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# THE FUNSTON DOUBLE TRACK

WILLARD WATTLES





THE FUNSTON DOUBLE TRACK  
AND OTHER VERSES

*by*

PRIVATE WILLARD WATTLES

*Tenth Sanitary Train, Tenth Division,*

CAMP FUNSTON, KANSAS

MEMBER OF THE VIGILANTES

MANHATTAN, KANSAS

N. A. CRAWFORD

1919

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FEB -1 1919

TO MAJOR-GENERAL LEONARD WOOD:

A SOLDIER IN DISCIPLINE BUT A  
FATHER IN AFFECTION, HE HAS  
BUILT THE ARMY OF DEMOCRACY



## FOREWORD

The proceeds of the sale of this booklet will be devoted to the establishment of a Kansas Poetry Prize, competition for which will be open to natives of Kansas.

The verses in this booklet appeared from time to time, during and after the war, in the *Kansas City Star*, the *Springfield Republican*, the *Boston Evening Transcript*, the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, and *Trench and Camp*; also in *Fifes and Drums*, the contributors to which were The Vigilantes and which was published by George H. Doran Company. Grateful acknowledgement is made to the original publishers for permission to reprint the material.

Special appreciation is extended to the *Kansas City Star* and to Mr. L. F. Wilford, artist on its staff, for the use of the drawing which appears on the cover.





## THE FUNSTON DOUBLE TRACK

*(On the way to Funston, when troop trains pass,  
the men going in different directions reach out  
and slap hands)*

The trains that move to Funston  
Run on a double track,  
And fast as new recruits go down  
The old recruits come back ;  
And some are clad in khaki  
And some are queerly dressed  
In all the odd disguises  
Of gaudy shirt and vest.

The trains that come from Funston  
Go rushing to the east  
Across the greening corn land  
Where harvesting has ceased ;  
And every train that passes  
Is thunderous with noise,  
Each window overflowing  
With ruddy, laughing boys.

The trains that go to Funston  
Move steadily to the west  
Freighted with equal cheering,  
With equal honor blessed ;  
And as the trains are passing  
The men reach out their hands  
And at the touch electric  
Each rookie understands.

“You’ll like it, boy, you’ll like it,”  
The lads in khaki shout;  
“Hey, bo, where are you going?”  
“Don’t know; we’ll soon find out.”  
A touch, a laugh, a passing,  
“I’ll meet you coming back,”  
Where trains go down to Funston  
Upon the double track.

## UPON THE HILLS OF FUNSTON

Upon the hills of Funston the yellow prim-  
rose glows,  
And tangled in the grasses is the shy, four-  
petaled rose,  
With its golden dust of pollen and the wild  
bees hurrying  
Through the green aisles of young summer  
like small, blazing suns a-wing.

Upon the hills of Funston the grass grows  
long and deep,  
And there are pleasant places where a man  
might fall asleep;  
Where overhead the white clouds go careen-  
ing down the sky,  
And it never seems at Funston that a man  
could ever die.

Upon the hills of Funston there are patient  
ranks of brown,  
Where lads with guns and bayonets go  
marching up and down;  
There's a splendor rests upon them from the  
tender, brooding skies,  
And the ringing sword of freedom is the an-  
swer of their eyes.

Upon the hills of Funston the meadowlarks  
swing low . . . . .  
But there are hills in Flanders where the lads  
in brown will go,

And many pleasant places in the sunny fields  
of France  
Where a man may rest him quiet and be mer-  
ry of the chance.

Upon the hills of Funston, in the sun and  
wind and rain,  
The sowing of our parents in their darkest  
hours of pain  
Bears its golden, laughing harvest out of  
which the perfect Bread  
Shall be broken for the nations that are call-  
ing to be fed.

How beautiful, how beautiful the brown and  
dusty feet  
Of those who bring glad tidings that shall  
make the whole world sweet;  
And there upon the Funston hills the doom  
of Hate is sealed,  
Where the patient lines of khaki tramp across  
a rain-drenched field.

("The Funston Double Track" and Upon the Hills of Funston" have been  
set to music by Elizabeth Uhls Lindsey, Overland Park, Kansas.)

## THE DEPOT BRIGADE

I went to join the army, I thought 'twas  
mighty fine  
To be a gory hero in the very front line,  
To mess around with hand grenades—'twould  
be amazing fun  
To jab a hungry bayonet into a howling Hun,  
To get my right arm shot in two and lose my  
eagle eye  
And hang my spinal column on the barbed-  
wire fence to dry.  
King George would come to greet me and  
take me back to Blighty  
And pin a colored ribbon on my pretty little  
nighty;  
Then when the war was over, with all my  
deeds bewilderin'  
I'd scare into coniption fits my children's  
children's children.

And so I came to Funston,—the weather  
went to zero,  
And underneath the shower-bath I hardly  
looked a hero.  
They stuck me in the kitchen, I mounted  
guard all night,  
And I was such an Ichabod my clothes they  
looked a fright.  
I scrubbed the hall a dozen times and fin-  
ished up the floor;  
The corporal, he came along and said, "Now  
scrub some more."  
They bawled me out at reveille, they nagged  
me at retreat,

They made remarks I really think I'd better  
not repeat;  
But worst of all their insults—alas, the sorry  
trade—  
They turned at last and stuck me in the De-  
pot Brigade.

Now all the friends I ever had are fighting  
Huns in France,  
They've raised Old Glory to the winds in  
Pershing's great advance,  
They've died in German dug-outs, they've  
given lives to save  
Some other wounded fellow from a muddy  
Flanders grave.  
They've swept like eagles through the sky  
and won the cross of war,  
Their youth is like a flaming sword, their fate  
a falling star.  
But I am here in Funston—God knows how  
long I'll stay,  
I search the printed list of dead with grow-  
ing dread each day,  
For when the war is over and all of history  
made,  
They'll say, "He stayed in Funston in the De-  
pot Brigade."

(Shortly after the publication of the foregoing stanzas the author secured  
a transfer to the Tenth Division.)

## THE DOUGHBOY'S LADIES' MONTHLIES

Says the Sergeant to the Corporal, "Let's see  
you make a noise,  
For someone's sent some magazines to our  
doughboys;  
Some ladies' aid society has gone and done  
us kind,  
So let's unpack our stocking, and see what  
we kin find."

The Corporal to the Sergeant, he up an' sez,  
sez he,  
"There isn't many high-brows in this here  
compan-ee;  
But what we'll do with *Harp's Bazaar* is more  
than I can tell  
Though they say there's lots of readin' in the  
*Ladies Home Journell.*"

The Sergeant stopped to masticate a chew of  
Navy Plug,  
"We'll use that *House and Garden* when we  
buy the parlor rug;  
An' when that Denver rookie starts to wash  
his overalls  
He kin get some nice suggestions by readin'  
in *McCall's.*"

The Corporal made two shining braids from  
out his auburn hair,  
"I think I'll rest a bit," sez he, "an' take up  
*Vanity Fair;*

I find my figure so obese, I really think I'll  
try  
To cut my Butterick jacket-suit from *Fashions*  
on the sly."

The Sergeant shook two loaded dice, and  
drew another card,  
"I learned this game of checkers from the  
*Youth's Companion*, pard,  
An' when I start to throw a bridge across a  
boilin' canyon  
I'll read up that new tatting stitch in the  
*Woman's Home Companion*."

The Corporal raised his pewter lid and blew  
the foam away\*,  
"I get so tender-hearted when I'm readin'  
*Vogue* all day,  
I sometimes think there ain't no use of high  
ideals an' vision  
Unless my ruffled bathin' suit is genuine Par-  
isian."

The Sergeant to the Corporal, he up an' sez,  
sez he,  
"I think that's all the magazines for this here  
compan-ee,  
An' when the boys has read 'em through, I'm  
sure they'll all be pleadin'  
To have some more good fashion-plates for  
desultory readin'."

\*It is of course to be understood that the liquid in the container  
is Bevo.



## ARMY SHOES

For a Sammy in the army, life is just one  
round of pleasure ;  
From reveille till taps at night somebody's  
got his measure :  
He hits the floor at a quarter of six and grabs  
his clothes and scoots  
Where sleepy, cussy sergeant chaps are lin-  
ing up recruits,  
They bawl him out the whole day long till  
he'd like to kill the brutes  
And every time he turns around some dog-  
goned bugle toots,—  
Oh, there's always something popping in  
the army.

But it isn't kitchen duty that gets the new  
recruity,  
It isn't peeling onions or cleaning cuspidors,  
It isn't lack of booty or the shave-tail so sa-  
lutey,  
That makes him pray in his honest way to  
soon be done with wars,  
It isn't being far from home or being far from  
booze,  
It isn't things he doesn't have, or things he'd  
like to lose,  
It's the shoes!

They take his clothes away from him in the  
receiving station  
And send him shivering down the line like  
Adam at Creation.

They poke him in the short ribs and they  
    grab him by the tongue,  
They say he's got tobacco-heart and can't in-  
    flate his lung,  
And other personal remarks that seldom have  
    been sung  
By any poet I have known without his being  
    hung;  
    Oh, there's always something popping in  
    the army.

They give him soap and water because they  
    think they'd orter,  
They count his spinal column and they mark  
    him up with chalk  
Till he would give a quarter just to be a  
    blooming martyr  
And to punch the first young corporal who  
    gives him any talk.  
It isn't beans and coffee and those peculiar  
    stews  
In which you meet your long lost child or any-  
    thing you choose,  
        It's the shoes!

I know at last the reason men are "buried in  
    their boots,"  
For shoes make splendid coffins for not too  
    plump recruits;  
Or over there in Flanders they will make a  
    cozy row  
Of cast-off shoes with heels run down or rup-  
    tures in the toe,  
And roof them up all shrapnel-proof and cut  
    a door below

So every Belgian family has a brand-new  
bungalow,—

Oh, there's always something popping in  
the army.

It isn't German bullets, or even doctored news  
That gives the lonesome Sammy a fit of army  
blues,

It's the shoes!

I stood retreat the other night all dressed up  
in my best,

The Captain, he looked down the line and  
hollered, "Pee-rade rest."

I bent my left leg at the knee and made my  
stummick small,

My right foot made a backward march six  
inches to the wall,

I grabbed my left thumb, stared in front, and  
heard the sergeant bawl:

"You lop-eared loon, look down and see, your  
shoe ain't moved at all!"

Oh, there's always something popping in  
the army.

If they'd strung me to a girder, I couldn't  
even stirred her,

I moved my foot around inside a dozen dif-  
ferent ways,

But they said the crime was murder, that I  
should have pulled it furder,

And sent me up to Leavenworth and give me  
thirty days.

It isn't fighting Germans, or the poison gas  
they use—

Some day we'll paint old Kaiser Bill a hun-  
dred different hues—

It's the shoes!

## LITERACHOOR AT CAMP FUNSTON

Oh, all the boys at Funston are a literary lot;  
When it comes to writing letters they are  
Johnny-on-the-spot.  
They're not so strong for Ruskin, Aeschylus,  
or Charlie Lamb,  
But they're strong as army mustard for the  
lays of Uncle Sam,  
They come into the "Y" at night in an ab-  
sent-minded way  
And grab a pen and quart of ink and have  
a lot to say—  
For though I never read the books they write  
in such a hurry  
There's someone seems to like them, and so  
it's "We should worry!"

## A BOX FROM HOME AT FUNSTON

When someone gets a box from home in our  
squad-room

Maginnis drops the mopping-stick, and Johnson  
drops the broom,

MacPherson's off in a Highland fling, and  
Terence begins to caper,

While Sandy yanks at the cotton string and  
scatters the wrapping paper.

Oh, here's a pound of chocolate fudge that'll  
turn your whiskers green,

And a chicken fried in its juicy hide as brown  
as a navy bean;

There's angel-food so gol-darned good that  
you reach for another cut,

A box of sinkers sweet with lard and rich as  
a hazel-nut.

Here's a thick divinity-brick, so whet your  
bowie-knife,

And a cocoanut cake that 'ud almost make a  
bridegroom leave his wife.

Like hungry crows we perch in rows on the  
foot of O'Reilly's bunk,

Full to the brim, but waitin' for Slim to carve  
us another hunk.

"Oh, it's hurry up, you lazy pup, or you'll  
never get a smell;

The Kaiser's strong, but Sherman's wrong,  
when he says that war is—*Well*,

Maginnis, drop your mopping-stick, and  
Johnson drop your broom,

For someone's got a box from home in our  
squad-room.

## VISITORS' DAY AT FUNSTON

When the folks come down to Funston  
With Mother in her best  
And Father at the steerin'-wheel  
A-sticking out his chest,  
With sister Mame excited  
At all the things she sees,  
And Aunt Maria sayin'  
"Why! Ain't there any trees?"  
It makes a feller cheerful  
In a kind of home-like way  
When the folks come down to Funston  
On a Visitin' Day.

You meet them at the Hostess House  
Beside the Gold Belt Road,  
And all the women holler,  
"Good gracious, ain't you growed!"  
And sister Mame is watchin'  
To see if you can spare  
One of them shiny buttons,  
An' pattin' down her hair,  
An' Ma brings out her knittin'  
An' says, "We've come to stay."  
Oh, it's mighty fine at Funston  
On a Visitin' Day.

When the folks come down to Funston  
There's lots of things to see:  
The barracks and the mess-room  
And the infirmary,  
The smoke-stacks and the laundry,  
The guns all streaked and pied,  
Our new alfalfa patches

(We're farmin' on the side),  
The Zone an' Army City  
Where Father has to pay  
Till I'm glad he's got the wallet  
On a Visitin' Day.

And then behind the Hostess House  
We climb up on the hill  
An' see the golden valley  
A-lyin' soft an' still,  
With all the panerammer  
Of woods an' hills an' skies,  
It sort of hits you funny  
An' gets into your eyes;  
For you know across the waters  
Where it's all torn mud and clay,  
There's lots of people missin'  
On a Visitin' Day.

## BATTALIONS OF THE SOUL

O ye at home in comfort  
Who laugh and love at ease,  
Remember those who perish  
To guard your luxuries,  
Who on the far-flung ocean  
Or through the smoke-dimmed trees  
Pay with their bodies' anguish  
For the soul's lone victories.

You have been quick to strengthen  
The sinewed strands of steel,  
And squat and spitting monsters  
Move forward wheel by wheel;  
Across the whitened waters  
Cuts swift the avenging keel,  
And through the fields of heaven  
The awful dews congeal.

But not alone with cannon  
Are God's stern battles won,  
And not with driven thunder  
We smite the shameful Hun:  
But with our clean young splendor  
And pulses swift that run  
We raze the walls of Sodom  
And hell's battalions stun.

What will you give to guard us—  
Not in red holocaust  
When the torn fields are streaming  
And storms of shell are tossed—  
But in the lonelier trenches  
Where faiths of home are lost  
And only a day of living  
Seems worth the bitter cost?



A song of *Annie Laurie*  
In a Y. M. hut at night,  
A stamp and sheet of paper,  
A book, a pipe alight,  
A reel of Charlie Chaplin,  
Two boxers squared to fight—  
These are the things you pay for  
That keep our bodies white.

What are your fields and furrows  
Your bursting barns of grain,  
The haze of yellow harvests  
Across the purple plain,  
If, when the war is over  
And your sons come home again,  
The soul's last fort is taken  
And faith's defenders slain?

(Written for the United War Work Campaign of Kansas.)

## / ENLISTED

Have you heard the shiver of bodies hurled  
Chest on crashing chest,  
When thigh-bones snap like pistol shots  
And men meet breast to breast?  
Have you seen the feet of a maddened horse  
Red-wet with the wine of war  
And wondered in crushing a comrade's face  
What you had killed him for?

Ever the sweep of the wave of men  
On the reef of jagged death,  
And frozen faces like cockle-shells  
Where the breaker billoweth,  
The outflung arms of a down-lipped boy  
With his throat shot through—  
Perhaps his shoulder brushed your own  
Or he slept last night by you.

My fathers followed Washington  
Into the forests dim,  
The blood of Warren at Bunker Hill  
In my veins runs from him,  
When Perry crossed from ship to ship  
They bent their arms to row,  
They faced the Mexicans' livid hail  
In the shattered Alamo.

The Susquehanna knew their tents,  
They perished at Bull Run,  
Shenandoah saw our dead  
Staring at the sun;

We marched with Sherman to the sea,  
Starved at Andersonville,  
And one of us died by the barbed-wire fence  
Under San Juan Hill.

You cannot change the written scroll  
Nor alter the charted plan,  
Ever must moaning women quail  
And man make war on man;  
Out of strength must sweetness come—  
Out of sacrifice  
We melt the metal and forge the key  
To enter Paradise.

I thank my fathers for what they paid  
On the altar of the years,  
I thank the women who gave me birth  
In agony and tears;  
I could not wish that life should ask  
One payment less from me,  
And the bugle-call of the arming hosts  
Sets their old passion free.

OH, BOY! OH, JOY . . . . .

*(Based on an incident of the Tuscania sinking)*

*"Oh, boy! oh, joy! where do we go from here,"*  
So the band was playing while the ship swam  
clear.

The trip was nearly over, Erin was ahead,  
Soon we would be tramping down the Flan-  
ders lanes instead.

Smoke was fogging upward, the long low  
room was blue,  
While many khaki tales went round, and none  
of them was true.

Then sudden came the crash of doom, and all  
the lights went out,  
"Steady, boys, they've hit us," came our cap-  
tain's ready shout.

Groping quickly upward, each one found his  
waiting boat,  
But five of them were shattered so we knew  
they couldn't float.

There was calling through the shadows  
where one sought to find his chum  
When a rocket split the darkness that was  
throbbing like a drum.

Then the lifeboats struck the water loaded  
to the very brim  
And there wasn't time to bother with the man  
who couldn't swim.

Then there came a cheery whistle from a lad  
whose ruddy chin  
Hardly cleared the broken wreckage, "Hi  
there, fellows, take me in."

When we said we couldn't take him, that the  
boat was loaded down  
And another man would swamp us so the  
rest of us would drown,

Quick he turned and gave up trying, but his  
laughter rippled clear,  
*"Oh, boy! oh, joy . . . . where do we go from  
here."*

TO THE GERMAN EMPEROR AND  
ALL HIS CLAN

Now that avenging armies  
Hurl back your shattered lines,  
You lift your cheating proffers  
And tune your subtle whines:  
The flail is raised to smite you  
And now before it fall  
You would avert the whip-lash  
In fate's stern judgment-hall.

Across the fields of Belgium  
You leave the spoor of hell,  
We trace the Beast retreating  
And mark his actions well;  
You launch a rain of shrapnel  
At wounded men in boats,  
The while you cry us "Comrade"  
With blackly perjured throats.

We have been stern and patient,  
We have withheld our hand  
In that firm-lipped appraisalment  
You do not understand;  
Now you shall have our answer  
In storm of belching shell:  
"No covenant with devils,  
No compromise with Hell!"

## IN A Y. M. HUT AT FUNSTON

I have heard America singing  
In deep, full-throated choruses,  
I have seen the youth of my country  
Lift up the banner of their fathers  
And with the sword of laughter achieve a  
    silent honor.

There are those who arose in the dawning  
    and kissed and parted,  
Who never again shall hear the cricket re-  
    plying  
Out of the dim-lit midnight;  
There are those who have seen  
The lilt of a head and the backward glance  
    of assurance turned in the doorway, with  
    the old, old gesture of boyhood;  
There are those who shall plow all day in a  
    motionless furrow.

But I have heard the gathering of natural,  
    melodious laughter;  
And I know that no nation, no matter how  
    haughty,  
Can stand in the hour when the young, swift  
    men of my country  
Come to the final ambush laughing and sing-  
    ing.

(Written in May, 1918.)

## AUTUMN HILLS OF FUNSTON

*(To the memory of Lieutenant Robert C. Westman  
of Massachusetts, killed in action August 10, 1918)*

Across the hills of Funston the autumn rains  
have swept,  
And silent are the grasses where the tiny  
creatures crept;  
Brown and red and yellow are the hollows  
of the hills,  
And violet the twilight where the waning sun-  
set fills  
All the little vales and gullies where the  
prairie roses glowed  
In early June in Funston beside the trampled  
road.

For yesterday the word came from the sister  
of a friend.  
"Bob died in France in August," were the  
simple words she penned  
Yet they turned my heart to ashes and they  
drew across the sky  
A veil that clouds the sunshine till the day I  
come to die;  
I could have spared a hundred from the store  
of friends I keep  
If only death had lifted the sickle from this  
sleep.

O autumn hills of Funston where I wait a  
prisoner  
With hands and feet so fettered that I can-  
not even stir,



The glory of the summer and the promise of  
the spring  
Are smit with frost of autumn and with black-  
ened withering;  
There's a new made grave in Alsace where  
the sudden poppies start  
But it's autumn here in Funston and it's win-  
ter in my heart.

## LADS OF THE KHAKI RETURNING

You tell me the war is soon over,  
That Hunland has crumbled down  
And peace in triumphant advances  
Has won through each flaming town.  
I greet you, rejoicer, with gladness,  
Yet mine is the harder fate,  
For peace with her banners and bugles  
Has come to me too late.

In a grave on the Lorraine sector  
Where I cannot know even the place,  
Lies quiet a torn young body,  
My lad of the shining face.  
He rose in the hour of our anguish  
With his eyes on the ultimate star;  
Now never again may I greet him,  
He has wandered so far.

O honor and beauty and splendor  
Of manhood as clean as the wind,  
O hands that were hearty to welcome,  
O Roland whose trumpet was thinned,  
Who blew in the beleaguered passes  
The horn of our desperate chance,  
Whose faith and whose body were white as  
The lilies of France!

The lads of the khaki returning  
March down the long lanes of the flag,  
And some of their coat-sleeves are empty,  
And some are on crutches that drag;  
They are back to the home of their fathers,  
They have stormed the battalions of Hate,  
Yet one face of gay laughter is absent—  
Peace, you are late, you are late!

## THE WAR AT HOME

God of our fathers, with bowed hearts we  
come  
In this glad hour when the unscathed rejoices;  
Strike Thou each little boaster awed and  
dumb  
Before the flame of Pentecostal voices.  
Our youth has stormed the hosts of hell and  
won,  
Yet we who pay the price of their oblation  
Know that the greater war is just begun  
Which makes humanity the nation's Nation.

## PRAYER IN TIME OF VICTORY

God of our fathers, Who hast called once  
more  
Our far-flung legions to the parent shore  
Where England guards the gateway of the  
seas  
And France upholds man's old equalities,  
Where Belgium bleeds beneath the steady  
stars  
And Serbia flames through freedom's ava-  
tars,  
Where grace of Florence and the hills of  
Rome  
Still lift the cross to fling hell's cohorts home,  
Grant Thou, our God Who nerved Cromwell  
with steel,  
In Maenad forms cried loud *A bas Bastille!*  
Who breathed through Garibaldi and Rous-  
seau  
And lifted Lincoln to prove a nation's woe,—  
That we not lightly overthrow the suns  
Too young, too proud, for all our belching  
guns.

Remember Thou the agony of Thy cross  
Which turned to triumph all the bitter loss.  
America runs swift upon appointed feet . . .  
Stay Thou our steps lest they become too  
fleet,  
Break Thou our backs and crown our brows  
with pain,  
Lest we become as those that we have slain;  
And then in faith of love's great victories  
Broken with wonder fling us to our knees.



OTHER BOOKS BY WILLARD WATTLES

Songs from the Hill. University Book Store,  
Lawrence, Kansas.

Sunflowers, A Book of Kansas Poems. A. C.  
McClurg & Company, Chicago.

Lanterns in Gethsemane. E. P. Dutton & Com-  
pany, 681 Fifth Avenue, New York City.









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