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Maine, The Union's Aurora: A Maine Centennial Poem, 1820-1920

Beulah Sylvester Oxton

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Maine, The Union's Aurora

A Maine Centennial Poem

1820 - 1920

BEULAH SYLVESTER OXTON
Maine, The Union's Aurora.

PART I

Opal mists are rising, the breath of the sleeping sea,
The morning star now melts now glows in tremulous mystery.
The dawn light pale and tender turns saffron, coral and rose,
Gleams thru the purple shadows and the darkness overflows.
Then, gloriously, superbly, the great gold disk of the sun
Wheels o'er the verge of the dimpling waves and a new day
has begun!

Far to the north a majestic peak salutes the new-born day,
Signals a joyous welcome to the sun's first shining ray—
'Tis Katahdin lifting its forehead into the rosy sky,
The nation's silent watchtower, whence the banners of morn-
ing fly.
Then up from her thousand valleys where still the night wind
dreams,
From her dew-bespangled meadows, her silver lakes and
streams,
From forests cool and fragrant, from sparkling creek and bay
Maine, the Union's Aurora, herald's the birth of day.

REVEILE

Awake, awake, O, Sisters!
Wake quickly every one,
Dreaming time is over-past,
The drama of night is done.
The cries of babes,
The idiot's scream,
   The maniac's awful moans,
The voices of children pleading for bread,
   The drunkard's oaths and groans.

A night of shame and cruel wrong,
   Of selfishness and greed;
Of discord, squalor and misery,
   Of liquor's foulest deed.

A night so black
   That only God by infinite wisdom knew
If light could vanquish its darkness,
   Or ever a star shine thru;
That beyond the verge
Of its dreadful pall
   Lay the yet unrisen morn
Of a day that should bring the glory
   Of Prohibition's dawn.

But when the dropping of the sand
   In Time's great hour-glass was spent,
There rose a radiant planet,
   The sable clouds were rent;
And with the voices of the night
   A mighty shout of joy was blent—
A light! A light! A light!

Day, God's day!
   The brightest day in History's myriad
   years,
Made brighter still by a golden hope
That like a mountain rears
Its towering peak
Into the blue
Above the low-hung clouds,
And glows with the splendor of sunrise
While shadow the plain enshrouds.

Out of the darkness of sorrow and tears
Into the beauty of Love's glad years!
Out of the midnight of failure and crime
Into the glory of service sublime!

Down on the dreaming valleys
And pine-crowned heights of Maine,
That lovely luminous planet
The fire of Heaven rained
And the mists of night up-rolling
Rose from her granite hills,
Opal and pearl and sapphire,
And the voice of the laughing rills
Mingled with music of thrushes
In the woodlands damp and dim
And song of the ocean breakers,—
As a sweetly chanted hymn.

But clearer, brighter, fairer,
The light of Heaven stole
Into the heart of her people,
Into their longing soul;
And kindled a holy fire
That never more shall fail
'Till the sun is cold in heaven
And the mighty stars are pale.
For the spirit of saints and martyrs
Is the source of its living coals,
The breath that quickens that fire
Is the prayer of her hero-souls.

With her face to that beauteous morning
   Her calm eyes steady and bright,
Her heart aflame and undaunted
   By terrors of bygone night;
With courage as strong as her mountains,
   With patience as deep as her sea,
With soul overflowed with pity
   For suffering humanity,
She lifted her love-keyed bugle
   And with lips touched by angel power
Sounded a world-heard clarion,
   Heralded the New Dawn hour.

REVEILE

Awake O, woe-weary Sisters!
   Passion's black night is passed!
The sorrow and tears
   Of the yester years
And Love's vigil is over at last!

The sound of men's sobs in the darkness,
   The drunkard's terrible cries,
The broken life
   Of a drunkard's wife,
The profaning of sacred ties!
No longer the snare of the fowler
Is set for the children's feet!
Nor loathsome nest
Of saloons infest
Either city or village street!

Nevermore the strength of our manhood
Be bartered for tainted gold!
Nevermore Youth's joy
Shall Liquor destroy,
Nor its honor by Greed be sold!

Arise O, Sisters beloved!
Thy garments of righteousness don!
Come forth to the light,
For the victory unite
And hail Prohibition's white morn!

As one who standing on some mountain top
That shoulders high above its fellow peaks,
Sees the white billows of the rolling mist
Lift and dissolve, while o'er the ranges' cheeks
The blush of dawn glows warm and beautiful;
Peak after peak looms thru the mellow mist
And burns with sunrise incense. The ravines
And valleys showing blue and amethyst
Give up their shadows and with light o'erflow.
On every side the new horizons grow
'Till all the clouds are gone. Then broad and fair
A perfect arc encircles earth and air.
So Maine has stood and watched the growing day
Of Prohibition light state after state.
The clouds of ignorance and mists of sin
Have risen and dissolved. Inviolate
Truth like heaven’s sun shines bright and clear,
Before its light old errors disappear.
Maine saw her sister states like peaks emerge
From out the folds of License’s mantling cloud
And gleam and glow with Prohibition’s ray
Echoing back her bugle’s challenge loud.

Intrenched in valleys where they had held sway
The Powers of Darkness long withstood the day;
But Science, Education, Woman’s vote
Religion, Medicine, Philanthropy,
Like shafts of sunlight bent their forceful rays
And turned the blackest depths to shining ways.
So grander, brighter, fairer grew the view,
Larger and broader the horizon new,
Until the circle of its ambient mark
Was National Prohibition’s perfect arc.

As Maine has stood so Maine shall stand
In the years that are to be;
True to her trust as the faithful stars
Or the tides of her wind-tossed sea:
Keeping her watch thru the long, long nights
Of the Nation’s doubts and fears,
Knowing the morn will break at last
She scans the sky and peers
Ever with eyes to the quickening East;
And with ear alert and keen
She hears the prow of the coming day
Wreathed with rainbowed mist and spray
Breaking the waves of the surging sea,
While the earth rolls on its celestial way
Bringing new dawns to Humanity.