



THE RUBAIYAT OF A MAN-AT-ARMS.

OH, come all ye who for the Nation toil :
Ye grimèd smiths, ye tillers of the soil ;
Come,—would you hearken to a soldier's lay—
Who ne'er laid hand to rifle nor to foil.

Away with me into the barrack square ;
The clean-combed barracks in its limewashed
glare ;

Away to Tommy's home in piping Peace ;
The den of fighting cubs, the lion's lair.

Here dwells the soldier in a groovèd crease ;
Here rots the guard of enervating peace.

In seeming lazy uselessness he does
His thankless duty as the nation police.

His pleasures limited, his spirit dead,
Dressed in a branding coat of roaring red,

The object of the hare-brained jester's pun ;
O'er him no praise is sung, no mass is said.

Lonely and forgotten he must lie,
Doing his duty most mechanically.

And fashioned women draw their kirtles back,
Lest he, polluting, touch them passing by.

What wonder, then, in lack of other cheer,
Without a home, with none to hold him dear,—

What wonder if, within a shell retired,
He drowns o'erweening loneliness in beer?