
So weirdly strange in night's dim solitude,
My soul was lost in solemn mystery,
While through the riven clouds upon the ridge
Of rugged mountains dark in Cumberland,
Far off, like flame and blood, the lurid gleam
Of the ascending moon broke through the night.
There was a time, old Blomidon! for thee,
Of fierceness and of wild fire-gleaming storm,
Far off within thy lusty days of youth,
Dim and forgotten now as some strange dream,
When nature burst her pent-up raging fires
And rolled the seething lava through the caves
And bellowing caverns of thine underworld,
Like wild, convulsive life-blood in the breast
Of one who struggles with a passion fierce
And deep as hell, and wildly terrible,
That shakes the firm foundation of his soul.

What bitter storms have swept thy mighty crest,
O Blomidon! since that primeval time?
How many a winter's frost has deeply scarred
The rugged outlines of thy massive brow,
Like human forces terrible that formed
Some grand, heroic character of old
On windy Trojan plain or Grecian isle?
How often hast thou felt the rolling crash
Of thunder 'gainst thine adamantine sides,
When, onward rolling and with ponderous rush,
Leaped with a mighty crash the thundering sea,
While round thy rocky base, mysteriously,
With ebb and flow, strange currents glided on
From the far-pulsing ocean, dark and wild,
Like life-blood through some breaking human heart?

Oft in the early eons of the world,
Ere man appeared upon her rugged face,
In yonder plain unwieldy mastodons
Trampled the slimy ooze beneath the shade

Of dense-leaved sigillaria; and at eve,
Old Blomidon! thou heardest from afar,
Re-echoing o'er all the sounding land,
The noisy clamour of their bellowing.
The famished panther, prowling round thy brow
With stealthy tread and hunger's fierce desire,
Heard from his lair the thunder of their roar,
And dashed with growling fury down thy sides
To join old Nature's red-toothed fiery war
And tear the quivering flesh, and lay in death
The remnants of an old stupendous race
Whose dull and ponderous bodies could not cope
With the fierce energy of newer life.

Here in thine upper realm, wild Blomidon!
Among thy mists and shadowy forests drear,
Remote from all the tangible delight
Of the wide world around, my anxious brain
Fills with a craving, restless and intense,
For those unknowable, mysterious truths
About the afterworld and spirit realm.
O Blomidon! if from their far abode
Pale, wandering ghosts at midnight ever come
Back in unquiet terror to the world,
Here to bewail their evil deeds of yore,
E'en now my fancy sees, with aspect strange,
The gliding wraith of some old pirate dread,
Sweeping the rugged outline of thy brow,
Where yonder stone, mysteriously stirred
By the low-moaning wind, drops to the sea.

A thousand years ago, old Blomidon!
On some bright summer morn, when Nature spread
Her charmed robe of greenery around
Thee and thy neighbouring valleys bright and fair,
In the old viking days, Jarl Eric came,
Perchance, and sailed beneath thy towering crest,
With bounding pulse, along the western shores
Of pleasant Markland, from the distant, blue
And shadowy horizon, where ocean storms

Dashed in the North around his Iceland home,
Ages before the courtly Champlain came
With gentlemen of France to Port Royale,
Who lingered through the balmy summer days
About the valleys of thy southern slopes,
By shore and forest in the Acadian land,
Like the old Grecian wanderers from Troy
Who, after toil in many a hard-won fight,
Sailed to the lotus islands of the sea
And quaffed the waters of Elysian joy,
And found oblivion from every care.

Thousands of years have come and slowly gone,
Old Blomidon! and on thy shadowy ridge,
In plain simplicity, the scattered huts
Of a few poor and simple cottagers
Now cluster by the dim old forest shade.
Thine old volcanic life has passed away,
And from thy forest dim, the panther gone,
The pirate and his wild, licentious crew
No longer wake at night thy echoing shores
By camp-fire's blaze with drunken revelling,
Or 'neath the silence of the quiet stars
Murder the hapless wretch who finds their lair.
No more the dying sailor, 'neath the slash
Of hissing cutlass or keen-edged knife,
In desperate fight against inhuman fiends,
Crimsons with his life's blood the weltering deck,
While far away, in some sweet English lane,
At the soft twilight hour, a maiden mourns
With anxious heart her lover's long delay.

Old Blomidon! the world is happier now,
And dimly in the dusk horizon far,
Eastward beyond the broad, low, shadowy land
Of Grand Pre, with its tender memories
Of old Acadian life and love and war,
I see the distant hills, where gardens old,
With hanging fruit on gnarled old apple trees,
And many a grapevine swelling through the night,

On rustic porch or simple cottage eave,
And shadowy elms and perfumed sweets of flowers,
And velvet lawn and daisy-sprinkled field,
All cluster round the academic walls
Of Windsor's quaint old halls and quiet homes.

Wild Blomidon! thou lookest o'er a land
Where peace and happiness and sweet content
Bless with their threefold joy a sturdy race;
And often as the toiler of the field,
Homeward returning at the close of day,
With happy, blissful heart to wife and child,
Seeing within the west the golden light
And rosy gleam of sunset, and the haze
Of dreamy purple on thy massive brow,
Blesses, with thankful heart, the God who made
His world so beautiful.

Old Blomidon! while here among thy shades,
'Neath the storm-laden sky in solitude,
My mind has wandered through the centuries
And eons of the past, among the dim
And far faint glimmerings of terrestrial life,
Down the long vista of old nature's way;
Amid the tumult wild of fierce red war
And struggle for existence of the brute,
Forever rising higher, type on type,
Developing new beauty age by age
Unto the latter glory of a happier day;
And now my dreaming from the dim, wild past
Turns to the joyousness of present years,
And soft, sweet glances from the kindly eyes
Of a fair little child sweep through my brain,
From far beyond the rolling of the wave;
And as my memory brings the vision bright
Of all her radiant beauty, and the light
Of her soft eyes, pensively beautiful,
And sweet as summer blue in morning skies—
I feel the adoration full of sweet
And fair delight that poets ever yield
In God's dear universe to beauty and to joy.

ON THE GULF SHORE AT BRACKLEY POINT

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Faded and gone the sweet and full delight
Of a fair summer day by wind-swept shores,
A twilight eve beside the surging wave,
And homeward wanderings beneath the light
Of trembling stars, through quiet country roads,
While friendly voices charmed the listening night.
With story and with song the happy hours
Have glided by and entered silently
The sacred realm of memory's golden zone,
Where, evermore, like music faintly heard
From far-off worlds, their influence lingers on.
O dear companions of the ocean shore,
Already, faint and far away, the surge
Is gleaming as of yore o'er sandy dunes,
And quivers as the cool breeze passes by,
And like an opal gem, whose beauteous light
Shines clearly from its crystal loveliness,
So gleams the pearly hue on rippled cloud
From out the soft, faint azure of the sky.
But far away and shadowy as a dream
The opal loveliness of that brief day,
Its light of morn, its glow of afternoon,
Its tender pensiveness at twilight hour,
Oh friendly souls, I see you once again,
In scattered groups about the windy shore,
While sea-birds sweep from out the distant main,
Like spirits from another world, and evermore
The breakers curl upon the gleaming sands.
And then again my fancy wanders o'er
The vast, mysterious waste of waters wide,
About whose far horizon silently
The distant wanderers sink below the verge
To seek for other shores, and one by one
Kind memory calls the dear, the loving friends
Who sighed farewell and sought the spirit's realm.
Far in the west the sloping sunbeams fall

Along the purple haze that hangeth o'er
The fruitful fields of peaceful Rustico,
Whose hardy toilers came from Acadie,
In olden days of war and earthly strife.
Now peacefully, about the distant hills,
Their homesteads nestle 'mong the leafy trees
And sloping fields where, ever silently
By day, by night, through sunshine and through storm,
The hidden seed extends to harvest bloom.
Slowly from o'er the distant-stretching sands
Towards his peaceful, well-loved cottage home,
The patient rustic comes at close of day
With heavy freight of weed, from sea-swept shore,
The tribute of old ocean's solemn depths
To ripening harvests of the smiling earth.
Out on the sweet blue fields of briny foam
The fisher-folk have toiled from morn till eve,
And gleaming fair, and slowly drifting on,
About the waters all the livelong day,
Their snowy sails hang o'er the soft blue sea
Where, in the olden days, the mariners
From France and England came and glided on
And felt the fair enchantment of the scene,
And marked the loveliness of this green isle,
And heard from Indian lips the sacred name
Of "Abegweit," fair home upon the wave.
The day is done, and all material things
Have vanished in the shadowy realm of night,
And underneath the glow of shining stars,
Suggestions of the clearer, brighter light
Of immortality come thronging one by one.
Farewell again, dear friends, good night, good night;
May many another morn and balmy eve
By wind-swept shores and under kindly skies,
For you and yours, come with the future years.

July 8, 1891



A WELCOME TO THE TENNIS PLAYERS
TO CHARLOTTETOWN

O mellow western wind! breathe sweet and low
Around the silvery margin of our Island home.
O mellow western wind! breathe sweet and low
A welcome unto those who kindly come
From other shores beyond the rolling wave.

O gladdening light of heaven! float calm and clear
On glittering birchen tree and grassy blade.
O gladdening light of heaven! float calm and clear
O'er velvet tennis mead: to man and maid
The glowing cheek, the bliss of health, impart.

O dreamy azure haze on distant hills
Around fair Elliot's winding, sylvan way;
O dreamy azure haze on Bonshaw hills,
Hang fair and shadowy all the summer day,
While man and maid the merry tennis play.

O wandering surge of ocean, calmly glide
Around the stretching shores of this fair land;
O wandering surge of ocean, calmly glide
About the bather on the golden sand,
And fill his brain with sportive joyousness.

O bird of eve, upon the woodland bough
Sing plaintively thy song at close of day;
O bird of eve upon the woodland bough,
A sad farewell to friends who go away
Chant plaintively among the sombre trees.

O mellow western wind, breathe sad and low,
And sigh farewell within the beech-tree shade.
O mellow western wind, breathe sad and low,
And sigh farewell to man and gentle maid;
For they, like sea-birds on the wing, will fade
O'er surging waves to far-off ocean shores.

TO A SWALLOW

(Written at Rosebank, P. E. I.)

O swallow, fluttering at my window-sill,
In happy flight this early morn of spring,
Beneath the shelter of my cottage eave
Build safe thine home and rest thy wandering wing.

Secure from harm through all the summer days,
Come when thou wilt and dart away again,
On whirling flight along the ambient air,
In joyful freedom, 'neath the golden sun.

But swallow, swallow, thou wilt fly again,
And leave our Island home, and cross the sea
Toward southern lands where summer suns still shine;
For wintry days were never made for thee.

O swallow, swallow, shall I think thee poor
In spirit, like a friend who turns away
And chills the kindly smile of brighter years
At the approach of sad adversity?

Oh swallow, swallow, no! I do thee wrong
By such a thought—forgive its cruel birth;
Thy mission is to fill the summer days
With joy, as do thy friends, the flowers of earth.

O swallow, where didst thou the knowledge find?
What power divine, like angel's guiding wand,
Didst point thine onward flight o'er mead and vale,
Unerring, to the summer of this northern land?

FROM AN
ADDRESS TO A UNITED STATES SENATOR
ON THE FISHERY QUESTION

(FROM PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND)

Here in the North, where ocean surges flow,
Dwells Liberty where'er the breezes blow;
From Brudenell to Kildare in the west,
Free as the wind is every Island breast;
English and French and Scotch and Irish, we
Live here in peace beside a northern sea;
Just scan these lines, which now in haste we send you,
And of your folly, prithee, sir, amend you.

Would'st play the tyrant? By thy country's power
Shall justice now be draggled in the mire?
And like a race barbaric, sunk in night,
Will ye attempt to strangle right by might,
Or like a bullying autocrat at school
Force younger boys to bear your tyrant rule?
Good Senator, before we fag to thee,
You'll sing another, more pacific note, we'll see.
O could the sacred shade of him arise
Who planted Liberty's fair-blooming tree,
That lifts her lofty branches in the skies—
Could he but cast his lordly eyes on thee,
He'd quickly place among thy country's rules
An act of disability for fools,
And send thee home again to till a farm,
And keep thy thieving fingers out of harm.
That day when any damned usurping hand,
By power and wealth too insolently grown,
Within the walls where justice once did stand,
Shall drag the goddess from her fair white throne,
Then starving labour, with her wretched brood,
Like famished tigers scenting human blood,
Shall leap on shrieking capital, and drain
The ebbing life-blood from the fluttering vein.

O what a vast, vast realm ye have to govern,
 A thousand miles from northern line to southern,
 Where every nation underneath the sun,
 Her quota furnishes to make you one.
 Far in the west, Lee Bung, the Chinee, washes,
 Down in the south the negroes have no bosses,
 Massed in the centre, huddled all together,
 Germans and Swedes, and Welshmen tough as leather;
 There on Louisiana's border stand
 Spaniards and Frenchmen filling all the land;
 Here peacefully among the Hudson meadows,
 The Dutchman smokes beneath his roof-tree shadows;
 And on the Atlantic coast your bone and sinew,
 To think of Fatherland may still continue.
 English and Scotch and Irish, what a fistful!
 Ye legislators need be very wistful.

O brothers of our race! a friendly hand
 We give, and welcome to the northern land;
 Come up and fish within our fertile waters,
 And intermarry with our buxom daughters,
 Bright as the morning light, their lovely features
 Sweet as the rose—O they are pleasant creatures;
 In all the land from Oregon to Maine
 You cannot match "la belle Canadienne."
 With metal fair and trusty weld a chain
 Of friendship for the nations once again.
 Fair Peace, thy gentle reign is o'er the land,
 Kindly and powerful as an angel's hand;
 Hushed in the silence of their midnight sleep,
 The hardy toilers of the surging deep
 Ride on the wave by George's Bank afar,
 Beneath the silver light of moon and star;
 While, resting from the day of busy toil,
 The peaceful tillers of the fruitful soil
 In many a hillside cottage sweetly dream
 Of field and meadow, flower and winding stream.

NATURE'S MINSTRELSY

O bird of eve upon the woodland bough,
Now in the twilight hour thy song awakes
The trembling chords of happy memories
Of nature's minstrelsy in days gone by.
"Abegweit," dear, dear "home upon the wave,"
How often as a child about thy shores
Have I not heard the music of the deep,
At morn when the bright sun gilded the sea,
And dancing waves sang clear their matin song;
At eve, when wandering breezes landward came
From fields afar of ocean's barren foam
And curling waters sounded on the sands;
At night, when Nature's voice was terrible,
The roaring surges lashed the rock-bound coast,
And thunder, howling diapason tones,
Crashed through the harmonies of ocean storm.
O wild and grand those nights were long ago.
And when the storm was hushed, the inland pines
Within the sombre forest, moaning, sighed
As fitfully the moon swept through the trees.
Ah, then was nature's music strangely sad,
As if it sang the solemn requiem
For the young sailor lad out on the sands.
And I have heard far out upon the sea,
When moonlight fell upon the dancing wave,
The charming witchery, the merry tune
Of flute notes pealing, while the silvery light
Of moon and stars and cloud were beautiful.
And oft, in boyhood, with the fisher-folk,
Through the long summer night upon the deep,
How sweet the music of the lapping wave
Against the boat's frail side did gently sound
To waft my boyish slumbers into dreams.
And oft, when autumn's freshening breezes blew,
I heard the curlew piping o'er the downs,
While ceaselessly the far-off ocean foam
In rolling symphony broke o'er the sands.

O loved "Abegweit!" still the music sweet,
 The minstrelsy of nature round thy shores,
 Sweeps through the golden chords of memory;
 And though, entranced, among the columned aisles
 Of old cathedrals dim with mellow light,
 I hear the swelling tones of organ-peal,
 Now softly sweet, now exquisitely sad,
 Now passionately grand in harmony.
 Yet will my memory ever wander home
 To where the surf beats wild on distant shores.
 Home of my youth! home of the twilight hours!
 Where on the waters dear old songs were sung
 By friends now scattered o'er the wide, wide world;
 Some 'mong the groves of sweet Bermudian isles,
 Some 'neath the pines of far New Zealand shores,
 Some on the sunny slopes of Italy,
 Think of the days of happiness gone by;
 O how delightful on thy waters broad,
 Dear Hillsborough, fair river of the sea,
 It was to sail by night upon thy waves
 And hear the songs by sweet-lipped maidens sung.
 Dear are the memories of those happy eves;
 And like the distant hills, low-lying, blue
 In hazy loveliness far o'er the sea,
 They form the shadowy realm of boyhood's years
 Beyond the silvery zone, where the wild sea
 Of after life rolls back upon the sands.

Still do the echoes faint of ringing bells,
 In old church-spires sound from that shadowy realm;
 And voices of the past oft sing again
 At dewy eve the songs of other days.
 But among childhood's memories, the songs
 Of sweetest melody were ever those—
 The dear old English songs at even sung,
 Sometimes by hearthlight in the winter night,
 Sometimes by twilight in the summer eve,
 Sung by the mother whom I loved so well.



THE VOYAGE OF THE DEAD.

IN MEMORY OF SIR JOHN THOMPSON.

Through mists and shadowy vapours of the night,
O'er lonely leagues of barren ocean foam,
Darkly majestic, in funereal garb,
Like Charon's bark of old, across the dim
And shadowy waters of death's fateful stream,
Westward a mighty warship cleaves her way
From the ancestral home of England's race,
And bears within her silent catafalque
A solemn freight, the mourned and honoured dead,
Unto a distant realm beyond the sea.

The wandering winds of ocean from afar,
With sobbing wail chant forth a piteous moan,
While swelling ocean surges wildly roll
Their diapason tones along the deep—
Beneath the lowering skies—and sea-birds wild
On mighty pinions from Norwegian coasts,
With strange, mysterious voices, through the night
Join the sad dirge of Ocean's requiem,
As if in lamentation for the dead.

Great spirit, calmly rest upon the wave;—
The toil of earthly years at last is o'er,
The glorious toil of battle in earth's fields,
The sadnesses, the sorrowings, the delights
Of earthly life, the happy days of love
In a fair western city by the sea,
The hours of preparation and of toil,
Of stern defeat, the ever noble years
Of manhood and of honourable deeds,
Of faithful service for thy country's good,
And to thy country's God, the few short hours
Of earthly honour in thy Sovereign's court
In ancient Windsor, by the lordly Thames—
All, all is over now. Great spirit, rest.
In death the body forms a glowing link,

OCCASIONAL POEMS

Bright as the molten metal 'neath the blow
 Of brawny smith upon the ringing steel,
 In the fair chain of peace forevermore
 To bind old England and her children dear,—
 The golden chain of kindness and love.

The night has flown, the morn has come and gone,
 The day is waning, and the western sky
 Is all aflame with gold and purple light,
 Mysteriously beautiful; and now among
 The shades and glowing vapours of the west,
 The dim, mysterious shores and looming hills
 Of the far western continent appear,
 Among whose thousand leagues of fertile fields,
 From old Laurentian hills to southern glades,
 And fair savannas of sweet Florida,
 Millions of England's sons in freedom roam,
 And kindly speak the dear old mother tongue.
 O warrior ship! bear thou thy burden safe;
 Take the tired body to its native land,
 And may thy service ever be of peace
 Between old England and her stalwart sons.

Charlottetown.



OCEAN SHADOWS

Out of the unknown shadows of the night,
 My soul went wandering o'er an ocean, dark
 And wildly desolate, where wind and storm
 Whitened the barren foam in those rough seas,
 Whose ceaseless surges rolled weird minstrelsy
 In diapason tones and thundering roar,
 And strange, deep, pulsing currents onward sweep
 Along the swelling bosom of the deep.

And after many, melancholy days
 Of weary gazing at the sad, dark sea
 And laden skies that, ever seemed to lower,

When neither light appeared in Heaven above
Nor any star to guide my devious way,
I drifted towards a land, whose distant hills
Seemed fair and friendly on the horizon;
And when I neared that strange, mysterious coast,
At times the ocean mists would slowly rise
And gleams of joyous sunlight fall upon
The yellow sands along the shadowy marge,
And fill the inland valleys with a light
Soft and mysteriously beautiful.

But not for me to rest and make a home
In the fair brightness of that joyous realm.
For many a season am I doomed, alone
To sail along the ocean's shadowy night,
Save when at intervals I seek the shores
Of that fair, gleaming land, and wander on
About the golden-sanded borderland
With friendly beings from the inner world,
Who welcome me to their home land of joy,
And come at summer morn or dewy eve,
To meet me where the rolling ocean waves
Break with impassioned music on the sands.

Radiant of face are they and full of bright,
Seraphic, joyous beauty, such as were
The Greeks on fair Ægean's balmy shores;
And happy children come with cheerful smiles
And pleasant laughter, and the Queen of all
These little fairies with her winsome ways
Gladdens my misty eyes and lights my heart
With the sweet witcherie of childish joy.

Such pensive sweetness fills her dreamy eyes
With soft, enchanting beauty, that my soul
Feels the sweet rapture that the Athenian knew,
Akin to adoration, when he found
God's presence in the beautiful on earth.
And then I hear the sobbing of the wave,
And the far distant voices of the sea

Call me again into the ocean gloom ;
And a sad melancholy fills my soul
As forth I wander from the happy earth.

Alas! for me the joys of that bright shore
Are but the empty semblance of a dream.
Yet ever and again I look afar
And see the dim, faint outline of the hills
Of that fair, beauteous land I love so well,
With all its tangible and earthly joy,
Sweet sounds of music and rich gems of art
And sighs and tears and smiles and sorrowings.
And after many days of wandering
About the cold grey sea, whose mysteries
Elude the searching of my inmost soul
And leave the riddle of my life untold.
"Whence did I come, why do I linger here,
And whither is the end of life's strange pilgrimage?"
Again I seek the distant, happy shores
Where dwell the friends of my far wanderings;
And sometimes when the moon hangs gloriously
Among the mountain peaks and lights the sea
With a surpassing splendour of delight,
They walk in friendly converse round the shores,
There happy ways and sweet companionship
Fill the swift hours with deep and rapturous joy.
But, like the shadow of a passing dream
Or floating cloud that dims the moon's clear light,
An influence strangely irresistible
Comes o'er my soul and separates from view
The dear companions of the passing hour;
And they glide inland to their home of light,
While towards the ocean and the midnight storm,
I pass again to drift in loneliness
Until my ocean wandering is o'er.

Charlottetown, July 26, 1894.

FAREWELL TO "ABEGWEIT"

O dim and shadowy shores, the light of morn
Changes to azure on thy distant hills,
Faintly and far away, as some sweet dream
Fades sadly into dim oblivion's realm
When slumbering eyes awake to morning's gleam.

Like messengers of love from the sweet fields
And fragrant meadows of yon Island home,
The sea-birds circle in the ocean wind
That bears me far from well loved friends away,
A wandering exile to another land.

O home upon the wave, farewell, farewell
To thee and thine. The moaning surges roll
And sweep their softened music on the wind,
Faintly and sadly, like the stifled sigh
From out the life-beat of some tender friend.

O gleaming light upon the lessening sails
Of hardy toilers, far from friendly shore,
May many a well-filled creel reward the toil
Of manly arms, and many a loving heart,
When evening comes and sails are snugly furled,
Welcome the happy toilers home again.

O cloud, and wave, and tender azure sky,
And wandering wind, and gleam of sunny light,
Far in the distance falling o'er the land
Where dwell the dear ones in the olden town,—
To them, O friendly nature, evermore be kind.



SCATARI, CAPE BRETON

O cruel wind! O cruel wave!
O cruel rocks of Scatari!
No more by Mira's pleasant shore
Will my brave laddie walk wi' me.

OCCASIONAL POEMS

Yestreen we cam frae Catalone,—
 The sweetest day in a' my life.
 For Donald clasped me in his arms,
 When I agreed tae be his wife.

His fishin' boat was on the shore,—
 He gaed me mony a sweet good-bye,
 And sailed o'er ocean's paths afar,
 'Neath the dim summer moon on high.

Last night the sudden storm arose
 And caught the fishermen at sea!
 O cruel wind! O cruel wave!
 O cruel rocks of Scatari!
 No more by Mira's pleasant shore
 Will my brave laddie walk wi, me.

North Sydney.



SONG

I love my love, I love my love
 And she is all the world to me
 And aye is faithful, fond and true
 If I have wealth or poverty.
 'Neath sunny skies or lowering clouds,
 Her smile is ever sweet and kind,
 Come weal or woe, come storm or calm,
 Come summer breeze or winter wind.

I love my love, I love my love,
 And ah! my sweet love loveth me!
 Sing all your tender melodies,
 O song-birds in the leafy tree.
 Though far away I wander, love,
 Across the mountains or the sea,
 My heart is ever full of joy,
 For ah, my sweet love loveth me!

And, like the wandering wind at eve,
Her presence seems to come to me
Where'er I rove, through forest shade
Or by the margins of the sea;
Her gentle voice I seem to hear,
Her beauteous face I ever see.
I love my love, I love my love,
And O my sweet love loveth me.



SONG.

She lived in sweet Glenaladale,
The lass I lo'ed sae lang ago.
No sweeter floweret in the vale
Sae blithely fair did ever grow.

The smile upon her bonnie face
Cam like the sunshine's pleasant gleam
Through quivering leaves, in sylvan place,
Beside the sweetly babbling stream.

But ere I told the secret tale
To that sweet lassie, young and fair,
They laid her in the flowery vale,
And my poor, lonely heart was sair.

Now memory oft will bring to me
Fair gleams o' love frae days of yore,
In that sweet land of Tracadie,
Beside the ocean's sounding shore.



ACADIA.

Far, far away and shadowy as a dream,
Beyond the surging of the billowy sea,
The distant shores of sweet Acadia gleam,
And thoughts of other days come back to me.

Among thy rugged hills, O distant land,
That now are veiled in soft blue mystery,
How often, when a boy, I loved to stand
And read, in ancient rocks, thy history.

How often by thy river intervales
The hours of twilight grey I loved to spend,
And breathe the fragrance of thy summer gales
Where leafy elms their graceful boughs extend.

Peaceful and quiet, through the summer morn,
From Port la Joie I see thy friendly shore,
Where earthquake wild and fierce volcanic storm
Spent terribly their force in days of yore.

But now thy life, with all that man desires
Of peace and joy and happiness, is blessed,—
Thy life that once through wild, volcanic fires
And coldness of chill Arctic bergs had passed.

O distant hills, that gleam so clear and fair
With azure loveliness this summer day,
Within thy girdling zone of ambient air,
Among your shadowy vales, my old friends stray.

Dear sister land, I look across the sea
From loved "Abegweit," our fair and sea-girt home,
And bid a fond good-bye to thine and thee;
For misty shadows from the ocean come,

And clouds arise, and sun and moon and star,
For us their glimmering fires will cease to beam,
And through the cold grey languor of the air
The Acadian hills will lose their azure sheen.

But clouds will melt away, and happy light
Will clothe again thy hills with radiant gleam,
As tender as sweet visions of the night,
That cheer some wandering exile's happy dream.



AN IDYL OF THE SEA

The evening sun has sunk to rest
Beyond the moaning sea,
And gloomy clouds fill all the West
With lurid mystery.

Down where the dashing ocean wave
Breaks wild with sudden roar,
A lonely maiden wanders far
Along the sea-swept shore.

Why does she walk so sadly there?
Her bosom heaves with sighs,
Her lovely face is full of care,
And from her soft sweet eyes

O tenderly the tear-drop falls
Down on her heaving breast,
Like moonlight glancing on a bank
Where glassy dewdrops rest.

Wild birds from ocean swiftly come,
Sweeping in windy flight,
To seek a shelter from the storm
And rest through darkening night.

Ah, then her vigil grows so sad
It prompts her anguished cry:
"Come back again, my sailor lad,
Come back or I shall die.

"O cruel wave, O cruel sky,
O deep and cruel sea,
O cruel wind which passeth by
And keeps my love from me!

"How many weary days ago
They said his ship would come!
But stormy winds forever blow
And drive him far from home.

"And now, beneath the ocean wave
Perchance he lieth dead.
Ah, if he does, then in the grave
Lay, lay my wearied head.

"O sweet white bird that flieth in
From out the dark, dark sea,
Where through the long day thou hast been,
O sweet bird, tell to me.

"If north or south or east or west
My lover thou hast seen,
O sweet white bird, I pray thee, rest
And say where thou hast been."

But swift the white bird turned away
And with a wild, shrill cry
That filled the maiden with dismay,
Vanished far in the sky.

And when the darkness sank o'er earth
She wandered sadly home,
And this the burden of her thoughts—
"O will he never come?"

Then through the night the storm arose
And howled with dismal roar,
The lightning flashed, the thunder crashed,
And on the sounding shore
The long white line of breakers moaned
An endless "Nevermore."

Now, as she listens to the storm
And hears the belching rain,
Like evil spirits of the night
Against her window pane,

She kneels unto the God of heaven
Who rules the stormy sea,
And with a voice of quivering tone
She prayeth fervently:

"O Thou, who once on Galilee
Did'st still the raging wave,
O guard my lover from the storm
And him from danger save."

But still the thunder's echoing roar
Resounds from sea and sky,
The mighty waves roll on the shore
And fling their foam on high.

All through the long and fearful night,
Now on her knees at prayer,
Now gazing at the wild, wild sea
Through lightning's fitful glare,

Midst wavering hope and trusting love
And wild, bewildering fear,
Now kneeling to the God above,
Now drooping in despair,

She passed the hours of weary night,
Long hours of gloom and storm,
Till clouds departed and the light
Appeared of gentle morn.

And gloriously the lord of day
Rose from his ocean bed,
While scattering clouds of crimson glow
In radiance round his head.

And in the distance, far away,
O maiden, can it be,
Out on the wide horizon dim,
A ship upon the sea?

So faint and far away it seems,
Like one who travels on
In silence by some spirit realm
Unknown to mortal man,

Around whose gold and silvery shores
A soft, sweet minstrelsy
Forever seems to fall and float
Upon the peaceful sea.

"O have you gone to that far realm,
My brave brave sailor lad?
Alas, alas, farewell, farewell,
O would that I were dead.

"But ah, perchance, that floating speck
Upon the distant main
Is some proud vessel on her path
To earth's far shores again.

"O frail, frail speck upon the sea,
From danger, waves and storms,
O bring my lover back to me,
Restore him to these arms."

But slowly, slowly southward sailed
The ship upon the main.
And, wild with grief, the maiden sighed
"He comes, ah! not again."

O slowly through the summer day
From north to south it bore,
O slowly through the summer day
From south to north it bore away
And slowly neared the shore.

But through the languid afternoon
The favouring breezes died,
And like a sea of jasper gleamed
The stretching ocean wide.

And far away the vessel hung
Between the sea and sky,
Her lifeless sails for passing gales
Drooped ever listlessly.

"O faithless wind that wanders far
By some sweet sea-girt isle,
And lingers where with perfumes rare
The balmy trees beguile,

"Strange ocean currents, deep and strong,
Waylay thy stately mate,

She, drifting, glides on pathless tides,
All heedless of her fate.

"Come back again to yonder bark,
She mourns thy sad delay ;
O wandering wind, I pray thee send
My lover on his way."

Far on the ocean's vast expanse
The rippling waves proclaim
Impetuously, with onward sweep,
The wind's return again.

And with a joy of fond embrace
The ship receives her lord,
Her canvas, o'er the billowy main,
Strains well each tightening cord.

And onward to the well loved land, —
O joy! they come, they come,
O joy, dear brother mariners,
To reach the longed-for home.

Now deepening twilight shadows fall,
Fair shines the evening star,
And round the dim delightful shores,
Two lovers wander far.

All dangers o'er, upon the shore
Their happy whisperings prove,
By many a tone of tenderness,
Their deep, unchanging love,

By many a passionate embrace,
While tender words were said,
By many a meeting of the lips,
While gentle sighs are made.

The silent language of delight
They use, the lover's kiss ;
The language of the glistening eye,
The kindly smile, the long-drawn sigh,
Unspoken words of bliss.

MEN OF THE NORTH.

Men of the North! if bugle call
Should lead you to the fray,
Be ready at your country's need
For battle's stern array,
By camp-fire gleam to watch and wait,
Or ply the midnight oar,
If barbarous injustice dare
Invade your native shore.

Men of the North! our heritage
Lies in a goodly land,
From where the Atlantic surges roll
To far Vancouver's strand,
Where many a mighty river flows
By stately city walls,
And where in mountain solitudes
The thundering torrent falls.

A thousand leagues of forest hoar
Where giant monarchs stand,
A thousand leagues of vernal plain
Where harvests glad the land.
On stormy oceans, dark and wild,
Our seamen ride the foam
As did our hardy ancestors
Around their British home.

O may our sons like them be strong,
Like them be true and brave
To do the right, to hate the wrong,
The oppressed and weak to save.
O God! Who rul'st the ways of men,
This Canada defend
Through days of weal and days of woe
Till time shall have an end.

CITY AND VELDT.

The blazing torch, the surging, shouting throng,
The wild hurrah, the deafening, roaring din,
The screeching rocket, and the brilliant glare
Of dazzling light along the uproarious street,
The rippling laughter of light-hearted girls,
The measured tramp of strong, deep-chested men,
The sailor, soldier and the citizen—
Old Halifax, at night, gone wild with joy.

She welcomes home again to Canada,
From o'er the stormy ocean vast and wild,
The tanned and swarthy men of Paardeberg.
Accept our thanks, O brave and worthy men,
Who, when the Empire self-defending stood,
Went forth to sacrifice your noble lives.
While the old city here is wild with joy
At your return to-night, the moon shines clear
O'er some wild veldt remote in Africa,
And throws the shadow of a simple cross
Athwart the grasses in the rustling wind.

Halifax, November 1st.



ICH DIEN.

IN MEMORIAM.

The day is cold, the rain is falling down,
The wind is wailing in the forest lone,
The sheep, upon the mountains bleak and bare,
Are crouching low beside each whitened stone.
My heart is sad, for many a grief and care
Has entered in and clings about my life
And dulls the brightness of my summer days,
And saps my strength and vigour for the strife
Of ceaseless warfare with a cruel world.

O coward heart! how idle to repine
When skies are lowering and the winds are cold;

Go, seek thy sheep upon the mountain wild,
 And gather in thy lambs to some warm fold,
 And peace and comfort then thyself shall feel;
 And, on the morrow, sunlight o'er the hills
 Will spread abroad its pleasant witcherie,
 And thou shalt hear thy Master's kindly voice
 In tones inaudible to mortal sense,—
 "E'en as ye did it unto one of these,
 In earthly fields, ye did it unto Me."



ACADIA.

O dear Acadia, thy rugged hills
 And pleasant vales and ocean wave-washed shores,
 I loved in early boyhood's happy days;
 To thee again I turn my wandering way,
 Still with the dear old love for thine and thee,
 That never has grown dim, though pilot's stars
 Have led my feet through many lands remote,
 Far from thy stately elms and grassy meads,
 Where many a winding river slowly strays
 Or cleaves impetuously its headlong way
 Among thy wild primeval solitudes.

Now, in the springtide days, I feel the glow
 And drink the nectar of a life renewed
 In leafy June, among the apple blooms,
 Where drowsy bees fly o'er the scented land
 Of sad Evangeline in Acadie;
 And often on some shadowy pine-clad hill,
 Near Windsor's classic shades, when night is done,
 I feel the glory of the mystic hour,
 At balmy eve, when the descending sun,
 With amethystine glow and wondrous light,
 Hangs very low amidst his molten evening fires
 And smiles beyond the shadowy purple hills,
 And twilight spreads her veil of mystery
 O'er all the charmed land of vale and stream,

Where Avon wanders from dark tarns remote
Among the distant mountains in the west,
While upward from the meadow-land afar
The drowsy lowings of the cattle come,
The tintinnabulation of their bells,
Upon the evening breeze, and one by one
The glittering sentinels of night appear,
The silence spreads o'er all the tired land,
And darkness with its wondrous mystery.

Then the ascending orb of dreamy night
Comes clear and glorious o'er the shadowy vales
And far-off hamlets of the dim St. Croix,
And through the calming influence of the hour
I wander homeward 'neath the quiet stars.

Windsor N. S.



TO A MAYFLOWER.

Pink and white and fair and tender
As the maid of Acadie,
Nova Scotia's simple emblem,
Sweet Arbutus! hail to thee!

Peeping out with bud and blossom
When the snow-wreaths disappear,
'Mong the golden-yellow mosses,
Earliest floweret of the year.

Blithe old winter now is going
And the vernal spring is here,
With its pulse of new life glowing
In the Maytime of the year.

Little floweret, how I love thee,
Child of nature's leafy glade,
By the borders of the forest
Thy romantic home is made.

Full of health and life and beauty,
 Simply wild and coyly sweet,
 How I love at morn to greet thee
 In thy quiet snow-retreat,
 How I love at morn to greet thee
 When the blush is on thy cheek.

When the dewdrops from the petals
 Fall like tears of happy joy,
 When the night of frosty sadness
 Has departed and gone by.

When the golden sun of morning
 Gladdens all the waking earth
 With the springtime joy and glory
 Of the coming summer's birth.

Little floweret, thou dost lead me
 Back to childhood's happy shore,
 Back to boyhood's glorious summer
 In the sunny days of yore.



TANTRAMAR.

Like a draught of nectar, full and free,
 The salt breeze from afar—
 O! it was joy to breathe to-day
 On windy Tantramar.
 It stirred my blood, and my horse flew fast
 Through the clear, sweet, ambient air,
 Joyous and bright in the morning light,
 While the piping plover whirled his flight
 O'er sedgy Tantramar.
 Far inland, old Fort Lawrence lay,
 Forgetful of ancient war,
 And we left it many a league behind
 On misty Tantramar.
 O the clover-bloom was fresh and sweet,
 And my horse was swift and strong

As he galloped on with rattling feet
 To the tune of the graybird's song.
 O the distant hills were soft and blue
 In Cumberland afar,
 And the wind o'er the billowy clover-field
 Swept gusty Tantramar.

Far from the sweet Elysian fields
 All day the south wind blew,
 And the sea-gull circled in the sky,
 And we heard the shrill curlew ;
 O forsake the city and come with me,
 Leave carking care afar,
 Come in the merry month of June
 For a gallop on Tantramar.

Halifax.



SPRINGTIDE.

In the old familiar places,
 By the pleasant woods and streams,
 Peopled by the dear, sweet faces
 In a shadowy land of dreams,—

By the dear, familiar faces
 That we looked in long ago
 In the morn of happy childhood,
 In our springtide's dreamy glow,—

There my spirit oft will wander,
 Through the far-off happy years,
 In the valley over yonder,
 Filled with childhood's smiles and tears ;

Where the earliest buds of springtime
 Came upon the willow tree,
 And the brooklet's wandering waters
 Sought the borders of the sea ;

Where the earliest wildwood blossoms
 Whitened on the cherry bough,

In the shadowy forest hanging
O'er the hillside's rocky brow ;

Where the river, sweeping grandly
From its upland meres and vales,
Deep and dark, and full of beauty,
To the ocean's unknown gales ;

Where the bracken, in the woodland
By the forest's ancient shade,
Pushed their dainty sculptured frondlets
Where the mighty trees were laid,

As they felt the glow of sunshine,
As they sprang from out the earth,
As they felt the pulse of nature
In the springtide's early birth ;

Where the squirrel, madly racing,
Through the forest fences grey,
Little gossip of the woodlands,
Chattered through the sunny day ;

Where the lambkins, in the meadow,
Played beside the browsing sheep,
And the first faint yellow daisies
In the field began to peep ;

Where the happy children's voices
Filled life's morning hours with joy,—
Ah! sweet little angel faces,
Still I hear your laughter coy!—

Where the shining swallow darted
By the droning water mill,
And the trout great circles started
O'er the mill-pond calm and still ;

Where the soft, green leaves of summer
Earliest came upon the trees,
And began the summer's glory,
Song of bird and hum of bees.

Where the robin, in the springtime,
Carolled from the budding tree,
And the golden light of morning
Sparkled o'er the stretching sea ;

Where the wavelets on the margin
Rippled o'er the glistening sands,
And great vessels in the distance
Slowly sailed to far-off lands.

We are still but little children
Playing by life's glorious shore,
Till the lordly vessels bear us
To the distant evermore.

May 30, 1906.



SONG.

LOCHABER, NOVA SCOTIA.

Full of mystery and beauty
Is the peaceful summer night ;
Calm and still, Lochaber's surface
Gleams beneath the gloaming light.

Come from out thy little cottage
On the border of the hill,
Come and meet me, Mary, Mary,
All my heart with rapture thrill.

Though thy dwelling place is lonely,
Queenly is thy face and form ;
Through the wild world, Mary, Mary,
I would shelter thee from harm.

Beauteous as a flower in summer
Is thy kindly, winsome face—
Blithe and gay and bright and bonnie,
Full of sweetness, full of grace,

Full of health and full of gladness,
Womanly and fair to see—
Dainty flower, that grew and blossomed
Sweet Lochaber, on thy lea.

Many a gentle tone of kindness
In thy voice I often hear;
At thy witching smile, my Mary,
Visions of delight appear.

Deep and tender are thy glances,
Kind and loving is thy breast—
I, a weary wandering dreamer,
Could I there one moment rest?

Come and let us walk together,
Hand in hand, the old, old way:
Heart to heart, the old, old story,
Mary, I to thee would say,—

"'Neath these stars that gleam above us,
Here on sweet Lochaber's shore,
Mary, dear, unto thy lover
Give thy love for evermore.

Here, while in the summer gloaming,
In the clover-scented eve,
The magician, love, around us
Silken cords begins to weave,

Lip to lip, here let him bind us,
Soul to soul and heart to heart;
Why should farewells ever grieve us?
Why should lovers ever part?"



THE JUBJUB

[Written for his little nephews and nieces when they were reading "Alice in Wonderland."]

O I have seen the wild Jubjub,
That ever great and frumious bird,
O I have seen the wild Jubjub,
And I have also sadly heard
The yowlings of his dreadful throat—
It was a weird, outgrabious note
That on the grimmeril silence smote.

He lived about a northern isle;
By day he sat upon a rock
And smole a most unearthly smile
And gave the dogfish many a shock,
For oft he dived into the sea
And fought with that wild, furious fish
The rashing, slashing orlafee,
Which was the Jubjub's favourite dish.

By night he hied him to the steep
Wild mountain height of Oskamash,
And for his supper plucked the bleep
And ate the trailing, brundled squash.

He roosted high within the wood
Upon a withered pine-tree top,
And it was never understood
How he could stand without a flop.
His friend, the philosophic owl,
Who occupied a neighbouring branch
(They often sat there, cheek by jowl,
And talked the most artistic Tranch)
Explained that he could lock his jaw
When posing to seem very wise
And deeply learned in the law
Before fool mugwump's bleary eyes.
But he could never comprehend
How any bird could lock its paw
And go to sleep upon one leg

Without a see, without a saw,
 As if it stuck upon a peg.
 The Jubjub heard the owl's remark
 And said "Such wisdom is so deep!
 'Tis useful in the twilig dark
 To send a jub at once to sleep."
 He closed his eyes, and not a wink
 Did e'er he wunk until the morn,
 When the bleared, frumsey polar bear
 Did loot upon his buglehorn.
 O clyly did the polar bear
 Loot softly on his buglehorn
 To wake that ever frumious bird
 And herald in the glimmering morn.

North Sydney, September 14, 1901.



ADVICE TO A CANADIAN STATESMAN.

[Lines written after a banquet given to the Premier and Cabinet Ministers in the city of Halifax on the 2nd of November, 1911]

To you and yours is given in sacred trust
 The government of all this goodly realm,
 From ocean unto ocean stretching far, —
 Rivers and valleys and stupendous plains,
 Where waving grainfields greet the summer breeze,
 And towering mountains holding in their depths
 Vast mines, more rich than fabled Araby,
 And forests dark, and inland waters wide,
 Where millions of industrious toilers dwell,
 And queenly cities rise with feverish haste,
 And from afar the sad-eyed emigrant,
 With hope renewed, appears among the throng.

For you and yours it is the strenuous task
 To guide these people to a higher life.
 No longer let them ever sadly sigh—
 "This miserable world! this vale of misery!

The wretched drudgery of all this daily toil!
Let us have peaceful rest from weariness."
Teach them to lift their heads in freedom high,
To reverence labour as the gift of God,
To live in healthy joy the strenuous life,
The life of toil in earth's sweet harvest fields,
And let them see, with eager, open eyes,
The noble heritage that God has given—
This blessed land so bright and beautiful,
This sweet Canadian land of hope and song,
So full of flowers and joy and nobleness
To him who strives with willing ears to hear,
To him who learns with busy brain to know,
To him who plans with strenuous arm to do.

Here let the light of purifying fires
Destroy the dens of filthy, devilish vice
Ere ever they can raise their hateful walls;
And in their place plant palaces of art,
The school, the theatre, the quiet church,
And fill the land with happy, singing joy,
The voice of sweet contentment and industrious peace.
Give to the people music, pictures, parks,
And let them feel the beauty of God's world,
God's blessed world of happiness and joy.
Teach them to understand the simple rule
That nature's terrible, unflinching hand
Will punish every breach of nature's law;
That plague will follow, like an evil beast,
Where dens of filth and infamy arise;
That foul disease will strike the guilty wretch
Who enters through the portals of the night
Into the secret haunts of vice and shame;
That where dishonesty, with trembling hand
Clutches the gold that was not fairly won,
Or robs the teeming coffers of the state,
To add more millions to his evil hoard,
Then, like a thunderbolt, the storm will strike
And dash him in an instant from his throne;
That where injustice, with her stumbling feet,

Treads down the cringing poor with cruel scorn,
There hatred and revenge will gather up
Their tattered garments, and with bloody war
Make red the robe of all her haughty brood.
Remember Paris and the dark Bastille,
And slaughtered settlers on Missourian plains.

Examine well the active, vigorous life
Of other nations, and their faults avoid,
Their virtues hold in highest reverence —
The culture of the Greek, the strength of Rome,
The vigour of the German, and the charm of France,
The justice of the kindly British race—
And let your legislators, in their noisy forge,
Hammer the ringing steel, and fashion well
Laws to protect the weak and curb the strong,
And paralyze the useless criminal.
Let honesty and industry go hand in hand,
With saving justice ever by their side.
Then Capital and Labour, well content,
Will stroll together through the mighty land,
Stupendous giants, in their northern home.

To you and yours is given, in sacred trust,
The government of all this goodly land.
The simple toiler in the peaceful field,
The hardy fisherman upon the wave,
The patient miner in the caverned earth,
The Indian hunter in the northern wild,
The pale-faced worker in the factory,
Become your wards in honourable trust.
See that the laws protect their simple lives,
And that their daily wage be just and true,
And that their cottage homes are fair to see.
If these poor, simple folk live happy lives,
The nation ever will be truly blest
And you and yours receive, at close of day,
The Master's benediction when ye rest—
"He who hath done it unto one of these
Hath done a blessed kindness unto Me."

"E MARES MERCES"

HALIFAX HARBOUR, MAY 30TH, 1906.

*"These men go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business
in great waters."*

All the mystery of nightfall,
Ere the gloaming light had gone,
Spread abroad her shadowy curtain
And the stars came, one by one.

All the harbour lights are twinkling,
Near at hand and far away,
All the placid waters sparkled,
All the hills were wrapped in gray.

Echoing sounds came from the distance,
Rowlock's beat and splash of oar,
And the evening bugle sounded
Far and near from shore to shore.

All the anchors had been lifted,
All the sails had been unfurled,
And the fisherfolk were drifting
To their far-off ocean world.

As the light of evening faded,
Then each fair and flapping sail,
In the mystery of twilight,
Dimly grew more faint and pale.

And the fleet of fishing vessels
Slowly drifted far away,
Vanishing like clouds of sunset,
One by one, at close of day.

Slowly, far away they floated,
With the ebbing of the tide,
Slowly, far away they floated,
To the ocean, wild and wide,

Where the winds of night would join them,
For their journey o'er the deep,
To the misty far-off places,
There their nightly watch to keep;

To the misty far-off places,
In the ocean's shadowy realm,
Where in storm will soon be tested
Sturdy stem and trusty helm.

There to mount the ceaseless surges
Of the vast Atlantic tide,
And upon the rolling waters
Of the billowy ocean ride.

Thus I saw them slowly drifting,
Slowly drifting far away,
To the zone of toil and danger,
Midnight storm and misty day.

Far away they go to danger,
Kindly men and strong and brave,
Heeding not the toil and hardship,
Ocean storm or raging wave.

Down along the rugged coastline,
Sheltered nook and wave-washed bay,
Wives and lovers, children, mothers,
They are leaving far away.

To their cleanly little dwellings
On the Nova Scotia strand,
May the God of kindness bring them
Back in safety to the land.

May their creels be overflowing,
And with gladness may they come
From old ocean's rolling surges
Back to happiness and home.



WANDERLIED.

I was a wanderer on wind swept shores
And fared among the dwellers by the sea,
In hamlet quaint, in port, in market town,
On lonely road or with good company,
Through stormy days of struggle and defeat,
Beneath the gloom of ever-frowning fate,
Still striving on, until my weary feet
Found out the pleasant paths of brighter days
And kindlier suns shone forth from clearer skies
And flowers appeared along earth's vernal ways,—
Then, when toward an inland realm afar
I wandered on a smiling summer day,
There chanced among the roses blooming there
A beauteous maiden by that selfsame way.



SONNET.

O far beyond the rolling of the wave,
Beyond the barren leagues of ocean foam,
Could I but fly to thee from these wild shores
And rest awhile within thy English home,
Where roses hang about thy chamber's walls,
And sweet laburnum scents the passing breeze,
While all around thy charmed presence gives
A strange, sweet influence to the flowers and trees!
Could I but fly to thee, and once again
The silvery music of thy sweet voice hear,
And look again into thy tender eyes
And see the gleam of kindness shining there!
O wild, wide ocean, and O cruel sea,
A lonely exile ye have made of me.



BY THE HEARTH.

There, by the pleasant gleam and kindly gloom
 Of fitful firelight glancing on the walls,
 I sit beside the hearth, and quietly
 My brain from fancy's golden realm recalls
 Your face so beautiful, your eyes so clear,
 Your charmed presence so divinely fair,—
 As though you sat within these chamber walls,
 Just over yonder in that old arm chair,
 As though the dancing firelight's fitful gleam
 Made bright the splendour of your radiant hair,
 As though you spoke in kindly accents low,
 As though I heard you breathe some tell-tale sigh,—
 Too sweet the vision; it is like a dream,
 That in the morning light has but to die.



UNCERTAINTY.

Peace, peace, unquiet heart! Born out of tune
 With the celestial stillness of this night
 Is all thy restless longing. Uncontrolled
 The wild anticipations of defeat,
 The glorious hope that a supreme delight
 Will crown the issue of thy fondest dream.
 Peace, peace, unquiet heart! The glittering stars
 Are looking kindly o'er the snow-clad hills
 And moving on their wondrous journeyings
 In quiet peace, obedient to the law
 Of the Almighty Ruler of the spheres,
 While I, with bursting heart and feverish brain,
 Tramp o'er the frozen earth, forgetful all
 That my short journey ends before His throne.



SUSPENSE.

Fiercely the wintry storm against my brow
Dashes the whirling snowdrift through the night
And rages on o'er frozen hill and vale,
While through the moaning wind I wander far,
Unheeding all its fury, for my heart
Is restless as the unquiet storm itself ;
While far away beyond the wintry sea
My spirit seeks a little chamber, where
Beside her evening lamp, in loneliness,
A maiden, more than others beautiful,
In quiet reverie turns o'er the page,
And thinks of him who writes these foolish words,—
Is it with smiles or with a tear or sigh ?
O stormy tempest, speak our destiny !



TO _____.

Could I but come to thee, dear tender heart,
Could I but come and there a welcome find,
For some short respite from the ceaseless strife
And sorrow of the world ; could I but bind,
With the soft, silken cords of love your heart
In such divine and sweet entanglement
That from my side you never would depart,
The world would then be joyous, bright and free,
Life ecstasy, and labour a delight,
And each new day a balmy summer dream,
And each new eve a shining summer night,
Where music to the raptured ear is borne ;
Then every struggling ill within my soul
Would fade away like mists at early morn.



BOULARDERIE,

ON THE BRAS D'OR, CAPE BRETON.

Boularderie! Boularderie!
The night is coming on;
Among thy blue, mysterious hills,
The fleeting day hath gone.

Boularderie! Boularderie!
The salt wave laps thy shore,
The sea-gull flieth to his home,
The fisher rests his oar.

Boularderie! Boularderie!
The night winds landward creep,
And in thy forest solitudes
They sink to balmy sleep.

Boularderie! Boularderie!
Beyond the blue Bras d'Or
Thine azure mountains softly gleam
Around thy stretching shore.

Boularderie! Boularderie!
Ceaseless the breakers moan
About thy rocky headlands bold
In muffled undertone.

Boularderie! Boularderie!
Against the twilight sky
Thy shadowy mountains clothe their sides
In veiled witchery.

Boularderie! Boularderie!
The golden clouds are grey,
The crimson of the sunset sky
Has faded far away.

Boularderie! Boularderie!
The day was passing fair,
The glorious morn, the happy noon,
The soft, sweet western air.

Boularderie! Boularderie!
It seemeth like a dream,—
So quietly the day has gone,
So soon the night has come.

Boularderie! Boularderie!
When life's brief day is o'er
And evening shadows gently fall
O'er earth's wild wind-swept shore,

Boularderie! Boularderie!
O may the gloaming come
In such an autumn eve as this,
When I pass to my home,—

Boularderie! Boularderie!
When, through the shadowy night,
Into the dim, strange, unknown realm
My spirit takes its flight.



The following verses, though from his manuscript, it is still not impossible, may have had another author.

There are three voices born of Heaven's blue:
The first to all men sounds at morning's break,
It rings a trumpet-blast the whole world through
When God says, Wake!

The second comes when noonday's sun is high,
A voice commanding and imperative,
Bidding men strive and pray unceasingly
When God says, Live!

The third, when evening follows in the shade
Of manhood's dying day, sounds last and best
To those who woke and lived and worked and prayed,
When God says, Rest!

