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Signing Your Life Away, Number Two February 2,1901, the first flame was lit in the blast furnace of the Dominion Iron & Steel Company. On December 30,1901, the first steel made In Cape Breton was poured. In the middle of that year-July 16,1901--In the height of the industrial boom that had come to Cape Breton, H. E. Baker wrote this poem called "Sydney." ("Ferrum" is Latin for "iron.") SYDNEY For years she drowsed beside the sea, And as the seasons came and went, Her one desire apparently Was but to dream and be content: Around her nature spread a scene Of field and forest, vale and hill. The harbor nestled in between, And made the landscape fairer still. The linnet sang beside her doors. The robin nested in her trees. The wild rose grew along her shores. And spent its fragrance on the breeze; And strangers came from far away. Attracted by her quiet moods. And gave their too brief holiday. To Sydney's drowsy solitudes. Then on a day stern Ferrum came. And whispered in her startled ear. Some words that set her cheek aflame. And made her tremble. "Do not fear, I love thee • henceforth thou shalt be My Sovereign Lady," Ferrum said, "And I'll abide, my love, with thee Forever. Be thou not afraid." And strength and beauty mated. Then The dreaming maid of rural charms. Became a queen of dusky men • They digged the pit, they wrought the ore. They built the furnace and the pier. She saw her sylvan scenes no more, Nor heard the songs she used to hear. He smiled, allaying her alarms. To quiet shade and rendezvous. Where happy lovers used to meet, She bade a long, a fond adieu, And welcomed in the crowded street. The babble of the noisy crew. The clash, the clamour and the strife; And ever growing on the view. The City rose to light and life. And often when the moonbeams dance Along her turrets lovingly, Three forms from out the night advance And gaze on her approvingly. And one is Wealth, and one is Thought, And one is Labor, and they smile As they behold the changes wrought Upon this happy northern isle. She sits upon her iron throne; She gazes out upon the sea; She does not mourn her beauty gone. But dreams of greater things to be. And through the hours of the night. Strange sounds are heard, the trains speed by And broad and brilliant flames the light Of Ferrum through the summer sky. • H. E. BAKER, Sydney, C. B., July 16th, 1901. !*?1' • ?;