

WORK-A-DAY  
WARRIORS

1910

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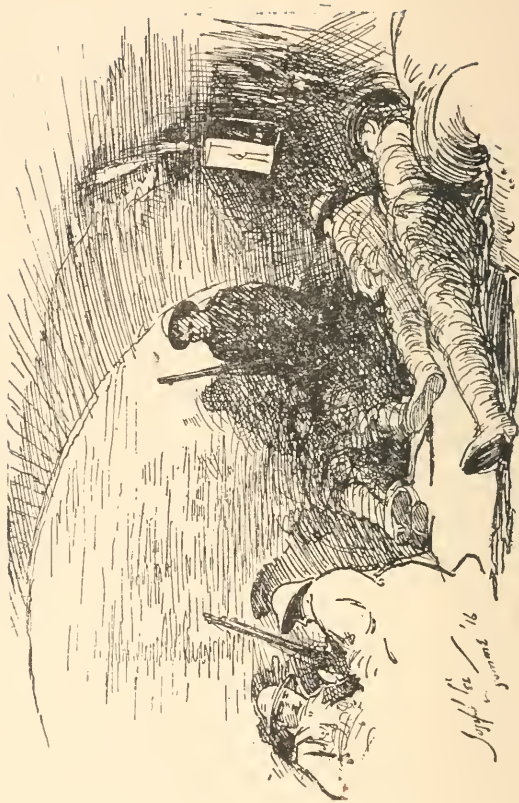
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WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS



SOLDIERS SHELTERING IN A CELLAR DURING A HEAVY BOMBARDMENT

# WORK - A - DAY WARRIORS

BY JOSEPH LEE  
AUTHOR OF "BALLADS OF BATTLE"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

LONDON  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.  
1917

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DEDICATED  
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## AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT

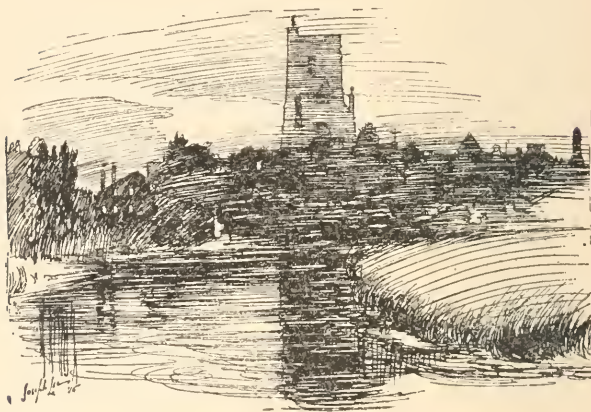
“GERMAN Prisoners,” “Back to London,” “Four Rye Sheaves,” and “Our British Dead,” appeared originally in *The Spectator*; “The Carrion Crow” in *The Nation*. To the respective Editors of these reviews I would return my thanks; in the first instance for the hospitality of their pages thus extended, and further for the kind permission they have so readily granted me to republish these pieces here. I have to acknowledge a similar courtesy on the part of Sir Frederick Treves, Bt., whose compilation, “Made in the Trenches,” published on behalf of the “Star and Garter” Endowment Fund, included “A Shakespeare Tercentenary,” and “St. Patrick’s Day in the Mornin’.”

J. L.

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ESTAIRES—EVENING



CAP WORN BY A SERGEANT OF THE SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS DURING THE INDIAN MUTINY ; IN FRANCE BY PRIVATE MILLAN, MACHINE GUN SECTION, THE BLACK WATCH

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

SOLDIERS SHELTERING IN A CELLAR DURING A  
HEAVY BOMBARDMENT (By permission of  
J. B. Grimond, Esq., St. Andrews) *Frontispiece*

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*We are but warriors for the working day ;  
Our gayness and our gilt are all besmirch'd  
With rainy marching in the painful field :  
There's not a piece of feather in our host  
(Good argument and hope we will not fly),  
And time hath worn us into slovenry ;  
But by the Mass our hearts are in the trim.*



A SHAKESPEARE TERCEN-  
TENARY IN THE TRENCHES

THREE centuries ago since Shakespeare  
died,  
Since he was shrouded in good English  
ground,  
His body to the earth, his spirit free,  
His bones to lie for aye, his book to live :

And here sit I, a tattered Corporal,  
Reading me snatches from a tattered  
tome,  
In fateful Flanders in a fetid trench,  
While round me lie six lads in ravelled  
hose,  
Torn kilts, and broken shoon, and lousy  
shirts,  
Like his own Falstaff's ragged regiment.

2      WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

We crouch within a dug-out's dusty  
depths ;  
A cavern in the earth ; Adullam cave ;  
A mouse's burrowing—a mole's—no more,  
Yet sanctuary 'gainst the iron storm  
Which works unheeded havoc o'er our  
heads.

Two hundred yards away the Teuton line  
Twines like some scaly serpent in the grass  
Which ever and anon doth vomit fire.

And these are 'they would claim Will for  
their own ?  
Well, they, if more than kin, are less than  
kind,  
For all the day, from dawning to the dusk,  
They've tried us with a dozen different  
deaths.

E'en so ; I turn the pages of his book  
As Shakespeare turned each several folio  
Of that vast, varied volumed Book of  
Life.

SHAKESPEARE TERCENTENARY 3

Here were stout words for cheer and  
    'couragement,  
And it seemed England when we heard  
    such words,  
And leafy Warwick in a Morn o' May,  
And Arden Forest 'neath a greenwood  
    tree.

This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this  
    England,  
This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear  
    land ;

This England never did, nor never shall,  
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror.

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once  
    more,  
Or close the wall up with our English dead !

Around us were the lodges of our dead,  
Who gave their life that England still  
    might live ;  
The very burrow in the which we were,  
Had bones of dead men baked into the  
    clay :  
Their ghosts still seemed to linger in our  
    lines.

4      WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

But I read on ; a passage from a play,  
With frequent interlude and change of  
    scene,

Till here was Denmark and the moody  
    Dane.

Without, the Corporal did change the  
    guard,

Even while Bernardo challenged Francisco  
Upon the battlements at Elsinore :

FRAN.—You come most carefully upon your  
    hour.

BER.—'Tis now struck twelve ; get thee to bed,  
    Francisco.

FRAN.—For this relief much thanks. . . .

“ And so say I,” said Nick, acrawling in,  
“ 'Tis dull work gazing into No Man's  
    Land,

And peopling it with denizens of dream—  
But do not let my coming stay the play ;  
The play's the thing ; your audience  
    awaits ! ”

So now my fingers found that sad, sweet  
    tale,

That story of the ancient grudge between  
The House of Montague and Capulet.

SHAKESPEARE TERCENTENARY 5

That old-time tear, that tale of deathless  
love,

Of youthful love, of love at sudden sight ;  
That moonlight madness of a man and  
maid,

That mating in a Springtime of the world,  
That Eve and Adam of a later date.

And so I read. . . .

Till o'er the sullen booming of the guns  
There rose the tumult of Verona's streets,  
The sounds of brawl, the bickering of  
blades,

And Tybalt draws upon Mercutio ;  
And there is rapier play, and then, and  
then,

Mercutio is hurt 'neath Romeo's arm :

MERCUTIO—A plague o' both your houses ! I  
am sped. . . . 'Tis not so deep as a well,  
nor so wide as a church door ; but 'tis  
enough, 'twill serve : ask for me to-morrow,  
and you shall find me a grave man. I am  
peppered, I warrant, for this world. A  
plague o' both your houses !

“ I cry ‘ Amen ! ’ to that ! ” upspake poor  
Nick,

He of reflective eye and raven hair,

6      WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

“ Hapsburg and Hanover, Kaisers and  
Kings !—

My mood this moment is to quarrel most  
With what would rob me of my life and  
love,

The beauty of the day, the dawn, the dusk,  
And give us naught but dark, and dust,  
and death—

And yet, and yet, if only England live  
Our life is but a little thing to give.”

And he is dead since syne ; I stood one  
morn,

At the chill hour of dawn, alone with—  
what ?

A man ?—a memory ?—a mystery ?

Which was what I had loved, and yet was  
not ;

Whose hand, that I had clasped so oft  
before,

Fell now from mine as in indifference ;

Who heard me not, who spoke not any  
word,

And still seemed voluble as many  
tongues ;

SHAKESPEARE TERCENTENARY 7

Whose eyes saw naught, yet seemed to  
embrace all ;  
Whose lips were parted as might be in  
smile  
That death had been so little difficult.

From the grim belt of broken, blasted  
trees,  
There spoke the rifle of a lurking foe ;  
The bullets spat upon the ruined wall  
'Neath which he lay ; silence throbbed in  
my ear ;  
A bird woke in the wood, and then a wind,  
Which lifted up a tress of his dark hair  
Then laid it down, like hand invisible,  
And moaned like to a hungry human  
heart.

And there stood I, and thought of hearts  
would break,  
And hands would move in memory 'mid  
that hair,  
When this news reached his now uncon-  
scious home,  
And I did groan for them and not for him.

8      WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

I saw the dawn drift up a quiet street,  
And steal into the room where he had  
    slept ;

I heard a dog bark, and a clanging bell,  
And then the kindly kitchen sounds which  
    he

Had known on many mornings long ago.

I bent me down and felt about his breast,  
And took the missives, that he held so  
    dear,

From her, the mistress of his ardent  
    heart.

And they were red with his heart's blood.

I found her pictured image, pensive  
    smiling, sad,

As if she had foreknowledge of his fate—  
And it was also showered with that red  
    rain.

And last of all I took the little disc,  
The little round that told the little  
    round

Of his career, and it was red with blood.



SHAKESPEARE TERCENTENARY 9

I laid one kiss upon his brow, and looked  
For the last time upon his sculptured face,  
And so I left him, till—what comes to pass.

But here was he alive, and, “ Read,” says  
he,

“ Those passages where Romeo doth part  
With Juliet and never meets her more.”

## GERMAN PRISONERS

WHEN first I saw you in the curious street,  
Like some platoon of soldier ghosts in  
grey,

My mad impulse was all to smite and slay,  
To spit upon you—tread you 'neath my  
feet.

But when I saw how each sad soul did  
greet

My gaze with no sign of defiant frown,  
How from tired eyes looked spirits broken  
down,

How each face showed the pale flag of  
defeat,

And doubt, despair, and disillusionment,  
And how were grievous wounds on many  
a head,

And on your garb red-faced was other red ;  
And how you stooped as men whose  
strength was spent,

I knew that we had suffered each as other,  
And could have grasped your hand and  
cried, “ My brother ” !



"EACH FACE SHOWED THE PALE FLAG OF DEFEAT."

## “ GLAD THAT I KILLED YER ”

A MODERN SONG OF LAMECH

*Hear my voice ; hearken unto my speech : for I  
have slain a man.*—GENESIS iv. 23.

GLAD that I killed yer—

It was you or me :

Our bayonets locked,

And then I pulled mine free ;

My heart beat like to burst ;

But Gawd, I got in first—

Glad that I killed yer !

Glad that I killed yer,

Though you are so young :

How still you lie

With both your arms outflung :

There's red blood on your hair—

Well, what the Hell I care ?—

Glad that I killed yer !

“ GLAD THAT I KILLED YER ” 13

Glad that I killed yer—  
    You're my enemy ;  
        I had to hate—  
    And you—you hated me ;  
        You mightn't be to blame—  
        I killed yer just the same—  
Glad that I killed yer !

Glad that I killed yer—  
    That's the game o' war ;  
        But for my luck  
    I'd lie just like you are ;  
        Your blood is on my hand—  
        Surely you understand  
I *had* to kill yer ?

Glad that I killed yer—  
    Yet I can't forget  
        The look you gave me  
    When we turned—and met—  
        Why do you follow me with staring  
            eye ?  
        Was it so difficult a thing to die—  
Gawd ! when *I* killed yer ?

14      WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

Glad that I killed yer—  
    Yet I'm sorry, too,  
        For those will wait  
    So long at home for you :  
        I have a mother living down at  
            Bow—  
    Thank Gawd for this that yours  
        will never know  
'Twas I that killed yer !

Glad that I killed yer—  
    It was you or me :  
        It does seem strange,  
    But it had got to be.  
        My heart beat like to burst,  
        But Gawd, I got in first—  
Glad that I killed yer !

## LE TAMBOUR

As I rode through the town of Aire,  
Up the long street did come  
A little lad who lustily  
Did beat a little drum,  
Did bang a brazen cymbal  
And beat upon a drum.

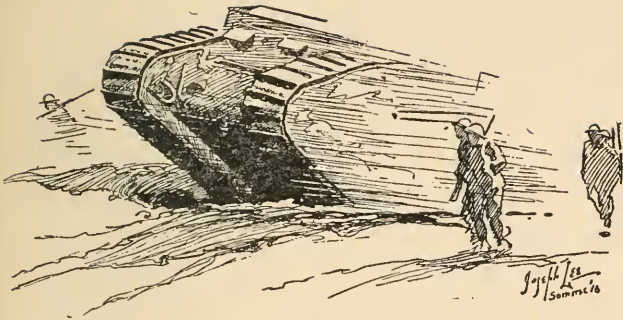
His father died at Verdun,  
His mother weeps in Aire ;  
The little lad drums undismayed,  
How should he know or care  
That each tuck makes her tears to  
start—  
That he beats tattoo on her heart ?

## ANCESTRY

I AM one with my fleet-foot forebear,  
skin-clad, with his flint-head spear ;  
I am one with the savage tribesman,  
with his bow-string taut to his ear ;  
I am one with them in their courage ;  
one with them in their fear :  
As I lie out here, with dead men near  
In this Listening-Post with my gun  
They and I are One !

I am one with the ancient Roman,  
pressing on in his grim phalanx ;  
I am one with the Spartan, the Trojan,  
and the Grecian's steel-clad ranks ;  
They with their Horse, Heaven-sent,  
and I with my earth-born " tanks " ;





“ TANK ” IN ACTION

18      WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

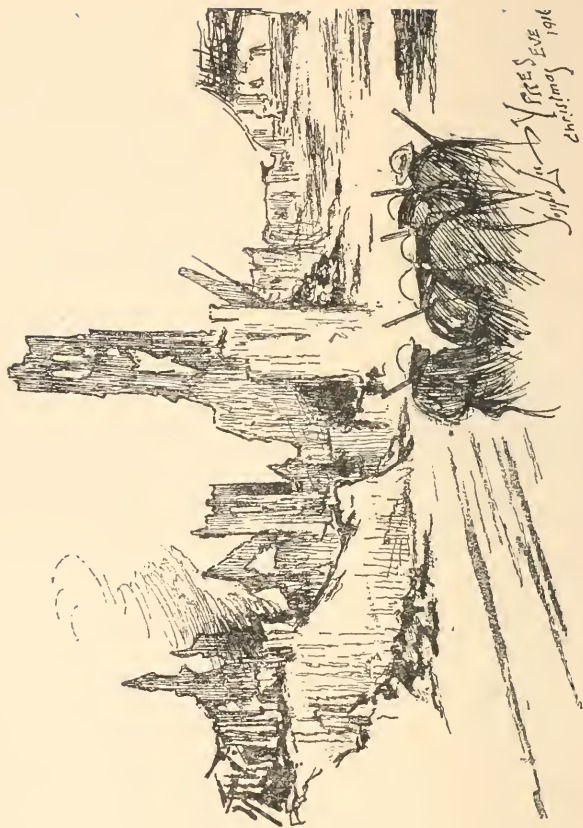
As I move to attack, with my kit on my  
    back,  
    And my bombs and my steel-tipped  
    gun,  
They and I are One !

I am one with the cohorts of Cæsar ;  
    with the hosts of Hannibal ;  
With the legions of all the leaders  
    to the last " Petit Caporal " ;  
One with the millions of nameless dead,  
    who have fallen as soldiers fall :  
As I crawl through the breach in the  
    battered wall,  
Or charge at the run with my gun,  
They and I are One !

## LEAVE

HE was going home to-morrow, his heart  
was light and gay ;

He was going home to-morrow—but he  
went Home to-day !



Ypres  
Christmas Eve 1916

YPRES—CHRISTMAS EVE



## BACK TO LONDON

A POEM OF LEAVE

I HAVE not wept when I have seen  
My stricken comrades die ;  
I have not wept when we have made  
The place where they should lie ;  
My heart seemed drowned in tears, but still  
No tear came to my eye.

There is a time to weep, saith One,  
A season to refrain ;  
How should it ope, this fount of tears,  
While I sate in the train,  
So that all blurred the landscape moved  
Outwith the window pane ?

22      WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

But one short day since I had left  
    A land upheaved and rent,  
Where Spring brings back no bourgeoning,  
    As Nature's force were spent ;  
Yet now I travelled in a train  
    Through the kindly land of Kent !

A kindly land, a pleasant land,  
    As welcome sight to me  
As after purgatorial pains  
    The Plains of Heaven might be,  
When the wondrous Goodness that is God  
    Draws a soul from jeopardy.

A pleasant land, a peaceful land  
    Of wooded hill and weald,  
Where kine stand knee-deep in the grass,  
    And sheep graze in the field ;  
A blessèd land, where a wounded heart  
    Might readily be healed.

A wholesome land, where each white road  
    Leads to a ruddy hearth ;  
Where still is heard the sound of song  
    And the kindly note of mirth ;

Where the strong man cheerful wakes to  
toil

And the dead sleep sound i' the earth.

I have not wept when I have seen

My chosen comrades die ;

I have not wept while we have digged

The grave where they should lie ;

But now I lay my head in my hand

Lest my comrades see me cry.

The little children, two by two,

Stand on the five-barred gate,

And wave their hands to waft us home

Like passengers of state ;

My heart is very full, so full

It holds no room for hate.

The children climb the five-barred gate

And blow us kisses five,

The little cripple in his car

Waves from the carriage drive :

Blessed are the dead, but blessed e'en  
more

We soldiers still alive !

24      WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

Lo ! we draw near to London town,  
    The troop train jolts and drags,  
The friendly poor come forth once more  
    To greet us in their rags—  
The very linen on the line  
    Flutters and flaunts like flags !  
The girls within the factory grim  
    Smile at the broken pane ;  
The sempstress in her lonely room  
    Sighs o'er her task again ;  
The servant shakes her duster forth  
    To signal our speeding train ;  
The station names go flitting past  
    Like old familiar friends ;  
The smoke cloud with the clouds aloft  
    In wondrous fashion blends,  
And, lo ! we enter London town,  
    To where all journeying ends.

I have not wept when I have seen  
    A hundred comrades die ;  
I have not wept when that we shaped  
    The house where they must lie—  
But now I hide my head in my hand  
    Lest my comrades see me cry.



These are the scenes, these the dear souls,  
    'Mid which our lot was cast,  
To this loved land, if Fate be kind,  
    We shall return at last,  
For this our stern steel line we hold—  
    Lord, may we hold it fast !

## THUNDER-STORM IN THE TRENCHES

*Hast thou an arm like God ? or canst thou thunder  
with a voice like Him ?*

BETWEEN the anger of our guns  
Spoke forth th' Artillery of Heaven ;  
Like warning words writ on the wall  
The sky with light was riven.

Yet did there seem no note of wrath,  
So that my soul rejoiced,  
As if I'd heard from Sinai's Mount  
God's admonition voiced.

## WAR

SOME REFLECTIONS BY CORPORAL RICHARD  
CREW OF THE CANADIANS

*From whence come wars and fightings ?—*JAMES iv. 1.

SURE, I dunno ;

There's some men call War "murder."

Some say it's elevatin' ;

I've 'eard both sides

Their cases statin'

An hour or so—

But I dunno.

There was Jim,

Got blown up in a mine :

He was elevated right enough—

But yet I felt it tough,

For I was fond o' him.  
 And then, pore Jake,  
 Struck in 's stummach,  
 Went swearin' straight to hell—  
 If hell ain't all a fake—  
 No, siree, War  
 Ain't pretty like a Calendar !

One thing—the dead  
 Ain't beautifully spread,  
 Each with an artistic scar  
 'Cross his fore'ead ;  
 No, that ain't War  
 Whatever poets say—  
 Shrapnel and high explosive  
 Do not work that way.

Ye mind o' Ned ?—  
 Him what went West  
 At St. Eloi ?—  
 A rare good boy,  
 One o' the very best ;



Joseph L<sup>es</sup> Albert Nov 16.

STATUE DE LA VIERGE, ALBERT, SOMME

*There is a belief that with the fall of this statue the war will terminate.*

Well, *his* pore 'ead  
 Was blown clean off,  
 And biffed me in the chest !—  
 It seems to me  
 There's something in the murder theory.

I've been out 'ere  
 Just on two year,  
 And seen it all  
     From Wipers to the Somme ;  
 And not much bugle blowing,  
 Nor banner flowing,  
     And all that truck ;  
 Just mostly muck and mud,  
 And mud and muck,  
 And what the Frenchies call, I think,  
     *ang-wee* ;  
 No, War ain't what them long-haired  
     coves  
 Have cracked it up to be !

And yet,  
 You bet,  
     There's something in it, too—  
     Not gauged by me and you ;

My Gawd, I've stood  
After a heavy biff,  
Pondering a bit on death—  
And getting back my breath—  
Thinking how boys have died,  
Until, by Christ, I've cried—  
Yet, somehow it seemed GOOD !

I mind me how  
Just nigh the Hat <sup>1</sup>—  
(Wish was there now !)  
We rounded up a snake—  
Some rattler at that !  
And Lariat Jack  
Bent o'er his saddle bow  
And gripped the rattler so,  
And broke its bloomin' back.  
And I said " Shake,"

<sup>1</sup> Medicine Hat, a town in Alberta, which derives its name—for the retention of which Rudyard Kipling made an eloquent and successful plea with his pen—from the fact that, seven Indians having been drowned higher up the creek, the hat of the Medicine Man here floated up. By the Cow-puncher it is designated colloquially and affectionately " The Hat." Wish I had my head in it now !

And yet felt sorry, too,  
     For that there worm  
 Was wondrous beautiful of hue !

I guess there are  
 Redeeming tints to War.  
 Mayhap the Lord—

    Who makes the silly snakes,  
     And breathes in storm, and shakes  
     The everlastin' hills wi' His earth-  
         quakes ;

    Who sets a little lamb  
 Upon an English mead,  
 Yet lets the tiger breed  
     And the wolf dam  
     Down in the jungle—

Mayhap the Lord  
     Ain't made no bloomin' bungle,  
 But even in bloody war—  
 Such as this are—  
     Fulfils His wondrous Word !

Christ ! I am cold, wish Sergeant Wood  
     would come,  
 And dish me out my morning tot o' rum !



## FOUR RYE SHEAVES

FOUR rye sheaves to be my bed ;  
“ Now God me save,” was the prayer I  
said ;

And sweet was the sleep that came to me,  
For I was home where I fain would be ;

And sweet was the dream that sleep did  
yield,  
A flowering bank, and a daisied field ;

A lovers' lane, and a winsome maid—  
But I never heard the word she said ;

I never heard what word she spoke,  
For the bugle was blown and I awoke.

. . . . .

34    WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

Four rye sheaves to be my bed—  
But where this night may I lay my head ?

Four rye sheaves to be my bed—  
Will she come with that word if I am  
    dead ?

## SICK PARADE

*Orderly Corporal, loq.—*

Fall in the lazy, the lousy, and the lame,  
Fall in the blighters who are trying to play  
the game—

Give me your number, religion, age, and  
name—

Fall in, fall in !

Fall in the fellows with the chilly feet ;  
Fall in the blokes who've had too much  
to eat ;

Fall in the " drafties " who are missing  
mother's teat—

Fall in, fall in !

Fall in, fall in, you heirs to every ill,  
The " Doc " will dish you out his wonder-  
working pill—

" Nine " or " eleven " <sup>1</sup> will either cure or  
kill—

Fall in, fall in !

<sup>1</sup> Popularly—or perhaps unpopularly—known among the men as " stoppers " and " starters."

36      WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

Fall in—bolt down your bit o' breakfast  
rootie,<sup>1</sup>

You who expect to go to England, home,  
and beauty—

You'll be marked down for " medicine and  
duty "—

Fall in, fall in !

Fall in, the lousy, the lazy, and the lame,  
Fall in the fellows who are out to play the  
game—

Give me your number, religion, age, and  
name—

Fall in, fall in !

<sup>1</sup> Bread—a word adopted into the soldiers' vocabulary from his Indian comrades-in-arms.

## A REST BILLET

“WHEN the next biff is over, we shall have  
a rest,” said Jo ;  
His comrades left him sleeping—for it was  
even so.

## PROGRESSION

BILL, when he lived in Lunnon, lived down  
Whitechapel way ;  
He owns a dug-out of his own, in old  
“ Park Lane ” to-day !

## SUPERSTITION

THREE soldiers lit their cigarettes, each by  
the self-same match ;  
Well, all the three have come so far—  
without a single scratch !

## SAINT PATRICK'S DAY IN THE MORNIN'

THE LOVE LILT OF CORPORAL PATRICK  
MULLOHOY OF THE CONNAUGHT RANGERS

SAINT PATRICK'S Day in the mornin',  
A year ago to-day,  
I was awalkin' meself alone  
Adown a green lane in ould Athlone—  
Well, sure now, of course, sweet  
Molly Malone  
Was with me upon the way ;  
I gathered a sprig of shamrock,  
Which in her dear breast she set,  
And, like the dew on the little plant,  
With tears her blue eyes were wet—  
For I was going away—  
O, Saint Patrick's Day in the mornin'  
A year ago to-day !

Saint Patrick's Day in the mornin',  
 This very blessed day,  
 The ould Colonel had us all out on  
 parade,  
 And, " I'm proud of me bhoys," was  
 what he said,  
 " Ye've won fresh laurels will never  
 fade—  
 That's all that I've got to say " ;  
 Then he gave us a sprig of shamrock,  
 And I sent it home to my pet,  
 And all that I wrote aneath it was :  
 " Perhaps ye will not forget—  
 For ever and alway—  
 Saint Patrick's Day in the mornin'  
 A year ago to-day ! "

Saint Patrick's Day in the mornin',  
 Next year this very day,  
 Please God I'll be walkin' meself  
 alone  
 Adown that green lane in ould  
 Athlone—  
 With by me side sweet Molly Malone,  
 To keep me upon the way ;

40      WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

Then I'll gather a sprig of shamrock,  
And set it upon her breast,  
And I'll place two kisses upon her  
lips—

And I'm thinkin' ye'll guess the  
rest—

For all that I'm going to say

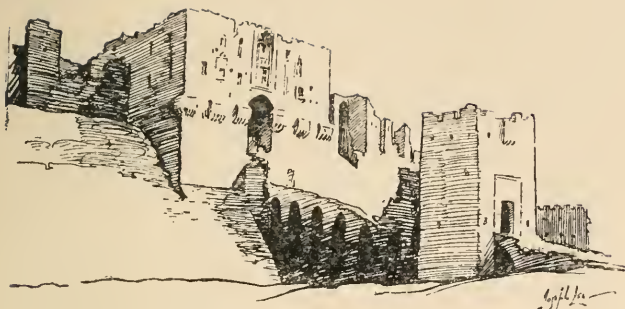
Is, "Ye haven't forgotten the pro-  
mise ye made

Upon Saint Patrick's Day—

Saint Patrick's Day in the mornin'

*Two* years ago to-day?"





“ THAT GRIM CASTLE IN THAT ANCIENT TOWN ”

“ IN ALEPPO ONCE ”

*And say besides, that in Aleppo once,  
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk  
Beat a Venetian and traduced the State,  
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,  
And smote him thus—and thus.*

OTHELLO.

How should it come to pass that on this  
page  
O'er which I pore by this pale candle light,  
There should appear this creature of  
affright—  
The unnamed victim of Othello's rage?

42    WORK-A-DAY    WARRIORS

He drags himself as 'twere upon the stage,  
And glares with eyes that are not things of  
    sight ;

And beckons to behold his piteous plight,  
The gout of blood no unguent can assuage.  
Beneath the battlements I see him lie,  
Of that grim castle in that ancient town,  
And all his wounds are mouths that seem  
    to cry

To bring the vengeance of Almighty  
    down—

How should it come to pass he points at  
    me ?

    Alas !

How should it come to pass ? How  
    should it come to pass ?



THE NURSE

## THE NURSE

WHEN I came to mysel' a lily-white hand  
Was stroking my fever'd brow,  
And I couldn't remember where I'd been  
hit,  
And I couldn't remember how,  
But I felt as if from red-hot hell  
The Lord had just set me free—  
And here was a blessed angel from heaven  
A-bending over me !

44    WORK-A-DAY    WARRIORS

She had a smile like a morn o' May,  
    And the kindest of soft grey eyes ;  
And I felt a sort o' confused, I suppose,  
    And I guess that I made to rise ;  
But she held me easy wi' one small hand,  
    And she said, " Now, you must lie still,"  
And I hadn't the strength o' a new-born  
    babe,  
    And so I just done her will.

I closed my peeps, and I lay for a spell  
    Stretched out in my little cot,  
A-trying to think what I'd gave them  
    Huns—  
    A-trying to think what I'd got,  
And, by-me-bye, my leg gave a twinge,  
    Made me more curse than cry,  
And I says to mysel', " Well, number one  
    Is a compound fractured thigh ! "

I explored no further for a bit,  
    But lay still in my little bed,  
Till sudden a bandage slipped o'er my eye,  
    And says I, " Number two's in the  
    head " ;

Then I noses about again, and remarks,  
“ There ain’t no cause for alarm,  
But unless I’m mighty mistaken, Mike,  
Number three’s in your fore left arm ! ”

I’d got splints all over my pore old stumps,  
And lint all over my skin,  
And I found ’arf a dozen apertures  
What had let bits o’ shrapnel in ;  
And thinks I, “ You’ve more metal in  
your hide  
Than money in your purse,”  
And I opened my eyes, and attempted to  
smile,  
And there again was the Nurse.

She looked at me so sorrowful,  
Yet brightly, too. Says I,  
“ It’s no use patching a hulk like me,  
Nurse, hadn’t you best let me die ? ”  
I seen her brush her eyes with her hand,  
Then she gave her proud head a toss,  
And, “ Michael,” she says, “ would you  
like to see  
A Red Cross Nurse really *cross* ? ”

46 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

The way that that girl manœuvred me,  
The sort o' things that she done,  
'Twas like having my old mother back  
again

And I but a kid aged one ;  
There's nothing that's pretty about me,  
And I'm only one half tamed,  
But when she'd attend to my toileting,  
I felt thankful—and ashamed !

It was always, " Mike, good mornin',  
And how do you feel to-day ? "  
And yet she'd the sharpest of eyes to see  
My drugs duly stowed away ;  
The visitin' Surgeon's very good,  
And the resident Doctor, too,  
But I places it here on record,  
It was Nursey what pulled me through !

The sight o' her face seemed to ease my  
pain,  
The sound o' her voice done me good,  
And she was so gentle and kind wi' me,  
What had been so sinful and rude ;

I done a heap o' pondering,  
And at nights before I slept,  
When I thought what I'd been with  
women,  
I just turned on my face and wept.

The world is full o' good women,  
And if they're not all the same,  
I'm doubting, matey, that you and me  
Are somehow a bit to blame ;  
And when I'm a-crawling around on my  
crutch  
And Sister goes up the ward,  
I think, there are angels withouten wings,  
And I'm glad, and I thank the Lord !

## A BALLAD OF DEAD LOVES

A-LONG ago, when the world was young,  
And spears were shivered, and lutes were  
strung,

And songs slid from the minstrel's tongue—

Ah ! woe is me !

A knight sailed over the Spanish Main,  
He sailed—but he came not back again—

Ah ! woe is me !

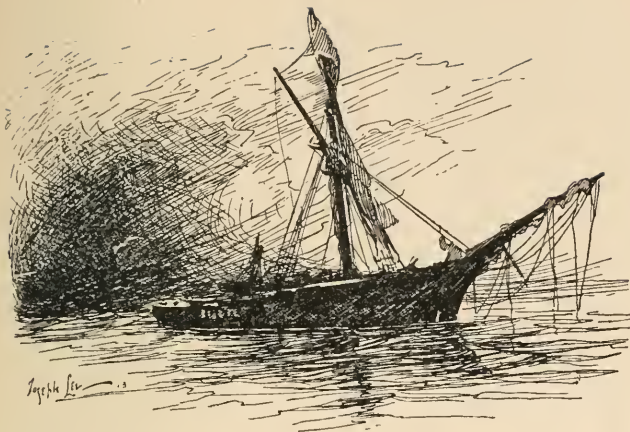
A-long ago was a ladye fair,  
With cyne of blue and with golden hair ;  
When her love came not she was full of  
care—

Ah ! woe is me !

She pined—but she pined not quite away,  
She wed with the knight who survived the  
fray—

Ah ! woe is me !





THE DERELICT

## THE SEA

A NIGHT WATCH ABOVE

My soul is sick for the sea,  
For the scudding ships,  
For the rollers racing free,  
For the winds that sting like whips,  
For the winds that sting like whips,  
For the winds that smack like wine :  
O for a good ship on the sea,  
If that good ship were mine.

50 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

Here is the night-watch set,  
And here do I take my stand,  
Doing my spell at the parapet  
With my eye fixed on No Man's Land ;  
With my eye set on No Man's Land,  
With my eye on that waste o' Hell,  
But my heart alert for the full sail's fret  
And the boom of the old ship bell.

I set my soul on an outward bound,  
And I set the course by a star ;  
But I miss the swell beneath my feet  
As she noses for over the bar,  
As she rises and dips at the bar,  
As she pauses to sniff the gale ;  
To-night I would circle the whole world-  
round  
With never a shorten sail !

I stand on the firing-step,  
As I've stood on the fo'c'sle-head,  
And I think of the sailors drowned I've  
known,  
And the soldiers I've known who are  
dead,

Of my mates over there who are dead,  
Of my mates who are grav'd in the  
sea,  
And I think that if God gave me choice of  
graves,  
I know what my choice would be !

The spindrift smites my face,  
As there comes the lashing of rain,  
And the gale whistles through the top-  
gallants  
Like the cry of a soul in pain,  
Like the cry of a soldier slain ?—  
Or a mariner in the sea ?—  
Ah ! if God would but give me choice of  
death,  
I know what my choice would be !

## THE STAR-SHELL

(WITH APOLOGIES TO THE GENTLE SHADE  
OF JANE TAYLOR)

TWINKLE, twinkle, little star,  
I *know* just what the 'ell you are,  
Up above the trench so high,  
Like some d—— arc-lamp in the sky!

When the blinking sun is gone,  
When 'e nothing shines upon,  
The Allemand throws up your light,  
Twinkle, twinkle all the night.

Then the Tommy in the dark  
Thanks you for your tiny spark—  
(I don't think!)

Fritz wouldn't guess our little go  
If you did not twinkle so!

But as it is 'e opens fire,  
Ketching us working at our wire—  
(" Keep still, you blokes ; get on yer  
knees,  
And freeze, ye bloomin' blighters, freeze !).

Oft in the trench my watch I keep,  
And o'er the parapet I peep,  
But Lordy ! I must mind my eye,  
When you go soaring through the sky !

Or when I'm out upon patrol,  
I've got to flop into a hole—  
Well do I know just what you are—Hell !—  
(There goes another !)  
Twinkle, twinkle, little star-shell !

## THE CARRION CROW

A CROW sat on a crooked tree,  
And first it cawed, then glowered at me.

Quoth I, "Thou hoary, hooded crow,  
Why do ye glower upon me so?"

"I look upon thee live," it said,  
"That I may better ken thee dead ;

"That I may claim thee for my ain  
When ye are smooed among the slain."

The crow perched on that crooked tree,  
Nor raised its evil eye frae me.

It perched upon that crooked thorn,  
And gazed on me as if in scorn :

"I'll whet my bill upon thy blade  
Where thou art lying in the glade ;

“ I’ll pike out baith thy bonnie e’en ;  
I’ll pike the flesh frae off each bane ;

“ Thy lips that kissed a lover fair,  
God wot ! but I will kiss them bare ! ”

The crow perched on that crooked tree,  
Nor raised its evil eye frae me.

“ Thou horrid, hooded, hoary crow,  
Why do ye glower upon me so ? ”

“ I look upon thee live,” it said,  
“ That I may better ken thee dead.”

[There is a somewhat whimsical sequel to the above. One afternoon the R.Q.M.S., who is one of the best revolver shots in the Battalion, entered my billet with a Webley in one hand and a dead crow in the other. “ He perched upon a tree, and glowered at me, and as I thought of him possibly picking out my e’en—well, *I picked him off first !* ”]

## NOEL

CHRISTMAS EVE, and a wind with a sting,  
We rode from Ypres through Elverdinghe.

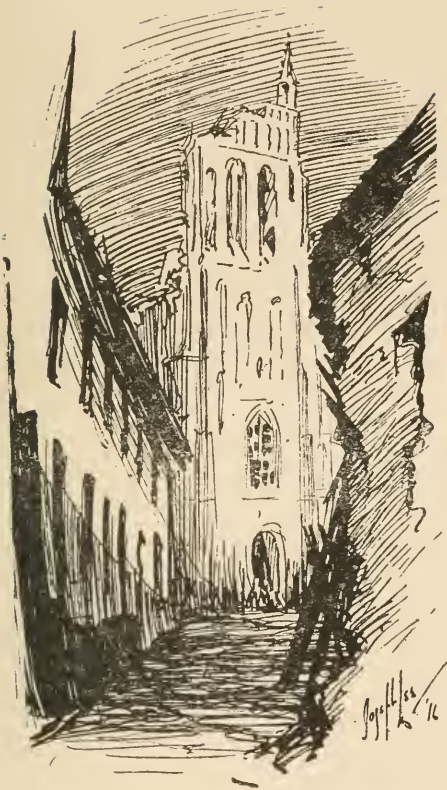
The ruined church rose gaunt on our  
right :

With a turn of the head,

The Q.M. said,

*“ There will be no service to-night ! ”*





RUINED CHURCH AT ELVERDINGHE

*"There will be no service to-night!"*

## CASUALTY LIST

(UNOFFICIAL)

MAIDENS and matrons ; mothers o' sons,  
How many have fallen a prey to the guns ?

## THE THINGS I'VE SEEN

PERHAPS a hundred years from now,  
When I below the sod am jammed,  
Some bloke may pick up this 'ere pome,  
And read, and say, "Well, I'll be  
damned!"

"There's nothing new," the Preacher says,  
"That happens underneath the sun"—  
And yet the curious things I've seen;  
The bloomin' curious things I've done.

I've seen young blokes what has been bred  
To sell duds in a draperie,  
Stand under fire and keep their head  
Wi' seasoned sodjers same as me!

I've 'ad them on a bombing raid,  
Wi' faces and wi' bay'nets black,  
And not a single one afraid  
And not a single man hang back!

60 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

They've lain and waited till the wire  
Was cut and scattered by our shells,  
Then waltzed into the German trench  
As gay as Negro minster-els !

I've seen our Batt. go singing in  
To what was well-nigh certain death ;  
I've seen 'em die, and heard 'em cheer  
For Britain wi' their dying breath !

I've seen my matey standing by,  
And asked him if a fag he'd got ;  
He hadn't even time to cry  
When something took him—*he was not !*

I've seen a bloke shot thro' the head—  
A bloke I ne'er heard swear afore—  
He spun right round, and dropped down  
dead,  
And wot he said was, " O you whore ! "

I've seen me chargin' on the foe,  
To prod him wi' my bayonet ;  
Then " Kamerad ! "—and next I know  
I'm handing him a cigarette !

I've seen our sappers spring a mine,  
 That darkened all the sky at noon,  
 And left a hole within their line  
 Like some lorn crater of the moon !

I've seen the Germans shell a town,  
 In this ungracious year o' grace ;  
 A market town, on market day—  
*And first shell in the market-place !*

I've seen an aeroplane brought down,  
 Just like a bird wi' broken wing,  
 And watched, for what seemed like a week,  
 Them doomed men try to right the  
 thing !

I've heard the guns at Neuve Chapelle—  
 An earthquake held in leash, say I,  
 Yet, o'er the hubbub of that hell,  
 I've heard a lark sing in the sky !

I've seen, amidst this waste o' war,  
 God's goodly seasons come and go ;  
 And flowers bloom in the wilderness,  
 And rain fall both on friend and foe.

62 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

I've seen—I've seen a heap o' things,  
That I ain't got no time to tell,  
But every word is Gospel true—  
I've done most o' the things mysel'.

“All vanity,” the Preacher says,  
“There's nothing new beneath the  
sun”—

And still the curious things I've seen,  
The amazing curious things I've done!

Perchance a hundred years from now,  
When I below the sod am jammed,  
Some bloke will pick up this 'ere pome,  
And read, and say, “Well, I'll be  
damned!”

And say!—If for the hist'ry books,  
Some o' my words seem rather warm,  
Perhaps some bloke might sort 'em out—  
I wouldn't do the kids no harm!

## THE RETURN O' THE YEAR

YEAR after year the grass,  
Year after year the grain,  
But the sleeping dead in their lonely  
    graves  
They never return again.

Year after year the bud,  
And the bird upon the tree,  
But my fond love wha sleeps so sound,  
He never comes back to me.

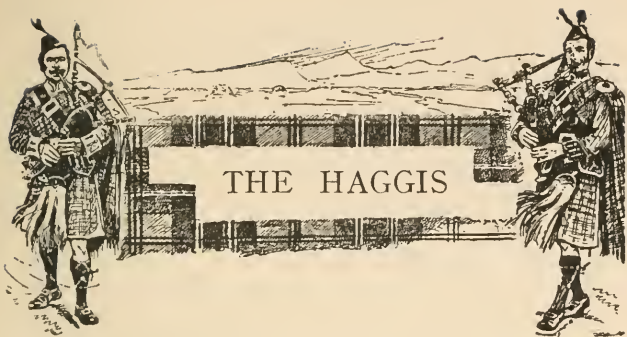
Year after year the wind,  
Year after year the rain,  
But the weary night and the dreary day  
Bring nought to me but pain.

The sun and the moon and the stars,  
And the clouds fade from the sky,  
And the last leaves fall from the lifeless  
    trees—  
It's O, that I might die !

64 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

Year after year the grass,  
Year after year the grain,  
But the dead who sleep in the weary  
    graves  
They never return again.





TO MRS. M——, TO WHOM WE WERE IN-  
DEBTED FOR A HAGGIS, WHOSE AMPLI-  
TITUDE WAS IN SOMEWISE COMMENSUR-  
ATE WITH THE LARGENESS OF HER  
HEART

*Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,  
Great chieftain o' the pudding race !*

A HAGGIS ; a Haggis,  
An honest Scottish Haggis !  
Let Frenchmen make a loud to-do  
About the length o' their menu—  
New-fangled fricassee, ragout,  
And sic like dishes—  
Auld Scotia's simple brag is  
Her ancient Haggis !

66      WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

To me arrives a Haggis ;  
A Haggis ?—A HAGGIS !  
A healthy, wholesome Haggis  
    As ever ye did see,  
And writ upon the tag is :  
“ To Sergeant Joseph Lee—  
Just boil it for a wee ! ”

Ah ! well kenn'd I wha made it—  
Frae the foundation laid it—  
Wha packed it up, and prayed it  
    Wad in condition be—  
As tho' hersel' had said it—  
    It brought me memorie  
    O' the land sae dear to me—  
Land where the rock and crag is,  
Land where the rill and quag is,  
Land where the leaping stag is—  
Did this Scotch Haggis.

“ Go out into the highways,  
Go out into the byways,”  
    Quo' I in muckle glee,  
“ Go into ilka billet—

The fatted calf is kille't—  
And say that so we will it—  
    Compel them come and pree  
The big and buirdly Haggis  
    That's been sent out to me ! ”  
“ Losh, but I'll sound the slogan ! ”  
Cried souple Stievie Logan,  
    And aff at aince set he.

The Haggis ; THE Haggis,  
Yes, let us to the Haggis—  
Pegasus, my nag is  
    Inclined to need the spur—  
We passed it for inspection,  
    Then in the pot  
    Till it was hot—  
O, glorious resurrection !

The Haggis, the Haggis ;  
Wull Wright an unco' wag is,  
    And he cried out wi' passion,  
    “ The smell itsel'  
    Might very well  
    Serve for a sodger's ration ! ”

68 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

Now quick the Cook arrays it,  
And in the Piper plays it ;

Ye never heard siccan a din,  
The billet roof comes tumblin' in.  
(I dinna ken wha pays it—

That's quite anither story.)

Dan gi'es us " Scotland's Glory " ;

His ruddy cheeks are outward blawn,

His neb is cocked, his neck is  
thrawn,

He blaws until his bag is

As big's our muckle Haggis !

Behind him, Billy Milne, elate,  
Bears the great chieftain on a plate,  
Advancing and retiring—

Like the Haggis' sel' perspiring—  
Wi' many a step frae many a dance  
Unknown in the salons o' France.

Now, round and round the room they  
go

For it is seemly even so ;  
At last amidst the babel

The Haggis takes the table !

The guests await, the Grace is said,  
Then the proud host outdraws his blade :

“ A British bayonet’s jag is  
The best for Hun or Haggis ! ”

Wi’ that he straightway falls on it  
And gi’es the Haggis sic a slit ;

The whereupon, entrancing sight,  
The hidden glories come to light—

“ Advance, attack, each valiant wight,  
And make good play wi’ fork and spoon,  
The Devil take the hindmost done—

The first to fail or flag is  
No’ worthy o’ a Haggis ! ”

No need to force a Scotsman go  
To find a friend or fight a foe,  
And swiftly at that given word  
They fall on it wi’ one accord,  
Wi’ spoon and gully-knife and fork  
They make the shortest o’ short work—  
There’s ne’er been sic a stabbin’  
Since our boys took the Schwaben !  
They hack and hew that Haggis  
Till a’ that’s left a rag is !

70    WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

And when they've worked their will o't,  
And when they've ate their fill o't,  
    Mair nor ae chield can scarcely drag his  
    Sel' frae that feast o' Haggis !

A Haggis, a Haggis,  
An honest, homely Haggis !—  
Land where the riven crag is,  
Land where the leaping stag is,  
Thy proudest boast and brag is  
Thy ancient Haggis !

## THE WILLOW TREE

O, WILLOW, Willow weeping,  
Your tears fall down for whom ?  
We soldiers who are sleeping  
Until the Day of Doom ?—  
O, Willow, Willow weeping,  
So soundly we are sleeping.

O, Willow, Willow weeping,  
Do you but weep for those  
Our women folk whose hearts are broke  
Whose eyelids never close ;  
Who lie all night unsleeping—  
O, Willow, Willow—weeping.

## VERSE VINDICTIVE

3668 PRIVATE WILLIAM WARLEY TO  
KAISER WILHELM II

How d'ye like it, Bill ?

How d'ye like it, Bill ?

How does it seem on the losing side ?

How does it pain you to pocket your  
pride ?

Sure, it's a bitter pill—

How d'ye like it, Bill ?

You'd got your mailed hand on one half  
of the map,

Like a thief with his paw in the till,

But John Bull's gripp'd your wrist,

And you'll open your fist—

How d'ye like it, Bill ?



You would wallow around in the wealth o'  
the world,

Like a hog wi' its snout in the swill,

But we've upset your trough,

For you've sure had enough—

How d'ye like it, Bill ?

You wanted a " place in the sun " was  
your plaint,

You could had it for us with a will ;

We'll find you a place hotter far than  
the sun—

You are bound, my bold Wilhelm, for  
hell on the run—

How d'ye like it, Bill ?

They do say that your hair is a-turning  
white,

And that you are looking ill—

Well, my pore mother is grey-haired  
too,

And I'm putting it down on account  
to you—

How d'ye like it, Bill ?

74 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

Your hair is turned white ; well, your  
hands are turned red

Wi' the blood ye ha' made men to spill ;  
I bayoneted one o' your blokes  
mysel'—

It was you that he cursed as his soul  
sped to hell!—

How d'ye like it, Bill ?

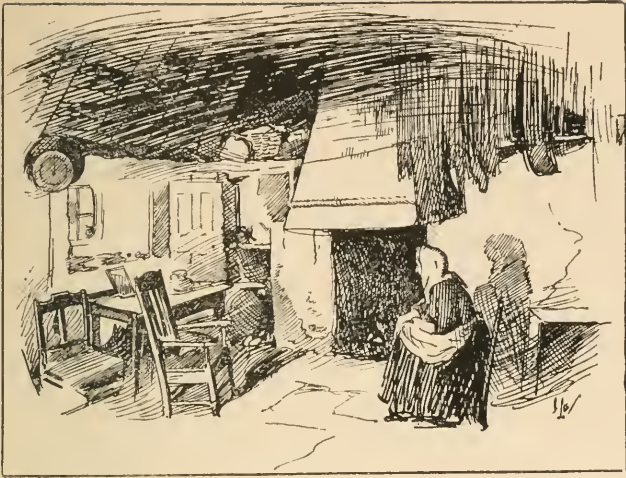
And when you shall stand at the Lord's  
Judgment Seat,

And the great Court is all hushed and  
still,

And the Angel Recording shall point  
to your scroll,

And God shall look right thro' your  
poor puny soul—

How will ye like it, Bill ?



ONE LOVED COT I KNOW

## TRENCH THOUGHTS

CHRISTMAS 1916

Not of the Christ who came  
Two thousand years ago ;  
Only the firelight glow  
In one loved cot I know.

Not of those shepherds old,  
Watching their flocks by night !  
But Father, and Kate with a light,  
Seeing that cows is right.

76 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

Not of the Angel song ;  
Peace unto men of Goodwill ;  
Only my brother Bill  
Dead, and he done no ill !

Not of the Heavenly Host,  
Bringing tidings of great joy ;  
But my Mother's homely employ,  
And her prayer, " My boy, my boy ! "

## THE SONG OF THE SOCK

DEDICATED TO LADY BAXTER OF IN-  
VEREIGHTY

HE stood within the flooded trench,  
The water reached his knee,  
His feet seemed like twa icebergs sunk  
Deep in an Arctic sea ;  
His heart was cold ; his hands were cold  
And dead as granite blocks :  
“ Lord ! What would I no gi’e the nicht  
For a clean pair o’ socks ! ”

He stood within the tottering trench,  
The water touched his thigh ;  
His wits were wander’ed, wanting sleep,  
But down he daurna lie ;  
His blood seemed frozen ; “ Lord,” he  
cried,  
“ Could I but slip my fit  
In saft, warm woolly socks, the kind  
My mither used to knit ! ”

78 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

He followed down the twining trench

The way the men did go ;

Sometimes he wrestled in a slough

As stern as Solway Flow.

Right ruefully, " Why did I no'

Bide at hame like ither folks ? "

Syne dourly swore he'd see it thro',

If he had but clean socks !

He struggled on the endless road,

All through the endless night,

Thro' wind and weet, thro' snaw and sleet,

He was a waeful wight ;

Quo' he, " I dinna mind being killed,

I dinna mind the knocks,

If only I could put my feet

Into a pair o' socks ! "

He stumbled thro' the silent town,

And to the ruined farm,

Then threw himself among the straw

And found it welcome, warm ;

But the clay walls were ill-designed

To stay the Winter's shocks,

And a' the night his feet were cauld—

He dreamed o' nought but socks !

THE SONG OF THE SOCK 79

He dreamed that on his mother's knee,  
A golden, curly head,  
Before the fire he warmed his feet  
Ere he should go to bed ;  
She felt his tiny toes—He woke—  
'Twas but a dream that mocks ;  
For she was dead—" Or I this day  
Wad no' hae wanted socks ! "

Just then a much-wished mail came in,  
And there was great a-do,  
To find out rightly which was which,  
And what was there for who ;  
The postman picked a parcel up ;  
" For Private Weelum Knox ! "—  
Will slipped the string, and out there fell  
A pair o' worsted socks !

There was beside a hame-baked cake  
To help him wi' his tea ;  
A case of Straight Cut Cigarettes  
Straight frae Virginiee ;  
Some soap, some jam, a packet neat  
O' Edina's far-famed rocks,  
But first and best o' a', a pair  
O' well-knit woollen socks !

80 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

They werena fashioned frail and fine,  
Too dainty for defiling,  
Not like the lasses' silken hose  
Worn for the lads' beguiling ;  
They bore no dandified design  
O' arrows or o' clocks—  
But just an honest, homely pair  
O' hand-made Scottish socks !

“ Now, thank the Lord ! ” he softly cried,  
“ For woman's skilful hand,  
And thank the Lord for woman's heart  
So swift to understand !  
And thanks to her, matron or maid,  
Seventeen or seventy-three,  
The socks who wrought, and had the  
thought  
To send them out to me !

Was't frae some mither, such as his ?  
Working her “ purl and plain,”  
And thinking o' her absent lad  
Till the tears drapp'd down like rain ;



THE SONG OF THE SOCK 81

Her hands aye full o' housely work,  
Patching trousers, mending frocks,  
Yet somehow finding time to knit  
A pair o' sodger's socks ?

Was't frae some grand dame, nearly done,  
Yet eager still to do,  
And full of memories of her sire  
Who fought at Waterloo ?  
Was't frae a maid o' modest mien,  
Soft eyes, and silken locks ?—  
Here Will pu'ed up his straying thoughts,  
And pu'ed on baith the socks !

Then quickly pu'ed ane off, to find  
A note, the which did say :  
“ I hope these socks will warm your feet,  
Yours faithfully, Nell Grey.”—  
They warmed his feet, they fired his  
heart—  
Wi' fearsome “ Heuchs ! ” and  
“ Hocks ! ”  
The day they wed, it's like I'll dance  
The soles out o' *my* socks !

82 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

O, women in this woeful time,  
Who work while ye do weep,  
Forget not that who goeth forth  
The sheaves shall surely reap ;  
Hearts that bemoan a man child slain—  
Hands that the Cradle rock,  
May knit this broken world again,  
Knitting a soldier's sock !

## EPITAPH

WHERE the long trench twines snake-like  
To keep the foe at bay,  
There be the place to lay me,  
And this be what you say :

*Here lieth one who loved all life,  
Sunshine and song, and sword and strife ;  
Sea and storm, and wind and rain,  
Breaking bud, and bursting grain,  
Pulsing pleasure, and stabbing pain—  
Who would, an he could, live all over  
again !*



A WAYSIDE ESTAMINET IN FLANDERS

## THE ESTAMINET

THE Recreation Hut is dull,  
The Dry Canteen is dry,  
And some'ow neither seems designed  
For soldiers sich as I ;  
I likes some family comfort  
And I likes some fireside cheer  
What time I am partaking of  
My little drop o' beer—  
And so it is I spend my pay  
Within the old Estamin-ay !  
*Deux bier, Mademoiselle, sil vous play !*

It's 'Ome Sweet 'Ome from twelve to two,  
 Likewise from six to eight,  
 And there I sits and pulls my pipe  
 And parleys with my mate ;  
 We sits and parleys 'bout the war  
 And if it's going to end—

*(What a hope !)*

And when the old clock strikes *weet heur*  
 We up and homewards wend—  
 And so when we can draw five francs  
 We do not put it in no banks !  
 • *Encore une bier, sil vous play !*

And when our appetites is sharp,  
 And we have got the spooof,  
 We have a plate o' *pomme de terre*,  
*Du pang, buerre, an oof ;*  
 And if the morning's very cold  
 Then in by stealth I come,  
 And blarney Marie till I gets  
*A café—avec rhum !*  
*Vite !* M.P. hovering o'er the way  
 Might close the old Estamin-ay !  
*Bon santé ! Mademoiselle ! Policemans*  
*no regardez moi !*

86 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

Marie is *très complaisant* ;

She is full o' woman's wile,  
With an expansive bosom,  
And an expansive smile ;  
And sometimes I have pondered

If it might not come to be  
That I might marry Marie—

If Marie 'd marry me—  
And spend the evening of my day  
Within this old Estamin-ay !

*Ah non, Monsieur ! Reste tranquille !—  
Après la guerre !*



THE WAGGONER



REFUGEES SHELTERING IN AN ESTAMINET DURING BOMBARDMENT



MARCELLE

*J. H. [unclear] 1885*



## MARCELLE ·

“ In your last book, ‘ Ballads of Battle,’ I looked in vain for some tribute to Marcelle, and for the picture which you made of her sitting by the open window.”—LETTER TO THE AUTHOR FROM SOLDIER-COMRADE.

MARCELLE, who served the café noir,  
The vintage white and red,  
With lightsome step, with laughing eye,  
With proudly poisèd head !

Vin blanc, vin rouge ; of red, of white,  
What need was there to speak ?  
For they were out-vied by the red  
And lily of thy cheek !

Trench-worn and stained we sat around  
And quaffed *vin ordinaire*,  
And were rejuvenate, as if  
Hebé the cup did bear !

90 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

For us the ever-generous door,  
The ever-gracious smile,  
The attentive ear, the ready tear,  
The glance devoid of guile.

But not for us that pensive gaze,  
The sudden mist of tears,  
The broken sigh that spoke a tale  
Of lovers' hopes and fears !

Marcelle ! when peace shall dawn at last  
Upon this night of pain,  
May thy bold chasseur, all unscathed,  
Come back to thee again !

Bon soir ! Marcelle !  
Thy Scottish soldiers wish thee well !



AT THE WINDOW

## THE TOT OF RUM

A SOLILOQUY AT STAND-TO IN  
THE TRENCHES

*When the Sergeant drinks your tot, never mind ;  
When the Sergeant drinks your tot, never mind ;  
When the Sergeant drinks your tot,  
Let him drink the bloomin' lot—  
Though it burns his bluidy throat  
We'll never mind.*

SOLDIERS' SONG.

BEFORE I saw the trenches  
I was a strict T.T.,  
The pledge I'd took,  
The water brook  
Was strong enough for me,  
But now I take my tot o' rum—  
(I wish to Gawd that Sarg. would come)—  
Each morning about three.

It's easy for the blokes at 'ome  
To talk of honest water,  
And tell us when we take our tot—

(A thimble would hold all the lot)—

We really shouldn't oughter ;  
But if they'd got to stand in mud  
And water to the knee,

I guess they'd take their tot o' rum—  
(*I wish* to Gawd that Sarg. would come)—  
The very same as me.

You've been ten days in the front line,  
Strafed soundly by the Hun,  
You're short o' grub, you're short o' sleep,  
The water's standing three foot deep,  
You're feeling nearly done ;  
"Stand-to !" You shiver with the cold  
You've no vitalit-ie—  
It's then you bless the tot o' rum—  
(*I wish* to *Gawd* that Sarg. would come,  
It's almost half-past three !)

It's like a warm hand round your heart,  
It's like a brazier's glow ;  
It trickles through your trembling lips,  
It thrills you to your finger-tips,  
And thaws your frozen toe.

94 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

“ A little for the stomach’s sake ”—

That’s good enough for me,  
To fortify my fainting frame—  
I’ll give you gospel for the same,  
See Tim. v. 23.

When we return from this ’ere war  
To mothers and to wives,  
No rum we’ll need,  
And then we’ll lead  
Sober and godly lives.  
But while we’re fighting in the mud,  
I begs to hope that we  
Will get our little tot o’ rum—  
(My feet is froze, my hands is numb,  
Thank Gawd ! I see the Sargeant come !)—  
Each morning just at three !

## THE STEEL HELMET

*" I have been a soldier in my youth, and therefore know what a helmet is, and what a morion or cap of steel is, as well as a casque with its beaver, and other matters relating to Soldierly—I mean to the arms commonly used by soldiers. And I say, with submission always to better judgments, that the piece before us, not only is not a barber's basin, but is as far from being so as white is from black, and truth from falsehood. At the same time I say that although it be a helmet, it is not a complete helmet."*—DON QUIXOTE.

SINCE in fair fight  
La Mancha's knight  
Won th' Helmet of Mambrino,  
At storm or siege,  
On lord or liege,  
Has such a casque been seen, O ?

When Cavaliers  
About the ears  
Of Roundheads banged the sword,

96 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

My shrapnel hat  
Might ha' been that  
I' which Barebones praised the Lord !

A halo shed  
Around our head,  
Says one artistic fellow,  
It might have been—  
(A soup tureen ?)—  
Designed by Donatello !

Well, have we not  
For lack of pot  
Used it to boil an egg in ?  
Or to immerse—  
Wash-tubs being scarce—  
A Highland hand or leg in ?

It lies like lead  
Upon the head  
When we are in the trenches,  
Yet I must state  
Our old " soup-plate "  
Is safer than the Frenchies'.



And so we laugh  
When Huns do straf  
Our line as they'd o'erwhelm it ;  
You see that dent ?  
For me 'twas meant—  
God bless my old steel helmet !



POILU WITH SHRAPNEL HELMET

## THE CUIRASSIER'S GRAVE

RAVEN plume on riven helm,  
Rider in an unknown realm ;

Thou hast ta'en the final journey,  
Thou hast made the final tourney,

Shivered thy lance, broken thy sword,  
Ended allegiance to thy lord.

So fares each knight encountereth  
The pale horse and his rider Death !



THE CUIRASSIER'S GRAVE

Post  
Vieux-Condé  
1870

## THE AUSTRALIAN

*In honour to plain Private Bill  
Great Agamemnon lifts his hand.*

THE ANZAC BOOK.

You don't salute, you don't salaam,  
You don't in gen'ral give a damn,  
You don't count much on discip-lyne—  
But Gawd! behold you in the line!

In Egypt, then Gallipoli,  
And now in France, along o' me;  
'Twas like a glint o' Southern sun  
To have you with us 'gainst the Hun.

You're big o' heart, you're big o' hand;  
Somewhere around six foot you stand;  
Sinews o' steel, an iron jaw—  
Fritz holds you fellers some in awe!

You don't salaam, you don't salute,  
But Cornstalks! you know how to shoot!  
Your 'ealths!—I lifts my glass o' beer—  
The biggest, boldest boys out here!



AN AUSTRALIAN

## THE LISTENING POST

FOUR live men lie in the grass,  
Listening what may come to pass ;  
Open eye, attentive ear—  
*Four dead men are lying near.*

We four lying in the rain,  
Harkening if perchance we gain  
Inkling of our enemy—  
*That dead hand seemed to beckon me !*

We four 'neath the lowering sky ;  
Straining ear, and open eye ;  
A star-shell lights a ghostly cheek—  
*Hark ! did I hear that dead man speak ?*

Out beneath the blackened sky  
We four listening live men lie ;  
Deep into the dark we peer—  
*And four dead men seem watching near !*

Unto the Earth my ear I keep ;  
I hear her breathing, long and deep ;  
The speeding shadows come and go—  
*Is that patrol friend or foe ?*

Beneath the blackened heavens we lie,  
Three brave lads—*the dead*—and I ;  
Open eye—attentive ear—  
They do not hear the sounds I hear,  
*Nor see four dead men watching near !*



ALLAH DAD



## TIK, JOHNNIE !

*" Tik, Johnnie ! " (pronounce Teek)—the friendly and familiar salutation between the British Tommy and his Indian comrade-in-arms, heard so frequently during the first year of the war. Freely translated, it means " good," " all right " ; and many a time it seemed to render more tolerable, desperate and well-nigh intolerable conditions.*

ALLAH DAD and Hira Singh,  
You and I fought for the King !  
Hajal Moka, Suba Khan,  
You stood with us, man to man—  
Tik, Johnnie !

When we were tottering to our knees  
Beneath a barbed cheval-de-frise,  
And struggling through the muddy miles,  
You'd meet us with a face all smiles  
And—Tik, Johnnie !

When we were crouching in the trench,  
And choking in the smoke and stench,  
The bullets falling like a flail,  
You'd pass us with a friendly hail—  
Tik, Johnnie !

106 WORK-A-DAY WARRIORS

And when, on stretchers dripping red,  
You bore the dying and the dead,  
With pity in your wistful eye,  
Your greeting seemed half sob, half sigh—  
Tik, Johnnie !

I've seen you leaning on a wall,  
Your head smashed by a rifle ball ;  
You've smiled, and raised a hand, and  
cried

Tik, Johnnie !  
Then turned upon your side and died.

May Allah, when you go above,  
Grant you the Heaven you would love ;  
And if our straying footsteps meet  
Then free and friendly-like we'll greet—  
Tik, Johnnie !



VIA DOLOROSA  
*Bringing in the wounded after 9th May*

## OUR BRITISH DEAD

*O stranger, bring the Spartans word, that here,  
Obedient thus to their command, we lie.*

SIMONIDES.

HERE do we lie, dead but not discontent,  
That which we found to do has had  
accomplishment.

No more for us uprise or set of sun ;  
The vigilant night, the desperate day is  
done.

To other hands we leave the avenging  
sword,  
To other tongues to speak the arousing  
word.

Here do we lie, dead but not discontent,  
That which was ours to do has had  
accomplishment.

Forget us not, O Land for which we fell—  
May it go well with England, still go well.

Keep her bright banners without blot or  
stain,  
Lest we should dream that we have died  
in vain.

Brave be the days to come, when we  
Are but a wistful memory. . . .

Here do we lie, dead but not discontent,  
That which we found to do has had  
accomplishment.



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