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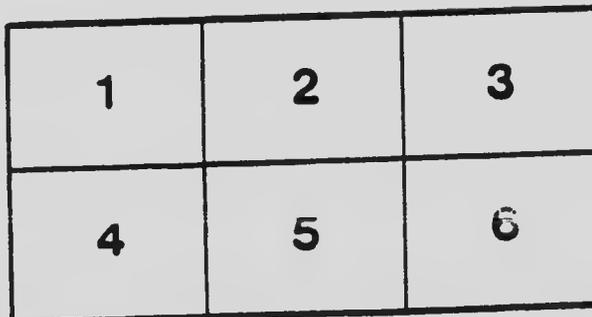
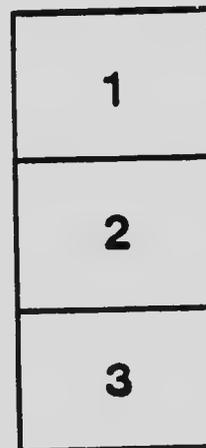
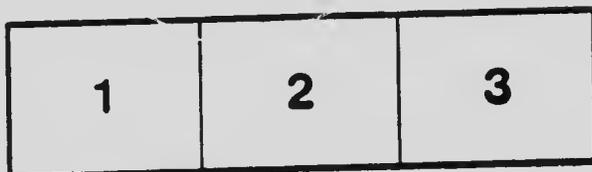
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Yours Sincerely
J. L. Wilson
Author



*Lightfoot, Lord of the Mighty
Pack*
and other poems

BY
J. G. WILSON

TO
MY WIFE

Introduction

I first met John George Wilson in an hospital ward for disabled soldiers, and found that this veteran of the Fifth Canadian Battalion had written a poem, "The Veteran's Ward," dedicated to those who had made this Soldier's Ward a reality. Living in the Canadian North he has the spirit of the Northland, and having served in the Great War he knows from experience the mind of the soldier. The poems which he now presents are the product of his experiences and will I trust find a place in many of our Canadian homes.

Rev. K. Hunter Palmer, D.D.

I have never been to Harvard.
Or trod the road to fame.
I have no fancy, fangled letters
To decorate my name.
In a way that's plain and simple
I'm expressing things that are true.
Heed my call, read them all.
The rest I leave to you.

J.G.W.,

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LIGHTFOOT, LORD OF THE MIGHTY PACK

Far north in the wake of the waste-lands
Where the gray wolves hunt and roam,
Lightfoot! Lord of the mighty pack
Ruled like a king on his throne.
He was light of foot, his fangs were sharp.
He ruled with a ruler's might.
He fought for love, he loved to kill.
There were few to dispute his right,

From his bushy tail, to his pointed nose,
He was stately proud and grand.
A free born son of the frozen North
Moulded by Nature's hand.
For years he had led the mightiest pack
That roamed the waste-lands height.
He was looked upon by his gray, gaunt tribe,
As their chosen god of might.

With the stately air of an ancient knight
He would roam the hills at night.
And howl a high-pitched serenade
To the stars and the Northern Lights.
Then he'd hurl a challenge, loud and long,
To the lord of some other pack,
And await the will of an unseen foe
To hurl him a challenge back.

Then white fangs bared to the silvery moon,
His dark eyes shining bright,
He'd hurl a battle cry to the wilds
And rally his pack for the night.
Then under the stars, o'er valley and plain,
Wild hunts and battles would rage,
Till the truce of the wilds, the sun in the east
Would cast its light on the stage.

One night to the stars and the Northern Lights
He had howled his serenade,
And hurled his challenge, loud and long,
To the lords of the north who raid.
He had squatted back with his lordly air
As he had on nights that fall,
When out of the north from a frozen lake
He heard a bull moose call.

Lightfoot sprang to his feet like a flash,
His dark eyes blazing red.
He hurled a battle cry to the wilds
That would waken the sleeping dead.
His brain was fired with a lust to kill
For a foe had disputed his right,
He called his pack from their secret haunts
To muster in haste for a fight.

From north, from south, from east and west,
From the northland's hidden waste
To answer the call of their chosen lord
The gray pack sped in haste.
Lightfoot's heart beat fast and free
As he watched with secret pride
The gray forms rush from here and there,
As they massed on the hill by his side.

With a final look at the surging mass
Lightfoot sprang in the lead,
Like a phantom horde, the mighty pack
Followed with graceful speed.
Their bright eyes shone, as they raced along
Over the snow-clad trail,
Like ancient knights in days of yore
In quest of the holy Grail

A black fox stood on a hill and gazed
As the mighty pack swept on,
Then raised his voice as in applause
When the last gray form had gone.
The rabbit, quail and plump grouse hen
That on other nights were prey,
Went unheeded past, as the lithe gray forms
Sped thro' the night on their way.

They raced o'er the frozen muskeg
Down thro' gully and glen.
At the dead of night, in the frozen north
Far from the haunts of men.
They raced o'er the snow with a silence
That pervaded the plains and heights.
While the white moon shone, the stars they danced
Thro' the bars of the northern lights.

The muskeg was passed, the valley gone
Onward they ran to the lake,
The pack was silent and running low,
Silence remained in their wake.
A bit beyond, and a distance down
The iceglare now could be seen,
And on it the curtain of northern lights,
Reflected their yellow and green.

Lightfoot slackened his speed on the ice,
Running along crouched low,
As he signaled a warning note to his pack
That he had located the foe.
Then down on his haunches, nose tipped high
With the pack all crouching round,
He released to the wilds of his north domains
The wolf's most weirdest sound.

'Twas a howl that was more than a challenge,
It came from his throat with a will,
As it echoed back from the wasteland height,
'Twas a curdling threat to kill.
A howl that would cause the heart of man
To skip a beat and grow cold,
If he chanced to know the law of the north
And the way of the wolf pack bold.

The northern lights danced over the scene
Of a great moose standing steady,
His feet fast set, his head hung low
To fight to the last he was ready.
The mighty pack formed a circle round
Their prey, knee deep in the snow.
A gaunt gray form made a flashing lunge
To receive a deadly blow.

For a knife keen hoof slashed open his side,
He crawled away with a moan,
To be killed by Lightfoot, the tyrant king
Who resented the slight to his throne.
For the pack well knew from past affrays
That their leader reserved for h's own
The right to rage at his own free will
A fight from the challenge he'd thrown.

Ever the last drawn breath of the fallen beast
Had passed away with a moan,
A score or more of the gaunt gray pack
Had torn him from flesh to bone.
Then a restless wave swept over the pack.
It came with a sudden thrill,
For those who had tasted the warm blood
Were fired with a lust to kill.

The big bull moose as he stood at bay
Seemed to sense that the restless pack,
Were waiting for Lightfoot who circled near
To open the first attack.
So braced himself in the frozen snow
And shook his well worn head,
As he waited the will of the big gray wolf,
His nostrils showing red.

A white owl screeched as it flew o'erhead.
The gray pack held its breath,
As it watched two kings of the frozen north
Stand face to face with death.
The big bull moose was a shaggy form,
Lightfoot a flashing thing,
As he circled round and watched in vain
For an open chance to spring.

Then he tensed himself for a mighty spring -
He sprang like a lightning flash,
His hind feet slipped as he left the ground,
A horned head caught him crash!
His gray form hurled thro' the open air,
Then fell in a huddled heap.
With a deafening roar the mighty pack
On the giant moose did leap.

With a bellowing roar he charged the mass,
Head swinging to and fro.
He fought his way for a hundred yards,
Then fell on the frozen snow.
With a howl of rage that was mixed with greed,
The gray pack killed their prey.
To their pent-up passions they now give vent,
That their leader had held in sway.

Before the last drawn breath had passed
From the lungs of the fallen beast,
A score or more of the hungry pack
Had started their bloody feast.
With their taste of blood their greed increased,
The strongest fought and growled,
While those too weak to fight the strong
Sat down on the snow and howled.

When the truce of the wilds, the sun in the east,
Cast his life on the stage,
'The gaunt gray firms of the leaderless pack
Slunk away in sorrow and rage,
For they knew that no more in the north domain
On their prowls in the dead of night
Would Lightfoot, their lord and king,
Lead them again into flight.

Lightfoot! lord of the mighty pack,
Never more from the hills at nights
Will you howl your high pitched serenades
To the stars and the northern lights.
Never will you hurl your challenge
Thro' the heart of your vast domains,
But your spirit will haunt forever,
Its hillsides, valleys and plains.

THE MOOSE RIVER MINE

Be proud of your vallant miner sons,

Ye land of the brave and the free,

For Canada sings their praise today

And the right to sing has she.

The whole world turned with breathless pause

While they battled with rock and time,

To snatch from the very jaws of death,

The men in that Moose River Mine.

They sweated, they toiled, by day, by night,

As they hewed in that narrow shaft,

They risked their lives with every stroke,

As they plied their miners' craft.

Undaunted they worked like men inspired,

A dynamic, courageous crew.

'Til at last to the waiting world at large

The cry came up that "they're through."

They were grimy, and covered with miner's dust,

But their hearts were free from despair,

And God only sees the souls of such men,

Not just the clothes that they wear.

They conquered the most gigantic task,

Not alone for the fame of the deed,

They answered the call of a pioneer race,

They upheld the Dominion's creed.

So Canada sings your praise today,
You men who played the part,
You drilled not alone to a victory great,
But to every Canadian heart,
Your deed as it stands is unparaelled
And will stand with the march of time.
Your bravery and courage is unexcelled,
In the shaft of the Moose River Mine.

MARCHING BY

On the battlefields of Flanders
After daylight leaves the sky,
There's a phantom army marching
And each night it marches by.
'Tis a legion of the Empire,
Silent ghosts of Briton's sons,
Marching onward, ever onward,
'Til the day of judgment comes.

There are husbands, sons and sweethearts,
Mustered on that night parade.
As they line up where the crosses
Mark the graves of those who paid.
Then with muffled drums and footsteps,
Forming fours they march again
In our memory, just to show us
What a victory costs to gain.

They'll keep marching on forever,
On their silent mute parades.
Marching by the hundreds, by the thousands,
Marching by in whole brigades.
On the battlefields of Flanders
After daylight leaves the sky,
Unheard, unseen, but ever,
There's an army marching by.

TERRY McGEE

Terry McGee was one of the men
Who rode the rolling plain,
In the scarlet coat of the Mounted Police,
As a member of the same.
His hair was red, his eyes were blue,
His face a sun-burn tan,
A native son of the Emerald Isle,
With a record for getting his man.

He was holding down a lonesome post
At the foot of the Touchwood hills,
His instructions were to peel an eye
For the smoke of the moonshine stills,
To locate and seize a crook or two
Of the reeking mountain brew,
And to bring to fort by hook or by crook
The ringleader of the crew.

So Terry had spent a week or so
In getting the lay of the land,
'Til he found that One-eyed-curly Pete
Was chief of the wanted band.
He also found that the Touchwood folks
Were holding their annual ball
On Thursday night, at eight o'clock,
In the old community hall.

So on Friday night he dressed himself
Like the folks of the Touchwood hills,
And then he loaded his forty-five
With some brass coated iron pills,
While he packed in his hip a pair of cuffs,
That he took from a peg on the wall,
Then he forked his mount and headed north,
For the moonshiners' annual ball.

Now Terry MGee was a primitive man
And action was what he liked,
So he schemed his schemes, and laid his plans,
As the mountain trail he hiked.
'Til at last the drone of a lone violin
Drifted out on the evening breeze.
Then Terry dismounted, and tied his nag
To a bluff of evergreen trees,

He drifted round the old log hall
'Til he stood near the open door,
The music had stopped, and One-eyed Pete
Was standing alone on the floor.
His voice was thick with a home-brew lisp
His eye was a bloodshot red,
But he held the crowd with his boastful air
And these were the words he said:

"I've heard today that them red-coated guys
Are sending up here to the hills,
A man of the force, named Terry McGee,
To try and locate our stills.
He has in his jeans, so I've been told,
A warrant for One-eyed Fete,
If ever we meet, that mounted man
Will die with his boots on his feet.

For I'm going to get this Terry McGee,
And the getting will just be fun,
Before the smoke's cleared right away
I'll have added a notch to my gun.
A friend of mine down at Wild Cat Creek
Is keeping his eye on this bird,
And when he heads for the Touchwood hills
He's going to pass the word."

One-eyed Pete had finished his speech
And started to leave the floor,
When Terry McGee of the Mounted Police
Stepped in thro' the open door.
He looked the part of a haunted man,
As he glared for a second or two,
Then turning to One-eyed-curly-Pete
He said "I've a message for you.

A friend of yours at Wild Cat Creek,
Whom I happened to meet today.
Told me to tell you that Terry McGee
Was bent on heading this way;
So I'll bid you goodnight, tho' I'd rather stay.
As my throat is parched and raw,
But I've got to keep hitting the lonesome trail,
A jump ahead of the law.

Then One-eyed-Pete gave an awful whoop
"Oh, I'm going to have some fun,
You're just the man I'm looking for,
You raw boned son-of-a-gun,
So you're keeping a jump ahead of the law,
Doggone your rawhide shoes,
Come out with me to my saddle bags
And I'll give you a shot of booze."

So Terry and Pete took a little hike
To a bluff of evergreen trees,
While the violins' drone of "Home, Sweet Home,"
Mixed with the evening breeze.
When Pete produced his crock of booze,
He near dropped with surprise,
When held in the hand of Terry McGee
Was a blue-nose forty-five.

Two riders approached a distant fort,
Some two hours after dawn,
Two voices were mixed with threats untold,
And the lilt of an Irish song.
The man who swore what he would do,
If his hands were only free,
Was known as One-eyed Curly Pete,
The singer was Terry McGee.

THE VETERANS' WARD

We're a bunch of crocks in the veterans's ward,
But you've treated us mighty good,
We may seem rough, but it's just all bluff,
We wouldn't be else, if we could.
You have earned it so we want you to know
We think that your mighty grand.
You're just true blue, like the ones we knew,
The Roses of No Man's Land.

When you wake us up, with bowl and cup
To wash at five in the morn,
We grouse, we fuss, we sometimes cuss
And wish we had never been born.
But whatever we do, we hand it to you,
You take it all with a smile.
You seem to know it was ever so
With the boys of the rank and file.

We're a bunch of crocks in the veterans' ward,
Just a few of the thousands more
That swing the lead in some peace time bed,
In this land from shore to shore.
We have done our bit, as we saw fit,
For the Empire's cause and how,
So in tending us, in your role of nurse
You're doing your bit now.

For sure enough your made of the stuff
That has made our nation's name,
From near or far, in peace or war,
You're the gamest of the game,
So we'd like you to know, as we come and go
And tried your patience hard,
Tho' we grouse and sigh, you stand ace high
With the boys of the veterans' ward.

THE VETERAN'S REVERIE

Toils of the day, have again passed away,
The shadows of night falling fast,
Relieved from all care, in my old wicker chair
My thoughts flicker back o'er the past,
O'er battles and frays of old army days,
Of pals who were loyal and true,
A silence of grace, with my thoughts seem to pace
As they march in a grand review.

By the light of the fire, they march and inspire
A vision so vivid and bright,
That trouble and care take wing thro' the air,
Once more I am back in the fight,
I see the bright flare of star shells, that glare
As they soar over no man's land,
As they flare thro' the night, they bring to sight
A German patrol close at hand,
A patrol to the right, has passed thro' the night
With a silence nerve-racking to bear,
Then hell's roaring hounds tear loose from bounds,
While cannon and shell spit the air,
Like one in a dream, I again hear the scream
Of shrapnel shrieking high overhead,
As it wails thro' the night, it sings in its flight
A lullaby down to the dead.

The smoke of the fray, has again passed away,
A star-shell does heavenwards glide,
Still forms by its flare I can pick here and there,
Old pals who have crossed the divide,
I again see the mud, half covered with blood,
Grim faces upturned to the sky,
But the smile on the tips, of blood flecked lips,
Make it somewhat easy to die.

My thoughts bring me back to earth with a crack,
My vision has faded from view,
No more do I scan, try hard as I can,
Grim faces of pals that were true,
But when cares pass away, at the close of day,
May this vision each night be my shrine,
'Til I shake hands again, with pals that were men
When I cross over life's firing line.

THE LUMBERJACK

Here's to the health of the lumberjack,
King of the northern woods.
Night or day in any old way,
He's always there with the goods.
He is rugged and rough and just as tough
As a son of the north can be.
He struts with the air, of a devil-may care,
With a heart that's big and free.
He's ready to fight for a living right
In the bounds of the logging camp.
He'll boost the bets in a game of draw
'Til its daylight in the swamp.
He works along with a cheery song
Thro' winter's bitter cold,
In spring he's off to the nearest town
To blow his surplus gold.
Free from the cramp of the logging camp
Out in the bush and snow,
He hits life high, his limit the sky
'Til the city lights burn low.
He has no care for the bill of fare,
That leads to the halls of fame.
Life to him is a royal flush
Held in a poker game.

With a stately air, that's free from care.
He swaggers through city streets,
With a loud "Hello, how's it loggin' boy?"
To every pal that he meets.
Form near and far, at the hotel bar
He lines them up for the drinks,
The lumberjack in his glory there
Cares not what the godly think.

He'll blow himself to a glorious spree
Til his last two-bits are gone,
Then back again to the woods he goes
Singing his cheery song.
Here's to the health of the lumberjack,
King of the northern woods,
He's ready and rough, rugged and tough.
But he's always there with the gods.

THE MEN OF THE FIGHTING FIFTH

When the Kaiser hurled, with flags unfurled,
His men from sea to sea,
To trample down the Belgian crown,
In their march 'o' gay Paree.
He cared for naught, or he never thought,
That the fighting might be stiff,
In his bid for fame there would cause him pain
The men of the Fighting Fifth.

All western sons, were these fighting ones
Each one as tough as nails,
The Kaiser's men, when they met with them
Retired with groans and wails.
So thus their fame, with their fighting name,
Did reach the Kaiser's ears.
While each defeat, his men did meet,
Caused him to shed more tears.

To his favorite one, the Crown Prince son,
The Kaiser said one day,
A mob of riff, called the Fighting Fifth,
Is helping to block my way.
I have picked my men, at the hour of ten
When darkness fills the gap,
My picked brigade, in a big night raid,
Will wipe them off the map.

So Kaiser Bill, on a far off hill
Stood stately proud and grand,
While howitzers roared, and star shells soared
Over on no man's land.
But his picked brigade, lost the ground they made
The Kaiser grew old and stiff,
For he'd lost aga'n, in a little game
To the men of the Fighting Fifth.

Thus thro' the war, his hopes did mar.
'Till he knew not what to do,
Thank Gott mine fleet, he said, won't meet
This murdering, fighting crew.
Across the Rhine, they will come in time
To upset my app'e cart,
For a peaceful clime, where the Fifth don't shine
I'm going to make a start.

Then came the day, when his hair turned gray,
He said to his chief king pin,
I'll have to go, while I've got a show
For this year I cannot win.
I hold no fear of the last frontier,
Or a sentence long and stiff.
But I'd rather rot, than once get caught
By the men of the Fighting Fifth.

PROWLERS OF THE NIGHT

Of all strange tales that e'er were told
The strangest I'll relate,
Of how from home I chanced to roam
And by fleas got nearly ate,
Fate called on me to sleep one night
With a trapper in his bed.
When just about to drop to sleep
I heard a gentle tread.

Like a little army marching
On my pillow, if you please,
Right away, my mind did say
Look out here come the fleas.
They clicked their heels in wild delight
As they trampled o'er my face,
The leader led his squadrons
With a veteran's easy grace.

Their spirits rose like vapor,
At a stunning game they tried
As they used my long and pointed nose
For a real toboggan slide.
They slid down o'er my nose bridge
And o'er my nose bridge cleft,
They keep sliding down, by thunder,
'Til they paused for want of breath.

Then the Leader called a change of sport
And a new game did begin,
To test their skill at jumping
From my nose down to my chin.
My mouth fell wide with wonder,
The beggars got my goat,
When one misjudged the distance
And landed on my throat.

They gamboled and they frolicked,
Thro' the stillness of the night,
Til faint and weak with hunger
They settled down to bite.
Now get me right, they sure did bite.
And altho' I could not see,
I knew a smile played on each face
As they all pitched into me.

They bit like hinds of fury
My tender hide they tore,
As they kept time to the music
To my bedmate's hearty snore,
The highest notes of snoring
To the fleas did act like gin.
They took fresh footholds in my cheek
And stuck their flesh hooks in.

I kicked and turned, tossed and turned,
But tighter did they hang on,
As thro' the air went my humble prayer
For home or the break of dawn.
At last the break of dawn appeared
My soul filled with delight,
For with grand array they marched away,
The Prowlers of the Night,

Now this is the end of my creepy tale
To the truth I've strictly kept,
The trapper rolled from bed, and said
I reckon I've overslept.

WHERE THE POPPIES BLOW

Where the poppies blow with the breezes,
When the sky lark sings its best,
At twilight yonder in Flanders'
Where Canada's heroes rest.

The song of the lark as it rises
As the evening shadows fall,
Adds with the poppies' fragrance
To the sanctity of it all.

The sun as it sets at evetide,
Throws its rays on Vimy's crest,
On the face of a great Memorial
Where Canada's heroes rest.

The men who upheld the traditions
Of the land of the Maple Leaf,
Gave their lives for a cause so worthy.
For such was their belief.

So the song of the lark as it rises
And the blowing poppies red,
Are emblems of God to remind us
Lest we forget our dead.

BUCKLE TO

When you've got an empty pocketbook,
And troubles quite a few,
When the cold, raw wind get's colder,
As your clothes it whistles thro'
When the world seems dark and dreary,
And you haven't got a friend,
Cheer up, brother sinner,
Things will soon be on the mend.

For they say a silver lining
Is thro' every dark cloud shining.
Just forget the black,
And watch the blue.
You can bet your bottom dollar,
Brooding's trouble's younger brother.
Just smile, hitch up your belt
And buckle to.

HER LULLABY

A mother sits by the fireside
While the burning embers throw
Their light on the face of her baby,
That she gently rocks to and fro.
The little arms of her darling
Round her neck like a vine does cling.
As she rocks it to sleep in the twilight,
This sweet lullaby she does sing.

"Hush a bye, Baby darling,
Soon the wave of the good fairies' wand,
Will put you to sleep and carry you dear,
To the place that they call fairy land.
There you will see in the land of your dreams
The elves dance and sing in their lane,
'Til the morning bell rings,
When the good fairy brings,
You back to your mother again.

THE TRAPPER'S SONG

I'll be mushing my way at the break of day,
To my shack north of Fifty Three.
Where I'll live again, from the haunts of men
A life that is healthy and free.
My traps are stacked, my grub is packed,
My dogs are keen for the rush,
My voice will ring, as I northward swing
When I yell to the leader, "mush."

I may be wrong, but the night seems long,
The dawn seems far away,
In my restless sleep, as I wake and peep
For the first gray streaks of day,
For I know right well, that the snow which fell
In the middle of the night,
Will fix things fine, on the trapping line
With the muskeg frozen tight.

I'm sick of the strife of city life
And the ways of the city folks,
I long for my shrines, the silent pines,
In their icy snowy cloaks.
I want to be far from the sights that are
In the din of a city street,
To roam again thro' wood and glen
Where the fox and the gray wolf meet.

To stand once more, on the frozen shore
Of a good old northern lake,
Where the cold winds blow the driven snow
While the huskies stand and shake.
To breathe the air that you get up there,
To be out on the dally runs,
The northern lights, the peaceful nights,
I'll be glad when morning comes.

I'll be glad to get back to my trapper's shack,
To the life that I like and know,
Where the caribou roam, in their northern home,
Where they're free to come and go.
So I leave to the high brow kind,
The glare of the city light.
When morning comes I'll pack my guns
And start on my peaceful hike.

THE WANDERLUST

I'm one of the few, that have followed thro'
The trails of the wanderlust,
When my tent I pitch, my feet they itch,
I've got to keep hiking or bust.
So I swing my pack, with its goods on my back,
And hit for the rambling trails.
Then happy and gay I march all day,
Or sometimes ride on the rails.
I'm always free from taxes and fee.
For riches in gold have I none.
I envy them not, the rich with their lot,
Their life to me would be glum.
So I sing me a song as I wander along,
In tune with the birds and the bees,
Sunshine or rain, to me look the same,
For I do with my time what I please.
I have traveled the land, with those of my brand,
And rode the rods with the rest,
I've seen all the things, the joy life brings
From the east coast out to the west.
I've been hungry and tired, hired and fired,
On the breadline I've been on the list.
But the places I've been, and things that I've seen
Have lessened the sting of the twist.

But sometimes as I dream my thoughts they lean
To the shadows that gather ahead,
Then I wonder if I, in the sweet by and by
Will wander on after I'm dead.
When the end is near, will I face without fear,
The trail that I followed with trust,
As I lived shall I die, on the trail with a sigh,
The end of a wanderlust.

LET US REMEMBER

Years have passed since halt was called
A bitter strife to end;
Peace came to earth, and earth to heaven
A prayer of thanks did send.
But now there lies in Flanders fields
Neath little mounds of clay,
The men who fell; the price of peace
They with their lives did pay.

Where little crosses stand in rows,
Where poppies bloom and fade,
There lie the men to whom we owe,
The day that peace was made.
Those men who fell to keep us still
A nation great in name;
Let us remember, lest we should
A nation walk in shame.

They trod the border land of death,
They crossed the last frontier,
To us they threw the flaming torch
And bade us not to fear,
But hold it high; we gave our pledge
To those who fought and bled,
Let us remember, lest we should
Forget our valiant dead.

O'er Flander's war-scarred battlefields
Grow poppies flaming red,
A wreath in loving memory
Of our legion of the dead.
They rest in peace, our valiant dead,
While we in peace abide.
Let us remember; Lest we should
Forget for what they died.

THE PROPHECY

This is the tale that was told to me,
By the chief of a Blackfoot tribe,
One night at dusk, on the western plains
At the end of a tiresome ride,
As we sat by a campfire's glowing light,
Twas fall and the night was cold,
The chief began in his Indian way,
And this is the tale he told:

White brother, he said, as I sit and gaze,
On these embers glowing bright,
I can see the past for many moons
When the red men fought the white;
Or the white men fought to drive the red
From these prairies wide, a home
That the Great White Spirit toiled for years
To create for them alone,

He stocked them well with buffalo herds,
Our forests swarmed with game,
We lived a care-free, happy life
Until the white man came,
He killed our game and drove us back,
As the e rolling plains he crossed,
He built up cities towns and mills
On the hunting grounds we lost,

Then up sprang fields of golden grain
Where buffalo used to feed,
Then forests too, were laid to waste,
To fill the white man's greed,
Soon noises strange of trains and cars,
Did o'er these prairies drone,
The white man as he marched with time
O'er trod the red-skins' home.

Then he forgot our vanquished race,
He bled our virgin soil,
He dreamt of golden crops, and wealth,
And leisure after toil,
He prospered well but here I make
A prophecy and claim,
That as the Indian tribes die out
Their soil will do the same.

That as the Indian tribes grow less
The sun will wrathful blaze,
These plains will turn to desert dust
Where buffalo used to graze,
That drouth will come into this land
Where golden crops have been,
That lakes will dry, and water cease
To flow in every stream.

Then shall the cries of paleface men,
From city, plain and town,
Reach the ears of long departed chiefs
In their happy hunting ground,
Then these same chiefs shall coun'el call
As they squat on the campfire rim,
And beseech the Great White Spirit
To forgive the white man's sin.

This is the tale that was told to me,
By the chief of a Blackfoot tribe,
The chief himself was a dying man
And that same night he died.
We buried him there on the open plains
And covered him up with a spade,
But I often think of the tale he told
And the prophecy he made.

THE NORTH

Where the banks of the river Saskatchewan
Hold their quiet waters in sway,
As they pass thro' the gate of the Northland
Silently winding their way,
To their south lies the boundless prairies,
To their north lies a country great,
Where the freighter, hunter and trapper
Each set forth on his own debate.

The south may boast of the splendor
Of its prairies and wheat crops untold,
But the north can boast of the wonders
Of its timber, fur pelts and gold.
The south is a land long developed
While the north in her infancy stands,
Just waiting for men who can conquer,
To step in and obey her commands.

She demands that the men who invade her
Be sturdy, steadfast and bold
That the legends of struggles to conquer
May from father to grandchild be told.
So that youth shall proudly give answer
I'm glad it's the land of my birth,
So let woodland and valley give echo,
We're mighty proud of the North.

THE SCHOOL HOUSE DANCE

When you tire of the city's gaudy glare
And the sheen of electric light,
When you feel that you want a change of air
On a cold, clear winter night,
Just find for yourself a girl's that coy,
Who's willing to take a chance,
Then hire a team and hit the trail
For a good old school house dance.

Out over the sparkling snow you glide,
So carefree, happy and gay,
Against your face the cold wind blows
As you snuggle close in the sleigh;
The weird howl of a lone coyote,
Breaks thro' the starry night,
A big white owl will welcome you
As it hoots in its solemn flight.

As you leave behind the city streets
And head for the open plains,
You'll have left your cares and woes
As tinder for city flames,
The lover's moon as she shines o'erhead
Will be working her magic spells,
The girl by your side will be thrilling a tune
To the chime of the jingling bells.

When you look at your partner's happy face
And see there a winsome smile,
Your heart will sing as the sleigh bells ring,
While you speed on mile by mile,
For a romance born on a moonlight night
Is really nothing new,
And you're none too pleased when at last the lights
In the school house beckon you.

When you pull your team at the open door,
And help your girl alight,
The sound within it indicates
A grand and glorious night;
Thro' the open door to the prairies wide
Comes the dancers' merry din,
As they laugh and sing and glide along
To the tune of a violin.

You will meet folks there who'll make you feel
At home and want to stay,
Each hand you grip, each smile you get,
To your heart will find its way.
While someone swings your partner fair
You'll find that you're still in luck,
For a country girl, at a school house dance
Isn't the least stuck up.

As you step the steps of the old quadrilles,
That once were stepped in France,
You will have more fun in a single night
Than you'd have at a city dance,
For it's swing your partner, promenade back,
'Til the first thing that you know.
The violin sings of "Home, sweet home,"
And you know that it's time to go.

Then back again o'er the frozen snow
The it's long past hour for bed—
You gaily talk as you amble along,
And there's many things to be said,
You're wishing, perhaps, the girl by your side,
Will be willing to take a chance,
And drift down the trail of life with you
From that good old school house dance.

L'ENVOI

When you tire of the city's gaudy glare,
And the sheen of electric light,
When you think that you need a change of air
On a cold, clear winter's night,
Just find for yourself a girl that's coy
Who's willing to take a chance,
Then hire a team and hit the trail
For a good old school house dance.

THE MEN WE LEFT BEHIND

When the long last post is sounding,

On the great Armistice day,
When we celebrate the victories
That were ours thro'out the fray,
As we bow our heads in silence

Let us call again to mind,
The memories of our glorious dead,
The men we left behind.

They rest in peace in Flanders' Fields

The soil of France their bed,
A cross of victory marks each grave,
Adorned with poppies red.

Each poppy brings a tender thought,

Each cross a tie to bind,
The memory of our glorious dead,
The men we left behind.

They gave their lives for freedom's cause,

A sacrifice they made,
That thro' their death we might have life.
The tyrant's hand they stayed.

Let us in silence bow our heads
Our thoughts and hearts entwined,
In memory of our glorious dead,
The men we left behind.

THE ISLE OF MY DREAMS

When the road that I'm treading seems dreary
As I roam o'er the trails of life,
When the load that I carry seems heavy
As I stumble along thro' the strife,
When the hill that I'm climbing seems covered
With misery, woe and despair,
I hie me away to the isle of my dreams
And dwell for a little while there.

The Isle of my dreams is a beautiful Isle,
Where the sun shines day by day,
Where the song birds sing, where the forests ring
With their echoes blithe and gay;
Each path leads out to a wondrous scene
Where I while my gladsome hours,
The fresh wind blows, as it ever sows
The scent of a million flowers.

Then back I fly from my fancy's dream
In my heart there's a happy song,
For the trail that before, to me was a bore,
Now doesn't seem quite so long.
While the load on my back, as I trod the track,
Of despair, seems lighter still,
For the scent of flowers on laden bowers
Has vanquished the woe of the hill.

THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

When the northern lights come down at nights
Under the dancing stars,
Your soul it will with awe enthrill,
As you watch their magic bars.
Thro' the Arctic gate, they sweep in state—
A ghostlike mystic band,
For know, there lies in the northern skies
The work of a master hand

The silent flights of the glimmering lights
As they leave their northern home,
Are kindred dust with the wanderlust
In their wild desire to roam.
With the stately grace, of a chariot race
They bolt thro' the open sky,
As they race in bars thro' the twinkling stars
With the heavens alight on high.

As you stand below on the frozen snow
And watch the noiseless spread,
Of their magic flow, as they come and go
In the bright sky overhead—
A reverence deep in your soul will creep
As you gaze on the vision grand,
Celestial light, in the dead of night,
O'er a silent frozen land.

A cold breeze whines, thro' the giant pines
So stalwart, grim and straight,
The Arctic bars thro' the twinkling stars
Shine down from their great estate,
Then the wolf pack's howl, on a nightly prowl—
A high pitched serenade
To the northern lights, as they soar the heights
Of the heavens undismayed.

A FRIEND

A friend is a gift from heaven,
An angel dressed in disguise,
A gift from God to us mortals,
A grand and a noble prize,

A friend is not given to flatter
But rather to tell us them all,
Our faults, our mistakes, as we falter,
And help, should we happen to fall,

A friend will be sad in our sorrow
And glad when our troubles mend,
So let us give thanks to heaven,
To God for his gift, a friend.

A MAIDEN'S LAMENT

Your gone, but your not forgotten.
Oh! my heart is bursting with pain,
At the thought, I shall never caress you
Or gaze in your dear eyes again.
I have cried myself sick in sorrow,
My heart throbs are heavy as lead,
Your gone, but you're gone forever,
Oh! Roary, my dear, you are dead.

You're gone, but you're not forgotten,
Oh! could I be but where you are,
The night seems so dark and so dreary
The stars seem so distant and far,
The moon in a dark cloud has hidden,
All nature's sweet beauty has fled.
You're gone, but your gone forever,
Oh! Roary my dear you are dead.

You're gone, but your not forgotten,
'Til this heart of mine beats its last,
My memory forever will wander
Back to you and the days that are past.
But, oh, in that awful collision
With the car, my heart how it bled,
You're gone, but you're gone forever,
Oh. Roary, my dear you are dead.

You're gone, but you're not forgotten
As long as I live I will see,
In my memory, the loving expression
In your face when you gazed at me.
But I know that your spirit will guide me
Thro' sunshine, thro' rain and thro' fog,
You're gone, but you're gone forever
Roary, my dear little dog.

A CALL OF THE NORTH

The northern lights dart across the sky,
Out of the night comes a lone wolf's cry,
A bull moose calls on his roving mate,
Each wild thing free, on this great estate.
The huskies growl as they gather round,
The trapper, heedless of life or sound,
His thoughts are racing wild and free,
With a call of the North in reality.

On a cold, clear morn, in this great northland,
'Mid beauty transfixed by nature's hand,
Comes the loud clear ring of a freighter's sleigh
Bound north for a post of the Hudson's Bay.
The freighter breaks trail thro' frozen snow,
His lips the smile, his eyes the glow,
With a vision of the north in reality,
A call of a country wild and free.

As the sun climbs high, the woodland rings
With a rifle shot, a bullet sings,
With a lurch, a moan, a gray moose falls
No more to send forth his rambling calls.
Thro' the blood of the hunter leaps a thrill
As he sights a fox on a nearby hill,
'Tis the north in its glory that he can see,
A call of the north that is wild and free.

LEST WE FORGET

Hark, there's a trumpet calling,
Thro' the stillness of the night,
Calling not men to shoulder arms
Or march out to the fight,
'Tis a trumpet call from the silent graves
Of Flanders and Courcellette,
A trumpet call to remind us all—

LEST WE FORGET

Our honored dead who were left behind
In a far off land or sea,
Who gave their all at a trumpet call
That our nation might be free—
Supreme the sacrifice they made,
Their lives without regret,
Let the silent call remind us all—

LEST WE FORGET

The memory of our glorious dead
Should be our solid stay,
To uphold the right in life's great fight
'Til the dawn of judgment day,
We do not know, God willed it so,
When the zero hour is set,
Let their silent call remind us all—

LEST WE FORGET

BILL

Bill was short, lean and wiry,
Quiet sort of chap but blunt,
Known thro'out the whole battallon
As the shrimp, or Bill the runt.
He never cared for pals or buddies,
From us all he kept apart,
'Til he met big Jim McKliver,
Then a friendship queer did start.

Bill and Jim they stuck together
Laughs and jeers could part them not,
Until the day a German sniper
Broke the ties that friendship wrought.
Bill he stood there, glaring, staring
Broken hearted we could tell,
Looking down at big McKliver
Laying crumpled where he fell.

Bill, his face looked grim and gloomy
As he slowly shook his head,
I'd sure like to get that blighter
Who's so generous with his lead.
Then his face got kind of thoughtful
And his mouth got kind of set.
But I knew that he was figgering
How that sniper he could get.

That same night when all was darkness
Save a star shell's glimmering light,
Bill he scrambled o'er the parapet
And he vanished in the night,
Left us standing, blinking, thinking
What would happen out in front.
If he met up with that sniper
Things would happen out in front.

So we stood to as we listened,
Rifles loaded close at hand,
While our eyes they pierced the shadows
To the depths of no man's land.
Bill we felt was sure to tangle
With an outpost on ahead,
Hell we felt would soon be popping
And the sky would soon be red.

There we stood to hark and listen
Kind of sucking in our breath,
Waiting for old Fritz to open
With his messenger of death.
But the night grew silent, chilly
With a silence that felt queer.
Save the rumble of the heavies
To the front and in our rear.

How long we waited none remembered,
Then a star shell lit the night,
Two forms we spied, that crawling
Loomed beneath that Very light.
Then the seconds seemed like ages,
And our hearts like us stood still
'Til a Fritzzy scaled our sand bags
At his heels close followed Bill.

Bill he headed for the dugout
With his prisoner on the run,
And across the his narrow shoulders
Slung a German sniber's gun.
How he did it Bill ne'er told us,
But the Fritzzy told the Cap,
That the devil crawled behind him
In his ribs he felt a gat.

Took his rifle and his trimmings,
Told him just to start and crawl.
Kept him heading for our trenches,
Never had a chance at all.
As for us we were like school kids
Feeling good, just fit to kill,
Stealing down that dirty dugout
Just to get a look at Bill.

Bill was sitting there and smoking,
Smilin' yes, doggone h's hide,
While the captain cussed him plenty
With a face that glowed with pride,
Bill he pointed to the prisoner,
Then he spoke, Boys, he's the one,
That's the blighter I can tell him
By the notches on his gun.

Now to us he's Bill the hero,
Should you call him Bill the runt,
You'll get such a bloomin' niding
That you won't repeat the stunt,
On his breast he wears a ribbon
And its color crimson red,
And one half of Bill keeps fighting
For the other half that's dead.

THE PRISON WARDER'S DREAM

Where prison bars stand out like stars
In the souls of men who dwell
In their rooms of hate, some six by eight,
The prisoner's narrow cell,
Where a shadowed light in the dead of night
Casts down a feeble glare,
O'er a silence dead, save the sodden tread
Of a night guard on the stair.

As on such a night, under such a light
As I sat on my hardwood seat,
That I dreamt a dream, which to me did seem
A nightmare most complete.
I was all alone, with not even the drone
Of a fly to disturb the air,
In my dream I fled, 'til I saw with dread
The devil stand by my chair.

With a smeary smile, you could see a mile,
He grinned from ear to ear,
As he turned his head to me, he said:
I'm glad to find you here.
Just follow me, while I go and see
My victims, those who fe'l
From the narrow way and see them pay
Their debts in a narrow cell.

So the devil and I, with steps so spry
Climbed up the winding stairs,
While the devil smiled like a tickled child,
I remembered my unsaid prayers.
We started out, but without a doubt
I shook till I almost fell,
When he winked at me and chuckled with glee,
As he peered in every cell.

It took me a year to get this one here,
He said, as he stopped to gaze,
On a boy in his teens who stole for the means
To blow on the girl of his craze.
The pace it was fast, but I got him at last,
He battled me out for a while,
But the joker I drew when at him I threw
A girl with a coy, cunning smile.

But she was a bit of the bottomless pit,
The fairest of the fair,
She coaxed him away from the broadest way,
Till he found himself laying there.
And that's how they fall, the big and the small,
The good along with the vile.
That's why I gloat as each one is smote,
With the strategy of my guile.

Then this one here, he said with a sneer
As he stopped at a cell farther on,
I filled him with greed, for money and speed
And got him one morning at dawn,
With a high powered car, sold fake stocks at par,
Deserted his children and wife,
'Til an unheeded brake, left a corpse in its wake,
He was tried and sentenced for life.

We passed along then until at cell number ten
The devil stopped short to stare,
With a look of hate, thro' the bars of the gate,
At the man who was lying there,
And strange to relate, he gripped hold of the gate
'Til I thought the bars he would bend,
But he whispered and said, that man on the bed
Is doing a stretch for a friend.

I laid well my plot, for years I fought
To capture the one I desired.
But I plotted in vain, unaware of the game
That a friendship so deep had inspired,
When this man stepped in, confessed to the sin,
He made a fool out of me.
As he picked up the knife, that wrecked his life
And let my victim go free.

Old Nick prattled on, till the streaks of dawn
Stole in thro' the prison bars,
Of the rank and file, the wicked and vile
And dark deeds under the stars,
Then silent in flight, he vanished from sight
Like vapor into the air,
I awoke with a bound, from a sleep that was sound
To find I was still in my chair.

ONCE WE WERE HUMBLE

Once we were humble like plain folks should be.
The good in our neighbor we always did see.
When he was sick we would lend him a hand.
His troubles were ours, beside him we'd stand.
But that was the days in the long, long ago
When neighbor helped neighbor to plough and sow.
We had picnics and parties with friendships galore
And welcome was always the sign on the door.
But away went those friends and times that were
(grand.

When the craze of gas buggies swept over the land.
Most everyone got one, and with them the lust
To pass up a neighbor and choke him with dust.
We fretted, we petted, we clamored for speed
The faster we traveled the greater our greed,
We lived for the present, forgot of the day
That the bill would fall due, the devil to pay.
We traveled on high, and traveled so fast
We burned out the bearings, and ran out of gas.
Then we were busted, twisted and bent
The money we had, on good times we spent,
So now we are fussing, and cussing our lot.
Forgetting that we are the mortals who shot
Good old prosperity right in the pants
We ordered the music now we must dance.

THE SCARLET RIDERS

Who are the men that are passing
With the roll of the countless age,
That are known from the frozen Arctic
South to the purple sage.
The men that have stood for justice
Thro' Canada's vast domains—
These men are the scarlet riders,
The riders of the plains,
South where the rolling prairies
Rise up to meet the sky,
They rode in the wake of the sage brush
To the tune of the buzzard's cry.
Hard riding the trail of the outlaw,
There under the scorching sun,
They rode to the lair of the bandits
Bringing to justice each one.
They were feared by the toughest criminal
For oftimes, stories were told,
Of deeds that were done by these riders,
So fearless, courageous and bold,
That the rules of their little red manual
Were so in their minds impressed,
That they got each man they went after
Tho' he were of the devil possessed.

In the first mad rush to the Yukon
Where crowds did surge and roll,
They enforced there the law and its order,
In the shadows of the Pole,
They braved in winter its blizzards
In summer its storms and rains,
Just as true to their little red manual
As their comrades on the plains.

When the deeds of the nation's heroes
Are pressed in its history book,
You may look through its countless pages
And find there in every nook,
Deeds that are set down as valor
With a list of its heroes' names,
You will find there the Scarlet Riders—
The Riders of the Plains.

A TOAST

Give us a toast the gay crowd cried
As they sat in the banquet hall,
Give us a toast that will cheer each heart,
They still continued to call,
An old man rose and a silence fell,
O'er those of the banquet spread,
As he raised his glass of sparkling wine
Till it hovered over his head.

His face was wreathed in a happy smile,
Like a man who had won in life.
The things worth while that only come
With courage and with strife.
I'll give you a toast, he gaily cried.
Of spirit combined with truth,
I'll give you a toast, he waved his glass.
Let's drink to the Glory of Youth.

ONCE WE WERE YOUTHS WITH A FUTURE

Once we were youths with a future,
Rugged, and full of grit,
Headstrong, ambitious and fiery,
Known as the choice of the fit.
Now we're a nation's burden
Burned out, weary and lame,
Old crocks to the young generation,
But still we would do it again.

We worked each one at his calling,
We were known from the east to the west
As the flower of the country's manhood,
Acknowledged and found the best.
Then came the call of the bugle
From the land far over the sea,
Calling for youth and its glory,
Answered by you and by me.

Then we were shoved into khaki
Told how to handle a gun;
Hailed as the cream of creation,
The greatest men under the sun.
We trained, we toiled and we sweated
Till we learned what we had to know.
Then we were placed on a troop train
To embark to the land of the foe.

We were cheered when we left the depot
Played by the band on our way,
Welcomed by cheers on the other side
When the boat and troops hit the quay,
Again, we were trained till we hardened,
In the game that is known as chance,
Again we embarked on a troop train
This time Somewhere in France.

Then out in the hell of horrors
The bloom of youth seemed to wane,
As we struggled by day and suffered by night
Morn brought them both back again,
We cursed, we cried till we hardened
We froze in the mud and the rain,
We kept our feet and dreamt of hell
And slept to dream again.

We went over the top by the hundreds
In the wake of the screeching shell,
We saw our pals that were next in line
Stumble, and lie where they fell
Then came the day when it ended—
We could hardly believe it was true,
We talked of home and the morrow,
The life we would take up anew.

Then back we came from the war zone,
To the trails of civilian life,
We were hailed as the nation's heroes,
Since victory was ours thro' strife.
But lo, we were doomed to our sorrow,
We, once the pride of the land,
Found we were restless and shattered,
Misfits in the eyes of man.

Once we were youths with a future,
Rugged and full of grit,
Now we belong to the legion
Of men who don't seem to fit.
Now were a nation's burden,
Burned weary and lame,
Old crocks to the young generation
But still, we would do it again.

IN MEMORIAM

His form lies under the sod tonight,
'Neath a mound in a shell-swept glen,
His laden feet and weary arms
Will never be tired again,
There's a vacant space in the ranks
By our side,
That time will never fill,
There's a rifle that's laying silent
By his form so calm and still.

We listen in vain for his cheery voice,
A voice we loved so well,
But he gave his all at his country's call,
He was one of the boys who fell,
He did his bit, as he saw fit,
Without thought of earthly fame,
So on heaven's scroll, when they call the roll
They are sure to call his name.

THE IMMIGRANT

I have stood for hours unnumbered
Mid the bustle and the din,
Of a busy railway depot
As the immigrant trains pulled in,
Watching the different expressions
In the endless chain and strife,
On the faces of the men and women
Starting afresh in life.

They come from the shores of England,
They hail from sunny France,
From the corner of central Europe
They come to the land of chance,
The dark, the white, the yellow
They flow in an endless stream,
Out to the rolling prairies,
The lust of wealth their dream,
On some there's a trace of worry,
While others show past despair,
Some are lit up with ambition,
While others are worn with care,
On some there's a marked distinction
Of breeding, compared with the rest,
But mixed with the poor and the humble
They pass along to the west.

Thus the Canadian Prairies
Receive their newborn sons,
The old, the weak and the feeble
Along with the choicest ones.
Each face as it passes onward
Shines with a hope in its quest,
As mingled one with another,
They pass along to the west.

AN IRISH LOVE SONG

When the shadows fall gently around you
At eve-tide when we are apart,
When your head on your pillow reposes
Call to me dear from your heart.
Then out of the night and the darkness
Down the heartaches of memory lane,
I will stand to your side, sweetheart darling,
In my arms I will hold you again.

The stars that shine high in the heavens
Each one with its glimmering light
Will carry my love to you sweetheart,
So remember me, darling, tonight,
For my heart will cry out in the darkness,
So remember, sweetheart, when I say
That my arms will reach out and embrace you,
Till the dawn of another day.

When the shadows fall softly around you
At eve-tide when you are alone.
My thoughts will join yours in the twilight,
My heart will find yours at home.
Then together we'll dream of the dawning,
Of the day that is coming, sweetheart,
When together, be it eve-tide or morning,
None but the Lord can us part.

A MORNING PRAYER

Dear Father in heaven,

We give thanks for the dawn,
For the rest, the peace

And the night that has gone,
For the health, the strength

You've been pleased to give.
For the daylight, the sunshine
And the chance to live.

We pray thee look down

From thy heaven above,
Bestow on thy children

Thy infinite love,
Comfort the sick,

The lame and the blind,
Teach us poor sinners

The way to be kind.
Teach us to help

Fellow men in their need,
Regardless of standing,

Color or creed,
Teach us not to be hasty

To judge or condemn,
To remember we all

Have the weakness of men.

Be with us this morn
As we pass on our way,
Bless us with courage
The power to stay,
Dear Father in heaven
Let us pray not in vain,
These blessings we ask
In the Saviour's Name.

