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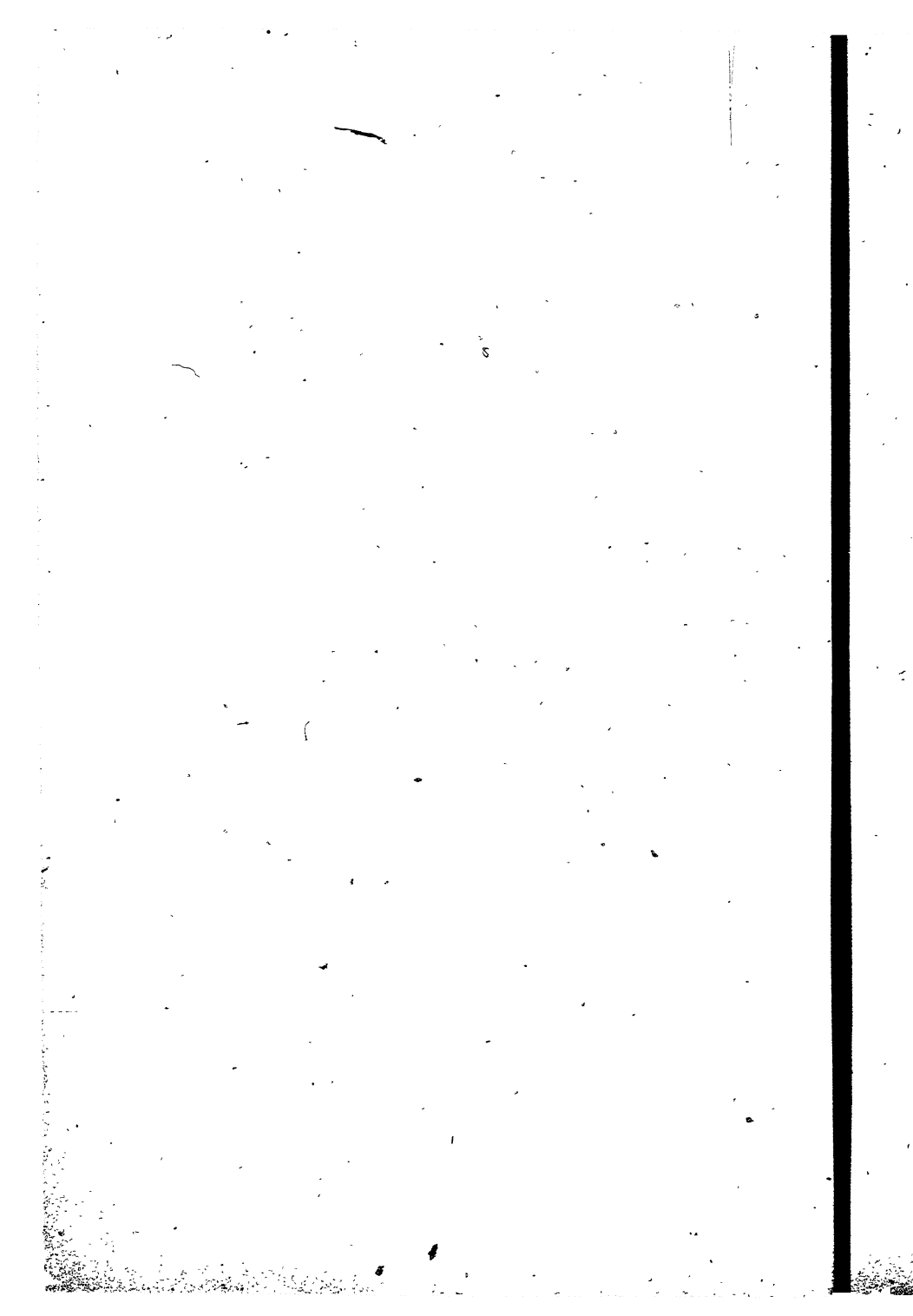
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1

CANADA,

AND OTHER POEMS.

—BY—

J. F. HERBIN.

WINDSOR, N. S.:

J. J. ANSLOW, BOOK, NEWSPAPER, AND GENERAL JOB PRINTER.
1891.

Canada.

CYCLES of years recorded before me in letters enduring,
Paged in the archives of earth, related a wonderful story ;
The growth of an infant world, till Life and Death were created ;
Nations unknown, and cities, unnamed in the legends of men,
Marked by the finger of ages alone where language has died
Spoken in love and war by people ambitious and human.
Tombs were the earth ; and years with the forests, enshrouded and
buried,

Told how perished the peoples before us ; a continent waiting
God's generation, awarded to toil that will name them forever.
Cycles of years recorded before me on pages enduring
Drew me to question the past and forget the passing of time.

Eager, the centuries backward I turned on the pages, till History
Lost in Tradition, the pencil is guided by fancy and dreams ;
And thought like a captive enters to muse in the regions of Silence ;
Regions of Silence, and secret dominions ruled by the Past.
My curious eyes marvel fondly, charming the soul's quicker pulses,
For power is given my vision to gaze on the youth of the world.
I linger on mystical pages, and fancy their secrets are solving,
Declaring the end of the labors that builded through centuries
silent.

The World, like a crystal afloat, was awlirl on the ocean of sun-
light,
Fallen like a drop from space when heaven was sprinkled with stars.
I looked on a shoreless sea, unbroken, unmeasured, and drear,
Surging and sweeping unhindered. Haply, the world yet unborn
Gave warning of birth ; and the curve and calm of the pregnant sea,
Like a mother's bosom, arose and throbbbed with a newer life.

Dark from its secret womb, a continent came into being,
And lay on the breast of the deep, the child of a giant mother ;
Strongest, and first, in the cradle of waves, of the children of
Ocean.

Billows that broke, and nights that enshrouded, were songs and
were nurses.

Storms were the teachers of power ; and cycles, the seasons of
growth.

Then, expanses of water began their lines of procession.

From the east, the Atlantic murmurs adown dark leagues of beaches ;
The Pacific lingers and listens, by echoing mountain and canon,
As words over heaven spake : " Do ye wait till my people come."

Mystery power and beauty, set in a living mould,
Sealed on Mortality's scroll the writ of a hand divine.

Nature sprang up into verdure to bloom in these kingdoms of
silence,

Where ages had wailed on the sea-shore, and levelled the mountains
with change.

Heaven, long sleepless in vigil, looked on with the patience of
waiting.

Seas moved restless and conscious, bending from border to border ;
Shaping symmetrical sweeps of coast from disorder ; and guided
By impulse creation-imparted encircled the living world.

Onward I held till cycles earth-annaed were shadows behind me ;
Seeing the birth of men, and monarchies gather and fall.

River and mountain, calm and eruption, were letters of record,
Mute, yet remindful of change and of God in the order of things.

Then, from the shadows of forests outrose the language of races ;
Nations, nameless, and fated to wander and fade like the seasons.

Southward they swept the continent over, marking the plains,
Like the flow of the tide to flood ; like the ebb to fall away.

Here did I linger till pondering deepened my passion to know.

My being went out, thrilled with the hope that was given from
heaven ;

Filled with the knowledge of wonders to be. At last, with a shock,
Over the face of the deep, the flash of a hand cut the billows ;
Then like a bird of the sea, a prow sped into its haven.
Henceforth, the land is an altar to freedom manhood has chosen ;
Never forsaken or wanting of love by the children of men.
Here, in the midst of the seas, unknown to the daring of valor,
Hinted or visioned by fancy, or vaguely known by tradition ;
Here, an inheritance locked through the ages, lost on the vastness
of waters,

Receives the foot of change. Silence doth pinion away,
As the spirit of life and hope joins across dividing seas,
The old enslaved world with this great, new home of Freedom.
Far through the quiet of forests, out o'er the plains of the Rockies,
The sounds of a new tongue startle the Indian chieftains, and utter
Monitions of the birth of a conquering people. Over the seas,
Thought like a messenger God-sent encircles the world with its fire.
Signs of a progress to be were marked on the pages before me,
Peoples to come from the lands that the sun may find in a day ;
Gathered and welded together, quickly their labors extended.
Then did I read of the strength breathed into their hearts and
their pulses

By the spirit that lived in the air of the valleys and mountains and
waters ;

Breathing a purpose and strength within them to gladden the world ;
A wisdom to guide aright till nations are taught of their teaching,
Wisdom and power like a great new light marking their virtue.

I con till the pages are teeming with annals of growth and of fame,
Turning again to the present, whose leaf is waiting half-written.
The book is heavy with promise accomplishment builds and
inspires ;

Golden with good and with power, and the richness yet to come.

Back to the last noble year, pledged to build into the future,
I am come where the impetus springs from the will of the people.
Centuries three has the fire been burning, brought over the ocean.

Solitudes waken and flash to the flaming of vigor, as manhood,
Young and eager to do, strides into the mountains and valleys,
And lifts the veil from the land long waiting in quiet and secret.
My country smiles like a bride to receive the kiss of betrothal.
Fair doth she seem to the world, and God's blessing has strength-

ened the union ;
And His promise bidding them onward to gather the good of
fruition

Lightens the way far into the years that are coming.

Noble and strong, the nations usher their scion among them,
Teaching, yet taught by the youngest, of glory, love and ambition.
Fancy with strength of its daring turns into the future of years,
Bold in the trial of deeds to track out the distant unknown.

Dare I portend for my land, with this volume open before me,
Honor and wealth for a crown, and growth of her dearest ambition?
Rank yet higher 'mid the nations of earth, and virtue's rewards?

I dare, with the knowledge of deeds that were, and of good that
shall be.

I dare, when the silver of morn melts into the paling darkness,
Look for a perfect day, flooded with golden glory.

I dare, when the grain leaves the liberal hand, look on to the
harvest ;

Yea, now I may hear on the morn the whirl of the sickle.

My heart beats strong at the sound of my country's name and
welfare,

Building with proud nationality, fame in her sons and her daughters ;
Loosening aloft her flag, flung boldly to storms and to breezes.

In the heart-throb of national feeling I hear but the heart-beat of
manhood,

Firing the currents of life in breasts of a happy people.

And re-echoed in softening cadence, the souls of her poets are
thrilling.

From thee, dear land, grandest and noblest theme, their music
Comes, inspired with glory and truth from holiest sources.

Appeal.

CANADIANS! raise aloft your country's flag,
Nor low to earth, nor lifeless see it drag.
Up! till each sign in gentle winds unread,
Meets breezes strong, and every fold is spread.
Its place is high, above the feeble gust
That dims its color with a servile dust.
Among the storms, there see it proudly move
The emblem of your country and your love—
Where all its noble length becomes unfurled
By winds that shake the proudest of the world.
Then will the nations read upon its face,
Whatever, once, their country and their race,
One hope and one ambition closely tie
This people to a common destiny.
A bond of kindred makes your pulses beat,
Frank, Saxon, Kelt, with triple force and heat;
Your veins no longer separate currents run,
Your hearts now animate and beat as one.
Oh noble land and nation! growing strong,
One sky and flag is yours, whatever tongue.
To hold and crown your rampart and your hall
With zeal and valour, needs the strength of all.
My countrymen, your fathers' valiant swords,
Their kings' decrees, their sages' golden words,
The world through cycles down have ruled and led—
A rich inheritance comes from the dead.
Their wisdom and their light are for your hand,
Blessed with the rule of this most fruitful land.
Thick years will come, sprung from the seed you sow;
And for those harvest-days that quickly flow,
The nation walks a-field casting the seed
Of worth and power, the future's urgent need.

The sun of progress shines ; and day full blest
And loud with labor from the east and west,
Hangs over you. Across the western sea,
Mankind new-born obeyed its destiny,
Wandering westward like a current's trend ;
In Canada the roadway hath its end.
The marching centuries of tribe and race
Around the earth, on this find halting-place.
Toward either coast the ocean currents glide ;
Upon their waves your sailors homeward ride.
No mimic ships are yours, the keels are deep ;
Your sons are brave when angry waters leap.
A man is this whose axe doth clear the ground ;
And where he smites the forest tumbles round.
This is a warrior, the first to bleed,
The foremost in the rank of noble deed.
At helm, with axe, before the foemen's guns,
You live and die your fathers' worthy sons.
Proud of your flag, see ! how your praises swing
It straight and clear, to nations heralding.

Promise.

WHAT fairer sky and lands than these
Promote a subject's weal ?
What clime more blessed of liberal earth
May other days reveal ?
What riper age, what fitter time,
To make a nation grow,
Can years present to willing men,
Or favoring chance bestow ?

The day is come, the men are born
Whose kingdom hath begun ;
A nation enters on the field
Of labors yet undone—
A nation set on earth so vast
Its day must linger long ;
And the bright sun that makes it fair
Will make the people strong.
Along the country's hills and plains,
The cities yet to rise
I see like shadows broad and dense
Beneath the lower skies.
Far up, the North where verdureless
The whaler finds the shore ;
Beside the oceans East and West
Whence favoring currents pour,
This age-protected land awakes
On every mount and plain ;
The thrill of purpose high and good .
Bestirs the hearts of men.
No weakling bends to servitude,
Or heedless of his toil,
Looks for a rank, spontaneous growth
On this ambitious soil.
Yet youthful, under strifeless skies,
To bloodless colors bound,
No foe has fallen on our dust
To mark a battle-ground.
A restless spirit stirs them, yet
Untried in battle-fields,
What motto valor dare emblaze
Upon their dintless shields.

War.

I THOUGHT of war. I saw this verdant land,
Where gardens spread and wheat-fields waving lay,
Flash like the fire of storms. Fair cities by the hand
Of unseen monsters in an instant born,
Are blood-bespattered, black and torn.
I choked with fumes of war, and heard all day
The cries of dying. I dared not step lest low
My palsied foot should crush some form below,
Just dead or voiceless in its agony.
The booming guns spake like the warrior breasts
With burning madness to destroy; and shell
Came like their curses, scathing where they fell.
The lowering heavens, yea, the farther sky,
The demon with his legions there infests;
The tortured air shrieks wild beneath their wings.
The sea is slashed with lance and scourge and stings
Of devil-might, till nature sick with blood
Shudders and bewails. War, thou blight
And thing of Hell! oh may thy wing refuse
To cast its shadow here! Yon tidal flood
Is peaceful, and the fleet that thither sails,
Has happy errand; and the seas are bright
With sunshine. Every year the summer-hues
Refresh these peaceful hearts; but thy fell breath
Brings all the awfulness of torturing death;
And every sign of peace which toil doth raise
Falls like the grain before the running blaze.

Unfinished.

HERE, in this land so bountiful to man
In fertile soil and seasons timely made,
Stray winds of discontent do sometimes fan
The flowering peace, and dull the day with shade.

Still, Union has raised up her stainless flag,
Unfurled secure where nothing shall betray ;
When Loyalty calls them forth, how few will lag
To own their manhood and their country's sway.

From these fair shores that fringe the tidal sea
Hath Commerce found a roadway o'er the wave.
The breezes come and go for all, and free,
And find no man a vassal or a slave.

On mountain-side the dark pines stately lift
Their heavy branches to the changeful sky ;
Thus were these shores when once the ocean-drift
Was left upon their rocky banks to dry.

Then, Labor, coming warmed with noble blood
That brought our fathers to a freer land,
Tore from the earth the firmly rooted wood ;
And cleared the meadows with a tireless hand.

That day and courage are not ended yet,
For greater labor tasks the strength of hands ;
Unfinished things before the workmen set ;
Cities yet unbuilt, unbroken lands.

Union.

ABOVE the glamour of long-dead Romance
Attired in gold and dress of every hue,
The glitter was not all, for dead did strew
The war-torn fields of Italy and France.
Stern Valor raised the sword and broke the lance
By many an alien wall ; and gasping threw
From dying hand its weapon in the dew
Of bloody strife. Yet wherefore not advance
Thus bold and strong in love, my comrades, here
On peaceful plains ; and wherefore not unfold
The flag not drenched as yet with battle-stains
As proudly for its purity ; and bear
The glorious front of union, though the gold
And blazonry of courts stir not our veins ?

Home.

MY home, my loved, my tree-embowered land,
So dear art thou I never more would stray ;
Contented here to rest in joy alway,
Near by such loveliness of sea and strand.
Perfected Nature's sweet and mild command,
Full of the luxury of night and day,
And every season's bounty, all repay
This loving heart submitting to her hand.

Here would I die 'mid scenes that saw me born,
And filled my youthful eyes with happy things ;
That gave my spirit all the good of breath.
My happy day since life's short joyful morn,
To this high noon has passed on golden wings ;
May all its pleasant light shine on my death !

