

Not that the only end beneath the sun
Is to make every sea a trading lake,
And all our splendid English history one
Voluminous mistake.

They who marched up the bluffs last stormy week,
Some of them, ere they reached the mountain's
crown,
The wind of battle breathing on their cheek,
Suddenly laid them down.

Like sleepers—not like those whose race is run—
Fast, fast asleep amid the cannon's roar,
Them no reveille and no morning gun
Shall ever waken more.

And the boy beauty passed from off the face
Of those who lived, and into it instead
Came proud forgetfulness of ball and race,
Sweet commune with the dead.

And thoughts beyond their thoughts the spirit lent,
And manly tears made mist upon their eyes,
And to them came a great presentiment
Of high self-sacrifice.

Thus, as the heaven's many-coloured flames
At sunset are but dust in rich disguise,
The ascending earthquake dust of battle frames
God's pictures in the skies.

*William Alexander,
Late Primate of all Ireland.*

Written during the Boer war.