

We lingered lovingly over *The Vale of Tears*. It was Gustave Dore's swan-song, for he died while the paint was yet wet on the canvas.

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The Padre has returned to London. He has been at Colchester for a fortnight, speaking to the soldiers. The regiments there quartered are the Warwicks, Gordon Highlanders, and Irish Fusiliers. He reports that when orders came for the men to be ready for immediate transportation to South Africa, the hospital was full of sick privates. In three hours there was not a solitary man in bed. The devilish itch to fight, which lies close under the skin of all Anglo-Saxons, had come out in a red heat, and every mother's son of them was ready to pay "the tax of blood" to his country, and, if need be, lay his body down to fertilize the soil of an African veldt.

John Bull deserves his name, for he is decidedly bellicose. He was keen for battle, and was far from pleased when the Hon. Cecil Rhodes said Kruger would "climb down." The war has not, however, been taken up with universal enthusiasm. Those called "Little Englanders" are making themselves heard. Still the red horse has begun his dread march, and this time it is a fight to the finish.

On Saturday we went to the Waterloo Station to witness the departure of the soldiers. Some of the officers left in private cars. Their mothers, wives, and sweethearts said good-bye to them with dry eyes, but pale, drawn faces. These women are of the best stock in the world, and would consider any display of feeling as bad form. Their stoicism, if less admirable, is quite equal to that of our Red Indians.

Every inch of space was occupied by eager spectators, with a strong cordon of

police lined up to hold them back. At one o'clock we heard the throbbing of the drums and the stirring strains of the band of the Grenadier Guards, and soon the Kharki-clad troops came into view. The cheering was tremendous, and with one voice the people welcomed The Black Watch by singing, "Auld Lang Syne." In spite of the police the crowds pressed on the soldiers, so that they were unable to preserve anything like good formation, and were therefore allowed to "march at ease." The detachments became thin lines of dust-color that wormed their way through the dense mass of people.

The Duke's son stood up in his stirrups and cheered; the cook's son came with his arm linked in his wife's; the son of a belted earl bared his head to wave the national colors. Youths and women insisted on carrying the soldiers' kit-bags, rifles, and impedimenta. The enthusiasm was unbounded, and one heard such shouts as these: "Ip, ip, urroar;" "Them's the boys for old Kruger;" "Shoot straight for the Old Country;" "Pull his whiskers" (Kruger's); "Don't forget Majuba;" "God bless you, laddies, and bring you safe home to your mothers." The Padre threw his silk hat into the air, and didn't catch it. The result was disastrous.

There were many tear-stained faces, and hearts that ached, too, for these tough-fibred sons of Mars, led out like sheep to the slaughter, for it will be a mere handful who come home again.

"Tramp, tramp, tramp, earth groans as they tread,
The clay-covered bones going down to the dead.
Every stamp, every step, every footfall is bolder,
'Tis a skeleton tramp with a skull on his shoulder.
But O! how he strides with his high-tossing head!
This clay-covered bones going down to the dead."

The cars pulled out to the strains of "God bless you, Tommy Atkins, here's your country's love to you." Ah, well! all the rest will be prose and sharply punctuated.