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W. H. P.

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SEALED ORDERS

(IN MEMORIAM CAPTAIN PIPON, R.N., C.M.G., C.B.)

Death is a Spirit!

Those who have seen him nearest

Hold him dearest,

For rareness in his choice

When, at his Master's Voice,

He seeks, for his own call,

The bravest, best of all.

When it seems unbetimes

That one both good and great

Should pass the shadowy gate

Opening to stranger climes,

Then may ye feel full sure

The soul has grown so pure

That it must needs incline

Into the Vast Divine.

Death is a Spirit!

We deem his pace too swift ;

To our eyes,

Though we be passing wise,

It is not given

To see across the rift

Between ourselves and Heaven!

On earth we hear a knell—

Elsewhere there peals a bell
In welcome for a guest,
New to the Wondrous Quest
Whereof no man on earth
May ever know the birth.

Only God knows, and they
Who have joined His great Array.

THE FLAG

Who breaks shall pay—the saying's worn,
But heed it ere the flag be torn.
Who breaks shall pay—the time has come,
With blare of bugle, beat of drum,
To herald it, by sea and land,
That Saxon, Celt, and Norman stand
Still foot to foot, still hand to hand ;
Still to the flag their faith they hold—
The flag that's new, the flag that's old.

Wave high, wave high the Union's Flag,
And God for merry England !

And what should quench our Union Lamp
But treachery within the camp ?
The traitors speed their eager race :
For Patriotism ? No—for Place !
Then be it ours their plans to meet,
To prove that patriot hearts still beat.
Recall the days of hard campaign,
When in the bitterest storm of pain,
While cannon roared to bullet's ping,
The self-same rage, the self-same swing,
Burnt Irish, English hearts to one,
Swelled to the highest organ tone,

Wrote history as one, not two,
In the great name of Waterloo.

Wave high, wave high the Union's Flag,
And God for merry England!

Wave high again the Union Flag,
Drop low to lowest depths the rag
That treacherous dismay would weave!
Again, 'tis ours to retrieve
The glories Empire has given,
The glories earth has caught from heaven!
Who breaks shall pay—the tale is worn,
Yet shall we see our splendour shorn,
To give the weak a fretful joy,
To make the Empire a toy,
A byword that will curse the men
Who think of *now*, and not of *then*?

Wave high, wave high the Union's Flag,
And God for merry England!

THE FLIGHT OF A SOUL
Lost, lost, and not a ray
To turn my night to day,
Lost, and no music's air
To break my dread despair :

Lost in the whelming dark,
With not a transient spark
From the immortal fire
Of purified desire :

Lost, where the meteor storm
Sweeps past in formless form,
And, infinitely sped,
The rushing worlds seem dead.

Lost, where each ordered sun
Reports his duty done ;
Lost, in the unnamed abyss
Where sun and satellite kiss.

Found, when the secret's found,
When every meanest mound
Respeaks the Word that cries
To Lazarus, Arise !

Found, when that wondrous note
Rings from each dancing mote ;
Found, when the soul grows still
Before the Eternal Will.

Found, where the Deed and Word
Through measureless vasts are heard,
Where firmaments unknown
Swell one great organ tone,

Where never space nor time
Ruled that tremendous Rhyme,
Where sphere on sphere is riven
In the harmonies of Heaven.

MY STARLINGS—APRIL

My starlings! Your singing
Is in my memory ringing;
With a voice that knew no sadness,
With each note a song of gladness,
You sought the self-same tree
Every morn to welcome me.
Then there came a bitter cold,
And your little tale was told.
When the day had sprung from dawn,
You lay dead upon the lawn,
On the lawn you loved so well,
When the day to noontide fell.
Though the young of your upbringing
Have taken up your singing,
How I miss with every day
Your first-loved roundelay.

THE BIRDS' EVENSONG

(FAITHFULLY REPORTED INTO ENGLISH)

The Leader. Sing it out! Sing it out! Sing it out!

An Elder. Quite right, quite right, quite right.

A Sceptic. Ah! no doubt!

The Choir. All thanks let us render

In all love to the Sender,

To the Sender of Night, to the Sender of Day!

Sc. Who says nay?

The L. Sing it out! Sing it out! Sing it out!

Ch. Sing in praise to the Maker of days!

Sc. Ah! No doubt!

Ch. And to Him who made the night!

Eld. Quite right, quite right, quite right.

A Voice. How I wonder what lies under—

Sc. All this rattle, all this clatter,

But it really doesn't matter.

The L. Never heed him. We don't need him,

He's a child of darkest night.

Eld. Quite right, quite right, quite right.

The L. Sing it out! Sing it out! Sing it out!

Sing with all your little voices,

For each one of us rejoices,

Take it up with a will!

Ch. Ah! yes, who could be still?

Who that had a voice to sing

To the glory of the King?
Who that knows the wondrous way
Of the evening, of the day?
Sc. Who says nay?
The L. Never heed what he may say!
While 'tis neither night nor day,
Let us sing it once again,
Let us sing the loving strain,
For when Night has dropped her screen,
Then the nightingale is Queen!
Ch. Then the nightingale is Queen!
In sad solitary glory
She recounts her passionate story,
Then the Nightingale is Queen!
But to us 'tis love, 'tis duty
To sing out the evening's beauty
Till the ending of the day—
Sc. Who says nay?
Ch. Till the ending of the day,
Till the very death of day!

THE BIRDS' MATINS—MAY

A Starling. We are here!

Another. Yes, you dear!

Both. Our reverences making,
Joyful wings we now are shaking,
We have dipped them in the lake,
And we greet the day awake!

Small bird on twig. Here are bread-crumbs strewn in
plenty!

One in tree. "Then come kiss me sweet and twenty!"

The other. There's no time for such beguiling,
For the day's not long for smiling.

Various voices. We must hurry!
We must scurry!

Here's the cat that they call Pucky!
That no other 'tis we're lucky!

He could charm ye,
But won't harm ye,

It's the cat that they call Pucky!

See, he crouches as for springing!

Then our way we'd best be winging,

Though he may not long to snatch us,

Yet his nature is to catch us,

So our way we'd best be winging

To rehearse our noontide singing!

We can cherish no resentment,
We will chirp and trill contentment ;
We must never dream of scorning
This provision for the morning !

THE BIRDS' GOOD-BYE

It's a pity you are going, it's a pity,
And it lends a little sadness to our ditty ;
We must flock to say good-bye to you,
We must raise a little cry to you
That you soon may come again to us,
For your absence is a pain to us ;
We'd come nearer if we dared,
But at catkind we are scared :
Not the cat that you call Pucky,
For his very name is lucky,
Smacks of poet's nomenclature,
And befits his dainty nature
As a little tricksome fairy
Who would rifle any dairy,
But will leave us birds alone
If we don't dispute his bone.
'Tis the other cats we fear,
Those with prey-attentive ear,
And an eye that means a rush
For young blackbird or young thrush,
Little tigers filled with glee
When a capture safe they see.
But for these our little life
Would have less of storm and strife ;

But for these we'd nearer come
All to wish you back at home.
It's a pity you are going, it's a pity,
And it lends a little sadness to our ditty.

BIRD LOVE

There were two song-thrushes upon the lawn ;
I noted them first at midday's dawn ;
She lay nestling upon the ground,
He hopped and fluttered and hovered around,
And constantly bent a listening ear
Shrewdly groundward till he could hear
A sound that to birds alone can speak,
Then dived with a swift and dexterous beak
To delve out food for his wing-crippled mate,
She took it in languid and gracious state.
When close upon them was my foot's fall
He fluttered away, and without a call
She followed as far as she could fly,
Then rested while he kept watch hard by.
When noon was dying I came again ;
He was still intent at his joyous pain
And she at her patience. Said I, " These two
Are the little lovers who think and do."

THE TORCHRUNNERS

(To FRANCIS COUTTS)

Poet, you question why the Spirit's fire
Should ever pale, and why the heart's desire
To touch the stars is still by earth-ties bound—
In your own mind is not the answer found ?

From age to age, from mighty name to name,
The runners still bear on the sacred flame ;
Not theirs to faint, not theirs to plead for rest—
Is not the torch an answer to your quest ?

The torch is live, it's soul shall never die,
The soul of Man and of Eternity,
Since of your race may never one forget
His task appointed—are you answered yet ?

With eyes downcast from trouble-blinded sight
The riddle still you strive to read aright ?
Look up ! See, through the wildering wrack of care,
The torch aflame, and read your answer there !

THE DEVIL'S THRUST

That summer evening—I mind it too well,
When the Devil crouched in my rapier's shell.
We had loved each other in sorrow and joy,
And we quarrelled over a worthless toy—
A toy that brought his death, my doom !
We fought alone in the great oak-room.
Rapier and dagger—we carried it through,
Each pass, each parry, we both of us knew.
We paused, and then again to our stand,
And I hit him sharp in the dagger hand.
He turned dead white, but he cried, "'Tis well !"
And the Devil laughed in my rapier's shell.
His blade rang clear on mine ; he passed
And touched me in turn, and said, " At last !"
Again he gave me a grazing wound,
And the Devil whispered, " Now, seconde !"
Once more he thrust, I beat down his sword :
It broke—he faced me without a word.
His dagger-hand helpless, he had no chance,
And yet I led him a deathly dance,
Advancing now, retreating then,
Till the Devil cried, " This is sport for men !"
And, " At him again, for he's pinned to the wall !"
Then I used my dagger—and that was all.

KING OLAF

King Olaf looked at his rack of swords,
And said, "'Tis a time for deeds, not words";
He looked at the rack, and out he drew
The blade he counted most straight and true.
"And this," he said, "will serve my intents
For rebels and rascals and malcontents.
Long have they plotted their treacherous game,
Unknowing the terror that clings to my name.
Long have they laid a dastardly plot,
Not knowing what is or what is not.
Long have they lain in an ambushade
Where they hoped my men might fall, afraid.
Long have they thought to rouse a scare
And catch me before I was ever aware.
They have thought the sword in its scabbard fast
While the flag clung idle about the mast :
With the sword unsheathed and the flag unfurled
King Olaf's name shall shake the world !"

FOUR LOVES

There was one I dearly loved, whose heart
Seemed to mine a counterpart ;
The notes were false, or my ear was wrong,
And so an ending of that song.

There was one who loved me well, whose soul
Fitted to mine as oar to thole.
A gale sprang up, as a gale well may,
And to-morrow was turned to yesterday.

There was one I loved, whose radiant face
Made me run the perilous race :
There is one I love, and one loves me
With a Love that spells Eternity.

THE HEART OF MEMORY

I sat beneath a kingly oak,
What words were said no mortal spoke ;
Dark was the night and black the tree :
I thought Death's secret, Memory.

I stayed to greet a talking stream,
I thought of sorrow as a dream—
The world was filled with fantasy
That made Life's secret, Memory.

Again I trod the self-same spot,
Cold was my heart, my passion hot,
No consolation could there be :
Hell's very name was, Memory.

But when, with years and wonders known,
My thoughts to tenderness had grown,
Then Heaven's radiance shone for me
From the heart's core of, Memory !

SUNSET

Sunset, with every sense awake
To catch the beauty of the lake.
Sunset, the sun a dying fire,
The last flame of a soul's desire ;
Yet not the last, for every cloud
Is instinct with new joys allowed.
Sunset, when all the clouds confess
The glories of the rainbow's dress.
Sunset, to all who see aright
It proves an Everlasting Might !
Sunset, and when the sun has set
The heart seems clouded with regret,
Till comes, to match the lord of noon,
The calmer splendour of the moon.

RAIN AND SUN

Rain in a sheet, and lightning through the gloom,
And thereon thunder with its voice of doom :
Rain with its all too cruel lash for some,
Who face it with no hope of rest or home :
Rain that in varying moods brings life or death,
And moves the air with strange and stirring breath.

Sunlight, and not a ray for one poor soul
Who can but catch one part of the great Whole.
Sunlight, and sun for him who sorrow-driven,
Yet sees in sunlight the foretaste of Heaven.

LOVE'S SILENCE

Of all the words that bear their part
In all the deeds of day to day,
One word is chiefly in my heart,
One little word I must not say.

The hills of truth are strait and steep,
They have a smart in every stone,
And climbing them I needs must weep
To think that love should die unknown.

Night follows day—day chases night,
And brings a lesson strange to teach,
That love is lifeless in the light
And silence is the fullest speech.

LOVE'S VICTORY

Beauty fair-haired, with soul serene,
To which of mortals shall be granted
To agitate that tranquil mien,
And lead you to a land enchanted ?

Those eyes as yet to love are sealed,
And shall be till the time appointed,
Until Love's magic has revealed
The realm where he is king anointed.

Shall Love come in a lightning blaze,
And show himself in sudden glory ?
Ah, no ! through slow succeeding days
He timidly shall tell his story.

And then at last the veil shall fall,
Unconsciously you'll make surrender,
Then Love shall reign the lord of all,
Even of your heart in all its splendour !

LIFE AND LOVE

True love is of a birth sublime,
It knows not space, it knows not time :
It has a guerdon from Above ;
For love is life, and life is love.

You, with your dangered gift of scorn,
Would seek to make true love forlorn,
Yet know where e'er your wish may rove,
That love is life, and life is love.

We mortals are compact of change,
We have a thought of wondrous range—
For boy and girl, for man and wife,
Yet life is love, and love is life.

Is't well to judge by human skill
What warrant serves true love to kill ?
It stands, through all your nescient strife,
That life is love, and love is life.

I match remembrance with your word,
The truth may pierce you like a sword,
The truth may be a keen-edged knife,
Yet life is love, and love is life.

False love is like the winding-sheet
Figured in snow and blinding sleet ;
The shelter whence you dare not move
Is—love is life, and life is love.

TWO EPITAPHS

(THE OLD DOG—SCOTT)

A reasoned faith in those he loved,
Wide tolerance for the more removed,
Courage and patience oft-times tried
And never wanting, if these proved
What will outlast this marking stone,
These and all else—then he has gone
Beyond our ken, but has not died.

CAT RAB

Alas, poor jester ! Yet you had rich store
Of friending from all those who knew your spell
While here you stayed ; and now perchance you dwell
In some cat's paradise, and heed no more
The pains whereof you knew not how to tell.
True humorist, you had a wondrous look,
With all your japes and quips, of sad surmise ;
Yet who can boast he read aright the book
Of thoughts behind those topaz-emerald eyes ?

LE CHAT DEVANT LA GUERRE

(FANTAISIE EN VERS LIBRES)

Ron ! Ron ! tout le monde

Dort en paix profonde,

Puisque moi,

Qui suis Roi,

J'dors.

Pstt ! Quel bruit étrange,

Quel vacarme change

Mes idées ?

Ah ! pour quelle affaire

Oserait-on distraire

Mes pensées ?

Est-ce un chien ?

Scrognon-non-non-non !

C'est un rien !

C'est une fusillade,

C'est une canonnade,

Tout va bien.

Ainsi tout le monde

Dort en paix profonde,

Ron ! Ron ! Ron !

AN ETON "VALE"

(WRITTEN FOR A YOUNG FRIEND)

That brilliant "J. K. S." who wrote of thee,
Our Mother Eton, had an eye to see,
A tongue to tell, thy wondrous witchery.
It was a swan-song and a trumpet-call
He made to celebrate thy "long low wall,"
And I who bid farewell to thee to-day
Know he has sung each word that I would say.

HENRY IRVING

“The courtier’s, scholar’s, soldier’s eye, tongue, sword”—
All these he had, and more : the living word
Through his from Shakespeare’s self reached every
heart ;

Nor ever his to play the baser part
That seeks enthronement let what will betide.
Nay, his it was to gather by his side
The first of followers, the best of peers,
And, joined with them, compel or smiles or tears.
Humanity and art his watchwords still,
A passionate pilgrim, through all good or ill
The world could give, he trod the upward way
And passed, in harness yet, from Night to Day.

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