



ON THE

OPENING

OF THE

TORONTO FREE PUBLIC
LIBRARY

ON THE

City's Semi-Centennial Day

MARCH 6TH, 1884

LET THERE BE LIGHT ! The word divine was spoken
In the dim dawn of earth's awakening hour,
When chaos, trembling, felt the links were broken
That bound the formless void beneath its power ;

When God's own Spirit brooded o'er the deep,
And moved above the waste of formless things,
Till life and soul emerged, as with a leap,
And reason flashed with light upon its wings.

Yet even now, with ages long completed,
How tardy still the glimmering dawn of day ;
How long the strife e'er, bigot foes defeated,
Wisdom is owned and ignorance gives way.

The righteousness that should exalt and bless
The nations, lingers still with fitful gleam ;
The Golden Age, with all its grand redress
And brotherhood for man, is yet a dream.

What of the coming ages' promised prize ?
What, watchman, of the dawn ? What of the night ?
Say, does the morning break ; the day-star rise ?
Is there some prelude of the longed-for light ?

To-day we answer from our New World home,
As here we dedicate this modest shrine
To letters ; praying that from thence may come
From Wisdom's ample page a light divine ;

Giving free converse with the good and wise ;
Free access to the thought-illuminated page,
Whence still to latest times, in living guise
Shall speak for all, historian, poet, sage

Nor grudge Romance's quaint beguiling mask ;
Let Truth the masquerade of Fiction wear,
To ease the toil-worn labourer at his task,
And with the charm of fancy banish care.

Make Knowledge ample as the air we breathe,
Its influence free as is the light of heaven ;
As He whose rain and sunshine all beneath
Unstinted share ; so let soul-light be given.

Spread wide the historic page to ardent youth ;
With liberal hand to manhood give the right
To drink deep draughts from the pure wells of truth.
Hasten the coming time : Let there be Light !

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE,
February 27, 1884.