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The Girl
Behind the Man
Behind the Gun



by Wilson MacDonald



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The Girl Behind the Man Behind the Gun

You have seen the line of khaki swinging grandly down the street,
You have heard the band blare out Brittanic songs,
You have read a ton of papers, and you've thrown them at your feet;
And your brain's a battle-field for fighting throings,
You have cheered for Tommy Atkins and you've yelled for Jack Canuck;
You have praised the French and Belgians, every one,
But I'm rhyming here a measure to the valor and the pluck
Of the girl behind the man behind the gun.

There's a harder game than fighting; there's a deeper wound by far
Than the bayonet or the bullet ever tore,
And a patient little woman wears upon her heart a scar,
Which the lonesome years will keep for evermore,
There are bands and bugles crying, and the horses madly ride;
And in passion are the trenches lost or won,
But SHE battles in the silence, with no comrade at her side,
Does the girl behind the man behind the gun.

They are singing songs in Flanders, and there's laughter on the wind;
They are shouting for their country and their king,
But the hallways yearn for music in the homes they left behind;
For the mother of a soldier does not sing,
In the silence of the night time, mid a ring of hidden foes,
And without a bugle cry to cheer her on,
She is fighting fiercer battles than a soldier ever knows;
And her triumph is an open grave, at dawn.

You have cheered the line of khaki swinging grandly down the street;
But you quite forgot to cheer another line,
They are plodding sadly homeward, with no music for their feet,
To a far more lonely river than the Rhine,
Ah! the battle field is wider than the cannon's sullen roar;
And the women weep o'er battles lost or won,
For the man a cross of honor; but the crepe upon the door
For the girl behind the man behind the gun.

When the heroes are returning and the world with flags is red;
When they show the tattered trophies of the war;
When your cheers are for the living and your tears are for the dead,
Which the foeman in the battle trampled o'er;
When you fling your reddest roses at the horseman in array,
With their helmets flaming proudly in the sun,
I would bid you wear the favor of an apple blossom spray,
For the girl behind the man behind the gun.

WILSON MacDONALD.

