

In the Fighting Top

By Tom MacInnis

1

There's a grim quiver thro' the air:
 Look out,
 You up there on the mast!
 Far and wide
 Over the dancing waves of danger,
 Say, are they coming at last?
 Aye, at last!
 Onward to battle
 They come,
 The Huns.
 Crash!
 Now for the leaping flash,
 And the long-throated thunder of the guns!

2

Yonder there,
 Where so long they were a-hiding,
 Thro' the grey mist gliding
 All in sight!
 Stript for action bare
 To the line!
 Clearer now, and nearer,
 Booming,
 Fuming,
 Rushing to the fight,
 O, fine!
 Over the dancing waves of danger
 How they drive!
 Eager in their anger to begin
 They think to win
 By one colossal victory,
 The sea!
 They seem to be
 Alive!
 Each moment tells:
 Shells!
 Here, there, everywhere,
 Across the heaving bitterness
 They rip and whine and ricochet.
 Shell!
 Screaming as they come at us,
 Screaming as they pass,
 To smash!
 Now, you, up there,
 Beware the smoor o' the poison wreath!
 Beware!
 The bolt of dragons darting overhead,
 And the dooming monsters nosing underneath!

3

Thud - thud - thud -
 We're in it now; the fight is on!
 Steel-ript,
 Flame-tipt,
 Look, there's one already gone!
 Split asunder
 Plunging under
 Into blue oblivion.
 Now, fire away, my fighting-top!
 Your turn has come!
 We're nigh enough for the little ones
 To reach and drop
 The Huns.
 We'll do them dead with the spatter of lead
 And the spit of our little artillery!
 While the big ones down below!
 So thud, thud, thud!
 But, O, that smashing below!
 Shrieks and groans!
 And the decks are slimy with blood
 While stark bits of flesh and bones
 Slip senseless in the sea!
 Blood!
 But what care we?

4

High up, with our little artillery
 We have our part to play;
 So, fire away, my fighting top!
 Hard hit, we know,
 We soon may go;
 Already the mast begins to sway;
 But fire away and do them dead—
 Do them dead until we drop
 Smacking in the sea!
 Maskee!
 Across the heaving bitterness,
 Fighting yet we call to death—
 And this is life!
 Life to the final stress!
 O, we are toppling gods, no less,
 Battling hell!
 In the feel of eternal life, no less,
 Laughing at hell!
 Tho' now for us
 Vast in one lightning moment of collapse
 All time may blast itself to nothingness.