



THE VETERAN.

WELL, boy, you're going off to war.
I'd go again myself
If I was fit. Just reach my sword
From off that dusty shelf.
Ah, thanks! The thrill it carries!
This battered hilt to hold.
I'm mutilated, boy, but still
I'm far from being old.

Just think, a scant eight months ago
I left here strong and tall,
And with my Briton brothers
Threw in my lot, my all.
Just eight short months, but in that time
I've lived a tragic life,
And seen my fill of hate and flame
And death in callous strife.

Eight months ago I used to dream
Of glory's honoured crown.
Eight months, and in that hasting time
My idols tumbled down.
I dreamt the thrill of battle;
The roaring charge; the check;—
I never thought that I'd return
A battered, useless wreck.

Oh, I was but a driftwood in
The backwash of a corps.
I've suffered and I've risked my life,—
That's what I 'listed for.