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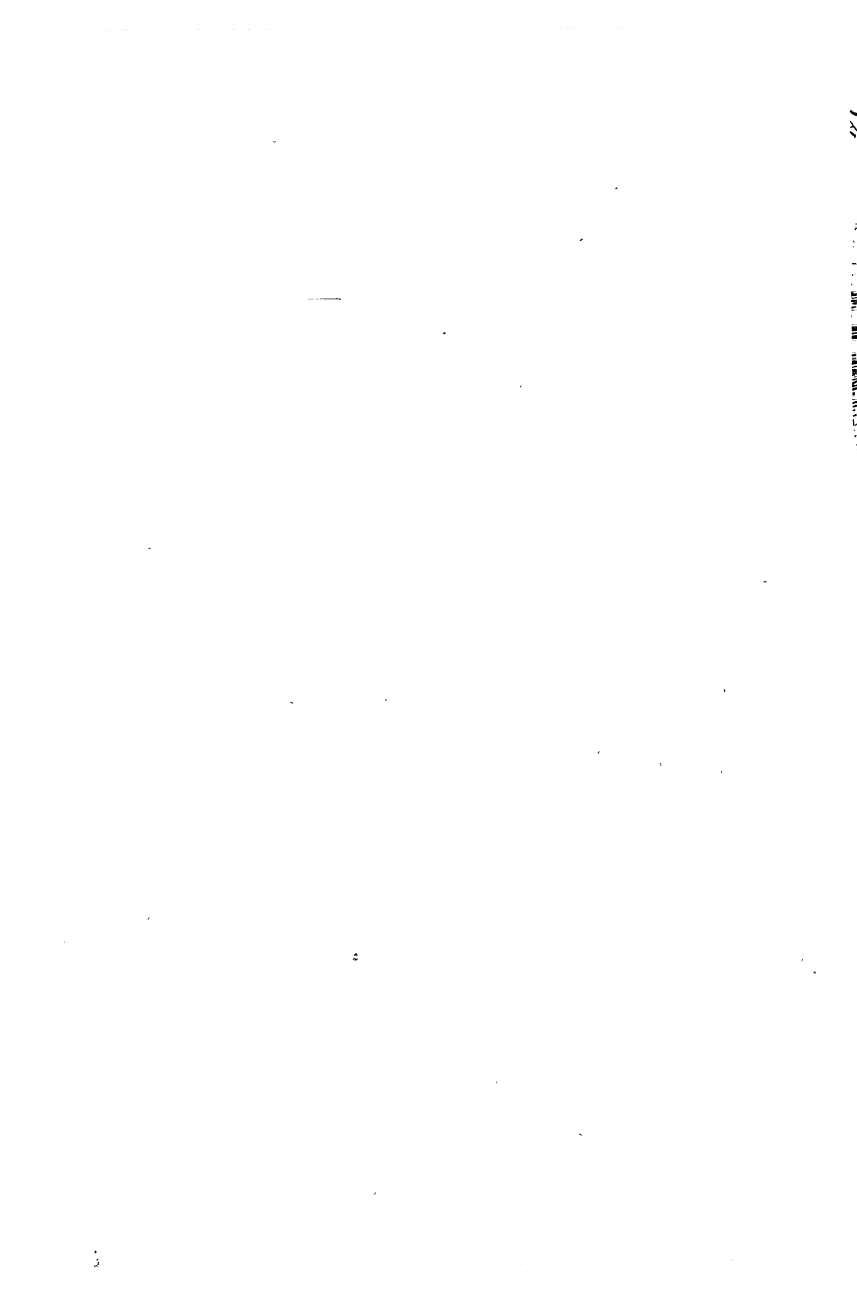
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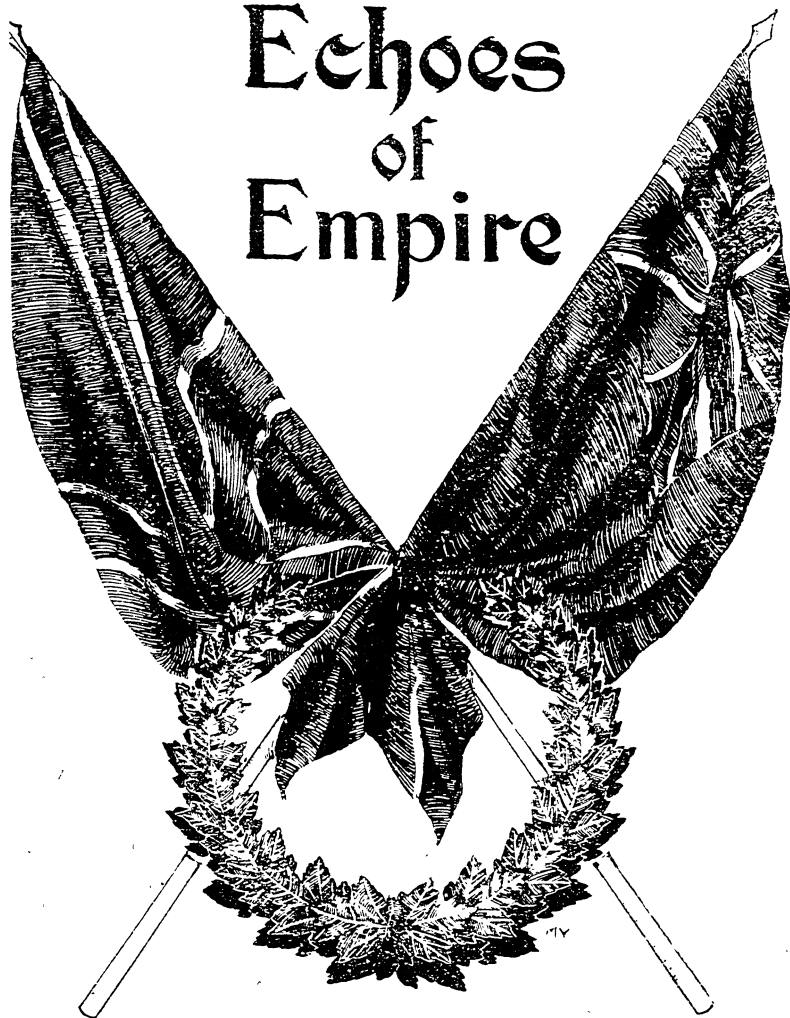
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# Echoes of Empire



Margaret G. Yarker



# Echoes of Empire

BY

MARGARET G. YARKER

(TORONTO)

TORONTO:

WILLIAM BRIGGS

1900

YARKER, M G.

Entered according to Act of the  
Parliament of Canada, in the year  
one thousand nine hundred, by  
MARGARET G. YARKER, at the  
Department of Agriculture.

DEDICATED  
TO  
**The Canadian Contingents;**  
TO  
THE GLORIOUS MEMORY  
OF  
THOSE WHO DIED  
AND TO  
THOSE WHO PROVED THEY WERE WILLING TO DIE  
FOR  
THE EMPIRE AND LIBERTY.

TORONTO, December, 1900.

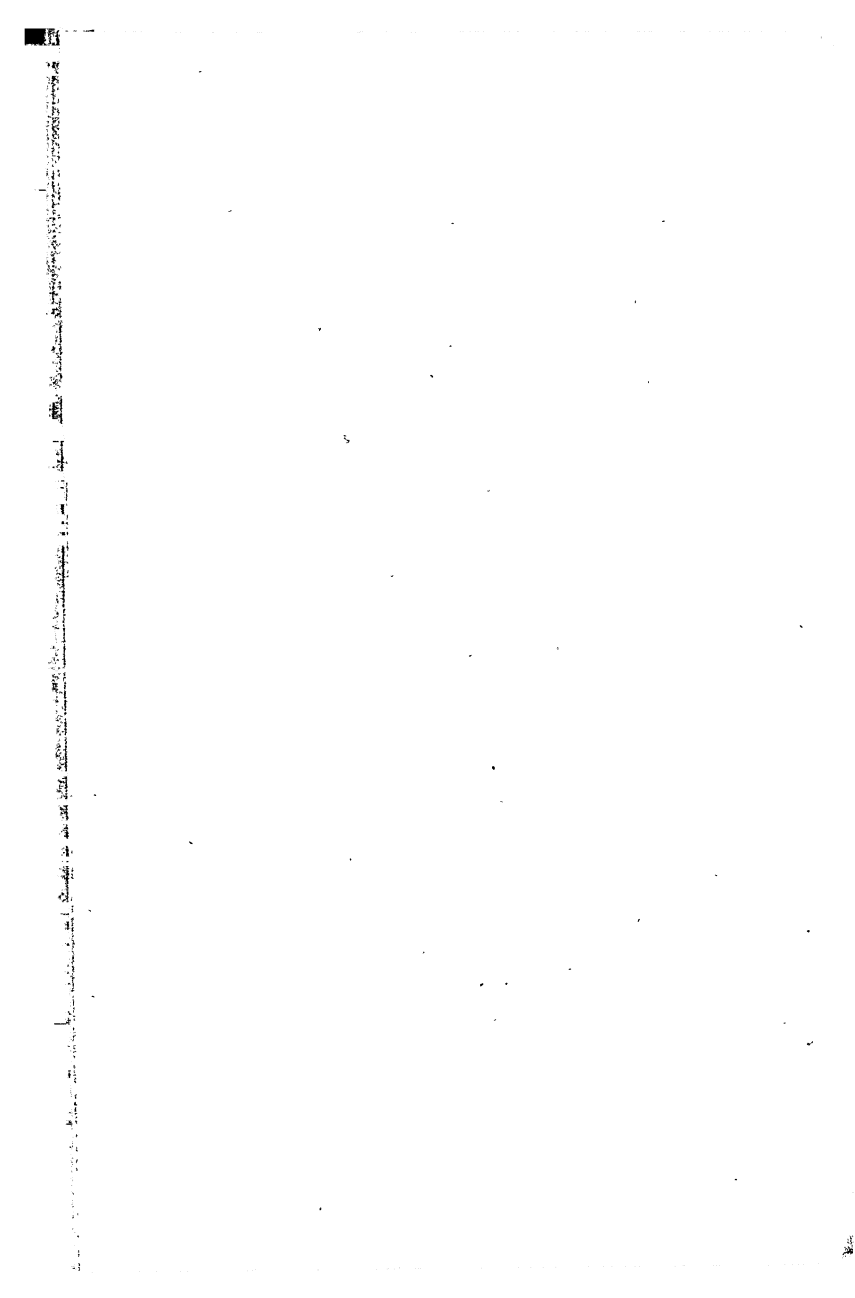
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## To the First Contingent

WE send you forth, oh brave, devoted band,  
With deafening cheer and high uplifted hand,  
And tears that mingle with a nation's pride,  
That gives her best to fight at England's side.

We send you forth to keep what England won  
For all who wear the title of a son,  
What now she battles for beyond the sea,  
The Briton's right and broad humanity.

We send you forth beneath the Triune Cross,  
The Victor's sign of triumph won through loss.  
In loyal fealty you bravely stand,  
To live or die for Queen and Motherland.

We send you forth with joy and fervent prayer.  
In danger's hour God keep you everywhere,  
Your guerdon be, though Life, though Death ye find,  
The Laurel with the Maple Leaf to bind.

TORONTO, October 30th, 1899.

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## The Last Church Parade

The Canadian Contingent attended the English cathedral at Quebec before leaving for active service in South Africa, October 29th, 1899. The old colours of the 69th Regiment hang in the chancel.

STORM sweeps without the sacred, stately pile,  
And shadows cling o'er nave and pillar'd aisle,  
In gloom scarce brighten'd by the pictured pane,  
And stillness broken but by fitful rain ;

When up the rain-beat height a sound we hear,  
A tread of martial measure drawing near,  
Then sharper sounds of short commanding words,  
The clank of scabbards and the ring of swords,

And through the lofty portals, opened wide,  
The great cathedral fills from side to side  
With soldiers fair and stalwart—these are they  
Who, ere they part for conflict, come to pray.

A jewell'd link enriching history's chain,  
Enwinding all within the sacred fane,  
Where Edward, sire of England's Empress Queen  
Had knelt unprescient of this wondrous scene.

For love of Her who sways this world-wide realm,  
Now draws a tide of strength to overwhelm  
And crush forever 'neath its mighty wave,  
The tyrant force that lives but to enslave.

A people's answer to the Empire's call,  
In one electric thrill engirdling all,  
One heart-beat throbbing through the giant frame,  
With arms uplifted in one single aim.

The organ's pealing note breaks out in praise,  
The white-robed choristers their voices raise  
To sink again, when falls the hush of prayer  
On all who bend in lowly reverence there.

And we, with breaking hearts, crush back the pain,  
Nor grudge our dear ones ; giving not in vain ;  
For self sinks lost in love of Right and Truth,  
Withholding not our fairest flower of youth,

Who go, not clad in helm and coat-of-mail,  
Yet, like the knights of old who sought the Grail,  
In loyal honour to a high behest,  
That holy vision lives in every breast.

Words full of comfort fall upon the ear,  
Old words, familiar, telling them "Draw near ;"  
The lifted chalice, gleaming, bids them rise,  
Rememb'ring now the Eternal Sacrifice.

They humbly kneel, and as they turn away,  
The clouded sun shines forth in streaming ray  
And lights with fire the cross of faded red,  
War-worn and tattered, resting overhead.

Stern sign of conflict ! Speechless tale you tell  
Of battle's lurid light, of shot and shell.  
Beneath you moves in faith, no foe to dread,  
A living cross o'er nave and transept spread.

“ By this sign conquer,” flamed upon the sky  
To Constantine of old, still be the cry  
Of every soldier 'neath the cross three-fold  
That Honour, Justice, Right, and Might uphold.

TORONTO, November 18th, 1899.



## After Magersfontein

THE sun sinks low in splendour over Magersfontein plain,  
Near the hillside by the river's murmuring flow,  
The battle-storm is ended and the pibroch's mournful strain  
Echoes sadly through the solemn evening glow.

Ah ! direful was the rising of that crimson-clouded sun  
O'er the redden'd field where men and leader lie,  
Where the crafty ambush'd foemen their cruel work have  
done,  
And the "bonny men" of Scotland fell to die.

A flash of light to dazzle, and a crash of hurtling lead  
Leaping sudden through the black, thick dark of night,  
And they fell, yet pressing forward, and their gallant souls  
had sped,  
Ere they met the foe they never blenched to fight.

Louder swells the pipes' sad wailing; see, the tossing tartans  
wave!

'Tis the living come to seek their slaughtered dead,  
And side by side to lay them in the long, low, lonely grave,  
'Mid the deep-wrung tears that heroes turn to shed.

Who forgets their deeds undying? Who can rob them of  
their fame?

Look on Dargai's height, on Lucknow, Waterloo,  
On the roll of Britain's glory blazon'd bright their honour'd  
name,  
They have died as Highland soldiers, brave and true.

Leave them, leave them, in their tartans,—far away they lie  
from home,

From the land of mist-clad mount and heather-bloom ;  
The veldt their vast cathedral, the starry sky its dome,  
And the nation's heart engraven for their tomb.

TORONTO, February 12th, 1900.

## Christmas, 1899

RING, Christmas bells, in joyous chime !  
Ring out upon this world of care ;  
Again to all the Sons of Time  
The message of the Lord to bear,  
In wider echo, widening still,  
"On earth be Peace, to men Good-will."

Yet, far across the Southern seas  
The sky with battle's roar is rent ;  
Loud swells upon the burning breeze  
The bugle's call o'er trench and tent.  
Can it be thus that we fulfil  
Thy purpose, Lord, of "Peace, Good-will" ?

To our dull ears no power is lent  
The high-swung bell of Peace to hear,  
That through the crash of armament  
Flings out, in silvery cadence clear,  
O'er strife-torn veldt and vale and hill,  
The chime prophetic, "Peace, Good-will."

We see not through these tear-dimm'd eyes  
The path foreknown our feet have trod  
Across Thy maze of centuries,  
But leaning on Thy hand, O God,  
Through storm to calm, to good through ill,  
We wait Thy promise, "Peace, Good-will."

## Vale

(To the Canadian Mounted Infantry.)

'MID songs of Victory ye leave our shore :  
The sea-swung link that thrills from end to end  
The Empire's heart, bids Joy and Sorrow blend.  
Be ye but worthy of your comrades gone before.  
Ye can no more.

TORONTO, February 21st, 1900.

## Our Dead

“For Country, for Empire, for Liberty.”

DARE we to grieve for these heroic dead  
Who live immortal in their country's fame?  
Be proud, O Canada! Such sons have bled  
To light the page historic with their name.

They witness for us, and their names are set  
Indelible against the scarlet seal  
In that great bond where Empire's sons are met,  
Inscribing unity for common weal.

They build up side by side that temple fair  
That looms beneath the battle-clouded sky.  
Truth, Right, and Liberty are centred there,  
And Peace upon its portals written high.

In War's red crucible are fused and blent  
The treasures of the Empire, new and old ;  
The dross of discord and of discontent  
Shall pass, to leave refined and pure the gold.

That priceless gift, O ! hearts bereaved, ye give  
In Freedom's cause, in sacrifice divine.  
The light of life ye lose while yet ye live,  
In gathered focus evermore shall shine.



## The Relief of Ladysmith

(Besieged Four Months, and defended by Sir George White.)

FLING wide the Flag against the sky !

Joy fills the heart, joy dims the eye,

Out rings the cheer, the stirring cry,

'Tis Victory !

For him who scorn'd himself to shield,

And those who, with him, scorn'd to yield,

Long may they live the sword to wield

In Victory !

Long months of waiting, bravely borne,  
Beleaguer'd, famish'd, battle-torn ;  
'Mid these ye kept your hope forlorn

Of Victory.

Not yet, brave hearts ! before the world  
Your chronicle of woes unfurl'd,  
As still the foe ye backward hurl'd

In Victory.

Where war's fierce missile scattereth,  
'Mid fever's pestilential breath,  
High courage strives with stalking Death

For Victory.

And still ye watch through scorching days,  
And still deliverance delays ;  
An Empire waits, an Empire prays,

For Victory.

Scarce muffled the derisive shout  
Of those who brave misfortune flout,  
And voices carp in fear and doubt

Of Victory.

The strong deliverer heeds no cry,  
"The eagle catches not the fly."\*  
Repulsed, he ever draweth nigh

To Victory.

And swooping on the fleeing foe,  
Deals swift the last decisive blow,  
That all the world may see and know

Our Victory.

Fling out the Flag against the sky,  
And lift the cheer, the ringing cry ;  
But bend the knee to God on high

For Victory !

TORONTO, March 2nd, 1900.

\* General Buller's family motto is "Aquila non capit muscas."

## The Queen's Message

TOUCHED by the tender hand that rules in love,  
The strings of Erin's harp vibrate and thrill,  
The chord responsive sweeping soft above  
Orchestral harmony, to linger still.

For every heart that owns that gentle sway,  
Through all the breadth of empire, beats in pride,  
Beneath the green—the homage Britons pay  
To Erin's sons who bravely fought and died.

And though the Shamrock glistens with the tear  
That Erin sheds for those who nobly fell,  
She wears the jewell'd emblem, doubly dear,  
In eloquence no speech nor words may tell.

TORONTO, ST. PATRICK'S DAY, 1900.

## The Strathcona Horse

(Dedicated to Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.)

WHERE the silvery chain of the mountain's white crest  
Breaks the blue of the sky in the wide-rolling West,  
de, As the river sweeps onward its swift-rushing tide,  
From the north, at thy call, Strathcona ! we ride.

Where the snowy-winged steeds of the storm whirl and  
fly,  
Where the shimmering lights flash their arch o'er the  
sky,  
Where the gleam of the Pole-star alone is our guide,  
From the plains of the north, Strathcona ! we ride.

Where the sun sinks in crimson and gold to his rest,  
And the long, level beams light the billowy breast  
Of the yellowing harvest, in hot summer-tide,  
From the peace of the north, Strathcona ! we ride.

Thou hast called in the name of the freedom we know ;  
Thou art answered. " For God and the Empire," we go  
In the cause of the Right, in the patriot's pride,  
From the north, for the Nation, Strathcona ! we ride.

And the path that we seek, 'neath the bright Southern  
star,  
With the light of the war-fire is flaming afar ;  
In saddle and stirrup, we swerve not aside,  
To the fore-front of battle, Strathcona ! we ride.

TORONTO, March 20th, 1900.

## The Fall of Pretoria

THE midnight darkness wraps the silent air  
About the sleeping city—lost to care,

When, on the startled ear, there sounds and swells

The warning, booming, deepening as it tells

In long insistence, 'mid the clang of bells,

Some joy too great the morrow's sun to wait,

Or dire disaster, in the hand of Fate.

And forth in surging crowds, with hurrying feet,

The uproused people press to fill the street

'Twixt fear and hope, till all the air, instill'd

With voice electric o'er the quick wire thrilled,

Pulsates with word of "Peace" and prayer fulfill'd.

And all the night in flaming joy grows bright,

And glows in one great beacon-fire of light.

For War's red scourge is stricken from the hand,  
That laid its lash upon a peaceful land ;  
    And, lifted in the Majesty of Right,  
    Our England's world-spread arms have shown her  
        might  
    Before her foes, who melt in nerveless flight.  
Cheer breaks on cheer, outringing, echoing, clear,  
To ring again, resurgent, far and near.

Like Jericho of old, with crumbling walls,  
Pretoria, vaunted stronghold, tottering, falls  
    Before the trumpet blast of him who leads,  
    Last of his line, the man who speaks in deeds,  
    Forgetting sorrow in his country's needs ;  
Whose honour'd name all ages shall proclaim,  
Undying in the golden courts of fame.

TORONTO, June 5th, 1900.



## A Nation's Welcome

SLOW circling round, the year has rolled away  
Since from our midst, 'neath Autumn's golden ray,  
Through banner'd streets ye marched, amid our cheers  
That rent the skies, yet bore the sound of tears.

Our hearts' proud beating, measured by our pain,  
As from our sight ye passed with martial strain,  
A people's faith and honour forth to bear,  
Your footsteps followed by a people's prayer.

Well kept your gage ! Our name ye bravely bore  
Before the world on Afric's distant shore,  
To shine from Paardeberg's unfading day,  
Where Death stood scorn'd upon your dauntless way.

What reck'd ye? Nay! ye onward rushed to dare  
The Transvaal's Lion in his cavern'd lair,  
And 'mid the storm of battle's hail and flame,  
Ye wreathed the Maple with the Flower of Fame.

In that brief hour for some, alas ! fulfill'd  
Life's dream, ere age their bounding pulse had chill'd  
In youth eternal, resting where they fell ;  
Fame's flower for them the "pale-hued asphodel."

Then from our coasts, like Centaurs springing forth,  
Leaped out the Riders of "the faithful North"  
To plant the Standard by their comrades' side,  
Upon the heights that Britain's power defied.

On, on, the stubborn foe in flight they press  
O'er river-drift and rock-bound wilderness ;  
'Mid bursting shell and deadly bullet sting,  
They hear the rushing wind of Azrael's wing

Unflinching, for they hold the soldier's creed,  
"Not years we live in, but heroic deed,"  
Yet must we mourn the sons who sleep afar,  
Though wrapped in honour, 'neath the Southern Star.

Their names are sounded in the triumph-song,  
To live remembered, long as time is long.  
Our high acclaim perchance afar they hear  
In air-borne echoes waved from sphere to sphere.

For now, brave Keepers of our Faith ! ye come,  
Amid the trumpet blare, the roll of drum ;  
With cheers that thunder through the cannon's roar,  
The Nation greets her heroes to her shore.

The streaming colours leap to light the air,  
With welcome flung from street and spire and square,  
And proudly wave the folds, upon the breeze,  
Ye bore to victory across the seas.

Ye, with your comrades, England's cause upheld ;  
Ye, with your comrades, widen as ye weld  
And forge with willing hands the chain of Might  
That lifts a Land of Darkness into Light,

And links yet closer, 'neath the flag unfurled,  
One people with one will around the world,  
Who look to God, high-purposed, strong and free,  
Beneath the Crown of Britain's sovereignty.

TORONTO, December, 1900.

