

ON THE REDUCTION OF THE BRITISH FORCES AND THE ABOLITION OF THE CANADIAN ARMY AND NAVY

* NOTE.—The B. C. M. does not necessarily endorse the sentiments in these verses, but holds that the viewpoint expressed is one worthy of presentation and consideration.—(Ed. B. C. M.)

Eight years ago we dreamed a dream
By day, and Peace was all its theme;
E'en midnight answered to the gleam
And shone like day;
Life whispered like a pebbled stream
Where children play.

We looked for years of calm repose,
Unirksome labour, love that flows
With even current to a close,
And at the end,
When o'er us Time spread all his snows,
A weeping friend.

We shut our eyes and closed our ears
Gainst those that vexed us with their fears;
They clipt our comforts with their shears.
And broke our dream;
Our rest was troubled with their jeers
And raucous scream.

Far from such frantic rage and heat,
Where passions warp the sense and cheat,
We sought the slumbrous music sweet,
The untaxed peace,
Which steal the suffrage of the street
And votes increase.

"We hate your wars," the tricksters cry,
"And all the greeds that make men die;
"A victory won's not worth a sigh,
"An orphan's groan";
They sent their miser prayers on high
To God's own throne.

Our armies dwindled, navies shrank,
We heaped the balance at the bank,
The storm-clouds gathered rank on rank,
Black overhead;
As at the Flood, they laughed and drank,
Tomorrow's dead.

The tempest on our puzzled sight
Leaped with a torrent's dizzying might;
Ten thousand cannon rent the night,
And we awoke,
Cast headlong from our airy height,
Our bubble broke.

For us poor, foolish, weak, and blind,
Kind Heaven a miracle designed,
That we, dead wood, new spring should find,
Send forth a shoot,
And fruitful from the sun and wind
Bear saving fruit.

Out of the depths, O Lord, we cried
For help, and heard our foes deride;
But Thou stood'st with us, side by side,
A Man of War,

Our hope and strength thine arm supplied
And led us far.

For years Heaven taught us in its school
Of pain and sorrow this hard rule,
Oft cheapness makes the dearest tool
For mortal needs;
O'er Wisdom if you set the Fool,
How Ruin speeds.

Then on our knees we fondly swore
Such foolish sins we'd sin no more,
No drowsy eyes would guard the door
Of Freedom's shrine,
Or armour rusting as of yore
Give foes the sign.

Eight years of iron and of blood
Swept by like a devouring flood;
Then in the refuse and the mud
Our visions failed;
Chill midnight nips the glowing bud
Which morning hailed.

From faith new found our eyes are turned;
Dear, blood-bought lessons all we've spurned;
Hearts that with love and triumph burned
But yestereve,
Are cold as dust that lies inurned
Where spiders weave.

Men whisper peace, but War cries loud;
Love sickens; Murder shakes his shroud;
Hatred and Fear have vengeance vowed
For blood self-spilt;
Pale Russia calls a ghostly crowd
To crown her guilt.

We sleep once more by soothing streams
Where no rough sounds may break our dreams,
No world that to the waking seems
Can reach us there;
Tropic nor Pole with curst extremes,
Shall work us care.

Our armour rusts upon the wall;
From nerveless hands our keen swords fall;
And purged of powder and of ball
Our guns are dumb;
No tall ships, though at death we call,
With wings shall come.

All round the laughing foemen wait;
Wide and defenceless stands our gate
Though still the oracles of Fate
Sound in the air,
And nearer crawls the Hour of Hate,
That will not spare.

—Donald Graham.

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