
THE WHITE COMRADE

One pulse-beat in the world's great heart of flame.
Perhaps a whistling youth on days of sun,
One among shadows on this night of nights,
Moving with other shadows all night long.
One leaving little loves far, far behind,
One pressing on with thousands of his kind
To answer that great question life had asked
Each one upon his hilltop back at home.

We three marched near together through old France,
Together trenched those days at Neuve Chapelle,
And saw the heavens part and fires descend,
And felt the roar of such a cannonade
As all the world of battles had not known.
The French lay close beside us, and near them
The lithe, brown men from India—heroes they.
We felt like children just discarding toys
In face of those whose souls had long known war,
Whose spirits flashed like rapiers in the face
Of the Great Danger. They were men indeed
Whom it was good to look upon and know,
And in those nights they learned of us to say,
When German flares lit up the evening skies,
"Behold the Northern Lights!" St. Julien came,
And that wild night in which old Edward fell.
Those hours are hard to speak about at all.
They went by like a flash in which we moved
As one man altogether, and the hours
Flared up to heaven like a burning torch.