

CANADIAN

The
PIONEERS

and Other Poems by

Michael Whelan

Renous River, N. B.

1917



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SOURCE:

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CONTENTS

THE ABORIGINES

THE EARLY DISCOVERERS

COLUMBUS

CARTIER

CHAMPLAIN

MAISSONNEUVE

BREBOEUF

FRONTENAC

LA SALLE

THE FATHERS OF CONFEDERATION

T. D. McGEE

SIR CHARLES TUPPER

SIR LEONARD TILLEY

THE CORONATION OF KING GEORGE V.

CANADA

FATHER MORRISSY

HON. EDWARD BLAKE

HON. ANDREW BLAIR

GOVERNOR SNOWBALL

EX-GOV. TWEEDIE

HON. JOSEPH HOWE, GOV. OF N. S.

LORD DURHAM

SIR W. LAURIER

EVANGELINE OF GRAND PRE

JOAN OF ARC (BLESSED)

THE VALLEY OF ROSES

THE BEAUTIFUL MIRAMICHI

THE SWEETEST SONG

OCT 13 1950

The Pioneers

THE INDIANS OR AMERICAN ABORIGINES

Their names are on our mighty hills
And on our sounding streams,
Where great Niagara's thunder thrills
And broad Lake Huron gleams,

Where Manitoba's waters lie,
By swift Saskatchewan,
Where Tobique's tumbling torrents fly
Beside the broad St. John.

Where Ottawa's dark, troubled tide,
In splendor sweeps along,
Or Saguenay's deep waters glide
In gloomy grandeur strong.

Where mighty Mississippi flows
In splendor to the sea,
Or where the golden sunlight glows
Upon our Miramichi.

Where from the Rocky Mountains' side
Missouri's waters flow,
Or where, thru valleys deep and wide,
Arkansas bends its bow,

Where rapid Rappahannock sweeps
Beneath the southern gale,
Or slumbering Susquehanna sleeps
Along the southern vale,

Where fair Ohio's beauteous stream
Monongahela meets,
Or lovely Shenandoah dreams
Within its rich retreats,

Where proud Potomac sweeps along
By tomb of Washington,
And sings its glorious Requiem song,
To her heroic son.

Where by Quebec's embattled Rock
Montcalm serenely sleeps
Or by the sacred tomb of Brock,
The Indian vigil keeps.

Dear Canada, thy lovely name
We owe to Indian lore,
Thy patronymic they can claim
Who dwelt herein of yore.

Detroit's dark strait their valor knows,
Where great Tecumseh fell,
And every stream, wherever it flows,
Has heard their savage yell.

Fair Pocahonta's name shall live
In Pity's peerless place,
For her sweet sake we should forgive
The sins of her dark race.

Proud Pontiac his standard raised,
Rebellion's fearful front,
But that dark deed has been erased
At Brant's baptismal font.

Upon our everlasting hills
And by our sacred streams,
Each Indian name the memory fills
With sweetest, saddest dreams.

Before Champlain had crossed the seas
Or seen our sounding shores,
Or Cartier flung unto the breeze
The Banner bright he bore;

Aye, long before Columbus bore
His way across the deep,
Those men of yore had named each shore
And everlasting steep.

Before the Northmen left the land
Where dwells eternal snow,
Some savage band had name each strand
With these sweet names we know.

From farthest North to sunny South,
From East to golden West,
From Mexico's broad mobile mouth,
To Alleghaney's crest.

Before Quebec's most holy place
Had known the great Laval
Or Mexico, thy frowning face
Entombed the brave La Salle.

Fierce Frontenac and great Marquette,
These splendid, sounding streams
Had all their Indian names ere yet
Your dreamers dreamed their dreams.

Upon our everlasting hills
And by our splendid streams,
Each Indian name the memory thrills
With sweetest, saddest dreams.

Ah, me, what awful forms arise
From out that fearful past
What phantoms rise before our eyes
Above their tomb so vast.

What memories of the savage dead
Who dwelt upon the sod,
And of the martyrs brave, who bled
To bring their souls to God!

Nov. 1904.

COLUMBUS—1492

(Sonnet)

Columbus, Christian Hero, who set sail
The Atlantic's broad and boisterous breast upon,
Thy constant cry: "Sail on, sail on, sail on!"
How long, how dark, how dreadful thy travail!
Thy trust in God's great goodness did prevail,
Till from the path all obstacles were gone:—
A Hemisphere for Freedom fairly won,
And all the world awoke and cried: "All hail!
When thou didst lift the dreary veil of night
That o'er the western world so long had hung,
It was as if God said: "Let There be Light,"
And the great world it's glad "Te Deums" sung.
When first upon our native shores you trod
Men heard once more the gracious Voice of God.

CARTIER—1535

Close in the wake of Great Columbus came
 This hero-heart, to find the great North Land,
 The storms of waves and winters to withstand,
 Discoverer of Canada, his claim,
 High in our hero-history is his name,
 Our country's love he ever shall command,
 Her deepest debt of gratitude demand,
 Who laid the deep foundations of her fame.
 Thru the great Gulf, beside our Miramichi,
 In warm Chaleur, brave Cartier cruised along,
 From these bold cliffs first flew the Fleur de Lis
 Where sweeps St. Lawrence, splendid, swift and strong.
 Forever shall his people fondly pray:—
 "God bless the gallant Captain Cartier."

CHAMPLAIN—1635

Hail! hero-heart, who sailed the stormy deep
 To found a noble nation in the West,
 To lay its firm foundations on the crest
 Of that great Rock that rises, stern and steep
 From where St. Lawrence in its splendid sweep
 Bears countless burdens on its broad, strong breast,
 Where many heroes died, where many rest—
 Valor and Virtue guard their sacred sleep,
 Their fame forever shall our country keep,
 A glorious treasure for all coming times,
 The harvest of their labors do we reap,
 Who follow, from all races and all climes.
 O great, sad soul, who sowed in bitter pain,
 We reap in joy, and bless you, brave Champlain.

MAISONNEUVE—1642

Hail! Maissonneuve, who founded Montreal,
 Upon the Royal Mountain's sun-kiss'd hill,
 Ten thousand tragic tales the spirit thrill,
 Where stood the scented pine-trees, straight and tall,
 The Voice of great Niagara over all,
 Whose mighty, murmuring waters seem to fill
 All space around, and bid the soul be still
 And listen to the great Creator's call.

Heroic soul! whose answer will we know,
 When timid souls did seek to daunten thee:
 "I came to found a city,—I shall go,
 Tho every tree an Iroquois should be."
 Inspiring words! their courage cheers and charms,
 Thy city points with pride "The Place of Arms."

 BREOBEUF—1648

Brave Breboeuf, giant, heart and mind and limb,
 You did dispel the darkness of their blight,
 Dying with all a martyr's dear delight
 For those sad, savage souls so dear to Him
 Who died for all. In forest shadows dim
 Long had they waited, looking for the light,
 Then burst on them thy presence pure and bright,
 They hailed "Echon" with high and holy hymn.

Thy Huron children loved thee, but the hate
 Their foes fiendish bore to all they loved
 Impelled them to thy fierce, heroic fate,
 A fate you did not fear, if God approved,
 They ate thy heart heroic, drank thy blood,
 Still fared the fight, still flowed the sacred blood!

 FRONTENAC (About 1700 A. D.)

Fierce Frontenac, forever in a fight
 With friend or foe, thy temper overcame
 Thy better nature and thy fairer fame
 Covered with clouds of envy and of blight.
 The common people loved thee, wrong or right
 For thy heroic heart and noble name,
 Friend of La Salle, perhaps thy clearest claim.
 To honor in that dark and dreary night
 Of forest fastness and fiendish foes
 Ere came the Conquest and the final close
 Of the old Regime, on that mighty Rock
 That long had stood the storm and battle shock,
 Where drooped the Lily but where bloomed the Rose,
 Where swift St. Lawrence in its splendor flows.

LA SALLE

By the mighty Lakes of the misty North
 To "The Father of Waters" he sallied forth,
 By Ohio's beautiful, bounding stream,
 His soul filled high with a holy dream.

By the lonely fort of "The Broken Heart,"
 He played a high and heroic part,
 Amid the glorious forest scene
 And fringed by leaves and mosses green.

In the great, grand Gulf of the sunny south,
 In search for the Mississippi's mouth,
 The gallant hero went far astray
 Five hundred miles to the west away.

To the faithful friends he had said good-bye,
 And all unconscious, went forth to die.
 By a traitor's bullet the hero fell
 In the wilds of the West that he loved so well.

THE FIRST AND LAST OF THE FATHERS

"For fiery, fierce and fickle is the south,
 But loving, dark and tender is the north."
 —McGee's Speech on Confederation.

HON. T. D. MCGEE, d, 1868

Brave Erin's brilliant and most gifted son,
 Whose sad and tragic fate all hearts deplore,
 Struck down in death just at the very door
 Of Union's glorious temple, but begun,
 And as the fearful fight was fairly won!
 All hearts by deepest grief were stricken sore
 Their tears in torrents on his tomb they pour,
 This well-beloved and grandly gifted one.
 Alas! the noblest cause has foolish friends
 More fell, fiendish than the fiercest foe,
 Who seek in strife their silly, selfish ends,
 Binding fair Freedom with a chain of woe.
 Brave Lincoln died for broader, better laws,
 McGee was murdered for his country's cause.

SIR CHARLES TUPPER, d. 1915

Sir Charles Tupper, last of that great band,
The famous thirty-three, the fathers all
Who met in old Quebec's historic hall
To formulate one Law for this great land.
To lay the firm foundation that should stand
The test of time and every strain and call
For fuller freedom from the things that thrall,
The false old forms that fetter brain and hand.
To clear the way for every race and creed
To forge ahead and be forever free,
To work for God and man in word and deed
In this broad land, from sounding sea to sea,
This grand old man forever from us passed
While all the world with war is overcast.

SIR LEONARD TILLEY

Sir Leonard Tilley, Tupper's faithful friend,
Who fought with other heroes in the fray
For our great country in the glorious day
Which brought our isolation to an end,
And all the different creeds and classes blend
As great and glorious rivals for the way
To peace and progress and the splendid play
Of all the blessed virtues that attend.
To worship God in freedom and in peace,
To clasp the hand of friendship all around,
Where oldtime feuds forever have to cease
And this great land is truly holy ground,
The greatest and the grandest ever trod,
Where man may dwell in peace and worship God.

CORONATION OF KING GEORGE V.

Tho not an age for sentiment or song,
With avarice and haste on every hand,
The god of Mammon marching thru the land,
While the great stream of Commerce sweeps along,
Ten thousand to the Coronation throng
And millions in the proud parade shall stand.
From the great British Empire's farthest strand,

To which all races of the world belong,
 The white, the black, the yellow, red and brown,
 From every climate, continent and shore
 Hands shall be lifted to salute the Crown,
 Hearts shall in loyal love libations pour
 Four hundred million souls shall sing:—
 "God save our glorious country and our King!"
 June, 1911.

CANADA

(Sonnet for the 50th Anniversary of Confederation)

Hail! lovely Lady, blue-eyed, golden haired
 Queen of the North from sounding sea to sea,
 All thou hast been and all thou yet shalt be,
 Thy fifty years of freedom have declared,
 By many tribulations well prepared
 To be the home of heroes, truly free,
 The splendid vision of thy future see
 In all thy gallant sons have done and dared.
 Home of the heroes of this mighty war,
 Hope of the victims of the tyrant's laws,
 The name of tyrant thy brave sons abhor
 Whose brothers bled and died in Freedom's cause.
 Land of the mighty mountains, lakes and streams,
 Home of our highest hopes and dearest dreams.

REV. FATHER MORRISSY

(Sonnet)

A great and good man's life is at an end,
 Upon his tomb the tenderest tears shall flow,
 Who cared for all, who wept at human woe,
 This priest of God, the people's faithful friend,
 All creeds and classes mourn, in sorrow blend
 Their souls for this dear one in death laid low,
 Whose kindly face with holiest love would glow
 When summoned on sweet Mercy to attend.
 The pangs of human misery to relieve,
 To shed sweet solace on some suffering soul,
 Such was his wont for whom our people grieve.
 Whose soul has sought the higher, happier goal.
 God called him hence—we bow the reverent head,
 Weep while we pray above this sainted dead.
 About 1904.

HON. EDWARD BLAKE

My country mourns her well-beloved son,
The great, the good, the gallant Edward Blake,
Who much had done and suffered for her sake,
This great one gone, his duty nobly done,
The highest place in men's esteem he won,
This pure, proud prince, who never did forsake
The cause deemed right, who foremost place did take
In forming her great history, but begun.
Grand were his gifts and grander still his soul,—
No narrow bigot, but a broad, brave mind,
Whose name stands high on Honors sacred Roll,
Who used his gifts for God and human kind.
To guide his country in the way of right
His fame a beacon and a brilliant light.
March, 1912.

ANDREW BLAIR, M. P.

Alas for fame in this commercial age!
When millions seem the only thing to win,
And in the ceaseless, selfish, sordid din
Vain Vice and Wealth against sweet Virtue rage,
This great one gone threw down his battle gage,
His fight in life he strongly, fiercely fought,
But did he reach the goal his great heart sought
Or could the crown he won his heart assuage?
One stern, swift sigh of sorrow and regret,—
The grave has closed above his hoary hair.
And friend and foe will all too soon forget
The faithful friend, the fearless Andrew Blair.
The strong, stern soul, the tender and the true,
Perhaps "he builded better than he knew."

GOVERNOR SNOWBALL

Great was his life and greater still its close,
As he sank down that dreary winter day
While hast'ning to the house of God to pray,
To final rest amid the winter snows.
Each kindly heart with honest feeling glows

Recalling him and his kind, manly way,
 Tho' care upon his heart did daily weigh
 And all he suffered heaven only knows.
 An earnest, honest, kindly man was he
 .. Whose grand, gray head has sought its silent rest.
 His like again beside our Miramichi
 We hope to have, but only hope at best.
 He did his best, his duty nobly done,
 The greatest gifts his country gives, he won.

EX-GOVERNOR TWEEDIE

(Sonnet Acrostic)

Lay him to rest amid your honor'd dead,
 Esteemed by many and by some condemn'd;
 Man's life is one long struggle to the end,
 Upward and hard the path he has to tread.
 Each heart since Adam's day has sorely bled
 Love, Life and Labor do not always blend.
 Justice and Mercy on all men attend,
 Torturing and soothing as hot tears they shed.
 With vim and vigor did he upward climb,
 Eager for conquest and the "garish day,"
 Even as Napoleon, he believed that time
 Did wonders in the winning of the fray,—
 "I was a stayer," has he often said,
 Each heart has kindly thoughts of this great dead.
 Aug. 1917.

LORD DURHAM.—1837.

My dear Lord Durham, venerated shade!
 Whose name to all Canadians should be dear,
 Whose memory our great country should revere,
 For the great part in her affairs you played.
 To thee the highest honor should be paid.
 Your words of wisdom, cautious, calm, and clear
 Filling the friends of freedom with good cheer,
 Repelling factions for the wrong arranged,
 Breaking the back of that old Compact vile.
 That long had kept Canadians snarling slaves,
 Testing the timber of that tyrant school
 That still has students by the western waves,
 This blessed boon Canadians owe to you,
 Freedom for millions—not the favor'd few.

HON. JOSEPH HOWE—1872

Hail Howe, great spirit in the land of dreams,
 O broad, brave soul, the bravest of your day,
 When mighty men and splendid souls held sway.
 Who loved the mountains, woods and singing streams
 Of this broad country, where all beauty beams.
 In that great age when giants led the way
 And giants followed, eager for the fray,
 And Howe held forth on high, heroic themes,

The varied branches of the British race,
 A common country gives a common claim,
 And Howe and Blake, McGee and Laurier place
 Our country's foremost in forensic fame.
 Others may follow, but they lead the van,
 Those friends of freedom and the rights of man.

SIR WILFRID LAURIER—1916

He stands alone upon the summit high
 Of his fair fame, to lay Life's burden down,
 To take, in golden age, the glorious crown
 His country gives him for the days gone by.
 His was no bigot zeal, no narrow cry,
 Race hate and feud forever met his frown,
 "Our country's good" his record and renown—
 This broad, brave soul whom none could ever buy.

This was his patriot answer to his own:
 "By broad St. Lawrence banks one race I see,
 "British this nation is—shall ever be,
 "Bound by love's links to Britain's ancient throne."
 "Canadians, for Canada we stand,
 "For God, for country and the Fatherland."

EVANGELINE, HEROINE OF GRAND PRE (1755)

How sweet, how sad thy story, fair young queen,
 How dear the dream in that beloved vale,
 How dark the sequel to the mournful tale,
 When thou wert forced to fly, Evangeline!

Ah God, the sorrow of that parting scene,
 Old ocean's mighty waters loud did wail
 The loss of those sad souls who thus set sail,
 Torn from the homes where they had happy been.

Thus doom'd, divided, ah the dark despair!
 No martyrs ever suffered more than this,
 Such sorrow as the soul could scarcely bear;
 How great the grief, how bright must be the bliss.
 White woe of earth, sweet Rose in heaven above
 Who walked the world for one dear dream of Love.

BLESSED JOAN OF ARC (1432)

Hail! holy Maid, who saw the Visions blest
 And heard sweet heavenly Voices calling thee,
 To go and set thy stricken country free,
 And pluck the sword from out her bleeding breast,
 To give a war-worn nation needed rest,
 To raise again the fallen Fleur de Lis,
 To usher in bright ages yet to be,
 For France, fair Land, thy loveliest and best,
 But France's foemen captured thee at last
 And burned thy blessed body in the fire,
 Thy pure, strong soul they could not overcast,
 That longed for Home and Heaven, thy desire,
 Forth from her lips they saw a snow-white dove
 Ascend on high, to life and light and love.

THE VALLEY OF ROSES

In a lovely Vale that in peace reposes
 By a stream that sweeps to the Miramichi,
 In a radiant refuge of rest and roses,
 Ah, that is the place where I long to be.

Where the noble elms arise in splendor,
 Upon the hills and the meadows green,
 Where the sun shines bright and the moonlight tender
 Falls soft and sweet on the splendid scene.

Where the birds sing songs in the trees and meadows
 And the flowers bloom in the summer sun,
 Where the hills arise in the shifting shadows
 And calm comes down when the day is done.

THE BEAUTIFUL MIRAMICHI

Where the great forests grow
And the bright waters flow
 And in splendor sweep on to the sea,
Where the sweet song-birds sing
On the bough or the wing
By the beautiful Miramichi,

There the kind hearts and true
Have a welcome for you
 Wherever your wanderings may be,
From the rich or the poor
Of a welcome you're sure,
 By the beautiful Miramichi,

May each kind, loving heart
From her hillsides depart
 To the home of the faithful and free,
May the good God above
From His mansions of love
 Bless the beautiful Miramichi.

THE SWEETEST SONG

As often as we wander forth at morning,
 At golden noon or silent starry night,
When Heaven all His footstool is adorning
 With every blessed charm for sense or sight,
When listening to the song that always pleases,
 The song the sweet birds sing upon the trees,
We seem to hear them sighing "Sweetest Jesus,"—
 The words come softly wafted on the breeze

The sweetness of that sacred Name entrancing
 Is ever the dear burden of their song,
As back and forth beneath the sunlight glancing,
 Ten million throats its tenderness prolong.
While man, poor sinful wretch, perchance is swearing,
 Blaspheming by that ever blessed Name.
His blessings in their beautiful bosoms bearing
 The song-birds bow their brilliant heads in shame.

Sing on, sweet birds, your royal anthem ringing,
On earth, in air, and over land and sea,
Sweet purity and peace to poets bringing,
Your listeners, lying low upon the lea,
Sing on, sweet birds, to the dear Lord Who loves you,
And holds you to His ever loving Heart,
Sing on, sweet birds, to that great God above you,
With artless, tender, thrilling, throbbing art.

The Song you sing O holy host of heaven,
The grandest hymn that human ear hath heard,
With all the strength that God to him hath given,
Is echoed by each lovely little bird.
The sacred song long sung by saints and sages,
Is warbled by the songsters, wanting words,
The Christian Chant that charms and cheers the ages,
This song of "Sweetest Jesus" by the birds.

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