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The Project Gutenberg EBook of 'Hello, Soldier!', by Edward Dyson

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Khaki Verse

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- START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK 'HELLO, SOLDIER!' \*\*\*

Produced by Peter O'Connell

"Hello, Soldier!"

Khaki Verse

by Edward Dyson

Many of these verse were originally printed in the "Bulletin," others in "Punch," "The Leader" and Melbourne "Herald." Some few are now published for the first time.

The paper famine leaving me no option but to print on peculiar paper, not wholly prohibitive or to defer the publication of my verses for an unknown period, the natural longing of a parent to parade his "well begotten" prevails. If my book is unusual and bizarre from a craftman's point of view, I plead the unusual times and extraordinary conditions. Of these times and conditions. I hope "Hello Soldier" is in some measure characteriastic.--Edward Dyson.

## AUSTRALIA.

AUSTRALIA, my native land,

A stirring whisper in your ear--  
'Tis time for you to understand

Your rating now is A1, dear.  
 You've done some rousing things of late.  
 That lift you from the simple state  
 In which you chose to vegetate.

The persons so superior,

Whose patronage no more endures,  
 Now have to fire a salvo for

The glory that is fairly yours.  
 At length you need no sort of crutch,  
 You stand alone, you're voted "much"--  
 Get busy and behave as such.

No man from Oskosh, or from Hull,

Or any other chosen place  
 Can rise with a distended skull,

And cast aspersions in your face.  
 You're given all the world to know  
 Your proper standing as a foe,  
 And hats are off, and rightly so.

You furnished heroes for the fray,

Your sterling merit's widely blown  
 To all men's satisfaction say,

Now have you proved it to your own?  
 Now have you strength to stand and shine  
 In your own light and say, "Divine  
 The thing is that I do. It's mine!"

The cannon's stroke throws customs down

The black and bottomless abyss,  
 And quaking are the gilded crown

And palsied feet of prejudice.  
 The guns have killed, but it is true  
 They bring to life things good and new.  
 God grant they have awakened you!

My ears are greedy for the toast

Of confidence before our guest,  
 The loyal song, the manly boast

Your splendid faith to manifest.  
 In works of art and livelihood

Shirk not the creed, "What's ours is good,"  
Dread not to have it understood.

Australia, lift your royal brow,

And have the courage of our pride,  
Audacity becomes you now,

Be splendidly self-satisfied,  
No land from lowliness and dearth  
Has won to eminence on earth  
That was not conscious of its worth.

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**BILLY KHAKI**

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 footing

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 morning

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 tossing,

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.

### **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 gorforsaken

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.

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 horizon'

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-trottin'

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!

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 Fritzy offers to sock me through;

'N' it's good to be livin' still.

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!

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.

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 lightnin', 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 hammunition 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, paralysed,  
 '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' cottages,  
 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.

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 reg'-

lar 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 surface

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.

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

Mollynoo!  
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 somethin'

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 reckernise

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 trimmin'

while I wait

A brick to jab or swing with, in a willin'

tatertate.

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, seeepy, soaky, sanguinary

jam!

There's the "fearful roar iv battle,"

What gets underneath yer 'at,  
Moonin' like a million cattle

Each as big as Ararat;  
There's the red field green 'n' slippy

(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 stenches

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 Barrenjack.

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 beside

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 beneath  
  
 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 fattened  
  
 in the mud,  
 Crackin' 'ardy, stewed together, rats an'  
  
 slurry men 'n' blood.  
 Weepin' Willie wouldn't have it these 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 roughup  
  
 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 gorforsaken

'Uns!

### **BILLJIM**

DOWN to it is Plugger Bill,  
Lysin' crumpled, white 'n' still.

Me 'n' him  
Chips in when the scrap begins,  
Carin' nothin' for our skins,  
Chi-iked as the 'Eavenly TwinsBill

'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 partnershipJim

'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 touchSimple  
 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 spillsBli'  
 me, this ole take-down Bill's

Done the same!

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 warBut

'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 twoIt

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 threequarters

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 Nouredin is some waddlin'

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.

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 peekin' 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!"

**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 twilight'  
s tender grace.  
After which with spade and rake we sought  
our special garden plot,  
And we 'tended to the cabbage and the shrinking  
young shallot.

So long lived we unmolested that this seemed  
indeed "the life."  
Set apart from mirk and worry and the incidence  
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 landscape.

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!

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 maddened

kangaroo.

They had left a woeful sight indeed--frail cabbages

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!

### **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 beautiful  
  
 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 beneath  
  
 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 acquainted

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.

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 behindThe

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.

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 plopSwung  
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 tempor'

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 daylight  
 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 sprees, '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 prisoner

with the German.  
 Me mouth is like an ashpan, there's hot fishbolts

in me head,  
 'N' through the barb-wire peerin' is me  
 foreigh 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!

### **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?"

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 badNow  
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.

The others trucked the wounded to a hentance

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 blooded  
'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'-plenty, 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 Gohanners,

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 treatOn

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 somehowGawd,

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  
elp me tater, it's a gift

How they glues you all together,  
Sayin' it's bin nicer weather!

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-about of many bags  
Was ground off in the dust 'n' crags

A-sittin' in Gallipoli.

I wore the khaki on the SommeMost

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**

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 QUAIN old gabled cottage sleeps between

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.

Peace lingers hidden from the knife, the tearing

blinding shell,

Where falls the spattered sunlight on a lichencovered

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 follows 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.

"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!

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 pincer'd 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.

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!

### **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.

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

Embroiding 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 munitions. 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.

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!

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**

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