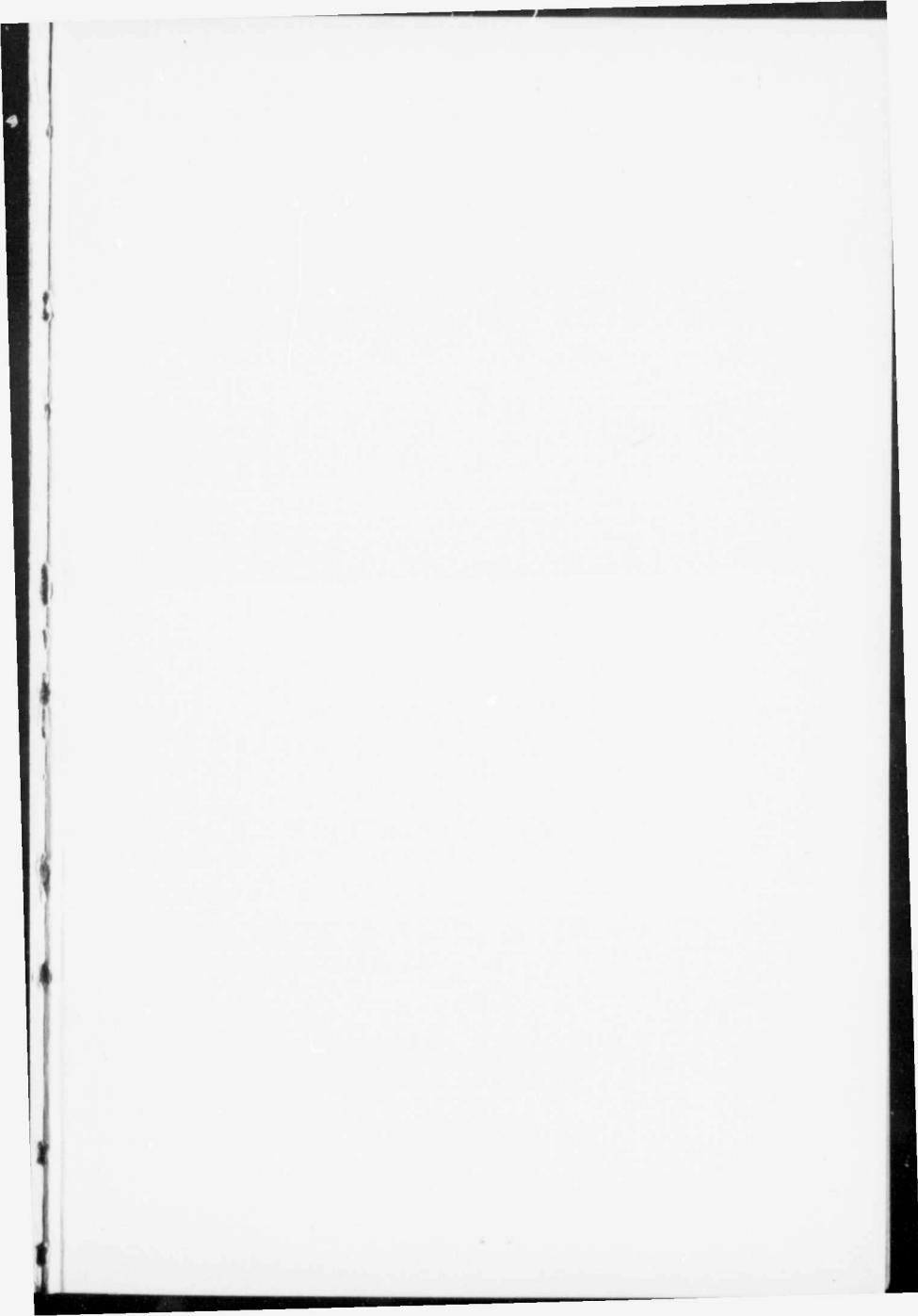
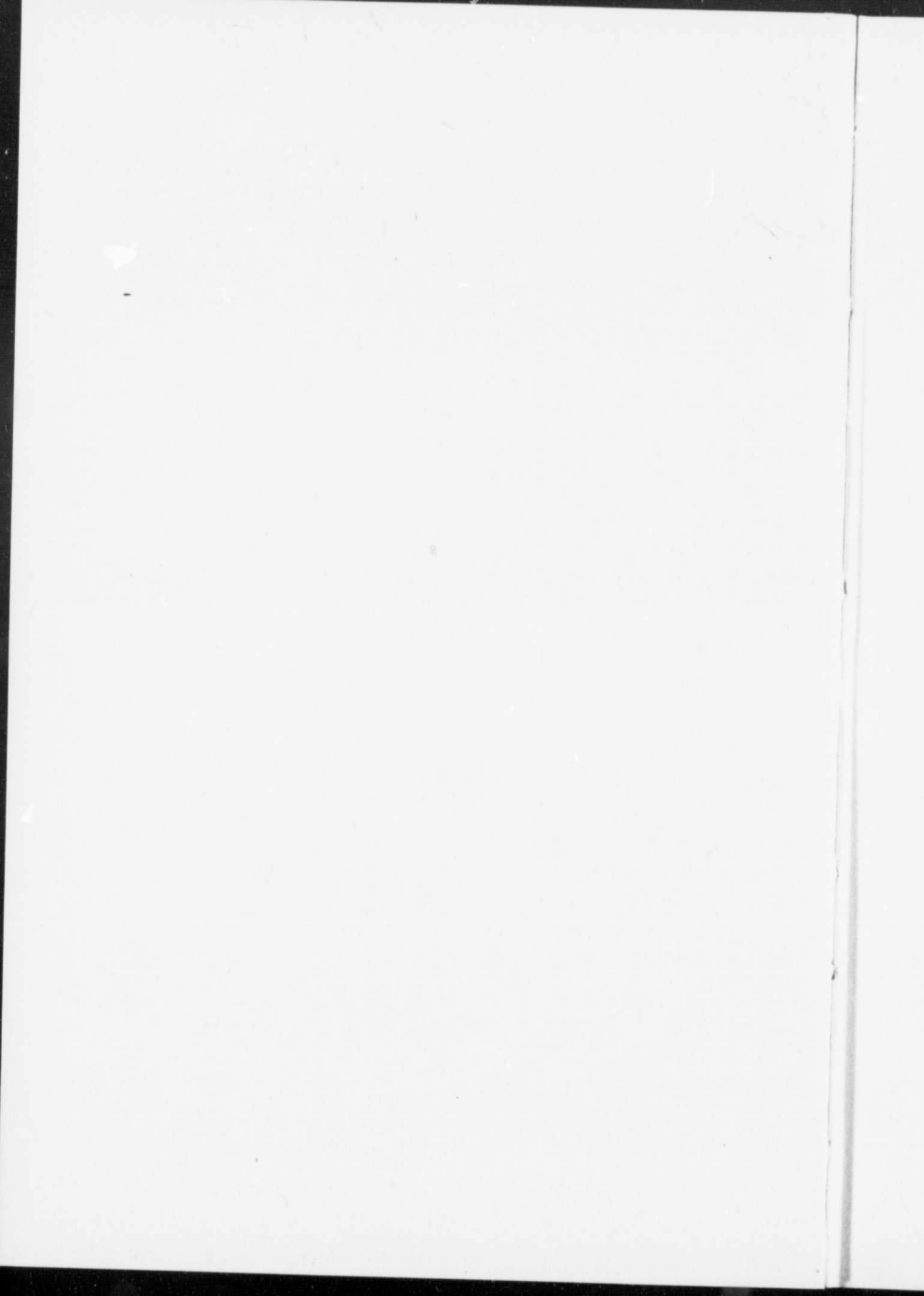


Our
Absent
Hero

MRS. DURIE

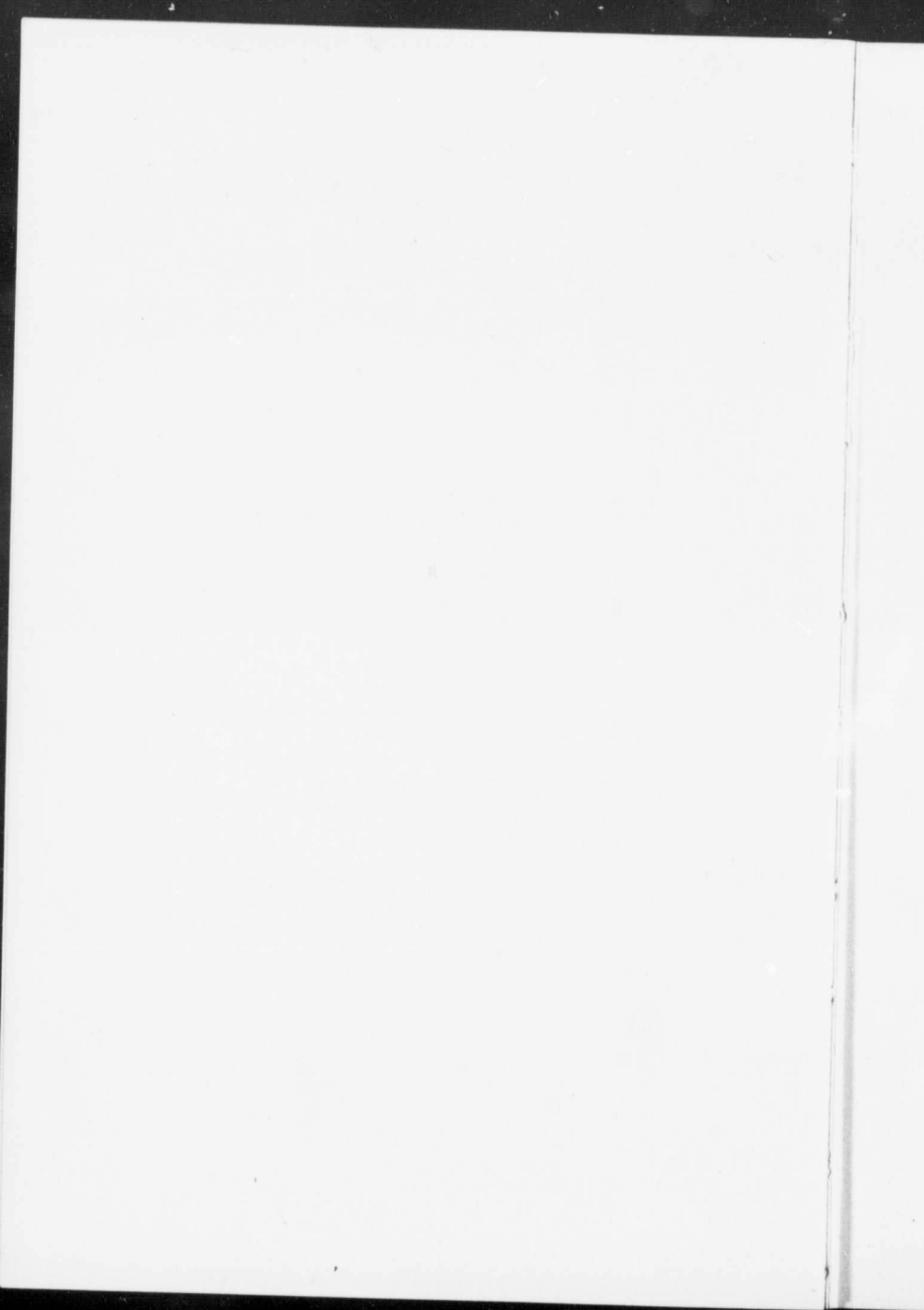
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*When flaming war broke, swift as panther
leaps
He threw his youth and strength on England's
side:
He died for England: if in France he sleeps,
He came into his own before he died.*

—From "The Empyrean."





WILLIAM ARTHUR PEEL, DEKIE
May, 1915



Our Absent Hero

Poems

In Loving Memory of

Captain William Arthur Peel Durie

58th Battalion, C.E.F.

By

Mrs. Durie

"Till the future dawns
Forget the past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity." — Shelley

Toronto
THE RYERSON PRESS
1920



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NOTE

Captain Durie, to whom this volume is reverently dedicated, was killed in action December 29th, 1917, while his battalion was holding the line at St. Emile, near Lens, France. On the evening of October 26th, 1917, during the attack at Passchendaele, after heavy fighting throughout the day, he went five times through drum-fire to save the wounded, who had lain since the early morning on the field: an incident that will be for ever associated with his name. No eulogy of his life would be complete that did not place emphasis on his fearlessness in action, his devotion to duty and his gallantry in the field.

—A. D.



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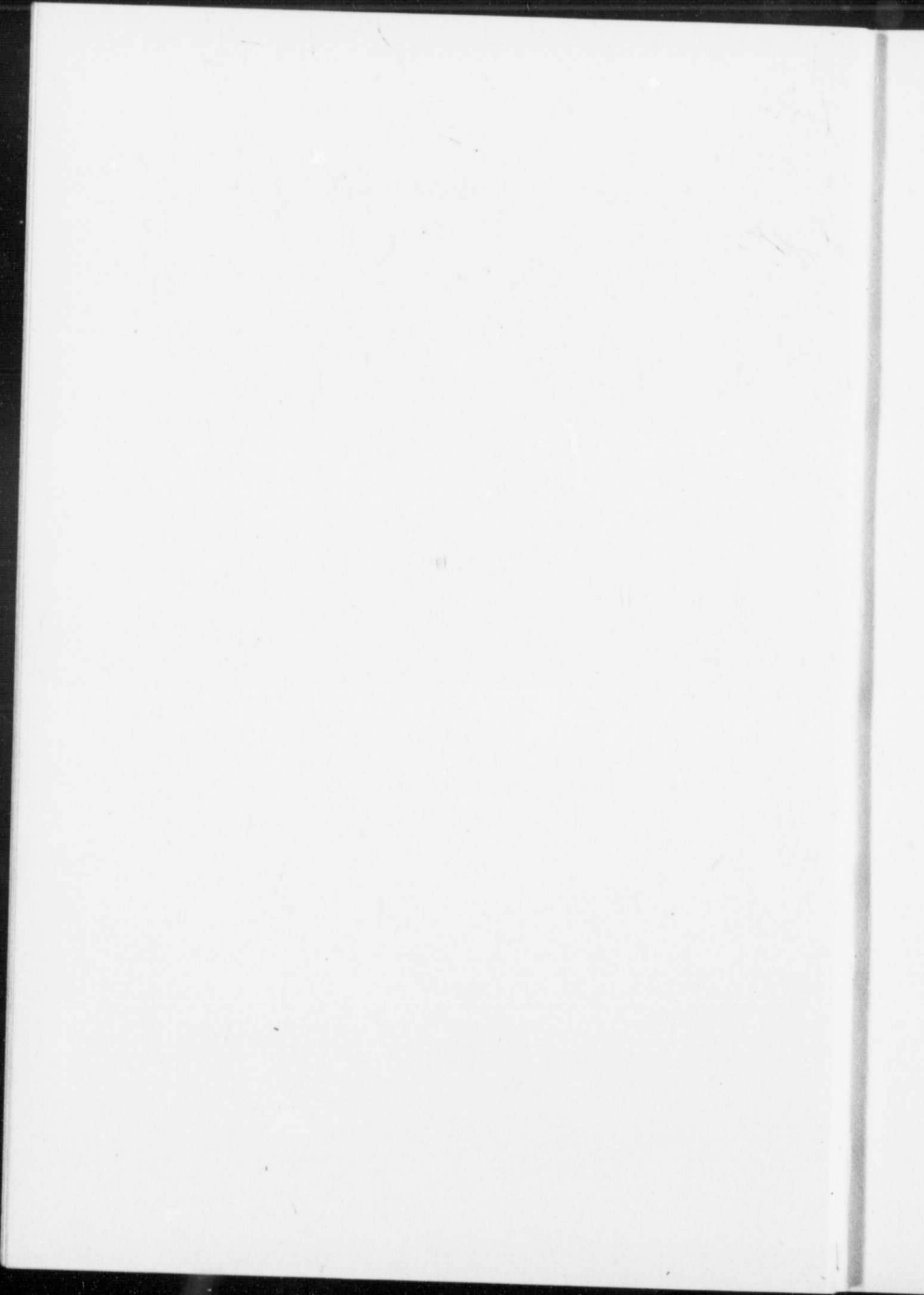
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POEMS



Our Absent Hero

“OUR Absent Hero”! Drink the toast
and stand,
Stumbling a little, as you rise and
shrink
Before the smarting tears, as trembling hand
Raises the glass: “Our Absent Hero”!
Drink!
He whom we honour, thrusting life and fame
Behind him, fell in France, leaving as prize
An everlasting name: an oriflamme,
That men shall hold on high with kindling
eyes.

Think not of him as racked with battle’s
sound,
With fevered pulses, war without surcease;
But think of him as of a victor crowned,
As of a soldier standing at his ease:
Lifting his eyes; then passing at a bound,
To where beyond this parting there is peace.

**My Heart It Is a Shrine for
Deeds of His**

MY heart it is a shrine for deeds of his
That live for ever in an ambient light;
Like purest marble that illumined is,
Or rarest jewels in a casket white.

As falls the sun on shaded chapel wall,
So streams the radiance of his gallant deeds,
Across the midnight of my life's black pall,
Shadow by shadow lifting where it leads.

I count my store; set this or that aside,
Like glittering gems, too precious to be
worn:

This had its birth in Flanders; ere he died,
This proved a herald of the approaching
morn.

And if I inward turn my thoughts into
The deeper recess where his image lives,
Set in a sparkling frame of sapphire hue
That to the deep-set eyes a lustre gives.

My Heart It Is a Shrine

Meseems I taste a fragrance in the air,
A breath that hovers sweet where sunshine
is:
A living thing, that comforts like a prayer,
This heart, that is a shrine for deeds of
his.

Vimy Ridge

April 9, 1917

THE cross I wear? That came from
Vimy Ridge.
La Folie Farm, which always makes a
bridge
Between my mind and the battle. The scarred
wood
Was picked up by my hero, when he stood
After the fight on Vimy, and for me
Sought out the shattered fragments of a tree,
The pieces somewhat larger than the match
With which he lit his pipe. But do you catch
The blaze of the word "Lens" across the
arms?
That's where my soldier fell. La Folie Farm's
A name that burns and flames, and stands to be
Immortal. Now to the great victory
Of Vimy Ridge. The tale is scarcely new.
How to describe it from his point of view
Who only saw a section of the fight!
One section only? God! can this be right?

Vimy Ridge

Nothing he spake of fearless, dying eyes
Looking to Heaven; nor of the anguished cries
Rending the air. He told his story while
I sat enthralled, as shaded word and style
Brought clear before my eyes what he had seen,
Nought of the horrors spake he, though I ween
His eyes, before that famous height was won
Had looked on that which shamed all horrors
done.

Easter Day dawned: the eve of the big push
At Vimy Ridge. My hero felt a hush
Of peace, and willed to meet his Blessed Lord
In the Bread and Wine; but he could not afford
Time for the sacred rite, for all day through
He worked, nor one short moment's leisure
knew.

His was a preparation for the day
We rose to life; though on Vimy death held
sway.

But, when the sun was set there came a call
To solemn service in the field, and all
Answered the summons of the Church parade,
Which to their work a fitting ending made.
Ah, me! Ere the morrow's sun could seek his
grave

How many would be sleeping with the brave?

Vimy Ridge

Our men, Canadians, who that we might live
Unfettered here, gave all that men could give!

The padre's voice had scarcely ceased from
prayer

When distant rounds of cheering tore the air;
Wild, yet harmonious; then loud song burst
forth

As if in answer to a challenge; worth
A hundred sermons to the men who stood
And waited while the approaching rhythmic
flood

Of sound came nearer, and a singing throng
Of marching men came rank on rank along:

The glorious Fourth Division! Theirs to die,
Nor once to count the cost. 'Twas thus passed
by

The assaulting forces! Thus that to them
came

The honour first to make great Vimy's name,
And without warning drive the entrenched
Hun

Like hasty scampering rats that fear the sun,
To earth. My soldier, he who later fell
At Lens, declared no words of his could tell

Vimy Ridge

With what a swinging gait our men passed by,
Marching, with song, to death and victory.

And once more silence reigned. Ere his turn
came

He looked out o'er the lines: all was serene
Except for a gun's flash. Then with his men
He moved up to position and dug in,
And with his batman waited till the dawn,
Watching, meanwhile, an airplane, now with-
drawn,

Now sweeping forward. Then all hell broke
loose!

The awful, flashing British guns that choose
To belch and vomit flame, had opened fire
On the dazed foe, forcing him to retire.

British artillery! searching every hand
Of ground. Tingling with victory and manned
With steadied will, under the blackened sky
My hero heard the missiles hurtling by
Charged with destruction; knew the objective
won,

Though pandemonium reigned; the fight begun,
Under twelve creeping barrages they advanced,
Waiting ten minutes while above them danced

Vimy Ridge

The raining shells; ten straining minutes, then
They onward drove straight at the fringe of
the rain
Of fire; made the disordered foeman run,
Nor stop to staunch the gaping wound that
none
Could stop nor staunch; that our men, pressing
on,
Breached to twelve thousand yards. Before
the sun
Had time to stain the east, a blinding storm
Of snow was falling on the Ridge, a form
Of sleet and rain that drenched the men and
left
Them chilled and cold, but pushing through
the cleft
Our guns had made. The minutes sped and
morn
Broke slowly over trenches scarred and torn
With shrapnel. All day long, from time to
time
In gusty sequence, then in booming rhyme,
The artillery flashed and thundered, and the
Huns
Replied; but our supports pressed on, while
tons

Vimy Ridge

Of shells burst everywhere. For ten long days
The battle raged. The price was paid. (A
maze
Of ghostly crosses marks the toll of lives.
You see the outstretched arms as your car
dives
Into the Arras road to-day. 'Tis said
The Risen Lord Himself walks 'midst the
dead.)

There youth and splendid manhood bit the
dust
That we might live in freedom; we who just
Feel a slight tremour if our finger aches.
The story of the taken trenches makes
A tale in itself. Well, are you bored? or have
You seen the advance at Vimy as my brave
Heart saw it? When he with his fearless
men
Marched mile on mile through slush and mire,
and then
Laid down, at Lens, the rich treasure of his
life:
A full, sufficient, perfect sacrifice.



SONNETS

"Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest
thought."

—*Shelley.*



The Daily Letter

YOUR daily letter from the front! It came,
A message sweet and sacred, telling me
You lived, O heart of mine! how blest to
see

The dear, familiar lines, when battle's flame
Was past; to know you safe and just the same!
And every precious letter headed free,
"On active service," brought an ecstasy
Of hope and longing, blent with dreams of
fame.

Your daily letter from the front! This said. . .
No, no! It could not be that you were dead!
This sent me all the love you had! said you
Were moving up the line; and dear and true
To the last you wrote. But when your letter
came
You'd left the line: and an immortal name.

Love's Wine

“**W**ITH all the love I have,” so ran the
 end
Of every loving letter sent from
 France
Before Death claimed him, and the sweet
 romance
Of life was over: sweet for him to blend
With trench news, all his soldier's love! to send
To the last, across the sea, his perfect love
For me! Death? What had he, with treasure-
 trove
Brimming with life and cheer that daily lend
Even yet, a brightness to the world, to do
With aught so grim, and chill, and still as you?
He did not prize you; he, whose voice was set
To quickened pulses; who escaped life's fret.
His draught left in my cup is richest wine;
“With all the love I have,” a kiss divine.

The Cliffs of England

HE said: "I saw the cliffs of England,
yesterday,
And felt a little homesick; hardly
knew myself;
And then remembered you were there. Cheer
up! I soon
Shall be in England on my leave." He wrote
from S.
40, First Army Rest Camp; this a cryptic
sign
That meant Boulogne. He had seen fighting
fierce, was ill;
Vimy and Avion were left behind, and some
Kind senior soul had sent him where the
western breeze
Blew straight from English downs across the
sea to France
And him; and the soft air was sweet with
summer bloom.
I crushed his letter to a heart that sang for
joy,

The Cliffs of England

Tho' blinding mists were in the eyes that
scanned the page;
Before September skies were old, he came:
And I
Basked, regnant, in a roseate peace untouched
by war.

A Soldier's Grave in France

HERE lies a widowed mother's only son.
O gentle winds! temper the airs of
heav'n

That they blow softly where his young head
rests

In friendly soil, rich-carpeted with bloom:
Scarlet and gentian blue and butter-gold,
Flecked with an English daisy here and there.
He was no dreamer, though he soundly sleeps;
Rather a man in whom the joy of life
Foamed sparkling to the brim; and when
great France

Sent forth her bitter, wailing cry for help,
(That France which holds him here enclasped
in earth)

Eastward he turned his face and crossed the
seas,

Laid youth and glorious manhood in the dust,
And so stepped into immortality.

Sunrise in France

I SAW the rosy dawn stream o'er your grave
Near ruined Lens; then grow to yellow
gold,

And day's first glory break in th' east, to which
Your quiet face is turned. You only sleep:
There must be something, 'neath an alien soil,
Of that immortal radiance men call life,
That made you what you were: the cheeriest
soul

That e'er was born. But look! The sun
mounts higher,
And a dark, outstretched arm is thrown
athwart

The bending poppies; a long cross steals out,
Black as the shadow in my aching heart;
A shade that ne'er was meant to mingle with
The sunshine on your grave: That should be
pure

As beaten gold; and as cheerful as were you.

Requiem

IF you would make a carven stone for me,
Grave me as one low-lying in the dust
Before a soldier form, erect and full
Of pride; and say of me: "She was not meet
To bind the latchet of his shoe, and yet
He loved her; held her dear and dearer still
Before he fell; was ever proud to call
Her 'Mother'; glad to hear her voice; to
catch
The low, articulate sound that named him
hers."

And carve him standing in an aureole light,
With laurel crown upon his victor's head,
And face upturned; and say: "While much he
loved

This woman at his feet, she was but clay
When likened to the Cause for which he
died."

The Richer Grace

IF you were here to-night thus would you
say:
“I count it grace for England to have
died;
For our fair Empire to have lived my day,
The unlived years to have laid down in pride.
My glowing, vigorous youth was only prized
For what it meant for you, and that dear
land
That nourished me; gave me all good, despised
As nought while it was but mine own. War’s
hand
Has touched me, laying in the dust my life
And my rich future: all I had and sought:
A maiden’s love, ambition free from strife;
The purpling fruits of diligence and thought.
I gave my all, knowing well what I gave.”
My darling, sweet your dust, and rich your
grave.

Dearest

WHAT lilt of softness is there in the
word
"Dearest," that it should lift, in
ecstasy,

This heart, to where a vibrant memory,
Vocal with sweetness, like full-throated bird,
Trembles and trills? A quivering cadence
heard

At eve, when life is still, and thoughts of
love

And him steal out like summer moonlight;
move

The emotions like a rustling wind; preferred
To softer airs; that shows the world a blank,
Minus the richness of that purest note,
Which folded in its purple fulness rank

And wealth of love; that makes me proud to
vote

His tender habit, sweet with youth and frank,
A song that rings, clear-toned, where
memories float.

A Warrior Undismayed

“**T**HE guns don’t bother him,” your comrades said,
In terse Canadian phrase, that fell on
the ear
Like full-toned music by a master played:
“For all who know him, know he has no
fear.”

O beyond meed of praise! Most dearest
prize
That war could offer, or companions give;
A vibrant music, ringing to the skies,
A clarion note, that shall forever live.

And when, at last, you matched yourself with
Death,
Facing the guns, steady as on parade;
Calm and unruffled and with quiet breath,
Up to the trench you came while cannon
played;

Fearless, nor “bothered,” as the soldier saith;
One hero more: a warrior undismayed.

His Comfortable Words

THE chaplain, bending o'er your snow-
white cot

Said: "Yes, you have been hit quite
hard," and you

Appealed: "The worst may come?" then he:

"Your lot

May be to pass; but you are young, 'tis true,
And strong; these count for much. But stay!

You shall receive, at dawn, the Bread and
Wine,

And be at peace, prepared for come what may:

God bless and keep you till the morning
shine."

At morn you took the Blessed Sacrament,

And when His Comfortable Words fell on
your ear,

"Our Saviour Christ," you said you were con-
tent

To pass, and thought that she and I were
near;

His Comfortable Words

Nor feared, nor felt death hard. 'Twas thus
He sent
His Presence, with familiar words, and
cheer.

Good-bye Forever

I SEE you standing on the moving train,
Lifting your soft trench cap with your
free hand,
Saying good-bye forever, and I stand
To-day, and see you through a mist of pain,
Knowing that I shall henceforth look in vain
For smiles of yours: for while I waved the
sand
Of your young life was ebbing, and the land
Of the Great Dead, unseen, was looming plain.
No voice there was, nor deep-toned, mystic
bell
To toll your passing; there was just a line
Of glistening rails; and you had said farewell
And vanished, smiling, from this life of
mine:
An inspiration in my heart to dwell,
A chord of sweetest music, rarely fine.

At Home

YOUR grave shall be a shrine where
children come

To leave sweet-scented flowers; where
men, being moved,
Shall read, inscribed, your valiant deeds, and
sum

Them up and say, "This man a soldier
proved."

Your pillow, blue with hyacinths in spring,
Shall fill the air with fragrance, through the
years;

When lark and chirping birdlings are a-wing
Women shall read your triumphs through
their tears.

You are not dead, tho' loving hands shall come
To touch your grave, and summer rains
shall stream

From softly weeping skies: you have reached
home;

The verdure on your grave shall richly
gleam;

At Home

But you have winged your way across the
foam:

Have slumbered, then awakened from your
dream.

How the Good News Came from Vimy to London

I.

LET us forget a moment, if you please,
That Browning ever wrote, with poet's
ease,
His song of Ghent. Leaving the past, let's
sink
All thoughts of Browning's verse, and only
think
Of Vimy, when the news reached England's
heart,
Old London, loving Mother! the world's mart
For tidings, blown across the seas from France,
The opening day of battle and the advance
On Vimy Ridge. But soft! Let me turn out
An instant; stop my tale to speak about
The bravest man that ever lived or died;
I call him 'hero, saint, or soldier,' pride
He was of all who knew and loved him; so:
He wrote, I say, in fashion strange, and no

How the Good News Came from Vimy to London

Mistake, for him. His letter came two days
Before the push; and give him heartiest praise
For what he said; 'twas this: "God bless and
keep
You, darling mother!" My sick heart did
leap
With cries unuttered, while I waited cold
With fear of what was coming, though untold.

II.

We had left Piccadilly, she and I,
And turning up the street, we heard a cry
Of: "All about the advance! Haig's great
advance!"
A dozen men were crying news from France.
We caught the first, and heard our ha'penny
clink;
Before our racing minds had time to think,
Our trembling hands held the expected news;
But silence dropped, and putting on the screws,
A press, restrained, told nothing of the fight.
We dried our tears and hurried out of sight
With beating pulses, hearts attuned to death,
And clutched with pain at what might come;
our breath

How the Good News Came from Vimy to London

Coming in gasps; then, wondering how they
fared,
We hurried on, for everything prepared.

III.

Well, what did come? From him came nothing; not
A word of battle. Guns were booming, but
No word from him of Vimy Ridge, nor yet
A word to say Canadians had beset
The foe on every side; and all in vain
To hope for more, until, at morn, again
We saw the despatches: "Headquarters in
France;
Canadians storm the heights and make
advance."
We learned what they had done, our splendid
men!
'Twas a mere scratching of the scribbler's
pen,
And nothing more. Followed a timid glance
For telegrams or message sent from France
To say that he was dead. No telegram
Intruded on the flying hours, I am

How the Good News Came from Vimy to London

Recording: minutes winged with hope, then
drenched
With sickening doubt and strangling fear,
entrenched
In the remotest recess of the heart,
But, sudden, leaping forward like a dart,
To stab and poison life. The moments ran
Till nine o' the clock found me within a span
Of the Old Bailey, and that other place
Where soldiers' names were kept. A minute's
space
Of time leaped onward ere I stood and asked:
"Is his name 'mongst the dead?" The answer
tasked
The mind, for lips grown pale, said: "All the
lines
Are choked with casualties. There are no
signs
That his is there." "And his Division? Third
It is! Was he at Vimy? Have you heard
Aught of his battalion? Tell me, O, tell!"
Came the response in crowded words that fell
Like sabre cuts upon my ear: "Yes, all
The Divisions were engaged." The words let
fall

How the Good News Came from Vimy to London

A mist before my eyes; I hurried out
And midst the roar of London's traffic thought
Of him alone: "Lived he, or was he dead?"
My only son, my first-born! Onward sped
The moments, days and hours; but nothing
came,

And seven long days had passed. Naming his
name

With firmer tones, to me, at last, they said:
"He must be living, for among the dead
We find no trace of him." With that I flashed
Across the sea to her, a message dashed
With pride and buoyant hope: "He's safe to
date,"

And then returned to ponder whether fate
Or God, would help. The days crept on, nor
came

A message, nor a line. With heart aflame
I sought another source: "Yes, news there
was;

He had been seen advancing; there was cause
To think him safe; an officer had seen
Him pushing on, while he himself had been
Among the wounded. So it fared from day
To day, till hope had vanished, and to pray

How the Good News Came from Vimy to London

Was futile. Then, what happened? Only
this,

A hurried letter came from him. Such bliss
I ne'er shall taste again. He, pushing on,
Sent back a line to say that he had come
Safely through the great battle, and had been
All day upon the Ridge, that he had seen
Such sights, and heard such sounds as make up
hell;

I must not worry, now, for he was well
And scarce had time to take up pen, but he
Would write again; I must not anxious be.

IV.

That's how the news of Vimy came to stay
In "Good Old London," (thus he loved to
say),

While tens of thousands waited, turned to
stone

With grief; and then the racking lists came on,
And I could only clutch my heart and say:

"Thank God! he lived through that most
glorious day

When first our men attacked at Vimy Height;
That he could write me news of Vimy's fight

**How the Good News Came
from Vimy to London**

Nor slept beneath the sod when battle's flame
Was passed." 'Twas thus the news of Vimy
came
To London; and our hearts were raised in
pride
That rose a vast and ever vaster tide.

The Faithful Warrior

On the morning of December 29th, 1917, Captain Durie, O.C. "A" Company, 58th Battalion, C.E.F., was killed in action during a heavy trench mortar bombardment while attempting to relieve his men.

THE Pilot of the Galilean lake
Came forth to meet you when you
crossed the bar.
What were the words of welcome that He
spake,
What your rejoinder, who had come so far?
I know the victor's crown was on your head,
Where late the shrapnel helmet pressed you
down,
And that your shining eyes blazed, battle-fed,
Beneath the thrice-won laurels of renown.
So swift had been your passage from the
trench,
You scarce had time to mark the changing
scene,
And I believe you wist not of the wrench
That bore your soldier soul to worlds serene.

The Faithful Warrior

Ere you had space to think of time and tide,
The narrow sea of death had fled from view,
And you had landed on the farther side,
And with your Pilot passed life's portals
through.

He called you by your name; not "Bill," dear
heart;
But by that other honoured name you bore;
He caught and pressed your hand until your
start
Caused Him to meet your wondering gaze
once more.

Your Pilot was in khaki, and your mind,
Running upon the trenches you had left,
"A" Company blown in! the bitter wind,
The dauntless courage of the men bereft,

Led you to question who the Great One was
Who claimed you for His own, so you
believed;
Then hurtling thoughts returning, without
pause
You cried: "The men, Sir, they must be
relieved."

The Faithful Warrior

And then, I think, the truth broke on your
mind,
That you had reached the shining shore
where men,
Heroic like yourself, their Master find,
Who, like themselves, a sacrifice has been.

Then quick the stinging thought that life was
done,
And home and she and I were left behind,
Came surging o'er you like a scorching run
Of molten lava, searing heart and mind.

Startled, you turned; but His strong voice
once more
Broke the fair calm of Paradise the blest:
"Captain, my Comfortable Words I pour
Still on the anguished souls that seek my
rest."

Scarce had He spoken, when there came a
call
Of loud tempestuous music, such as breaks
Only when kings and stainless heroes fall
And pass unchallenged through the eternal
gates.

The Faithful Warrior

Then came a quivering moment, when you
knew

The King of Glory passing on His way;
This was His welcoming salute for you,
For you the mystic words He turned to
say:

“ Captain, beloved! You have entered in
To heaven’s bliss and My abundant joy;
My sacrificial blood cleansed you from sin,
Your sacrifice brings peace without alloy.”

And lo! you stood transfigured, and a throng
Of clamouring kinsmen pressed on every
side,
And bore you to your Father’s house with song,
In His calm peace and favour to abide.

Thus ever comes the Pilot of the Galilean lake,
To faithful warriors who their country’s
service proudly take.

The Return of the Old Battalion

THERE'S a throbbing in the pulses, and
a whirring in the streets,
There's a start and sudden hand-clasp,
when a chum his comrade meets;
There's a rapture in the sunshine, and the
clouds are milky foam,
For the famous, old battalion, the *Battalion's*
coming home.

We have buried the old motor deep in flags
of every kind,
And our green and crimson pennants, fair, are
fluttering in the wind;
We have buttressed up our courage, but our
whitening lips are dumb,
For the gallant, old battalion, his *Battalion's*
coming home.

They will talk of France and Flanders, where
the trenches were a lark,
And they're just a fighting unit, but you'd
know them in the dark;

The Return of the Old Battalion

They have had their firing parties, and we've
had our roll of drum;
But the ripping, old battalion, the *Battalion's*
coming home.

We have reached the crowded station, we have
heard the whistle's shriek;
But a mist has dimmed the springtime, and we
scarcely dare to speak;
Then the train comes rushing onward, cheers
are tearing the blue dome,
For the splendid, old battalion, our *Battalion's*
coming home.

And we mop the tears in silence, for our boys
mopped up the Huns;
And we only think of heroes, and forget the
pounding guns;
They are coming! Their dead comrades'
names are writ in honour's tome,
But the fighting, old battalion, the *Battalion's*
coming home.

They are moving on in companies, and proudly
march along,
To the sound of brazen music, the ovations of
the throng;

The Return of the Old Battalion

And the crowds are cheering madly, for the
ways all lead to Rome:
It's the 58th Battalion, the *Battalion* coming
home.

Then we hurry to receive them, where the
final march shall end,
Where are eager tens of thousands, waiting
husband, son and friend;
There's a sudden hush of voices, then a cry,
"They come, they come!"
And the glorious, old battalion, the *Battalion*,
has come home.

Through the open portals swinging, comes the
Colonel in the van,
And a deafening music echoes in the rafters'
lofty span;
And we wave in wild commotion, while in
ranks the heroes come;
Then we falter, for the man we loved, *Our
Man's* not coming home.

Avion

June 28th, 1917

I.

AT AVION, it was, that first you met
The Prussian Guard, the dastard
Kaiser's pet
And pampered regiment, famed for strength
and height;
That was the old battalion's special fight.
You met the Prussians, vanquished them, and
won
A lasting fame, for every mother's son
Knew the battalion's honour was at stake:
Fosse 4 and miles of trenches were to take.
Messed up the Guardsmen were; such as came
through
Cried *Kamerad*; one, weeping, begged of you
His life, and got it; and one wounded near
To death, begged just a little water clear,
And got it; for while on your comrades swept
You stayed to assuage the Guardsman's thirst
and kept

Avion

Your head. Opening the bottle at your side
You, bending, pressed the lips that moaned
and cried
For water with the cup you held; were
thanked,
And onward rushed to find your men out-
flanked
A little later. Rises this aching heart
To bless you for that deed; true soldier's part
You played in succouring such as he, unfit
To live, or know his shattered body lit
Again with life divine; made man like you:
But you were ever tender, brave and true!

II.

The guns had opened fire in the morning hour
That goes before the dawn; not nearly four
Nor three o' the clock, but earlier still. While
all
Was hung in blackness, came the shrieking
fall
Of shells on the trenches of the watchful Huns,
Precursor of the dash through fire, and runs
That breach the front. Somewhere lay
stretched a line,
A whitened tape, lost or concealed, a sign

Avion

That marked the place of muster, that was
known

Only to one who tarried; he alone
Knew where to find the string. The lives of
men,

Nay, something more, hinged on the tape.
What then?

A man who once had been your college mate,
(Old U.C.C. to the fore!) was willed by fate
To meet you in the darkness; his platoon,
With him, was going o'er the top, and soon
His eyes had found you. In the darkening
night

A voice said: "Arthur, everything's all right:
I'll find the tape!" But the barrage was on;
The moments flew and nothing could be done
But meet red death and fire, and may be pray
The Huns were somewhere in the front; no
way

Was there to know; and if a life or two
Went out in that mad rush, well, you could do
Nought but push on; mistakes will often come,
For war is war, but soldiers' lips are dumb
In face of danger; your heart cursed the man,
Or failing fortune, that had spoiled the plan.

Avion

III.

What happened? This: a hidden mine was
sprung;

You were supporting, and ere you came on,
Ten minutes later, with your splendid men,
Hundreds had fallen, but the Huns were then
Stubbornly holding on, and their new line
Must still be broken, and the courage fine
Of soldiers must be tested to the last.

Then was it that your men and you surpassed,
For the old battalion's sake, all human
strength;

For your supports had failed, failed in the
length

To reach the objective; left you "hanging in
The air," pounded and trying hard to win
A respite from the hammering guns, to hold
What had been taken. Nought more fine nor
bold

Was known, except the taking of *Fosse 4*
By him that duty loved, but honour more.
You stood alone upon the parapet,
Quiet and undismayed, and valiant met
The rain of fire, till all were safe, who fought,
In trench and dugout; held your life as
nought.

Avion

IV.

This was your "show," the old battalion's
show,

At Avion, near Lens. My verse could flow
Forever in an ecstasy of praise,
Mingled with pride and with a great amaze
That such as I could bear so brave a son,
Distinguished for his courage; one who won
The admiration, praise and high esteem
Of all ranks. Thus you dreamed your noblest
dream

Before you fell and found in death the best,
Though radiant life was sweet, and liquid
Rest

Reached out her hand. Dying, you stand
apart:

A vibrant throb of a great nation's heart.

Curfew

SHIPS passing in the night are said
To speak each other, ere they part,
Never again to meet, as maid
May find and lose a lover's heart.
Does power divine make man to meet,
For a brief, flying moment's space,
That other man, whom but to greet,
Gives to the world a richer grace?

A subaltern who fought in France,
(He hated all self-flattery),
One evening found himself, by chance,
Near an Imperial battery.
A bloomin' sergeant, on his round,
Had just been told to "put some over."
Tho' working party on the ground,
Was easy target, bare of cover.

The soldier, thinking of his men,
And knowing Fritzie's favourite plan,
Of giving shell for shell again,
And killing, always, man for man,

Curfew

Protested: "What about my men?

And Fritzie's habit; what about
Retaliation? Give us, then

A chance to finish, now we're out.

"I know the place, and know right well

The casualties we have to fear;
Just have a heart, and go and tell
Your officer that we are here."

The sergeant shook a stubborn head;

His trusted honour was at stake;

Whate'er his troubled conscience said

Must be suppressed for precept's sake.

He was of the Imperial force;

And while he held Canadians dear,

His mind could find no other course,

His sense of duty sparkled clear.

What was a subaltern compared

With orders, made to carry out?

Or conscience, pricking, if it flared

With common sense and raised a doubt?

His answer broke the silence: "You

Must take your chance like any other;

My Captain takes a different view;

His orders were to put some over.

Curfew

And that is what I mean to do,
Orders are orders, Sir," he said.
My soldier, knowing what he knew,
Lifted a youthful, haughty head.

"Where is your officer? This spot
Is hell itself, if Fritzie choose;
Only last night a dozen got
A dose! Why man, your head-piece use!
Take me without another word
To see your Captain, and be quick!"
The sergeant, pondering, still demurred,
Then, plunging into shadows thick

He led the angry soldier straight
To where a senior Captain sat
At work. Was it mere man, or fate,
Guiding divinely to the spot?
The facts were stated brief, the tale
Was told as straight as words could tell;
But, nothing moved, the man, though pale,
Sat undisturbed, and cold as well.

What was to do? A sudden find,
Like arrow hurtling from a bow,
Shot through the young subaltern's mind,
Breaking in accents soft and low:

Curfew

“ You know we are Canadians, Sir;
I'm from Toronto!” The reply,
With rising color and a stir:
“ You from Toronto? So am I.”

The soldier turned and went his way;
No shot, he knew, would break the calm;
But as he marched, curious to say,
Words learned in childhood, brought him
balm;
And dormant memory, at a cast,
Forced long-forgotten words to light;
A voice within him, from the past,
Cried: “ Curfew shall not ring to-night.”

An Incident of Vimy Ridge

A MISTY softness lay on Vimy Ridge,
An ease from war, with quickened
sense of spring
That comes, in France, ere butterfly and
midge,
Hovering, in fragrant winds, are on the
wing.
Where many-tinted hues in wild-flowers glow,
As soft as in the shimmering rainbow
bridge;
For nowhere do such scarlet poppies grow,
And rich, as in the fields on Vimy Ridge.
A single soldier, droning on his way,
Was feeling youth a glorious thing, and life
A long perfection; the most perfect day
A dream of splendour, after bitter strife.
But with the slumbrous sweetness of the air,
Was mingled subtle silence, soft as night:
An atmosphere portending happenings rare:
Presage of "something doing" on the
Height.

An Incident of Vimy Ridge

The soldier, scarcely conscious of a thought
Beyond the moment, sudden felt astir
With sense of things impending; the airs
brought

A wafted message, urging like a spur.
His loitering steps were hastened with a call
That turned his glance to the ascending
road;

A comrade's greeting only brought a fall
Of eyes, followed by word in cryptic code.

Marching together with their upward gaze,
Fixed on the hill, till they had gained the
top;

The soldiers, turning, saw with quick amaze,
A quiet group of motors brought to stop.
"What's doing?" was the thought my soldier
found

Coursing along his mind; that had response
In softly floating whispers, circling round,
'Midst officers, attendant for the nonce.

And ere his breath could come again, a form
Regal, but kindly, stood before his eyes
"The King!" The waiting soldier checked a
storm

Of feeling; checked a cry of keen surprise.

An Incident of Vimy Ridge

And brought himself to attention with the rest,
While swift the King returned the sharp
salute.

A waiting car received the expected guest,
Who vanished 'midst attendants grimly
mute.

Adown the road, 'customed to wheels of guns,
Sped the huge motor, gleaming like a star;
The soldier marvelled that the dullard Huns,
Could miss the twinkling of the Royal car.
Think thus of Vimy in the quiet hours
That come with firelight, or with morning's
ring;

As of a home for flaming, scarlet flowers;
A place where valiant soldiers met their
King.

In the Hospital Ward

May, 1916

T WAS England, and the fragrant month
of May;
The tender days of spring were in
the bud;
Kew Gardens were ablaze, and chestnut spray
Arched, scattering feathery petals in a flood.
The heaviest days of war were yet to come,
And yet to come the welcome news of peace;
But nature, loving man, had spread a foam
Of milky whiteness on the boughs and trees.

At home, the apple-blossoms and the peach,
Pink-tinted, shaded leafy, country lanes;
Rushes were greening in the river's reach,
And bending lilacs opened to the rains.
The sap in spreading maples was astir,
And migrant birds were everywhere a-wing;
The flaming tanager vied, as it were,
With scarlet-breasted robin, and the spring.

In the Hospital Ward

In France, two frenzied women hurried on
Through blinding showers, warm with the
breath of May,
To where a wounded soldier, only son,
For King and country, prostrate, dying lay.
The bloody salient, Sanctuary Wood,
Had known him only three short days
before;
Since when, his spirit, poised for flight had
stood,
Waiting a summons to the unknown shore.

The women, crazed with fears that wronged
their faith,
And racked with grief; their eager hearts
afame,
Waited to hear, "He lives," to hear, "he saith
He longs to see you," ere they called his
name.

With frightened faces; vexed with rising sighs,
They found the ward they sought: their
soldier smiled,
But pain had crushed the sunshine from his
eyes,
And Death had marked him for the track-
less wild.

In the Hospital Ward

His heavy breathing broke upon the ear,
Like stroke of sabre on the tender flesh;
His face was pinched and wan, but, shining
clear,

His fevered eyes their story told afresh.
The women, moving slowly, took his hand,
And smiled into his eyes, as women will;
And marked the blood-stains, that, like searing
brand,

Scorched where they fell, and falling seemed
to kill.

One of the women kissed the pallid cheek,
And beckoned silence, for the dews of death
Were gath'ring, and, tho' he essayed to speak,
His words but came in gasps of broken
breath.

But Providence, or fate, or was it love?
Decreed this soldier born to fight again;
And drew him gently back to life, to prove,
That youth survives, if faith her hold
retain.

He lived; and while sweet-scented roses
bloomed,
In France, and larks sang in the summer sky,

In the Hospital Ward

And nightingales, far from the guns that
boomed,

Trilled in full-throated ecstasy near-by,
The soldier, tasting all the joy that came
To one who loved to live, found living
sweet;

His cheeriness and smile were pure as flame,
Or golden sunshine on a field of wheat,

Or other beauty, gentle nature finds
With which to deck her shimmering, velvet
earth;

His was the sweetness of contented minds
And his the glory of a soul's re-birth.
What is to tell? Well, just to say once more
He lived; and lived to fight till victory came;
And when men speak of heroes gone before,
With lifted hearts they name this soldier's
name.

Mentone

O FAIR MENTONE! with your sea
A dreamy radiance of delight;
Your palms, a miracle to me,
Still shine upon my aching sight,
Bring me sweet happiness again,
Bring roseate pleasure, blent with pain.

Your far-off hills of yesterday,
Where we two met and roved together,
Are a sweet vision, fair as May,
Your villas bright as sunny weather:
An ecstasy of white and blue,
Mingles with groves of darkest hue.

When first I saw your mountains proud,
My train, east-bound, for Italy,
Stopped, and beside a waiting crowd,
I saw my soldier beckoning me,
And all my weariness to scorn,
My night he turned to gladsome morn.

Mentone

If life can yield a purer beam
Of bliss, than swept my soul that day,
When I beheld, as in a dream,
A khaki form 'midst flowers gay;
Then send it me that I may die,
Of the sweet rapture willingly.

My eyes still swim with mystic joy,
My pulses throb, his kiss I feel;
A mad delight without alloy,
Was mine, to feel his presence real:
To know my waiting not in vain,
To see him face to face again.

But war's dark stain was with him still;
Tho' day by day you gave him health;
Of pleasures rich he had his fill,
Of sunny skies and love, a wealth;
You reached him that you had to give,
And having all he loved to live.

We loved you for your mountains free,
The hovering beauty of your skies;
But, more than all, you were to me
A rest as sweet as Paradise:
A music stealing on the air;
A sunbeam, golden, sent to cheer.

Mentone

And Monte Carlo from us won,
A sigh that fell exquisitely;
Her stately whiteness lured us on
To love her palace by the sea:
To hail her beauty; to refrain
From taking aught of loss or gain.

And when the rippling moonlight streamed
Across the bay at Garavan,
We thought of Cleopatra, dreamed
Of Egypt and the caravan;
And life was sweet: the shade of war
We suffered not our dream to mar.

The pyramids were just at hand,
An eagle's flight across the sea;
A shimmering light was on the land;
The sunset glowed for him and me;
We were a happy, human pair,
Wandering, entranced, in sunlit air.

Beneath your spreading palms we walked,
Idling the happy hours away;
We watched the twinkling lights, and talked,
While music floated o'er the bay;
Our hearts were set to bravest tune,
Nor thoughts of death disturbed our noon.

Mentone

We left you in the sweet, spring light,
With flowers in profusion piled;
Your mountains reared to stately height;
When last we looked your waters smiled;
Dreaming, I see you as we passed,
Seeming your fairest at the last.

The Willow Tree

The Legend of the Princess of the Willow Tree, as told by Old Tomotada, who carved her image.

Great hero of Old Japan, named Itomudo, when young man, grew bitter and weary of the world, and retired to foreign overwater land, and there lived in distant forest hermitage. To his loneliness came a most fair woman. Her origin was not to Itomudo known, but, so legend say, she was, in truth, most marvelous—a tree spirit, coming from out the heart of a near-by-growing willow tree. She, Princess of Willow branch, loved Itomudo, and make him happy like mortal wife. And Itomudo forgot Japan.

The enemies suddenly came against Nippon, threatening even great castle of Mikado; and messenger came urgently across blue seas, calling on Itomudo to go back and fight to save Japan.

But Itomudo said, "No, never can leave beloved woman wife." Willing was he, most unworthily, to sacrifice his honour for his love. Then fair Willow Wife, truly more strong than he, said, "Itomudo, cut down this too-much-growing Willow Tree, which brings dishonourable shade upon our garden hut," and Itomudo, suspecting nothing, puts axe to tree, while Willow Wife laughs gaily. And when he turns, he hears one more gay laugh, and sees nothing but gar-

The Willow Tree

ments of beloved and one green Willow branch; for she had gone back to heart of Willow Tree.

So did Willow Princess, with her life, save Itomudo's honour, and send him back to distant home across blue seas. And Itomudo became brave, famous, victorious General, and did duty of saving well-beloved Home-land of Japan.

From the programme of the Globe Theatre.

PRINCESS sweet of old Japan,
Tell, O tell me! if you can
How you broke life's cruel span,
Ere he left you.

On the stage we saw you fair,
Loved your eyes and raven hair,
And your pretty, childish air,
Ere he left me.

You, the spirit of a tree,
Duty cherished first, while he,
Loved you only, nor was free,
Ere he left you.

One gay, ringing laugh he heard,
Sweet as fluting note of bird;
Then you vanished. Was he stirred
Ere he left me?

The Willow Tree

Wife and Princess of Nippon,
You it was who urged him on;
Gave your heart of gold to one,
Ere you left him.

Tell me, Spirit of the Tree,
How to conquer grief, and be
Free as you were; brave as he,
Ere he left me.

Was your secret yours alone?
Does sweet nature hear our moan?
Will she take us for her own,
When they leave us?

Sweetest Princess of Japan,
Tell, O tell me! if you can,
How to bind a heart, when man,
My man, has left me.

The Empyrean

HE came into his own before he died;
His fame, his life, and every
splendid deed,
Was rounded to the full, ere he had sighed
The last, swift breath that his brave spirit
freed.

Nor death, nor fate, nor fortune's chilling
blast,
Can change the wonder of that radiant truth,
That what he dreamed of, he attained at last,
And knew himself the master of his youth.

That splendid self, that nought could hold nor
bind,
Rose, like a lark, in spirals from the earth
To heaven's blue; the music of his mind,
Was set to sweetest cadence from his birth.

Yet he so bore himself with modest pride,
That few there were who guessed the vic-
tories scored,

The Emyrean

Who knew the poet soul, that thrilled at tide
Of rhythmic verse; that all things base
deplored.

When flaming war broke, swift as panther
leaps

He threw his youth and strength on Eng-
land's side:

He died for England: if in France he sleeps,
He came into his own before he died.

Thus shall it be that all his stainless past,
Shall stand like monument of purest gold,
Or effigy, within Westminster vast,
Chiselled in classic marble, quaintly old.

Nor any sleeper, there, more blest than he,
Who bravely found himself before he fell;
Who knew the empyrean reached; knew him-
self free,

And tasted nectar sweet with Hebe's spell.

And that, ere the advancing years, or time
Had claimed him; ere his eager youth had
known

The touch of age, he lived; then passed sub-
lime;

And tasting death, he came into his own.

Passchendaele

October 26th, 1917

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.

(The 58th Battalion, C.E.F., was the first Canadian battalion to attack at Passchendaele.)

MY absent hero, ere himself was laid
To rest, in France, to the requiem of
the guns,
On that black day that made the world for me
A sunless place, told, how at Passchendaele
Our troops advanced and took and held the
Ridge.

I pray you for an instant follow me
In thought to Flanders; take at Ypres a train
And push towards the east; then make descent,
After a twenty minutes' run by rail,
Then take the road, and stand and laugh to
scorn
The shell-holes on the Ridge, remembering
well

Passchendaele

That every pockmark meant a human life.
Look down; now throw your swimming eyes
across

The path of glory stretching to the east.
For here it was the 58th was given
By luck, the post of honour in the attack
At Passchendaele, the fight, that brought us
all

An everlasting fame, and made us great
And more than glorious, at a staggering cost.
Now, thread your way between the humps and
scars

And you will come, in time, to Bellevue Spur,
Rather, let's say, to the enchanted ground,
Where the old battalion, plunging up the slope,
Tho' met with withering fire from the Huns,
Swept on, till only seventy were left,
And held the Spur.

'Twas thus my hero spake:
He had been left behind, and bade the men
God speed. The hour, he said, was early
dawn,
Scarce six o' the clock. He closed his tired
eyes
And then, it seemed, he opened them, and lo!

Passchendaele

A staggering, wounded man stood in the tent
Covered from head to foot with crimson blood;
To his torn face he held a dripping cloth
And still essayed to staunch his gaping wound.
My hero knew him for his tenting-mate,
A senior officer, and in command.

"We're shot to pieces, Bill!" he cried at last;
"Seventeen officers have fallen out;
There's no one left. When we'd gone o'er the
top,

We met a galling fire from the Huns;
Machine-guns fairly bristled in the box
That crowned the height, and made it more
than hard

For us to advance a paltry hundred yards,
With every foot of ground strewn thick with
dead.

I left them broken, bent, but hanging on,
With two lieutenants clinging to the Spur,
And picked my way, beneath a rain of shells,
Along a road that vanished as I walked."

O ye of miserable stock! whom he
Called "safety firsts," ye who took every
chance

Passchendaele

To save yourselves, once you had crossed the
seas;

Better, by a hair's breadth, than slackers here!
Listen, I pray you, to what this man did
When he was left behind at Passchendaele;
No more, he said, than was his duty; yet
He did it nobly: that's enough for me.

The time was early morn, and scarcely light;
But minutes count and melt like snow in rain
When souls are being pounded out of men.

The breaking morning found him plunging on
Through deep morass and through a deeper
mud

That caught him somewhere near or 'round
the waist,

To where the old battalion held the line,
With two lieutenants clinging to the Spur,
The receding Germans yielding inch by inch,
And raining tons of missiles on our men.

With no emplacements for our lurching guns
In the quaking lake of fusing mire and earth,
And nothing left to do but drag them up,
As best we could, through miles of oozing
mud,

Passchendaele

Our troops drove back the Huns, dented and
breached

Their wall of steel, and so forever laid
In the mire the arrogance and vaunted might
That hurled their challenge at a peaceful world.

All day the battle raged, but stubborn men
Pressed on the massive "pill-box" on the
height

And stormed it, smashing up the battery
That wrought such havoc in the early morn.
Then what was left of the old 58th
Came on, to find their wounded and their dead
Strewing the blood-soaked swamps like with-
ered leaves

That fall before the autumn's leveling blast.

Where were the wounded? Did I ask, or did
My soldier tell me how the fallen fared?
Ere yet the height was stormed, from break
of day

And through the tedious hours that make the
time

We call the morning and the afternoon,
They lay unsuccoured on the battle-field
Where first they fell, nor any aid received,

Passchendaele

Nor dressings of their wounds, till battle's
flame
Had swept beyond the Spur and passed them
by,
Leaving them prone in face of victory.

So hot had been the shelling of the morn
That none might venture in the zone of fire
And live; but towards the set of sun there
came

Surgeons and helpers; these it was who bore
And drew as many as the fort would hold
To safety, and to rest upon the floor.

And here my soldier found them late at night,
After the heavy fighting of the day.
Battered and spent and seeking rest as well,
He, with his comrades, came to Bellevue Spur.
Entering the massive structure on the height
He found the sick and dying on the floor
So closely packed that one might barely pick
A single step between them as they lay;
Nor could my hero more than find a space
To stand on, after he had entered in.

What could be done? His mind flashed quick
as light.

Passchendaele

The day was won! But this—! A sergeant's
voice

Broke the swift flight of thought: the relieving
force,

He said, had come at last; but what about
The wounded? They could not be left behind,
For never does the British soldier leave
His comrades on the field, though others come
To carry on the fight when he is spent.

At this the Second in Command rose up
And spoke to him I called my hero. Would
He face the fire of the Huns again and take
The wounded out? go back a thousand yards
And bring the stretcher-bearers up; then back
And back again till all were safely out?

Another heart had quailed; my soldier's word
Was, "Yes, sir"; then he faced about and
plunged

Into the night and down the shell-swept road
Till coming to a place below the height,
Where there were living men, he quickly
swung

Stretchers and stretcher-bearers into line,
Sixty in number; then moved up again
'Neath heavy fire, to the pill-box on the hill.

Passchendaele

Five trips in all. A last man, sorely hit,
Begged mercy when a loud, exploding shell
Struck on the battered trench, and all seemed
lost.

Four prisoner Huns, there were, who took
him out.

The wounded were evacuated; more,
Were taken to a place of safety; then
With scarcely strength to stand, my hero went
Once more to the front: he bearing in his
lung

The German bullet got at Ypres, a year
Or more, before the attack at Passchendaele,
Gathered the men together and brought out
The constituent battalion: seventy men.

Did the wounded praise him for his heart of
gold,

His fearless courage under heavy fire,

His gift for organizing and his speed?

Yes: you may take my word, they did; and
more;

Called him "Priceless thing," as soldiers do;

Said he had won the coveted V.C.

And Military Cross, each to his mind;

For had he not with valour bravely saved

Passchendaele

A dozen score or more of human lives,
Under terrific fire from the foe,
Drum-fire, it was, and brought them proudly
back

To peace and safety, well behind the guns?

Yes! And the Second in Command had nought
But words of commendation. Warmly wrung
His hand (again, as soldiers do), and thanked
Him gravely: Said his work had been the
best

Done at "the show" that day. His Colonel,
too,

Praised him unstintingly, and so it was
My hero walked content: his work well done.

Such is the heroic story told, in part,
By him who ever honoured Duty first;
Who splendid passed, at Lens, to his reward;
Who never knew retreat before the Hun,
And laid him down, in France, beloved of all
For long and gallant service in the line.

A Bugle Call

GIVE me back the years of wonder,
Bring again the days of war!
Let me feel my pulses throbbing,
Close my ears to children's sobbing,
And my life of sorrow robbing,
Take away the days that are.
Give me back the years of wonder,
Bring again the days of war!

Let me hear the tramp of soldiers,
Sound again the bugle call!
Break the quiet of my gloaming
With the noise of waters foaming,
Rushed through chasm and gorge, e'er homing
Near the camp where heroes dwell.
Make me hear the songs of soldiers
Rising clear, from cot and hall.

Days when life was still before us,
Filled with all that Death could lure;
When our sires and sons proved true men,
With red blood; the shirkers few men;

A Bugle Call

When the nation's trumpet drew men
To resist a common foe.
Days when honour urged and tore us,
Days when only death was sure.

Then we saw them in their splendour,
Caught their hands when lips were dumb.
Take away my grief and trouble,
Give me wheat, nor leave the stubble,
For my sorrow, give me double,
Far remove the stains of war.
Tell about the Great Surrender;
Call the years that are to come!

Let me hear their names a-chiming
In the temple towers of Time!
Show them slain, but crowned victorious,
'Midst a nation's shouts uproarious;
Let me see the Vision Glorious
Of the years that are to come.
Show an empire's poets rhyming
Manhood shattered in its prime.

Bring our marching men before me,
Curb my pride and check my tears.
In the halls of fame and glory,
Grave their names and tell their story,

A Bugle Call

Till their monuments are hoary
With the dust of coming years.
Bring our marching men before me,
Crown with peace my hopes and fears.

Own their greatness, life's attraction;
Set the gates of fame ajar!
That sweet youth and poets dreaming,
Touched, may see the glory streaming,
See the splendour, softly gleaming,
In the vacant years to come.
Follow them in word and action:
Nor let slip the dogs of war.

Morning

"The watchman said, 'The morning cometh.'"

I.

THE dawn breaks in the eastern sky,
And it is morning, O my soul!
Are goals for which men strive and die
Still far beyond their weak control?

You, bravest soldier, soaring free,
Nor pausing in your onward flight,
See us as the immortals see,
From fields of purest, azure light.

Somewhere your spirit, free and strong,
In other, vaster world than ours,
Looks with a mind that knows not wrong,
On these contrasted, earthly powers.

You died that Freedom here might stand
Unchallenged on a loftier height;
You gave your life, and dying fanned
The fires that quelled the Vandals' might.

Morning

But what avails? though great our name,
And courage be our Empire's boast,
Though justice burns, a windless flame
Along our hills from coast to coast,

If narrow minds refuse the best,
And statesmen stumble in the race,
And scholars scarcely bear the test,
And churchmen honour what is base?

"I go away," so said the Word,
"To send the holy Comforter;
I come again." We wait, O Lord!
Impatient though we know we are.

Is this Thy Coming, this Thy Peace,
A world given up to pain and blight?
All that we stood for, had, all ease
Pressed from existence in a night!

II.

As one who seeks with breaking heart
To staunch a freshly opened wound;
Who finds a letter, whole or part
From him whose ears are closed to sound,

Morning

So throb my senses once again;
I hear the nation's wild alarms;
I feel the thrill, recall the pain,
The clamour of a world in arms.

I see you part of that sweet youth,
Our flower of manhood, going away,
Never to come again to soothe
The fretted hours we call to-day.

And we who knew the gentle touch
Of loving hands, and miss them now,
Turn back with longing, envying much
The tender past we used to know;

And old things take a fairer form,
Forgotten songs the airs pervade:
This is the house where you were born,
And this the garden where you played.

Of your companions, many sleep
In ruined France, not far from you;
You were such merry children! deep
In childish fun, and ringing true.

Morning

The hastening shadows often fell
Along the sweetness of the grass,
Chasing the sun's red beams, that tell
The children's hour about to pass,

Ere yet the merry, rippling wave
Of childish laughter died away;
In France, the shadows on their graves
Mingle their dark with poppies gay.

III.

I see your face and mark in thought
The shining glory in your eyes
That praise of England always brought,
Glowing like sunset in the skies.

The robins, fluting in the trees,
Sang loud His praises who had made
The happy earth; and droning bees,
Their toll of humming sweetness paid.

And she you loved was always there,
Whose name in blue forget-me-nots
We longed to plant: a vision fair,
And sweet beyond all words or thoughts

Morning

So flies the mind as in a dream
 Adown the gulf of vanished years,
Finding the mellow sunshine's beam
 Only through blinding mists of tears.

IV.

I cannot bear the pain of loss,
 Tho' life be kind and friendship sweet;
You were the sunlight on the moss,
 And tireless kept my sinking feet.

Yours was the wider, steadier mind;
 The brain that coped with larger things;
That chose the best, and saw mankind
 Through gladdening eyes, as one that sings.

Your man's strong arm, your shielding
 strength,
Kept all invading foes at bay;
Your active care and love gave length
 Of days to me, who feared the fray.

And now in friendly soil you keep
 In France, not far from Agincourt,
A braver vigil; emblem meet
 Of deathless life for evermore.

Morning

For everlasting life is yours;
Yours is a name that cannot die:
For what you died for still secures
For man an immortality.

V.

Is there a balm for grief like mine?
For wounded pride? Such ease from pain
As tigress torn from cub may find,
Ere she shall see her young again?

Science alone can make reply,
For Faith is dead; and only God
Can bring us lasting victory,
Or pierce the darkness of the cloud.

For reason gives a surer sign
Than patient faith, in things unseen;
And there is harmony divine
'Twixt science and our hearts' sweet dream.

Lord! Give us back our Glorious Dead,
Or show them living, blest, with Thee;
Let faith be lost in sight, as said
The Word we cherish. Give him me!

Morning

VI.

Is this th' estate for which men strove
Through countless ages, gave their best;
Poured out their treasure, owned their love
Only for that which stood the test?

When adding sum to sum we face
The last analysis, all told,
Are we indeed a greater race
Than were the Orient men of old?

A vast modernity appears;
A woman happier there and here;
But gazing o'er the waste of years,
Has man attained a loftier sphere?

The answer breaks along the mind,
Like restless billows on the shore:
"We live not to ourselves, but find
Our life in striving more and more,

"Nor count it loss if only one
Heroic soul survives in kind,
To fling a seed of wisdom back
To runners pressing from behind."

Morning

Thus the rejoinder. We who staked
Our all, and lost, are not content
To feel our pain, and know unslaked
Our thirst; to see the veil unrent.

VII.

We trace our lineage back to God;
Then science swings us to the ape;
We love to walk where Knowledge trod,
To ramble free in Learning's wake.

And man was man, alert and wise,
Three hundred thousand years ago:
What ravening chaos broke his ties,
Leaving him helpless here below?

A pall of silence falls amain,
Along the staggering gulf of years:
Hopeless we trace another vein,
And view the present through our tears.

Our world, grown black with war and strife,
Believes, at least, the darkness spent,
And might, with force, no longer rife,
Though evil stalks with discontent.

Morning

We faced the Prussian squarely bold
And forged, in blood, an iron chain
That holds him bound, and still shall hold
Till Peace and Christ shall reign again.

And looking down the vale of years,
We see him staggering, bent and lean :
A vagrant outcast, sick with tears,
Son of a nation that has been.

VIII.

Barely we draw our loathing breath,
When a devouring monster lights
Across our path, and taking shape,
Threatens, with clenched fists, our rights.

Tell us, thou shade of recreant man!
Whether a phantom, fiend or worse,
What cruel tyrant walks again,
More deadly than the Prussian curse?

He has his home beyond your sea ;
His avarice savours of your lust
To conquer ; yet, with such as he,
We would not fight if fight we must.

Morning

He helps to fan the fires of war;
Takes milk from babes and basks at ease;
He shines, a scintillating star,
And rules the commerce of the seas.

His natal land, by right of his,
Is called America the free;
Yet he a greater menace is
Than Prussian rule, to liberty.

For he would ruthless kill the soul,
And virtue break, as on a wheel;
To strangle honour is his goal,
And crush the world beneath his heel.

But truth is truth, when all is said,
Hard to mistake; we ask in woe,
"Can man be honest and in trade?"
In black despair we answer, "No."

IX.

Who taught us first to love the base?
To set the sordid man on high?
To join the madly whirling chase
For pelf, gained by dishonesty?

Morning

Great Nation! All too proud to fight,
While we swept on and kept your coast;
Remember, Freedom was your light,
And honour, once, your proudest boast.

While England met the advancing hosts,
And Canada her flag unfurled;
While marched our men from distant posts,
You fired the phrase heard 'round the
world.

We would have fought a hundred years,
Nor bowed our necks to Prussian yoke;
Cease firing would have fall'n on ears
'Customed to flame and battle-stroke.

Yet ever shall the word be clear,
If you had done your duty first
Instead of last, *he* had been here,
And sorrow's darkest night dispersed.

Away with thoughts that chafe the mind,
That turn the peaceful heart to sin!
Man was not made to hate his kind,
However frail his kind has been.

Morning

X.

Son of the Empire, city-born,
If I may muse on days gone by,
Forget sweet youth laid down at morn
With life and pulses beating high;

If fair my thoughts shall dwell with you,
Turn backward, leap the gulf of war,
Revive the years and bring anew,
The tender days that distant are,

What vibrant memories thought may send
Shall thrill to songs that are no more,
Life's ebon shadows trembling lend
A higher light to days of yore.

I see you on the college green
A little lad, of ruddy face,
Of generous heart and cheerful mien,
And nothing wanting, much, in grace.

And older grown, you learn in time,
To manage sail and rowing-boat;
To breast the waves, to dive and swim,
And laughing on the billows float;

Morning

Then, stirring with the lark at morn,
Rich in the love of simpler things,
You lave in waters blue, that scorn
Aught but the purest, freshest springs.

At morn you tread fields drenched with dew;
The hemlock lands are your abode,
You range the cedar woodlands through,
And cycle on the country road.

Your boyish heart is pure and true;
Your ringing laugh is frank and deep;
The very air is sweet with you:
And now in sunny France you sleep.

XI.

Touched is the evening lake with gold;
Amber the mists with fairy light;
The inland, summer sea is rolled
In splendour, and a purple light.

Your phantom bark, your silvered blade
Have borne you to a magic land;
The radiance, touching you, is laid,
On children, playing on the sand.

Morning

XII.

Changeth the light, an emerald green
Is foaming 'round a racing keel;
A bounding yacht swims on the scene,
A dipping bow, a flowing sail.

The wetted sheet is in your hand,
The rudder's bar is yours to guide;
You are a princeling to command;
To rule the air, and winds and tide.

The light of joy is in your eyes,
And you are master of your fate;
The crested waves, the sunlit skies
Are yours, and you for kings a mate.

I match the highest in my power
To lowly bow before this king,
Who learned in boyhood's tender hour,
That freedom is a glorious thing.

XIII.

Soft is the moonlight on the fields,
And soft the raven shadows move;
The rose her richest fragrance yields;
The whispering hemlocks murmur love.

Morning

The moon has thrown a rippling beam
Of silver light across the bay,
And you are pulling towards the stream
That ever holds your oars at bay.

And happy children mock the sight,
Then join in tender roundelay;
Their moonlit faces soft with night;
Their breathing sweet as new-mown hay.

The pines and white-stemmed birches lift
Their rustling branches to the sky;
From darkened foliage sighing drift
Tunes from the night-winds floating by.

Is there no portent in the air,
No sign, to show you marked for death?
Nothing but moonlight everywhere,
Wrapping the earth in silver sheath.

XIV.

I thought to say no better man
Nor braver, lives upon the earth;
While knowing well that nature's plan
Had marked you hero from your birth.

Morning

I saw you blest with happy home,
Felt children clinging to my knee;
I saw the years that are to come
Purple with fruit of industry.

Your generation, who shall tell?
Who shall declare your ancient name?
Scotia and Beaver mingling well
In fearless knight and without blame.

I saw you with the statesman's mind,
Not great, but ever wise and good;
Not giv'n to trivial tasks, that find
Their highest in a farmer's good,

But busied with the aims that build
An empire: not philanthropist;
Leaving for others, better skilled,
That human work which Christ-like is.

Fair was the dream; but fate perceived
An error; chose another course;
And if to-day you have achieved,
Your glory springs from loftier source.

Morning

You, who had run a glorious race,
But still with so much left to do!
Soldier or statesman, be your place
High as the heav'n's eternal blue.

XV.

As sinks the sun from out the sky,
An evening glory in the west,
So fall my dreamings, comes my cry
For baser musings, thoughts unblest.

I see man still with heart aflame
For conquest, still a sordid clod,
And call him by a harsher name,
'Brute-beast, touched by the hand of God.'

Degenerate, heavy-lipped and gross,
Languishing for the dancing-girl;
With bulging eyes and face morose,
A bestial atom in the whirl;

Wanton, and trampling underfoot
The law from thund'rous Sinai giv'n;
An oak-tree, rotten at the root,
A soul defaced, born meet for Heav'n;

Morning

Then I bethink me, view with pride,
The kindling clearness in your face;
Know you for him who vice decried,
See writ a standard for the race.

XVI.

The mysteries of life laid bare,
Doors, secret, opened at our touch,
Our tranquil senses, eased from care,
No longer fear, but marvel much.

Ours is a faith that can endure,
Can look beyond the things we see,
To that which man may still procure
From nature's golden treasury.

To touch the stars, the air explore,
To harness light and ether waves,
To reach the ruddy planet's shore,
Is that his soaring spirit craves.

And he shall yet attain that end,
Shall touch the worlds that seem so far:
Shall man his airplanes to defend
His Earth from Martian dogs of war.

Morning

For man is moulded to a form
That brooks not law, but such as gives
To him a dominance, by storm
Or battle's test, where'er he lives.

He moves from age to age unblest,
Forever in a maelstrom whirled;
Shall calm and happiness and rest
Be his in other, older world?

XVII.

The sanctuary lights burn dim;
You stand, a surpliced server tall,
With taper lit. Now the lights swim
Across your tablet on the wall.

White-robed you meet the tender bride;
The choir and priests in chorus chant,
And music, in a swelling tide,
Reaches the vaulted rafters' slant.

To join the husband of her choice,
She moves in misty whiteness sheathed,
And, wife to be, she hears the voice
That first o'er festal Eden breathed.

Morning

You with the cross have gone before,
And reach the altar steps, while she
Nor fears what fortune has in store,
If she may mate with such as he.

XVIII.

Hushed is the silent nave and pew,
Stilled is the choir, where once you moved ;
The very air is full of you,
Full are the hearts that greatly loved.

O lingering sweetness! bring again
The boyish form, the gleeful thought :
Touch with the light that quenches pain,
The darkness that his death has brought!

XIX.

The racing years the days renew,
And you to manhood's strength have come :
The patriot's note rings clear and true,
True rings the note for King and home.

As ever in the man shall shine,
If he be true to nature's plan,
Strain of the boy, inborn, divine,
Marking him for the perfect man,

Morning

So dwelt in you a lighter vein,
That gladdened, brought its full reward;
Hockey and football cleared your brain,
Nor baseball on your senses jarred.

You joined the Island's sporting rush;
You cheered the Mayor's first opening
throw;
Your ardent spirit met the hush
In drama, when the lights burned low.

XX.

My brain, with visionary forms
Swims, as the mind unfolds the years;
Your splendid manhood's glory warms,
Your smile, like sunlight, heals and cheers.

Like a great tree whose roots grow deep
In soil that nourishes and bears,
Where wisdom sows and sages reap,
You drew a harvest free from tares.

Your love was as the spreading oak
That casts refreshing depths of shade;
Yours were the lips that comfort spoke,
Your strength a rock by storms unswayed.

Morning

A widowed mother's son and stay;
You towered, a giant 'mongst your peers;
You held a sordid world at bay,
And gladly paid life's full arrears.

The chaos of a life you brought,
With steady hand, to calm and peace;
You brought content and ordered thought;
From carping care you brought release.

Nor word of mine can paint the mind
That bore the burden, knew the good;
Nor fraught with wisdom justice blind;
That human weakness understood.

O Rock of Mercy, Hope of Years!
Throw 'round me once again your strength;
Keep me from shadowing pain and tears,
Till face to face we meet, at length!

XXI.

You met mankind with broadened mind,
But scorned the idler and the fool;
You felt the Empire's heartstrings bind,
And gloried much in British rule.

Morning

You loved a policy that gave,
Strength to the country of your birth;
You knew that Britain ruled the wave,
You held her mistress of the earth.

We miss your strength of will and thought,
We mourn the mind that gauged aright
Men and events; that tireless brought
Us reasoned judgment, clear as light.

And if to-day my spirit craves
That part in you I called "the man,"
That largeness, gracious nature graves
On hearts designed from nobler plan,

'Tis that this aching, frozen heart,
Robbed of the sunshine of your face,
Missing, in you, the man, in part
Misses the glory of our race.

XXII.

We gathered at the Christmas board,
Two grieving women, drank the toast,
"Our Absent Hero," son adored,
Brother beloved: our unseen host.

Morning

Christmas! The feast you loved! We heard
Your cheery calling in the hall;
Your bounteous gifts our pulses stirred;
We heard your laugh, your footsteps' fall.

We felt your presence, warmly close,
Our listening ear caught all you said;
Then, dreaming, we remembered those
Who mourned, with us, an empire's dead

We saw you one of that great host
Who, smiling, passed beyond our sea:
Wreathed be their names with Christmas toast,
Entwined their smiles with Christmas glee!

XXIII.

The years roll on, and lo! you rise
To answer, at the Empire's call;
War's tumults thunder to the skies,
And women's tears unheeded fall.

Swift as the poisoned arrow's flight,
Breaks red the turgid pomp of war;
The powers of darkness, winged with might,
Would crush a world beneath their car.

Morning

Again th' adjacent cataract's roar
Is tuned to tramp of marching men;
Thousands on thousands, score on score,
Leave city, furrow, plough and glen.

A smoke from burning cities curls,
The Vandals' banner is unfurled,
A common foe his forces hurls
Against a sleeping, peaceful world.

XXIV.

Two trembling women, darkly clad,
Have said good-bye with eyes alight;
Brimming with life and cheer, you bade
Your native land a last good-night.

And Mother England, opening wide
Her arms, receives her soldier sons
With loud huzzas, with glowing pride,
Ere they have faced the Prussian guns.

Where once was yellow gorse and sod,
Where holly glows and sunshine warms;
In haunts where late the Poet trod
Are transports, men and clanking arms.

Morning

XXV.

One hell we feared; we called it erst,
 "The door to Calais," "England's port,"
'Twas bloody Ypres claimed you first;
 Baptized with fire, of gods the sport.

He* who had heard the loud acclaim
 Of cheering thousands, when the ball
Was rushed to goal 'mid hearts aflame
 And mad with pride, was first to fall.

They sleep with faces towards the dawn,
 Who first gave youth and life, nor is
The glory of their fame withdrawn,
 Nor shall be, while the nation lives.

XXVI.

I feel again the catching breath,
 The written slip is in my hand:
"Dangerously wounded." Was it death
 Or life? Could you the hour withstand?

*Major Norman Leckie, 58th Battalion, C.E.F.,
Hamilton, Ont., was killed in action in the Ypres
Salient, April, 1916.

Morning

I hear a kindly voice that says,
"There's just a chance that he may live,
For Nature oft her debt repays,
And temperate ways, and youth, are his."

For you, on alien soil, the priest,
Serving the chapel by the sea,
Made intercession, at the Feast
Of Him, who died on Calvary.

Such is my tale: you baffled death,
Laughing to scorn your crumpled chest;
You drew a long and quivering breath,
And we who loved you, knew you blest.

O sweetest day! thrice sacred night,
That drew you, trembling, back to life,
That spared you for a stiffer fight,
For fuller triumphs in the strife.

XXVII.

Day follows day, year chases year
And still the din of battle rings;
The goal is set, the issues clear:
Death, or the death of baser things.

Morning

Our heroes fall on Vimy Height,
And you are in the thick again;
Tho' we have scotched the Prussian's might,
His arrogance is still unslain.

O God, that such things are! that youth
Still the sweet flower of manhood yields!
That slackers live to poison truth,
That middle-age the coward shields!

XXVIII.

At Passchendaele you held your life
As nothing, tho' your senses reeled;
In fiercest battle of the strife,
You won your laurels in the field.

He whom you honoured was the first
To greet you, when your task was done,
To hail you victor, in a burst
Of words, that warmed the heart like sun.

He called you "Bill," and grasped your hand,
Said ne'er had better work been done;
Gave you, with glance, to understand
The Military Cross was won.

Morning

High courage yours in noble kind.
What was the rift within his plan?
I hold 'twas but the rustic mind
Poisoned against the city man,

That held the honour back, to say,
In part, to fighters, such as he,
"Think not a city man, well-born,
Shall rank with soldiers such as we."

(Or human worm, earth-fed and dank,
Raining discomforts on the men;
Hated, and hating every rank;
Handing himself the plums amain.)

But when the feast was set, to bring
Honour to those who honours won,
Uprose a soldier of the King,
Who feared nor death nor mother's son.

"One is there present, sir," he cried,
"Who of high fame deserving is;
Our decorations we deride,
Nor care to wear, while he lacks his!"

Morning

Your soaring courage, mounted high
Still sheds the radiance fate decreed:
Beneath the sun all things shall die,
Except the memory of your deed.

XXIX.

A ten days' respite, and you held,
Once more, the Ridge, at Passchendaele;
Your slightest error ruin spelled
But such as you can never fail.

When order came to "Hold the line,"
You knew the thrill that pride can feel;
Your courage rose like sparkling wine;
Your will responded, true as steel.

And when, at last, you sank to rest,
At Christmas, Feast you loved so well,
By men beloved, by comrades blest,
We only said, "A hero fell."

XXX.

Come to me in the dewy morn,
When pearly mists hang o'er the grass,
When trembling lights are on the thorn,
The shining lake a sea of glass.

Morning

Come to me in the golden noon,
When birds are twittering on the bough,
When roses glow in leafy June,
When rushes green and zephyrs sough.

Come with the rustling sounds of eve;
Come softly with the firelight's glow;
Bring with you brimming life, nor leave
Till laughter's lightest rills o'erflow.

Come to me in the silent hours,
Ere night her sable mantle casts.
Alike on nesting birds and flowers;
Come to me while the twilight lasts.

Come to me, hero of my dreams,
When sleep upon mine eyes descends;
When starlight through my curtain streams,
Bring liquid peace that sorrow ends.

Come to me in the midnight watch,
My darkness change to whitest light;
Break through the gloom, give me to catch,
Once more, your "Dearest," then "Good-
night."

Morning

Come to me with the love I miss,
With face aflame and eyes that shine;
Make me to feel your soft, rough kiss,
Pressed light against this cheek of mine.

Come to me when Death's kindly mists
Are dimming eyes that look for you;
Come, if weak nature still resists
The iron clasp, the chilling dew.

O! hold me in your strong, young arms,
When tired my spirit sinks to rest,
Turn to sweet comfort wild alarms,
Gather me, dreaming, to your breast.

Come in the radiant, new-found morn
With lustrous eyes and quiet breath;
Give me to know this soul reborn,
Crown me a victor over death.

So shall we sail a sapphire sea;
The tranquil streams shall roam beside;
Our rest, deep as eternity,
Our deathless love, as ether wide.

Morning

XXXI.

A glory streaming from on high,
Touches the earth from pole to pole;
The day breaks in the eastern sky,
And it is morning, O my soul!

You, bravest soldier, soaring free,
While here, by truth and duty led,
In tasting immortality,
Have given new radiance to the dead.

I see a splendour in your face,
And know you just a man, no more;
And in that look I know our race
A finer species than before.

A nation rises to its birth,
I mark your life, the finished march;
You fill your place who proved your worth:
A segment in the perfect arch.

Eternal honour, reverence true,
Be yours, where'er the living move!
The new-born day is full of you,
Full are the hearts that greatly love.