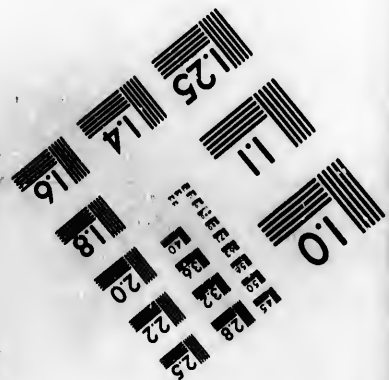
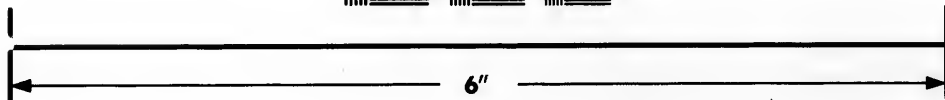
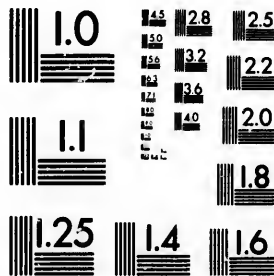


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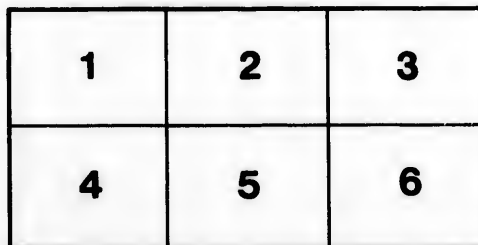
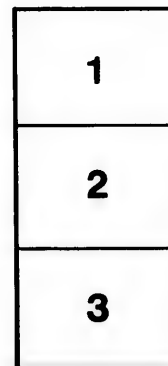
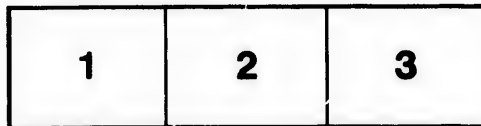
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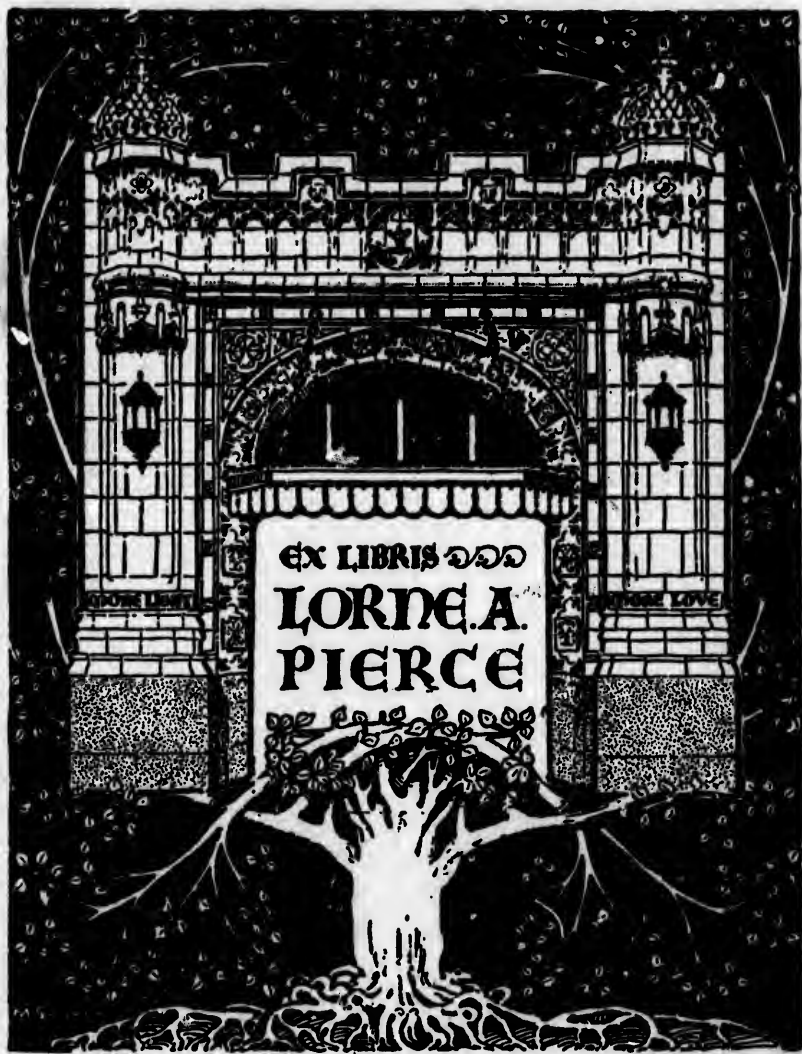
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A Christmas
Canticle,

Saints' Day Ballads, and
Sundry Other Measures.

The Author:

E. H. Stafford.

*Incipe, si quid habes; et me fecere poetam
Pierides: sunt et mihi carmina: me quoque dicunt
Vatem pastores, sed non ego credulus illis.*

TORONTO: Printed by The
Bryant Press, and to be sold
at James Bain's Store, on
King St., at Tyrrell's, and
at Wm. Briggs' Book House,
Anno Domini MDCCCXCV.

LP P58537. T34C4
To the

Rev. John Potts D.D.

with the sincere

regards of the
writer

Toronto,

Dec. 25th 1895.

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An Eastern Legend.
Will o' the Wisp.
To a Flock of Seagulls.

A Hymn for the Canadian Provinces.

*Inscribed with profound respect to the Hon. Sir Oliver Mowat, K.C.B.,
Prime Minister of Ontario.*

O Watcher of the Ages, with reverent words we call,
Who saw Time's golden Empires in grandeur rise and fall;
O God to whom the Races in fear or triumph pray,
Call to a nation's glory the flower of Canada.

With noble pride enfold us, make brave the people's heart,
With might and truth undaunted to play a Nation's part;
Till shines the dawn and splendor of daring empery,
O Canada, my Country, forever true to thee

Reared to an ampler freedom upon thy rock-bound shore;
An iron race of heroes a race of heroes bore;
Champlain is still remembered on Stadacona's rock,
The battle smoke of Queenston, and sacred grave of Brock.

For Canada our fathers in war and famine died,
For Canada their children are marshalled side by side;
While warrior blood is flowing within Canadian veins,
Deep in thy heart, my Country, their memory remains.

The prairie winds are sweeping beyond Saskatchewan,
Saint Lawrence, rolling seaward, is shining in the dawn,
From mountain peaks of silver a sound of voices comes,
Along our coasts and rivers there is a roll of drums.

Oh! gather now about her, as in her day of need,
In the old love of country eternally agreed;
While from each tower and bastion the flag of England waves
Above thee, O my Country, and o'er thy heroes' graves.

In Mount

66108

In Mount Royal Vale.

So much is lost from all I had—
The hope to make your hearts so glad—
 So much is unfulfilled !
And yet I know that you are near,
For through the midnight watch I hear
 The voices that are stilled.

Upon your graves in Maytime yet
Unfolds the vestal violet,
 And through the early spring,
When blossoms, drenched with shining rain,
Pour odours down the vale again,
 The gypsy robins sing.

They sing above unopened eyes,
And lips that murmured lullabies
 In musky summer's calm ;
While from the city, far away,
Booms deeply, at the close of day,
 The bell of Notre Dame.

The river winds that southward blow
Down from the dusky Ottawa,
 Are with a presage filled ;
And through the midnight watch I hear
Those sweet companions very near,
 The voices that are stilled !

Ⓐ Christmas Canticle.

(As sung by the actors in a mystery play).

Darkly through the awful gloom
Thunders now a nameless doom;
On the hills the camp fires glare
Wildly in the blackened air,
And the Old Fear all have known
Hisses in our ears alone.

From the temple's dark alcove
Men of Athens cry to Jove,
By the Nile's most sacred wall
Frantic priests to Isis call;
Only back through countless years
Mocks the music of the spheres.

Out on pastures far away,
Kneeling shepherds sadly pray,
When, behold! a golden star
Rolls in molten light afar,
And along the sylvan hills
Night undimmed with glory fills.

Gathering white on Heaven's rampires,
Sweetly sing celestial choirs,
For to-day, sublimely born,
Christ has sanctified the morn:
From their thrones our tyrants hurled,
Soothed our woe, and saved the world.

A Ballad

Q Ballad for Saint Alphege's Day.

Our Danish bands, ten thousand deep,
Surrounded Canterbury's wall.
We heard the watch, from keep to keep,
Arouse the town with call on call;
As we that raven flag of ours
Unrolled before their old watch towers.

Our battle trumpets blew a blast
Across the freshly trampled fields.
With cries and curses gathered fast,
Line upon line, our blazing shields,
As in the clouds of dust swept down
Our host, advancing on the town.

Their ringing arrows filled the air,
Our Danish bolts shot back again,
And many a Dane fell dying there
Before the mailed Englishmen.
The armour's clash and battle's roar
I shall remember evermore.

All day, before the iron gate,
We fought till all the ground was red;
All day we heard the yells of hate,
And stones hurled down from overhead.
The gates were broken down that night,
For we had fought as Danes can fight.

A cry swept through the city then
The which my heart shrinks to recount;
In Saint Augustine's Church our men
Dashed down Alphege before the fount,
And in the rage of death the Danes
Fast bound him with the altar chains.

We killed the warriors on the stair,
And caught their torches burning bright—
The temple, in a smoky glare,
Lay wrapped in roaring flames all night.
And through the town rose awful
shrieks,
And women prayed with whitened
cheeks.

Alphege we slew with reckless hand,
And blood and gold spilled in the street;
He did not curse us, but the land
Soon wrought us ruin more complete.
Broken, but not by man undone,
A few came back, and I am one.

Our Danish bands, ten thousand deep,
Returned not to the ocean shore;
Our ships are sunk, our warriors sleep
In Kentish meadows evermore;
But some shall tell what God has done,
A few came back, and I am one.

The Last

The Last Orison.

Shaper of breathing lives, and Lord of all above,
Thy name I learned beside my mother's knee;
She drew me to her arms, and said that Thou wert Love—
Oh art Thou Love to me!

I cannot rear my thoughts amid the golden spheres,
Where roll the stars about Thy throne on high,
But here in lowly wise I call on Thee with tears,
And feel Thy presence nigh.

Childlike to Thee I looked when came the night of fear,
On Thee I laid my sorrows of the day;
The whole earth spake of One who seemed to be so near,
It was not hard to pray.

The bolted doors that lock the corridors of Time,
And bar the awful avenues of Space,
My soul at last shall pass, and then, Oh dream sublime!
I shall gaze on Thy face.

A Night Blooming Cereus.

At Coahuila, Mexico.

The desert stoic, silent of its power,
Looms with bare cactus fronds, a form austere;
Its blossoms dream their beauty all the year,
Both through the still heats and the sandy shower.

But once each year, and at the midnight hour,
The censer leaves shake loose their rich perfume,
And paling petals, full of golden bloom,
With majesty unfold into a flower.

Even so have hearts, with vacillation sweet,
Thrilled into momentary love, as when
Stars briefly gleam, without a cloud between;

Even so have dark souls, murdered by defeat,
Glowed with pure prayer, who never spake again.
Flowers of the desert midnight! Who hath seen?

A Ballad for Saint Lucia's Day.

The twinkling ripples of the summer sea
Beneath the crimson sun lay all unrolled,
And from their rondure odorous Sicily
Lifted her crown of gold.

The laurel branches and the sycamore
Perfumed the soft air with their dreamy tinct,
And starry cassia buds drooped lightly o'er,
Ensphered and indistinct.

In night's cool purple Lucia came forth
With shining eyes and sweet unsmiling mouth,
And while the soft airs sought the silent north,
Her eyes turned ever south.

A vestal, vowed to heaven's bright cynosure,
Her soul and body were diversely given;
The last a lover claimed, though no less pure,
The first she pledged to heaven.

But when her lover called her, passionate hearted,
She sought again the treasure of her troth,
And told him all; whereon his love departed,
And hatred came, and wrath.

And this he told, and this accused her of,
That, being a Christian, she had been forsworn
But love of Christ suppressed all human love,
And even conquered scorn.

A Victim

A victim, given to Cyprian votaries,
To pine for long and live the life of loath,
The world seemed wanton, and her life its prize,
And Lucia hated both.

But when they came to lead her to her prison,
They could not move her, made immovable.
About the praying virgin had arisen
A weird and subtle spell.

They tried to drag her with an oxen yoke ;
In fury poured the boiling oil above her ;
The cords that would have forced her strained and
broke,
The oil marred no part of her.

Then through her bosom, dreading what had been,
They dashed a sharp sword, and her bosom bled ;
And veiling her soft eyes as death crept in,
She raised her lovely head.

An Empire's fall, the maiden prophesied,
And Romans trembled at the words she said ;
Then growing still, death made her heaven's bride,
For she was dead.

Written on a page of *Polpeucte*.

The soft regret. The beauty on the cheek
Of Syrinx, in the vale of Arkady ;
Pan's mellow pipe beneath the myrtle tree,
When love in lyric numbers learned to speak :

The calm sublime. Below Hymettus peak
The marble stage and choral melody,
Borne through Athenian gardens towards the sea ;
The purity of the divinely Greek :

Such hymns of matin, through long garish years
Rolled with auroral light, and after long,
Pealed back the vespers night may not retrench.

Attuning to the music of the spheres,
Sweet Truth awoke, and the old world's aftersong
Swelled with the sad perfection of the French.

Clearing Port.

'Tis sweet to linger on the quay
While the black ships put out to sea
 With ensigns to the wind;
And sweet to hear the brazen bell,
And mingled voices of farewell,
 Ere all is left behind.

Alone and silently I gazed
As the great anchors were upraised
 And sails lashed to the spars;
Alone saw England's sinking shore,
As westward bound we smoothly bore
 Between the sea and stars.

Ah, mighty splendor unsurpassed—
Yet sight of land is sweet at last,
 And sweet at early morn
To wake, and from the crowded deck
Behold the proud walls of Quebec,
 And land where I was born.

Death is such putting out to sea,
Death such a clearing port; may we
 When clangs the harbour bell,
Though long upon the ocean tossed,
Be not on sandy barrens lost,
 But reach the Citadel!

The Funeral of John Wesley.

A stir of footsteps in the morning dark
Was heard, and redly glared a smoking torch;
The city still slept on, but on the silence, hark!
Faint strains of music from the chapel porch.

Still hung the night gloom over London spires,
The mists of March lay cold in City Road,
While stole a melody of slowly singing choirs,
Down through the darkened aisles where Death
abode.

Then came the preacher's measured monotone,
The sad, sweet hymn of mourning at the bier,
And solemn Litanies for one forever gone;
The man's mute sorrow, and the woman's tear.

No hearse and no escutcheon honoured him;
Six poor men, only, bore him to the grave
With heavy steps, and slow, while every eye grew dim
With tears, for tears were all that he would have.

Six poor men bore his coffin to the tomb,
Who the awful thunderbolts of Truth had hurled,
Catching that light serene, still shining in the gloom;
Ten thousand shout his warning to the world.

So passed a great soul to its lasting sleep;
So, at life's limit, all shall separate,
Till rolls the trumpet blast, resounding down the
deep,
And every sepulchre unseals its gate.

Vermilion Bay.

In the remote and solitary west
There rolls forever in the wilderness
A bay of marginal gold; and when at dawn
The Morning lifts her beamy coronal
Above the eastern woods, the glistering waves
Melt to rose colour, and at Eventide,
When the sun's slowly sloping car descends
Into the violet vapours of the west,
The shining waters swim in crimson light;
Map-makers call it the Vermilion Bay.

From the brown sedge and lilies on the shore
Loose flights of waterfowl sometimes start up
And swiftly slant their course above the pines,
With sharp discordant screams, and flapping wings,
While silent bitterns on the weedy bar
Wade with slow splashing feet. Sometimes the deer
Come fearlessly to drink at break of day,
Brushing the bright dews from the embroidered ferns,
And with their delicate antlers tearing loose
The hanging foliage of the forest boughs.

From solitude to solitude the birds
Parley in Ariel's golden melodies,
And day-winds, garmented in summer smells,
With tremulous whispers crisp the shining pools,
Or loiter in a blissful bower of leaves.

And where

And where the moss spreads richly on the ground
By mouldering trunks of great trees, dead and bare,
And cloistered violets in hollows dank
Fill with soft blue the grasses faintly sunned;
The Past, with lettered scrip of silver rime,
Comes back and breathes her fables in my ear.

For in this place, in unrecorded days,
The desperate Algonquins closed in war;
Here fell their flinty arrows, here, perhaps,
Beneath the golden autumn's scarlet dies
Coy meetings of primeval Pastoral;
When in the grove of spruce and juniper
A dusky virgin listened by the reeds,
Awaiting the familiar paddle stroke,
And the canoe, that on the waters calm
Unrolled a trail of silver, and the tread
Of moccasins, when the soft harvest moon
Floated amid her shining mists asleep,
With one white arm across her pillow bent,
And golden locks upon her rosy cheek—
Titania in a bed of cygnet down.

Or, peradventure, on these banks encamped
Some of those bands that searched the farther west
For China and the realms of Prester John,
Vérendrye, or LaSalle, or Frontenac;
In those old days of famine and romance,
Ere wartime, when the Bourbon Fleurs de Lys
Unfolded o'er the cannon at Quebec.

Or somewhat

ound
bare,

Or somewhat later, when the Jesuit,
Blazing a trail in unfamiliar woods,
Brought to the west the Roman Breviary.
Or when the missionary* by the rocks
A century after, moored his lone canoe,
And looked out in the golden afternoon,
And saw the silent prairies sweeping far
Westward, and from the old Portage du Chien,
Footsore and famished, brought the Bible first:
And in the wigwams by the river stayed,
Thereafter called Negick, among the tribes,
The otter, for no red man swam so well.

Witch of the Past, in forests sibylline,
How are thy scrolls of wisdom scattered now !
The breathless hopes and plans imperial—
England and France—democracy and Rome—
While the fond deities of nature wrap
About each vestige their thick raimenting,
And the mild races of the forest flowers
Forever at the freshening of May
Spring into colour, swinging censers sweet,
And dropping starry dust, and the dim rocks
And fuming brooks, and purple shining lakes,
During eternal amid fading things,
Are monumental to their memory.

west

*Thomas Hurlburt

omewhat

An Eastern

An Eastern Legend.

Where halts the desert caravan
There came a worn and thirsty man,
Who at a running fountain's brink
In silent prayer stooped to drink.
And restful was it there to wait
An hour beneath the palm and date.

But when the earthen cup he raised,
So bitter was the water's taste
That, scarcely moistening his lip,
He let the jar of water slip;
And to those ears that hear on high
Cried, "Water, Heaven, or I die!"

Whereon a spirit voice replied,
"Oh, cast the drinking cup aside,
For it is moulded of the clay
Of one long dead and lost to-day:
Of one whose sin is writ in Heaven;
A sin forever unforgiven."

With locked hands drinking from the pool,
The water then seemed sweet and cool;
And thus refreshed, with bended head,
The traveller reverently said,
"My life from such sin, Allah, bless,
As lives eternal bitterness!"

Will o' the Wisp.

Night's caravan swept through the azure gate
That eastward stands eternally ajar,
And far from ways of men a traveller,
In wildernesses black, was wandering late.

Perhaps to pray he paused, perhaps to wait
The fortunate coming of the northern star,
Or lady moon, when, weirdly from afar,
The will o' the wisp allured him to his fate.

So error forever at our gate encamps.
The sky was ever full of evil lamps,
And life of ill philosophies and creeds.

Ye who find life a losing of the way
In patience wait until the break of day,
Though long in coming, for it truly leads.

To a Flock of Seagulls.

Welcome us without ado,
Dear pages, sent with good intent
From yonder fog-wrapped continent,
To meet us on the highway blue,
With those proprieties of phrase
That serve for goodwill nowadays,
And greeting to our ship and crew.

How often with the voyage bored,
Impatient for my land affairs,
Of Kipling tired and passengers,
When even whist I half abhorred,
I've seen your wings in mid career
At last, and known the land was near,
And back to spirits was restored.

Out sentries of the shore. But when
We cleared the Mersey, flocks like you
Followed as boys a bridal do
For a long day at sea, and then,
When landward the last gull had flown,
West for a week we sailed alone
Till we approached the coast again.

So coast to coast on Fate's black chart!
For I must moralize, you see—
And the gulls are gone that followed me
When I slipped my moorings to depart.
Soon a landward gun will sound (as now),
And Death's dark gulls about my bow
Scream while the night falls on my heart.



