

CANADIANA

ROUGH RHYMES
OF A
CANADIAN SOLDIER

BY
HAROLD PEACOCK.

PRICE 1/3.

BIRMINGHAM:
ALLFAY LTD., EDMUND STREET.

CANADIANA



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TO
THE OFFICERS AND MEN
OF THE
2ND INFANTRY DIVISION,
LIVING HERE AND BEYOND THE VEIL,
WHO, BY THEIR
NEVER-FAILING CHEERFULNESS
AND
THEIR INDOMITABLE PLUCK,
HAVE IMMORTALIZED THE FAIR NAME OF CANADA,
THESE RHYMES ARE DEDICATED BY
ONE WHO IS PROUD TO HAVE BEEN
THEIR COMRADE,
HAROLD PEACOCK.

FEB 1 6 1966

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Bert.

To some folk goodness seems to come
 As natural as the rain,
To others it's a struggle to keep
 Sober, clean and sane.
I've puzzled long and often, why
 The Maker made man thus,
Why some have so little goodness,
 While others have so much !
We observe this in the Army
 Perhaps more than anywhere.
Suppose it's in the Navy,
 Likewise in the Air.
What, you'd like to hear my story,
 And you can the time allow ?
Well, I'll tell you of a hero,
 God, how we miss him now !

* * *

He said he'd not much religion,
 Tho' he sometimes went to Church ;
He never culled a fellow,
 Never left him in the lurch.

He loved a glass of beer at noon,
And sometimes one at night ;
But his life-long pal once told me
He'd never seen Bert tight.
He hadn't seen much schooling,
Tho' he knew an awful lot ;
And whenever asked a question
He would answer like a shot.

I met him first whilst training
In a mixed and stubborn mob,
We had everything from lab'rer
To the real old country Snob.
Tho' forming fours seems easy,
Yet it's mighty tiring work ;
One man alone kept smiling,
Known by the name of " Bert."

At last our training finished,
We were shipped across to France.
We thanked our lucky stars
And Heaven for the chance
Of greeting erstwhile Heinie ;
We were happy to the core,
We'd sure give him our compliments
Then wipe off an old score.

It was quite O.K. the first few days,
 But when it began to rain,
We were soon fed up and tired out ;—
 The mud went 'gainst the grain,—
And the Postal Corp forgot us,
 So I can tell you for a cert,
Only one could ever cheer us,
 And his proper name was Bert.

When out on a working party,—
 The night as black as ink,
The bullets pinging round us,
 Sure we hadn't time to think
Of the weight of the blessed trench-mats
 Or the sand bags just like lead,
We even ceased expecting
 A bullet through the head ;
Yet one man was always busy,
 Tho' never with Death would flirt,
Always knew just what to do,
 He was known by the name of Bert.

I remember one night out in No Man's Land
 Cutting wire at an awful speed,
One of the fellows had been before,
 And gave us all the lead ;
We'd almost finished the Blighty job,
 When some dude carelessly fired a shot.

Heinie's flares went up by dozens,
 We knew he would spot the lot,
So we moved up pretty quickly,
 Charged headlong into his trench,
I can all of it well remember,
 My knee "copt" a terrific wrench.
We got quite close to Fritzie,
 Tossed at him our every bomb,
Then we collared one of his wounded
 And returning took him along.

The first thing then was a roll-call
 Soon after we reached our line,
And we found one man was missing,—
 Of him there was never a sign.
One of our boys cleared the parapet,
 The rest of us all alert
And straight, but he who had gone,
Facing bullet and bomb,
 Was known by the name of Bert.

Seven of us followed our comrade
 Crawling through mud and slime,
But never a sight of the pal so white
 When dawn warned of a dangerous time.

Just as the day was breaking
 We saw him crawling along,
On his back a human freight,
 In his heart a song.
He had saved the life of a comrade,
 Then to our surprise
We discovered a piece of shrapnel
 Had taken the sight of his eyes.
He only lived ten minutes—
 Was conscious to the last—
And Heinie never fired a shot
 Whilst Bert thus spoke of his past :

“I had the dearest mother,
 And a sweetheart of whom I'm still proud,
But somehow the Father required them,
 Took away from this sin-sick crowd ;
And pals, life for me has been dreary,
 But to-night, out in No Man's Land,
The White Comrade came quite near me—
 Touched me with His hand—
Told me of my darlings,—
 That I would be with them to-day.
I had shared with Him in the Sacrifice,
 No need for me to delay.
Good-bye, old friends, God bless you
 Watch and pray and work.”

These, the last words of a grand old pal,
Known by the name of Bert.

He once said he'd not much religion,
Tho' he ofttimes went to Church,
But he never failed a fellow,
Never left him in the lurch.
He loved a glass of beer at noon
And I know he loved a joke—
Always ready with a song,
Could tell a funny joke.
Tho' pious folk may shake their heads,
Yet I'll wager my last month's pay,
That so far as reaching Heaven,
Bert might easily show them the way.
And should they try to follow him,
They'd be greeted with many a jerk,
For we know our man who is still our pal,
Known by the name of Bert.

Girl of my Dreams.

WEARY and sleepy in the trenches one night,
Bullets pinged near me, death lurked in sight,
I had a vision—a picture so clear—
'Twas of a face I shall ever hold dear,
A face full of beauty—her eyes divine,
And I am so happy—for sure she is mine.

God sent you to me, Girl of my dreams,
God heard my prayer and He answered, it
seems ;
'Through peril and danger, tho' Death round
me teems,
God knows I will love you, Girl of my dreams,
Always will love you, sweet face of my dreams.

When fighting is hardest, and dark clouds above,
Come to me vision, sweet gift of love ;
Speak to me, loved one, grant to me rest,
Thou knowest I love thee, such love is best—
I know thou hast given me love long denied,
Then speak to me, dream-girl, and I'm satisfied.

God sent you to me, Girl of my dreams,
God heard my prayer and He answered, it
seems,
Through peril and danger, tho' Death round
me teems,
God knows I will love you, Girl of my dreams,
Always will love you, sweet face of my dreams.

God Reigns !

God Reigns !

You scoff—who've never heard
His voice, and have been spared
Sights of hell and heaven combined
To crush man's proud agnostic mind :
Whilst red-hot iron scars the soul,
In agony I touched the goal,
And so, I know,
God reigns !

God Reigns !

How do I know? What can I shew
To you, who quiet faith would overthrow,
And bury deep in tranquil sleep
The trust of God for man to keep
Unto the end? Is this thy plan
To reap a harvest? Foolish man,
Take heed, I plead !
God reigns !

God Reigns !

'Midst shriek of shell, man's funeral knell,
My war-worn mind refused to dwell
On God. A shell-torn tree shaped as a cross
Defied me, taught me of my loss ;
This symbol of a boundless love
Enthralled me—drew my thoughts above—
I heard, His word—
God reigns !

Only a Violet.

ONLY a tiny violet, plucked in a war-worn lane,
But its fresh perfume banished care and gloom,
Tho' it left me an aching pain.

Only a tiny violet, yet it carried my thoughts away
And I lived anew in a love so true,
Pledged on a sun-kissed day.

Only a tiny violet, I walked again with my dead
In the country sweet, where fresh flowers greet,
And joy birds sing o'erhead.

Only a tiny violet, taugth of a wondrous power
To feel my loss, to ease my cross,
And brighten the lonely hour.

Only a tiny violet, plucked in a war-scarred land,
But it spoke to me of a love so free,
And methinks, I now understand.

The Lad with the Face Divine.

OUR Padre says, "God's ways are mysterious,
His will at times hard to believe."
When Padre spoke thus he was serious,
I never knew him to deceive,
And I believe him, but here's my story
Of one who helped when night
Seemed darkest,—lead like hail
Struck parapet,—and over all a ghastly light
Mocked God, then strove to urge
To great endeavours foul Satanic legions
Let loose from gaol, with rapturous dirge
Applauding war and turmoil—man's creation.

* * *

He was only a delicate kiddie,
The smallest soldier I knew—
His eyes were bright, with a heaven-born light,
They were wondrous kind and true.
No wonder we all loved the youngster—
Maybe I loved him best—
And of this I am sure, he helped me to endure
When the tempter put me to the test.
He was not what you'd call sanctimonious,
Tho' his ideas were old-fashioned and quaint ;
But his life was surely harmonious
And in tune with the present-day saint.

I've thought a good deal 'bout religion,
For mine's been a clean bringing up,
And many a religious question
Have I asked when down on my luck.

I have listened to preachers by numbers,
Should say, well, fully four score,
And tho' often tempted to slumber,
Have listened, and what is more,
Sought for a word to help me,
To carry me on through the week ;
And believe me, I've listened intently,
E'en tho' discourses were sometimes weak ;
But this laddie, I'm *sure*, brought me nearer—
Quite close to the things men want ;
Both man and God became dearer,
And aren't these the things that count ?

One night in the front-line trenches,
The mud right up to our knees,
I nearly took leave of my senses,
Was sure the wee kiddie would freeze !
Then, later on in the evening,
We'd just finished our ration of rum,
Some of our party were beaming,
The reviver had warmed us some ;
The kid spoke to me of his brother
Who'd "cashed in" a year that night ;
Then he spoke of his much-loved mother,
And his eyes shone grand and bright.

I turned my head for the tear drops
Commenced to course down my cheek,
Then I quietly turned, for the youngster
Had suddenly ceased to speak,—
A bullet had pierced his helmet—
Passed clean through his sunny head,
And the lad so white, having finished his fight,
Now lay on the firestep dead.

*I shall never forget the expression
On his face, I'd ne'er seen it before,
The smile, if smile I must call it,
Draws me to some tideless shore ;
I'll see it when odds are against me,
And the shadows of night draw near.
His smile will surely guide me
To the Home he loved so dear.
When the " Last Post " for me has sounded,
And the turmoil of life is o'er,
To the Home of Peace, love surrounded,
His smile will welcome once more.*

* * *

We carried his body at daybreak
Some distance behind the line,
And erected a Cross, for the Mother's sake,
Of the lad with the face divine.

The Orphan's Plea.

“ I WONDER if you'll tell me something I would like
to know,
Why I never see my Mumsie, 'cos I love, I love
her so—
So I'll tell you all about it, your eyes are nice and
kind ;
Then p'rhaps when I have finished, you'll help me
Mumsie find !
For I miss her, want to kiss her, want her hear my
prayers at night,
Whilst I whisper, 'God bless Mumsie, save my
Daddy in the fight.' ”

* * *

One day, Mumsie got a tel'gram, in a 'velope colour
pink,
I was sitting on the hearth-rug, playing with my cat,
I think,
Saw my Mumsie read the tel'gram, then she came
and stroked my head,
And she hugged me, oh, so closely, kissed me on
my cheek and said :—
'May God bless you, honey darling, keep you in
His care always,
And may happiness and sunshine in your life be all
the days.' ”

Then I saw my Mumsie crying, and a lump come in
my throat,
Just like when Daddy left us, 'fore he went off to
his boat.
Mumsie, darling, saw me crying, and she wiped
away her tears,
Whispering softly, 'Precious darling, you'll have
Mum through all the years.'
Then she helped me dress my dollies, played with
my toys upon the floor,
Till I felt so very sleepy, couldn't count up any more,
So s'pose she carried me upstairs, put me in my
pretty cot,
P'raps I said my little prayers, but this I've quite
forgot.

Next day I went to Mumsie's room and kissed her
on the cheek,
Thought she was pr'tending to be a tiny bit asleep,
So I hugged her very gently, as gentle as could be,
Then walked away on tip-toe, I heard Nurse callin'
me ;
But when I got close to the door, I turned once
more to look,
And saw my Mumsie smiling like the pictures in my
book.

My Auntie took me later for a long ride in a train
To my Grannie's in the country, close by a lovely
lane,
Grannie quietly kissed me, then I saw some tear-
drops fall,
And my Auntie started crying, but I couldn't cry
at all.
I heard my Gran'ma yesterday speak 'bout a broken
heart,
Which sometimes comes to people, when from loved
ones they must part ;
So I asked my Nurse this morning if my heart would
break in bits,
'Cos I cannot see my Mumsie, and I'm tired of the
kits?
But Nursie told me, honest, that my Mother was
all right,
Far away from darkness, where the nightmares can-
not fright,
And she said my Mum was happy, but I'm sure that
cannot be,
For Mumsie told me often, her happiness was me !

* * *

So I puzzle, and I puzzle, whilst I try to think it out :
My dollies see me crying, but don't know what it's
about,
Now I've told you all my troubles, I do hope you
will not mind
Looking for my darling Mumsie, for your eyes are
good and kind."

Ted.

TED was a tough old doughnut,
The age limit passed by days ;
Yet he 'listed to do his portion,
And he did it in many odd ways.

Straight, he was a reg'lar knock-out !
Would scrap and box with the best ;
Ready to champion the youngsters,
Or any he thought much oppressed.

He'd ranched in the West for a period,
Mined in the Klondyke a spell,
Taught school on the plains of Dakota,
Farmed in Nebraska as well.

Sailed the Great Lakes one season,
Hunted grey wolf, deer and moose ;
Logged in the woods of Ontario,
Hewn down many hundreds of spruce.

He'd travelled twice to Australia,
Lived for a time in Japan ;
I thought him a bit of a failure,
He was such a peculiar man.

One night he told me his story,
A bungle all the way through—
He had borne the shame of another,
As sometimes peculiar men do.

Exiled from home and kindred,
Banished from all he held dear,
Furrows ploughed deep in his strong heart,
Tho' as yet he'd shed never a tear.

He didn't, he lived for a purpose,
To help lame dogs over stiles ;
His ideals were uncommon and strange—
But ideals which are ever worth while.

I saw him one night agitated,
He'd met with a lad from his home
Who told him of kindred and mother,
And his brother who wild oats had sown.

Ted had lived not in vain for another,
His young brother the first was to go ;
But he left a fond declaration,
Of Ted's good in the days long ago.

Old Ted told me this the morning
On which we began our attack,
Praying me to deliver a message,
In case he never got back.

His brother had died in the trenches,
Having fought of his own free-will ;
The world acclaimed him a hero,
As it does when a voice is still.

“Tell mother I need no forgiveness,
I tried but to right what was wrong,
Doing the best for my brother,
The laddie was far from strong.

Tell her I long for my home, Pal,
Long for it more each day ;
Tho' I seem rough and unkempt now,
Tell her I ne'er neglected to pray.”

* * *

He was giving the rest of his message,
When a hurricane just like hell
Struck the supports and hit me,
And maybe some others as well.

They soon shipped me over to Blighty,
I'd a terrible ache in my head,
But I managed to scrawl down in pencil
The message of dear old Ted.

By and by I hobbled on crutches,
Busied myself quite a bit,
Thinking of Ted in the trenches,
Wondering if he'd been hit.

I stumped one day to the garden,
To bask in the sweet sunshine there,
When a lady spoke to me softly,
(She'd the loveliest snow-white hair !)

She spoke to me of her darling,
Who lay quite close to death's door,
And when I heard his battalion,
Very quickly I wished to know more.

We met at his bedside later,
My Pal was cheerful and bright,
He'd received all his heart had ached for,
And crossed "The Divide" with the night.

* * *

Old Ted quietly basks in the sunshine
Of the love The Brother hath shewn,
And I trust and hope that sometime
His vision may be mine own.

Sunshine.

THERE'S a something some folk share,
Tho' their cupboards may be bare,
And their clothes perhaps a little old and worn ;
 It never seems to fail, tho' troubles fall like hail,
And comfort be from them for ever torn.
'They always wear a smile, something well worth
 while,
 A Ministry of Sunshine bright and clear,
'Tis a token from above, of hope, good cheer and
 love,
 A sunshine giv'n to those whom God holds dear.

'Tis a sunshine of love and good nature,
 Sunshine of kind words and true,
A sunshine in some folk a feature,
 Brightness which pulls others through.
It cheers and sustains me when weary,
 And life seems so hopelessly wrong,
One glimpse of a face bright and cheery
 Is a something which helps me along.

It's an everlasting tonic when you're too tired to
frolic,
And your idea of life is naught but blue,
Your heart may feel like lead, wishing you were dead,
Then seek the ray of sunshine made for you.
'Twill help you on the road, easier make the load,
Give to you encouragement and power,
To take up Life's own fight will be your heart's
delight,
If you seek the sunny sunshine—Heaven's own
dower!

The Rum Ration.

Now some folk have a lot to say,
In fact they're never done,
You'd almost think they had to pay
Spot cash for our ration Rum.

They may be right, they may be wrong,
But if they held a gun
In trench perhaps they'd change their song
And boost our ration Rum.

A weeny tot helps such a lot,
When teeth are chattering some,
And when we're blue, it warms right through,
The frugal ration Rum.

When fighting's o'er and back once more,
We boys to Homeland come,
We'll bid adieu to friend so true,
Our old-time ration Rum.

The Marigold.

I GATHERED you in Picardy on a sweet September
day,
A wond'rous little flower—a glorious Heaven-born
ray,
You dwelt quite near the trenches in a cosy resting
place,
And methinks the Gard'ner meant you to smile into
my face!

Oh beauteous sun-kissed Marigold, you taught of
hope and love,
When life seemed cold and bitter you drew my
thoughts above.
Tale that thrilled me through and through when my
heart was very sad,
Thy song, oh precious Marigold, will keep me ever
glad.

Died of Wounds.

His race well run,
Mine only son ;
A victory won,
His life work done.

Much would I know
Of Boy's last day,
My whole heart yearns
For one bright ray.

Was bitter pain
My Boy to know ?
Was the way plain
For him to go ?

Did any hear
One word for me ?
Were friends quite near
One smile to see ?

Does Sonny lay
Behind the line ?
Can any say
Or give one sign ?

Was a wee Cross
Erected there
To speak the loss
Of son I bare?

He touched the goal,
He paid the price.
Rests now his soul
Through sacrifice.

O Virgin dear,
Thou suffered too,
Thy presence cheer
And keep me true.

O Christ Divine,
Who for me died,
Thy pains are mine
Not one denied.

Rest, darling Boy,
Until the morn,
Claim I the joy
Thyself mine own.

Paradise.

WHEN life is nought but tears, days seem long as
years,

Fond hopes have vanished with the dawn.

When love is but a dream, a glad tho' hopeless theme,
Sweetness from my life for ever torn,

Canst tell me then a place, where love and trust
keep pace?

Joy is but the echo of the day.

Should there be a home divine, I fain would call it
mine,

A paradise from which I'd never stray.

Is Paradise a place where none can grieve,
Where love can never doubt or ne'er deceive.
And war has never reached, sword hath ne'er
unsheathed,

Is this the Paradise you would me show?

Could I but reach the gates at break of day,

And someone bade me enter, bade me stay,

I would rest my tired head on a love I thought
long dead

In the wondrous Paradise you'd have me know.

There's sadness in my mind, no tranquillity I find;
Helpless thus I travel on life's road.
Grim silence in the air, deep sorrow everywhere,
In solitude I bear my heavy load.
My hope passed through the veil, all prayer could
not avail,
In Wonderland my love hath touched the goal.
I'm weary waiting here, the night is full of fear,
Wish Paradise would claim me for its toll.

Our Sergeant-Major.

HE is brave and bold, cares not for the cold,
Bunk never pulls him in the morning,
And woe to the private, regardless of climate,
After reveille continues his snoring.
His voice roars like a cannon, with a breeze of the
Shannon,
He is Irish from toes to his pate ;
When he sings us Killarney, sure he sounds a bit
balmy,
'Tis more like the Hun hymn of hate.

*But he's our Sergt.-Major, tho' his voice sounds
like a razor,
And we've got to toe the mark from morn till
night,
He's a reg'lar old-time soldier, none so very brave
or bolder,
He's a worshipper of Tillett's, sees we always
gets good billets,
Guarantees to every man a real square deal,
Tho' we laugh much when he's singing, we
know he's good and willing,
The man we recognise is at the wheel.*

Hear him in a Heinie trench, growling at the awful
stench
Which almost puts a fellow on the blink :—
“ We clean it out to-morrow,” and we know it to our
sorrow,
Wonder does he know just what we think ?
He really is a beauty, thorough with his duty,
Perhaps he'll get promotion very soon,
So we won't put up a kick, tho' he rubs it in quite
thick,
The man we calculate's a perfect boon.

He is careful with our ration, unlike the Non-Com's
fashion,
And spins it out, especially the rum,
When the nights are cold and bitter, many a man
feels like a quitter,
Sure I've wished my lease of life was almost
done.
But to see our Sergt.-Major smile to us his
favour,
Then pass an extra tot of juice along,
Is a something well worth seizing, a tonic when
you're sneezing,
From the man who often tries to sing a
song.

He won a decoration, a credit to the nation,
The S.-M. took it thankfully, of course,
But he doesn't boast about it, or want other folk to
shout it,
Or desire it trumpeted by any source,
He only did his duty, this he always taught the
rookie,
Was the sum and substance of the soldier game,
And we never knew him balk, he practised all he
taught,
So manfully we try to do the same.

*But he's our Sergt.-Major, tho' his voice sounds
like a razor,
And we've got to toe the mark from morn till
night,
He's a reg'lar old-time soldier, none so brave or
bolder,
He's a worshipper of Tillet's, sees we always
get good billets,
Guarantees to every man a real square deal,
Tho' we laugh much when he's singing, we
know he's good and willing,
The man we recognise is at the wheel.*

Your Daddy.

BABY mine, with eyes so fine, you bring me thoughts
of Daddy ;
Your eyes of blue, so clear and true, are like the
eyes of Daddy.
They speak to me of love so free, he gave me, babe,
your Daddy.
He loved us so, and fain would go away from home,
your Daddy.

* * *

Once in a while, when your eyes smile, I see in
them your Daddy ;
When we're asleep and angels keep, I dream oft of
your Daddy.
In realms above, midst boundless love, he waits for
us, your Daddy ;
He loved us much, someday we'll touch the stars,
and be with Daddy.

Take me to Kentucky.

I WANT the dear old Homestead in Kentucky 'neath
the hill,

Where troubles are forgotten and all nature seems
to thrill—

Where all the folk are kindly with a kindness warm
and true,

And there ever waits a welcome when I'm feeling
sad and blue.

Then take me to Kentucky, to the cotton-fields
again ;

Take me to Kentucky, where my heart can feel no
pain,

And peace is but the echo of the daily round of
life—

Where everyone is happy, and the thing unknown
is strife,

And Massa Boss, is loved becous, he's good to white
and coon.

So take me to Kentucky do, oh take me, take me
soon !

I miss the dear home-faces I have loved for many
years—

To kiss the dear home-faces would dry away my
tears ;

'Tis what my heart doth long for when the road
seems very long,

Just a breath of Old Kentucky, and all life becomes
a song.

The Change.

LIFE was full of bitterness,
Dark clouds o'erhead—
Flowers lost their loveliness,
Love cold and dead.

One spoken word, a blush, a smile,
Hath changed my soul ;
I live now in a sunny clime,
Near to my goal.

One lingering kiss—a fond embrace,
All nature glad ;
Flowers smile into my face—
I'm never sad.

A Dream.

I HAD a dream of you, my Boy, so true,
I'll write it, if you like it—tell me, tell me do.
Tho' you may think me foolish, prosy, quaint,
You know I never did profess to be a saint :--
I dreamt the Kaiser had been assassinated,
And Hindenburg had lost his precious head,
Whilst you yourself Crown Will electrocuted,
Then immediately you shot the Sultan dead.
I dreamt the German Fleet, out for an airing,
Was greeted by our Beatty—warm and strong,
And only seven returned to do the swearing,
The rest had answered Davy's solemn gong.
I dreamt the Zeppelins were all back numbers,
And Heinies' Submarines were but a jest,
Londoners enjoying peaceful slumbers,
And "Specials" once more taking natural rest,

* * *

*I dreamt the Widow and the Orphan in our Country
Poverty and misery now defied.*

*Pensions well revised—dependents comfy,
A gracious tribute to our gallant Boys who died.*

I dreamt of Union throughout the Empire,
The Classes and the Masses close allied,
Then I rose to put the kettle on the fire
And discovered I was dreaming, and I sighed.

Religion.

SOME soldiers think religion is simply a matter of
fate,
And in a curious fashion they write thus on life's
slate :—

“If my name is written on a high explosive shell,
No power on earth can save me—perhaps it's just
as well.”

“True religion must mean sacrifice,”—I've oft heard
parsons say,
Many chaps believe this—in a puzzling sort o' way,
Others think, petitioning the Almighty up on high
Is sure proof of religion, with its glory by and by.

It's surprising in the Army how warm friendships
quickly grow,
The pals we made whilst serving,—no better we'll
ever know.
One I recall this moment, who'd suffered many a
loss,
Told me that religion was, the bearing a heavy cross.

He once told me his cross was heavy, it lay on his
heart like lead,
Many nights had he prayed the coming dawn would
discover him dead.
But, the dawn found him stronger—ready a day's
work to face,
This, he said, was religion—the giving of strength
and grace.

His health had been aught but extra from the first
day of his birth.
Ne'er known a mother's love—the most wonderful
love on earth.
His father died "On Service"—a warrior doing his
bit,
Leaving a son to mourn him—the laddie so far
from fit.

Years rolled on, then one day the "Call of the
West" he heard
Sounding definite and clear, the lad's very soul it
stirr'd.
Thoughts of fortune won him, such thoughts have
won many before
From every sky of the planet, from many a distant
shore.

Later, he married a Western lady, healthy, robust
and strong,
And for the last few years life has been a delightful
song!
Children were born to the couple, a winsome, glad-
some three,
In fact the sweetest kiddies 'twas ever man's luck to
see.

Daily he spoke of his youngsters, joy and delight of
his heart ;
Sure, 'twas only natural, they were so far apart.
And methinks he sometimes felt tiny arms around
his neck,
And dreamt of gentle kisses on his face now bronzed
and set.

Some time ago I found out, the last day he went in
the line,
A cable had been sent him, a message to make
heart pine.
His wife had passed, quite suddenly, to a land
where wars are unknown,
Where lovers know no sighing, and true hearts are
never lone.

Wounded that tour in the trenches, I helped to
carry him back,
Bearing him first to the Aid Post, later on to the
track ;
I don't remember the details—but well “call back”
his smile,
When “good luck” we bade him, and a stay in
Blighty worth while.

* * *

Home once more near the Foothills, my pal writes
me from his ranch,
Saying he'll never forget the long days over in
France,
Refers to his kiddies often—not one word of his
loss ;
I know he's living religion—bearing his heavy cross.

The Message.

ONLY a brief wired message,
Received one mid-summer's night,
Only a brief wired message,
Told of the death of my knight.
But the words are printed for ever
On my heart so saddened and torn,
And I prayed my God to sever
This soul from body so worn.

Only one letter later,
Kind, tho' it caused me much pain,
Boy was killed near a crater,
Not one of his chums remain
To say where my joy is buried,
Whether in graveyard or in the line,
And my heart was weary, worried,
I prayed my God for one sign.

* * *

Only a tiny token,
Given to me in a dream,
I saw my darling unbroken,
Safe with his friends o'er the stream.
When my race is run I will follow,
Through lone valley emptied of sting,
To the Home where sighing and sorrow
Is lost in the beauteous spring.

The Farmer's Thanks.

The Farmer, ere he sowed his grain, presented to
God this prayer:—

“Thou knowest, Lord of Harvest, I have done my
best,

From early morn to setting sun, for me no rest,
I've tilled the land right patiently and well
Prepared a cosy resting place for seed to dwell.
And now I ask Thee, Lord, to bless my seed,
In this the nation's hour of direst need,
Send gentle rains, the sunshine and the breeze,
I pray Thee, humbly, Lord, upon my knees.”

* * *

His prayer was heard, 'tis ever thus the Lord's
delight,

To honour those who nobly toil from morn till night.
He gave the mellowed sunshine and the dew,
His wondrous far-flung promises are ever true.
But the puny man, ere he sold his grain,
Forgot his prayer for the breeze and the rain.
He neglected his thanks, thus missed a smile
From the Father's face, one glimpse worth while.

Compassion.

ONE spoken word, the warm clasp of your hand,
Is all I need to shew you understand ;
My anxious soul, the weariness I feel,
When love is far away, and torn life's seal.

One spoken word, the sadness in your eyes
Is all I see, 'tis all that satisfies ;
My empty heart, the bitterness and fear
Is quieted, when I know your heart is near.

Sister.

DEAR little Sister, dressed neatly in grey,
Bearing the burden and heat of the day,
Showering kindness, gentleness, love,
Gifts of The Healer, gifts from above.

Dear little Sister, well playing your part,
Easing the pain and sadness of heart ;
Serving your fellows, bruised in the fight,
God bless you Sister—keep in His sight.

The Church Parade.

THERE'S one sore point, puts a fellow out of joint,
It is known as the Church Parade,
But I just want to say, it is not the going to pray,
Or being taught to journey up the grade ;
For when we're at the front, bearing perhaps the
brunt,
It's surprising how the service helps along,
So it's only right to mention, ere the Padre claims
attention,
We've been parading minutes sixty-one.

My Reverie.

To-DAY I sit in my dug-out musing
Over days a long time past,
When I did nought but my choosing,
Days much too happy to last ;
When I rollicked at home with my children,
Played with them hour after hour,
One of my joys was to thrill them
With tales of the Empire's power.

First I think of wee delicate Ronnie,
With heart so true, true as steel,
Face supernaturally bonnie,
Eyes full of loving appeal ;
And I think of strong, robust Harry,
Joy of a fond mother's heart,
Who burden of home would carry,
Manfully doing his part.

Then the face of my baby-girl Mary
Comes in my dreams every day,
And Winnie, winsome wee fairy,
To me is a heaven-born ray.
To-day I muse much of another,
Faithfully bearing her load,
Who is wife, sister and mother,
To me on this war-scarred road.

So alone in my shelter I'm dreaming,
Of days so free, free from pain,
On faith may I ever be leaning,
God grant me homeland again.

An Evening Prayer.

WE at close of day O Father
For our Empire plead,
Guard our Soldiers, God of Armies
In their need.

Shield our Sailors in their perils
On the mighty deep,
Guide them, bless them, loving Pilot,
Safely keep.

Grant our Airmen as they upwards
Climb through haze and cloud,
Grace to hear Thy promise ringing
Clear and loud.

Grant our wounded as they languish
On their beds of pain
Heavenly comfort : and Thy mercy
On the slain.

Grant our Leaders strength and courage
Whilst they plans devise,
May their Schemes find fullest favour
In Thine eyes.

On us pour Thy richest Blessings,
When all wars shall cease :
In the brightness of Thy Presence
We find peace.