

POETS AND PATRIOTISM

Charles Mair and Tecumseh

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PERHAPS THE MAIN REASON that Charles Mair has been regarded separately as literary figure on the one hand and historical figure on the other is that he himself, despite his ardent literary nationalism, never seemed to envisage the two roles acting together. Here was a Canadian who by word and action fanned the flame of Riel's 1869 uprising, who was a leading participant in the event itself, who avoided Thomas Scott's fate before a *métis* firing squad only by a last-minute escape leading ultimately to an almost unbelievable trek across the frozen wastes of North Dakota, who continued for many years to live a life of tension and adventure — yet who evidently never considered any of this experience as the subject-matter for literature. The only direct connection, for example, that he made between his literary endeavours and Riel was that the rebel leader had been indirectly responsible for the loss of poetry manuscripts on the "Fountain of Bimini" and on "some incidents in the early life of Zoroaster" — long narrative pieces, evidently of romantic and pseudo-Oriental detail that almost certainly would not have helped Mair's reputation any way.

Not that a writer must write from his own experience. But it seems curious that Mair, so avidly dedicated to what he believed to be the callings of the poetic dramatist and of the nationalist, did not realize that he had unparalleled opportunity to reflect both at once. If he had written such a play, of course, his arch-enemy Riel would have appeared as villain, and John Schultz, or a figure that Mair might have based on his own conception of himself, as hero. Today the work would be a curio. But not so much so, perhaps, as the drama that Mair did write.

In the early eighteen-eighties, when Riel's return from Montana presaged new trouble in the West, Mair moved his family from Prince Albert to the safety of Windsor, Ontario, and there he wrote *Tecumseh*, the verse drama that he hoped would confirm the promise noted by so many critics in *Dreamland* almost fifteen years before and that was meant to settle conclusively the question of who was Canada's greatest national poet. For "I would rather be the author of a really good Canadian poem," he said, "than anything else under the cape of our northern skies."¹

The great Shawnee chief had for Mair, therefore, a special fascination. Not only had he been an unusual personality, a brilliant leader of his people, but he had also played a very significant role in defending Canada against armed invasion and, indeed, in saving her from annexation by the hated Yankee. In the story of the final months of Tecumseh's career Mair could reflect some of his own knowledge and experience of the Indian race; but most important, he could urge by means of literature — that touchstone or gauge, he had once called it, of a nation's desire for greatness — a recognition of Canada's heroic past and of her potentiality for a magnificent future. The depression that had so quickly followed Confederation had overpowered the efforts of patriots, literary and otherwise, to make firm the bonds by which the far-spread provinces had agreed to join. But the National Policy of 1878 brought a surge of prosperity, and once again a number of writers, particularly Roberts and Lampman, began to express themselves in terms of a national literature. As Malcolm Ross has noted, "the air is charged;" and Mair, by 1880, riding the crest of economic security and social respectability as a Prince Albert merchant and land speculator, was encouraged to attempt a work frankly and characteristically reflective of his own ardent nationalism.

He had not composed a line of drama before this time, and either because of this inexperience or because of his simply following the example of a host of nineteenth-century writers from Shelley to Browning, he decided upon the "literary" or "closet" drama to tell Tecumseh's story. The long narrative poem, as written by Major John Richardson on the same subject, he dismissed, "for the brief and noble career of Tecumseh was essentially dramatic" (DP, Jan. 6, 1884). But his feelings of inadequacy led him to depend considerably upon the opinions and advice of others. No sooner had he finished a scene, or even less, than he sent it to Principal George Grant of Queen's or to his old Canada First associate, George T. Denison, of Toronto, either of whom might then forward it to someone else before it was returned to Mair in Windsor. By the time

Tecumseh was finished, much of it had been read and criticized by not only Mair's close friends but also by Sir Daniel Wilson, Goldwin Smith, Charles G. D. Roberts — even by Matthew Arnold.

Denison was a source of advice and inspiration such as probably no other Canadian poet has ever had. The first act he described as "the finest piece of writing ever put to paper in Canada," and a song by Iena (an Indian maiden) as "a gem". It was invariably to Denison that Mair turned when in doubt. Where should this song be placed — in the third act or the fifth? Or what did he think of these lines on a bison herd? Or of these on a meeting of Brock and Lefroy (Iena's lover) by moonlight?

BROCK How still the night!
 Here Peace has let her silvery tresses down,
 And falls asleep beside these lapping waves.
 The hour is late so let us to repose (our beds?)
 War rises early, and will up ere dawn
 To fright her with his drum.

or

Tomorrow War will wake her with his drum(?)

Is "drum" the right word? I have an idea it should be "bugle" (DP, Jan. 16, 1884).

The first criticism of Principal Grant tended to increase such doubts concerning diction. "The power of the work," said Grant, "would sometimes be the better for being restrained, . . . such expressions as 'their damned offal cast as messes to our hounds' exciting feelings only of disgust." Iena's song (Denison's "gem") he disliked for similar reasons: "I could hardly forbear using my pencil as I read slowly and carefully the second time." Such offences against good taste ("form", Grant called it) must be expunged if the work were to have real literary merit (DP, Jan. 16, 1884). And Mair conceded that there was justification for the learned Principal's opinion; his "semi-savage life and experience in the North-West" had probably deprived him of "form", of opportunity to mingle with "literary and artistic society". Denison, then beginning his long career on the Toronto Bench, was, as always, characteristically direct on these points; "Don't be afraid of Grant and his 'form'," he advised. "It is hard work pleasing preachers and is hardly worth the trouble; as long as you keep in with the Police Magistrates it is *all right*" (MP, Jan. 31, 1884).

The critical approach of Mair's old friend was generally what it had been

when *Dreamland* was published. There was little question about Mair's abilities as a poet — perhaps a slight change might be made here and there — but what really mattered was the national spirit the work reflected, the patriotic fervour it avowed. "I expect your poem to be the first great Canadian poem written by a Canadian and depicting the grandest period of our national history," he both encouraged and advised. It was Mair's duty to give this "Canadian national tone" to his drama; "as Shakespeare breathed forth the national spirit of England in *Henry V* . . . let you give voice to it for Canada" (MP, Jan. 31, 1884).

Even his differences of political opinion with Goldwin Smith did not prevent Denison from coaxing the Oxford expatriate and advocate of continental union to read Mair's manuscript. Smith's comments other than that "the Indian was a mere savage" (DP, Feb. 1, 1884) are not extant, but they were evidently complimentary enough to stimulate Mair to pay tribute to Smith "in spite of his unbelief in our national future" (DP, Jan. 16, 1884). Roberts was also in Toronto at the time, engaged in his short-lived editorship of Smith's literary periodical, the *Week*, and Denison, who had manuscript in his pocket when he met Roberts,

showed him your lines in confidence . . . and he was delighted with every line, continually breaking out in praise . . . He said he had studied your *Dreamland and Other Poems* very closely and rated them very highly. From the lines I showed him, he said you have improved and matured (MP, Feb. 14, 1884).

But the most remarkable stimulus Denison provided for Mair was the criticism of parts of *Tecumseh* that he virtually extorted from Matthew Arnold. Arnold was visiting Goldwin Smith at the Grange before returning to England from his lecture tour of the United States, and met Denison there one evening in early February, 1884. The Colonel invited the Arnolds and Smiths to lunch with him at his Heydon Villa the next day, and although Arnold said "he had a rule of not reading poetry in manuscript, as he would be so bothered with it," he did not mind "doing it for a friend" like Denison;

So after lunch to-day, I brought him quietly upstairs into my library and pulled out of my pocket a copy of the passage by Iena and asked him to read it. I had had my clerk copy it out very clearly and neatly (now remember this is all between you and me). He read it very slowly and critically to himself and when he had finished it he said, "Whoever wrote that can write; it is very good." I said, "You like it?" "Yes," he said again, "Whoever wrote that can write poetry." But, said he, "I only judge from these few lines; I cannot tell how the rest may be. This may be a fine passage imbedded in a mass of stuff. I could form no opinion of a

drama from a few lines. Now, if I want to criticize, my objection to the passage is this. He brings in a passage which is mere ornamentation; the reference to the clouds shearing off fleeces, etc., is a very pretty idea prettily expressed but it is pure ornamentation; it does not add to the passage but weakens it, breaks in upon the flow of it. All the rest is very fine, all matter vigorously and forcibly put and very interesting. Now look here — there are one, two, three, eight lines just thrown in for ornament — they do not add force to the passage.”

“Well,” said I, “would you strike those lines out?” “I don’t see well how he could,” said he; “but he might condense the idea.”

Denison again cautioned Mair about divulging this private critique, for Arnold “would not like any opinion of his to be known outside when he has only seen a scrap of your work.” And certainly, he added, the nose of “the apostle of Sweetness and Light would have gone up in the air,” if he “had stumbled upon ‘excrement, buttocks and offal mixed up in messes for hounds.’” But Denison’s “great object in having this talk with Arnold” was accomplished. “When your book is out,” he told Mair, “I can send him a copy, remind him of his having read some of it, and by having interested him in it, secure his attention to it.” And this, Mair’s irrefragable friend was convinced, would be “of great service in London — for I know if your book is only seen it will force its way, but it is important to have it noticed” (MP, Feb. 14, 1884). After further consideration of Arnold’s remarks, Denison was equally convinced that the British scholar could really find nothing wrong with the passage he had read, but had had “to show that he could make *some* criticism” and the “simile about the clouds . . . was the only one he could make” (MP, Feb. 21, 1884). The lines remained, therefore, just as Mair had originally written them, and it is doubtful that Arnold ever read them again. But the whole incident is illustrative of the energetic concern Denison consistently evinced for Mair’s work — and also, perhaps, of those qualities Goldwin Smith had in mind when he introduced Denison to Lord Salisbury as a man “who proposes to settle all political problems by a charge of light cavalry drawn up and armed in some improved fashion.”²

WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT of Matthew Arnold to stimulate him spiritually and the active collaboration of Denison to aid him materially as well as spiritually, Mair pressed on with his work through the summer and fall of 1884. For a while during the spring he had thought he might publish in

July or August of that year, but he considered himself "so severe" towards his writing that most of it went into the wastepaper basket. Also, as he progressed, he became increasingly enamoured with the character of Brock. As much as he revered Tecumseh, he felt the British hero would have offered more scope than the Indian chief; the available records, too, about Brock were more plentiful. For a time, therefore, he pondered whether or not he should include scenes on the Niagara frontier and the death of Brock at Queenston. That he eventually decided against this different emphasis was due almost as much to Denison's urging him to finish the drama as to his own realizing "it would break up the unity of incident regards Tecumseh, who had no part in the operations there" (DP, Feb. 1, 1884). There was, however, despite the early unsureness concerning dramatic writing, a growing conviction that the work might actually be staged. His wife Eliza thought so; Denison said it "would bring down the house" (MP, Oct. 16, 1884); and before he was finished, Mair himself conceded that it might be "a good acting play . . . , for it is full of striking situations — I may live to see it on the boards in Toronto yet" (DP, Mar. 21, 1885). As a result he returned to material he had thought to be in final form, adding, deleting and generally revising, with at least a half-resolved intention of making *Tecumseh* a vehicle for the live stage. To such delay were added others of varying significance. Denison, for example, objected to Mair's favourable depiction of the American General Harrison, and composition halted until Mair resolutely informed his friend: "I am sorry he was not a beast but I cannot falsify history for the sake of dramatic effect . . . He was an upright man of kind disposition and considerable ability . . . I am sorry for all this but it can't be helped" (DP, Mar. 1, 1884).

There was one interruption, however, that neither Mair nor Denison could avoid — the North-West Rebellion. When news reached the East that Riel's *métis* had defeated a force of N.W.M.P. and Prince Albert volunteers just south of the town, *Tecumseh* was forgotten. On April 1, 1885, Denison's militia regiment was ordered to prepare for active service and on the same day Mair arrived from Windsor, determined to join his friend. "It is my duty," he wrote his wife; "I should never forgive myself if I failed in this trying hour for Canada" (MP, Apr. 2, 1885). But the note of high drama ends here — even when it takes into account a letter written by a Windsor citizen and warning Riel that "Mr. C. Mair . . . left this morning . . . with the object of seeing you and shooting you" (MP, Apr. 1, 1885). For Mair and Denison never got closer than a base fifty miles from the fighting, and by the end of July the two comrades-in-arms were back in Ontario, intent on finishing *Tecumseh* by the fall. Even then, however,

Riel's trial and the subsequent delay in his execution kept Mair's mind from work. His own interest in Riel was, of course, greater than that of the ordinary Canadian who had not experienced imprisonment and even threat of death at the hands of the notorious rebel chief; and his correspondence reveals a strain that perhaps only an execution could relieve. "The opinion of the best people here is that Riel should be hanged," he wrote to Denison with a smugness that belied his real uncertainty; "nothing but hanging will suit the right public mind of Ontario" (DP, Aug. 10, 29, 1885). But Riel went to the gallows on November 16 and *Tecumseh* reached the press a month later.

Mair's almost complete subordination of artistic principles to those of ardent nationalism and of sentimental melodrama makes *Tecumseh* a curious work. For its five acts and twenty-eight scenes, which, if acted, would require at least four hours of presentation, the "play" is a pageant of stylized and highly rhetorical history — although various patriotic groups in Ontario and British Columbia were to bring at least parts of it to the boards in later years. During the depicted period, three heroes, Tecumseh, Brock and young Lefroy, vie for supremacy with not only invading Americans (including low Yankee ruffians) but also traitors in their own camps — Tecumseh's villainous brother the Prophet, and Brock's faint-hearted subordinate, Colonel (later General) Procter. And since the play is a tragedy, the final "curtain" falls on a scene of desolation: Tecumseh is dead, Procter has ignominiously retreated, the Americans have won the battle of Moraviantown, and Iena is carried away lifeless in the arms of the distraught Lefroy. Brock, however, has died gloriously in victory at Queenston Heights, Tecumseh has achieved immortality even in failure, and the Canadian reader is obviously expected to realize that the ultimate outcome of the war was an American defeat.

Tecumseh himself is a superb, if wooden, figure, a romantic noble savage who acts with consistent gallantry and integrity. As a dramatic creation he is at times Shakespearean, at others Miltonic, and at others Restoration Heroic, but certainly always lofty. Brock is the idealized British soldier. Bold, energetic, decisive, but sensitive to his great responsibility, he is aware of the odds against him, as he occasionally reveals in Shakespearean soliloquy:

Now might the head of gray Experience
 Shake o'er the problems that surround us here;

 Could England stretch its full, assisting hand

Then might I smile though velvet-footed time
Struck all his claws at once into our flesh.

But the most interesting character is Lefroy, "a poet-artist, enamoured of Indian life, and in love with Iena." For this young English expatriate who wanders in and out of the woods searching for love and serenity has a psychological complexity quite lacking in his fellow *dramatis personæ*. He is a Byronic figure, the melancholy poet on a quest, but transplanted from a corrupt Europe to an about-to-be-corrupted Canadian wilderness. Like Tecumseh, he deplures "the sordid town that here may rise," yet sees no solution in clearly defined boundaries for different races. And Lefroy, as critic W. D. Le Sueur was quick to note, is depicted "with a dash of socialism of a very modern type, not unlike that of which Mr. William Morris is perhaps the most interesting contemporary professor" (Toronto *Week*, Mar. 4, 1886). At first Mair intended "to kill Lefroy" in the fifth act, "to get him out of an unhappy world" (DP, Feb. 1, 1884), but instead he introduced an even more pathetic reversal. When Lefroy goes forth to battle, Iena dresses as an Indian boy so that she can follow him in disguise. At a critical moment she springs from "behind a large sugar maple", intercepts an American bullet "and is shot dead". So Lefroy is left as

but a shell,
A husk, an empty case, or anything
That may be kicked around the world.

Two other aspects of *Tecumseh* warrant brief attention. By both soliloquy and long passages of descriptive dialogue Mair provides the reader with a vivid picture of the flora and fauna of not only the Upper Canada of Brock's time but of also the still undiscovered West. Usually the setting is pastoral rather than savage, closer to the Forest of Arden than to the wilderness of the contemporaneous Deerslayer. Lefroy's speech in "Another Part of the Forest" and beginning "This region is as lavish of its flowers/As Heaven of its primrose blooms by night" praises the bounty of nature in terms reminiscent of Friar Laurence or Banquo. But when he describes the "unrivalled wastes" visited by Tecumseh and himself in order to enrol the western tribes, Lefroy becomes expansive in his poetic delineation of "ocean's paraphrase", where

Great prairies swept beyond our aching sight
Into the measureless West; uncharted realms,
Voiceless and calm, save when tempestuous wind
Rolled the rank herbage into billows vast,
And rushing tides, which never found a shore.

It should be noted, however, that in some of such descriptive passages Mair wrote verse that rises to the level of commendable poetry, as modern critics who have not dismissed *Tecumseh* unread can affirm. A. J. M. Smith, for example, has praised Mair's "impressionistic picture of the wilderness, vast and unplumbed, teeming with life, but empty of man", the "intensity and power" that resulted when his "imagination caught fire" and that "anticipates the more fervid spirit of the later poets."³ Unfortunately, these strengths point up the inconsistency so characteristic of Mair's verse, the lapses in taste and "form" that ran through *Dreamland* in 1868 and that Mair was never able to overcome, even to recognize more than superficially.

His provision of comic relief in *Tecumseh* is an additional example. Shakespeare had his Dogberry and Verges, Snug and Bottom, Bardolph and Pistol. Mair has his Twang and Slaugh, Gerkin and Bloat, low buffoons in the shape of "Yankee ruffians" who, of course, speak in prose:

Slaugh. . . . Jest wait till the live citizens o' these United States and Territories gits a chance, end we'll show . . . what a free people, wi' our institooshuns *kin* do . . . I'd give them Kernel Crunch's billet.

Gerkin. What was thet, General?

Slaugh. Why, they say he killed a hull family o' redskins, and stuck 'em up as scar'--crows in his wheat fields. Gentlemen, there's nothin' like original ideas!

Such an interlude was incorporated, of course, for more than comic effect. Its players are not just white boors, they are American boors, and are intended to express character contrast as well as dramatic contrast to the citizens of York:

Excitement and leave-taking. The volunteers break into column and sing:

O hark to the voice from the lips of the free!
O hark to the cry from the lakes to the sea!
Arm! arm! the invader is wasting our coasts,
And tainting the air of our land with his hosts.

And to such patriotic aspects of his drama did Mair devote his most painstaking attention and the largest share of his creative talents.

BUT THE RECEPTION of *Tecumseh* in 1886 by press and public alike, far more enthusiastic than even that accorded *Dreamland* eighteen years before, suggests that Mair had caught the national pulse. There were, of

course, particular factors that attracted notice. The growing awareness of the plight of the Indian, the part he had played in the recent Rebellion, Mair's own exciting involvement with the notorious Riel in 1869 and his subsequent participation in the campaign of 1885, undoubtedly evoked a special response. And there was also the literary periodical. Although limited in circulation and struggling against great odds, magazines and papers such as the *Week* and the *Varsity* were competently edited and, within their scope, influential in forming taste and opinion. Along with the daily newspapers, they acclaimed *Tecumseh* almost without qualification. Mercer Adam's commentary in the *Varsity* was so long, indeed, as to require two instalments, on February 27 and March 5, in which the former editor of the *Canadian Monthly* stated that Mr. Mair had "achieved a great and complete success" and that "in the choice and handling of a great Canadian theme" he had "amply justified the poet's function and art." Surely "the beauty and melody of some of the love songs," Adam wrote, "are hardly surpassed by the best of England's lyric poets," nor could there be any doubt that the drama as a whole had risen to its "true mission" — "to preserve the memory of an heroic period in the country's annals, and to stimulate national interest in the events and characters of the time."

The daily newspapers echoed the patriotic fervour of the periodicals. There were frequent references (complimentary to Mair) to *Henry V* and yet also to the fact, as the *Montreal Gazette* of March 2 noted, that the author had not passed "beyond the pale of our own romantic story" in selecting his subject. George Stewart, Jr., emphasized in the *Quebec Morning Chronicle* of February 27 that *Tecumseh* in tone and spirit was purely Canadian ("not a classical allusion appearing in the text") and the *Kingston British Whig* of March 27 that it had a claim "for all Canadian royalists — in fact, for all Canadians."

The diction of Mair's characters, both high and low, however, proved to be a contentious point even with the highly commendatory Canadian critics. W. D. Le Sueur in the *Week* of March 4 thought "some characters . . . might perhaps have been spared;" Gerkin, Slaugh and company were probably represented correctly enough, but "we cannot help feeling as if there were a trace of U. E. Loyalist prejudice in this portraiture." Adam believed that "our neighbours across the line won't take kindly to the rather slangy prose dialogues", Stewart felt the American ruffians "cheaped the work", and an unidentified critic of the *April Canada Educational Monthly* was convinced that their "very names . . . betrayed the prejudiced spirit in which the Yankee caricatures were drawn."

From Mair's literary contemporaries came praise and encouragement similar

to that voiced by the native press. Charles Sangster, fading physically and mentally as a Civil Service clerk in Ottawa, promised that as soon as his "brain got clearer" he would "dive into" *Tecumseh*. "I had got as far as the fourth Act," he wrote, "when my brain gave out, and my doctor will not let me read just now, as I am unfit for brain work" (MP, Feb. 23, 1886). Particularly pleasing to William Kirby was Mair's obvious intention "to make Canadians proud of their country and of the great men who have lived and died among us" (MP, Mar. 4, 1886). Roberts admitted to Mair that he had considered his own poetry "the best yet done in Canada" but that *Tecumseh* was quite superior; "I shall certainly spare no effort to do something myself that shall equal it" (MP, Mar. 10, 1886). And Pauline Johnson was ecstatic in her praise, particularly of the evidence of Mair's "long study and life with the people whom he has written of so carefully, so truthfully". Her only regret was that his love story should end so tragically:

Oh! Lefroy, where is your fellowman in fiction? Iena, where your prototype? Alas, for all the other pale-faced lovers, they are indifferent, almost brutal creations, and as for the redskin girls that love them, they are all fawn-eyed, unnatural, maidenly idiots. . . . But the inevitable doom of death could not be stayed even by Mair's sensitive Indian-loving pen (Toronto *World*, Mar. 22, 1892).

The personage perhaps most important of all in the excitement stimulated by the publication of *Tecumseh* was Denison. He had helped to write it; now, almost single-handedly, he sold it. Like a commander holding a literary Fort York that would raise its gate to friendly overtures but from which attacks and foraging missions could be effected, Denison issued communiqués to Mair recording what was surely the most intensive selling campaign in nineteenth-century Canadian letters. "Foster and I went to see Dwight yesterday," he wrote a few days after the work appeared, "and asked him to send an associated press despatch by telegraph all over Canada to let the public know what a sensation *Tecumseh* has created." Other reports followed almost daily. "I made three people buy copies at Hart's this morning;" "Bain is selling plenty now; I keep sending people to him;" "I am after Ross, the Minister of Education, to use *Tecumseh* in the schools;" "Foster and I have been at work to-day to have editorials in the *Telegram* and *News* about the rapid sale of the book, complimenting the Toronto people on their taste." Denison might well report to the author, therefore, that the booksellers had told him that "no Canadian book has sold across the counter like this has," that it "is going like blazes" and that "this edition is a goner" (MP, Mar. 3, 4, 1886).

Mair was elated. It was, perhaps excepting that time of a hero's return from Fort Garry in 1868, his finest hour. There was a possibility that the play would be translated into Ojibway — “certainly an event in the history of the drama!” (DP, Dec. 7, 1885); even more exciting was that fifty copies had been sent to Chapman and Hall in London (the book bears their imprint as well as that of Hunter and Rose of Toronto), who were to await English reviews before undertaking publication themselves. Mair had purposely included copious notes on Indian lore and Canadian history for the benefit of English readers, and through a Prince Albert friend who was the cousin of “one Andrew Lang”, critiques were to appear in the *Saturday Review* and other British periodicals. These hopes failed to materialize, however, for there was neither criticism nor publication in Britain. Mair charged later that Chapman and Hall did not even bother to distribute their copies, or to return the money enclosed for obtaining English copyright. His Prince Albert friend became “a lying scoundrel.”

But in the spring of 1886 *Tecumseh* was widely acclaimed as the country's outstanding literary achievement and Mair as its greatest national poet. When Hunter and Rose suggested that a second printing be run off as quickly as possible, he declined only when told there was a possibility of financial loss; he estimated that the years of writing had cost him ten thousand dollars and his return but five hundred — “so I have bled for my country with a vengeance” (DP, Nov. 3, 1890). But such thoughts were probably farthest from his mind on Victoria Day, 1886, as Mrs. John Beverley Robinson, the wife of the Lieutenant-Governor, pinned on his Rebellion Medal and dubbed him “our warrior bard.” To Mair, at forty-seven and with almost as many years ahead of him, the future seemed redolent with promise.

Even as a poet he could not imagine the reversals of fortune ahead. For within a decade *Tecumseh* was forgotten and its author was pleading to the government, to his friends and relatives, to anyone who might rescue him from the poverty and oblivion that had befallen him.

¹ Public Archives of Canada, Denison Papers, Mair to G. T. Denison, November 23, 1883. All subsequent notes from correspondence are given parenthetically in the text and refer either to the Denison Papers (DP), or to the Mair Papers (MP) in the Queen's University Library.

² Arnold Haultain, *Goldwin Smith's Correspondence* (Toronto: McClelland and Goodchild, 1913), pp. 5-6.

³ “Nationalism and Canadian Poetry”, *Northern Review*, I (December-January, 1945-46), 39-40.