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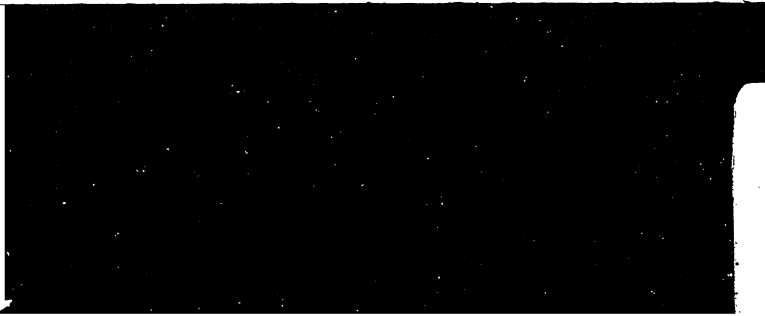
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CANADA

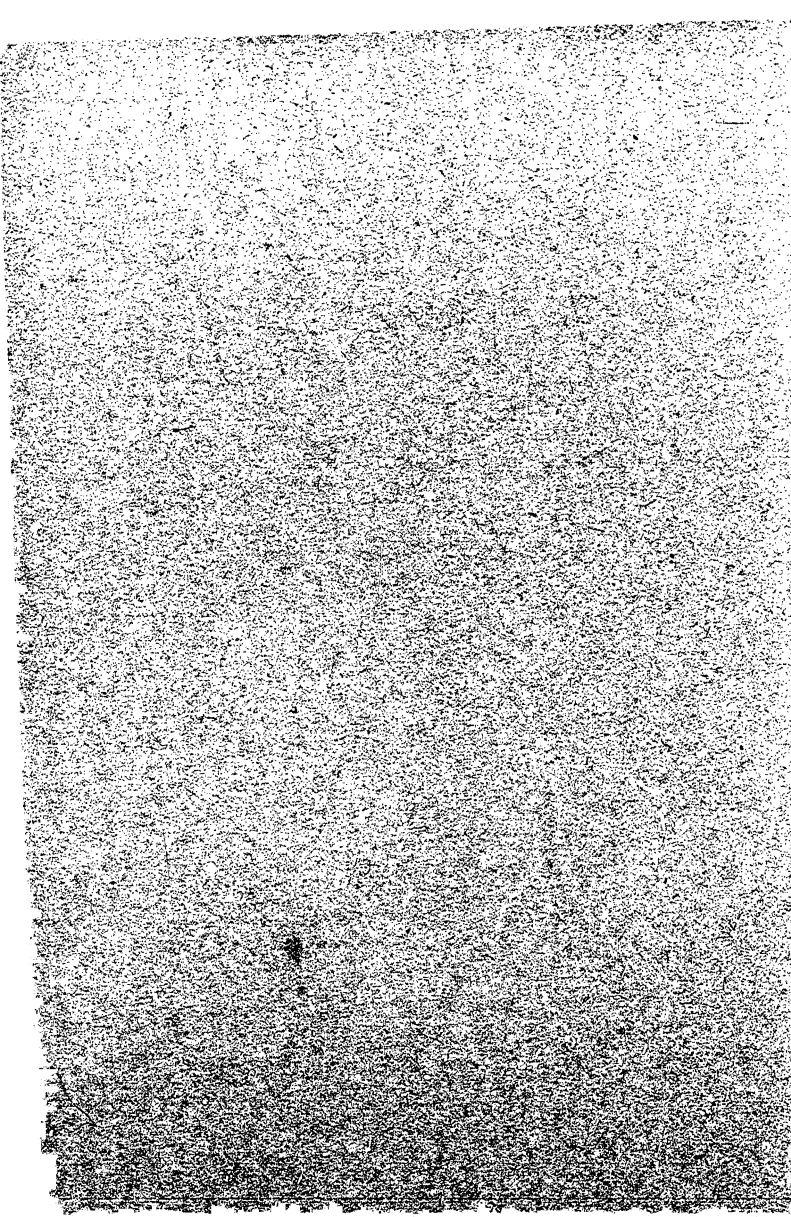
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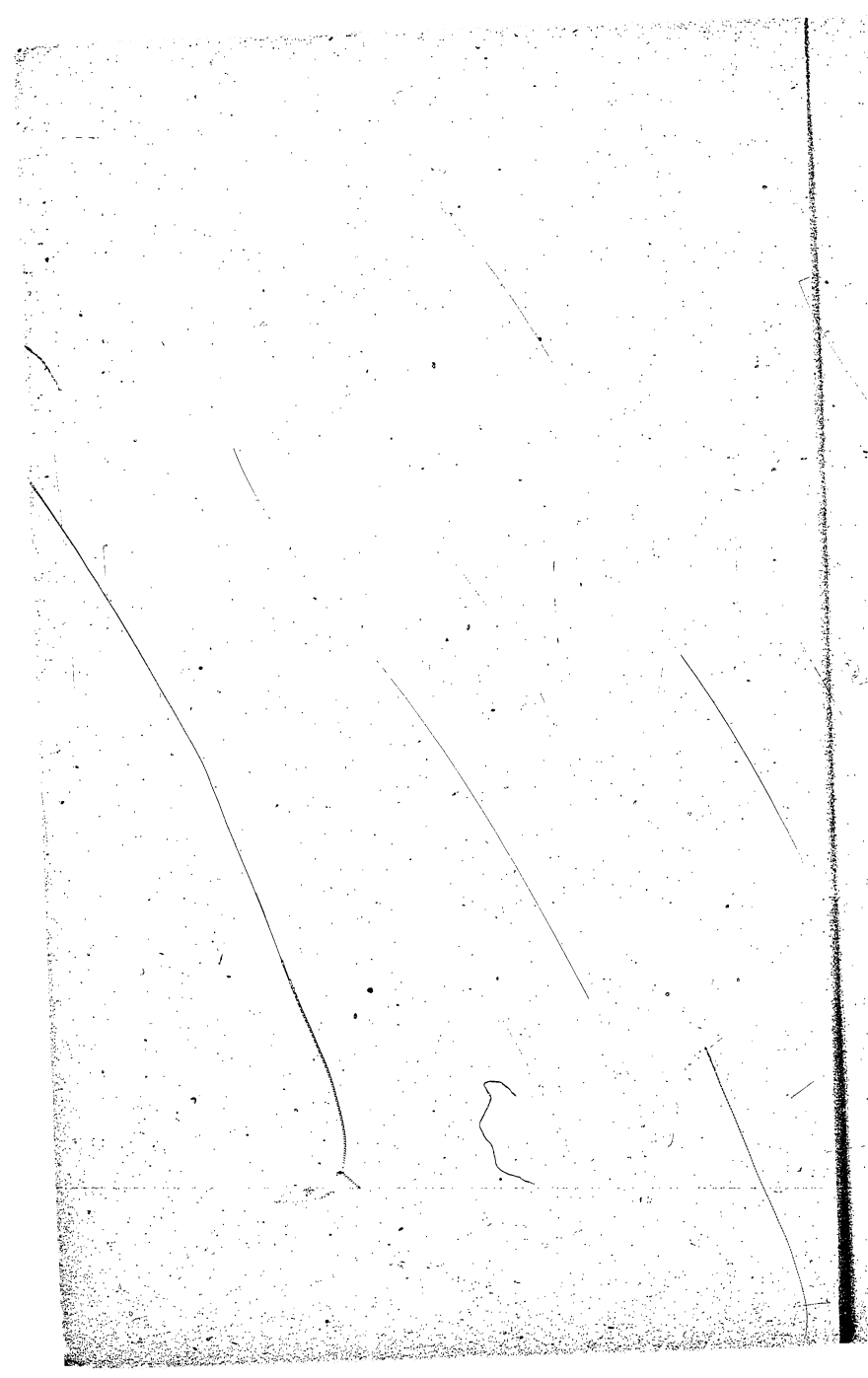
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CANADA



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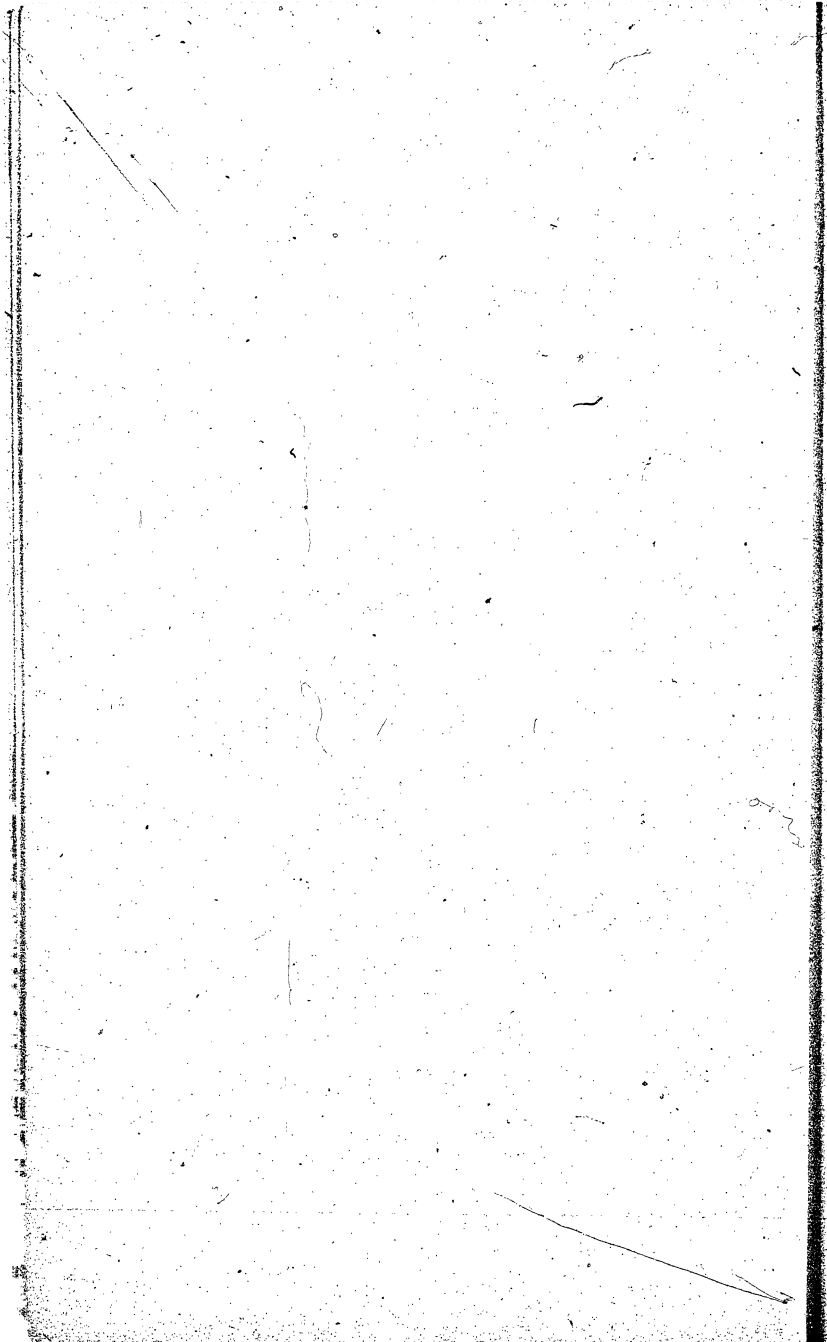
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DEDICATED TO

LOUIS HONORE FRECHETTE ESQ. M. P.

BY HIS FRIEND

THE AUTHOR.



CANADA!

I

Land of my love! Dear Canada, my home!
Land of majestic streams, and mountains grand!
My heart turns ever to thee, though I roam
At times far from thee, on a distant strand
Land of legend! Land of heroes brave,
I hail thee, first-born, of the sons of France.
May Freedom's arm be ever stretched to save,
Thee, Canada, from Slavery's dark trance!

II

An exile from old Erin, thee I choose
To henceforth shelter all my waning years—
A tender mother, thou didst not refuse
To shield ; but kissed away my falling tears.
With soul refreshed, upon thy soil I stood,
A freeman, free from European thrall ;
And then I vowed to give to thee my blood,
My life, my hopes, my loves, my future, all !

III

That vow I gave thee in the summer noon
When first I ploughed the deep St. Lawrence' tide,
Upon thy festal day in gorgeous June
When memories throng to fill thy heart with pride.
I saw thy sons rejoice in honest glee—
Thy dark-eyed daughters smiling as the dawn—
And my pent soul burst in an extasy,
And leaped with all the lightness of a fawn !

IV

Dear Canada ! What brilliant beauty blooms
Upon thy rivers, lakes, and sparkling rills ?
Thy lovely glades are laden with perfumes
Which waft their fragrance o'er thy purple hills !
Thy lofty pines are waving in the breeze
Which sweeps the spaces of the mighty West ;
While wild-birds fill thy groves with melodies
That calm the soul into a happy rest !

V

How beauteous beautiful thy lofty dome
Where myriad graces have perennial birth ?
It seems a glimpse of glory, yet to come,
In brilliance bathing hospitable earth !
And yet thy beauty is not that alone
Which for the moment dazzles, and then dies—
Its essence is the spirit that has shone
With lustrous light in thy historic skies !

VI

For Canada, thy truest beauty beams
In Freedom's gorgeous, glorious, sacred glow ;
Thy holiest light for ever brightly gleams,
From Freedom's shrine—the grave of Papineau !
His was a soul that, fearless, ever sprung
Beyond the meaner strifes of petty men :
His dauntless heart to Freedom ever clung—
Canadians ne'er may see his like again !

VII

In him bright Freedom saw the hope of Truth
Dawn freshly o'er this fair Canadian land—
In very age his heart was filled with youth,
E'er dreaming visions lofty, pure, and grand.
With patriot zeal, he wielded patriot power,
And compact tyrants felt his mighty spell ;
He gave his country, Freedom's holy dower,
And vainly, words, his praises seek to tell !

VIII

Oh ! glorious were the patriot hopes of yore —
The hopes which thrilled this land in Thirty-Seven,
When Liberty, baptised in freemen's gore.
Arose, transcendent, like a star of Heaven !
The heroes of that epoch ever live
Within the loves of grateful men, and ne'er
Can tyrants from our hearts their memories rive,
Or from our souls, the reverence due them, tear !

IX

Tis radiant noon — Orion sheds his ray
Upon the river neath me flowing free ;
Of flowers wild I gather many a spray
Amongst the towering hills of old Levis !
I watch the quivering of each leafy grove,
And dream sweet dreamings of the golden past,
When Hilda poured the nectar sweet of love
In moon-rayed cups, too fondly dear to last !

X

In moon-rayed wine-cups, Hilda gave to me
The sweet, delirious, thrilling draught of love—
I drank it with a spirit bounding free,
Nor deemed that e'er our souls apart would rove.
Yet, Canada, I bless thee for that hour
When, lip to lip, I clasped her in my arms ;
And felt the mystic, witching, wondrous power
Of dark-eyed Hilda's ever freshening charms !

XI

We sought the nooks where the wild roses grow,
And watched the red sun setting in the West :
We sought the glades where crystal streamlets flow,
While, Love, exultant, throbbed within each breast !
We heard the song-birds making melody
Where Echo floats delighted through the vale ;
And whispered, soft, Affection's harmony—
Ah ! ever dear is true love's tender tale !

XII

Dear Northern land—the sweetest of the sweet !
Thy morn is ever bright, thy evening fair—
Lethargic is that soul which fails to greet,
The balmy freshness of thy fragrant air !
Thou art an Eden, Canada, my home,
And when my spirit quits this garb of clay,
I ask the Gods that I may ever roam,
Amid the beauties of thy Summer day !

XIII

For then thy verdant landscapes, fair to view,
Doth gently wave in the ambrosial breeze ;
Tis then the amorous day god sips the dew,
Which sparkles in each leaflet of the trees !
Tis then the raylets dance in every stream
That lightly leaps its pebbled course along ;
Tis then the blue-birds, twittering in the beam
Transport the soul with their gay Summer song !

XIV

Oh ! stay with me forever, ye bright-dreams
Of aerial castles and melodious bowers,
Where Fancy's bark sweeps over laughing streams
Which kiss banks laden with luxuriant flowers !
Oh ! stay with me, and tip with silver light
The memories sweetest of that lovely maid,
Whose eyes, like twin-stars, in the Summer night
Illumed my soul, while straying in the glade !

XV

Tis June—the morning o'er our Northern hills
With majesty ascends in golden pride ;
A sheet of beauty is upon the rills
Which haste to swell the great St. Lawrence' tide.
The flowers are spangled with the diamond-dew,
The maples sway in the light, early breeze ,
And melodies, though ancient ever new,
Awake the harps of overarching trees !

XVI

Tis morn—and most wondrous fair, the scene,
Which greets my vision o'er the spreading plain;
By friends surrounded—hark! from the village green
What strains are those? Ah! 'tis *La Claire Fontaine*.
Oh! dulcet anthem swelling to the skies,
Forever echo far from shore to shore,
While Freedom's star doth lustrously arise
To guide the hearts which ever upward soar!

XVII

Oh! Fresh and fair and lovely is the scene,
The distant hills are decked in glad array;
The flowery vales so richly, deeply green
Are clad, like brides, in beauty's garments, gay!
The glorious sun, Jehovah's gorgeous priest,
Advancing, gilds the mountain and the plain—
Behold him, mitred in the golden East,
With streams of glory in his crimson train!

XVIII

Tis eve—and Phœbus setting in the West
Doth linger long beyond the mountains tall ;
Upon St. Lawrence, like a spirit blest,
The crystal lights from silvery Luna fall !
The vesper bells are stealing gently o'er
From swelling hill, and deep, secluded glen ;
The twinkling orbs in boundless ether soar,
And solemn Night assumes her sway again !

XIX

Tis pleasant now beneath the beechen boughs
Upon the sward to sit with treasured friends ;
And pledge once more Affection's holy vows
While loving Hope with Peace in sweetness blends !
Tis pleasant now beneath the evening star
To waft our fancies on the dewy breeze ;
And watch the rippling wavelets sweeping far,
While magic whisperings fill the spreading trees !

XX

Mid scenes like these, dear Poet-friend of mine
My heart first opened to thee, as a rose,
The sun of which was that kind heart of thine,
Which warmly beamed, and warmer daily grows ;
And as the storied flower ever turns
Its beauty to the day-star's glorious light,
So turns my soul to love that strongly burns,
To bask beneath thy genius, glowing bright !

XXI

I met thee in the early morn of life,
And joined with gladness Freedom's Spartan band ;
And, eager, mingled in the sacred strife
To sentinel from foes this treasured land !
For, though immortal beauties ever shower
O'er river, vale and mountain tall, their lights,
Yet, sacreligious men would hail the hour
Of Freedom's spasmic death in slavish blights !

XXII

Dark-minded men ! Fanaticism, their God,
Who, evil see in every march of Mind :
Who long to wield the Inquisition's rod,
And scourge the holy rights of human kind !
Who preach the blasting creed of " right divine,"
And teach obedience passive, to the Crown—
Those are thy foes, Frechette, and these are mine
Who seek to tear the flag of Freedom down !

XXIII

Behold them—hypocritic in their arts,
Sporting with Religion's sacred name,
Like white-washed sepulchres ; their impure hearts
Have never felt the glow of Manhood's flame !
Degenerate sons of hero sires are they,
With every noble aspiration dead—
They see no beauty in the crimson ray
Which ever beams on fields where martyrs bled !

XXIV

Was it for this Jacques Cartier crossed the sea ?
Ten thousand spirit-voices answer : No !
Was it for this they charged at St. Denis,
Or, hero-swords surrounded Papineau ?
Or, is it now, when Peace is on the land,
And Frank, and Celt, and Saxon, meet as one,
With giant strides, advancing hand in hand,
Toward the fullest noon of Freedom's sun—

XXV

When Science, in her grand triumphal car,
With Progress, ever leading in the van,
Is drawn, magnetic, to the brilliant star
Of Learning, beaming o'er awakened man —
Is this the time to barrier the flow
Of Knowledge, with mere idle creeds and forms ?
Five hundred thousand voices answer : No,
In tones as sweeping as the sweeping storms !

XXVI

Is this the time Reaction to invoke—
Is this the age to stay the torrent-roll
Of Liberty, and with a cunning stroke
Of darkling guile to smite the free-born soul ?
Is this the time Corruption to enthrone,
And basely sell the honor of the land ?
“No. ! No. !” exclaim the hero-spirits gone,
In accents loud of patriot command !

XXVII

We hearken to those voices, proud and sage,
Eternal monitors of Truth are they ;
And though immortal warfare were to wage,
Yet, firm we stand in Freedom's bright array !
Invincible, we scorn the sordid host,
Whose End is Office, and whose God, is Spoil ;
And from Atlantic to Pacific coast,
To guard the land we hold our proudest toil !

XXVIII

Oh, Liberty! Thou art our souls' desire ;
Great Goddess! All thy benisons impart,
And fill with purest glow, the patriot fire
Unquenchable in each Canadian heart!
Thy sceptre, bloometh ever as the rod
Of Aaron, in the Temple of the free ;
And suppliant, we beg of nature's God
To bless this land from centre unto sea—

XXIX

To keep this land, Victoria's brightest gem!
To guard it ever from Disaster, dire ;
To crown it with Truth's radiant diadem,
And every soul with Freedom to inspire!
Oh, Canada! Adopted land of mine,
Accept this humble tribute of my song—
May Peace, dear land, with Happiness be thine,
And countless ages all thy joys prolong!

Quebec, 10th September, 1877.