

'Hello, Soldier!' eBook

'Hello, Soldier!' by Edward Dyson

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Page 1

BILLY KHAKE

Marching somewhat out of order
when the band is cock-a-hoop,
There's a lilting kind of magic in the swagger
of the troop,
Swinging all aboard the steamer with her
nose toward the sea.
What is calling, Billy Khaki, that you're foot-
ing it so free?

Though his lines are none too level,
And he lacks a bit of style.
And he's swanking like the devil
Where the women wave and smile,
He will answer with a rifle
Trim and true from stock to bore,
Where the comrades crouch and stifle
In the reeking pit of war.

What is calling, Billy Khaki? There is
thunder down the sky,
And the merry magpie bugle splits the morn-
ing with its cry,
While your feet are beating rhythms up the
dusty hills and down,
And the drums are all a-talking in the hollow
of the town.

Billy Khaki, is't the splendor of the song the
kiddies sing,
Or the whipping of the flags aloft that sets
your heart a-swing?
Is't the cheering like a paeon of the toss-
ing, teeming crowds,
Or the boom of distant cannon flatly bumping
on the clouds ?

What's calling, calling, Billy? 'Tis the rattle
far away
Of the cavalry at gallop and artillery in play;
'Tis the great gun's fierce concussion, and the
smell of seven hells



When the long ranks go to pieces in the
sneezing of the shells.

But your eyes are laughing, Billy, and a
ribald song you sing,
While the old men sit and tell us war it is a
ghastly thing,
When the swift machines are busy and the
grim, squat fortress nocks
At your bolts as vain as eggs of gulls that spatter on the rocks.

When the horses sweep upon you to complete
a sudden rout,
Or in fire and smoke and fury some brave
regiment goes out,
War is cruel, Bill, and ugly. But full well
you know the rest,
Yet your heart is for the battle, and your face
is to the west.

For if war is beastly, Billy, you can picture
something worse—
There's the wrecking of an empire, and its
broken people's curse;
There are nations reft of freedom, and of hope
and kindly mirth,
And the shadow of an evil black upon the
bitter earth.

So we know what's calling, Billy. 'Tis the
spirit of our race,
And its stir is in your pulses, and its light is
on your face
As you march with clipping boot-heels
through the piping, howling town
To uphold the land we live in, and to pull a
tyrant down.

Thou his lines are none too level,
And he's not a whale for style,
And he's swanking like the devil
When the women wave and smile
He will answer with a rifle,
Trim and true from stuck to bore,
When the comrades sit and stifle
In the smoking pit of war.

Page 2

AS THE TROOP WENT THROUGH

I *Heard* this day, as I may no more,
The world's heart throb at my workshop door.
The sun was keen, and the day was still;
The township drowsed in, a haze of heat.
A stir far off on the sleepy hill,
The measured beat of their buoyant feet,
And the lilt and thrum
Of a little drum,
The song they sang in a cadence low,
The piping note of a piccolo.

The township woke, and the doors flew wide;
The women trotted their boys beside.
Across the bridge on a single heel
The soldiers came in a golden glow,
With throb of song and the chink of steel,
The gallant crow of the piccolo.
Good and brown they were,
And their arms swung bare.
Their fine young faces revived in me
A boyhood's vision of chivalry.

The lean, hard regiment tramping down,
Bushies, miners and boys from town.
From 'mid the watchers the road along
One fell in line with the khaki men.
He took the stride, and he caught their song,
And Steve went then, and Meneer, and Ben,
Long Dave McCree,
And the Weavers three,
All whisked away by the "Come! Come! Come!"
The lusty surge of the vaunting drum.

I swore a prayer for each soldier lad.
He was the son that might have had;
The tall, bold boy who was never mine,
All brave with dust that the eyes laughed through,
His shoulders square, and his chin in line,
Was marching too with the gallant few.
Passed the muffled beat
Of their swanking feet,



The swell of drum, the exulting crow,
The wild-bird note of the piccolo.

They dipped away in the listless trees;
A mother wept on her beaded knees
For sons gone out to the long war's end;
But more than mother or man wept I
Who had no son in the world to send.
The hour lagged by, and drifting high
Came the fitful hum
Of the little drum,
And faint, but still with an ardent flow,
The pibroch, call of the piccolo.

MARSHAL NEIGH, V.C.

He came from tumbled country past the
humps of Buffalo
Where the snow sits on the mountain 'n' the
Summer aches below.
He'd a silly name like Archie. Squattin'
sullen on the ship,
He knew nex' to holy nothin' through the gor-
forsaken trip.

No thoughts he had of women, no refreshin'
talk of beer;
If he'd battled, loved, or suffered vital facts
did not appear;
But the parsons and the poets couldn't teach
him to discourse
When it come to pokin' guyver at a pore,
deluded horse.

If nags got sour 'n' kicked agin the rules of
things at sea,
Artie argued matters with 'em, 'n' he'd kid
'em up a tree.
"Here's a pony got hystericks. Pipe the word
for Privit Rowe,"
The Sargint yapped, 'n' all the ship came
cluckin' to the show.

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He'd chat him confidential, 'n' he'd pet 'n'
paw the moke;
He'd tickle him, 'n' flatter him, 'n' try him
with a joke;
'N' presently that neddy sobers up, 'n' sez
"Ive course,
Since you puts it that way, cobber, I will be
a better horse."

There was one pertickler whaler, known
aboard ez Marshal Neigh,
Whose monkey tricks with Privit Rowe was
better than a play.
He'd done stunts in someone's circus, 'n' he
loved a merry bout,
Whirlin' in to bust his boiler, or to kick
the bottom out.

Rowe he sez: "Well, there's an idjit! Oh,
yes, let her whiz, you beauty!
Where's yer 'orse sense, little feller? Where's
yer bloomin' sense iv duty?
Well, you orter serve yer country!" Then
there'd come a painful hush,
'N' that nag would drop his head-piece, 'n', so
'elp me cat, he'd blush.

We was heaped ashore be Suez, rifle, horse,
'n' man, 'n' tent,
Where the land is sand, the water, 'n' the
gory firmament.
We had intervals iv longin', we had sweaty
spells of work
In the ash-pit iv Gehenner, dumbly waitin'
fer the Turk.

We goes driftin' on the desert, nothin' doin',
nothin' said,
Till we get to think we're nowhere, 'n' arf
fancy we are dead,
'N' the only 'uman interest on the red hori-
zon's brim
Is Marshal Neigh's queer faney fer the lad
that straddles him.



Plain-livin's nearly, bored us stiff. The Major
calls on Rowe
To devise an entertainment. What his
charger doesn't know
Isn't in the regulations. Him 'n' Rowe is
brothers met,
'N' that horse's sense iv humor is the oddest
fancy yet.

But the Turk arrives one mornin' on the outer
edge iv space.
From back iv things his guns is floppin' kegs
about the place,
'N' Privit Artie Rowe along with others iv
the force
Goes pig-rootin' inter battle, holdin' converse
with his horse.

Little Abdul's quite a fighter, 'n' he mixes it
with skill;
But the Anzacs have him snouted,, 'n', oh,
ma, he's feelin' ill.
They wake the all-fired desert, 'n' the land for
ever dead
Is alive 'n' fairly creepin', and the skies are
droppin' lead.

When they've got the Ot'man goin', little
gaudy hunts begin.
It fer us to chiv His Trousers. 'n' to round
the stragglers in.
Cuttin' closest to the raw, 'n' swearin' lovin'
all the way,
Is Artie from Molinga on his neddy, Marshal
Neigh.

We're pursuin' sundry camels turkey-troatin'
anyhow
With the carriage iv an emu 'n' the action iv
a cow,
When a sand dune busts, 'n' belches arf a
million iv the foe.
They uncork a blanky batt'ry, 'n' it's, Allah,
let her go!



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We're not stayin' dinner, thank you. Lie
along yer horse 'n' yell,
While the bullets pip yer britches 'n' you
sniff the flue of Hell.
Here it is that Artie takes it good 'n' solid in
the crust,
He dives from out the saddle, 'n' is swallowed
in the dust.

I got through 'n' saw them pointin' where the
Marshal faced the band.
He was goin' where we came from, sniffin'
bodies in the sand.
Till he found Rowe snugglin' under, took him
where his pants was slack,
'N' be all the Asiatic gods, he brought his
soldier back!

With a bullet in his buttock, 'n' a drill hole
in his ear,
He dumped Artie down among us. Square
'n' all, how did we cheer!
There's no medals struck fer neddies, but we
rule there orter be,
'N' the pride iv all the Light Horse is old
Marshal Neigh, V.C.

IN HOSPITAL.

It is thirty moons since I slung me hook
From the job at the hay and corn,
Took me solemn oath, 'n' I straight forsook
All the ways of life, dinkum ways 'n' crook,
'N' the things on which it was good to look
Since the day when a bloke was born.

I was give a gun, 'n' a bay'net bright,
'N' a 'ell of a swag iv work,
N' I dipped my lid to the big pub light,
To the ole push cobbers I give "Good-night!"
Slipped a kiss to 'er, 'n' I wings me flight
For a date with the demon Turk.



Ez we pricked our heel to the skitin' drum.
Square 'n' all, I was gone a mile.
With a perky air, 'n' a 'eart ez glum
Ez a long-dead cod, I was blind 'n' dumb,
Holdin' do the tear that was bound to come
At a word or a friendly smile.

Now I've seen it all, I may come out dead,
But I 'ope never more a fool.
I have scorched, 'n' thirsted, 'n' froze, 'n'
bled,
'N' bin taught the use of the human head,
For when all is done 'n' when all is said,
War's a wonderful sort of school.

I've bin taught to get 'em 'n' never fret,
'N' to sleep without dreamin' when
We have swarmed a slope with the red rain wet;
I 'ave learned a pile, 'n' I'm learnin' yet;
But the thing I've learned that I won't forget
Is a way of not judgin' men.

We was shot down there in a dirty place—
From the mansions 'n' huts we'd come—
'N' of all the welter the 'ardest case
Was a little swine with a dimpled face,
Who a year ago was dispensin' lace
In a Carlton em-por-ee-um.

In the moochin' days of me giddy youth,
When I kidded meself a treat,
I'd have pass him one ez a gooey. 'Strewth
On the track iv Huns, he's a eight-day sleuth,
'N' at tearin' into 'em nail 'n' tooth
He's got Julius Caesar beat!

I ain't proud with him ; 'n' I'm modest, too,
When dividin' a can of swill
With a Algy boy from the wilds iv Kew.
Cos I do not know what the cow will do
When a Fritzzy offers to sock me through;
'N' it's good to be livin' still.



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There you are, you see! Oh! it makes you sore,
When a bloke you despised at 'ome
In them pifflin' days of the years before
Takes a odds-on chance with the God of War,
'N' he tows you out with his left lung tore,
'N' a crack in his bleedin' dome!

'Twas a lad called Hugh done ez much for
me.
(He has curls 'n' he's fair 'n' slim).
Well, I mind the days in the Port when we
Puts it over Hugh coz we don't agree
With his tone 'n' style, 'n' my foot was free
When the push made a hack of him.

Now he's paid me back. I had struck a snag,
And must creep through the battle spume
All a flamin' age, with a grinnin' jag
In me thigh, for water, or jest a fag.
Like a crippled snake I was forced to drag
Shattered flesh till the crack of doom.

When they saw me he was the one who came.
'N' he give me a raffish grin
'N' a swig. I wasn't so bad that shame
Didn't get me then, for the lad was lame.
They had passed him his, but his 'art was
game.
'N' he coughed ez he brought me in.

I have tackled God on me bended knees,
So He'll save him alive 'n' whole,
For the sake of one who he thinks he sees
When the Nurse's hands bring a kind of ease;
And I thank God, too, for the things like these
That have give me a sort of soul.

There are Percies, Algies, 'n' Claudes I've
met
Who could take it 'n' come agen,
While the bullets flew in a screamin' jet.
What in pain, 'n' death, and in mire 'n' sweat
I 'ave learned from them that I won't forget
Is a way of not judgin' men.



SISTER ANN.

I'm lyin' in a narrow bed,
 'N' starin' at a wall.
Where all is white my plastered head
 Is whitest of it all.
My life is jist a whitewashed blank,
 With flamin' spurts of pain.
I dunno who I've got to thank,
I've p'raps been trod on by a tank,
 Or caught out in the rain
 When skies were peltin' fish-plates, bricks
 'n' lengths of bullock-chain.

I'm lyin' here, a sulky swine,
 'N' hatin' of the bloke
Who's in the doss right next to mine
 With 'arf his girders broke.
He never done no 'arm t me,
 'N' he's pertickler ill;
But I have got him snouted, see,
'N' all old earth beside but she
 Come with the chemist's swill,
 'N' puts a kind, soft 'and on mine, 'n' all
 my nark is still.

She ain't a beaut, she's thirty two,
 She scales eleven stone;
But, 'struth, I didn't think it true
 There was such women grown!
She's nurse 'n' sister, mum 'n' dad,
 'N' all that straight 'n' fine
In every girl I ever had.
When Gabr'el comes, 'n' all the glad
 Young saints are tipped the sign,
 You'll see this donah take her place, first
 angel in the line!



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She's sweet 'n' cool, her touch is dew—
Wet lilies on yer brow.

(Jist 'ark et me what never knew
Of lilies up to now).

She fits your case in 'arf a wink,
'N' knows how, why, 'n' where.
If you are five days gone in drink,
N' hoverin' on perdition's brink,
It is her brother there.
God how pain will take a man, and
He has spoke with her!

I dunno if she ever sleeps
Ten minutes at a stretch.
A dozen times a night she creeps
To soothe a screamin' wretch
Who has a tiger-headed Hun
A-gnawin' at his chest.
'N' when the long, 'ard flight is won,
'N' he is still 'n' nearly done,
She smiles down on his rest,
'N' minds me of a mother with a baby at her
breast.

The curly kid we cuddled when
There was no splendid row
(It seemed a little matter then,
But feels so wondrous now).
It's part of her. She's Joan iv Ark,
Flo Nightingale, all fair
'N' dinkum dames who've made their mark
If she comes tip-toe in the dark,
We blighters feel her there.
The whole pack perks up like a bird, 'n'
sorter takes the air.

She chats you in a 'Ighland botch;
But if our Sis saw fit
To pitch Hindoo instead of Scotch
I'd get the hang of it,
Because her heart it is that talks
What now is plain to me.
At war where bloody murder stalks,
'N' Nick his hottest samples hawks.



I have been given to see
What simple human kindness is, what
brotherhood may be.

BRICKS.

Dear Ned, I now take up my pen to write
you these few lines,
And hopin' how they find you fit. Gorbli',
it seems an age
Since Jumbo ducked the Port, 'n' drilled 'n'
polished to the nines,
He walked his pork on Collins like a hero off
the stage,
Then hiked a rifle 'cross the sea this bleedin'
war to wage.

The things what's 'appened lately calls to
Jumbo's mind that day
Our push took on the Peewee pack, 'n'
belted out their lard,
With twenty cops to top it off. But now I'm
stowed away,
A bullet in me gizzard where I took it good
and hard,
A-dealin'-stoush 'n' mullock to the Prussian
flamin' Guard.

At Bullcoor mortal charnce had dumped a
mutton-truck of us
From good ole Port ker-flummox where we
didn't orter be,
All in a 'elpless hole-the Pug, Bill Carkeek,
Son, 'n' Gus,
Don, Steve, 'n' Jack, 'n' seven more, 'n', as
it 'appens, me,
With nothin' in since breakfast, 'n' a week
to go for tea.

Worked loose from Caddy's bunch, we went
it gay until we found
We'd took to 'arf the ragin' German Hempire
on our own.
Then down we went so 'umble, with our noses
in the ground,
Takin' cover in the rubble. If a German head

was shown
It was fare-the-well to Herman with a bullet
through the bone.

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We slogged the cows remorseless, 'n' they
laid for us a treat.
We held that stinkin' cellar, though, 'n' when
the day was done
Son pussied on his bingie where a Maxie trim
'n' neat
Had spit out loaded lightrnin', and he slugged
a tubby Hun,
Then choked a Fritzie with his dukes, 'n'
pinched the sooner's gun!

We rigged her on her knuckle-bones. Cri',
how she lapped 'em up!
We hosed 'em out with livin' lead. That was
the second day.
Me left eye I'd 'ave give for jest a bubble in a
cup,
Three fingers I'd 'ave parted for a bone I've
flung away;
But the butcher wasn't callin', 'n' the fountain
didn't play.

T'was rotten mozzle, Neddo. We had blown
out ever clip,
'N' 'blooded the hammunion for the little box
of tricks.
Each took a batten in his fist. Sez Billy
"Let 'er rip!"
But Son he claws his stubble. Sez—he:
"Hold a brace of ticks."
Then "Yow!" he pipes 'n' "Strewth!" he
sez, "it's bricks, you blighters,
bricks!"

There's more than 'arf a million spilt where
somethin' hit a pub;
We creeps among 'n' sorts 'em, stack afore,
'n' stack behind;
The Hun is comin' at us with his napper like
a tub—
You couldn't 'ope to miss it, pickled, par-
alysed, 'n' blind.
Sez Sonny: "Lay 'em open! Give 'em
blotches on the rind!"



Then bricks was flyin' in the wind. Mine
dinted Otto's chin;
Ole Nosey got his brother, which he never
more will roam.
When Ulrich stopped a Port bookay he rolled
his alley in.
Their fire was somethin' fierce. Poor Son
was blowin' blood 'n' foam,
"Fill up," he coughs, "'n' plug 'em! S'elp
me Gord, we're goin' 'ome!"

With bricks we drove right at 'em 'n' we
wanged 'em best we could.
'Twas either bed 'n' breakfast or a scribble
and a wreath.
Haynes bust a Prussian's almond, took the
bay'net where he stood,
Then heaved his last 'arf-Brunswick, split
the demon's grinnin' teeth,
And Son went down in glory, with a German
underneath!

We'd started out with gibbers in our clobber
and our 'ats.
They gave us floatin' lead enough to stop an
army cor.
We yelled like fiends, 'n' countered with a
lovely flight of bats,
Then rushed in close formation, heavin' cot-
tages, n' tore
Through blinded, bleedin' Bosches, 'n' lor
love yeh, it was war!

We came peltin', headfirst, 'elpless, in a drain
among a lot
Of dirty, damned old Tommies (Gord! The
best that ever blew!)
Eight left of us, all punctured, each man
holdin' what he'd got.
Me wild, a rat hole in me lung, but in me
mauley, too,
A bull-nosed brick with whiskers where no
whiskers ever grew.



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There's nothin' doin' now. I wear me blankets like a toff.
The way this fat nurse pets me, strewth, it's well to be so sick,
A-dreamin' of our contract 'n' the way we pulled it off.
I reckon Haig is phonin' Hughes: "Hullo, there, Billy. Quick—
A dozen of the pushes and a thousan' tons of brick!"

MUD.

This war's a waste of slurry, and its atmosphere is mud,
All is bog from here to sunset. Wadin' through
We're the victims of a thicker sort of universal flood,
With discomforts that old Noah never knew.

We have dubbed our trench The Cecil.
There's a brass-plate and a dome,
And a quagmire where the doormat used to be,
If you're calling, second Tuesday is our regular day at home,
So delighted if you'll toddle in to tea!

There is mud along the corridors enough to bog a cow;
In the air there hangs a musty kind of woof;
There's a frog-pond in the parlour, and the kitchen is a slough.
She has neither doors nor windows, nor a roof.

When they post our bald somnambulist as missing from his flat
We take soundings for the digger with a prop.
By the day the board is gratis, by the week



it's half of that;
For the season there's a corresponding drop.

Opening off the spacious hallway is my natty
little suite,
A commodious and accessible abode.
By judicious disposition, with exclusion of
my feet,
There is sleeping room for Oliver the toad.

Though the ventilation's gusty, and in gobs
the ceiling falls—
Which with oral respiration disagrees—
Though there comes a certain quantity of
seepage from the walls,
There are some I knew in diggings worse
than these.

On my right is Cobber Carkeek. There's a
spring above his head,
And his mattress is a special kind of clay.
He's a most punctilious bloke about the
fashion of his bed,
And he makes it with a shovel every day.

Man is dust. If so, the Cobber has been
puddled up a treat.
On domestic sanitation he's a toff,
For he lights a fire on Sunday, bakes his sur-
face in the heat,
Then he takes a little maul, and cracks it
off.

After hanging out a winter in this Cimmerian
hole
We're forgetting sheets, and baths, and
tidy skins.
In the dark and deadly calm last night they
took us on patrol.
Seven, little fellows, thinking of their sins.

It was ours like blinded snails to prowl the
soggy, slimy night,
With a feeler pricking out at every pore
For the death that stalks in darkness, or the
blinking stab of light,
And the other trifling matters that are war.

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That's the stuff to get your liver, that's the
acid on a man,
For it tries his hones, and seeks his marrow
through.
You have got the thought to comfort you that
life is but a span,
If Fritz squirts his loathly limelight over
you.

We got back again at daybreak. Cobber
ducked to doss and said,
From the soft, embracing mud: "No more
I'll roam.
"Oh, thank Heaven, blokes," he murmured,
"for the comforts of a bed!
Gorstruth, but ain't it good to have a
home!"

MICKIE MOLLYNOO.

A mile-long panto dragon ploddin'
'opeless all the day,
Stuffed out with kits, 'n' spiked with rifles,
steamin' in its sweat,
A-heavin' down the misty road, club-footed
through the clay,
By waggons bogged 'n' buckin' guns,
the wildest welter yet,
Like 'arf creation's tenants shiftin' early
in the wet.

We're marchin' out, we dunno where, to meet
we dunno who;
But here we lights eventual, 'n' sighs 'n'
slips the kit,
'N', 'struth, the first to take us on is Mickie
Mollynool!
A copper of the Port he was, when 'istory
was writ.
Sez I: "We're sent to face the foe, 'n', selp
me, this is It."



A shine John. Hop is Mollynoo. A mix-up
with the push
Is all his joy. One evenin' when his
baton's flyin' free
I takes a baby brick, 'n' drives it hard agin
the cush,
'N' Privit Mick is scattered out fer all the
world to see,
But not afore indelible he's put his mark on
me.

I got the signs Masonic all inlaid along me
lug
Where Molly, P.C., swiped me in them
'appy, careless days.
He's sargin' now, a vet'ran; I'm a newchum
and a mug,
'N' when he sorter fixes me there's some-
thin' in his gaze
That's pensive like. "Move on!" sez he.
"Keep movin' there!" he says.

If after this I dreams of scraps promiscuous
and crool,
The mills in Butcher's Alley when the
watch is on the wine,
Those nights he raided Wylie's shed to break
the two-up school,
I takes a screw at Molly. With a grin that
ain't divine
He's toyin' with a scar of old I reckonise
as mine.

'N' so I'm layin' for it, 'n' I'm wonderin' how
'n' what.
We're signed on with the Germans, 'n' there
ain't a vacant date;
But sure it's comin' to me, 'n' it's comin' 'ard
'n' 'ot.
Me lurk is patient waitin', but I'm trim-
min' while I wait
A brick to jab or swing with, in a willin'
tatertate.



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Oh, judge me wonder! There's a scrim that
follers on a raid.
I'm roughin' it all-in with Hans. He sock
me such a bat
I slides on somethin' narsty, 'n' me little grave
is made;
But Molly butts my Hun, 'n' leaves no face
beneath his hat,
'N', "'Scuse me, Mister Herr," sez he, "I have a lien on that!"

He helps me under cover, 'n' he 'ands me
somethin' wet
(I've got a lick or two that leaves me feelin'
pretty sick).
"Lor love yeh, ole John Hop," sez I, "yiv
buried me in debt."
"Don't minton ut at all," he sez, 'n' eyes
me arf-a-tick.
'N' back there in the trench I sits, 'n' trims
another brick.

'Tis all this how a month or more; then
Mollynoo sez he:
"Come aisy, Jumm, yeh loafer, little hell 'n'
all to view.
A job most illegant is on, cut out fer you 'n'
me.
The damnedest, dirtiest fighter on the
Continent is you,
Bar one, yeh gougin' thafe, 'n' that is
Sargin' Mollynoo!"

I take, with knife 'n' pistol, arf a brick to line
me shirt.
We creeps a thousan' yards or so to jigger
up a gun
Which seven Huns is workin' on the Irish like
a squirt.
We gets across them, me 'n' him. I pots
the extra one;
Mick chokes his third in comfort, 'n',
be'old, the thing is done!



He stands above me, rakin' sweat from off his
gleamin' nut.

"Me dipper's leakin', Mick," sez I; "me
leg is bit in two."

Sez he: "Bleed there in comfort, I'm for
bringin' help, ye scut."

He's back in twenty minutes, with a dillied
German crew.

"Three'll carry in the gun," sez he, "the
rest will carry you."

I dunno how he got 'em, but he made them
barrer me.

They lugged the gun before him, 'n' he
yarded them like geese.

Then Mickie s'lutes the Major. "They're in
custody," sez he,

"Fer conduc' calculated to provoke a breach
iv peace,

A-tearin' iv me uniform, 'n' 'saultin' the
po-lice."

Then down he dumped. His wounds would
make a 'arf a column list.

When hack to front I chucks me bricks 'n'
smiles the best I can.

He grins at me: "Yer right," sez he, "Hold
out yer bla'-guard fist,

I couldn't fight yeh, blarst yeh, if yeh dinted
in me pan.

This messin' round wid Germans makes a
chicken iv a man."

Jam.

(A Hymn of Hate).

What is meant by active service

'Ere where sin is leakin' loose,

'N' the oldest 'and's as nervis

As a dog-bedevelled goose,

Has bin writ be every poet

What can rhyme it worth a dam,

But the 'orror as we know it

Is jist jam, jam, *jam*!

Oh, the 'ymn of 'ate we owe it—

Stodgy, splodgy, seepy, soaky, sanguinary
jam!



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There's the "fearful roar iv battle,"
What gets underneath yer 'at,
Mooin' like a million cattle
Each as big as Ararat;
There's the red field green 'n' slippery
(And I'm cleaner where I am),
But the thing that's got me nippy
It is jam, jam, *jam*!
Druv us sour it has, 'n' dippy,
Sticky, sicky, slimy, sloppy, stummick-straftin'
jam!

Of the mud that's in the trenches
Writers make a solemn fuss;
For the vermin 'n' the stench
Little ladies pity us;
But the yearn that's honest dinkum,
'N' the prayer what ain't a sham
Is that Fritz may bust 'n' sink 'em
Ships of jam, jam, *jam*!
For we bolt 'em, chew 'em, drink 'em,
Million billion bar'ls of beastly, cloyin'
clammy jam!

We are sorry-sick of peaches,
'N' we're full right up of plum,
'N' innards fairly screeches
When the tins of apple come.
Back of Blighty piled in cases,
Jist as close as they can cram,
Fillin' all the open spaces,
Is the 'jam, jam, *jam*!
Oh, the woe the soldiers face is,
Monday, Sunday, ruddy, muddy, boundless
bogs of jam.

WEEPIN' WILLIE.

Whey our trooper hit wide water every
heart was yearin' back
To the little 'ouse at Coogee or a hut at Bar-
renjack.
She was 'ookin' up to spike the stars, or rootin'



in the wave,
An' me liver turned a hand spring with each
buck the beggar gave.
Then we pulls a sick 'n' silly smile 'n' tips a
saucy lid,
Crackin' hardy. Willie didn't. Willie
snivelled like a kid.

At Gallip' the steamer dumped us, 'n' we got
right down to work,
Whoopin' up the hill splendacious, playin'
tiggie with the Turk.
When the stinkin' Abdul hit us we curled
down upon a stone,
'N' we yelled for greater glory, crackin' 'ardy
on our own.
Not so Willie. He was cursin', cold ez death
'n' grey ez steel,
'N' the smallest thing that busted made the
little blighter squeal.

In the bitter day's that follered, spillin' life be-
side the sea,
We would fake a spry expression for the things
that had to be,
Always dressin' up the winder, crackin' 'ardy
though we felt
Fearful creepy in the whiskers, very cold be-
neath the belt.
But his jills would sniff 'n' shiver in the mother
of a fright,
'N' go blubberin' 'n' quakin' out to waller in
the fight.

In the West we liked the weather, 'n' we fat-
tened in the mud,
Crackin' 'ardy, stewed together, rats an'
slurry men 'n' blood.
Weepin' Willie wouldn't have it these



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was

pleasin' things abed,
'N' he shuddered in his shimmy if they passed
him with the dead.
When he cried about his mother, in a gentle
voice he'd tell
Them as dumb-well didn't like it they could go
to sudden 'ell.

There was nothin' sweet for Willie in a rough-
up in the wet;
But if all things scared him purple, not a thing
had stopped him yet.
If some chaps was wanted urgent special dirty
work to do
Willie went in with a shudder, but he alwiz
saw it through.
Oh, a busy little body was our Willie in a
crush!
Then he'd cry out in the night about the faces
in the slush.

Well they pinked him one fine mornin' with
a thumpin' 'unk iv shell;
Put it in 'n' all across him. What he was
you couldn't tell.
I saw him stitched 'n' mended where he
whimpered in his bed,
'N' he'd on'y lived because he was afraid to
die, he said.
Sez he "Struth, they're out there fightin',
trimmin' Boshes good 'n' smart,
While I'm bedded here 'n' 'elpless. It fair
breaks a feller's 'eart."

But he came again last Tuesday '-n' we go it
in a breath—
"London's big 'n' black 'n' noisy. It would
scare a bloke to death."
He's away now in the trenches, white 'n'
nervous, but, you bet,
Playin' lovely 'ands of poker with his busy



bay-o-net,
'Fraid of givin' 'n' of takin', 'fraid of gases,
'fraid of guns—
But a champion lightweight terror to the gor-
forsaken 'Uns!

BILLJIM

Down to it is Plugger Bill,
Lyin' crumpled, white 'n' still.
Me 'n' him
Chips in when the scrap begins,
Carin' nothin' for our skins,
Chi-iked as the 'Eavenly Twins-
Bill 'n' Jim.

They 'ave outed Bill at last,
Slugged me cobber hard 'n' fast.
It's a kill.
See the purple of his lip
'N' the red 'n' oozy drip!
Ends our great ole partnership-
Jim 'n' Bill

Mates we was when we was kids;
Camp, 'n' ship, 'n' Pyramids,
Him 'n' me
Hung together, 'n' we tore
Up the heights from Helles shore,
Bill a long 'arf head afore,
Fine to see!

Then it was we took a touch-
Simple puncture, nothin' much;
But we lay
'N' we stays the count, it seems,
In a sorter realm of dreams
Where the sun infernal gleams
Night 'n' day;

Boilin', fryin' achin', dumb,
Waitin' till the stretchers come,
Patiently.
I hangs on to 'arf a cup.
Which I wants ole Bill to sup.



Damn if he ain't savin' up
His for me!

When they come to lift my head
I am softly kiddin' dead,
For a game,
So's they'll first take on his gills.
Over, though, me scheme he spills-
Bli'me, this ole take-down Bill's
Done the same!



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But he isn't kiddin' now,
And it knocks me anyhow
 Seein' him.

We was both agreed before,
Though it got 'em by the score,
Two was goin' to beat this war-
 But 'n' Jim.

Mate o' mine, yiv stayed it through.
Hard luck, Bill-for me 'n' you
 Hard 'n' grim.
They have got me Cobber true,
But I'm stickin' tight ez glue....
Bill, there's one who'll plug for two-
 It is Jim!

THE CRUSADERS.

What price yer humble, Dicko Smith,
 in gaudy putties girt,
With sand-blight in his optics, and much
 leaner than he started,
Round the 'Oly Land cavorting in three-
 quarters of a shirt,
And imposin' on the natives ez one Dick
 the Lion 'Earted?

We are drivin' out the infidel, we're hittin'
 up the Turk,
Same ez Richard slung his right across the
 Saracen invader
In old days of which I'm readin'. Now
 we're gettin' in our work,
'N' what price me nibs, I ask yeh, ez a
 qualified Crusader!

'Ere I am, a thirsty Templar in the fields of
 Palestine,
Where that hefty little fighter, Bobby
 Sable, smit the heathen,
And where Richard Coor de Lion trimmed
 the Moslem good 'n' fine,



'N' he took the belt from Saladin, the
slickest Dago breathin'.

There's no plume upon me helmet, 'n' no red
cross on me chest,
'N' so fur they haven't dressed me in a
swanking load of metal;
We've no 'Oly Grail I know of, but we do
our little best
With a jamtin, 'n' a billy, 'n' a battered
ole mess kettle.

Quite a lot of guyver missin' from our brand
of chivalry;
We don't make a pert procession when
we're movin' up the forces;
We've no pretty, pawin' stallion, 'n' no
pennants flowin' free,
'N' no giddy, gaudy bedquilts make a
circus of the 'orses.

We 'most always slip the cattle 'n' we cut out
all the dog
When it fairly comes to buttin' into battle's
hectic fever,
Goin' forward on our wishbones, with our
noses in the bog,
'N' we 'eave a pot iv blazes at the cursed
unbeliever.

Fancy-dress them old Crusaders wore,
and alwiz kep' a band.
What we wear's so near to nothin' that it's
often 'ardly proper,
And we swings a tank iv iron scrap across
the 'Oly Land
From a dinkie gun we nipped ashore the
other side of Jopper.

We ain't ever very natty, for the climate here
is hot;
When it isn't liquid mud the dust is thicker
than the vermin.
Ten to one our bold Noureddin is some wad-
dlin' Turkish pot,
'N' the Saladin we're on to is a snortin'
red-eyed German.



But be'old the eighth Crusade, 'n' Dicko
Smith is in the van,
Dicko Coor de Lion from Carlton what
could teach King Dick a trifle,
For he'd bomb his Royal Jills from out his
baked-pertater can,
Or he'd pink him full of leakage with a
quaint repeatin' rifle.



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We have sunk our claws in Mizpah, and
Siloam is in view.
By my 'alidom from Agra we will send the
Faithful reelin'!
Those old-timers botched the contract, but we
mean to put it through.
Knights Templars from Balmain, the Port,
Monaro, Nhill, andl Ealin'.

We 'are wipin' up Jerus'lem; we were ready
with a hose
Spoutin' lead, a dandy cleaner that you bet
you can rely on;
And Moss Isaacs, Cohn, and Cohen, Moses,
Offelbloom 'n' those
Can all pack their bettin' bags, and come
right home again to Zion.

PEACE, BLESSED PEACE.

*Here in the flamin' thick of thick of things,
With Death across the way, 'n' traps
What little Fritz the German flings
Explodin' in yer lunch pe'aps,
It ain't all glory for a bloke',
It ain't all corfee 'ot and stoo,
Nor wavin' banners in the smoke,
Or practisin' the bay'net stroke—
We has our little troubles, too!*

Here's Trigger Ribb bin seein' red
'N' raisin' Cain because he had,
Back in the caverns iv his 'ead,
A 'oller tooth run ravin' mad.
Pore Trigger up 'n' down the trench
Was jiggin' like a blithered loan,
'N' every time she give a wrench
You orter seen the beggar blench,
You orter 'eard him play a toon.

The sullen shells was pawin' blind,
A-feelin' for us grim as sin,
While now 'n' then we'd likely find



A dizzy bomb come limpin' in.
But Trigger simply let 'er sizz.
He 'ardly begged to be excused.
This was no damn concern of his.
He twined a muffler round his phiz,
'N' fearful was the words he used.

Lest we be getting' cock-a-whoop
Ole 'Ans tries out his box of tricks.
His bullets all around the coop
Is peckin' like a million chicks.
But Trigger when they barks his snout
Don't sniff at it. He won't confess
They're on the earth—ignores the clout,
'N' makes the same old sung about
His brimmin' mug of bitterness.

They raided us there in the mud
One day afore the dead sun rose.
Me oath, the mess of stuff and blood
Would give a slaughterman the joes!
And when the scrap is past and done,
Where's Trigger Ribb? The noble youth
Has got his bay'net in a Hun,
While down his cheeks the salt tears run.
Sez he to me "Gorbli"—this tooth!"

A shell hoist Trigger in a tree.
We found him motherin' his jor.
"If this ache's goin' on," sez he,
"So 'elp me, it'll spoil the war!"
Five collared Trigger on his perch,
They wired his molar to a bough,
Then give the anguished one a lurch,
'N' down he pitches. From that birch
His riddled tooth is hangin' now.

This afternoon it's merry 'ell;
Grenades is comin' by the peck;
A big gun times us true 'n well,
And, oh! we gets it in the neck.
They lick out flames hat reach a mile,
The drip of lead will never cease.
But Trigger's pottin' all the while;
He sports a fond 'n' foolish smile-
"Thank Gord," he sez, "a bit of peace!"

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THE HAPPY GARDENERS.

We were storemen, clerks and packers on
an ammunition dump
Twice the size of Cootamundra, and the goods
we had to hump
They were bombs as big as water-butts, and
cartridges in tons,
Shells that looked like blessed gasmains, and
a line in traction-guns.

We had struck a warehouse dignity in dealing
with the stocks.
It was, "Sign here, Mr. Eddie!" "Clarkson,
forward to the socks!"
Our floor-walker was a major, with a nozzle
like a peach,
And a stutter in his Trilbies; and a limping
kind of speech.

We were off at eight to business, we were free
for lunch at one,
And we talked of new Spring fashions, and the
brisk trade being done.
After five we sought our dugouts lying snug
beneath the hill,
Each with hollyhocks before it and geraniums
on the sill.

Singing "Home, Sweet home," we swept,
and scrubbed, and dusted up the place,
Then smoked out on the doorstep in the twi-
light's tender grace.
After which with spade and rake we sought
our special garden plot,
And we 'tended to the cabbage and the shrink-
ing young shallot.

So long lived we unmolested that this seemed
indeed "the life."
Set apart from mirk and worry and the inci-
dence of strife;
And we trimmed our Kitchen Eden, swapping



vegetable lore,
While the whole demented world beside was
muddled up with war.

There was little talk of Boches and of bloody
battle scenes,
But a deal about Bill's spuds and Billy
Carkeek's butter-beans;
Porky specialised on onion and he had a sort
of gift
For a cabbage plump and tender that it took
two men to lift.

In the pleasant Sabbath morning, when the
sun lit on our "street,"
And illumed the happy dugout with effulgence
kind and sweet,
It was fine to see us forking, raking, picking
off the bugs,
Treading flat the snails and woodlice and
demolishing the slugs.

Then one day old Fritz got going. He had
a hint of us,
And the shell the blighter posted was as roomy
as a 'bus;
He was groping round the dump, and kind of
pecking after it;
When he plugged the hill the world heeled up,
the dome of heaven split.

Then, O Gott and consternation! Swooped a
shell a and stuck her nose
In Carkeek's beans. Those beans came up!
A cry of grief arose!
As we watched them—plunk! another shell
cut loose, and everywhere
Flew the spuds of Billy Murphy. There were
turnips in the air.

Bill! she tore a quarter-acre from the land-
scape. With it burst
Tommy's carrots, and we watched them, and
in whispers prayed and cursed.
Then a wail of anguish 'scaped us. Boomed
in Porky's cabbage plot

A detestable concussion. Porky's cabbages
were not!



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There the Breaking strain was reached, for
Porky fetched an awful cry,
And he rushed away and armed himself.
With loathing in his eye,
Up and over went the hero. He was savage
Through and through,
And he tore across the distance like a mad-
dened kangaroo.

They had left a woeful sight indeed—frail cab-
bages all rent,
Turnips mangled, little carrots all in one red
burial blent,
Parsnips ruined, lettuce shattered, torn and
wilted beet and bean,
And a black and grinning gap where once our
garden flourished green.

.....
Five and fifty hours had passed when came a
German in his shirt.
On his back he carried Porky black with
blood, and smoke and dirt.
“I sniped six of ’em,” said Porky, “an’ me
pris’ner here,” he sez-
“I done in the crooel swine what strafed me
helpless cabba-ges.”

THE GERM

I took to khaki at a word,
And fashioned dreams of wonder.
I rode the great sea like a bird,
Chock full of blood and thunder.
I saw myself upon the field
Of battle, framed in glory,
Compelling stubborn foes to yield
As captives to my sword and shield—
This is another story.

We sat about in sun and sand,
We broke old Cairo’s images,
Met here and there a swarthy band



In little, friendly scrimmages,
And here it is I start to kid
No Moslem born can hit me.
The Germ then that had long laid hid
Came out of Pharaoh's pyramid,
And covertly he bit me.

For some few days I wore an air
Of pensive introspection,
And then I curled down anywhere.
They whispered of infection,
And hoist me on two sticks as though
I bore the leper's label,
And took me where, all in a row
Of tiny beds, two score or so
Were raising second Babel;

But no man talked to any one.
And no bloke knew another.
This soldier raved about his gun,
And that one of his mother.
They were the victims of the Germ,
The imp that Satan pricks in,
First cousin to the Coffin Worm,
Whose uncomputed legions squirm
Some foul, atomic Styx in.

The Germ rides with the plunging shell,
Or on the belts that fret you,
Or in a speck of dust may well
One thousand years to get you;
Well ambushed in a tunic fold
He waits his special mission,
And never lad so big and bold
But turns to water in his hold
And dribbles to perdition.

Where is war's pomp and circumstance,
The gauds in which we prank it?
Germ ends for us our fine romance,
Wrapped in a dingy blanket.
We set out braggartly in mirth,
World's bravest men and tallest,
To do the mightiest thing on earth,
And here we're lying, nothing worth,
Succumbent to the smallest!



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JOEY'S JOB.

In days before the trouble Jo was rated as
a slob.
He chose to sit in hourly expectation of a job.
He'd loop hisself upon a post, for seldom
friends had he,
A gift of patient waitin' his distinctif quality.
He'd linger in a doorway, or he'd loiter on the
grass,
Edgin' modestly aside to let the fleetin'
moments pass.

Jo' begged a bob from mother, but more often
got a clout,
And settled down with cigarettes to smoke the
devil out.
The one consistent member of the Never
Trouble Club,
He put a satin finish on the frontage of the
pub.
His shoulder-blades were pokin' out from
polishin' the pine;
But if a job ran at him Joey's footwork was
divine.

Jo strayed in at the cobbler's door, but, scoffed
at as a fool,
He found the conversation too exhaustin' as
a rule;
Or, canted on the smithy coke, he'd hoist his
feet and yawn,
His boots slid up his shinbones, and his pants
displayin' brawn:
And if the copper chanced along 'twas beauty-
ful to see
Joe wear away and made hisself a fadest
memory.

Then came the universal nark. The Kaiser
let her rip.
They cleared the ring. The scrap was for the
whole world's championship.



Jo Brown was takin' notice, lurkin' shy be-
neath his hat,
And every day he crept to see the drillin' on
the flat.
He waited, watchin' from the furze the blokes
in butcher's blue,
For the burst of inspiration that would tell him
what to do.

He couldn't lean, he couldn't lie. He yelled
out in the night.
Jo understood—he'd all these years been
spoilin' for a fight!
Right into things he flung himself. He
took his kit and gun,
Mooched gladly in the dust, or roasted gaily
in the sun.
"Gorstruth," he said, with shining eyes, "it
means a frightful war,
'N' now I know this is the thing that Heaven
meant me for."

Jo went away a corporal and fought again the
Turk,
And like a duck to water Joey cottoned to the
work.
If anythin' was doin' it would presently come
out
That Joseph Brown from Booragool was there
or thereabout.
He got a batch of medals, and a glorious
renown
Attached all of a sudden to the name of
Sergeant Brown.

Then people talked of Joey as the dearest
friend they had;
They were chummy with his uncles, or ac-
quainted with his dad.
Joe goes to France, and presently he figure as
the best
Two-handed all-in fighter in the armies of the
West,
And men of every age at home and high and
low degree,
We gather now, once went to school with
Sergeant Brown, V.C.

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Then Hayes and Jo, in Flanders met, and very
proud was Hayes
To shake a townsman by the hand, and sing
the hero's praise,
"Oh, yes," says Jo, "I'm doin' well, 'n' yet
I might do more.
If I was in a hurry, mate, to finish up this war
I'd lay out every Fritz on earth, but, strike me,
what a yob
A man would be to work himself out of a
flamnin' job!"

Now Jo's a swell lieutenant, and he's keepin'
up the pace.
Ha "Record" says Lieutenant Brown's an
honor to the place.
The town gets special mention every time he
scores. We bet
If peace don't mess his chances up, he'll be
Field-Marshal yet.
Dad, mother and the uncles Brown and all our
people know
That Providence began this war to find a grip
for Jo!

THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME.

I said: "I leave my bit of land-
In khaki they've entwined me,
I go abroad to lend a hand."
Said she: "My love, I understand.
I will be true, and though we part
A thousand years you hold my heart"-
The girl I left behind me.

I went away to fight the Huns-
No coward thought could bind me,
I sizzled n the tropic suns,
I faced the bayonets and the guns.
And when in daring deeds I shone
One little woman spurred me on-
The girl I left behind me.



Out there, in grim Gallipoli.

Hard going they assigned me,
I pricked the Turk up from the sea;
I riddled him, he punctured me;
And, bleeding in my rags, I said:
"She'll meet me somewhere if I'm dead-
The girl I left behind me.

In France we broke the German's face-
They tried with gas to blind me.
In mud we bogged from front to base,
And dirt was ours, but not disgrace.
They carved me till I couldn't stand.
Said I "Now for the Lodden, and
The girl I left behind me.

I came ashore, and struck the track;
For dust you scarce could find me.
The dear girl gave no welcome back-
Shed changed her names and state, alack!
"You've been a time, I must say, Ned,
In finishing your old war." Said
The girl I left behind me.

I flung a song up to the skies.
For battles gods designed me.
I think of Fifi's laughing eyes,
And Nami, dusk, but sweet and wise,
And chortle in my heart to find
How very far I've left behind-
The girl I left behind me

HOW HERMAN WON THE CROSS

Once in a blue eternity they gave us
dabs of rum
To close the seams 'n' keep the flume in
liquor-tight condition;
But, soft 'n' sentimental, when the long, cold
evenin's come,
I'd dream me nibs was dronking' to the height
of his ambition,
With rights of suction over all the breweries
there are,
Where barrels squat, like Brahma gods, in
Mother Hardy's bar.



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I had me fit of longin' on the night the Germans came,
All breathin' lioke a gas attack. The air
was halcholic.
We smelt 'em in the darkness, 'n' our rage
went up in flame.
It was envy, squealin' envy, put the ginger
in the frolic.
We shot 'em full of spelter, then went over it
to spite
The swines what drunk the liquor that was
ours by common right.

"If this ain't stopped, 'n' quick," sez we,
"there won't be left a drop
To celebrate the vict'ry when we capture
their position."
I'm prowlin' blind, when sharp there comes a
fond, familiar plop-
Swung round a post, a German in a pitiful
condition
Looms over me. He's sprung a cork, and
shales a flask on high,
'N' sings of beer that touchin' it would make
a butcher cry.

Sez he: "Berloffed kamarid, you haf some
drinks mit you."
I meant to spike him where he waved,
but altered me intention.
'N' "If you put it thus," sez I, "I don't
care if I do."
We had a drink together. There's a tem-
por'y suspension
Of hostilities to sample contraband 'n' other
stuff
In the enemy's possession. Which I think
he's had enough.

That Hun had thirty pockets, 'n' he'd stowed
a flask in each,
'N' presently I'm thinkin' I could love him
like a brother.
He's talkin' fond 'n' friendly in outlandish



parts of speech.
"You're prisoner of war," I sez; 'n' then
we had another.
Ten flasks he pours into his hat, 'n' fills it
to the brim,
'N' weeps 'n' sez his frau she will be waitin'
up for him.

We drink each other's health, 'n' know no
henmity nor fear.
I see I've got to pinch him, but he's out to
do his div. in,
'N' don't care if he don't go home till day-
light doth appear.
Sez he: "I pud you home to bed upside dot
'ouse you live in."
He shakes his finger in me eye: "Mein friendt,
you're preddy trunk!"
Then arm in arm through No Man's land we
does a social bunk.

There's Fear afoot. Comes more than once
the glug of sudden death.
We're rockin' fine 'n' careless where the
rifle fire is breakin',
'N' singin' most uproar'ous, in the bomb's
disgustin' breath,
Of girls, 'n' drink, 'n' cheerful spree, 'n'
'Herman thinks he's takin'
A cobber home to somewhere in an subbub
damp 'n' dim,
Whereas I know fer certain it is me is takin'
him.

Somehow, sometime, I lands him where he's
safely put to bed.
I wake nex' day, 'n' holy smoke! I'm pri-
soner with the German.
Me mouth is like an ashpan, there's hot fish-
bolts in me head,
'N' through the barb-wire peerin' is me
foreign cobber 'Erman.
"Ve capdure each lasd nighd," sez he "you
home haf bring me, boss."
For bravery in takin' me, he got the Iron
Cross!

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WHEN TOMMY CAME MARCHING HOME.

Devine came back the other day.
We'd planned a great home-comin'.
No long trombone we had to play,
No fine, heroic drummin'.
With two sticks and a milk-can Borne
Put up a martial clatter,
While Carter blew a bullock-horn
Says Tom Devine, with healthy scorn;
"Gorstruth! what is the matter?"

We set three colored petticoats
From Baker's chimneys blowin'
('Tis not the bravest flag that floats,
Yet 'twas the finest goin');
We cheered our hero all we knew,
No song of praise neglectin',
To show our pride as he limped through
He merely spat and snorted, "Who
"The deuce are yous expectin'?"

They lured him to my shop somehow,
And sued for news of battle.
Says Tom: "Who rides the mail track now?
Who herdin' Stringer's cattle?"
A dint the Turk put in his head.
He covers with a ringlet.
He'd won a medal, so we read.
"I might 'ave 'ad it pinched," he said-
"I've sewn it in my singlet!"

Says Cole "But, 'struth, you must 'ave seen
A fearful swag of scrappin'."
And Tom agrees "Where men are keen
That's pretty sure to 'appen.
One night a little bloke from Hay
Who plugged a Pentridge warder
Got such a doin' that at day,
Amazed, they ticked him for a stray
Distinguished Service Order.



“Then Sydney Bob was rather vexed
With Green—who’d pinched his braces,
That was ‘continued in our next’
In half a score of places.
McCubbin threw his grub at Lea
(You know how sticky stew is);
They fought till neither man could see.
You talk of fight—Gorstrike me, we
Saw stacks of it at Suez!”

HELLO, SOLDIER!

Back again ‘n’ nothin’ missin’ barrin’
arf a hand,
Where an Abdul bit me, chokin’ in the Holy
Land.
‘Struth, they got some dirty fighters in the
Moslem pack,
Bull-nosed slugs their sneakin’ snipers spat
ters in yer back
Blows a gapin’ sort iv pit in
What a helephant could sit in.
Bounced their bullets, if yeh please,
Like the ‘oppers in a cheese,
Off me rubber pelt in droves,
Moppin’ up the other coves.
So here’s me once more at large in
Bay-street, Port, a bloomin’ Sargin’.
“Cri, it jumbo.” “Have a beer.”
“Wot-o, Anzac; you’re a dear.”

Back once more on Moley’s corner, loafin’ like
a dook;
Back on Bourke, me livin’ image, not a
slinkin’ spook;
Solid ez the day I started, medals on me
chest,
Switchin’ with me pert melacca, swankin’
with the best
Where the little wimmen’s flowin’,
With their veils ‘n’ ribbons blowin’-
See their eyes of bloo ‘n’ brown
Butterflyin’ ‘bout the town!
Back at ‘ome-oh, ‘struth, it’s good!
Long, cold lagers from the wood,
Ev’ry cobber jumpin’ at you,

Strangers duckin' in to bat you-
"Good ole Jumbo, how're you?"
"Ello, soldier, howja do?"

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Back at Grillo's where the nigger googs his
whitey eyes,
Plucks his black ole greasy banjo while the
cod-steak fries;
Fish 'n' chips, a pint iv local, and the tidy
girl
Dancin' glad attendance on yeh 'zif yeh was
an earl;
Trailin' round the blazin' city,
Feelin' all content 'n' pretty,
Where the smart procession goes,
Prinked 'n' polished to the shows,
One among the happy drive-
'Sworth the world to be alive!
Dames ez smilin' ez a mother,
Ev'ry man ver fav'rit brother:
"Ello, Jumbo, how is it?"
"Arr there, soldier! Good 'n' fit?"

Takin' hozone at St. Kilder's good enough
for me,
Seein' Summer and the star-blink simmer in
the sea;
Cantin' up me bloomin' cady, toyin' with a
cig.,
Blowin' out me pout a little, chattin' wide 'n'
big
When there's skirt around to skite to.
Say, 'oo has a better right to?
Done me bit 'n' done it well,
Got the tag iv plate to tell;
Square Gallipoli survivor,
With a touch iv Colonel's guyver.
"Sargin' Jumbo, good ole son!"
"Soldier, soldier, you're the one!"

Back again, a wounded hero, moochin' up 'n'
down,
Feelin' 'stthough I'd got a fond arf-Nelson on
the town;
Never was so gay, so 'elp me, never felt so
kind;
Fresh from 'ell a paradise ain't very hard to
find.



After filth, 'n' flies, 'n' slaughter
Fat brown babies in the water,
Singin' people on the sand
Makes a boshter Happy Land!
War what toughened hone 'n' hide
Turned a feller soft inside!
Great it is, the 'earty greetin's,
Friendly digs, 'n' cheerful meetin's
"Ello, Jumbo, howja do?"
"Soldier, soldier, how're you?"

THE MORALIST.

Three other soldier blokes 'n' me packed
'ome from foreign lands;
Bit into each the God of Battles' everlastin'
brands.
They limped in time, 'n' coughed in tune, 'n'
one was short an ear,
'N' one was short a tier of ribs 'n' all was
short of beer.
I speaks up like a temp'rance gent,
But ever since the sky was bent
The thirst of man 'as never yet bin squenched
with argument.

Bill's skull was welded all across, Jim 'ad an
eye in soak,
Sam 'obbled on a patent leg, 'n' every man
was broke;
They sang a song of "Mother" with their faces
titled up.
Says Bill-o: "'Ere's yer 'eroes, sling the
bloomin' votive cup!
We got no beer, the soup was bad-
Now oo will stand the soldier lad
The swag of honest liquor that for years he
hasn't 'ad?"

Sez I: "Respeck yer uniform! Remember
oo you are!"
They'd pinched a wicker barrer, 'arf a pram
'n' 'arf a car.
In this ole Bill-o nestled 'neath a blanket, on
his face
A someone's darlin' sorter look, a touch iv



boy'ood's grace.

The gentle ladies stopped to 'ear,

'N' dropped a symperthetic tear,

A dollar or a deener for the pore hafflict
dear.



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The others trucked the wounded to a hentrance
up a lane.

I sez: "Sich conduct's shameful!" Bill-o
took to ease his pain

One long 'un and another. The conductor
picked his brand;

The gripman lent his countenance to wot he
'ad in 'and.

And when they moved their stand 'twas
Sam

Lay pale 'n' peaceful in the pram,
'N' twenty flappers stroked his paw, 'n' said
he was a lamb.

The gathered in the tokens and they bloood
'em as above,

While Jim-o done the hinvalid 'oom Sammy
had to shove.

Sez I: "No noble 'eroes what's bin fightin'
for their king

Should smirch theirselves by doin' this dis-
'onerable thing."

But fine old gents 'n' donahs prim

They stopped 'n' slid the beans to Jim.

You betcher life I let 'im hear just what I
though of 'im.

Nine, g.m. at St. Kilder, saw the finish of the
prowl.

Each 'ad his full-'n'-plentv, and was blowin'
in the tow'l.

As neither bloke cud stand alone, they leaned
'n' argufied

Which was the patient sufferer oo's turn it was
to ride.

Each 'eld a san'wich and a can.

Sez I: "This shouldn't 'ave began-

'Tain't conduct wot it worthy of a soldier and
a man."

I cud 'a' cried with injured pride. Afore a
push the three

Got scrappin', vague 'n' foolish, which the
cripple boy should be.



Sam slips his scientific leg, 'n' flings it in the
drain-
"I'll auto 'ome," he sez, "or never see me
'ome again."
But I am thinkin' 'ard oo he
Tucked 'elpiess in the pram might be.
Comes sudden reckerlection. Great Gohan-
ners, it is me!

REPAIRED

Hauled I was from out the tip
Fritz made with his demonstration,
All broke up, a fractured hip
In me Darby Kell a rip
Settn' up a cool sensation
Like excessive ventilation

One 'and cluttered up a treat-
On me oath you wouldn't know it
From a 'andsome plate of meat.
They had sorter pied me feet,
And a bullet of the foe hit
Where no decent bloke could show it.

'Arf a year they've botched me now;
Ev'ry scientific schemer
In the cor' has faked me prow,
Soled 'n' heeled a bloke somehow-
Gawd, the last one was a screamer.
Wirin' up me flamin' femur!

Comes a guy and pipes you square,
Gogglin' at you through his glasses,
Swings you in the barber's chair,
Tilts you this end up with care,
Lets you have a whiff of gasses
Chattin' off-hand with the lasses.

Then he slices clean 'n' swift,
Like a cobbler cuts his leather,
Gives the splintered knob a lift-
S'elp me tater, it's a gift
How they glues you all together,
Sayin' it's bin nicer weather!



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Surgeon wipes his 'ands, a verse
Chortle softly as he pitches
Probes and sponges to the nurse,
Thinks the lunch might have bin worse;
Close your little gap he hitches,
Whistlin' as he jabs the stitches.

I'm caught in with fiddle-strings,
Stuck about with bits 'n' patches,
Fixed with ligatures 'n' springs,
Lath 'n' plastered, swung in slings
Skewered with little wooden matches,
Hung with hinges, knobs 'n' latches.

Till I lay behind me screen,
Serious 'n' sober one day,
Satisfied 'n' all serene,
'Arf a man 'n' 'arf machine
What they winds up ev'ry Monday
'N' it tilts all ways by Sunday.

'Ome again I'll come, a neat,
Semi-autymatic loafer,
Number up, 'n' all complete,
Creakin' round on Collins Street,
With a licence (which I'll owe for)
My own car and my own shofer!

OUT OF KHAKI.

I *slung* me khaki suit to-day.
Civilian now front heel to chin
I 'op round on a single shin;
At home in peace I'm bound to stay.
'N' so they've took me duds away.
It 'urt like strippin' off me skin!

I put it on three years ago,
The ole brown rig. There wasn't then
A prouder chicken in the pen.
Jist twenty turned, me nibs you'd know
For how I give me chest a throw,
A man among the best of men.



Me little no the touch I give,
Me chin's ez solid ez a rock,
'N' level with the Town 'All clock,
A five-inch grin across me chiv.
"Lor' love us, this is how to live,"
Sez I, 'n' felt I owned the Block.

Glad eyes was ever on the lurk,
'N' little 'earts was thumpin' warm
For nippers trainin' with the swarm
To swat ole Kaiser Bill, or work
A toe-hold on the heathen Turk.
Fair dink, I loved the uniform!

I soused mine in the brine that day
When Tophet spilt, 'n' in the roar
Of shells that split the sea 'n' tore
Our boats to chips, we broke any
Up through the pelt of leaden spray,
'N' got our first real taste of war.

They shot me tunic all to rags;
Then in the perpendic'lar spree
Me trousers wore off to the knee.
The right-abouts of many bags
Was ground off in the dust 'n' crags
A-sittin' in Gallipoli.

I wore the khaki on the Somme-
Most time 'twas jist a coat of mud;
I once come through the battle scud
Stripped mother-naked by a bomb;
'N' once it' took its color from
Me own 'n' one good cobber's blood.

They cheered the khaki through the street
When we come home with pipers gay,
But now I'm jist a bloke in grey.
Harf-lost, lob-sided, incomplete,
It's nothin' but me spook you'll meet,
Ghost-walkin' in the light o' day.

THE SINGLE-HANDED TEAM



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We're more than partners, Ned 'n' me,
Two sections permanently righted.
Yiv seen us on the mooch, maybe,
Like remnants lovin'ly united.
Ned's only got one stump, the left;
By 'appy chance I've got its brother,
Of his two dukes he's been bereft;
My left was mauled, 'n' had to go,
It fortunitly 'appens though,
I kept the other.

Ned lost one ear, the left, 'n' struth,
He dropped the correspondin' weeper.
A Hun he crooled me lovely youth
By bombin' out me right 'and peeper.
He done a guy too with me ear,
The right, 'n' now I dunno whether
'Twas Fate's intention, butt it's clear
When trimmed each as the other's mate
'Twas up to us two, soon or late,
To get together.

'Board ship there's me like arf a peach,
'N' Ned's the other arf, but soon it
Strikes' Bill Carkeek that side by each
We makes a satisfact'rv unit.
A 'andy cobber on the ship
Fakes up for us a set of clutches
That damps us firmly hip to hip.
In seven minutes we can peg
The mile out on a timber leg
'N' two steel crutches.

We now go halves, like Si'mese twins,
'N' as a team I hold we're bosker—
The blighter on the street that grins
Has got to deal with Edwin-Oscar.
At balls we two-step, waltz, 'n' swing,
'N' proppin' walls no one has seen us.
When at the bar I never ring
The double on ole Ned. For both
One hand must serve, 'n', on me oath,
It's fair between us.



We jolt one knife 'n' fork, 'n' find
One horse enough for both to ride on,
And neither feller rides behind.
Some sez we put a pile of side on.
Well, where's the single-handed brace
Will take us on? We'll put the peg in,
Train fine, 'n' jump, or box, or race,
Or wrestle them; 'n' more than that
To clinch a match, so 'elp me cat,
We'll throw a leg in!

He's five feet eight, I'm little less;
He's Roman, I'm a sort of Proddy;
But no sectarian bitterness
Will disunite this sec'lar body—
We're hitched for good, we're two in one.
Our taste's the same, from togs to tippie.
But, straight, it makes me sad, ole son,
To think if he should croak or me,
The pore bloke what is left might be
A bloomin' cripple.

BATTLE PASSES

A *quaint* old gabled cottage sleeps be-
tween the raving hills.
To right and left are livid strife, but on the
deep, wide sills
The purple pot-flowers swell and glow, and
o'er the walls and eaves
Prinked creeper steals caressing hands, the
poplar drips its leaves.
Within the garden hot and sweet
Fair form and woven color meet,
While down the clear, cool stones, 'tween
banks with branch and blossom gay,
A little, bridged, blind rivulet goes touching
out its way.



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Peace lingers hidden from the knife, the tear-
ing blinding shell,
Where falls the spattered sunlight on a lichen-
covered well.
No voice is here, no fall of feet, no smoke lifts
cool and grey,
But on the granite stoop a cat blinks vaguely
at the day.
From hill to hill across the vale
Storms man's terrific iron gale;
The cot roof on a brooding dove recks not the
distant gun.
A brown hen scolds her chickens chasing
midges in the sun.

Now down the eastward slope they come.
No call of life, no beat of drum,
But stealthily, and in the green,
Low hid, with rifle and machine,
Spit hate and death; and red blood flows
To shame the whiteness of the rose.

Crack followes crash; the bestial roar
Of gastly and insensate war
Breaks on the cot. A rending stoke,
The red roof springs, and in the smoke
And spume of shells the riven walls
Pile where the splintered elm-tree spawls.

From westward, streaming down hill,
Shot-ravaged, thinned, but urgent still,
The brown, fierce, blooded Anzacs sweep,
And Hell leaps a up. The lilies weep
Strange crimson tears. Tight-lipped and mute,
The grim, gaunt soldiers stab and shoot.

It passes. Frantic, fleeing death,
Wild-eyed, foam-flecked and every breath
A labored agony, like deer
That feel the hounds' keen teeth, appear
The Prussian men, and, wild to slay
The hunters press upon their prey.



Cries fade and fitful shots die down. The
Tumbled ruin now
Smoke faintly in the summer light, and lifts
The trodden bough.
A sigh stirs in the trampled green, and held
And tainted red
The rill creeps o'er a dead man's face and
steals along its bed.
One deep among the lilacs thrown
Shock all the stillness with a moan.
Peace like the snowflake lights again where
utter silence lies,
And softly with white finger-tips she seals a
soldier eyes.

THE LETTERS OF THE DEAD.

A letter came from Dick to-day;
A greeting glad he sends to me.
He tells of one more bloody fray—
Of how with bomb and rifle they
Have put their mark for all to see
Across rock-ribbed Gallipoli.

"How are you doing? Hope all's well,
I in great nick, and like the work.
Though there may be a brimstone smell,
And other pungent hints of Hell,
Not Satan's self can make us shirk
Our task of hitting up the Turk.

"You bet old Slacks is not half bad
He knows his business in a scrim.
He gets cold steel, or we are glad
To stop him with a bullet, lad.
Or sling a bomb his hair to trim;
But, straight, we throw no mud at him.

"He fights and falls, and comes again,
And knocks our charging lines about.
He's game at heart, and tough in grain,
And canters through the leaded rain,
Chock full of mettle—not a doubt
'T will do us proud to put him out.



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"But that's our job; to see it through
We've made our minds up, come what may,
This noon we had our work to do.
The shells were dropping two by two;
We fairly felt their bullets play
Among our hair for half a day.

"One clipped my ear, a red-hot kiss,
Another beggar chipped my shin.
They pass you with a vicious hiss
That makes you duck; but, hit or miss,
It isn't in the Sultan's skin
To shift Australia's cheerful grin.

"My oath, old man, though we were prone
We didn't take it lying down.
I got a dozen on my own—
All dread of killing now is flown;
It is the game, and, hard and brown,
We're wading in for freedom's crown.

"Big guns are booming as I write,
A lad is singing 'Dolly Grey,'
The shells are skipping in the night,
And, square and all, I feeling right
For, whisper, Ned, the fellows say
I did a ripping thing to-day.

"Soon homeward tramping with the band,
All notched a bit, and with the prize
Of glory for our native land,
I'll see my little sweetheart stand
And smile, her smile, so sweet and wise—
With proud tears shining in her eyes.

"Geewhiz! What price your humble when
Triumphant from the last attack,
We face a Melbourne crowd again,
Tough, happy, battle-proven men,
And while the cheer-stormed heavens crack
I bring the tattered colors back!"

. . .

A mist is o'er the written line
Whence martial ardor seems to flow;



A dull ache holds this heart of mine—
Poor boy, he had a vision fine;
But grave dust clouds the royal glow;
He died in action weeks ago!

He was my friend—I may not weep.
My soul goes out to Him who bled;
I pray for Christ's compassion deep
On mothers, lovers—all who keep
The woeful vigil, having read
The joyous letters of the dead.

BULLETS

As bullets come to us they're thin,
They're angular, or smooth and fat,
Some spiral are, and gimlet in,
And some are sharp, and others flat.
The slim one pink you clean and neat,
The flat ones bat a solid blow
Much as a camel throws his feet,
And leave you beastly incomplete.
If lucky you don't know it through.

The flitting bullets flow and flock;
They twitter as they pass;
They're picking at the solid rock,
They're rooting in the grass.
A tiny ballet swiftly throws
Its gossamer of rust,
Brown fairies on their little toes
A-dancing in the dust.

You cower down when first they come
With snaky whispers at your ear;
And when like swarming bees they hum
You know the tinkling chill of fear.
A whining thing will pluck your heel,
A whirring insect sting your shin;
You shrink to half your size, and feel
The ripples o'er your body seal-
'Tis terror walking in your skin!



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The bullets pelt like winter hail,
The whistle and they sigh,
They shrill like cordage in a gale,
Like mewling kittens cry;
They hiss and spit, they purring come;
Or, silent all a span,
They rap, as on a slackened drum,
The dab that kills a man.

Rage takes you next. All hot your face
The bitter void, and curses leap
From pincered teeth. The wide, still space
Whence all these leaden devil's sweep
Is Tophet. Fiends by day and night
Are groping for your heart to sate
In blood their diabolic spite.
You shoot in idiot delight,
Each winging slug a hymn of hate.

The futile bullets scratch and go,
They chortle and the coo.
I laugh my scorn, for now I know
The thing they cannot do.
They flit like midges in the sun,
But howso thick they be
What matter, since there is not one
That God has marked for me!

An Eastern old philosophy
Come home at length and passion stills-
The thing will be that is to be,
And all must come as Heaven wills.
Where in the swelter and the flame
The new, hot, shining bullets drip;
One in the many has an aim,
Inwove a visage and a name-
No man may give his fate the slip!

The bullets thrill along the breeze,
They drum upon the bags,
They tweak your ear, your hair they tease,
And peck your sleeve to rags.
Their voices may no more annoy-
I chortle at the call:



The bullet that is mine, my boy,
I shall not hear at all!

The war's a flutter very like
The tickets that we took from Tatt.
Quite possibly I'll make a strike;
The odds are all opposed to that.
Behind the dawn the Furies sway
The mighty globe from which to get
Those bullets which throughout the day
Will winners be to break or slay.
I have not struck a starter yet

The busy bullets rise and flock;
They whistle as they pass;
They're chipping at the solid rock,
They're skipping in the grass.
Out there the tiny dancers throw
Their sober skirts of rust,
Brown flitting figures tipping toe
Along the golden dust.

UNREDEEMED.

I saw the Christ down from His cross,
A tragic man lean-limbed and tall,
But weighed with suffering and loss.
His back was to a broken wall,
And out upon the tameless world
Was fixed His gaze His piercing eye
Beheld the towns to ruin hurled,
And saw the storm of death pass by.

Two thousand years it was since first
He offered to the race of men
His sovran boon, As one accurst
They nailed Him to the jibbet then,
And while they mocked Him for their mirth
He smiled, and from the hill of pain
To all the hating tribes of earth
Held forth His wondrous gift again.



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To-day the thorns were on His brow,
His grief was deeper than before.
From ravaged field and city now
Arose the screams and reek of war.
The black smoke parted. Through the rift
God's sun fell on the bloody lands.
Christ wept, for still His priceless gift
He held within His wounded hands.

THE LIVING PICTURE

He rode along one splendid noon,
When all the hills were lit with Spring,
And through the bushland throbbed a croon
Of every living, hopeful thing.

Between his teeth a rose he bore
As white as milk, and passing there
He tossed it with a laugh. I wore
It as it fell among my hair.

No day a-drip with golden rain,
No heat with drench of wattle scent
Can touch the heart of me again
But with that young, sweet wonder blent.

We wed upon a gusty day,
When baffled fury whipped the sea;
And now I love the swift, wet play
Of wind and rain besetting me.

I took white roses in my hand,
A white rose on my forehead shone,
For we had come to understand
White roses bloomed for us alone.

When scarce a year had gone he sped
To fight the wars. With eyes grown grim
He kissed my lips, and whispering said:
"The world we must keep sweet for him!"

He wrote of war, the soldier's life.
"Tis hard, my dearest, but be brave.



I did not make my love my wife
To be the mother of a slave!"

My babe was born a boy. He had
His father's eyes, his smile, his hair,
And, oh, my soul was brimming glad—
It seemed his father's self was there!

But now came one who bade me still
In holy Heaven put my trust.
They'd laid my love beneath the hill,
And sealed his eyes with timeless dust.

Against my breast the babe I drew,
With strength from him to stay my fears.
I fought my fight the long days through;
He laughed and dabbled in my tears.

From my poor heart, at which it fed
With tiger teeth, I thrust despair,
And faced a world with shadow spread
And only echoes in the air.

The winter waned. One eve I went,
Led by a kindly hand to see
In moving scenes the churches rent,
The tumbled hill, the blasted lee.

Of soldiers resting by the road,
Who smoked and drowsed, a muddy rout,
One sprang alert, and forward strode,
With eager eyes to seek us out.

His fingers held a rose. He threw
The flower, and waved his cap. In me
A frenzy of assurance grew,
For, O dear God, 'twas he! 'twas he!

I called aloud. Aloft my child
I held, and nearer yet he came;
And when he understood and smiled,
My baby lisped his father's name.

They say I fell like something dead,
But when I woke to morning's glow
My boy sat by me on the bed,
And in his hand a rose of snow!

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THE IMMORTAL STRAIN.

"Late Midshipman John Travers (Chester), aged 16 years. He was mortally wounded early in the action, yet he remained alone in a most exposed post awaiting orders, with his gun's crew dead all round him."

We told old stories one by one,
Brave tales of men who toyed with death,
Of wondrous deeds of valor done
In days of bold Elizabeth.
"Alas! our British stock," said we,
"Is not now what it used to be."

We read of Drake's great sailors, or
Of fighting men that Nelson led,
Who steered the walls of oak to war.
"These were our finest souls," we said.
"Their fame is on the ocean writ,
Nor time, nor storm may cancel it."

"The mariners of England then
Were lords of battle and of breeze.
The were, indeed the wondrous men
Who won for us the shoreless seas,
Who took old Neptune's ruling brand
And set it in Britannia's hand."

"But now," we sighed, "the blood is pale,
We're little people of the street,
And dare not front the shrilling gale.
The sons of England are effete,
Of shorter limb and smaller mould,
Mere pigmies by the men of old."

Then came the vibrant bugle note.
None cowered at the high alarm,
The steady fleets were still afloat,
And England saw her soldiers arm,
And readily, with sober grace.
The close-set ranks swung into place.

On sea and shore they fought again,
And storied heroes came to life,



Once more were added to the slain.
Once more found glory in the strife;
Again her yeoman sons arose;
A wall 'tween Britain and her foes.

The eager lads, with laughing lips
And souls elate, where oceans roar,
Or planes the eagle's flight eclipse,
Give all for her, and come no more;
Or where death thunders down the sky
Beside their silent guns they lie;

This boy who, while the iron rains
With seething riot whip the flood,
Fights on, till in his heart remains
No single drop of English blood,
Avers the British strain sublime,
Outliving Death, outlasting Time!

THE UNBORN

I see grim War, a bestial thing,
with swinish tusks to tear;
Upon his back the vampires cling,
Thin vipers twine among his hair,
The tiger's greed is in his jowl,
His eye is red with bloody tears,
And every obscene beast and fowl
From out his leprous visage leers.
In glowing pride fell fiends arise,
And, trampled, God the Father lies.

Not God alone the Demon slays;
The hills that swell to Heaven drip
With ooze of murdered men; for days
The dead drift with the drifting ship,
And far as eye may see the plain
Is cumbered deep with slaughtered ones,
Contorted to the shape of pain,
Dissolving 'neath the callous suns,
And driven in his foetid breath
Still ply the harvesters of Death.

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He sits astride an engine dread,
And at his touch the awful ball
Across the quaking world is sped,
I see a million creatures fall.
Beyond the soldiers on the hill,
The mother by her basinet.
The bolt its mission must fulfil,
And in the years that are not yet
Creation by the blow is shorn
Of dimpled hosts of babes unborn!

THE COMMON MEN.

The great men framed the fierce decrees
Embroiling State with State;
They bit their thumbs across the seas
In diplomatic hate;
They lit the pyre whose glare and heat
Make Hell itself seem cold;
The flames bloomed red above the wheat,
Their wild profusion wreathed the street—
Then in the smoke and fiery sleet
The common men took hold.

Where Babel was with Bedlam freed,
And wide the gates were flung;
To chaos, while the anarch breed
In all the world gave tongue,
The common men in close array,
By mountain, plain and sea,
Went outward girded for the fray,
On one dear quest, whate'er they pay
In blood and pain—the open way
To keep for Liberty.

The common men who never tire,
Unsightly in the mirk
Of caking blood and smoke and mire,
Push forward with their work;
A while in foulest pits entombed,
Resistless, still and slow,
Burnt, broken, stifled, seeming doomed,
Past where the flowers of Satan bloomed,



Up gutted hills with shell-breath plumed,
The stubborn armies go.

Contending in the shattered sky
In empyrean wars,
The sons of simple men out-vie
God's splendid meteors;
Where'er the mills of Vulcan roared
And blinked against the night,
Swart shapes with sweat-washed eyes have
stored
The clean, lean lightnings of the Lord
To be a league-long, leaping sword
In this our holy fight.

The small men know the burden well,
The dreadful paths they know,
With fear and death and torture dwell.
And sup and sleep with, woe.
They're riven in the shrapnel gust,
But; blind and reeling, plan
Another blow, a final thrust
To subjugate the tyrant's lust.
So, bleeding, blundering in the dust,
Men fight and die for *man*.

THE CHURCH BELLS.

The Viennese authorities have melted down the great bell in St. Stephen's to supply metal for guns or muntions. Every poor village has made a similar gift.—Lokal Anzeiger.

The great bell booms across the town,
Reverberant and slow,
And drifting from their houses down
The calm-eyed people go.
Their feet fall on the portal stones
Their fathers' fathers trod;
And still the bell, with reverent tones,
From cottage nooks and purple thrones
Is calling souls to God.



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The chapel bells with ardor spake
Above the poplars tall,
And perfumed Sabbath seemed to wake.
Responsive to their call
From dappled vale and green hillside
And nestling village hives
The peasants came in simple pride
To hear how their Lord Jesus died
To sweeten all their lives.

...

They boom beyond the battered town;
The hills are belching smoke;
And valleys charred and ranges brown
Are quaking 'neath the stroke.
The iron roar to Heaven swells,
And domes and steeples nod;
Through cities vast and ferny dells
And village streets the clamant bells
Are calling souls to God!

THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT.

THE young lieutenant's face was grey. As came the day. The watchers saw it lifting white And ghostlike from the pool of night. His eyes were wide and strangely lit. Each thought in that unhallowed pit: "I, too, may seem like one who dies With wide, set eyes."

He stood so still we thought it death,
For through the breath
Of reeking shell we came, and fire,
To hell, unlit, of blood and mire.
Tianced in a chill delirium
We wondered, though our lips were dumb
What precious thing his fingers pressed
Against his breast.

His left hand clutched so lovingly
What none might see.
All bloodless were his lips beneath
The straight, white, rigid clip of teeth.
His eyes turned to the distance dim;



Our sleepless eyes were all on him.
He stirred; we aped a phantom cheer.
The hour was here!

The young lieutenant blew his call.
"God keep us all!"
He whispered softly. Out he led;
And over the vale of twisted dead,
Close holding that dear thing, he went.
On through the storm we followed, bent
To pelt of iron and the rain
Of flame and pain.

His wan face like a lodestar glowed
Down that black road,
And deep among the torn and slain
We drove, and twenty times again
He squared us to the charging hordes.
His word was like a hundred swords.
And still a hand the treasure pressed
Against his breast.

Our gain we held. Up flamed the sun.
"The ridge is won,"
He calmly said, and, with a sigh,
"Thank God, a man is free to die!"
He smiled at this, and so he passed.
His secret prize we knew at last,
For through his hand the jewel's red,
Fierce lustre bled.

THE ONE AT HOME.

Don told me that he loved me dear
Where down the range Whioola pours;
And when I laughed and would not hear
He flung away to fight the wars.
He flung away—how should he know
My foolish heart was dancin' so?
How should he know that at his word
My soul was trillin' like a bird?

He went out in the cannon smoke.
He did not seek to ask me why.
Again each day my poor heart broke
To see the careless post go by.

I cared not for their Emperors—
For me there was this in the wars;
My brown boy in the shell-clouds dim,
And savage devils killin' him!



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They told me on the field he fell,
And far they bore him from the fight,
But he is whole—he will be well
Now in a ward by day and night
A fair, tall nurse with slim, neat hands
By his white bedside smilin' stands;
His brow with trailin' fingertips
She soothes, and damps his fevered lips!

I know her not, but I can see
How blue her great eyes are, and hear
The cooin' of her voice as she
Speaks gentle comfort to my dear;
With love as sweet as mother's care
She heals his wounds, she strokes his hair...
O God, could I but let him see
The hate of her consumin' me!

THE HAPLESS ARMY

"A soldier braving disease and death on the battlefield has a seven times better chance of life than a new-born baby."—Secretary of War, U.S.A.

The Hapless Army from the dark
That lies beyond creation,
All blinded by the solar spark,
And leaderless in lands forlorn,
Come stumbling through the mists of morn;
And foes in close formation,
With taloned fingers dripping red,
Bestrew the sodden world with dead.

The Hapless Army bears no sword;
Fell destiny fulfilling,
It marches where the murder horde,
Amid the fair new urge of life,
With poison stream, and shot, and knife,
Make carnival of killing.
No war above black Hell's abyss
Knows evil grim and foul as this.

In pallid hillocks lie the slain
The callous heaven under;



Like twisted hieroglyphs of pain
They fleck earth to oblivion's brink,
As far as human mind may think,
 Accusing God with thunder
Of dreadful silence. Nought it serves—
Fate ever calls the doomed reserves!

Still with Death's own monotony
 The innocents are falling,
Like dead leaves in a forest dree;
And still the conscript armies come.
No banners theirs, no beat of drum,
 No merry bugles calling!
Mad ally in the Slayers' train,
Man slaps and sorrows for the slain!

THE END