

The Poet's Corner.

A Soldier's Prayer.

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my rank to keep;
Grant no soldier tries to take
Shoes or socks before I wake.
Watch o'er and guard my slumber,
Keep my bunk and number;
May no pole or guy rope break
And smother me before I wake.
Protect me in my dream,
Make it butter, cheese, and cream;
Let me dream of chocolate cake,
Forgetting not the sirloin steak.
Grant that time may fly on wheels,
Till I get some decent meals.
And that snowy feather bed,
Where I long to lay my head,
And those greasy half-baked beans,
Take me back in my dream to-night,
And forever more I'll be all right—
Take me back to that land so true,
Where they don't hike in mud all over your shoe,
Where the rain storms cease, and no cold wind blows,
Where the laundries wash and don't spoil your clothes.
Lord, Thou knowest all my troubles,
From grooming mules to pick and shovels:
Lord, if Thou but take me home,
I'll promise the world no more to roam,
No more to leave the old fireside,
Though war may wage on every side;
I'll never swear, I'll never drink,
Or at fair ladies cast a wink,
But I'll settle down with a bonnie wife,
To live contented all my life.
Lord, grant this my earnest prayer:
Just take me back to "Anywhere."

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Munitions.

I'd love to hear the church bells ring,
The way they crashed out years ago:
The years another George was King,
And warships came to Plymouth Hoe.
But bells go by machinery now,
They only ring for funerals;
The long, low ships come silently
To unknown, hidden, grey sea walls.

I'd love to see my own true love
Come radiantly home to me.
I ask no other treasure trove
From all the world or any sea.
But true loves do not come again,
Now all the world is coloured grey,
While only hope and dreams remain,
Since our true men have sailed away.

Oh, I shall hear the church bells ring
The way they crashed out years ago,
When all the armies of the King
Come sailing home by Plymouth Hoe.
And I shall see my own true love
That died in France far from my breast;
He'll march unseen, but I shall see,
And I shall cheer him with the rest.

J. B.

The Sergeant-Major Instructor: His Smile

(CONTRIBUTED FROM CANADA.)

Through six short weeks we've blundered,
And basked beneath his smile.
Through troubled paths of brushwood
He led us many a mile.
Most of us cleared the hurdles,
Superior and rough,
We scaled the ditch and counter-scarp,
And thought we'd called his bluff.

But when upon the crest we stood,
All eager to revet,
We saw him with a long fascine
Balancing the parapet.
Some would have crowned him then with sods,
Some would have sand-bagged him,
And some were waiting for relief,
Some were for slaying him.

With a gabion for a halo,
He smiled and sweetly said:
"Now boys, we're on the downward grade,"
Away we once more sped.
He tied us into many knots—
His smile seemed most intent—
And with a fougasse drove us through
Barbed wire entanglement.

From a machicoulis gallery,
Through an egg-glass in the floor,
We saw him doing tambour stunts,
With tubes of bangalore.
He thirty million thirsty men,
And thrice as many horse,
Had watered ere the sun was up,
With one pump—lift and force.

And when we fondly hoped to pause,
Beside a three-flagged stream—
"To-day we build some brushwood huts,
And dig a new latrine.
Just place that village in defence,
A gun epaulment there,
And don't forget your 10 per cent."—
He never turned a hair.

Midst spars and struts and transoms,
And falls with C2 strain,
He thrust a tamped BT2 charge
Upon our aching brain.
His figures and his formulæ
Were getting past a joke.
"In ten minutes time we carry on;
Now break off for a smoke.

There's aparados behind you,
I've traversed both your flanks;
You know the angle of descent,
High powers can't thin your ranks."
Again his sweet smile cheered us,
When a running guy brought word,
Our one and only trestle bridge
Lay gun-cottoned in the ford.

The unmeasured stream we needs must cross
The final lap to win;
But you can bet he boomed us o'er,
On a unclosed biscuit tin.
We've breasted the tapes, measuring,
Can stand at ease awhile,
And though his formula's forgot,
We'll not forget his smile.