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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AN ODE ***

An Ode

READ AUGUST 15, 1907, AT THE DEDICATION OF THE MONUMENT ERECTED AT GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS, IN COMMEMORATION OF THE FOUNDING OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY IN THE YEAR SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THREE BY MADISON CAWEIN



JOHN P. MORTON & COMPANY, INCORPORATED.
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY MCMVIII



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An Ode

In Commemoration of the Founding of the

I.

They who maintained their rights,
Through storm and stress,
And walked in all the ways
That God made known,
Led by no wandering lights,
And by no guess,
Through dark and desolate days
Of trial and moan:
Here let their monument
Rise, like a word
In rock commemorative
Of our Land's youth;
Of ways the Puritan went,
With soul love-spurred
To suffer, die, and live
For faith and truth.
Here they the corner-stone
Of Freedom laid;
Here in their hearts' distress
They lit the lights
Of Liberty alone;
Here, with God's aid,
Conquered the wilderness,
Secured their rights.
Not men, but giants, they,
Who wrought with toil
And sweat of brawn and brain
Their freehold here;
Who, with their blood, each day
Hallowed the soil.
And left it without stain
And without fear.

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II.

Yea; here, from men like these,
Our country had its stanch beginning;
Hence sprang she with the ocean breeze
And pine scent in her hair;
Deep in her eyes the winning,
The far-off winning of the unmeasured West;
And in her heart the care,
The young unrest,
Of all that she must dare,
Ere as a mighty Nation she should stand
Towering from sea to sea,
From land to mountained land,
One with the imperishable beauty of the stars
In absolute destiny;
Part of that cosmic law, no shadow mars,
To which all freedom runs,
That wheels the circles of the worlds and suns
Along their courses through the vasty night,
Irrevocable and eternal as is Light.

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III.

What people has to-day
Such faith as launched and sped,
With psalm and prayer, the Mayflower on its
way?—
Such faith as led
The Dorchester fishers to this sea-washed
point,
This granite headland of Cape Ann?
Where first they made their bed,
Salt-blown and wet with brine,
In cold and hunger, where the storm-wrenched

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pine
Clung to the rock with desperate footing.
They,
With hearts courageous whom hope did
anoint,
Despite their tar and tan,
Worn of the wind and spray,
Seem more to me than man,
With their unconquerable spirits.—Mountains
may
Succumb to men like these, to wills like theirs,
—

The Puritan's tenacity to do;
The stubbornness of genius;—holding to
Their purpose to the end,
No New-World hardship could deflect or bend;

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—
That never doubted in their worst despairs,
But steadily on their way
Held to the last, trusting in God, who filled
Their souls with fire of faith that helped them
build
A country, greater than had ever thrilled
Man's wildest dreams, or entered in
His highest hopes. 'Twas this that helped them
win
In spite of danger and distress,
Through darkness and the din
Of winds and waves, unto a wilderness,
Savage, unbounded, pathless as the sea,
That said, "Behold me! I am free!"
Giving itself to them for greater things
Than filled their souls with dim imaginings.

IV.

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Let History record their stalwart names,
And catalogue their fortitude, whence grew,
Swiftly as running flames,
Cities and civilization:
How from a meeting-house and school,
A few log-huddled cabins, Freedom drew
Her rude beginnings. Every pioneer station,
Each settlement, though primitive of tool,
Had in it then the making of a Nation;
Had in it then the roofing of the plains
With traffic; and the piercing through and
through
Of forests with the iron veins
Of industry.
Would I could make you see
How these, laboriously,
These founders of New England, every hour
Faced danger, death, and misery,
Conquering the wilderness;
With supernatural power
Changing its features; all its savage glower
Of wild barbarity, fierce hate, duress,
To something human, something that could
bless
Mankind with peace and lift its heart's elation;
Something at last that stood
For universal brotherhood,
Astonishing the world, a mighty Nation,
Hewn from the solitude.—
Iron of purpose as of faith and daring,
And of indomitable will,
With axe and hymn-book still I see them
faring,
The Saxon Spirit of Conquest at their side
With sword and flintlock; still I see them
stride,
As to some Roundhead rhyme,
Adown the aisles of Time.

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Can praise be simply said of such as these?
 Such men as Standish, Winthrop, Endicott?
 Such souls as Roger Conant and John White?
 Rugged and great as trees,
 The oaks of that New World with which their
 lot

Was cast forever, proudly to remain.
 That world in which each name still stands, a
 light
 To beacon the Ship of State through stormy
 seas.

Can praise be simply said
 Of him, the younger Vane,
 Puritan and patriot,
 Whose dedicated head
 Was laid upon the block
 In thy name, Liberty!

Can praise be simply said of such as he!
 Needs must the soul unlock
 All gates of eloquence to sing of these.
 Such periods,
 Such epic melodies,

As holds the utterance of the earlier gods,
 The lords of song, one needs
 To sing the praise of these!

No feeble music, tinklings frail of glass;
 No penny trumpetings; twitterings of brass,
 The moment's effort, shak'n from pigmy bells,
 Ephemeral drops from small Pierian wells,
 With which the Age relieves a barren hour.
 But such large music, such melodious power,
 As have our cataracts,
 Pouring the iron facts,
 The giant acts

Of these: such song as have our rock-ridged
 deep

And mountain steeps,
 When winds, like clanging eagles, sweep the
 storm

On tossing wood and farm:
 Such eloquence as in the torrent leaps,—
 Where the hoarse canyon sleeps,
 Holding the heart with its terrific charm,
 Carrying its roaring message to the town,—
 To voice their high achievement and renown.

Long, long ago, beneath heaven's stormy
 slope,

In deeds of faith and hope,
 Our fathers laid Freedom's foundations here,
 And raised, invisible, vast,—
 Embodying naught of doubt or fear,

A monument whose greatness shall outlast
 The future, as the past,
 Of all the Old World's dynasties and kings.—
 A symbol of all things

That we would speak, but cannot say in words,
 Of those who first began our Nation here,
 Behold, we now would rear!

A different monument! a thought, that girds
 Itself with granite; dream made visible
 In rock and bronze to tell

To all the Future what here once befell;
 Here where, unknown to them,
 A tree took root; a tree of wondrous stem;
 The tree of high ideals, which has grown,
 And has not withered since its seed was sown,
 Was planted here by them in this new soil,

Who watered it with tears and blood and toil:
An heritage we mean to hold,
Keeping it stanch and beautiful as of old.—
For never a State,
Or People, yet was great
Without its great ideals;—branch and root
Of the deep tree of life where bud and blow
The dreams, the thoughts, that grow
To deeds, the glowing fruit.

VII.

The morn, that breaks its heart of gold
Above the purple hills;
The eve, that spills
Its nautilus splendor where the sea is rolled;
The night, that leads the vast procession in
Of stars and dreams,—
The beauty that shall never die or pass:—
The winds, that spin
Of rain the misty mantles of the grass,
And thunder-raiment of the mountain-streams;
The sunbeams, needling with gold the dusk
Green cowls of ancient woods;
The shadows, thridding, veiled with musk,
The moon-pathed solitudes,
Call to my Fancy, saying, "Follow! follow!"
Till, following, I see,—
Fair as a cascade in a rainbowed hollow,—
A dream, a shape, take form,
Clad on with every charm,—
The vision of that Ideality,
Which lured the pioneer in wood and hill,
And beckoned him from earth and sky;
The dream that cannot die,
Their children's children did fulfill.

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In stone and iron and wood,
Out of the solitude,
And by a forthright act
Create a mighty fact—
A Nation, now that stands
Clad on with hope and beauty, strength and
song,
Eternal, young, and strong,
Planting her heel on Wrong,
Her starry banner in triumphant hands....
Within her face the rose
Of Alleghany dawns;
Limbed with Alaskan snows,
Floridian starlight in her eyes,—
Eyes stern as steel yet tender as a fawn's,—
And in her hair
The rapture of her rivers; and the dare,
As perishless as truth,
That o'er the crags of her Sierras flies,
Urging the eagle ardor through her veins,
Behold her where,
Around her radiant youth,
The spirits of the cataracts and plains,
The genii of the floods and forests, meet,
In rainbow mists circling her brow and feet:
The forces vast that sit
In session round her; powers paraclete,
That guard her presence; awful forms and fair.
Making secure her place;
Guiding her surely as the worlds through
space
Do laws sidereal; edicts, thunder-lit,
Of skyed eternity, in splendor borne
On planetary wings of night and morn.

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VIII.

Behold her! this is she!
Beautiful as morning on the summer sea,
Yet terrible as is the elemental gold
That cleaves the tempest and in angles clings
About its cloudy temples.—Manifold
The dreams of daring in her fearless gaze,
Fixed on the future's days;
And round her brow, a strand of astral beads,
Her soul's resplendent deeds;
And at her front one star,
Refulgent hope,
Like that on morning's slope,
Beaconing the world afar.—
From her high place she sees
Her long procession of accomplished acts.
Cloud-wing'd refulgences
Of thoughts in steel and stone, of marble
dreams,
Lift up tremendous battlements,
Sun-blinding, built of facts;
While in her soul she seems,
Listening, to hear, as from innumerable tents,
Æonian thunder, wonder, and applause
Of all the heroic ages that are gone;
Feeling secure
That, as her Past, her Future shall endure,
As did her Cause
When redly broke the dawn
Of fierce rebellion, and, beneath its star,
The firmaments of war
Poured down infernal rain,
And North and South lay bleeding 'mid their
slain.
And now, no less, shall her Cause still prevail,
More so in peace than war,
Through the thrilled wire and electric rail,
Carrying her message far;
Shaping her dream
Within the brain of steam,
That, with a myriad hands,
Labors unceasingly, and knits her lands
In firmer union; joining plain and stream
With steel; and binding shore to shore
With bands of iron;—nerves and arteries,
Along whose adamant forever pour
Her concrete thoughts, her tireless energies.

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On Old Cape Ann

[Pg 17]

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On Old Cape Ann

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I.

ANNISQUAM

Old days, old ways, old homes beside the sea;
Old gardens with old-fashioned flowers aflame,
Poppy, petunia, and many a name

Of many a flower of fragrant pedigree.
Old hills that glow with blue- and barberry,
And rocks and pines that stand on guard, the
same.
Immutable, as when the Pilgrim came,
And here laid firm foundations of the Free.
The sunlight makes the dim dunes hills of
snow,
And every vessel's sail a twinkling wing
Glancing the violet ocean far away:
The world is full of color and of glow;
A mighty canvas whereon God doth fling
The flawless picture of a perfect day.

II.

[Pg 20]

"THE HIGHLANDS," ANNISQUAM

Here, from the heights, among the rocks and
pines,
The sea and shore seem some tremendous
page
Of some vast book, great with our heritage,
Breathing the splendor of majestic lines.
Yonder the dunes speak silver; yonder shines
The ocean's sapphire word; there, gray with
age,
The granite writes its lesson, strong and sage;
And there the surf its rhythmic passage signs.
The winds, that sweep the page, that interlude
Its majesty with music; and the tides,
That roll their thunder in, that period
Its mighty rhetoric, deep and dream-imbued,
Are what it seems to say, of what abides,
Of what's eternal, and of what is God.

III.

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STORM AT ANNISQUAM

The sun sinks scarlet as a barberry.
Far off at sea one vessel lifts a sail,
Hurrying to harbor from the coming gale,
That banks the west above a choppy sea.
The sun is gone; the tide is flowing free;
The bay is opaled with wild light; and pale
The lighthouse spears its flame now; through a
veil
That falls about the sea mysteriously.
Out there she sits and mutters of her dead,
Old Ocean; of the stalwart and the strong,
Skipper and fisher whom her arms dragged
down:
Before her now she sees their ghosts;
o'erhead,
As gray as rain, their wild wrecks sweep along,
And all night long lay siege to this old town.

IV.

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FROM COVE TO COVE

The road leads up a hill through many a brake,
Blueberry and barberry, bay and sassafras,
By an abandoned quarry, where, like glass,
A round pool lies; an isolated lake,
A mirror for what presences, that make
Their wildwood toilets here! The road is grass
Gray-scarred with stone: great bowlders, as
we pass,
Slope burly shoulders towards us. Cedars
shake
Wild balsam from their tresses; there and here

Clasping a glimpse of ocean and of shore
In arms of swaying green. Below, at last,
Beside the sea, with derrick and with pier,
By heaps of granite, noise of drill and bore,
A Cape Ann town, towering with many a mast.

V.

[Pg 23]

PASTURES BY THE SEA

Here where the coves indent the shore and fall
And fill with ebb and flowing of the tides;
Whereon some barge rocks or some dory
rides,
By which old orchards bloom, or, from the
wall,
Pelt every lane with fruit; where gardens, tall
With roses, riot; swift my gladness glides
To that old pasture where the mushroom
hides,
The chicory blooms and Peace sits mid them
all.
Fenced in with rails and rocks, its emerald
slopes,—
Ribbed with huge granite,—where the placid
cows
Tinkle a browsing bell, roll to a height
Wherefrom the sea, bright as adventuring
hopes,
Swept of white sails and plowed of foaming
prows,
Leaps like a Nereid on the ravished sight.

VI.

[Pg 24]

THE DUNES

Far as the eye can see, in domes and spires,
Buttress and curve, ruins of shifting sand,—
In whose wild making wind and sea took hand,
—
The white dunes stretch. The wind, that never
tires,
Striving for strange effects that he admires,
Changes their form from time to time; the land
Forever passive to his mad demand,
And to the sea's, who with the wind conspires.
Here, as on towers of desolate cities, bay
And wire-grass grow, wherein no insect cries,
Only a bird, the swallow of the sea,
That homes in sand. I hear it far away
Crying—or is it some lost soul that flies,
Above the land, ailing unceasingly?

VII.

[Pg 25]

BY THE SUMMER SEA

Sunlight and shrill cicada and the low,
Slow, sleepy kissing of the sea and shore,
And rumor of the wind. The morning wore
A sullen face of fog that lifted slow,
Letting her eyes gleam through of grayest
glow;
Wearing a look like that which once she wore
When, Gloucesterward from Dogtown there,
they bore
Some old witchwife with many a gibe and
blow.
But now the day has put off every care,
And sits at peace beside the smiling sea,
Dreaming bright dreams with lazy-lidded eyes:
One is a castle, precipiced in air,

And one a golden galleon—can it be
'Tis but the cloudworld of the sunset skies?

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