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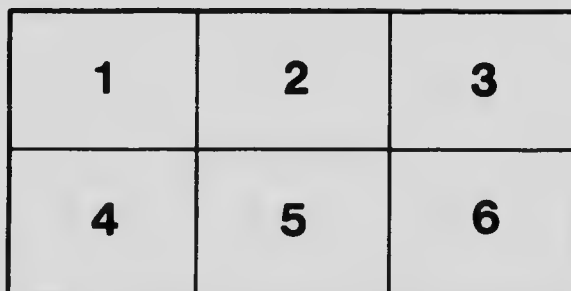
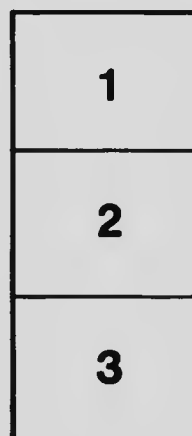
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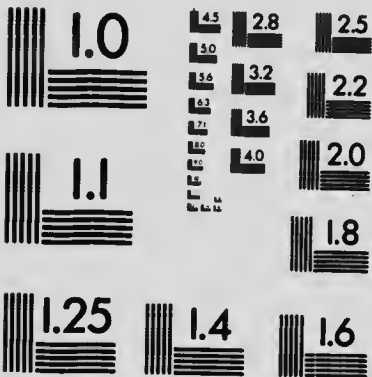
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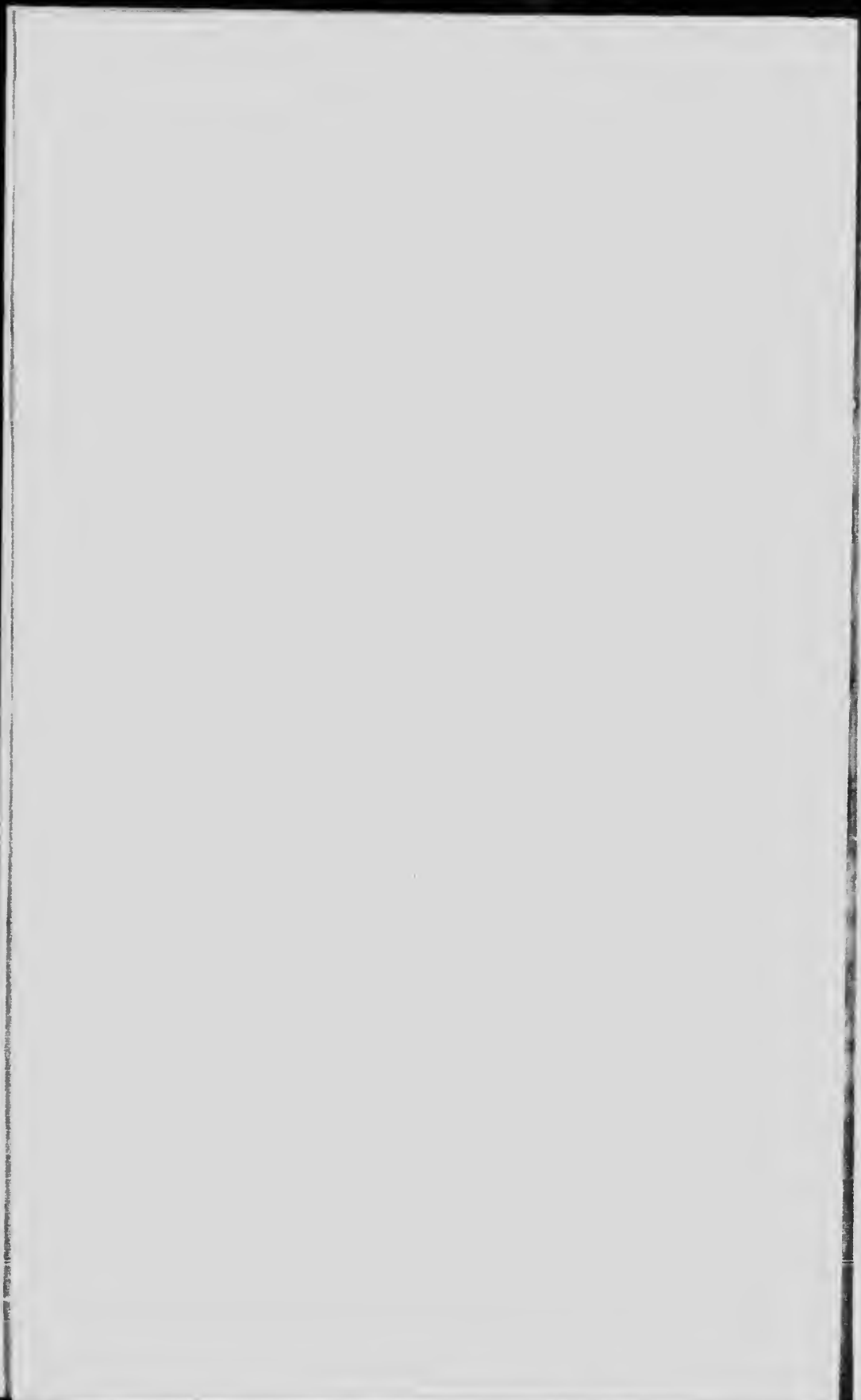
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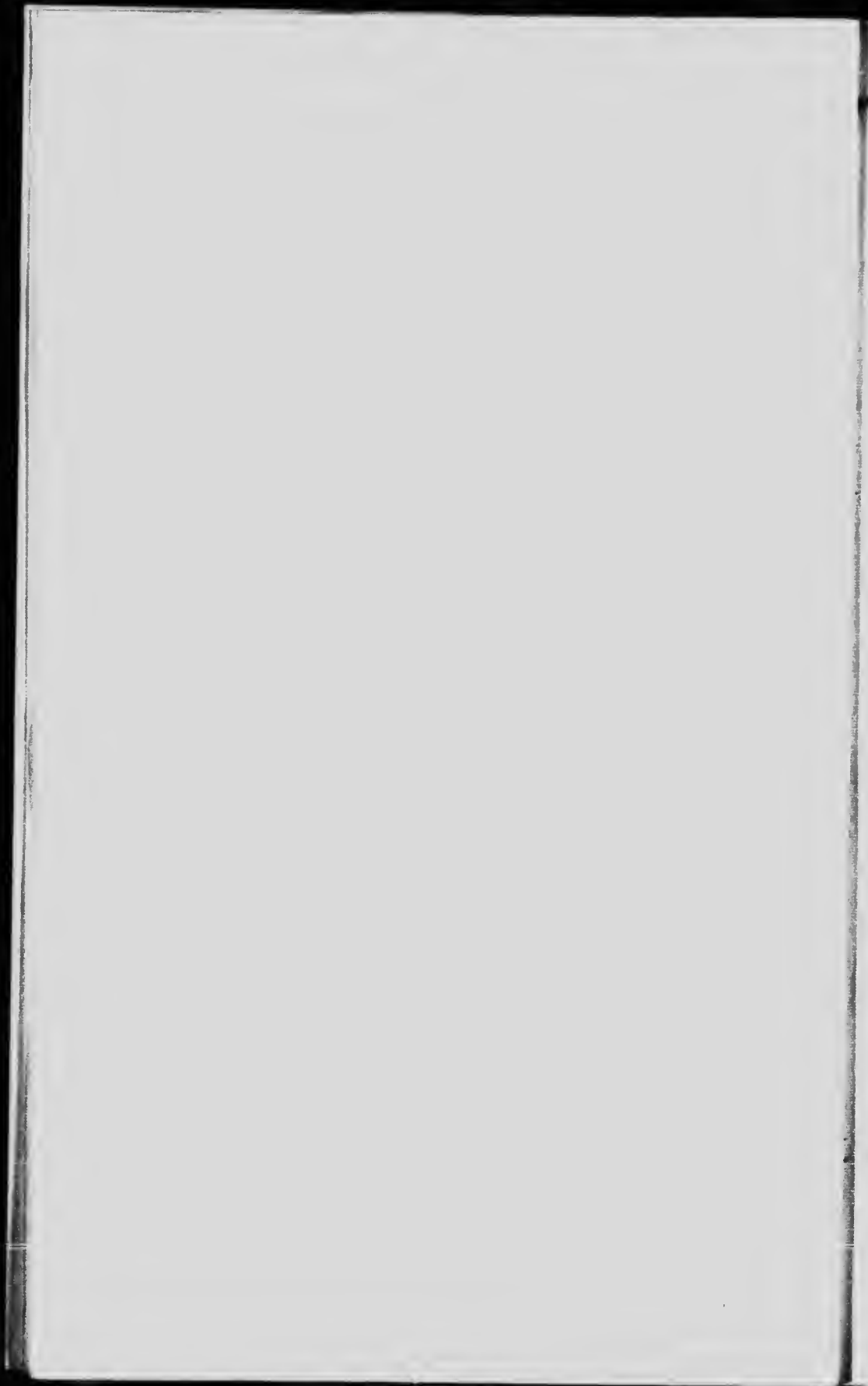


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**THE NEW JOAN
AND OTHER POEMS**



Poetry

THE NEW JOAN

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

KATHERINE HALE

Author of "Gray Knitting", "The White Comrade", Etc.

Author of "The White Comrade" (Warrior's Companion)

McCLELLAND, GOODCHILD & STEWART,
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These are chiefly songs of women's work, but there is a Christmas song for soldiers. The music of life is stilled to-day. Only the bugle note is heard. To the men in the trenches it means action, organized and perfected; to us at home it repeats the call. These songs are bound in crimson for that is the colour of courage; and in gold which signifies the strength and the joy of life which is work.

THE NEW JOAN

THE VISION

A SOLDIER'S soul returns the centuries down—
Radiance again! Love's gleaming mystic mate,
She who was burned for witchcraft and for state
In the old market-place of Rouen town.

To-day I met her spirit on the Earth,
And felt a joyous light dark spaces fill;
I knew this troubled planet called her still
Upon the wheel of reincarnate birth.

"Behold a legion of all-souls," she said,
"Who ride again for country and for King,
And with them, as the ardent sun with spring,
See the enchanted ones that life calls dead."

"Woman and man, renewing faith's old tryst,
Breast, shuddering, the deeps of this last war,
And high above them gleams the stranger-star,
Silver in blood-red skies—the grail of Christ."

"O you who see a vision in the night,
And you who ride high-hearted, woman-man,
I call you by the name of The New Joan."
So passed she, clad in armour, clad in light.

I

THE CHILD

GIVE me a new soul, God of all things free,
Help me to dream the golden dream of youth,
Till gazing deep into the eyes of Truth
The dream returns in life that is to be.

With Thee I breathe a fire most strange and bright,
Rosy as dawning, jubilant as day,
A light eternal on the time-worn way,
A morning note to stir the aged night.

To sing the song of flower-time again
It is to deck with joy an ancient door,—
A fresh rose, cosmic of each rose before,
To link with wonder in the endless chain.

And as they play mid stars or 'neath the sun
I ask a song for children everywhere,
A gleam that dances with them unaware
Since God, and they, and joy, are wholly One.

II

THE LAW

IF Law be given my hand to make
I pray Thee, Lord, that I may break
The old Law, resolute and hard
And fickle as a chance-thrown card.

And ere I lay me down to sleep
I pray Thee, Lord, new Law to keep,
Great statutes made of Love and Pain,
Beauty of Sorrow born again.

For I would find out Truth, my Lord,
The soul behind the naked word,
And at the bourne where life began
I would inquire the law for man.

Perhaps a Voice may answer me
That until man in woman be,
Woman in man, the two in one,
The latter days have not begun.

The woman-will of man a part,
The more-of-man in woman's heart,
From that great marriage pure of flaw
May spring the Everlasting Law.

III

THE KITCHEN

*"Whoever makes a thing more bright
He is an angel of all light"*
So I, with every skill I can,
Return to use of pot and pan.

Retrieve must I the ages' waste,
And learn that what the years call 'Taste,'
Is Hunger's sated brother, Sin.
Lo, I shall dwell where Truths begin.

A kingdom enter, ancient, dear,
Where red Fire lives, and Plenties are,
Where Order summoned back to me
Makes Labor sing, makes Beauty free.

So shall I take the golden wheat
And make me loaves for men to eat;
For I am Joan, whose pure desire
Still keeps aflame the household fire.

IV

THE LAND

I AM back on the land of my fathers,
And I tread it with double-soled boots,
I hoe it with hands that are toil-worn
Wearing joyful and picturesque suits.

I am clad, head to foot, in dull khaki
That echoes my good mother—Earth,
And I'm glad that my profile is "boyish,"
That my "song" is a whistle of mirth.

I can cut and convey to my cabin
These logs that I need for the fire,
And I hail the concern of each slacker
Who is ribald anent my attire.

I am doing his bit, though he lingers.
I am Joan—and not Peter Pan.
Yet the vision that glows through my working
Is the love that I bear to one man.

V

THE BATTLEFIELD*

SOMETHING sings gently through the din of battle,
Something spreads very softly rim on rim
And every soldier hears, at times, a murmur
Tender, incessant,—dim.

A tiny click of little wooden needles,
Elfin amid the gianthood of war;
Whispers of women, tireless and patient,
Who weave the web afar.

Whispers of women, tireless and patient,
"This is our heart's love," it would seem to say,
"Wrought with the ancient tools of our vocation,
Weave we the web of love from day to day."

And so each soldier, laughing, fighting,—dying
Under the alien skies, in his great hour,
May listen, in death's prescience all-er-folding,
And hear a fairy sound bloom like a flower—

I like to think that soldiers, gaily dying
For the white Christ on fields with shame sown deep,
May hear the tender song of women's needles,
As they fall fast asleep.

*This poem first appeared as "Grey-Knitting."

VI

THE WORLD

It is a new world that my feet must tread,
New, though the hurrying ages call it old,
While fields that yesterday were cloth-of-gold
Are all dissolving, like a film half-fled.

The wondrous 'stage' of life, its mimic joys;
The deft accomplishment, the bubble fame;
Statecraft bedecked as a career, a name;
Art as a servitor that wealth employs—

These were the worlds our mothers counted new,
These were the ways we still had kept our own,
Until Eternal Law from His high throne
Melted our world in sudden fire, and dew.

And now through mists of dew, through leaping flame
We ride again upon an ancient quest,
That we may bring Love home, no longer guest
But Love Triumphant, ever to remain.

See the bright banner a new Day outflings;
It shall be ours to hold it high and white.
Again a Voice! And out of dawning light
The deathless soul of God through us sings.

*Spirit of Life, radiant and glad and free,
Come, as of old, be born again of me.
Through me recover that which man has lost,
Mine was the making, mine the precious cost.
Out of my body come the sons of men,
Into my keeping give their souls again,
And let me make this world God's little room
Wherein Love's splendours live again and bloom.*

CHRISTMAS SONG

To You—Beloved—in the Trenches

CHRISTMAS! Is it merry?
"Smokes and bully-beef!"
Not one blood-red berry
Not one holly-leaf.

Stockings filled with pleasure
That a day destroys—
Boxes crammed with treasure
Ah! Trench-children's toys!

"Things" that in the passing
Bring a ray of light,
"Joy!" with death amassing
All this Christmas night.

"Stories!" Yes! and "Laughter!"
And the heart held high;
Silence following after
And the soul's still cry.

Yet another feast day
In the mud of France—
"Hearts," we can at least say,
"Onward goes the dance."

"There is no cessation
To this small affair,
On with war's vocation
In the hell-fire's flare."

It is true as spoken
With the one word more:
We have found a token
By hell's open door.

Through Death's crimson gateway
We have seen a sign
That has made this Birthday
Still a night divine.

Through the first sweet silence,
Darkness, close and near,
Has disarmed hell's violence—
Night has whispered clear.

"Though all Earth be broken
Two things live above,
These—God's ancient token—
Quiet stars—and Love.

"Stars for life's last reaping,
Stars in heaven's bright dome,
Love for your safe keeping
Love to lead you home."

LONDON

A Canadian soldier, returned to "Blighty," speaks

THE day we came to London! Oh, how strange
To see the City-of-the-World like this!
Our dreams had been of London. Not 'the sights'
But that young London that young hearts explore;
The Music Halls, the roads, the sleepy Inns,
Where old Romance is felt anew each day.
This was to be our London.

Thus we came:

We came as cattle come, when packed too tight
In some barbaric car of ancient mould;
We came not driven with whips, nor massed in crowds,
But driven by bitter pain and almost dead
From faintness of our wounds. We came
From siege and rapine, plunder and hell-fire,
From thunders never ceasing, from swift death,
From screams and cries, and parting gasp of souls,
And from supremest vision given to man.
This way we came to London.

Oh, my friends,

We touched white cliffs upon a summer day,
Pain-blinded, minds befogged, we rode along
That ancient-traversed way of all the world.
And, slowly, as the evening shadows fell
We reached old Paddington. Were driven out
In shabby cabs, through misty, half-lit ways,
Into a great wide Place, from whence small streets
Wondered zig-zag with no apparent plan,
Yet knew we were at home.

I still can feel
The cab stop for a moment, and a face
Peer in the open window. 'Twas a mask
Set in a flowered hat. With awful eyes
She stared, and asked, and answered in a flash:
"Ah, well! You're nearly dead, poor dears, but I—
I, who am here forever, come again."

And then we drifted on, and soft grey walls
Held us a moment to dissolve in mist.
Once at a turn I saw the Abbey rise
And once the outstretched arms of giant trees.
Sometimes a light, but always murmurous noise
Not so much hoof-beat, motor-hum or cry,
As vibrancy of voices, far and near,
A myriad-mingled sound of many men.
This, and a strange new vision of the heart,
A love just dawning, an age-old surprise,
A sudden turning to those splendid arms
That are forever open. Thus we came
Broken by war, home to her splendid arms.

THE MOTHER

My son sails high
His ocean, azure air :
He in the shining sky—
And swift Death everywhere.

His ardent youth
Explores a strange new sea
As if even Death, forsooth,
Were rare good company.

And my dear heart,
Each moment that you fly
Is a dull eon apart
In my soul's agony.

This autumn wind
Treachorous, hungry,—chill,
Those laughing wings may find
And rend, and still.

The earth-force, strong,
Ready to lure your bark,
May hum a homing-song
And draw you to the dark.

O golden Fire,
Whose course is never run,
Outshine all dark desire
And keep my son.

A SPRING DAY

O, MARCH, he is a loud-foot lad,
Nor pipes as April can,
But this green day he brings again,
An olive-branch to man.

His emerald hours are promises
Set in the snow-white days;
And slowly moves Earth's miracle
Along the hidden ways.

As peace is paler than red war,
The crocus than the rose,
So Life comes whispering up the land
A word that whitely glows.

And not in azure Arcady
Or where great battles ring,
Is felt the everlasting hope
That is the heart of Spring;

But in the spirit of the race
That holds a vision clear,
And plucks the flower of fadeless dream,
Through soldier as through seer.

JUNE, 1917

THE road runs green again, my friend,
That yesterday lay white,
And shadows deep as violets
Are washed away in light.

For northward mounts the eagle sun,
And Spring in silver sheen
Has set some blood-red flowers aflame
Along the road grown green.

The bugle's note, the robin's note,
A trio make with June,
And laughing Life, and ardent Death,
They will be wedding soon.

But O, the splendor of the way!
And O, the magic sheen
That hath enmeshed God's flower-of-love
Along the road of green!

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