

## SONNETS FOR THE PEOPLE.

Lament instead, condemn, despise, deride—  
God knows there's room for all such sentiments,  
And reason; but there's work to do beside,  
The need of which grows hourly more intense,  
Our parlor-shrugs, and sneers, and bitter jests;  
Are vile with sinning if they mean but these:  
No lazy words in drawing-rooms are tests  
Of love of country! Prayer upon its knees  
Grows into folly if it kneels too long,  
Or falls asleep while kneeling! Would to God  
That men who talk so much, deploring wrong  
Would mingle work with words as true men  
should!

For mortal sin strikes deeper than all speech,  
But not too deep for God and man to reach.

And man! My countrymen, consider well  
That where a fair integrity has been,  
Cometh dishonesty contemptible  
Swayeth the nation and is boldly seen  
Of all men. Gracious God of love, make haste,  
Our vineyard needs Thee! Here's no purple  
wine

Pressed into life, that smells of the divine—  
The vines (though in the sun have gone to waste,  
Weakness and guilt, like serpents from the  
ground

Uplift themselves, and coil and shine around  
Our tree of life, and none is found to raise  
Their poisonous head and save God's sacred fruit!  
A reckless nation tramples under foot  
God's gifts as glorious as the angels use,  
CORA AITKEN.

## THE DEFENCE OF CANADA.

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE LITERARY AND  
SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE OTTAWA, BY

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In bringing under your notice the subject of the defence of Canada, I hope I may be allowed to deprecate any idea of suggesting that the matter requires consideration, other than that which is due to the state of military preparation incumbent upon all nations in the present, past, and, unless the millennium arrives, in the future ages of the world. The very fact that money is voted for the maintenance of defences, shows that in the opinion of the majority of the nation such defences are necessary, and looking from our neighbors point of view, it must be a healthy sign that the protection of our own country is a matter of consideration rather than aggressive tactics against those who live beyond our frontier.

At no period in the history of Canada were the relations between herself and the United States on a more satisfactory footing than at the present time. At no period have the causes of even possible disagreement been so few, and at no time have the two countries been so strenuously engaged in the peaceful rivalry of developing their great and as yet unrealized resources. Still, with the teachings of history before them, neither nation has dared completely to disarm, and we in Canada might with equal justice resent the care evinced by the majority of the several States of the Union in the maintenance of their militia, as they might look askance at us for considering the best method of utilizing our comparatively slight resources for our own protection. As long as the States remain united, and ruled by men whose objects are to wage war with nature and bring her under subjection, rather than to extend a territory illegally almost beyond the control of a central Government, so long will Canada be secure from danger from external foes. But if the central power should show signs of weakness, if sections of men, or even separate States should break off, and giving way to lawless desires, become turbulent and unruly, then Canada will have need to look to her defences, and to take measures for the protection of her hearths and homes.

To be prepared for such eventualities is often the best way of preventing their occurrence, and therefore it would be an affectation of sensibility if we refrained from consideration of our own means of protection in the fear lest our friends and neighbors should consider that any reflection were directed against, or doubts entertained of their peaceful intentions.

Canada is so situated that as long as she remains a part and parcel of Great Britain, and so long as Great Britain maintains her maritime superiority, she has no danger to fear from the seaboard, and her land frontier alone requires protection. Here however, lies a difficulty which will need much skill and forethought to meet.

A casual glance at the map of the Dominion is sufficient to show the weak natural features of its frontier. Putting aside British Columbia, which in the event of war must be dealt with separately from the other Provinces, and Manitoba, which also must depend for protection on resources other than those in immediate connection with Ontario and Quebec, I would direct attention to the long frontier extending from Georgian Bay through Lakes Huron, St. Clair, Erie, and Ontario to the River St. Lawrence, and thence inclining southward to the Bay of Fundy, a distance of upwards of 2,200 miles. If this frontier had at its back a cultivated country of extent proportionate to its length there would be little difficulty in guarding it, but the reverse is the case. Excepting the peninsula of Ontario formed by Lakes Huron, Erie, and Ontario, there is little depth of cultivated land, the Dominion being shut in, the vast northern forest, which together with the severity of the climate forces the tide of emigration westward.

The problem to be solved is how with a total population of about three million five hundred thousand, and with a frontier of 2,200 miles, the country can best be protected. Now, included in the general defence of the country there are two main objects to be looked to, viz: the necessity of keeping open communication with England by the St. Lawrence, and of preventing the Dominion itself from being cut in two. For the first the maintenance of Quebec is obviously necessary; for the second the safety of Montreal and of the narrow strip which extends from Montreal to Kingston, including Ottawa, the capital of the Dominion, must be carefully looked to. For the present I would put aside the Maritime Provinces, as until the Intercolonial Railway is established there can be little communication for defensive purposes between them and the two Provinces of Quebec and Ontario, whilst Halifax "Nova Scotia," St. John's "New Brunswick," and Charlottetown "Prince Edward Island," would depend for protection in a great measure on the British fleet.

The subject therefore under consideration may be subdivided as follows:—The protection of Ontario as far as Kingston. The defence of the country between Kingston and Montreal, including Ottawa. The defence of Montreal the commercial capital. The keeping open of communication between Montreal and Quebec. The defence of Quebec.

Before however proceeding to details, I would allude to one problem difficult of solution in all countries, but especially difficult in Canada, viz:—How can the defence of the country be provided for without too

\*This does not include P. E. Island, Manitoba or British Columbia.

greatly crippling its resources either by the expenditure of money or of labor. Military expenditure is the insurance that a country pays against loss by war, but the amount of insurance must depend on the value of the property, on the risk insured against, and on the means of the insurer. In Canada and the United States the risk, happily, is not great, whereas, owing to a variety of circumstances, such as the scarcity of labor in comparison with the vast works requisite for opening up new countries, and the dread of checking, either by taxation or much more by forced service, the tide of immigration, there is well-grounded opinion that military efforts at all commensurate with those of European nations, are neither desirable or even possible. To ask Canada to build and arm fortifications which, considered purely from a strategical point of view, might be deemed requisite, would consequently be to require more than could reasonably be expected. To keep up a force which military authorities would consider necessary for her protection would also probably be beyond her capabilities, and therefore, whoever deals with the subject of the defence of the country must, to use a homely proverb, cut his coat according to his cloth.

Indirectly in connection with these considerations, I would wish to offer a few cursory observations on a matter which men responsible for the security of the Dominion should consider with care and attention. There is a great danger lest a country should be misled by numerical statistics, and lest it should find when the day of trial arrives that it has been resting on a paper army. There is a danger lest it should be deceived by the outside show of a military force when the true requisites of military strength are wanting. The accidents, "so to speak," of an army, sometimes tend to conceal its weakness, in place of adding to its strength by the influence they bring to bear on men's sentiments and feelings. Bright uniforms, stirring music, and even the assemblage of considerable bodies of troops to go through a few showy manoeuvres do not prove that the real requisites of an army are present and available. For the military profession, military training is required, and it is better to maintain a small force so educated as that it may serve as a nucleus for a greater, than to have a large force which cannot be moved, and in which those who are to command knew little more than those who are called on to obey. On an alarm of war a considerable army might be rapidly raised in Canada if trained officers and non-commissioned officers were ready at hand, and if plans for its organization had been carefully prepared and were clearly understood; whereas, unaided by such preparation, the troops would be mere mobs of armed men, without knowledge, discipline or cohesion. A chain is weak if one link lacks strength, and an army fails in efficiency if one of its many requisites are wanting. It needs first the nerves, or staff, to put the mass in motion; then the officers and non-commissioned officers with a fair knowledge of their respective duties; then the men, with a supply of arms, clothing, and a sufficiency of ammunition, not to speak of horses for the cavalry and guns, and reserve ammunition for the artillery. Then the transport, commissariat and hospitable arrangements, and last, but not least, the reserves with their due supplies. To take a palpable instance, the military stores may be full of Snider rifles, but unless the supply of ammunition is in proportion, these rifles are