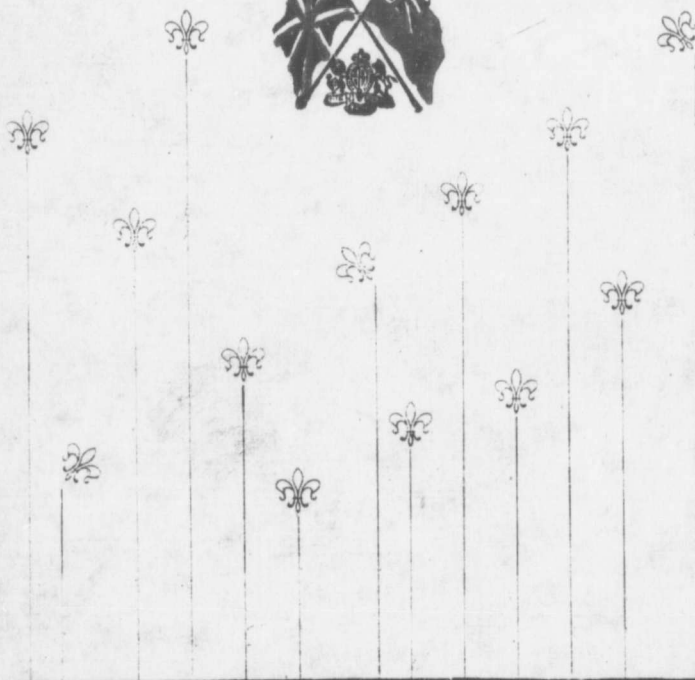


War Poems.

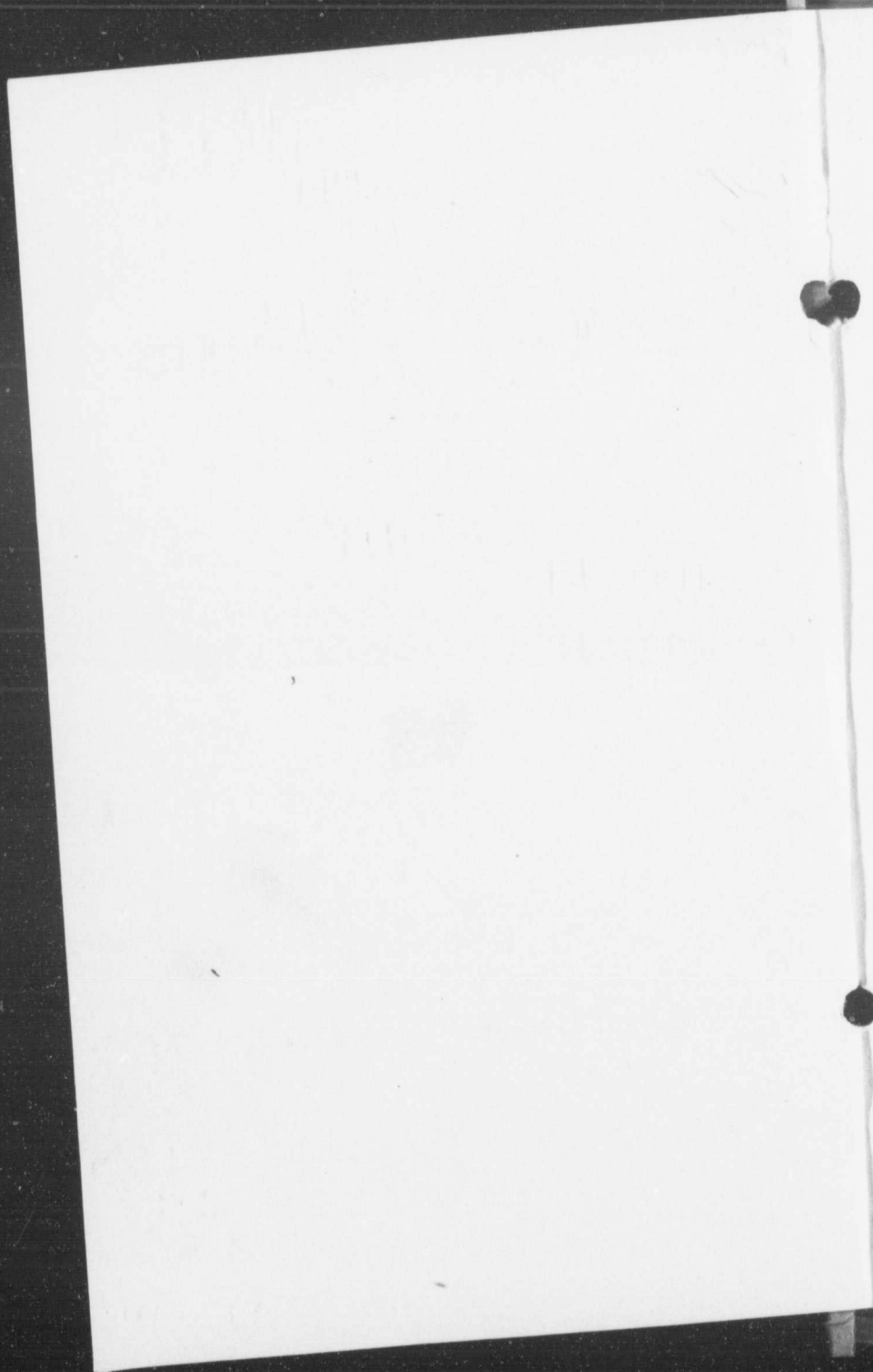


By
The KHAN

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War Poems

By
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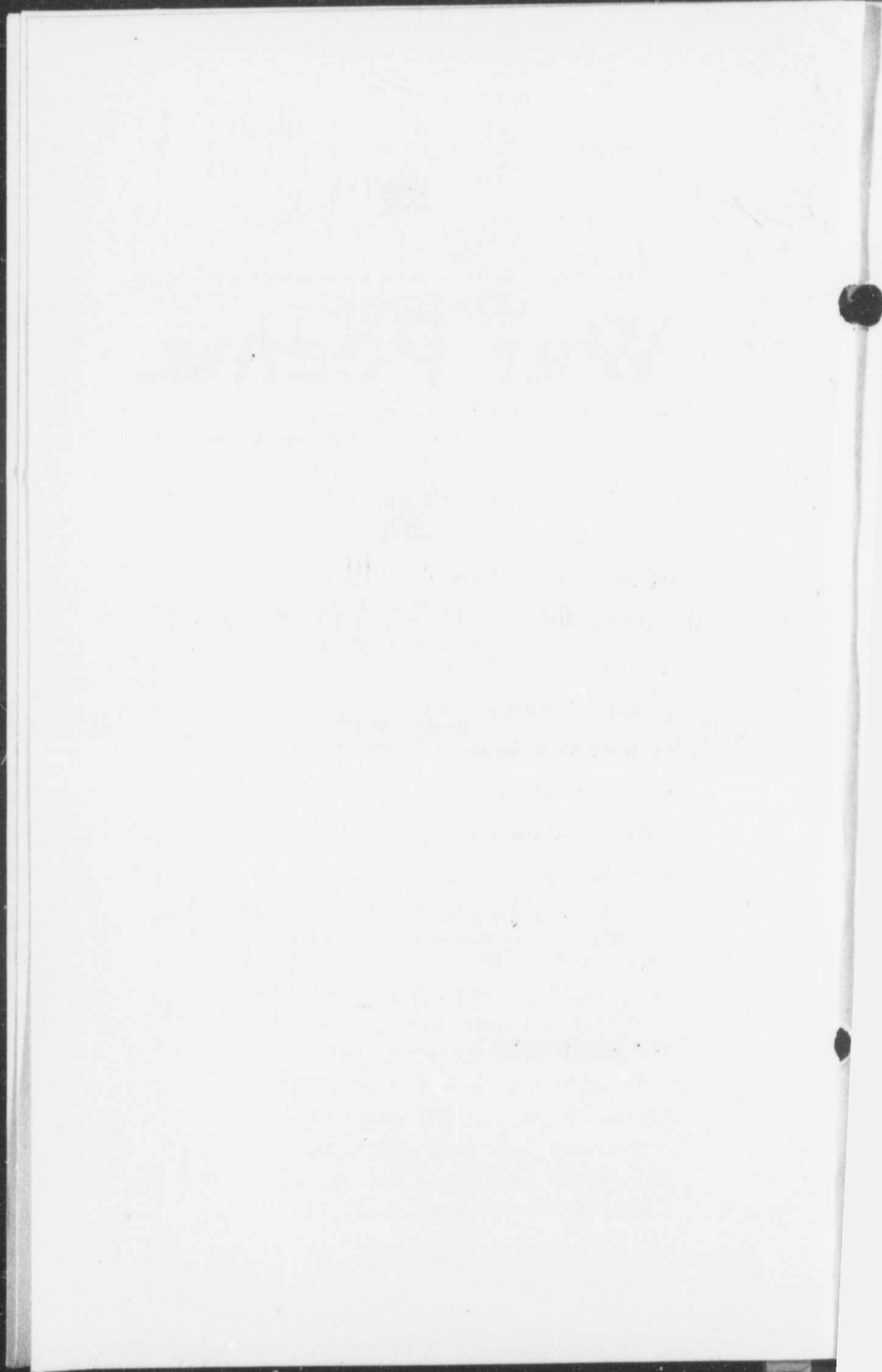
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By

R. K. Kernighan.

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War Poems.



FROM STONEY CREEK TO LANGEMARCK

At Stoney Creek a lilac grows
Beside an ancient fence,
Above the graves of friends and foes
It pours its sweet incense.
I'd love to take a shoot that waves
A lissome leafing lance,
And plant it on our soldiers' graves
In far-off blood-stained France!

The battlefield is scourged and bare
Where shrapnel tore the loam,
A Canuck lilac growing there
Would make it look like home.
Across the sea a bird might win
His way, and sing perchance
The Maple Leaf For Ever in
Our lilac tree in France.

A lilac tree like those that grow
By Barton's shaded rills,
Like those that grow where breezes blow
Through blue Ancastrian hills.
Such trees do fill our world with bliss
In Wentworth's wide expanse;
How sweet to have a tree like this
Above our graves in France!

Our boys will sleep their last long sleep
Beneath our lilac tree;
The incense of its bloom shall keep
Thro' all eternity.
And when Great Gabriel blows his horn
They'll waken from their trance;
They'll wake on Resurrection morn
Beneath our tree in France!

KITCHENER!

Blood dimmed days of war are these,
But they're not days of gloom,
Altho' among our seven seas
Our hero sought his tomb.
But tho' he's sleeping 'neath the flood,
To wait the coming dawn,
Better than brawn or bone or blood,
His soul goes marching on!

The Seven Seas—they keep our trust,
Above their surges roll;

But tho' that they may keep his dust,
They may not keep his soul!
Better the man that we knew well,
Better his bone and brawn,
Better the cry that blood will tell,
His soul goes marching on!

The Seven Seas may keep his bones
Among their deeps impearled,
His spirit hand shall shake the thrones
That domineer our world.
Altho' his bones are 'neath the wave
Bid every fear begone,
For tho' our hero's in his grave
His soul goes marching on!

He left five million men behind,
Each bears a British gun;
Why are ye foolish—why so blind
As think his work is done?
Nay! Nay! his work will never cease
Until all fear is gone,
Upon its way to seek for peace
His soul goes marching on!

The Lord He never shuts a door
But others open wide,
His body sank thro' ocean's floor,
His soul rose from the tide.
Then let our proudest ensigns fly,
And let all dread be gone,
For o'er our heads in yonder sky
His soul goes marching on!

THE MEN OF THE NORTHERN ZONE

Oh, shall we shatter our ancient name
And lower our patriot crest,
And leave a heritage dark with shame
To the infant on the breast?
Nay, nay—and the answer blent
In chorus is world-wide sent:
“Your blow at Freedom made her reel
And now ye must atone,
Your Germany never shall place her heel
On the Men of the Northern Zone!”

Shall the mothers that bore us bow the head
And blush for degenerate sons?
Are the patriot fires gone out and dead?
Ho! brothers, stand to the guns!
Let the flag be nailed to the mast,
Defying the coming blast;
For Canada's sons are true as steel,
Their mettle is muscle and bone,
And Germany never shall place her heel
On the Men of the Northern Zone!

Oh, we are the Men of the Northern Zone,
God Save the King, we call;
He sits on a bird's eye maple throne,
In our bird's eye maple hall!
Our people shall aye be free,
They never shall bend the knee,
For this is the land of the true and the leal
Where freedom is bred in the bone,
And Germany never shall place her heel
On the Men of the Northern Zone!

WHERE THEY COME FROM

The Hundred and Twenty-Ninth to war
Went gaily forth one day,
They gladly met the mighty Huns
All in the bloody fray;
They hailed the German lads with glee,
They hailed them all with joy;
"Here is a kick from Lynden, boys,
And a jolt on the jaw from Troy."

Chorus:

"Whence come ye?" der Kaiser cried,
When they had flung him down.
"Our mothers they sell their butter'n eggs
In good old Dundas town!"

On they went thro' fire and smoke,
Our gallant joy and pride;
Here's a smash from Sheffield town
And a whip-like clip from Clyde,
And old Westover takes a crack
At every Hun with vim,
And Stoney Batt'ry takes a whack
At the nearest one to him.

Chorus:

"Whence come ye?" der Kaiser cried,
When they had dumped him down.
"Our mothers they sell their butter'n eggs
In good old Dundas town!"

"Where'd ye learn to fight?" he asked,
And then they laughed, "Ho! ho!"

We learned to fight with main and might
At famous Rockton Show,
'Twas there we early learned the trick,
Our battles were not few,
It ain't no trick to whale and lick
A son of a gun like you!"

Chorus:

"Whence come ye?" der Kaiser cried,
When they had spread him down.
"Our mothers they sell their butter'n eggs
In good old Dundas town!"

"But who're these other chaps I see,
These men with eyes of flame?"
"Oh, these," they answered him with glee,
"From Bullock's Corners came."
So here's a kick from old Strabane,
A jolt from Copetown, too;
They whaled the Huns with might and main
Till they were black and blue.

Chorus:

"Whence come ye?" der Kaiser cried,
When they had pegged him down.
"Our mothers they sell their butter'n eggs
In good old Dundas town!"



**"GOD REST YOU, MERRIE
GENTLEMEN!"**

Ye Gentlemen of Empire,
Who freely face the foe,
Ye heroes under Kitchener,
And those with Jellicoe;
Ye semaphores of Empire,
Balfour, Asquith, Grey,
"God rest you, merrie gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay."

For you may lose some ships at sea,
Some regiments in flame;
Go into battle merrily,
And smiling play the game!
The tempest from the stout oak tears
A few bruised leaves away—
"God rest you, merrie gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay."

For ye have snatched a victory
On many a stricken field,
And gathered gold on land and sea
To gild a shattered shield;
Our youths go forth to battle,
Our old keep house and pray—
"God rest you, merrie gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay!"

What boots it if a ship is toss'd
A wreck in battle fog?
What boots it if a gun is lost

And sunk in Belgium's bog?
For here and there a pine must fall
Before the tempest's sway—
"God rest you, merrie gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay!"

In pent-up citadels the foe
Is hampered to his knees,
But ye go free for weal or woe
Across the seven seas;
Your far-flung battle line doth stretch
From Albion to Cathay—
"God rest you, merrie gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay!"

The seven corners of the earth
God gave to us to keep,
And while we're guarding home and hearth
We sleep, nor creep, nor weep;
But many a palm shall fall before
The cyclone loud and grey—
"God rest you, merrie gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay!"

THE SORE HEEL

You folks at home when evening comes
Do sit from eight to ten,
And talk and read about the hosts
Of hapless wounded men.

But sure 'tis not the bayonet,
Nor bullets make us squeal,
For none of them is in it with—
A nice sore heel!

For long ere this I might have put
The kibosh on Von Kluk,
But only for a measly streak
Of thunderin' bad luck.
You folks cannot appreciate
How awful bad I feel;
I'm not a hero 'cause I had
A pink sore heel!

It scarcely lays you up if you
Are by a bayonet stung,
Nor hors de combat if you get
A bullet thro' the lung.
But you can take this here from me
It's very true and real
There's nothing does the business like
A nice sore heel!

A broken nose is dreadful,
A broken shin's a curse,
A broken rib is pretty bad,
A broken head is worse;
But into insignificance
These minor terrors reel,
You can't compare these troubles with
A rich sore heel!

How can you into battle go?
How follow trump and drum?

How can you rattle foeman if
Your heels are on the bum?
You cannot charge the German's host
Nor mosey to a meal
If you have got to lug along
A big sore heel.

Oh, we'd have captured Berlin
Six weeks ago or more,
And at the Potsdam palace we
Had thundered on the door;
Alas! We couldn't move a peg,
In spite of wild appeals,
Because a million men or more
Had nice sore heels!

THEY ARE ON THEIR WAY

We know not where we're going,
We care not how we go
To find the fruiting battlefields
Of glory and of woe.
Mayhap it is to Belgium,
Perhaps to far Cathay;
We don't know where we're going,
But we are on our way!

We only know they've called us,
The battle-flag's unfurled,
The battle-tide is rolling
Breast-high 'round the world.

East or west or north or south,
It matters not to-day;
We don't know where we're going,
But we are on our way!

Our flag is just as sacred
On Belgium's fields of woe
As floating o'er our village
In old Ontario.
So blithely we go sailing
Across the ocean grey,
We don't know where we're going,
But we are on our way!

The flag we love's in danger;
Oh, stirring days are these,
The flag that braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze!
We hear the trumpets sounding,
Our hearts are light and gay,
We don't know where we're going,
But we are on our way!

We come from a throneless people
To shatter a far-off throne,
Haste to the world-wide battle,
Men of the Northern Zone!
Crossing the deep grey ocean,
Hastening to the fray,
We don't know where we're going,
But we are on our way!

If, in that far-off battle,
I and my comrade fall,
Then, in that far-off battle
We answered our country's call.
Dying, we both shall whisper,
After we both shall pray:
"We don't know where we're going,
But we are on our way!"

THE GREAT CLANCY

The daring Irish reached the battle's marge,
Storming the trenches in a gallant charge,
When front and flank the hidden batteries
roared

Thick as hail the iron tempest poured.

The rifles rattle on the breastworks' crown
When Doherty, the Major, yells "Lie down!"
The men lay down hugging the quaking
earth,
Above them bombshells shrieked in fiendish
mirth.

They stirred not, moved not, scarce their
breath they drew,
Till all at once a sassy bugle blew,
Upward and onward, deathless fame to find.
Alas! they left a comrade brave behind.
Clancy it was, so famed for divilment,
The joy, the pride of his fine regiment.

He moved not when the bugle called, but
prone

He lay upon the ground, all still and lone,
His comrades found him when the fight was
o'er,

They gathered round him, and their hearts
were sore.

Many a sob shook many a manly breast
For dear old Clancy, bravest and the best,
Then all were silent—was't a cannon roared?
"Be jabbers, no!" said Hogan, "some wan
snored."

He turned brave Clancy over with a poke,
And that fine soldier stirred himself and
woke,

"And why," he asked them, and he gave a
yawn,

"Didn't yez wake me when the fun was on?"

"Clancy, me boy," the laughing Major said,
"There's not the like of you in this brigade,
You are a jewel and a gem, old hoss,
You ought to get the prized Victoria Cross,
It takes a brave man, that I know right well,
To go to sleep upon the steps of hell!"



A. SONG OF A SHIRT

My comrades in the trenches got—
For fighting men are pets—
Most lovely presents sent from home,
Soap, socks and cigarettes;
My present set my soul alert,
It filled my heart with glee,
It was a very handsome shirt
My sweetheart made for me!

There in the roaring battle front,
All safe from harm I'd feel,
That handsome shirt she made for me
Could turn the foeman's steel;
I knew that I could get no hurt,
From danger I was free
So long as I did wear the shirt
That Mollie made for me.

That shirt got soiled—you all have had
Experiences like mine;
I went to work and washed that shirt
And hung it on the line.
A fight began—our Captain roared
"Fall in! Fall in!" cried he.
I dashed away to get the shirt
That Mollie made for me!

"Halt!" cried the Captain in a rage,
"Surely you will not fail,
You heard the brassy bugles blow,
And now you're turning tail!"

"Excuse me, Captain," I felt hurt
And nervouslike, you see,
"I'm only goin' to git the shirt
That Mollie made for me!"

"Gimme that shirt!" the Captain cried,
He filled my soul with woe;
He folded up my joy and pride
And flung it midst the foe.
'Twas then my nerve it took a spurt,
For I could plainly see
I had to go and get that shirt
That Mollie made for me!

I dashed amid the battling foe,
A raging wilderness,
I slew six hundred Germans—
Six hundred—more or less;
But I came back unharmed, unhurt,
And bore aloft with glee
Six German standards and the shirt
That Mollie made for me!

THE COOK'S ANTHEM

(The camp cooks will have troubles of their own ere this cruel war is over. They may not mingle with bombs and bullets on the firing line, but that will be a joke to what will be coming to them when they burn the soup! The Khan, who has always had a

tender place in his heart for cooks, whether they wore petticoats or not, hath written these touching lines for their comfort, hoping that they may stay the wrath of the rank and file and cause them to ever regard the grub outfit in a Christian spirit.)

Upon the march they go,
Hungry all, but steady;
Hark! hear yon bugle blow,
Hey, boys, your grub is ready!
Now here is my advice,
I fancy none can beat it,
If it smells good, tastes good and looks good,
Eat it!

True, the mess may be
Somewhat tough in swallerin',
Take this advice from me,
Don't ye do no hollerin';
Take it on your knee
And with a welcome greet it,
If it looks good, tastes good and smells good,
Eat it!

Keep away from the kitchen!
Keep away from the cook!
E'en tho' you're itchin'
For just one little look.
Here is a crisis, boys,
Now like good soldiers meet it,
If it looks good, smells good and tastes good,
Eat it!

Soldiers of the sword
Have dined upon a horse,
And then have thanked the Lord
Their dinner wasn't worse.
Now here's advice—no harm,
If I once more repeat it,
If it smells good, looks good and tastes good,
Eat it!

All things are meal and meat,
I tell you this—I ought to,
You don't know what you'll eat
Until, perchance, you've Got To!
Be thankful for your food,
And most respectful treat it,
If it tastes good, looks good and smells good,
Eat it!

Write this down in your books,
With this sad plea appended,
O, please don't kill the cooks
Until the war is ended!
Sit down and sup your soup,
Now, after me, repeat it,
If it looks good, smells good and tastes good,
Eat it!



A NICE WRIST WATCH

In this great World War
Have you noticed this, my dear,
There's not so many heroes
For whom us folks can cheer?
But gladly I sit down
Before my little desk,
To write about a hero who
Is mighty picturesque.

Upon his tally stick the Duke
Has cut another notch,
Something that will tickle us,
He's made the Turk ridiculous,
Let's give to splendid Nicholas,
A nice wrist watch!

Where'll we get the gems?
That question's not disturbin'—
We'll tear them from the Kaiser's crown
Or from the Sultan's turban;
The gallant Grand Duke's wrist
Shall blaze with jewels glad,
For cheers I will insist,
For good old Adam Zad!

For on his tally stick the Duke
Hath nicked another notch,
Here's something that will tickle us,
He's made the Turk ridiculous,
Let's give to splendid Nicholas,
A nice wrist watch!

THE VERTEBRÆ

Britain! when the war-god
Did sudden lift the lid,
We didn't get there soon
As other people did;
We did not bear the brunt
But proudly we remind you
That tho' we're not in front,
We're all right here behind you!

You'll find we're slow but sure,
We're never in a hurry,
So while these wars endure
We're with you—so don't worry;
And we will do our stunt
Where any dangers find you,
And tho' we're not in front,
O, Canada's behind you!

You'll find we're sure tho' slow,
We never hurry-scurry,
We'll to your rescue go,
And so you needn't worry,
We'll all be in the hunt,
No foeman's heel shall grind you,
And tho' we're not in front,
O, Canada's behind you.

It's many and many a mile
To those far-warring shores,
It took us quite a while
To finish up our chores;

And now we'll bear the brunt,
And we would all remind you
Your spine is not in front,
But it is right behind you!

COMPARISONS ARE ODIOUS

Our democratic King is gay,
He smiles at any droll thing.
And how is this? It's just this way—
You see, he's NOT the whole thing.
Why is the hapless Kaiser lost
In Flanders' dark and dole bush?
His people know it to their cost
He thinks he is the Whole Push!

Why is our democratic King
Such a well-loved sovereign?
Because our democratic King
Doth not assay to govern!
But Little Bill of Silver Hill,
In other words Der Kaiser,
He's got it in his bean he is
The He, She, It and I, sir!

Our King hath no Kitarr and he
Is ne'er attacked with dizziness,
Because the people's King, you see,
Always minds his business.
But Little Bill, he quite enjoys
To trundle an howitzer,

He thinks he is the Great Big Noise,
The He, She, I and It, sir!

Why is King George so dearly loved?
Because he's wise and modest,
And from his throne he won't be shoved
Or trampled in the sawdust.
But when the Kaiser speaks out plain,
It sounds just like a cuss, sir,
He takes the Lord's great name in vain,
"Gott only iss mit us, sir!"

When war's volcano throat is cold,
The lava and the scoria,
In veneration we will hold
The grandson of Victoria.
But when the Prussian King shall go
Into his tomb commodious—
But I will stop right here—you know
Comparisons are odious!

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

Once on a time a nation
Was beaten in every fray.
Her people in consternation
Were tried with a sore dismay.
The bravest and best of their armies
Turned from the fight to flee
From the front of old Stonewall Jackson,
And the fore of Robert E. Lee!

Army succeeded army,
Bludgeoned, battered and beat.
An army succeeded that army
Only to meet defeat.
They left their guns on the hillsides,
They dropped their colors to flee
From the front of old Stonewall Jackson,
And the fore of Robert E. Lee!

Peace! cried the feminine-hearted;
Peace! ere our nation is gone.
But the bull dog people just started
Another campaign and held on!
And that was the year of their triumph,
The year of their jubilee;
They crushed the heroes of Jackson,
They crumpled up Robert E. Lee!

To-morrow the Hunnish falcons
Will wing where the snow lies deep.
They'll shriek on the rock-bound Balkans,
They'll feed on the Serbian sheep.
'Tis plain as the sight on your rifle,
So plain it no plainer can be,
The Huns have a Stonewall Jackson,
And also a Robert E. Lee!

But the time will come when the story
Will run in a different way;
The flag now battered and gory
Will float o'er their mountains to stay.
The day of our triumph cometh,
The day of our jubilee,

When we've crushed their Stonewall Jackson,
And held up their Robert E. Lee!

THE IRON CROSS

I'm going to write these verses for
My friends the Red Cross ladies:
A German ghost went down the stairs
And reached the doors of Hades.
Satan ambled forth and said:
"This sight my spirit shocks.
Where'd you git that sleepin' shirt?
Where DID you git them socks?

"Where did you get that jar of plums?
They ripened in some still grove.
I figure that this dainty comes
From some nice girl near Millgrove!
These raspberries!—some pretty maid
To pick them dared disaster.
She got them in a thorny glade
Somewhere near Ancaster.

"These peaches!—Yum—taste awful good;
My spirits they do rally.
They grew—the only place they could—
Down in the Dundas Valley.
Fam'd Rockton grew these apples;
They ripened 'mid the rocks.

But—where'd you git that nightie?
Where DID you git them socks?"

The German soldier was not mum—
Indeed he seemed enraptured.
"I took this pile of plunder from
A Wentworth boy we captured."
The Devil laughed with fiendish mirth.
He said: "I'll treat you well for this;
You were the meanest thief on earth;
I'll welcome you in hell for this!"

THE PEOPLELESS PLAIN

The Prince of Peace when war is o'er
Shall don His diadem,
The homeless folk whose hearts are sore,
The People—what of them?
Tears no more shall stain their faces,
The scalding tears of pain,
These People shall people God's peopleless
places,
Shall people His peopleless plain!

Whene'er the Lord doth shut a door,
Another opens wide,
He'll find them homes when war is o'er
This side the rolling tide;
Of tears He'll wipe away the traces,
And make them smile again;
His People shall people His peopleless places,
Shall people His peopleless plain!

Their fields are scourged with iron hoofs,
Their garden walls are low,
And everywhere their broken roofs
Let in the rain or snow;
But there's a peopleless plain that graces
A world across the main,
Those People shall people these peopleless
places,
Shall people that peopleless plain!

Oh, why rebuild the ruined shrine?
'Tis fall'n, so let it stay!
Come build a shrine in lands divine,
In new world's far away!
A land where warfare ne'er debases,
A land of grass and grain,
Ye People!—come people these peopleless
places,
Come people this peopleless plain!

Across the sea—let no one grieve—
A pathway ye shall find,
And safe from danger ye shall leave
Great Pharoh's host behind.
Your prophet I'll be!—uplift your faces!
And this shall be my strain,
"God's People shall people His peopleless
places,
Shall people His peopleless plain!"
