

My Army, O, My Army!

And Other Songs

Lawson, Henry (1867-1922)

A digital text sponsored by
Australian Literature Gateway

University of Sydney Library
Sydney

2003



<http://purl.library.usyd.edu.au/setis/id/lawmyar>
© University of Sydney Library. The texts and images are not to be used for
commercial purposes without permission

Source Text:

Prepared from the print edition published by Tyrrells Limited Sydney 1915
127pp.

All quotation marks are retained as data.

First Published: 1915

A821.89 *Australian Etext Collections at poetry 1910-1939*

**My Army, O, My Army!
And Other Songs
Sydney
Tyrrells Limited
1915**

DEDICATED, WITHOUT PERMISSION,

TO MY GENEROUS PATRON IN TWO HEMISPHERES,
EARL BEAUCHAMP,
ERSTWHILE OF NEW SOUTH WALES,
WHO WAS "TOO DEMOCRATIC FOR THE COUNTRY HE
WAS SENT TO GOVERN."

Acknowledgment

IN giving the usual acknowledgment to the *Bulletin*, I wish particularly to thank James Edmond, the Editor.

“Jimmy” is away in the wilds of savage Africa hunting health (and not innocent animals), and I hope next year to hear his old growl, with increased volume, from the Editorial Chair again.

HENRY LAWSON.

My Army, O, My Army! And Other
Songs

My Army, O, My Army!

My army, O, my army! The time I dreamed of comes!
I want to see your colours; I want to hear your drums!
I heard them in my boyhood when all men's hearts seemed cold;
I heard them as a Young Man — and I am growing old!
My army, O, my army! The signs are manifold!

My army, O, my army! My army and my Queen!
I used to sing your battle-songs when I was seventeen!
They came to me from ages, they came from far and near;
They came to me from Paris, they came to me from Here! —
They came when I was marching with the Army of the Rear.

My Queen's dark eyes were flashing (oh, she was younger then!);
My Queen's Red Cap was redder than the reddest blood of men!
My Queen marched like an Amazon, with anger manifest —
Her dark hair darkly matted from a knifegash in her breast
(For blood will flow where milk will not — her sisters knew the rest).

My legions ne'er were listed, they had no need to be;
My army ne'er was trained in arms — 'twas trained in misery!
It took long years to mould it, but war could never drown
The shuffling of my army's feet in the hunger-haunted town —
A little child was murdered, and so Tyranny went down.

My army kept no order, my army kept no time;
My army dug no trenches, yet died in dust and slime;
Its troops were fiercely ignorant, as to the manner born;
Its clothes were rags and tatters, or patches worn and torn —
Ah, me! It wore a uniform that *I* have often worn!

The faces of my army were ghastly as the dead;
My army's cause was Hunger, my army's cry was “Bread!”
It called on God and Mary and Christ of Nazareth;
It cried to kings and courtesans that fainted at its breath —
Its women beat their poor, flat breasts where babes had starved to death.

* * * * *

My army! My army — I hear the sound of drums
Above the roar of battles — and, lo! my army comes!
Nor creed of man may stay it — nor war, nor nation's law —
The pikes go through the firing-lines as pitchforks go through straw —
Like pitchforks through the litter, while empires stand in awe.

Song of the Dardanelles.

The wireless tells and the cable tells
How our boys behaved by the Dardanelles.
Some thought in their hearts “Will our boys make good?”
We knew them of old and we knew they would!
 Knew they would —
 Knew they would;
We were mates of old and we knew they would.

They laughed and they larked and they loved likewise,
For blood is warm under Southern skies;
They knew not Pharoah ('tis understood),
And they got into scrapes, as we knew they would.
 Knew they would —
 Knew they would;
And they got into scrapes, as we knew they would.

They chafed in the dust of an old dead land
At the long months' drill in the scorching sand;
But they knew in their hearts it was for their good,
And they saw it through as we knew they would.
 Knew they would —
 Knew they would;
And they saw it through as we knew they would.

The Coo-ee called through the Mena Camp,
And an army roared like the Ocean's tramp
On a gale-swept beach in her wildest mood,
Till the Pyramids shook as we knew they would.
 Knew they would —
 Knew they would.
(And the Sphinx woke up as we knew she would.)

They were shipped like sheep when the dawn was grey;
(But their officers knew that no lambs were they).
They squatted and perched where'er they could,
And they “blanky-ed” for joy as we knew they would.
 Knew they would —
 Knew they would;

They “blanky-ed” for joy as we knew they would.

The sea was hell and the shore was hell,
With mine, entanglement, shrapnel and shell,
But they stormed the heights as Australians should,
And they fought and they died as we knew they would.

 Knew they would —

 Knew they would;

They fought and they died as we knew they would.

From the southern hills and the city lanes,
From the sandwaste lone and the Blacksoil Plains;
The youngest and strongest of England's brood! —
They'll win for the South as we knew they would.

 Knew they would —

 Knew they would;

They'll win for the South as we knew they would.

Peddling round the World.

When at first in foreign parts
Was her flag unfurled,
England was a Gipsy lass
Peddling round the world.
Sailing on the Spanish Main —
Everywhere you roam —
Peddling in the Persian Gulf
Things she'd made at home.
Peddling round the world,
Peddling round the world —
England was a Gipsy lass
Peddling round the world.

England *never* wanted war,
Not on land or sea —
Other nations rising up
Couldn't let her be.
England only wanted peace,
And the ocean's breath;
So there came, in course of time,
Queen Elizabeth.
Queen Elizabeth —
Queen Elizabeth —
Came a plain, bad-tempered queen,
Called Elizabeth.

Queen Elizabeth, she called
Drake, and Raleigh too —
Essex, Howard, and the rest
Of the pirate crew;
“See what you can do,” she said.
“England's feeling sick —
If you don't, I'll hang you all!
Better do it quick.”
“Better do it quick,” she said —
“Better do it quick”;
And they knew she'd keep her word,

So they did it quick.

Drake and Raleigh sailed away —
 (Only Bess they feared)
Cleared the Spanish Main and singed
 The King of Spain his beard —
Singed the King of Spain his beard,
 And his hair they curled.
England was a Gipsy's love
 Peddling round the world.
 Peddling round the world,
 Peddling round the world.
England was a Gipsy's love
 Peddling round the world.

Once again, when Cromwell came,
 England wanted room;
So he lowered Holland's tone,
 Smashed the Dutchman's broom.
Sent a message to Algiers;
 Made its meaning plain —
On the way they called once more
 On the King of Spain.
 On the King of Spain —
 On the King of Spain:
 Called, to jog his memory,
 On the King of Spain.

So the years went round and round,
 Over hills and flats —
England was a Gipsy wife —
 England had her brats;
Peddling in the China Sea,
 Far from English ground;
Doing biz with Mrs. Jap —
 Peddling all around.
 Peddling all around —
 Peddling all around;
Making friends with Mrs. Jap —
 Peddling all around.

* * * * *

When the war is past and gone,
 With its blood and tears;

And the world may count upon
Peace for fifty years —
When the gory battle-flags
Round their sticks are furled —
Then you'll see a Gipsy crone
Peddling round the world.
Peddling round the world —
Peddling round the world.
Then you'll see a Gipsy crone
A-peddling round the world!

Shawl as old as Joseph's coat,
Hair as white as snow,
Mind as bright as Seventeen —
Eyes still like the sloe —
Peddling in the Southern Seas —
Everywhere you roam —
And she'll fill her baskets here
With things *we'll* make at home.
Things we'll make at home —
Things we'll make at home —
Call to fill her baskets here
With things we'll make at HOME.

Grey Wolves Grey.

The Russian march is soft and slow,
Through dust and heat, or slush and snow,
When the Russian skies hang grey and low
To the frontiers far where the Russians go;
And they march to-night and they march to-day
Like the grey wolves grey, like the grey wolves grey.

Nor song nor sound their track reveals,
Save the ceaseless "clock" of the waggon wheels;
But a rift in the mist shows a glint of sun
On the long, dark shape of a toiling gun;
And they strain by night and they drag by day
To a distant goal, like the grey wolves grey.

As the horses toil at the ends of trains,
And the ends of roads on the Blacksoil Plains.
And Ivan digs in the frozen clay,
And he rolls the logs a bed to lay
For a gun that's five hundred miles away,
But as sure to come as the grey wolves grey.

He is marching on with a purpose grand,
For brother Slav in another land;
Whose tongue, perchance, he cannot understand. —
But he knows the cry from the far-away,
And he smells the blood like the grey wolves grey.

And Ivan's wife in her den at home,
While hunger looms and his lean wolves come —
With her grey-black bread like the Darling mud,
And her tea-bricks bound with the bullock's blood —
She shields her cubs by night and day
Like the crouching sluts of the grey wolves grey.

And I march with Ivan where'er he be,
With the foreign blood that is strong in me,
And the love and the hate that is fantasy,
Like the ghosts of a father's memory.

With the blood that is strange to us to-day
As the strange wild blood of the grey wolves grey.
 Grey wolves,
 Grey wolves —
The strange wild blood of the grey wolves grey.

Interlude. Callaghan's Hotel.

There's the same old coaching stable that was used by Cobb and Co.,
And the yard the coaches stood in more than sixty years ago;
And the public-private parlour, where they serve the passing swell,
Was the shoeing forge and smithy up at Callaghan's Hotel.

There's the same old walls and woodwork that our fathers built to last,
And the same old doors and wainscot and the windows of the past;
And the same old nooks and corners where the Jim-Jams used to dwell;
But the Fantods dance no longer up at Callaghan's Hotel.

There are memories of old days that were red instead of blue;
In the time of "Dick the Devil" and of other devils too;
But perhaps they went to Heaven and are angels, doing well —
They were always open-hearted up at Callaghan's Hotel.

Then the new chum, broken-hearted, and with boots all broken too,
Got another pair of bluchers, and a quid to see him through;
And the old chum got a bottle, who was down and suffering Hell; —
And no tucker-bag went empty out of Callaghan's Hotel.

And I sit and think in sorrow of the nights that I have seen,
When we fought with chairs and bottles for the orange and the green;
For the peace of poor old Ireland, till they rang the breakfast bell —
And the honour of Old England, up at Callaghan's Hotel.

The March of Ivan.

Are you coming, Ivan, coming? — Ah, the ways are long and slow,
In the vast land that we know not — and we never sought to know.
We are watching through the daybreak, when the anxious night is done,
For the dots upon the skyline — black against the rising sun;
We are watching through the morning haze, and waiting through the
night,
For the long, dark, distant columns that proclaim the Muscovite!

Are you coming, Ivan, coming? (Oh! the world is growing gray
With the terror of the future and the madness of to-day!)
Are you marching, Ivan — forward? (Oh! the world is dark'ning fast,
For the crimes of greater nations 'gainst the small ones in the past.)
Yours, in part, to make atonement, so remember what you are!
Ivan! Sing! — “The Slav is coming! On for Russia and the Czar!”

Ivan's Song.

“Yes, I'm coming, Ivan, coming — I am marching out again
On the weary roads of Russia, past the forest, marsh and plain;
Past the field and past the village, in the shine and in the rain —
By the cart-rut and the grass-track and the jolting cattle-train.
(And, maybe, some gleam of glory penetrates my sluggish brain)
I am marching out for Russia, and for Europe and for you —
But, maybe, I'm mainly marching just because they told me to.

“I have marched to many frontiers, in the pregnant days gone by,
When they told us where to march to, but they did not tell us why.
And they showed us whom to fight with, and they told us where to die.
I have seen our grey battalions to their Heaven — or Hades — hurled —
'Twas enough it was for Russia! — what cared we about the world?

“Did one moan of Ivan's mother penetrate to other lands?
Did one prayer of Ivan's father — with his old and knotted hands?
Did one sob from Ivan's sweetheart, or one cry from Ivan's wife?
Or a wail from Ivan's children, for the loss of Ivan's life?
Marching with the Wolf of Hunger — marching with the Bear of
Strength!

We have marched for many winters — but the end is near at length!

“Tis a long, long march from Plevna, when the Bear went to his den.
It is far from the Crimea; Oh! you did not want us then!
From the shambles of Port Arthur, 'twas a weary way and slow —
And our track was always dotted with the black dots on the snow.
By black dots and crimson splashes you may trace poor Ivan's track —
And I think that Ivan's banner should be red, and white and black.

“Ne'er was Present-blinded tyrant who learnt wisdom from the Past,
And there's one forgot the errand that brought Ivan this way last!
'To the frontier, and no further' seemed our motto and our vow,
Since we marched from burning Moscow — *but we're marching further now!*

Neighbour's burning house — or city! — they are easy to forget;
But we lit a light for Europe that shall be rekindled yet!

“Never song of Ivan's valour, or of 'Russia's Flag Unfurled!'
Or the Iron Cross of Russia, penetrates the Outer World.
Ye! who civilise and peddle, ye who hesitate and lag,
Never heard the Russian March and never saw the Russian flag!
You have called on us to save you, never saying why, or how,
But the samovar is boiling! and you'll hear and see us now.

“From our garrets and our cellars — from the little all we had —
Where the winter brings the sleigh-bells to the streets of Petrograd;
From our huts and from our hutches — from wherever we may be —
From our goat's-flesh and our mare's milk and our black unsweetened tea,
From the silence of Siberia, and the strange, snow-deadened streets —
From the blazing banks of Jordan, where we dip our winding-sheets.
From our black bread and our vodka — asking naught, and undismayed —
From our never-empty cradles! — we are coming to your aid.

“Oh, we leave no bands behind us, blaring tunes of Tyranny,
And we wave no swords above us, yelling songs of Liberty;
And no blatant voice of ruler, as we tramp through dry and wet,
Blares: 'Remember You are Russians!' — we're not likely to forget.
There are some who have forgotten — merely men, like you and me —
And one object of our marching is to jog their memory.

“You shall hear us, you shall see us — save the dead and deaf and blind —
While the armour of our winter hardens thick and fast behind.
We are marching, we are coming, *and we are not on the sea* —

You shall see us on the furthest frontier of our enemy!
And while you fix up your frontiers, and remember what you are,
We shall march with Peace for Europe! — back to Russia and the Czar.”

Mostly Slavonic.

I. — Peter MichaeloV.

It was Peter the Barbarian put an apron in his bag
And rolled up the honoured bundle that Australians call a swag;
And he tramped from Darkest Russia, that it might be dark no more,
Dreaming of a port, and shipping, as no monarch dreamed before.
Of a home, and education, and of children staunch and true,
Like my father in the fifties — and *his* name was Peter, too.
(*He* could build a ship — or fiddle, out of wood, or bark, or hide — .
Sail one round the world and play the other one at eventide.)

Russia's Peter (not *my* father) went to Holland in disguise,
Where he laboured as a shipwright underneath those gloomy skies;
Later on he went to England (which the Kaiser now — condemns)
Where he studied as a ship-smith by old Deptford on the Thames —
And no doubt he knew the rope-walk — (and the rope's end too, he
knew) —
Learned to build a ship and sail it — learned the business through and
through.
And I'd like to say *my* father mastered navigation too.
(*He* was born across in Norway, educated fairly well,
And *he* grafted in a ship-yard by the Port of Arundel.)

“Peter Michaelov” (not Larsen) *his* work was by no means done;
For he learned to make a ploughshare, and he learned to make a gun.
Russian soldiers must have clothing, so he laboured at the looms,
And he studied, after hours, building forts and building booms.
He would talk with all and sundry, merchants and adventurers —
Whaling men from Nova Scotia, and with ancient mariners.
Studied military systems (of which Austria's was the best).
Hospitals and even bedlams — class distinctions and the rest.

There was nothing he neglected that was useful to be known —
And he even studied Wowsers, who had no creed of his own.
And, lest all that he accomplished should as miracles appear,
It must always be remembered he'd a secret Fund for Beer.

When he tramped to toil and exile he was only twenty-five,
With a greater, grander object than had any man alive.
And perhaps the lad was bullied, and was sad for all we know —
Though it isn't very likely that he'd take a second blow.
He had brains amongst the brainless, and, what that thing means I knew,
For before I found my kingdom, I had slaved in workshops too.

But they never dreamed, the brainless, boors that used to sneer and scoff,
That the dreamy lad beside them — known as “Dutchy Mickyloff” —
Was a genius and a poet, and a Man — no matter which —
Was the Czar of all the Russias! — Peter Michaelovich.

* * * * *

Sweden struck ere he was ready — filled the land with blood and
tears —
But he broke the power of Sweden though it took him nine long years.
For he had to train his army — He was great in training men —
And no foreign foe in Russia have had easy times since then.

* * * * *

Then the Port, as *we* must have one — *His* a work of mighty drains —
(Ours of irrigation channels — or it should be, on the plains).
So he brought from many countries strong adventures with brains.
It was marshes to horizons, it was pestilential bogs;
It was stoneless, it was treeless, so he brought Norwegian logs.

'Twas a land without a people, 'twas a land without a law;
But the lonely Gulf of Finland heard the axe and heard the saw;
He *compelled* the population to that desert land and lone —
Shifted them by tens of thousands as we'll *have* to shift our own.
He imported stone and mortar (*he* supplied the labouring gang),
Brought his masons from all Russia — let the other towns go hang;
Brought his carpenters from Venice — *they* knew how to make a port!
Till he heard the church bells ringing in the town of Petersfort!
Brought his shipbuilders from Holland, built his navy feverishly —
Till the Swedish fleet was shattered and the Baltic routes were free,
And his Port was on the Neva and his Ships were on the sea!

* * * * *

Petrograd upon the Neva! and the Man who saw it through! —
Stately Canberra on the Cotter! — and the men who build it too!

* * * * *

Russian Peter was “*inhuman*,” so the wise historians say —
What's the use of being human in a land like ours to-day,
Till a race of stronger people wipe the Sickly Whites away?
Let them have it, who will have it — those who do not understand —
“Peter lived and died a savage” — *but he civilized the land*.
And, as it is at present, so 'twas always in the past —
'Twas his nearest and his dearest that broke Peter's heart at last.

* * * * *

He was more than half a heathen, if historians are true;
But he used to whack his missus as a Christian ought to do —
And he should have done it sooner — but *that* trouble isn't new.
We'd have saved a lot of bother had we whacked our women, too.
Peter more than whacked his subjects, ere the change was brought about.
And, in *some* form or another, *we* shall have to use the knout,
If we wish to build a nation — else we'll have to do without.
And be wretched slaves and exiles, homeless in the Southern Sea,
When an Asiatic Nation hath “rough hewn” our destiny.

II. — The Brandenburgers.

Things have been mixed up in Europe till there's nothing in a name,
So it doesn't really matter whence the Brandenburgers came;
But they did no pioneering as *our* fathers did of old —
Only bullied, robbed and murdered till they bought the land with gold.
And they settled down in Prussia to the bane of Germany,
With a spike upon the helmet where three brazen balls should be.
And they swaggered, swigged and swindled, and by bullying held sway,
And they blindly inter-married till they're madmen to this day.
And the lovely nights in Munich are as memories of the dead;
Night is filled with nameless terrors, day is filled with constant dread.
But Bavaria the peaceful, ere the lurid star is set,
She shall lead her neighbours on to pluck the Prussian Eagles yet.

We'll pass over little Denmark, as the brave historians can,
Austria suffered at Sadowa, France was sorry at Sedan.
And for England's acquiescence in the crime she suffers too.
Meanwhile Denmark drained her marshes, planted grain and battled
through.

(We, who never knew what war is — who had gold without the pain —
Never locked a western river that might save a western plain.)
You may say the Danes were pirates, and so leave them on the shelf?
Given youth and men and money, I would pirate some myself!

Why should I be so excited for another nation's pains?
I am prejudiced and angry, for my forefathers were Danes.
What have I to do with nations? Or the battle's lurid stars? —
I am Henry, son of Peter, who was Peter, son of Lars;
Lars the son of Nils — But never mind from whence our lineage
springs —
Yes, *my* forefathers wore helmets, but their helmets wore the wings —
(There's a feather for your bonnet, there is unction for your souls!)
And the wings bore us to England, and Australia and the Poles.
What did *we* for little Denmark? Well, we sent our thousands through;
But, without the guns or money, what could Scandinavia do?
(It is true of some Australians, by the sea or sandwaste lone,
That they hold their father's country rather dearer than their own.
But the track is plain before them, and they know who blazed the track,
To the work our Foreign Fathers did in Early Days, Out Back.
As a mate can do no mean thing in the bushman's creed and song,
So a fellow's father's country [seems to me] can do no wrong.)

Where was I? The Wrong of Denmark — or the chastening of her soul?
And perhaps her rulers “got it” where 'twas needed, on the whole.
'Twas the gentlemen of Poland crushed the spirit of the Pole,
Till he didn't care which nation he was knouted by, and served;
So the gentlemen of Poland got wiped out, as they deserved.
Freedom shrieked (where was no freedom), and perhaps she shrieked for
shame.
But let Kosciusko slumber — *we've* immortalised his name.
By the poets and the tenors have our tender souls been wrenched;
And, on many a suffering Christian, Polish Jews have been avenged.

III. — The Blue Danube.

Where the skies are blue in winter by the Adriatic Sea,
And the summer skies are bluer even than our own can be;
In the shadow of a murder, weak from war and sore afraid;
By the ocean-tinted Danube stood the city of Belgrade.
Danube of the love-lit starlight, Danube of the dreamy waltz —
And Belgrade bowed down in ashes for her crimes and for her faults.
And the Prussian-driven Austrians who'd been driven oft before,
From Vienna's cultured city marched reluctantly to war.

Just to clear a path for Prussia, and her bloodhounds to the sea;
To the danger of the white world and the shame of Germany.
And a blacker fate than Belgium's stared the Servians in the face.
But Belgrade had many soldiers of the old Slavonic race,

And her gun-crews manned the Danube, small and weak, but
undismayed —
And Belgrade remembered Russia, and she called on her for aid.

* * * * *

And there came a secret message and a sign from Petrograd,
And the Servian arm was strengthened and the Servian heart was glad.
For the message in plain English, from the City of Snow,
Simply said: "I'm sending Ivan by the shortest route I know."
So then Servia bid defiance, for she knew her friend was true;
And her guns along the Danube added blue smoke to the blue.

IV. — The Peasantry.

Who are these in rags and sheepskin, mangy fur-caps, matted hair?
Who are these with fearsome whiskers, black and wiry everywhere?
Who are these in blanket putties — canvas, rag, or green-hide shoes?
These with greasy bags and bundles grimy as the Russian flues?
Never song nor cheer amongst them, never cry of "What's the News?"
Packed on cattle-trains and ox-carts, from the north and south and east;
Trudging from the marsh and forest, where the man is like the beast?
On the lonely railway platforms, bending round the village priest;
Here and there the village scholar, everywhere the country clowns?
They're reservists of old Russia pouring in to Russian towns!

* * * * *

Women's faces, gaunt and haggard, start and startle here and there,
White and whiter by the contrast to the shawls that hide their hair.
Black-shawled heads — the shrouds of sorrow! Eyes of Fear without a
name!
Through the length and breadth of Europe, God! their eyes are all the
same!
Famous Artist of the Present, wasting Art and wasting Life,
With your daughters for your models, or your everlasting wife —
With *your* kids for nymphs and fairies, or your Studies in "the Nood" —
Exercise imagination, and forget your paltry brood!
Take an old Bulgarian widow who has lost her little store,
Who has lost her sons in battle, paint *her* face, and call it "War."

V. — The Russian March.

Russian mist, and cold, and darkness, on the weary Russian roads;

And the sound of Russian swear-words, and the whack of Russian goads;
There's the jerk of tightened traces and of taughtened bullock-chains —
'Tis the siege guns and the field guns, and the ammunition trains.
There's the grind of tires unceasing, where the metal caps the clay;
And the “clock,” “clock,” “clock” of axles going on all night and day.
And the groaning undercarriage and the king pin and the wheel,
And the rear wheels, which are fore wheels, with their murd'rous loads of steel.

Here and there the sound of cattle in the mist and in the sleet,
And the scrambling start of horses, and the ceaseless splosh of feet.
There's the short, sharp, sudden order such as drivers give to slaves,
And a ceaseless, sougning, sighing, like the sound of sea-worn caves
When a gale is slowly dying and the darkness hides the waves,
And the ghostly phosphorescence flashes past the rocky arch
Like the wraiths of vanished armies. ... It is Ivan on the march!
'Tis an army that is marching over other armies' graves.

“Halt!”

Clamp of bits and gathering silence — here and there a horse's stamp;
Sounds of chains relaxed, and harness, like the teamsters come to camp.
Sounds of boxes moved in waggons, and of axes on a log —
And the wild and joyous barking of the regimental dog!
Sounds of pots and pans and buckets, and the clink of chain and hook —
And the blasphemous complaining of the Universal Cook.
Mist and mist and mellowed moonlight — night in more than ghostly robes;
And the lanterns and the camp fires like dim lights in frosted globes.
Silence deep of satisfaction. Sounds of laughter murmuring —
And the fragrance of tobacco! *Are you Ivan? Ivan! Sing!*

“I am Ivan! Yes, I'm Ivan, from the mist and from the mirk;
From the night of “Darkest Russia” where Oppression used to lurk —
And it's many weary winters since I started Christian work;
But you feared the power of Ivan, and you nursed the rotten Turk.
Nurse him now! Or nurse him later, when his green-black blood hath laved
Wounds upon your hands and “honour” that his gratitude engraved;
Poison teeth on hands that shielded, poison fangs on hands that saved.

“No one doubted Ivan's honour, no one doubted Ivan's vow,
And the simple word of Ivan, none would dream of doubting now;
Yet you cherished, for your purpose, lies you heard and lies you spread,
And you triumphed for a Spectre over Ivan's murdered dead!

You were fearful of my power in the rolling of my drums —
Now you tremble lest it fail me when To-morrow's Morrow comes!

I had sought to conquer no land save what was by right my own —
I took Finland, I took Poland, but I left their creeds alone.
I, the greater, kindlier Tyrant, bade them live and showed them how —
They are free, and they are happy, and they're marching with me now —
Marching to the War of Ages — marching to the War of Wars —
Hear the rebel songs of Warsaw! Hear the hymn of Helsingfors!
From the Danube to Siberia and the northern lights aflame.
Many freed and peaceful millions bless the day when Ivan came.
Travel through the mighty Russland — study, learn and understand
That *my* people are contented, for my people have their land.

“It was spring-time in Crimea, coming cold and dark and late,
When I signed the terms you offered, for I knew that I could wait;
When I bowed to stronger nations or to Universal Fate.
And the roofs of guiltless kinsmen blazed across my frontiers still,
Where the bloody hordes of Islam came to ravish, rob and kill;
And the lands were laid in ashes over many a field and hill;
And the groans of tortured peasants (dreaming yet and sullen-mad) —
And the shrieks of outraged daughters echoed still in Petrograd;
So we taugt and trained and struggled, and we cursed the Western
Powers,
While we suffered in the awful silence of your God, and ours.

“For the safety of the White Race and the memory of Christ,
Once again I marched on Turkey, only to be sacrificed,
To the Sea-Greed of the Nations, by the pandering of the weak,
And the treachery in Athens of the lying, cheating Greek.
Once again I forced the Balkans over snow and rock and moss,
Once again I saw the passes stormed with unavailing loss;
Once again I saw the Crescent reeling back before the Cross,
And the ships of many nations on the billows dip and toss.

Once again my grey battalions, that had come with Christian aid,
Stood before Constantinople! Ah, you wish that we had stayed!
But the Powers raised their fingers, fearful even once again,
With the jealous fear that lingers even now (and shall remain);
Frigid as the polar regions were your hearts to others' pain —
So I dragged my weary legions back to Russia — *once again*.

“Thrice again they raised their fingers when I came with purpose true,
And I bowed and smirked and grovelled as I had been used to do.
Till my kin in bloody visions saw their homes in ruins laid

From the Danube to the ocean, from the ocean to Belgrade;
I was ready, for the last time, when they called on me for aid.

From the Dardanelles, denied me, shall my outward march be set;
And you'll see my fleets of commerce sail the Adriatic yet.”

Grey Day.

Daybreak on the world of Europe! Daybreak from the Eastern arch;
Hear the startling sound of bugles! Load and limber up and march!
On! for Ivan and his children, Peace and Rest and Morning Star!
On for Truth and Right and Justice. On for Russia and the Czar!

An Interlude of Peace. The Fairy West.

I.

We wrote and sang of a bush we never
Had known in youth in the Western land;
Of the dear old homes by the shining river,
The deep, clear creeks and the hills so grand.
The grass waved high on the flat and siding,
The wild flowers bloomed on the banks so fair,
And younger sons from the North came riding
To vine-clad homes in the gardens there.
*We wrote and sang — and the Lord knows best —
Oh, those dear old songs of the fairy West!*

We dreamed and sang of the “bustling mother”;
The brick-floored kitchen we saw so clear,
The pranks and jokes of the youngest brother,
The evening songs of our sisters dear.
The old man dozed in the chimney corner,
Or smoked and blinked at the cheerful blaze,
Or yarned with a crony — old Jack Horner —
Who'd known him back in the Digging Days.
*We worked and sang — and the Lord knows best —
Oh, those dear old homes of the fairy West!*

By tracks that ran 'neath the granite ridges
The children played on their way from school —
By the fairy dells and the sapling bridges,
And stole a swim in the willowed pool.
And home they flocked with their ceaseless chatter,
Till, happy and tired, and washed and fed —
(The wash came after — it doesn't matter)
They said their prayers and they went to bed.
*We worked and dreamed — and the Lord knows best —
Oh, those dear old ways of the fairy West!*

We rose at daylight, refreshed and hearty,
And drank our tea while the children slept;

We worked with the zest of a camping party,
While the morning breeze through the gum-trees crept.
We worked till the signal of "Breakfast ready!"
And ate our fill of the good land's best;
And Jimmy and Mary, and Nell and Teddy,
And all the children were washed and dressed.
*Oh, those grand old farms of pleasure and rest
In the fairy tales of the Golden West!*

'Twas a land overflowing with milk and honey,
And eggs and bacon and butter and beer.
We came to Sydney, with whips of money,
To see the world about twice a year.
The girls got married to rich young farmers,
And did no work save to populate;
And we had the pick of the city charmers
And took our brides to the country straight.
*We dreamed and sang — and the Lord knows best —
Oh, those dear old dreams of the fairy West!*

II.

I dreamed last night of those days long vanished,
And buried in bitterness out of sight;
The scene was gone and the folk were banished,
And this is the vision I saw last night —
It may be false and it may be real;
It may be wrong and it may be right —
A sort of set-off to the grand ideal:
We'll call it "A Vision of Sandy Blight."
*We dreamed and sang — and you know the rest —
The Sandy Blight in the Wondrous West.*

The daylight comes to the skillion "winder,"
A hole with never a breath of air;
And never a pane of glass to hinder
The reek from the pig-sty adjacent there.
The skillion cowers in the daybreak ghostly,
Criminal-like, as skillions do;
It is fashioned of bark and bagging mostly —
And furnished with bark and bagging, too.

* * * * *

Swiftly — too swiftly — the light comes creeping

Round the corners, cobweb-immeshed,
To the dusty “bunk” where “the boys” lie sleeping,
Gummy-eyed, dirty and unrefreshed.
Huddled like monkeys (I'm tired of coining
Rhyme to brighten this cheerful lay) —
A bang on the slabs of the room adjoining:
“*Git up! Are yer gaunter lay there all day?*”

Three hides of bones in the yard are bailed up
(We called 'em “k'yows” when my heart was young),
A pitiful calling where calves are railed up,
A stifling cloud from the powdered dung.
A dusty and sleepy head is boring
Into the flank of each dusty cow —
Milk, dust and burrs in the buckets pouring;
Three skinny youngsters are milkin' now.

And rainy weather! I would be plainer —
The filthy tail and the plunging hoof!
(The worst came out in the home-made “strainer,”
But more came down from the “dairy” roof.)
Seven cows each, and the calves are “poddied.”
The pigs are fed while the boys can creep;
They've done the work of the able-bodied,
And one sits down in the dust to sleep.

The skimmin', and scaldin' (in loo'-warm water,
And cloudy at that) and the churnin' done,
The hopeless face of the elder daughter
The narrowed mind of the elder son.
The sulky scowl of the younger brother,
The morning greeting of “you're a fool!”
The rasping voice of the worn-out mother:
“Now git yer breakfus' an' git ter school!”

Three miles to the school-house — and often more in
The sparser districts (it makes me sick) —
“Mountins and rivers” and “parsin' ” and “drorin' ”
Readin' and writin' and 'rithmetic,
Sewin' an' singin' and “objeck lessins,”
Spellin', dicktashin', “home lessins” too!
A bit of “relegin” for all these “blessin's,”
And home in a hurry to milk the Coo.
*We slaved and sang — and the Lord knows best —
Oh, those dear old homes of the fairy West!*

P.S.: I was in “Yewklid” the day I finished
Me edyercashun in those times dim —
My younger brother cleared out to Queensland,
’Twas “mountains and rivers” that finished him.

Dawgs of War.

Comes the British bulldog first — solid as a log —
He's so ugly in repose that he's a handsome dog;
Full of mild benevolence as his years increase;
Silent as a china dog on the mantelpiece.

Rub his sides and point his nose,
Click your tongue and in he goes,
To the thick of Britain's foes —
Enemies behind him close —
(Silence for a while).

Comes a very different dog — tell him at a glance.
Clipped and trimmed and frilled all round. Dandy dog of France.
(Always was a dandy dog, no matter what his age)
Now his every hair and frill is stiff as wire with rage.

Rub his sides and point his nose,
Click your tongue and in he goes,
While behind him France's foes
Reel and surge and pack and close.
(Silence for a while.)

Next comes Belgium's market dog — hard to realise.
Go-cart dog and barrow dog — he's a great surprise.
Dog that never hurt a cat, did no person harm;
Friendly, kindly, round and fat as a “Johnny Darm.”

Rub his sides and point his nose,
Click your tongue and in he goes,
At the flank of Belgium's foes
Who could *not* behind him close —
(Silence for a while).

Next comes Servia's mongrel pup — mon grel dawgs can fight;
Up or down, or down or up, whether wrong or right.
He was mad the other day — he is mad today,
Hustling round and raising dust in his backyard way.

Rub his sides and point his nose,
Click your tongue and in he goes,
'Twixt the legs of Servia's foes,

Biting tails and rearmost toes —
(Silence for a while.)

There are various terrier dawgs mixed up in the scrap,
Much too small for us to see, and too mad to yap.
Each one, on his frantic own — heard the row commence —
Tore with tooth and claw a hole in the backyard fence.
No one called, but in they go,
Dogs with many a nameless woe,
Tripping up their common foe —
(Silence for a while).

From the snows of Canada, dragging box and bale,
Comes the sledge-dog toiling on, sore-foot from the trail.
He'll be useful in the trench, when the nose is blue —
Winter dog that knows the French and the English too.
Rub his sides and point his nose,
Click your tongue and in he goes,
At his father's country's foes,
And his mother's country's foes.
(Silence for a while.)

See, in sunny Southern France a dog that runs by sight,
Lean and yellow, sharp of nose, long of leg and light,
Silent and bloodthirsty, too; Distance in his eyes,
Leaping high to gain his view, the Kangaroo Dog flies!
Rub his sides and point his nose,
Click your tongue and up he goes,
Lands amongst his country's foes —
And his country's country's foes;
While they sway and while they close —
(Silence for a while).

* * * * *

See across the early snow, far across the plain,
Where the clouds are grey and low and winter comes again;
By the sand-dune and the marsh — and forest black and dumb —
As dusky white as their winter's night, the Russian wolf-hounds come!
(Silence for a while.)

A Slight Misunderstanding at the Jasper Gate.

Oh, do you hear the argument, far up above the skies?
The voice of old Saint Peter, in expostulation rise?
Growing shrill, and ever shriller, at the thing that's being done;
More in sorrow than in anger, like our old Jack Robertson.
Old Saint Peter's had his troubles — heaps of troubles, great and small,
Since he kept the gates of Heaven — but this last one covers all!
It is not a crowing rooster — *that's* a sight and sound he's useter,
Simulated by some impish spirit that he knows full well;
It is simply Drake, of Devon, who is breaking out of Heaven,
With a crew of pirate brethren, to come down once more to Hell!

Oh, do you hear the distant sound, that seems to come and go,
As thunder does in summer time, when faraway and low?
Or the “croon” beneath the church bells, when they're pealing from the
tower —
And the church bells are the battle-call in this dark, anxious hour.
Do you *feel* the distant throbbing; Do you feel it go and come;
Like a war hymn on horizons, or a centuries-mellowed drum!
Hear it sobbing, hear it throbbing, like some not unhappy sobbing —
By the peaceful Devon landscape and the fair Devonian home!
By the land those spirits meet in — and it's Drake's Drum, spirit-beaten,
By perhaps the Rose of Torridge — and it's calling Drake to come?

Oh, do you feel a cooling hand upon your fevered brow?
That dulls your ears to Hell's Own Din — or that worse *Silence*, now?
In the starlight in the Channel, while Destruction lurks below,
Or that Nether-Hell, the Stoke-hole, where you cannot see or know?
Do you feel a soothing presence, keeping sanity in one
Going mad, in Satan's Nightmare, where the gun-crew works the gun?
It is Raleigh! — Admiral-Poet, who had dreams though few may know
it —
Who had dreams of England's greatness, otherwise than by the sea.
Sorrowful but all-forgiving, bringing courage to the living —
Raleigh's Spirit, not from London, but his Vanished Colony.

Oh, do you feel a stony calm that you had never known?
With comrades in the firing-line, or “Sentry Go” alone.

When it's Hellfire all around you, and it's freezing slush below,
Or you pace in rain and darkness, with Old Death, and "Sentry Go" —
Feel a cold determination that makes all but Now a blank;
That's half foreign to your nature, and half foreign to your rank?
It is Wellington, where French is, who has broken Heaven's trenches,
With his purple-blooded captains (who used purple language *then*)
Come to strengthen with his spirit all the coolness you inherit —
He who took the scum of Europe, and who trained them to be Men.

A Mixed Battle Song.

Lo! the Boar's tail is salted, and the Kangaroo's exalted,
And his right eye is extinguished by a man-o'-warsman's cap;
He is flying round the fences where the Southern Sea commences,
And he's very much excited for a quiet sort of chap.
For his ships have had a scrap and they've marked it on the map
Where the H.M.A.S. *Sydney* dropped across a German trap.
So the Kangaroo's a-chasing of his Blessed Self, and racing
From Cape York right round to Leeuwin, from the coast to Nevertire;
And of *him* need be no more said, save that to the tail aforesaid
Is the Blue Australian Ensign firmly fixed with copper wire.
(When he's filled the map with white men there'll be little to desire.)

I was sulky, I was moody (I'm inclined to being broody)
When the news appeared in Sydney, bringing joy and bringing tears,
(There's an undertone of sorrow that you'll understand to-morrow)
And I felt a something in me that had not been there for years.
Though I lean in the direction of most absolute Protection
(And of *wheat* on the selection)
And, considering Congestion and the hopeless unemployed,
I'd a notion (but I hid it) that, the way the *Emden* did it,
'Twould be better for Australia if her "commerce" was destroyed.

You may say that war's a curse, but the peace curse may be worse,
When it's lasted till it's rotten — rotten from the inmost core,
To the mouldy skin which we are, in the land we call the freer —
And I almost feel inclined to call for "Three Cheers for the War!"
For I think, when all is over, from Magellan's Straits to Dover,
Things will be a great deal better than they ever were before.
But, since "Peace" and "Right" are squalling, I'll content myself with
calling
For three rousers — like the ringing cheers we used to give of yore —
 For the *Emden*!
 For the *Sydney*!
And their gallant crews and captains — both of whom we've met before!
And, for Kaiser William's nevvvy, we shall venture three cheers more!
Cheers that go to end a war.

The Three Quiet Gentlemen.

There is a quiet gentleman a-motoring in France
(Oh, don't you hear the honking of a British motor-car?) —
Like any quiet gentleman that you may meet by chance,
Who doesn't wear a uniform, and doesn't sport a star.
Another quiet gentleman is sitting by his side
(Oh, do you hear the “shuffling feet” tonight in Gay Paree?) —
The honking of their motor-car, when they go for a ride,
Is louder than the biggest gun that's made in Germany.

Another quiet gentleman, who's very like the first
(Oh, don't you hear the tinkle of the sleigh-bells on the snow?)
Is riding out in Russia now to watch the best and worst.
Oh, hear the bells of Petrograd a-ringing soft and low —
The Christmas bells of Petrograd, that hail the birth of Christ;
The sleigh-bells from the opera that hail the birth of Sin —
While eyes of men are dried in Hell and hearts of men are iced —
Are louder than the loudest blare that's blaring in Berlin.

The Unknown God.

A Phantasy of Optimism.

The President to Kingdoms,
As in the Days of Old;
The King to the Republic,
As it had been foretold.
*They could not read the spelling,
They would not hear the call;
They would not brook the telling
Of Writing on the Wall.*

I buy my Peace with Slaughter,
With Peace I fashion War;
I drown the land with water,
With land I build the shore.
I walk with Son and Daughter
Where Ocean rolled before.
I build a town where sea was
A tower where tempests roar.

From bays in distant islands,
And rocks in lonely seas,
With unseen Death in silence
I smite mine enemies!
The great Cathedral crashes
Where once a city stood;
I build again on ashes
And breed on clotted blood!

I link the seas together,
And at my sign and will
The train runs on the ocean bed,
The great ship climbs the hill!
For pastime I flood deserts
With water from the rill;
And in my tireless leisure hours
I empty lakes, and fill.

I plumb the seas beneath us
And fathom skies above,
Yet I make Peace for hatred
And I make War for love.
I race beneath the ranges
And sit where Mystery dwells —
Yet mankind sees no changes,
They ask for “miracles!”

I own the world and span its
Lone lands from Pole to Pole;
I live in other planets,
Yet do not know my soul —
The soul that none may fathom,
Whose secrets none may tell,
The soul that none may humble,
The Soul Unconquerable!

I am the God of Ages!
I am the Unknown God!
My life is written pages
Wherever man hath trod.
From bounds of Polar regions,
To where the Desert reigns,
I've left my myriad legions
On countless vanished plains.

And I shall reign for ever
On earth while oceans roll,
In shape of man, or woman,
Through my immortal soul;
Yet I can love and suffer,
Be angry, or be mild,
And I can bow me down and weep
Just like a mortal child.

I conquer Death and Living,
And Fiends in shape of men,
For I rejoice in giving
Not to receive again.
For I am Man! — and Mortal!
And Mammon's Towers must fall,
Though Greed draws all his pencils through
The Writing on the Wall!

The Captains.

The Captains sailed from all the World — from all the world and Spain;
And each one for his country's ease, her glory and her gain;
The Captains sailed to Southern Seas, and sailed the Spanish Main;
And some sailed out beyond the World, and some sailed home again.

And each one for his daily bread, and bitter bread it was,
Because of things they'd left at home — or for some other cause.
Their wives and daughters made the lace to deck the Lady's gown,
Where sailors' wives sew dungarees by many a seaport town.

The Captains sailed in rotten ships, with often rotten crews,
Because their lands were ignorant and meaner than the ooze;
With money furnished them by Greed, or by ambition mean,
When they had crawled to some pig-faced, pig-hearted king or queen.

And when a storm was on the coast, and spray leaped o'er the quays,
Then little Joan or Dorothy, or Inez or Louise,
Would kneel her down on *such* a night beside her mother's knees,
And fold her little hands and pray for those beyond the seas.
With the touching faith of little girls — the faith by love embalmed —
They'd pray for men beyond the seas who might have been becalmed.

*For some will pray at CHRIST His feet, and some at MARY'S shrine;
And some to Heathen goddesses, as I have prayed to mine;
To Mecca or to Bethlehem, to Fire, or Joss, or Sol,
And one will pray to sticks or stones, and one to her rag doll.
But we are stubborn men and vain, and though we rise or fall,
Our children's prayers or women's prayers, GOD knows we need them
all!
And no one fights the bitter gale, or strives in combat grim,
But, somewhere in the world, a child is praying hard for him.*

The Captains sailed to India, to China and Japan.
They met the Strangers' Welcome and the Friendliness of Man;
The Captains sailed to Southern Seas, and “wondrous sights” they
saw —
The Rights of Man in savage lands, and law without a law.
They learnt the truth from savages, and wisdom from the wild,

And learned to walk in unknown ways, and trust them like a child.
(The sailors told of monstrous things that be where sailors roam ...
But none had seen more monstrous things than they had seen at home.)

They found new worlds for crowded folk in cities old and worn,
And huts of hunger, fog and smoke in lands by Faction torn.
(They found the great and empty lands where Nations might be born.)
They found new foods, they found new wealth, and newer ways to live,
Where sons might grow in strength and health, with all that God would
give.

They tracked their ways through unknown seas where Danger still
remains,
And sailed back poor and broken men, and some sailed back in chains.
But, bound or free, or ill or well, where'er their sails were furled,
They brought to weary, worn-out lands glad tidings from the World.

The Seasons saw our fathers come, their flocks and herds increase;
They saw the old lands waste in War, the new lands waste in Peace;
The Seasons saw new gardens made, they saw the old lands bleed,
And into new lands introduced the curse of Class and Creed.
They saw the birth of Politics, and all was ripe for Greed.
And Mammon came and built his towers, and Mammon held the fort:
Till one new land went dollar-mad, and one went mad for Sport.

Where men for love of Science sailed in rotten tubs for years,
To hang or starve, while nought availed a wife or daughter's tears —
Where men made life-long sacrifice for some blind Northern Power,
Now Science sinks a thousand souls, and sinks them in an hour.
You would be rich and great too soon — have all that mortal craves;
The day may come ere you have lived when you'll be poor and slaves.
You heeded not the warning voice, for Self and Sport prevailed;
You yet might wish, in dust and dread, those Captains had not sailed.

Interlude. A Dirge of Joy.

Oh! this is a joyful dirge, my friends, and this is a hymn of praise;
And this is a clamour of Victory, and a paeon of Ancient Days.
It isn't a Yelp of the Battlefield; nor a Howl of the Bounding Wave,
But an ode to the Things that the War has Killed, and a lay of the Festive
Grave.

'Tis a triolet of the Tomb, you bet, and a whoop because of Despair,
And it's sung as I stand on my hoary head and wave my legs in the air!

Oh! I dance on the grave of the Suffragette (I dance on my hands and
dome),
And the Sanctity-of-the-Marriage-Tie and the Breaking-Up-of-the-
Home.

And I dance on the grave of the weird White-Slave that died when the
war began;
And Better-Protection-for-Women-and-Girls, and Men-Made-Laws-for-
Man!

Oh, I dance on the Liberal Lady's grave and the Labour Woman's, too;
And the grave of the Female lie and shriek, with a dance that is wild and
new.

And my only regret in this song-a-let as I dance over dale and hill,
Is the Yarn-of-the-Wife and the Tale-of-the-Girl that never a war can
kill.

Oh, I dance on the grave of the want-ter- write, and I dance on the Tomb
of the Sneer,

And poet-and-author-and-critic, too, who used to be great round here.
But "Old Mother Often" ("Mother of Ten") and "Parent" escaped from
the grave —

And "Pro Bono Publico" liveth again, as "Victis," or "Honour the
Brave."

Oh, lightly I danced upon Politics' grave where the Friend of the
Candidate slept,

And over the Female Political Devil, oh wildly I bounded and leapt.
But this dance shall be nothing compared with the dance of the spook of
the writer who sings

On the grave of the bard and the *Bulletin's* grave, out there at the Finish

of Things!

A New John Bull.

A tall, slight, English gentleman,
With an eyeglass to his eye;
He mostly says “Good-Bai” to you,
When he means to say “Good-bye”;
He shakes hands like a ladies' man,
For all the world to see —
But they know, in Corners of the World.
No ladies' man is he.

A tall, slight English gentleman,
Who hates to soil his hands;
He takes his mother's drawing-room
To the most outlandish lands;
And when, through Hells we dream not of,
His battery prevails,
He cleans the grime of gunpowder
And blue blood from his nails.

He's what our blokes in Egypt call
“A decent kinder cove.”
And if the Pyramids should fall?
He'd merely say “Bai Jove!”
And if the stones should block his path
For a twelve-month, or a day,
He'd call on Sergeant Whatsisname
To clear those things away!

A quiet English gentleman,
Who dots the Empire's rim,
Where sweating sons of ebony
Would go to Hell for him.
And if he chances to get “winged,”
Or smashed up rather worse,
He's quite apologetic to
The doctor and the nurse.

A silent English gentleman —
Though sometimes he says “Haw.”

But if a baboon in its cage
Appealed to British Law
And Justice, to be understood,
He'd listen all polite,
And do his very best to set
The monkey grievance right.

A thoroughbred whose ancestry
Goes back to ages dim;
Yet no one on his wide estates
Need fear to speak to him.
Although he never showed a sign
Of aught save sympathy,
He was the only gentleman
That shamed the cad in me.

The Vanguard.

They say, in all kindness, I'm out of the hunt —
Too old and too deaf to be sent to the Front.
A scribbler of stories, a maker of songs,
To the fireside and armchair my valour belongs!
Yet in campaigns all hopeless, in bitterest strife,
I have been at the Front all the days of my life.

Oh, your girl feels a princess, your people are proud,
As you march down the street, 'midst the cheers of the crowd;
And the Nation's behind you and cloudless your sky,
And you come back to Honour, or gloriously die;
While for each thing that brightens, and each thing that cheers,
I have starved in the trenches these forty long years.

The cities were silent, the people were glum,
No sound of a bugle, no tap of a drum;
Our enemies mighty and Parliaments sour,
Our Land's lovers few, and no Man of the Hour.
The Girl turned her nose up (maybe 'twas before),
And they voted us Cracked when we marched to the war.

Our army was small and 'twas scattered afar,
And our headquarters down where the Poor People are.
But I knew the great hearts of the Jims and the Bills,
And we signalled by wireless as old as the hills.
There were songs that could reach to our furthestmost wing,
And Sorrow and Poverty taught me to sing.

Our War Hymn the war hymn that ever prevails —
Oh, we sang it of old when we marched from Marseilles!
And our army traditions are cherished with pride
In streets and in woods where we triumphed, or died;
Where, rebel or loyal, by farmhouse and town,
The chorus waxed faint as they volleyed us down.

No V.C. comes to us, no rest nor release,
Though hardest of all is this fighting in peace.
Small honour to wife or to daughter or son,

Though noblest of all are the deeds that are done.
But we never are conquered, we never can die,
For we live through the ages, my army and I!

Said the Kaiser to the Spy.

“Now tell me what can England do?”

Said the Kaiser to the Spy.

“She can do nought, your Majesty —

You rule the sea and sky.

Her day of destiny is done;

Her path of peace is plain;

For she dare never throw a troop

Across the Strait again.”

The Kaiser sent his mighty host,

With Bombast in advance,

To set his seal on Paris first,

And make an end of France.

Their guns were heard in Paris streets,

And trembling Europe heard;

(They're staggering back in Belgium now)

And England said no word.

“Now tell me what can England do?”

Said the Kaiser to the Spy.

“She can do nought in Southern seas

Where her possessions lie!

Her colonies are arming now —

They only wait your aid!”

“I'll send my ships,” the Kaiser said,

“And I will kill her trade!”

The Kaiser sent his cruisers forth

To do their worst or best;

And one made trouble in the North —

The Cocos tell the rest.

He sent a squadron to a coast

Where treachery prevailed —

Gra'mercy! They were stricken hard

On seas that Raleigh sailed!

“Now tell me what can England do?”

Said the Kaiser to the Spy.

“Her ports are all unfortified
And there your chances lie!”
He sent his ships to Scarborough,
And called them back again.
The *Blucher* lies in Channel ooze
With seven hundred men.

“Oh, tell me what can England do?”
Said the Kaiser to the Spy.
“She can't hold Egypt for a day —
(I have it from On High.”)
And so the Kaiser paid the Turk
To put the matter through —
And England's Queen of Egypt now,
And boss of Turkey too.

“Now tell me what shall England do?”
Said the Kaiser to the Spy.
You see that neither of them knew
Much more than you or I.
But the blooming thing that's troubling me
As the pregnant weeks go by,
Is wotinell shall England do
When the Kaiser hangs that Spy!

The Old Stockman's Lament.

Wrop me up in me stockwhip and blanket,
And bury me deep down below,
Where this piffle and sham won't disgust me,
In the land where the coolibahs grow;
For I've stayed with some well-to-do people,
And I've dined with some middle-class folk;
And I've sorrowed by clock-tower and steeple
Till my heart for the Commonwealth's broke.

They have flown in another direction,
Who used to clack-clack by the hour
Of "this awful Freetrade and Protection,"
Of our dear darling member "in power,"
And the Higher Religion for Dossers,
And the Need of an Object for Drunks —
Now they're all of them Red or Blue Crossers,
With their tails sticking out of their trunks.

There are citified Martins in dozens —
The Darling Point Martins the pick —
Who used to be horrified cousins
Of a Martin we knew as "Mad Mick."
He is hanging out somewhere where French is;
But they heard he'd enlisted — somehow,
And 'twould paralyse Mick in the trenches
To know how he's glorified now.

You remember the George Henry Crosses?
They've packed up twelve trunks in despair.
He's the boss of the back-station bosses,
And Ernie's the son and the heir.
He has never put hands on a wether,
Nor heard a pithed store-bullock grunt;
So they're taking the mailboat to England
To see Ernie safe to the Front.

And each of the war-going parsons
Costs many a heart-breaking tear —

Like that caddish young cub of old Carson's,
All found and four hundred a year.
He feels not a word that he preaches,
But he will not be criticised there,
Where, out where the flying shellscreches,
Poor Tommy must fight, sweat and swear.

“Our relatives, too” (hang the Censor!)
Each girl has a tear on her cheek.
Cousin Roger has gone as dispenser
(Expenses and three pounds a week.
More risky than list'ning to sermons,
As some of our fellows will find,
Is a fierce fortnight's fight with the Germans
In front — and with Roger behind.)

And the Girls, they are writing like blazes,
And Auntie is moaning like hell;
And I wish I was under the daisies —
Or the bluegum would do just as well.
So I want to be wropped in me blanket,
And buried down — deep down — below;
Where this cant and this cackle won't reach me —
In the land where the coolibahs grow.

A Fantasy of War.

From Australia.

Oh, tell me, God of Battles! Oh, say what is to come!
The King is in his trenches, the millionaire at home;
The Kaiser with his toiling troops, the Czar is at the front.
Oh! Tell me, God of Battles! Who bears the battle's brunt?
The Queen knits socks for soldiers, the Empress does the same,
And know no more than peasant girls which nation is to blame.
The wounded live to fight again, or live to slave for bread;
The Slain have graves above the Slain — the Dead are with the Dead.
The widowed young shall wed or not, the widowed old remain —
And all the nations of the world prepare for war again!
But ere that time shall be, O God, say what shall *here* befall!
Ten millions at the battle fronts, *and we're five millions all!*
The world You made was wide, O God, the world we made is small.
We toiled not as our fathers toiled, for
Sport was all our boast;
And so we built our cities, Lord, like warts, upon the coast.

* * * * *

From Europe.

The seer stood on the mountain side, the witch was in her cave;
The gipsy with his caravan, the sailor on the wave;
The sophist in his easy chair, with ne'er a soul to save,
The factory slaves went forth to slave, the peasant to the field;
The women worked in winter there for one-tenth of the yield;
The village Granny nursed their babes to give them time to slave;
The child was in the cradle, and the grandsire in his grave.
The rich man slumbered in his chair, full fed with wine and meat;
The lady in her carriage sat, the harlot walked the street
With paint upon her cheek and neck, through winter's snow and sleet.
We saw the pride of Wealth go mad, and Misery increase —
And still the God of Gods was dumb and all the world was Peace!

* * * * *

The wizard on the mountain side, he drew a rasping breath,
For he was old and near to life, as he was near to death;
And he looked out and saw the star they saw at Nazareth.
“Two thousand years have passed,” he said. “A thousand years,” he said.
“A hundred years have passed,” he said, “and, lo! the star is red!
The time has come at last,” he said, and bowed his hoary head.
He laid him on the mountain-side — and so the seer was dead.
And so the Eastern Star was red, and it was red indeed —
We saw the Red Star in the South, but we took little heed.
(The Prophet in his garret starved or drank himself to death.)

* * * * *

The witch was mumbling in her hole before the dawn was grey;
The witch she took a crooked stick and prodded in the clay;
She doddered round and mumbled round as is the beldame's way.
“Four children shall be born,” she said, “four children at a birth;
Four children of a peasant brood — and what shall come on earth?
Four of the poorest peasantry that Europe knows,” she said,
“And all the nations of the world shall count their gory dead!”
The babes are born in Italy — and all the world is red!

* * * * *

The Ship.

The world You gave was wide, O Lord, and wars were far away!
The goal was just as near, O Lord, to-morrow or to-day!
The tree You grew was stout and sound to carve the plank and keel.
(And when the darkness hid the sky Your hand was on the wheel.)
The pine You grew was straight and tall to fashion spar and mast.
Our sails and gear from flax and hemp were stout and firm and fast.
You gave the metal from the mine and taught the carpenter
To fasten plank and rib and beam, and sheath and iron her.
The world You made was wide, O Lord, with signs on sea and sky;
And all the stars were true, O Lord, you gave to steer her by.
More graceful than the albatross upon the morning breeze.
Ah me! she was the fairest thing that ever sailed the seas;
And when the madness of mankind burns out at last in war,
The world may yet behold the day she'll sail the seas once more.
We were not satisfied, O Lord, we were not satisfied;
We stole Your electricity to fortify our pride!
You gave the horse to draw our loads, You gave the horse to ride;
But we must fly above the Alps and race beneath the tide.

We searched in sacred places for the things we did not need;
Your anger shook our cities down — and yet we took no heed.
We robbed the water and the air to give us “energy,”
As we'd exhaust Thy secret store of electricity.
The day may come — and such a day! — when we shall need all three.

* * * * *

And lest Thou shouldst not understand our various ways and whys,
We cut Thy trees for paper, Lord, where-on to print our lies.
We sent the grand Titanic forth, for pleasure, gold and show;
And all her skeletons of wealth and jewels lie below.
For fame or curiosity, for pride, and greed, or trade,
We sought to know *all* things and make all things that Thou hast made!
From Pole to Pole we sought to speak, and Heaven's powers employ —
Our cruisers feverishly seek such language to destroy.
We shaped all things for war, and now the Sister Nations wade
Knee-deep in white man's blood to wreck all things that we have made!
For in the rottenness of Peace — worse than this bitter strife! —
We murdered the Humanity and Poetry of Life.

* * * * *

The Bells and the Child.

The gongs are in the temple — the bells are in the tower;
The “tom-tom” in the jungle and the town clock tells the hour;
And all Thy feathered kind at morn have testified Thy power.

Did ever statesman save a land or science save a soul? —
Did ever Tower of Babel stand or wardrums cease to roll? —
Or wedding-bells to ring, O Lord — or requiems to toll?

Did ever child in cradle laid — born of a healthy race —
Cease for an hour, all unafraid, to testify Thy grace?
That shook its rattle from its bed in its proud father's face?

Cathedral bells must cease awhile, because of Pride and Sin,
That never failed a wedding-morn that hailed a king and queen,
Or failed to peal for victory that brave men died to win.
(Or failed to ring the Old Year out and ring the New Year in.)

The world You made was wide, O God! — O God, 'tis narrow now —
And all its ways must run with blood, for we knew more than Thou!
And millions perish at the guns or rot beside the plough,
For we knew more than Thou.

Interlude. A Mate Can Do No Wrong.

We learnt the creed at Hungerford,
 We learnt the creed at Bourke;
We learnt it in the good times,
 And learnt it out of work.
We learnt it by the harbour-side
 And on the billabong:
“No matter what a mate may do,
 A mate can do no wrong!”

He's like a king in this respect
 (No matter what they do),
And, king-like, shares in storm and shine
 The Throne of Life with you.
We learnt it when we were in gaol,
 And put it in a song:
“No matter what a mate may do,
 A mate can do no wrong!”

They'll say he said a bitter word
 When he's away or dead.
We're loyal to his memory,
 No matter what he said.
And we should never hesitate,
 But strike out good and strong,
And jolt the slanderer on the jaw —
 A mate can do no wrong!

The Lady of the Motor-Car.

The Lady of the Motor-car she stareth straight ahead;
Her face is like the stone, my friend, her face is like the dead;
Her face is like the stone, my friend, because she is “well-bred” —
Because her heart is dead, my friend, as all her life was dead.

The Lady of the Motor-car she speaketh like a man,
Because her girlhood never was, nor womanhood began.
She says, “To the Aus-traliah, John!” and “Home” when she hath been.
And to the husband at her side she says, “Whhat *doo* you mean?”

The Lady of the Motor-car her very soul is dead,
Because she never helped herself nor had to work for bread;
The Lady of the Motor-car sits in her sitting-room,
Her stony face has never changed though all the land is gloom.

Her motor-car hath gone to hell — the hell that man hath made;
She sitteth in her sitting-room, and she is not afraid;
Nor fear of life or death, or worse, could change her well-bred mien;
She knits socks in a stony way, and says, “Whhat *doo* they mean?”

The lady in her carriage sits, with cushions turning green —
And once it was a mourning-coach, and once it held a queen.
Behind a coachman and a horse too old to go to war,
She driveth to her “four o’clocks” and to her sick and poor.

And when the enemy bombards and walls begin to fall,
The Lady of the Motor-car shall stand above you all;
Amongst the strong and silent brave, and those who pray or shriek,
She’ll nurse the wounded from the grave and pacify the weak.

And if the enemy prevails, with death on every side,
The Lady of the Car shall die as heroines have died,
But if the victory remains, she’ll be what she hath been,
And, sitting in her motor-car, shall say: “Whhat *doo* you mean?”

Young Kings and Old.

The Young King fights in the trenches and the Old King fights in the rear —

Because he is old and feeble, and not for a thought of fear.

The Young King fights for the Future, and the Old King fights for the Past —

The Young King is fighting his first fight and the Old King is fighting his last.

It is ever the same old battle, be the end of it Beer or Blood —

Or whether the rifles rattle, or whether a friend flings mud;

Or a foe to the rescue dashes, and the touch of a stranger thrills —

Or the Truth — or the bayonet flashes; or the Lie — or a bullet kills.

The young man strives to determine which are the truths or lies,

And the old man preaches his sermon — and he takes to his bed and dies;

And the parson is there, and the nurse is (or the bread is there and the wine) —

And the son of the minister curses as he dies in the firing line.

And ever, and ever, and ever, as it was in ages untold,

The women grow still more “clever,” and the young know more than the old;

Till the seer on the hill cries “Treason!” and the witch grins out of her hole —

And a clarion voice shouts “Reason”! — and the Drums of Destruction roll.

The young bard bounds to the office, with eyes and with cheeks a-glow,

And he meets the old on the stairway, with tottering knees and slow.

And ever the Cowards of Conscience, or Envy, or Greed — or Trade

Are forcing us back from Antwerp, or forcing us from Belgrade.

But courage! By hut or steeple! — and courage for old and young!

No song for the sullen people has ever been left unsung!

And the crudest note that was worthy has never gone by unfelt —

I shall die in peace by the Danube, while you shall sing by the Scheldt!

Interlude. Next Door.

Whenever I'm moving my furniture in
Or shifting my furniture out —
Which is nearly as often and risky as Sin
In these days of shifting about —
There isn't a stretcher, there isn't a stick,
Nor a mat that belongs to the floor;
There isn't a pot (Oh, my heart groweth sick!)
That escapes from the glare of Next Door!
The Basilisk Glare of Next Door.

Be it morn, noon or night — be it early or late;
Be it summer or winter or spring,
I cannot sneak down just to list at the gate
For the song that the bottle-ohs sing;
With some bottles to sell that shall bring me a beer,
And lead up to one or two more;
But I feel in my backbone the serpentine sneer,
And the Basilisk Glare of Next Door.
The political woman Next Door.

I really can't say, being no one of note,
Why she glares at my odds and my ends,
Excepting, maybe, I'm a frivolous Pote,
With one or two frivolous friends,
Who help me to shift and to warm up the house
For three or four glad hours or more,
In a suburb that hasn't the soul of a louse;
And they've got no respect for Next Door!
They don't give a damn for Next Door.

The Route March.

Did you hear the children singing, O my brothers?
Did you hear the children singing as our troops went marching past?
In the sunshine and the rain,
As they'll never sing again —
Hear the little school-girls singing as our troops went swinging past?

Did you hear the children singing, O my brothers?
Did you hear the children singing for the first man and the last?
As they marched away and vanished,
To a tune we thought was banished —
Did you hear the children singing for the future and the past?

Shall you hear the children singing, O my brothers?
Shall you hear the children singing in the sunshine or the rain?
There'll be sobs beneath the ringing
Of the cheers, and 'neath the singing
There'll be tears of orphan children when
Our Boys come back again!

Fighting Hard.

“The Australians are fighting hard in Gallipoli.” — *Cable*.

Rolling out to fight for England, singing songs across the sea;
Rolling North to fight for England, and to fight for you and me.
Fighting hard for France and England, where the storms of Death are
hurled;
Fighting hard for Australasia and the honour of the World!
Fighting hard.

Fighting hard for Sunny Queensland — fighting for Bananaland,
Fighting hard for West Australia, and the mulga and the sand;
Fighting hard for Plain and Wool-Track, and the haze of western heat —
Fighting hard for South Australia and the bronze of Farrar's Wheat!
Fighting hard.

Fighting hard for fair Victoria, and the mountain and the glen;
(And the Memory of Eureka — there were other tyrants then),
For the glorious Gippsland forests and the
World's great Singing Star —
For the irrigation channels where the cabbage gardens are —
Fighting hard.

Fighting hard for gale and earthquake, and the wind-swept ports
between;
For the wild flax and manuka and the terraced hills of green.
Fighting hard for wooden homesteads, where the mighty kauris stand —
Fighting hard for fern and tussock! —
Fighting hard for Maoriland!
Fighting hard.

Fighting hard for little Tassy, where the apple orchards grow;
(And the Northern Territory just to give the place a show),
Fighting hard for Home and Empire, while the Commonwealth
prevails —
And, in spite of all her blunders, dying hard for New South Wales.
Dying hard.

Fighting for the Pride of Old Folk, and the people that you know;
And the girl you left behind you — (ah! the time is passing slow).
For the proud tears of a sister! come you back, or never come!
And the weary Elder Brother, looking after things at home —
Fighting Hard! *You Lucky Devils!*
 Fighting hard.

Booth's Drum.

[According to Commissioner Hay, Chief Officer of the Salvation Army in Australia, who has just returned from Europe, there are already about 20,000 Salvationists at the Front, and more going, and a lot more getting ready in a hurry to go. ... In Europe there are brigades of nurses and Red Cross workers under the control of “Brigadier” Mary Murray. She is a daughter of General Sir Alexander Murray of the Indian Military forces, and she has been a member of the Salvation Army for twenty years. ...The Army has placed a number of its homes (and presumably all its barracks) at the disposal of the naval and military authorities for use as hospitals. ... In Australia there are several Salvation Army training camps that have been visited and complimented by the Minister for Defence, who has accepted the offer of the Army to accommodate and care for children orphaned by the war, and for whom succour in private homes cannot be found. Belgian children will be welcomed and cared for. ...Eighty Salvation Army people have volunteered for Red Cross work; the majority well trained as surgical nurses. ...All those trained as officers have special training in first aid; over 600 young men have already gained certificates. Tents are being erected at Rosehill, where men in training will be provided with writing material, reading matter, games, music, etc., and a coffee canteen. I don't know what the “etc.” is, but, incidentally, the Army handed in its little bit of £ 1,000 for the widow's and orphans' fund — just to keep things going like. Glory, Alleluia!]

They were “ratty” they were hooted by the meanest and the least,
When they woke the Drum of Glory long ago in London East.
They were often mobbed by hoodlums — they were few, but

And their Lassies were insulted, but they banged the drum — and
prayed.

Prayed in public for the sinners, prayed in private for release,
Till they saved some brawny lumpers — *then* they banged the drum in
peace.

(Saved some prize-fighter and burglars) — and they banged the drum in
peace.

Booth's Drum.

He was hook-nosed, he was “scrawny,”
He was nothing of a Don.
And his business ways seemed Yiddish,
And his speeches “kid” — or kiddish;
And we doubted his “convictions” —
But his drum is going on.

Oh, they drummed it ever onward with old Blood-and-Fire unfurled,
And they drummed it ever outward to the corners of the world.
Till they banged the drum in Greenland and they banged in Ispahan,
And they banged it round to India and China and Japan.
And they banged it through the Islands where each seasoned Son of Rum
Took them for new-fangled Jim Jams when he heard the Army Drum.
(For a bran' new brand of Horrors, when he saw the Army come.)
So they banged it in the desert, and they banged in the snow —
They'd have banged the Drum to Mecca! with the shadow of a “show.”
(But Mohammed cut their heads off, so they had to let it go.)

Somewhere in the early eighties they had banged the drum to Bourke,
Where the job of fighting Satan was white-hot and dusty work.
Oh, the Local Lass was withered in the heat that bakes and glares,
And we sent her food and firewood but took small heed of her prayers.
We were blasphemous and beery, we were free from Creed or Care,
Till they sent their prettiest Lassies — and they broke our centre there.
So that, moderately sober, we could stand to hear them sing —
And we'd chaff their Testifiers, and throw quids into the ring.
(Never less than bobs or “dollars” — sometimes quids into the ring.)

They have “stormed” our sinful cities — banged for all that they were
worth —
From Port Darwin to Port Melbourne, and from Sydney round to Perth.
We'd no need for them (or woman) when we were all right and well,
But they took us out of prison, and they took us out of Hell.
And they helped our fallen sisters who went down for such as we,
And our widows and our orphans in distress and poverty.
And neglected wives and children of the worst of us that be;
And they made us fit for Glory — or another Glorious Spree.
(So I rather think there's something that is up to you or me.)

Oh! the Blindness of the Future! — Ah, we never reckoned much
That they'd beat the quids we gave them into bayonets and such.
That the coin would be devoted, when our world was looking blue,
To another kind of orphan — wife, or child, or widow too.
But the times have changed a sudden, and the past is very dim;
They Have Found a Real Devil, and They're Going After Him.

(With a Bible and a Rifle they are going after him.)

For the old Salvation Army, and their
Country, and their King,
They are marching to the trenches, shouting, "Comrades! Let us Sing!"
They'll find foreign "Army" soldiers here and there and everywhere,
Who will speak their tongue and help them. And they'll surely breathe a
prayer
For the Spy — before they shoot him; and another when he's still.
And they're going to "fire a volley" in the Land of Kaiser Bill.
But, when all is done and quiet — as before they march away —
They will kneel about their banner, saying "Brethren. Let us pray."

They have long used army rank-terms, and oh, say what it shall be,
When a few come back the real thing, and when one comes back V.C.!
They will bang the drum at Crow's Nest, they will bang it on "the
Shore,"
They will bang the drum in Kent-street as they never banged before.
And At Last they'll frighten Satan from the Mansion and the Slum —
He'll have never heard till that time such a Banging of the Drum.

He was lonely with his thousands,
Lonely in his household too,
For his children had deserted,
And his captains, not a few.
He was old and white and feeble
And his sight was nearly gone,
And he "could not see his people,"
But his drum is rolling on.
Booth's Drum.
