

BALLADS

THE BALLAD OF EAST AND WEST

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall
meet,

Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment
Seat;

But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face,
tho' they come from the ends of the earth!

Kamal is out with twenty men to raise the Border-side,
And he has lifted the Colonel's mare that is the Colonel's pride:
He has lifted her out of the stable-door between the dawn and the day,
And turned the calkins upon her feet, and ridden her far away.

Then up and spoke the Colonel's son that led a troop of the Guides:
"Is there never a man of all my men can say where Kamal hides?"

Then up and spoke Mahommed Khan, the son of the Ressaldar:

"If ye know the track of the morning-mist, ye know where his pickets are.

"At dusk he harries the Abazai--at dawn he is into Bonair,

But he must go by Fort Bukloh to his own place to fare,

So if ye gallop to Fort Bukloh as fast as a bird can fly,

By the favour of God ye may cut him off ere he win to the Tongue of Jagai.

"But if he be past the Tongue of Jagai, right swiftly turn ye then,

For the length and the breadth of that grisly plain is sown with Kamal's men.

There is rock to the left, and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,

And ye may hear a breech-bolt snick where never a man is seen."

The Colonel's son has taken a horse, and a raw rough dun was he,

With the mouth of a bell and the heart of Hell and the head of the

gallows-tree.

The Colonel's son to the Fort has won, they bid him stay to eat--

Who rides at the tail of a Border thief, he sits not long at his meat.

He's up and away from Fort Bukloh as fast as he can fly,

Till he was aware of his father's mare in the gut of the Tongue of Jagai,

Till he was aware of his father's mare with Kamal upon her back,

And when he could spy the white of her eye, he made the pistol crack.

He has fired once, he has fired twice, but the whistling ball went wide.

"Ye shoot like a soldier," Kamal said. "Show now if ye can ride."

It's up and over the Tongue of Jagai, as blown dustdevils go,

The dun he fled like a stag of ten, but the mare like a barren doe.

The dun he leaned against the bit and slugged his head above,

But the red mare played with the snaffle-bars, as a maiden plays with a glove.

There was rock to the left and rock to the right, and low lean thorn
between,

And thrice he heard a breech-bolt snick tho' never a man was seen.

They have ridden the low moon out of the sky, their hoofs drum up the
dawn,

The dun he went like a wounded bull, but the mare like a new-roused
fawn.

The dun he fell at a water-course--in a woful heap fell he,

And Kamal has turned the red mare back, and pulled the rider free.

He has knocked the pistol out of his hand--small room was there to strive,

"'Twas only by favour of mine," quoth he, "ye rode so long alive:

There was not a rock for twenty mile, there was not a clump of tree,

But covered a man of my own men with his rifle cocked on his knee.

"If I had raised my bridle-hand, as I have held it low,

The little jackals that flee so fast were feasting all in a row:
If I had bowed my head on my breast, as I have held it high,
The kite that whistles above us now were gorged till she could not fly."
Lightly answered the Colonel's son: "Do good to bird and beast,
But count who come for the broken meats before thou makest a feast.

"If there should follow a thousand swords to carry my bones away,
Belike the price of a jackal's meal were more than a thief could pay.

"They will feed their horse on the standing crop, their men on the garnered
grain,
The thatch of the byres will serve their fires when all the cattle are
slain.

"But if thou thinkest the price be fair,--thy brethren wait to sup,
The hound is kin to the jackal-spawn,--howl, dog, and call them up!
And if thou thinkest the price be high, in steer and gear and stack,
Give me my father's mare again, and I'll fight my own way back!"

Kamal has gripped him by the hand and set him upon his feet.

"No talk shall be of dogs," said he, "when wolf and gray wolf meet.

"May I eat dirt if thou hast hurt of me in deed or breath;
What dam of lances brought thee forth to jest at the dawn with Death?"
Lightly answered the Colonel's son: "I hold by the blood of my clan:
Take up the mare for my father's gift--by God, she has carried a man!"
The red mare ran to the Colonel's son, and nuzzled against his breast;

"We be two strong men," said Kamal then, "but she loveth the younger best.

"So she shall go with a lifter's dower, my turquoise-studded rein,
My broidered saddle and saddle-cloth, and silver stirrups twain."

The Colonel's son a pistol drew and held it muzzle-end,

"Ye have taken the one from a foe," said he;

"will ye take the mate from a friend?"

"A gift for a gift," said Kamal straight; "a limb for the risk of a limb.

"Thy father has sent his son to me, I'll send my son to him!"

With that he whistled his only son, that dropped from a mountain-crest--

He trod the ling like a buck in spring, and he looked like a lance in rest.

"Now here is thy master," Kamal said, "who leads a troop of the Guides,

And thou must ride at his left side as shield on shoulder rides.

Till Death or I cut loose the tie, at camp and board and bed,

Thy life is his--thy fate it is to guard him with thy head.

"So, thou must eat the White Queen's meat, and all her foes are thine,

And thou must harry thy father's hold for the peace of the Border-line,

And thou must make a trooper tough and hack thy way to power--

Belike they will raise thee to Ressaldar when I am hanged in Peshawur."

They have looked each other between the eyes, and there they found no fault,

They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on leavened bread and salt:

They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire and fresh-cut sod,

On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife, and the Wondrous Names of God.

The Colonel's son he rides the mare and Kamal's boy the dun,
And two have come back to Fort Bukloh where there went forth but one.

And when they drew to the Quarter-Guard, full twenty swords flew clear--

There was not a man but carried his feud with the blood of the mountaineer.

"Ha' done! ha' done!" said the Colonel's son.

"Put up the steel at your sides!

Last night ye had struck at a Border thief--

tonight 'tis a man of the Guides!"

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face,
tho' they come from the ends of the earth!

THE LAST SUTTEE

Not many years ago a King died in one of the Rajpoot States. His wives, disregarding the orders of the English against Suttee, would have broken out of the palace had not the gates been barred.

But one of them, disguised as the King's favourite dancing-girl, passed through the line of guards and reached the pyre. There, her courage failing, she prayed her cousin, a baron of the court, to kill her. This he did, not knowing who she was.

Udai Chand lay sick to death

In his hold by Gungra hill.

All night we heard the death-gongs ring

For the soul of the dying Rajpoot King,

All night beat up from the women's wing

A cry that we could not still.

All night the barons came and went,

The lords of the outer guard:

All night the cressets glimmered pale

On Ulwar sabre and Tonk jezail,

Mewar headstall and Marwar mail,

That clinked in the palace yard.

In the Golden room on the palace roof
All night he fought for air:
And there was sobbing behind the screen,
Rustle and whisper of women unseen,
And the hungry eyes of the Boondi Queen
On the death she might not share.

He passed at dawn--the death-fire leaped
From ridge to river-head,
From the Malwa plains to the Abu scars:
And wail upon wail went up to the stars
Behind the grim zenana-bars,
When they knew that the King was dead.

The dumb priest knelt to tie his mouth
And robe him for the pyre.
The Boondi Queen beneath us cried:
"See, now, that we die as our mothers died
In the bridal-bed by our master's side!
Out, women!--to the fire!"

We drove the great gates home apace:
White hands were on the sill:
But ere the rush of the unseen feet
Had reached the turn to the open street,
The bars shot down, the guard-drum beat--

We held the dovecot still.

A face looked down in the gathering day,

And laughing spoke from the wall:

"Ohe', they mourn here: let me by--

Azizun, the Lucknow nautch-girl, I!

When the house is rotten, the rats must fly,

And I seek another thrall.

"For I ruled the King as ne'er did Queen,--

Tonight the Queens rule me!

Guard them safely, but let me go,

Or ever they pay the debt they owe

In scourge and torture!" She leaped below,

And the grim guard watched her flee.

They knew that the King had spent his soul

On a North-bred dancing-girl:

That he prayed to a flat-nosed Lucknow god,

And kissed the ground where her feet had trod,

And doomed to death at her drunken nod,

And swore by her lightest curl.

We bore the King to his fathers' place,

Where the tombs of the Sun-born stand:

Where the gray apes swing, and the peacocks preen

On fretted pillar and jewelled screen,
And the wild boar couch in the house of the Queen
 On the drift of the desert sand.

The herald read his titles forth,
 We set the logs aglow:
"Friend of the English, free from fear,
Baron of Luni to Jeysulmeer,
Lord of the Desert of Bikaneer,
 King of the Jungle,--go!"

All night the red flame stabbed the sky
 With wavering wind-tossed spears:
And out of a shattered temple crept
A woman who veiled her head and wept,
And called on the King--but the great King slept,
 And turned not for her tears.

Small thought had he to mark the strife--
 Cold fear with hot desire--
When thrice she leaped from the leaping flame,
And thrice she beat her breast for shame,
And thrice like a wounded dove she came
 And moaned about the fire.

One watched, a bow-shot from the blaze,

The silent streets between,
Who had stood by the King in sport and fray,
To blade in ambush or boar at bay,
And he was a baron old and gray,
And kin to the Boondi Queen.

He said: "O shameless, put aside
The veil upon thy brow!
Who held the King and all his land
To the wanton will of a harlot's hand!
Will the white ash rise from the blistered brand?
Stoop down, and call him now!"

Then she: "By the faith of my tarnished soul,
All things I did not well,
I had hoped to clear ere the fire died,
And lay me down by my master's side
To rule in Heaven his only bride,
While the others howl in Hell.

"But I have felt the fire's breath,
And hard it is to die!
Yet if I may pray a Rajpoot lord
To sully the steel of a Thakur's sword
With base-born blood of a trade abhorred,"--
And the Thakur answered, "Ay."

He drew and struck: the straight blade drank
The life beneath the breast.

"I had looked for the Queen to face the flame,
But the harlot dies for the Rajpoot dame--
Sister of mine, pass, free from shame,
Pass with thy King to rest!"

The black log crashed above the white:
The little flames and lean,
Red as slaughter and blue as steel,
That whistled and fluttered from head to heel,
Leaped up anew, for they found their meal
On the heart of--the Boondi Queen!

THE BALLAD OF THE KING'S MERCY

Abdhur Rahman, the Durani Chief,
of him is the story told.
His mercy fills the Khyber hills--
his grace is manifold;
He has taken toll of the North and the South--
his glory reacheth far,
And they tell the tale of his charity
from Balkh to Kandahar.

Before the old Peshawur Gate, where Kurd and Kaffir meet,
The Governor of Kabul dealt the Justice of the Street,
And that was strait as running noose and swift as plunging knife,
Tho' he who held the longer purse might hold the longer life.

There was a hound of Hindustan had struck a Euzufzai,
Wherefore they spat upon his face and led him out to die.

It chanced the King went forth that hour when throat was bared to knife;
The Kaffir grovelled under-hoof and clamoured for his life.

Then said the King: "Have hope, O friend! Yea, Death disgraced is hard;

Much honour shall be thine"; and called the Captain of the Guard,
Yar Khan, a bastard of the Blood, so city-babble saith,
And he was honoured of the King--the which is salt to Death;
And he was son of Daoud Shah, the Reiver of the Plains,
And blood of old Durani Lords ran fire in his veins;
And 'twas to tame an Afghan pride nor Hell nor Heaven could bind,
The King would make him butcher to a yelping cur of Hind.

"Strike!" said the King. "King's blood art thou--his death shall be his
pride!"

Then louder, that the crowd might catch: "Fear not--his arms are tied!"
Yar Khan drew clear the Khyber knife, and struck, and sheathed again.
"O man, thy will is done," quoth he; "a King this dog hath slain."

Abdhur Rahman, the Durani Chief,
to the North and the South is sold.
The North and the South shall open their mouth
to a Ghilzai flag unrolled,
When the big guns speak to the Khyber peak,
and his dog-Heratis fly:
Ye have heard the song--How long? How long?
Wolves of the Abazai!

That night before the watch was set, when all the streets were clear,
The Governor of Kabul spoke: "My King, hast thou no fear?"

Thou knowest--thou hast heard,"--his speech died at his master's face.

And grimly said the Afghan King: "I rule the Afghan race.
My path is mine--see thou to thine--tonight upon thy bed
Think who there be in Kabul now that clamour for thy head."

That night when all the gates were shut to City and to throne,
Within a little garden-house the King lay down alone.

Before the sinking of the moon, which is the Night of Night,
Yar Khan came softly to the King to make his honour white.
The children of the town had mocked beneath his horse's hoofs,
The harlots of the town had hailed him "butcher!" from their roofs.

But as he groped against the wall, two hands upon him fell,
The King behind his shoulder spake: "Dead man, thou dost not well!
'Tis ill to jest with Kings by day and seek a boon by night;
And that thou bearest in thy hand is all too sharp to write.

"But three days hence, if God be good, and if thy strength remain,
Thou shalt demand one boon of me and bless me in thy pain.
For I am merciful to all, and most of all to thee.

"My butcher of the shambles, rest--no knife hast thou for me!"

Abdhur Rahman, the Durani Chief,

holds hard by the South and the North;
But the Ghilzai knows, ere the melting snows,
when the swollen banks break forth,
When the red-coats crawl to the sungar wall,
and his Usbeg lances fail:
Ye have heard the song--How long? How long?
Wolves of the Zuka Khey!

They stoned him in the rubbish-field when dawn was in the sky,
According to the written word, "See that he do not die."

They stoned him till the stones were piled above him on the plain,
And those the labouring limbs displaced they tumbled back again.

One watched beside the dreary mound that veiled the battered
thing,
And him the King with laughter called the Herald of the King.

It was upon the second night, the night of Ramazan,
The watcher leaning earthward heard the message of Yar Khan.

From shattered breast through shrivelled lips broke forth the rattling
breath,

"Creature of God, deliver me from agony of Death."

They sought the King among his girls, and risked their lives thereby:

"Protector of the Pitiful, give orders that he die!"

"Bid him endure until the day," a lagging answer came;

"The night is short, and he can pray and learn to bless my name."

Before the dawn three times he spoke, and on the day once more:

"Creature of God, deliver me, and bless the King therefor!"

They shot him at the morning prayer, to ease him of his pain,

And when he heard the matchlocks clink, he blessed the King again.

Which thing the singers made a song for all the world to sing,

So that the Outer Seas may know the mercy of the King.

Abdhur Rahman, the Durani Chief,

of him is the story told,

He has opened his mouth to the North and the South,

they have stuffed his mouth with gold.

Ye know the truth of his tender ruth--

and sweet his favours are:

Ye have heard the song--How long? How long?

from Balkh to Kandahar.

THE BALLAD OF THE KING'S JEST

When spring-time flushes the desert grass,
Our kafilas wind through the Khyber Pass.

Lean are the camels but fat the frails,
Light are the purses but heavy the bales,
As the snowbound trade of the North comes down
To the market-square of Peshawur town.

In a turquoise twilight, crisp and chill,
A kafila camped at the foot of the hill.

Then blue smoke-haze of the cooking rose,
And tent-peg answered to hammer-nose;
And the picketed ponies, shag and wild,
Strained at their ropes as the feed was piled;
And the bubbling camels beside the load
Sprawled for a furlong adown the road;
And the Persian pussy-cats, brought for sale,
Spat at the dogs from the camel-bale;
And the tribesmen bellowed to hasten the food;
And the camp-fires twinkled by Fort Jumrood;

And there fled on the wings of the gathering dusk
A savour of camels and carpets and musk,
A murmur of voices, a reek of smoke,
To tell us the trade of the Khyber woke.

The lid of the flesh-pot chattered high,
The knives were whetted and--then came I
To Mahbub Ali the muleteer,
Patching his bridles and counting his gear,
Crammed with the gossip of half a year.

But Mahbub Ali the kindly said,
"Better is speech when the belly is fed."
So we plunged the hand to the mid-wrist deep
In a cinnamon stew of the fat-tailed sheep,
And he who never hath tasted the food,
By Allah! he knoweth not bad from good.

We cleansed our beards of the mutton-grease,
We lay on the mats and were filled with peace,
And the talk slid north, and the talk slid south,
With the sliding puffs from the hookah-mouth.

Four things greater than all things are,--
Women and Horses and Power and War.

We spake of them all, but the last the most,
For I sought a word of a Russian post,
Of a shifty promise, an unsheathed sword
And a gray-coat guard on the Helmund ford.

Then Mahbub Ali lowered his eyes
In the fashion of one who is weaving lies.

Quoth he: "Of the Russians who can say?
When the night is gathering all is gray.
But we look that the gloom of the night shall die
In the morning flush of a blood-red sky.

"Friend of my heart, is it meet or wise
To warn a King of his enemies?
We know what Heaven or Hell may bring,
But no man knoweth the mind of the King.

"That unsought counsel is cursed of God
Attesteth the story of Wali Dad.

"His sire was leaky of tongue and pen,
His dam was a clucking Khuttuck hen;
And the colt bred close to the vice of each,
For he carried the curse of an unstanched speech.

"Therewith madness--so that he sought
The favour of kings at the Kabul court;
And travelled, in hope of honour, far
To the line where the gray-coat squadrons are.

"There have I journeyed too--but I
Saw naught, said naught, and--did not die!
He harked to rumour, and snatched at a breath
Of 'this one knoweth' and 'that one saith',--
Legends that ran from mouth to mouth
Of a gray-coat coming, and sack of the South.

"These have I also heard--they pass
With each new spring and the winter grass.

"Hot-foot southward, forgotten of God,
Back to the city ran Wali Dad,
Even to Kabul--in full durbar
The King held talk with his Chief in War.

"Into the press of the crowd he broke,
And what he had heard of the coming spoke.

"Then Gholam Hyder, the Red Chief, smiled,
As a mother might on a babbling child;

But those who would laugh restrained their breath,
When the face of the King showed dark as death.

"Evil it is in full durbar
To cry to a ruler of gathering war!
Slowly he led to a peach-tree small,
That grew by a cleft of the city wall.

"And he said to the boy: 'They shall praise thy zeal
So long as the red spurt follows the steel.

"And the Russ is upon us even now?
Great is thy prudence--await them, thou.
Watch from the tree. Thou art young and strong,
Surely thy vigil is not for long.

"The Russ is upon us, thy clamour ran?
Surely an hour shall bring their van.
Wait and watch. When the host is near,
Shout aloud that my men may hear.'

"Friend of my heart, is it meet or wise
To warn a King of his enemies?
A guard was set that he might not flee--
A score of bayonets ringed the tree.

"The peach-bloom fell in showers of snow,
When he shook at his death as he looked below.
By the power of God, who alone is great,
Till the seventh day he fought with his fate.

"Then madness took him, and men declare
He mowed in the branches as ape and bear,
And last as a sloth, ere his body failed,
And he hung as a bat in the forks, and wailed,
And sleep the cord of his hands untied,
And he fell, and was caught on the points and died.

"Heart of my heart, is it meet or wise
To warn a King of his enemies?
We know what Heaven or Hell may bring,
But no man knoweth the mind of the King.

"Of the gray-coat coming who can say?
When the night is gathering all is gray.

"To things greater than all things are,
The first is Love, and the second War.

"And since we know not how War may prove,
Heart of my heart, let us talk of Love!"

THE BALLAD OF BOH DA THONE

This is the ballad of Boh Da Thone,
Erst a Pretender to Theebaw's throne,
Who harried the district of Alalone:
How he met with his fate and the V.P.P.

At the hand of Harendra Mukerji,
Senior Gomashta, G.B.T.

Boh Da Thone was a warrior bold:
His sword and his Snider were bossed with gold,

And the Peacock Banner his henchmen bore
Was stiff with bullion, but stiffer with gore.

He shot at the strong and he slashed at the weak
From the Salween scrub to the Chindwin teak:

He crucified noble, he sacrificed mean,
He filled old ladies with kerosene:

While over the water the papers cried,

"The patriot fights for his countryside!"

But little they cared for the Native Press,

The worn white soldiers in Khaki dress,

Who tramped through the jungle and camped in the byre,

Who died in the swamp and were tombed in the mire,

Who gave up their lives, at the Queen's Command,

For the Pride of their Race and the Peace of the Land.

Now, first of the foemen of Boh Da Thone

Was Captain O'Neil of the "Black Tyrone",

And his was a Company, seventy strong,

Who hustled that dissolute Chief along.

There were lads from Galway and Louth and Meath

Who went to their death with a joke in their teeth,

And worshipped with fluency, fervour, and zeal

The mud on the boot-heels of "Crook" O'Neil.

But ever a blight on their labours lay,

And ever their quarry would vanish away,

Till the sun-dried boys of the Black Tyrone

Took a brotherly interest in Boh Da Thone:

And, sooth, if pursuit in possession ends,

The Boh and his trackers were best of friends.

The word of a scout--a march by night--
A rush through the mist--a scattering fight--
A volley from cover--a corpse in the clearing--
The glimpse of a loin-cloth and heavy jade earring--
The flare of a village--the tally of slain--
And...the Boh was abroad "on the raid" again!

They cursed their luck, as the Irish will,
They gave him credit for cunning and skill,
They buried their dead, they bolted their beef,
And started anew on the track of the thief
Till, in place of the "Kalends of Greece", men said,
"When Crook and his darlings come back with the head."

They had hunted the Boh from the hills to the plain--
He doubled and broke for the hills again:
They had crippled his power for rapine and raid,
They had routed him out of his pet stockade,
And at last, they came, when the Day Star tired,
To a camp deserted--a village fired.

A black cross blistered the Morning-gold,
And the body upon it was stark and cold.
The wind of the dawn went merrily past,

The high grass bowed her plumes to the blast.

And out of the grass, on a sudden, broke

A spirtle of fire, a whorl of smoke--

And Captain O'Neil of the Black Tyrone

Was blessed with a slug in the ulnar-bone--

The gift of his enemy Boh Da Thone.

(Now a slug that is hammered from telegraph-wire

Is a thorn in the flesh and a rankling fire.)

* * * * *

The shot-wound festered--as shot-wounds may

In a steaming barrack at Mandalay.

The left arm throbbed, and the Captain swore,

"I'd like to be after the Boh once more!"

The fever held him--the Captain said,

"I'd give a hundred to look at his head!"

The Hospital punkahs creaked and whirred,

But Babu Harendra (Gomashta) heard.

He thought of the cane-brake, green and dank,

That girdled his home by the Dacca tank.

He thought of his wife and his High School son,
He thought--but abandoned the thought--of a gun.
His sleep was broken by visions dread
Of a shining Boh with a silver head.

He kept his counsel and went his way,
And swindled the cartmen of half their pay.

* * * * *

And the months went on, as the worst must do,
And the Boh returned to the raid anew.

But the Captain had quitted the long-drawn strife,
And in far Simoorie had taken a wife.
And she was a damsel of delicate mould,
With hair like the sunshine and heart of gold,

And little she knew the arms that embraced
Had cloven a man from the brow to the waist:
And little she knew that the loving lips
Had ordered a quivering life's eclipse,

And the eye that lit at her lightest breath
Had glared unawed in the Gates of Death.

(For these be matters a man would hide,
As a general rule, from an innocent Bride.)

And little the Captain thought of the past,
And, of all men, Babu Harendra last.

* * * * *

But slow, in the sludge of the Kathun road,
The Government Bullock Train toted its load.
Speckless and spotless and shining with ghee,
In the rearmost cart sat the Babu-jee.

And ever a phantom before him fled
Of a scowling Boh with a silver head.

Then the lead-cart stuck, though the coolies slaved,
And the cartmen flogged and the escort raved;
And out of the jungle, with yells and squeals,
Pranced Boh Da Thone, and his gang at his heels!

Then belching blunderbuss answered back
The Snider's snarl and the carbine's crack,
And the blithe revolver began to sing
To the blade that twanged on the locking-ring,
And the brown flesh blued where the bay'net kissed,

As the steel shot back with a wrench and a twist,
And the great white bullocks with onyx eyes
Watched the souls of the dead arise,
And over the smoke of the fusillade
The Peacock Banner staggered and swayed.

Oh, gayest of scrimmages man may see
Is a well-worked rush on the G.B.T.!

The Babu shook at the horrible sight,
And girded his ponderous loins for flight,
But Fate had ordained that the Boh should start
On a lone-hand raid of the rearmost cart,
And out of that cart, with a bellow of woe,
The Babu fell--flat on the top of the Boh!

For years had Harendra served the State,
To the growth of his purse and the girth of his pet.

There were twenty stone, as the tally-man knows,
On the broad of the chest of this best of Bohs.
And twenty stone from a height discharged
Are bad for a Boh with a spleen enlarged.

Oh, short was the struggle--severe was the shock--
He dropped like a bullock--he lay like a block;

And the Babu above him, convulsed with fear,
Heard the labouring life-breath hissed out in his ear.

And thus in a fashion undignified
The princely pest of the Chindwin died.

* * * * *

Turn now to Simoorie where, lapped in his ease,
The Captain is petting the Bride on his knees,
Where the whit of the bullet, the wounded man's scream
Are mixed as the mist of some devilish dream--
Forgotten, forgotten the sweat of the shambles
Where the hill-daisy blooms and the gray monkey gambols,
From the sword-belt set free and released from the steel,
The Peace of the Lord is with Captain O'Neil.

* * * * *

Up the hill to Simoorie--most patient of drudges--
The bags on his shoulder, the mail-runner trudges.

"For Captain O'Neil, Sahib. One hundred and ten
Rupees to collect on delivery."

Then

(Their breakfast was stopped while the screw-jack and hammer
Tore waxcloth, split teak-wood, and chipped out the dammer;)

Open-eyed, open-mouthed, on the napery's snow,
With a crash and a thud, rolled--the Head of the Boh!

And gummed to the scalp was a letter which ran:--

"IN FIELDING FORCE SERVICE.

"Encampment,

"--th Jan.

"Dear Sir,--I have honour to send, as you said,
For final approval (see under) Boh's Head;

"Was took by myself in most bloody affair.

"By High Education brought pressure to bear.

"Now violate Liberty, time being bad,
To mail V.P.P. (rupees hundred) Please add

"Whatever Your Honour can pass. Price of Blood
Much cheap at one hundred, and children want food;

"So trusting Your Honour will somewhat retain
True love and affection for Govt. Bullock Train,

"And show awful kindness to satisfy me,

I am,

Graceful Master,

Your

H. MUKERJI."

* * * * *

As the rabbit is drawn to the rattlesnake's power,
As the smoker's eye fills at the opium hour,
As a horse reaches up to the manger above,
As the waiting ear yearns for the whisper of love,
From the arms of the Bride, iron-visaged and slow,
The Captain bent down to the Head of the Boh.

And e'en as he looked on the Thing where It lay
'Twixt the winking new spoons and the napkins' array,
The freed mind fled back to the long-ago days--
The hand-to-hand scuffle--the smoke and the blaze--
The forced march at night and the quick rush at dawn--
The banjo at twilight, the burial ere morn--
The stench of the marshes--the raw, piercing smell
When the overhand stabbing-cut silenced the yell--
The oaths of his Irish that surged when they stood
Where the black crosses hung o'er the Kuttamow flood.

As a derelict ship drifts away with the tide
The Captain went out on the Past from his Bride,

Back, back, through the springs to the chill of the year,
When he hunted the Boh from Maloon to Tsaleer.

As the shape of a corpse dimmers up through deep water,
In his eye lit the passionless passion of slaughter,
And men who had fought with O'Neil for the life
Had gazed on his face with less dread than his wife.

For she who had held him so long could not hold him--
Though a four-month Eternity should have controlled him--
But watched the twin Terror--the head turned to head--
The scowling, scarred Black, and the flushed savage Red--
The spirit that changed from her knowing and flew to
Some grim hidden Past she had never a clue to.

But It knew as It grinned, for he touched it unfearing,
And muttered aloud, "So you kept that jade earring!"

Then nodded, and kindly, as friend nods to friend,
"Old man, you fought well, but you lost in the end."

* * * * *

The visions departed, and Shame followed Passion:--

"He took what I said in this horrible fashion,

"I'll write to Harendra!" With language unsainted

The Captain came back to the Bride...who had fainted.

* * * * *

And this is a fiction? No. Go to Simoorie

And look at their baby, a twelve-month old Hourie,

A pert little, Irish-eyed Kathleen Mavournin--

She's always about on the Mall of a mornin'--

And you'll see, if her right shoulder-strap is displaced,

This: Gules upon argent, a Boh's Head, erased!

THE LAMENT OF THE BORDER CATTLE THIEF

O woe is me for the merry life
I led beyond the Bar,
And a treble woe for my winsome wife
That weeps at Shalimar.

They have taken away my long jezail,
My shield and sabre fine,
And heaved me into the Central jail
For lifting of the kine.

The steer may low within the byre,
The Jat may tend his grain,
But there'll be neither loot nor fire
Till I come back again.

And God have mercy on the Jat
When once my fetters fall,
And Heaven defend the farmer's hut
When I am loosed from thrall.

It's woe to bend the stubborn back
Above the grinching quern,
It's woe to hear the leg-bar clack
And jingle when I turn!

But for the sorrow and the shame,
The brand on me and mine,
I'll pay you back in leaping flame
And loss of the butchered kine.

For every cow I spared before
In charity set free,
If I may reach my hold once more
I'll reive an honest three.

For every time I raised the low
That scared the dusty plain,
By sword and cord, by torch and tow
I'll light the land with twain!

Ride hard, ride hard to Abazai,
Young Sahib with the yellow hair--
Lie close, lie close as khuttucks lie,
Fat herds below Bonair!

The one I'll shoot at twilight-tide,
At dawn I'll drive the other;
The black shall mourn for hoof and hide,
The white man for his brother.

'Tis war, red war, I'll give you then,
War till my sinews fail;
For the wrong you have done to a chief of men,
And a thief of the Zukka Kheyl.

And if I fall to your hand afresh
I give you leave for the sin,
That you cram my throat with the foul pig's flesh,
And swing me in the skin!

THE RHYME OF THE THREE CAPTAINS

This ballad appears to refer to one of the exploits of the notorious Paul Jones, the American pirate. It is founded on fact.

... At the close of a winter day,
Their anchors down, by London town, the Three Great Captains lay;
And one was Admiral of the North from Solway Firth to Skye,
And one was Lord of the Wessex coast and all the lands thereby,
And one was Master of the Thames from Limehouse to Blackwall,
And he was Captain of the Fleet--the bravest of them all.

Their good guns guarded their great gray sides that were thirty foot in the
sheer,
When there came a certain trading-brig with news of a privateer.

Her rigging was rough with the clotted drift that drives in a Northern
breeze,
Her sides were clogged with the lazy weed that spawns in the Eastern seas.

Light she rode in the rude tide-rip, to left and right she rolled,
And the skipper sat on the scuttle-butt and stared at an empty hold.

"I ha' paid Port dues for your Law," quoth he, "and where is the Law ye
boast

If I sail unscathed from a heathen port to be robbed on a Christian coast?

Ye have smoked the hives of the Laccadives as we burn the lice in a bunk,
We tack not now to a Gallang prow or a plunging Pei-ho junk;
I had no fear but the seas were clear as far as a sail might fare
Till I met with a lime-washed Yankee brig that rode off Finisterre.

"There were canvas blinds to his bow-gun ports to screen the weight he bore,

And the signals ran for a merchantman from Sandy Hook to the Nore.

"He would not fly the Rovers' flag--the bloody or the black,

But now he floated the Gridiron and now he flaunted the Jack.

He spoke of the Law as he crimped my crew--he swore it was only a loan;

But when I would ask for my own again, he swore it was none of my own.

"He has taken my little parrakeets that nest beneath the Line,

He has stripped my rails of the shaddock-frails and the green unripened pine;

He has taken my bale of dammer and spice I won beyond the seas,

He has taken my grinning heathen gods--and what should he want o' these?

My foremast would not mend his boom, my deckhouse patch his boats;

He has whittled the two, this Yank Yahoo, to peddle for shoe-peg oats.

"I could not fight for the failing light and a rough beam-sea beside,

But I hulled him once for a clumsy crimp and twice because he lied.

"Had I had guns (as I had goods) to work my Christian harm,

I had run him up from his quarter-deck to trade with his own yard-arm;
I had nailed his ears to my capstan-head, and ripped them off with a saw,
And soused them in the bilgewater, and served them to him raw;
I had flung him blind in a rudderless boat to rot in the rocking dark,
I had towed him aft of his own craft, a bait for his brother shark;
I had lapped him round with cocoa husk, and drenched him with the oil,
And lashed him fast to his own mast to blaze above my spoil;
I had stripped his hide for my hammock-side, and tasselled his beard i' the
mesh,
And spitted his crew on the live bamboo that grows through the gangrened
flesh;
I had hove him down by the mangroves brown, where the mud-reef sucks
and
draws,
Moored by the heel to his own keel to wait for the land-crab's claws!
He is lazar within and lime without, ye can nose him far enow,
For he carries the taint of a musky ship--the reek of the slaver's dhow!"
The skipper looked at the tiering guns and the bulwarks tall and cold,
And the Captains Three full courteously peered down at the gutted hold,
And the Captains Three called courteously from deck to scuttle-butt:--
"Good Sir, we ha' dealt with that merchantman or ever your teeth were cut.

"Your words be words of a lawless race, and the Law it standeth thus:
He comes of a race that have never a Law, and he never has boarded us.

"We ha' sold him canvas and rope and spar--we know that his price is fair,

And we know that he weeps for the lack of a Law as he rides off Finisterre.

"And since he is damned for a gallows-thief by you and better than you,
We hold it meet that the English fleet should know that we hold him true."

The skipper called to the tall taffrail:--"And what is that to me?

Did ever you hear of a Yankee brig that rifled a Seventy-three?

Do I loom so large from your quarter-deck that I lift like a ship o'
the Line?

He has learned to run from a shotted gun and harry such craft as mine.

"There is never a Law on the Cocos Keys to hold a white man in,
But we do not steal the niggers' meal, for that is a nigger's sin.

"Must he have his Law as a quid to chew, or laid in brass on his wheel?

Does he steal with tears when he buccaneers? 'Fore Gad, then, why does
he

steal?"

The skipper bit on a deep-sea word, and the word it was not sweet,

For he could see the Captains Three had signalled to the Fleet.

But three and two, in white and blue, the whimpering flags began:--

"We have heard a tale of a--foreign sail, but he is a merchantman."

The skipper peered beneath his palm and swore by the Great Horn Spoon:--

-

"'Fore Gad, the Chaplain of the Fleet would bless my picaroon!"

By two and three the flags blew free to lash the laughing air:--

"We have sold our spars to the merchantman--we know that his price is fair."

The skipper winked his Western eye, and swore by a China storm:--

"They ha' rigged him a Joseph's jury-coat to keep his honour warm."

The halliards twanged against the tops, the bunting bellied broad,

The skipper spat in the empty hold and mourned for a wasted cord.

Masthead--masthead, the signal sped by the line o' the British craft;

The skipper called to his Lascar crew, and put her about and laughed:--

"It's mainsail haul, my bully boys all--we'll out to the seas again--

Ere they set us to paint their pirate saint, or scrub at his grapnel-chain.

"It's fore-sheet free, with her head to the sea, and the swing of the unbought brine--

We'll make no sport in an English court till we come as a ship o' the Line:

Till we come as a ship o' the Line, my lads, of thirty foot in the sheer,

Lifting again from the outer main with news of a privateer;

Flying his pluck at our mizzen-truck for weft of Admiralty,

Heaving his head for our dipsey-lead in sign that we keep the sea.

"Then fore-sheet home as she lifts to the foam--we stand on the outward tack,

We are paid in the coin of the white man's trade--the bezant is hard, ay, and black.

"The frigate-bird shall carry my word to the Kling and the Orang-Laut

How a man may sail from a heathen coast to be robbed in a Christian port;
How a man may be robbed in Christian port while Three Great Captains
there
Shall dip their flag to a slaver's rag--to show that his trade is fair!"

THE BALLAD OF THE CLAMPHERDOWN

It was our war-ship Clampherdown
Would sweep the Channel clean,
Wherefore she kept her hatches close
When the merry Channel chops arose,
To save the bleached marine.

She had one bow-gun of a hundred ton,
And a great stern-gun beside;
They dipped their noses deep in the sea,
They racked their stays and stanchions free
In the wash of the wind-whipped tide.

It was our war-ship Clampherdown,
Fell in with a cruiser light
That carried the dainty Hotchkiss gun
And a pair o' heels wherewith to run

From the grip of a close-fought fight.

She opened fire at seven miles--
As ye shoot at a bobbing cork--
And once she fired and twice she fired,
Till the bow-gun drooped like a lily tired
That lolls upon the stalk.

"Captain, the bow-gun melts apace,
The deck-beams break below,
'Twere well to rest for an hour or twain,
And patch the shattered plates again."
And he answered, "Make it so."

She opened fire within the mile--
As ye shoot at the flying duck--
And the great stern-gun shot fair and true,
With the heave of the ship, to the stainless blue,
And the great stern-turret stuck.

"Captain, the turret fills with steam,
The feed-pipes burst below--
You can hear the hiss of the helpless ram,
You can hear the twisted runners jam."
And he answered, "Turn and go!"

It was our war-ship Clampherdown,
And grimly did she roll;
Swung round to take the cruiser's fire
As the White Whale faces the Thresher's ire
When they war by the frozen Pole.

"Captain, the shells are falling fast,
And faster still fall we;
And it is not meet for English stock
To bide in the heart of an eight-day clock
The death they cannot see."

"Lie down, lie down, my bold A.B.,
We drift upon her beam;
We dare not ram, for she can run;
And dare ye fire another gun,
And die in the peeling steam?"

It was our war-ship Clampherdown
That carried an armour-belt;
But fifty feet at stern and bow
Lay bare as the paunch of the purser's sow,
To the hail of the Nordenfeldt.

"Captain, they hack us through and through;
The chilled steel bolts are swift!

We have emptied the bunkers in open sea,
Their shrapnel bursts where our coal should be."
And he answered, "Let her drift."

It was our war-ship Clampherdown,
Swung round upon the tide,
Her two dumb guns glared south and north,
And the blood and the bubbling steam ran forth,
And she ground the cruiser's side.

"Captain, they cry, the fight is done,
They bid you send your sword."
And he answered, "Grapple her stern and bow.
They have asked for the steel. They shall have it now;
Out cutlasses and board!"

It was our war-ship Clampherdown
Spewed up four hundred men;
And the scalded stokers yelped delight,
As they rolled in the waist and heard the fight
Stamp o'er their steel-walled pen.

They cleared the cruiser end to end,
From conning-tower to hold.
They fought as they fought in Nelson's fleet;
They were stripped to the waist, they were bare to the feet,

As it was in the days of old.

It was the sinking Clampherdown
Heaved up her battered side--
And carried a million pounds in steel,
To the cod and the corpse-fed conger-eel,
And the scour of the Channel tide.

It was the crew of the Clampherdown
Stood out to sweep the sea,
On a cruiser won from an ancient foe,
As it was in the days of long ago,
And as it still shall be.

THE BALLAD OF THE "BOLIVAR"

Seven men from all the world, back to Docks again,
Rolling down the Ratcliffe Road drunk and raising Cain:
Give the girls another drink 'fore we sign away--
We that took the Bolivar out across the Bay!

We put out from Sunderland loaded down with rails;
We put back to Sunderland 'cause our cargo shifted;

We put out from Sunderland--met the winter gales--
Seven days and seven nights to the Start we drifted.

Racketing her rivets loose, smoke-stack white as snow,
All the coals adrift adeck, half the rails below,
Leaking like a lobster-pot, steering like a dray--
Out we took the Bolivar, out across the Bay!

One by one the Lights came up, winked and let us by;
Mile by mile we waddled on, coal and fo'c'sle short;
Met a blow that laid us down, heard a bulkhead fly;
Left the Wolf behind us with a two-foot list to port.

Trailing like a wounded duck, working out her soul;
Clanging like a smithy-shop after every roll;
Just a funnel and a mast lurching through the spray--
So we threshed the Bolivar out across the Bay!

'Felt her hog and felt her sag, betted when she'd break;
Wondered every time she raced if she'd stand the shock;
Heard the seas like drunken men pounding at her strake;
Hoped the Lord 'ud keep his thumb on the plumber-block.

Banged against the iron decks, bilges choked with coal;
Flayed and frozen foot and hand, sick of heart and soul;
Last we prayed she'd buck herself into judgment Day--

Hi! we cursed the Bolivar--knocking round the Bay!

O her nose flung up to sky, groaning to be still--
Up and down and back we went, never time for breath;
Then the money paid at Lloyd's caught her by the heel,
And the stars ran round and round dancin' at our death.

Aching for an hour's sleep, dozing off between;
'Heard the rotten rivets draw when she took it green;
'Watched the compass chase its tail like a cat at play--
That was on the Bolivar, south across the Bay.

Once we saw between the squalls, lyin' head to swell--
Mad with work and weariness, wishin' they was we--
Some damned Liner's lights go by like a long hotel;
Cheered her from the Bolivar--swampin' in the sea.

Then a grayback cleared us out, then the skipper laughed;
"Boys, the wheel has gone to Hell--rig the winches aft!
Yoke the kicking rudder-head--get her under way!"
So we steered her, pulley-haul, out across the Bay!

Just a pack o' rotten plates puttied up with tar,
In we came, an' time enough, 'cross Bilbao Bar.

Overloaded, undermanned, meant to founder, we
Euchred God Almighty's storm, bluffed the Eternal Sea!

Seven men from all the world, back to town again,
Rollin' down the Ratcliffe Road drunk and raising Cain:
Seven men from out of Hell. Ain't the owners gay,
'Cause we took the "Bolivar" safe across the Bay?

THE ENGLISH FLAG

Above the portico a flag-staff, bearing the Union Jack,
remained fluttering in the flames for some time, but ultimately
when it fell the crowds rent the air with shouts,
and seemed to see significance in the incident.--DAILY PAPERS.

Winds of the World, give answer! They are whimpering to and fro--
And what should they know of England who only England know?--
The poor little street-bred people that vapour and fume and brag,
They are lifting their heads in the stillness to yelp at the English Flag!

Must we borrow a clout from the Boer--to plaster anew with dirt?
An Irish liar's bandage, or an English coward's shirt?

We may not speak of England; her Flag's to sell or share.

What is the Flag of England? Winds of the World, declare!

The North Wind blew:--"From Bergen my steel-shod vanguards go;

I chase your lazy whalers home from the Disko floe;

By the great North Lights above me I work the will of God,

And the liner splits on the ice-field or the Dogger fills with cod.

"I barred my gates with iron, I shuttered my doors with flame,

Because to force my ramparts your nutshell navies came;

I took the sun from their presence, I cut them down with my blast,

And they died, but the Flag of England blew free ere the spirit passed.

"The lean white bear hath seen it in the long, long Arctic night,

The musk-ox knows the standard that flouts the Northern Light:

What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my bergs to dare,

Ye have but my drifts to conquer. Go forth, for it is there!"

The South Wind sighed:--"From the Virgins my mid-sea course was ta'en

Over a thousand islands lost in an idle main,

Where the sea-egg flames on the coral and the long-backed breakers croon

Their endless ocean legends to the lazy, locked lagoon.

"Strayed amid lonely islets, mazed amid outer keys,

I waked the palms to laughter--I tossed the scud in the breeze--

Never was isle so little, never was sea so lone,
But over the scud and the palm-trees an English flag was flown.

"I have wrenched it free from the halliard to hang for a wisp on the Horn;
I have chased it north to the Lizard--ribboned and rolled and torn;
I have spread its fold o'er the dying, adrift in a hopeless sea;
I have hurled it swift on the slaver, and seen the slave set free.

"My basking sunfish know it, and wheeling albatross,
Where the lone wave fills with fire beneath the Southern Cross.
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my reefs to dare,
Ye have but my seas to furrow. Go forth, for it is there!"

The East Wind roared:--"From the Kuriles, the Bitter Seas, I come,
And me men call the Home-Wind, for I bring the English home.
Look--look well to your shipping! By the breath of my mad typhoon
I swept your close-packed Praya and beached your best at Kowloon!

"The reeling junks behind me and the racing seas before,
I raped your richest roadstead--I plundered Singapore!
I set my hand on the Hoogli; as a hooded snake she rose,
And I flung your stoutest steamers to roost with the startled crows.

"Never the lotus closes, never the wild-fowl wake,
But a soul goes out on the East Wind that died for England's sake--
Man or woman or suckling, mother or bride or maid--

Because on the bones of the English the English Flag is stayed.

"The desert-dust hath dimmed it, the flying wild-ass knows,
The scared white leopard winds it across the taintless snows.
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my sun to dare,
Ye have but my sands to travel. Go forth, for it is there!"

The West Wind called:--"In squadrons the thoughtless galleons fly
That bear the wheat and cattle lest street-bred people die.
They make my might their porter, they make my house their path,
Till I loose my neck from their rudder and whelm them all in my wrath.

"I draw the gliding fog-bank as a snake is drawn from the hole,
They bellow one to the other, the frightened ship-bells toll,
For day is a drifting terror till I raise the shroud with my breath,
And they see strange bows above them and the two go locked to death.

"But whether in calm or wrack-wreath, whether by dark or day,
I heave them whole to the conger or rip their plates away,
First of the scattered legions, under a shrieking sky,
Dipping between the rollers, the English Flag goes by.

"The dead dumb fog hath wrapped it--the frozen dews have kissed--
The naked stars have seen it, a fellow-star in the mist.
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my breath to dare,
Ye have but my waves to conquer. Go forth, for it is there!"

"CLEARED"

(In Memory of a Commission)

Help for a patriot distressed, a spotless spirit hurt,
Help for an honorable clan sore trampled in the dirt!
From Queenstown Bay to Donegal, O listen to my song,
The honorable gentlemen have suffered grievous wrong.

Their noble names were mentioned--O the burning black disgrace!--
By a brutal Saxon paper in an Irish shooting-case;
They sat upon it for a year, then steeled their heart to brave it,
And "coruscating innocence" the learned Judges gave it.

Bear witness, Heaven, of that grim crime beneath the surgeon's knife,
The honorable gentlemen deplored the loss of life;
Bear witness of those chanting choirs that burk and shirk and snigger,
No man laid hand upon the knife or finger to the trigger!

Cleared in the face of all mankind beneath the winking skies,
Like phoenixes from Phoenix Park (and what lay there) they rise!
Go shout it to the emerald seas-give word to Erin now,

Her honorable gentlemen are cleared--and this is how:

They only paid the Moonlighter his cattle-hocking price,
They only helped the murderer with council's best advice,
But--sure it keeps their honor white--the learned Court believes
They never gave a piece of plate to murderers and thieves.

They ever told the ramping crowd to card a woman's hide,
They never marked a man for death--what fault of theirs he died?--
They only said "intimidate," and talked and went away--
By God, the boys that did the work were braver men than they!

Their sin it was that fed the fire--small blame to them that heard
The "bhoys" get drunk on rhetoric, and madden at the word--
They knew whom they were talking at, if they were Irish too,
The gentlemen that lied in Court, they knew and well they knew.

They only took the Judas-gold from Fenians out of jail,
They only fawned for dollars on the blood-dyed Clan-na-Gael.
If black is black or white is white, ill black and white it's down,
They're only traitors to the Queen and rebels to the Crown.

"Cleared," honorable gentlemen. Be thankful it's no more:
The widow's curse is on your house, the dead are at your door.
On you the shame of open shame, on you from North to South
The band of every honest man flat-heeled across your mouth.

"Less black than we were painted"--Faith, no word of black was said;
The lightest touch was human blood, and that, ye know, runs red.
It's sticking to your fist today for all your sneer and scoff,
And by the Judge's well-weighed word you cannot wipe it off.

Hold up those hands of innocence--go, scare your sheep, together,
The blundering, tripping tups that bleat behind the old bell-wether;
And if they snuff the taint and break to find another pen,
Tell them it's tar that glistens so, and daub them yours again!

"The charge is old"--As old as Cain--as fresh as yesterday;
Old as the Ten Commandments, have ye talked those laws away?
If words are words, or death is death, or powder sends the ball,
You spoke the words that sped the shot--the curse be on you all.

"Our friends believe"? Of course they do--as sheltered women may;
But have they seen the shrieking soul ripped from the quivering clay?
They--If their own front door is shut, they'll swear the whole world's warm;
What do they know of dread of death or hanging fear of harm?

The secret half a country keeps, the whisper in the lane,
The shriek that tells the shot went home behind the broken pane,
The dry blood crisping in the sun that scares the honest bees,
And shows the "bhoys" have heard your talk--what do they know of these?

But you--you know--ay, ten times more; the secrets of the dead,
Black terror on the country-side by word and whisper bred,
The mangled stallion's scream at night, the tail-cropped heifer's low.
Who set the whisper going first? You know, and well you know!

My soul! I'd sooner lie in jail for murder plain and straight,
Pure crime I'd done with my own hand for money, lust, or hate,
Than take a seat in Parliament by fellow-felons cheered,
While one of those "not provens" proved me cleared as you are cleared.

Cleared--you that "lost" the League accounts--go, guard our honor still,
Go, help to make our country's laws that broke God's laws at will--
One hand stuck out behind the back, to signal "strike again";
The other on your dress-shirt front to show your heart is @dane,

If black is black or white is white, in black and white it's down,
You're only traitors to the Queen and but rebels to the Crown
If print is print or words are words, the learned Court perpend:
We are not ruled by murderers, only--by their friends.

AN IMPERIAL RESCRIPT

Now this is the tale of the Council the German Kaiser decreed,
To ease the strong of their burden, to help the weak in their need,
He sent a word to the peoples, who struggle, and pant, and sweat,
That the straw might be counted fairly and the tally of bricks be set.

The Lords of Their Hands assembled; from the East and the West they
drew--

Baltimore, Lille, and Essen, Brummagem, Clyde, and Crewe.

And some were black from the furnace, and some were brown from the soil,
And some were blue from the dye-vat; but all were wearied of toil.

And the young King said:--"I have found it, the road to the rest ye seek:
The strong shall wait for the weary, the hale shall halt for the weak;
With the even tramp of an army where no man breaks from the line,
Ye shall march to peace and plenty in the bond of brotherhood--sign!"

The paper lay on the table, the strong heads bowed thereby,
And a wail went up from the peoples:--"Ay, sign--give rest, for we die!"
A hand was stretched to the goose-quill, a fist was cramped to scrawl,
When--the laugh of a blue-eyed maiden ran clear through the council-hall.

And each one heard Her laughing as each one saw Her plain--
Saidie, Mimi, or Olga, Gretchen, or Mary Jane.

And the Spirit of Man that is in Him to the light of the vision woke;

And the men drew back from the paper, as a Yankee delegate spoke:--

"There's a girl in Jersey City who works on the telephone;
We're going to hitch our horses and dig for a house of our own,
With gas and water connections, and steam-heat through to the top;
And, W. Hohenzollern, I guess I shall work till I drop."

And an English delegate thundered:--"The weak an' the lame be blowed!
I've a berth in the Sou'-West workshops, a home in the Wandsworth Road;
And till the 'sociation has footed my buryin' bill,
I work for the kids an' the missus. Pull up? I be damned if I will!"

And over the German benches the bearded whisper ran:--
"Lager, der girls und der dollars, dey makes or dey breaks a man.
If Schmitt haf collared der dollars, he collars der girl deremit;
But if Schmitt bust in der pizness, we collars der girl from Schmitt."

They passed one resolution:--"Your sub-committee believe
You can lighten the curse of Adam when you've lightened the curse of Eve.
But till we are built like angels, with hammer and chisel and pen,
We will work for ourself and a woman, for ever and ever, amen."

Now this is the tale of the Council the German Kaiser held--
The day that they razored the Grindstone, the day that the Cat was belled,
The day of the Figs from Thistles, the day of the Twisted Sands,
The day that the laugh of a maiden made light of the Lords of Their Hands.

TOMLINSON

Now Tomlinson gave up the ghost in his house in Berkeley Square,
And a Spirit came to his bedside and gripped him by the hair--
A Spirit gripped him by the hair and carried him far away,
Till he heard as the roar of a rain-fed ford the roar of the Milky Way:
Till he heard the roar of the Milky Way die down and drone and cease,
And they came to the Gate within the Wall where Peter holds the keys.

"Stand up, stand up now, Tomlinson, and answer loud and high
The good that ye did for the sake of men or ever ye came to die--
The good that ye did for the sake of men in little earth so lone!"
And the naked soul of Tomlinson grew white as a rain-washed bone.

"O I have a friend on earth," he said, "that was my priest and guide,
And well would he answer all for me if he were by my side."
--"For that ye strove in neighbour-love it shall be written fair,
But now ye wait at Heaven's Gate and not in Berkeley Square:
Though we called your friend from his bed this night, he could not speak
for you,
For the race is run by one and one and never by two and two."
Then Tomlinson looked up and down, and little gain was there,

For the naked stars grinned overhead, and he saw that his soul was bare:
The Wind that blows between the worlds, it cut him like a knife,
And Tomlinson took up his tale and spoke of his good in life.

"This I have read in a book," he said, "and that was told to me,
And this I have thought that another man thought of a Prince in Muscovy."
The good souls flocked like homing doves and bade him clear the path,
And Peter twirled the jangling keys in weariness and wrath.

"Ye have read, ye have heard, ye have thought," he said, "and the tale is
yet to run:

By the worth of the body that once ye had, give answer--what ha'ye done?"
Then Tomlinson looked back and forth, and little good it bore,
For the Darkness stayed at his shoulder-blade and Heaven's Gate before:--
"O this I have felt, and this I have guessed, and this I have heard men say,
And this they wrote that another man wrote of a carl in Norroway."

--"Ye have read, ye have felt, ye have guessed, good lack! Ye have hampered
Heaven's Gate;

There's little room between the stars in idleness to prate!

O none may reach by hired speech of neighbour, priest, and kin

Through borrowed deed to God's good meed that lies so fair within;

Get hence, get hence to the Lord of Wrong, for doom has yet to run,

And...the faith that ye share with Berkeley Square uphold you, Tomlinson!"

* * * * *

The Spirit gripped him by the hair, and sun by sun they fell
Till they came to the belt of Naughty Stars that rim the mouth of Hell:
The first are red with pride and wrath, the next are white with pain,
But the third are black with clinkered sin that cannot burn again:
They may hold their path, they may leave their path, with never a soul to
mark,
They may burn or freeze, but they must not cease in the Scorn of the Outer
Dark.

The Wind that blows between the worlds, it nipped him to the bone,
And he yearned to the flare of Hell-Gate there as the light of his own
hearth-stone.

The Devil he sat behind the bars, where the desperate legions drew,
But he caught the hasting Tomlinson and would not let him through.

"Wot ye the price of good pit-coal that I must pay?" said he,
"That ye rank yoursel' so fit for Hell and ask no leave of me?
I am all o'er-sib to Adam's breed that ye should give me scorn,
For I strove with God for your First Father the day that he was born.

"Sit down, sit down upon the slag, and answer loud and high
The harm that ye did to the Sons of Men or ever you came to die."
And Tomlinson looked up and up, and saw against the night
The belly of a tortured star blood-red in Hell-Mouth light;
And Tomlinson looked down and down, and saw beneath his feet

The frontlet of a tortured star milk-white in Hell-Mouth heat.

"O I had a love on earth," said he, "that kissed me to my fall,
And if ye would call my love to me I know she would answer all."

--"All that ye did in love forbid it shall be written fair,

But now ye wait at Hell-Mouth Gate and not in Berkeley Square:

Though we whistled your love from her bed tonight, I trow she would not
run,

For the sin ye do by two and two ye must pay for one by one!"

The Wind that blows between the worlds, it cut him like a knife,

And Tomlinson took up the tale and spoke of his sin in life:--

"Once I ha' laughed at the power of Love and twice at the grip of the Grave,
And thrice I ha' patted my God on the head that men might call me brave."

The Devil he blew on a brandered soul and set it aside to cool:--

"Do ye think I would waste my good pit-coal on the hide of a brain-sick
fool?"

I see no worth in the hobnailed mirth or the jolthead jest ye did

That I should waken my gentlemen that are sleeping three on a grid."

Then Tomlinson looked back and forth, and there was little grace,

For Hell-Gate filled the houseless Soul with the Fear of Naked Space.

"Nay, this I ha' heard," quo' Tomlinson, "and this was noised abroad,

And this I ha' got from a Belgian book on the word of a dead French lord."

--"Ye ha' heard, ye ha' read, ye ha' got, good lack! and the tale begins
afresh--

Have ye sinned one sin for the pride o' the eye or the sinful lust of the
flesh?"

Then Tomlinson he gripped the bars and yammered, "Let me in--
For I mind that I borrowed my neighbour's wife to sin the deadly sin."
The Devil he grinned behind the bars, and banked the fires high:
"Did ye read of that sin in a book?" said he; and Tomlinson said, "Ay!"
The Devil he blew upon his nails, and the little devils ran,
And he said: "Go husk this whimpering thief that comes in the guise of a
man:

Winnow him out 'twixt star and star, and sieve his proper worth:
There's sore decline in Adam's line if this be spawn of earth."

Empusa's crew, so naked-new they may not face the fire,
But weep that they bin too small to sin to the height of their desire,
Over the coal they chased the Soul, and racked it all abroad,
As children rifle a caddis-case or the raven's foolish hoard.

And back they came with the tattered Thing, as children after play,
And they said: "The soul that he got from God he has bartered clean away.

"We have threshed a stook of print and book, and winnowed a chattering
wind

And many a soul wherefrom he stole, but his we cannot find:

We have handled him, we have dandled him, we have seared him to the
bone,

And sure if tooth and nail show truth he has no soul of his own."

The Devil he bowed his head on his breast and rumbled deep and low:--

"I'm all o'er-sib to Adam's breed that I should bid him go.

"Yet close we lie, and deep we lie, and if I gave him place,
My gentlemen that are so proud would flout me to my face;
They'd call my house a common stews and me a careless host,
And--I would not anger my gentlemen for the sake of a shiftless ghost."
The Devil he looked at the mangled Soul that prayed to feel the flame,
And he thought of Holy Charity, but he thought of his own good name:--
"Now ye could haste my coal to waste, and sit ye down to fry:
Did ye think of that theft for yourself?" said he; and Tomlinson said, "Ay!"
The Devil he blew an outward breath, for his heart was free from care:--
"Ye have scarce the soul of a louse," he said, "but the roots of sin are
there,
And for that sin should ye come in were I the lord alone.
But sinful pride has rule inside--and mightier than my own.

"Honour and Wit, fore-damned they sit, to each his priest and whore:
Nay, scarce I dare myself go there, and you they'd torture sore.

"Ye are neither spirit nor spirk," he said;

"ye are neither book nor brute--

Go, get ye back to the flesh again for the sake of Man's repute.

"I'm all o'er-sib to Adam's breed that I should mock your pain,
But look that ye win to worthier sin ere ye come back again.
Get hence, the hearse is at your door--the grim black stallions wait--
They bear your clay to place today. Speed, lest ye come too late!
Go back to Earth with a lip unsealed--go back with an open eye,

And carry my word to the Sons of Men or ever ye come to die:
That the sin they do by two and two they must pay for one by one--
And...the God that you took from a printed book be with you, Tomlinson!"

* * * * *

BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS

Dedication

To T. A.

I have made for you a song,
And it may be right or wrong,
But only you can tell me if it's true;
I have tried for to explain
Both your pleasure and your pain,
And, Thomas, here's my best respects to you!

O there'll surely come a day
When they'll give you all your pay,
And treat you as a Christian ought to do;
So, until that day comes round,
Heaven keep you safe and sound,
And, Thomas, here's my best respects to you!

--R. K.

DANNY DEEVER

"What are the bugles blowin' for?" said Files-on-Parade.

"To turn you out, to turn you out", the Colour-Sergeant said.

"What makes you look so white, so white?" said Files-on-Parade.

"I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch", the Colour-Sergeant said.

For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you can hear the Dead March play,
The regiment's in 'ollow square--they're hangin' him today;
They've taken of his buttons off an' cut his stripes away,
An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

"What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard?" said Files-on-Parade.

"It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold", the Colour-Sergeant said.

"What makes that front-rank man fall down?" said Files-on-Parade.

"A touch o' sun, a touch o' sun", the Colour-Sergeant said.

They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are marchin' of 'im round,
They 'ave 'altd Danny Deever by 'is coffin on the ground;
An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneakin' shootin' hound--

O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'!

"'Is cot was right-'and cot to mine", said Files-on-Parade.

"'E's sleepin' out an' far tonight", the Colour-Sergeant said.

"I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times", said Files-on-Parade.

"'E's drinkin' bitter beer alone", the Colour-Sergeant said.

They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must mark 'im to 'is place,
For 'e shot a comrade sleepin'--you must look 'im in the face;
Nine 'undred of 'is county an' the regiment's disgrace,
While they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

"What's that so black agin' the sun?" said Files-on-Parade.

"It's Danny fightin' 'ard for life", the Colour-Sergeant said.

"What's that that whimpers over'ead?" said Files-on-Parade.

"It's Danny's soul that's passin' now", the Colour-Sergeant said.

For they're done with Danny Deever, you can 'ear the quickstep play,
The regiment's in column, an' they're marchin' us away;
Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they'll want their beer today,

After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

TOMMY

I went into a public-'ouse to get a pint o' beer,
The publican 'e up an' sez, "We serve no red-coats here."
The girls be'ind the bar they laughed an' giggled fit to die,
I outs into the street again an' to myself sez I:

O it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, go away";
But it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins", when the band begins to play,
The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to play,
O it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins", when the band begins to play.

I went into a theatre as sober as could be,
They gave a drunk civilian room, but 'adn't none for me;
They sent me to the gallery or round the music-'alls,
But when it comes to fightin', Lord! they'll shove me in the stalls!

For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, wait outside";
But it's "Special train for Atkins" when the trooper's on the tide,
The troopship's on the tide, my boys, the troopship's on the tide,
O it's "Special train for Atkins" when the trooper's on the tide.

Yes, makin' mock o' uniforms that guard you while you sleep
Is cheaper than them uniforms, an' they're starvation cheap;
An' hustlin' drunken soldiers when they're goin' large a bit
Is five times better business than paradin' in full kit.

Then it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, 'ow's yer soul?"

But it's "Thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll,
The drums begin to roll, my boys, the drums begin to roll,
O it's "Thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll.

We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too,
But single men in barricks, most remarkable like you;
An' if sometimes our conduct isn't all your fancy paints,
Why, single men in barricks don't grow into plaster saints;

While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that,

an' "Tommy, fall be'ind",

But it's "Please to walk in front, sir",

when there's trouble in the wind,

There's trouble in the wind, my boys,

there's trouble in the wind,

O it's "Please to walk in front, sir",

when there's trouble in the wind.

You talk o' better food for us, an' schools, an' fires, an' all:

We'll wait for extra rations if you treat us rational.

Don't mess about the cook-room slops, but prove it to our face

The Widow's Uniform is not the soldier-man's disgrace.

For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Chuck him out, the brute!"

But it's "Saviour of 'is country" when the guns begin to shoot;

An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything you please;

An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool--you bet that Tommy sees!

FUZZY-WUZZY

(Soudan Expeditionary Force)

We've fought with many men acrost the seas,
An' some of 'em was brave an' some was not:
The Paythan an' the Zulu an' Burmese;
But the Fuzzy was the finest o' the lot.

We never got a ha'porth's change of 'im:
'E squatted in the scrub an' 'ocked our 'orses,
'E cut our sentries up at Suakim,
An' 'e played the cat an' banjo with our forces.

So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
We gives you your certificate, an' if you want it signed
We'll come an' 'ave a romp with you whenever you're inclined.

We took our chanst among the Khyber 'ills,
The Boers knocked us silly at a mile,
The Burman give us Irriwaddy chills,
An' a Zulu impi dished us up in style:

But all we ever got from such as they
Was pop to what the Fuzzy made us swaller;
We 'eld our bloomin' own, the papers say,
But man for man the Fuzzy knocked us 'oller.

Then 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' the missis and the kid;
Our orders was to break you, an' of course we went an' did.
We slosed you with Martinis, an' it wasn't 'ardly fair;
But for all the odds agin' you, Fuzzy-Wuz, you broke the square.

'E 'asn't got no papers of 'is own,
'E 'asn't got no medals nor rewards,
So we must certify the skill 'e's shown
In usin' of 'is long two-'anded swords:
When 'e's 'oppin' in an' out among the bush
With 'is coffin-'eaded shield an' shovel-spear,
An 'appy day with Fuzzy on the rush
Will last an 'ealthy Tommy for a year.

So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' your friends which are no more,
If we 'adn't lost some messmates we would 'elp you to deplore;
But give an' take's the gospel, an' we'll call the bargain fair,
For if you 'ave lost more than us, you crumpled up the square!

'E rushes at the smoke when we let drive,
An', before we know, 'e's 'ackin' at our 'ead;

'E's all 'ot sand an' ginger when alive,
An' 'e's generally shammin' when 'e's dead.

'E's a daisy, 'e's a ducky, 'e's a lamb!
'E's a injia-rubber idiot on the spree,
'E's the on'y thing that doesn't give a damn
For a Regiment o' British Infantee!

So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
An' 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead of 'air--
You big black boundin' beggar--for you broke a British square!

SOLDIER, SOLDIER

"Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
Why don't you march with my true love?"
"We're fresh from off the ship an' 'e's maybe give the slip,
An' you'd best go look for a new love."
New love! True love!
Best go look for a new love,
The dead they cannot rise, an' you'd better dry your eyes,
An' you'd best go look for a new love.

"Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
What did you see o' my true love?"
"I seed 'im serve the Queen in a suit o' rifle-green,
An' you'd best go look for a new love."

"Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
Did ye see no more o' my true love?"
"I seed 'im runnin' by when the shots begun to fly--
But you'd best go look for a new love."

"Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
Did aught take 'arm to my true love?"
"I couldn't see the fight, for the smoke it lay so white--
An' you'd best go look for a new love."

"Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
I'll up an' tend to my true love!"
"E's lying on the dead with a bullet through 'is 'ead,
An' you'd best go look for a new love."

"Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
I'll down an' die with my true love!"
"The pit we dug'll 'ide 'im an' the twenty men beside 'im--
An' you'd best go look for a new love."

"Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
Do you bring no sign from my true love?"
"I bring a lock of 'air that 'e allus used to wear,
An' you'd best go look for a new love."

"Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
O then I know it's true I've lost my true love!"
"An' I tell you truth again--when you've lost the feel o' pain
You'd best take me for your true love."

True love! New love!

Best take 'im for a new love,

The dead they cannot rise, an' you'd better dry your eyes,

An' you'd best take 'im for your true love.

SCREW-GUNS

Smokin' my pipe on the mountings,
 sniffin' the mornin' cool,
I walks in my old brown gaiters
 along o' my old brown mule,
With seventy gunners be'ind me,
 an' never a beggar forgets
It's only the pick of the Army
 that handles the dear little pets--'Tss! 'Tss!
For you all love the screw-guns--the screw-guns they all love you!
So when we call round with a few guns,
 o' course you will know what to do--hoo! hoo!
Jest send in your Chief an' surrender--
 it's worse if you fights or you runs:
You can go where you please, you can skid up the trees,
 but you don't get away from the guns!

They sends us along where the roads are,
 but mostly we goes where they ain't:
We'd climb up the side of a sign-board
 an' trust to the stick o' the paint:
We've chivied the Naga an' Looshai,
 we've give the Afreedeman fits,
For we fancies ourselves at two thousand,

we guns that are built in two bits--'Tss! 'Tss!

For you all love the screw-guns...

If a man doesn't work, why, we drills 'im

an' teaches 'im 'ow to behave;

If a beggar can't march, why, we kills 'im

an' rattles 'im into 'is grave.

You've got to stand up to our business

an' spring without snatchin' or fuss.

D'you say that you sweat with the field-guns?

By God, you must lather with us--'Tss! 'Tss!

For you all love the screw-guns...

The eagles is screamin' around us,

the river's a-moanin' below,

We're clear o' the pine an' the oak-scrub,

we're out on the rocks an' the snow,

An' the wind is as thin as a whip-lash

what carries away to the plains

The rattle an' stamp o' the lead-mules--

the jinglety-jink o' the chains--'Tss! 'Tss!

For you all love the screw-guns...

There's a wheel on the Horns o' the Mornin',

an' a wheel on the edge o' the Pit,

An' a drop into nothin' beneath you as straight as a beggar can spit:

With the sweat runnin' out o' your shirt-sleeves,
an' the sun off the snow in your face,
An' 'arf o' the men on the drag-ropes
to hold the old gun in 'er place--'Tss! 'Tss!
For you all love the screw-guns...

Smokin' my pipe on the mountings,
sniffin' the mornin' cool,
I climbs in my old brown gaiters
along o' my old brown mule.
The monkey can say what our road was--
the wild-goat 'e knows where we passed.

Stand easy, you long-eared old darlin's!
Out drag-ropes! With shrapnel! Hold fast--'Tss! 'Tss!

For you all love the screw-guns--the screw-guns they all love
you!

So when we take tea with a few guns,
o' course you will know what to do--hoo! hoo!

Jest send in your Chief an' surrender--
it's worse if you fights or you runs:
You may hide in the caves, they'll be only your graves,
but you can't get away from the guns!

GUNGA DIN

You may talk o' gin and beer
When you're quartered safe out 'ere,
An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot it;
But when it comes to slaughter
You will do your work on water,
An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.

Now in Injia's sunny clime,
Where I used to spend my time
A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,
Of all them blackfaced crew
The finest man I knew
Was our regimental bhisti, Gunga Din.

He was "Din! Din! Din!
You limpin' lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!
Hi! slippy hitherao!
Water, get it! Panee lao!
You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din."

The uniform 'e wore
Was nothin' much before,

An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,
For a piece o' twisty rag
An' a goatskin water-bag
Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.

When the sweatin' troop-train lay
In a sidin' through the day,
Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows crawl,
We shouted "Harry By!" 2
Till our throats were bricky-dry,
Then we wopped 'im 'cause 'e couldn't serve us all.

It was "Din! Din! Din!
You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?
You put some juldee 3 in it
Or I'll marrow 4 you this minute
If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!"

'E would dot an' carry one
Till the longest day was done;
An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.

If we charged or broke or cut,
You could bet your bloomin' nut,
'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.
With 'is mussick 5 on 'is back,

'E would skip with our attack,
An' watch us till the bugles made "Retire",
An' for all 'is dirty 'ide
'E was white, clear white, inside
When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!
 It was "Din! Din! Din!"
With the bullets kickin' dust-spots on the green.

 When the cartridges ran out,
 You could hear the front-files shout,
 "Hi! ammunition-mules an' Gunga Din!"

I shan't forgit the night
When I dropped be'ind the fight
With a bullet where my belt-plate should 'a' been.
I was chokin' mad with thirst,
An' the man that spied me first
Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.
'E lifted up my 'ead,
An' he plugged me where I bled,
An' 'e guv me 'arf-a-pint o' water-green:
It was crawlin' and it stunk,
But of all the drinks I've drunk,
I'm gratefulest to one from Gunga Din.

 It was "Din! Din! Din!"

'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;
'E's chawin' up the ground,
An' 'e's kickin' all around:
For Gawd's sake git the water, Gunga Din!"

'E carried me away
To where a dooli lay,
An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar clean.
'E put me safe inside,
An' just before 'e died,
"I 'ope you liked your drink", sez Gunga Din.
So I'll meet 'im later on
At the place where 'e is gone--
Where it's always double drill and no canteen;
'E'll be squattin' on the coals
Givin' drink to poor damned souls,
An' I'll get a swig in hell from Gunga Din!
Yes, Din! Din! Din!
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
Though I've belted you and flayed you,
By the livin' Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

1 Bring water swiftly.

2 Mr Atkins' equivalent for "O Brother."

3 Hit you.

4 Be quick.

5 Water skin.

OONTS

(Northern India Transport Train)

Wot makes the soldier's 'eart to @penk, wot makes 'im to perspire?

It isn't standin' up to charge nor lyin' down to fire;

But it's everlastin' waitin' on a everlastin' road

For the commissariat camel an' 'is commissariat load.

O the oont, 1 O the oont, O the commissariat oont!

With 'is silly neck a-bobbin' like a basket full o' snakes;

We packs 'im like an idol, an' you ought to 'ear 'im grunt,

An' when we gets 'im loaded up 'is blessed girth-rope breaks.

Wot makes the rear-guard swear so 'ard when night is drorin' in,

An' every native follower is shiverin' for 'is skin?

It ain't the chanst o' being rushed by Paythans from the 'ills,

It's the commissariat camel puttin' on 'is bloomin' frills!

O the oont, O the oont, O the hairy scary oont!

A-trippin' over tent-ropes when we've got the night alarm!

We socks 'im with a stretcher-pole an' 'eads 'im off in front,

An' when we've saved 'is bloomin' life 'e chaws our bloomin' arm.

The 'orse 'e knows above a bit, the bullock's but a fool,

The elephant's a gentleman, the battery-mule's a mule;

But the commissariat cam-u-el, when all is said an' done,

'E's a devil an' a ostrich an' a orphan-child in one.

O the oont, O the oont, O the Gawd-forsaken oont!
The lumpy-'umpy 'ummin'-bird a-singin' where 'e lies,
'E's blocked the whole division from the rear-guard to the front,
An' when we get him up again--the beggar goes an' dies!

'E'll gall an' chafe an' lame an' fight--'e smells most awful vile;
'E'll lose 'isself for ever if you let 'im stray a mile;
'E's game to graze the 'ole day long an' 'owl the 'ole night through,
An' when 'e comes to greasy ground 'e splits 'isself in two.

O the oont, O the oont, O the floppin', droppin' oont!
When 'is long legs give from under an' 'is meltin' eye is dim,
The tribes is up be'ind us, and the tribes is out in front--
It ain't no jam for Tommy, but it's kites an' crows for 'im.

So when the cruel march is done, an' when the roads is blind,
An' when we sees the camp in front an' 'ears the shots be'ind,
Ho! then we strips 'is saddle off, and all 'is woes is past:
'E thinks on us that used 'im so, and gets revenge at last.

O the oont, O the oont, O the floatin', bloatin' oont!
The late lamented camel in the water-cut 'e lies;
We keeps a mile be'ind 'im an' we keeps a mile in front,
But 'e gets into the drinkin'-casks, and then o' course we dies.

1Camel--oo is pronounced like u in "bull," but by Mr. Atkins to
rhyme with "front."

LOOT

If you've ever stole a pheasant-egg be'ind the keeper's back,
If you've ever snigged the washin' from the line,
If you've ever crammed a gander in your bloomin' 'aversack,
You will understand this little song o' mine.

But the service rules are 'ard, an' from such we are debarred,
For the same with English morals does not suit.

(Cornet: Toot! toot!)

W'y, they call a man a robber if 'e stuffs 'is marchin' clobber
With the--

(Chorus) Loo! loo! Lulu! lulu! Loo! loo! Loot! loot! loot!

Ow the loot!

Bloomin' loot!

That's the thing to make the boys git up an' shoot!

It's the same with dogs an' men,

If you'd make 'em come again

Clap 'em forward with a Loo! loo! Lulu! Loot!

(ff) Whoopee! Tear 'im, puppy! Loo! loo! Lulu! Loot! loot! loot!

If you've knocked a nigger edgeways when 'e's thrustin' for your life,

You must leave 'im very careful where 'e fell;
An' may thank your stars an' gaiters if you didn't feel 'is knife
That you ain't told off to bury 'im as well.

Then the sweatin' Tommies wonder as they spade the beggars under
Why lootin' should be entered as a crime;
So if my song you'll 'ear, I will learn you plain an' clear
'Ow to pay yourself for fightin' overtime.

(Chorus) With the loot,...

Now remember when you're 'acking round a gilded Burma god
That 'is eyes is very often precious stones;
An' if you treat a nigger to a dose o' cleanin'-rod
'E's like to show you everything 'e owns.

When 'e won't prodooce no more, pour some water on the floor
Where you 'ear it answer 'ollow to the boot
(Cornet: Toot! toot!)--

When the ground begins to sink, shove your baynick down the chink,
An' you're sure to touch the--

(Chorus) Loo! loo! Lulu! Loot! loot! loot!

Ow the loot!...

When from 'ouse to 'ouse you're 'unting, you must always work in pairs--
It 'alves the gain, but safer you will find--

For a single man gets bottled on them twisty-wisty stairs,
An' a woman comes and clobbs 'im from be'ind.

When you've turned 'em inside out, an' it seems beyond a doubt
As if there weren't enough to dust a flute

(Cornet: Toot! toot!)--

Before you sling your 'ook, at the 'ousetops take a look,
For it's underneath the tiles they 'ide the loot.

(Chorus) Ow the loot!...

You can mostly square a Sergint an' a Quartermaster too,
If you only take the proper way to go;
I could never keep my pickin's, but I've learned you all I knew--
An' don't you never say I told you so.

An' now I'll bid good-bye, for I'm gettin' rather dry,
An' I see another tunin' up to toot

(Cornet: Toot! toot!)--

So 'ere's good-luck to those that wears the Widow's clo'es,
An' the Devil send 'em all they want o' loot!

(Chorus) Yes, the loot,

Bloomin' loot!

In the tunic an' the mess-tin an' the boot!

It's the same with dogs an' men,

If you'd make 'em come again

(fff) Whoop 'em forward with a Loo! loo! Lulu! Loot! loot! loot!
Heeya! Sick 'im, puppy! Loo! loo! Lulu! Loot! loot! loot!

'SNARLEYOW'

This 'appened in a battle to a batt'ry of the corps
Which is first among the women an' amazin' first in war;
An' what the bloomin' battle was I don't remember now,
But Two's off-lead 'e answered to the name o' Snarleyow.

Down in the Infantry, nobody cares;
Down in the Cavalry, Colonel 'e swears;
But down in the lead with the wheel at the flog
Turns the bold Bombardier to a little whipped dog!

They was movin' into action, they was needed very sore,
To learn a little schoolin' to a native army corps,
They 'ad nipped against an uphill, they was tuckin' down the brow,
When a tricky, trundlin' roundshot give the knock to Snarleyow.

They cut 'im loose an' left 'im--'e was almost tore in two--
But he tried to follow after as a well-trained 'orse should do;
'E went an' fouled the limber, an' the Driver's Brother squeals:
"Pull up, pull up for Snarleyow--'is head's between 'is 'eels!"

The Driver 'umped 'is shoulder, for the wheels was goin' round,
An' there ain't no "Stop, conductor!" when a batt'ry's changin' ground;
Sez 'e: "I broke the beggar in, an' very sad I feels,
But I couldn't pull up, not for you--your 'ead between your 'eels!"

'E 'adn't 'ardly spoke the word, before a droppin' shell
A little right the batt'ry an' between the sections fell;
An' when the smoke 'ad cleared away, before the limber wheels,
There lay the Driver's Brother with 'is 'ead between 'is 'eels.

Then sez the Driver's Brother, an' 'is words was very plain,
"For Gawd's own sake get over me, an' put me out o' pain."
They saw 'is wounds was mortal, an' they judged that it was best,
So they took an' drove the limber straight across 'is back an' chest.

The Driver 'e give nothin' 'cept a little coughin' grunt,
But 'e swung 'is 'orses 'andsome when it came to "Action Front!"
An' if one wheel was juicy, you may lay your Monday head
'Twas juicier for the niggers when the case begun to spread.

The moril of this story, it is plainly to be seen:
You 'avn't got no families when servin' of the Queen--
You 'avn't got no brothers, fathers, sisters, wives, or sons--
If you want to win your battles take an' work your bloomin' guns!

Down in the Infantry, nobody cares;
Down in the Cavalry, Colonel 'e swears;
But down in the lead with the wheel at the flog
Turns the bold Bombardier to a little whipped dog!

THE WIDOW AT WINDSOR

'Ave you 'eard o' the Widow at Windsor
With a hairy gold crown on 'er 'ead?
She 'as ships on the foam--she 'as millions at 'ome,
An' she pays us poor beggars in red.

(Ow, poor beggars in red!)

There's 'er nick on the cavalry 'orses,
There's 'er mark on the medical stores--
An' 'er troopers you'll find with a fair wind be'ind
That takes us to various wars.

(Poor beggars!--barbarious wars!)

Then 'ere's to the Widow at Windsor,
An' 'ere's to the stores an' the guns,
The men an' the 'orses what makes up the forces
O' Missis Victorier's sons.

(Poor beggars! Victorier's sons!)

Walk wide o' the Widow at Windsor,
For 'alf o' Creation she owns:
We 'ave bought 'er the same with the sword an' the flame,
An' we've salted it down with our bones.

(Poor beggars!--it's blue with our bones!)

Hands off o' the sons o' the Widow,

Hands off o' the goods in 'er shop,

For the Kings must come down an' the Emperors frown

When the Widow at Windsor says "Stop"!

(Poor beggars!--we're sent to say "Stop"!)

Then 'ere's to the Lodge o' the Widow,

From the Pole to the Tropics it runs--

To the Lodge that we tile with the rank an' the file,

An' open in form with the guns.

(Poor beggars!--it's always they guns!)

We 'ave 'eard o' the Widow at Windsor,

It's safest to let 'er alone:

For 'er sentries we stand by the sea an' the land

Wherever the bugles are blown.

(Poor beggars!--an' don't we get blown!)

Take 'old o' the Wings o' the Mornin',

An' flop round the earth till you're dead;

But you won't get away from the tune that they play

To the bloomin' old rag over'ead.

(Poor beggars!--it's 'ot over'ead!)

Then 'ere's to the sons o' the Widow,

Wherever, 'owever they roam.

'Ere's all they desire, an' if they require

A speedy return to their 'ome.

(Poor beggars!--they'll never see 'ome!)

BELTS

There was a row in Silver Street that's near to Dublin Quay,
Between an Irish regiment an' English cavalree;
It started at Revelly an' it lasted on till dark:
The first man dropped at Harrison's, the last forninst the Park.

For it was:--"Belts, belts, belts, an' that's one for you!"
An' it was "Belts, belts, belts, an' that's done for you!"
O buckle an' tongue
Was the song that we sung
From Harrison's down to the Park!

There was a row in Silver Street--the regiments was out,
They called us "Delhi Rebels", an' we answered "Threes about!"
That drew them like a hornet's nest--we met them good an' large,
The English at the double an' the Irish at the charge.

Then it was:--"Belts..."

There was a row in Silver Street--an' I was in it too;

We passed the time o' day, an' then the belts went whirraru!
I misremember what occurred, but subsequent the storm
A Freeman's Journal Supplement was all my uniform.

O it was:--"Belts..."

There was a row in Silver Street--they sent the Polis there,
The English were too drunk to know, the Irish didn't care;
But when they grew impertinent we simultaneous rose,
Till half o' them was Liffey mud an' half was tattered clo'es.

For it was:--"Belts..."

There was a row in Silver Street--it might ha' raged till now,
But some one drew his side-arm clear, an' nobody knew how;
'Twas Hogan took the point an' dropped; we saw the red blood run:
An' so we all was murderers that started out in fun.

While it was:--"Belts..."

There was a row in Silver Street--but that put down the shine,
Wid each man whisperin' to his next: "'Twas never work o' mine!"
We went away like beaten dogs, an' down the street we bore him,
The poor dumb corpse that couldn't tell the bhoys were sorry for him.

When it was:--"Belts..."

There was a row in Silver Street--it isn't over yet,
For half of us are under guard wid punishments to get;
'Tis all a merricle to me as in the Clink I lie:
There was a row in Silver Street--begod, I wonder why!

But it was:--"Belts, belts, belts, an' that's one for you!"
An' it was "Belts, belts, belts, an' that's done for you!"
O buckle an' tongue
Was the song that we sung
From Harrison's down to the Park!

THE YOUNG BRITISH SOLDIER

When the 'arf-made recruity goes out to the East
'E acts like a babe an' 'e drinks like a beast,
An' 'e wonders because 'e is frequent deceased
Ere 'e's fit for to serve as a soldier.

Serve, serve, serve as a soldier,
Serve, serve, serve as a soldier,
Serve, serve, serve as a soldier,
So-oldier of the Queen!

Now all you recruities what's drafted today,
You shut up your rag-box an' 'ark to my lay,
An' I'll sing you a soldier as far as I may:
A soldier what's fit for a soldier.

Fit, fit, fit for a soldier...

First mind you steer clear o' the grog-sellers' huts,
For they sell you Fixed Bay'nets that rots out your guts--
Ay, drink that 'ud eat the live steel from your butts--
An' it's bad for the young British soldier.

Bad, bad, bad for the soldier...

When the cholera comes--as it will past a doubt--
Keep out of the wet and don't go on the shout,
For the sickness gets in as the liquor dies out,
An' it crumples the young British soldier.

Crum-, crum-, crumples the soldier...

But the worst o' your foes is the sun over'ead:
You must wear your 'elmet for all that is said:
If 'e finds you uncovered 'e'll knock you down dead,
An' you'll die like a fool of a soldier.

Fool, fool, fool of a soldier...

If you're cast for fatigue by a sergeant unkind,
Don't grouse like a woman nor crack on nor blind;
Be handy and civil, and then you will find
That it's beer for the young British soldier.

Beer, beer, beer for the soldier...

Now, if you must marry, take care she is old--
A troop-sergeant's widow's the nicest I'm told,
For beauty won't help if your rations is cold,
Nor love ain't enough for a soldier.

'Nough, 'nough, 'nough for a soldier...

If the wife should go wrong with a comrade, be loath
To shoot when you catch 'em--you'll swing, on my oath!--
Make 'im take 'er and keep 'er: that's Hell for them both,
An' you're shut o' the curse of a soldier.

Curse, curse, curse of a soldier...

When first under fire an' you're wishful to duck,
Don't look nor take 'eed at the man that is struck,
Be thankful you're livin', and trust to your luck
And march to your front like a soldier.

Front, front, front like a soldier...

When 'arf of your bullets fly wide in the ditch,
Don't call your Martini a cross-eyed old bitch;
She's human as you are--you treat her as sich,
An' she'll fight for the young British soldier.

Fight, fight, fight for the soldier...

When shakin' their bustles like ladies so fine,
The guns o' the enemy wheel into line,
Shoot low at the limbers an' don't mind the shine,

For noise never startles the soldier.

Start-, start-, startles the soldier...

If your officer's dead and the sergeants look white,

Remember it's ruin to run from a fight:

So take open order, lie down, and sit tight,

And wait for supports like a soldier.

Wait, wait, wait like a soldier...

When you're wounded and left on Afghanistan's plains,

And the women come out to cut up what remains,

Jest roll to your rifle and blow out your brains

An' go to your Gawd like a soldier.

Go, go, go like a soldier,

Go, go, go like a soldier,

Go, go, go like a soldier,

So-oldier of the Queen!

MANDALAY

By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' lazy at the sea,
There's a Burma girl a-settin', and I know she thinks o' me;
For the wind is in the palm-trees, and the temple-bells they say:
"Come you back, you British soldier; come you back to Mandalay!"

Come you back to Mandalay,
Where the old Flotilla lay:
Can't you 'ear their paddles chunkin' from Rangoon to Mandalay?
On the road to Mandalay,
Where the flyin'-fishes play,
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!

'Er petticoat was yaller an' 'er little cap was green,
An' 'er name was Supi-yaw-lat--jes' the same as Theebaw's Queen,
An' I seed her first a-smokin' of a whackin' white cheroot,
An' a-wastin' Christian kisses on an 'eathen idol's foot:
Bloomin' idol made o'mud--
Wot they called the Great Gawd Budd--
Plucky lot she cared for idols when I kissed 'er where she stud!
On the road to Mandalay...

When the mist was on the rice-fields an' the sun was droppin' slow,
She'd git 'er little banjo an' she'd sing "Kulla-lo-lo!"
With 'er arm upon my shoulder an' 'er cheek agin' my cheek
We useter watch the steamers an' the hathis pilin' teak.

Elephints a-pilin' teak
In the sludgy, squidgy creek,
Where the silence 'ung that 'eavy you was 'arf afraid to speak!
On the road to Mandalay...

But that's all shove be'ind me--long ago an' fur away,
An' there ain't no 'busses runnin' from the Bank to Mandalay;
An' I'm learnin' 'ere in London what the ten-year soldier tells:
"If you've 'eard the East a-callin', you won't never 'eed naught else."
No! you won't 'eed nothin' else
But them spicy garlic smells,
An' the sunshine an' the palm-trees an' the tinkly temple-bells;
On the road to Mandalay...

I am sick o' wastin' leather on these gritty pavin'-stones,
An' the blasted Henglish drizzle wakes the fever in my bones;
Tho' I walks with fifty 'ousemaids outer Chelsea to the Strand,
An' they talks a lot o' lovin', but wot do they understand?
Beefy face an' grubby 'and--
Law! wot do they understand?
I've a neater, sweeter maiden in a cleaner, greener land!
On the road to Mandalay...

Ship me somewheres east of Suez, where the best is like the worst,
Where there aren't no Ten Commandments an' a man can raise a thirst;
For the temple-bells are callin', an' it's there that I would be--

By the old Moulmein Pagoda, looking lazy at the sea;
On the road to Mandalay,
Where the old Flotilla lay,
With our sick beneath the awnings when we went to Mandalay!
On the road to Mandalay,
Where the flyin'-fishes play,
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!

TROOPIN'

(Our Army in the East)

Troopin', troopin', troopin' to the sea:

'Ere's September come again--the six-year men are free.

O leave the dead be'ind us, for they cannot come away

To where the ship's a-coalin' up that takes us 'ome today.

We're goin' 'ome, we're goin' 'ome,

Our ship is at the shore,

An' you must pack your 'aversack,

For we won't come back no more.

Ho, don't you grieve for me,

My lovely Mary-Ann,

For I'll marry you yit on a fourp'ny bit

As a time-expired man.

The Malabar's in 'arbour with the Jumner at 'er tail,

An' the time-expired's waitin' of 'is orders for to sail.

Ho! the weary waitin' when on Khyber 'ills we lay,

But the time-expired's waitin' of 'is orders 'ome today.

They'll turn us out at Portsmouth wharf in cold an' wet an' rain,

All wearin' Injian cotton kit, but we will not complain;

They'll kill us of pneumonia--for that's their little way--
But damn the chills and fever, men, we're goin' 'ome today!

Troopin', troopin', winter's round again!
See the new draf's pourin' in for the old campaign;
Ho, you poor recruities, but you've got to earn your pay--
What's the last from Lunnon, lads? We're goin' there today.

Troopin', troopin', give another cheer--
'Ere's to English women an' a quart of English beer.
The Colonel an' the regiment an' all who've got to stay,
Gawd's mercy strike 'em gentle--Whoop! we're goin' 'ome today.

We're goin' 'ome, we're goin' 'ome,
Our ship is at the shore,
An' you must pack your 'aversack,
For we won't come back no more.

Ho, don't you grieve for me,
My lovely Mary-Ann,
For I'll marry you yit on a fourp'ny bit
As a time-expired man.

FORD O' KABUL RIVER

Kabul town's by Kabul river--

Blow the bugle, draw the sword--

There I lef' my mate for ever,

Wet an' drippin' by the ford.

Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,

Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!

There's the river up and brimmin', an' there's 'arf a squadron swimmin'

'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

Kabul town's a blasted place--

Blow the bugle, draw the sword--

'Strewth I sha'n't forget 'is face

Wet an' drippin' by the ford!

Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,

Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!

Keep the crossing-stakes beside you, an' they will surely guide you

'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

Kabul town is sun and dust--

Blow the bugle, draw the sword--

I'd ha' sooner drowneded fust

'Stead of 'im beside the ford.

Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,

Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!

You can 'ear the 'orses threshin', you can 'ear the men a-splashin',
'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

Kabul town was ours to take--

Blow the bugle, draw the sword--

I'd ha' left it for 'is sake--

'Im that left me by the ford.

Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,

Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!

It's none so bloomin' dry there; ain't you never comin' nigh there,

'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark?

Kabul town'll go to hell--

Blow the bugle, draw the sword--

'Fore I see him 'live an' well--

'Im the best beside the ford.

Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,

Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!

Gawd 'elp 'em if they blunder, for their boots'll pull 'em under,

By the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

Turn your 'orse from Kabul town--

Blow the bugle, draw the sword--

'Im an' 'arf my troop is down,

Down an' drowned by the ford.

Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,

Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!

There's the river low an' fallin', but it ain't no use o' callin'

'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

ROUTE MARCHIN'

We're marchin' on relief over Injia's sunny plains,
A little front o' Christmas-time an' just be'ind the Rains;
Ho! get away you bullock-man, you've 'eard the bugle blowed,
There's a regiment a-comin' down the Grand Trunk Road;
 With its best foot first
 And the road a-sliding past,
 An' every bloomin' campin'-ground exactly like the last;
 While the Big Drum says,
 With 'is "rowdy-dowdy-dow!"--
 "Kiko kissywarsti don't you hamsher argy jow?" 2

Oh, there's them Injian temples to admire when you see,
There's the peacock round the corner an' the monkey up the tree,
An' there's that rummy silver grass a-wavin' in the wind,
An' the old Grand Trunk a-trailin' like a rifle-sling be'ind.

 While it's best foot first,...

At half-past five's Revelly, an' our tents they down must come,
Like a lot of button mushrooms when you pick 'em up at 'ome.
But it's over in a minute, an' at six the column starts,
While the women and the kiddies sit an' shiver in the carts.

 An' it's best foot first,...

Oh, then it's open order, an' we lights our pipes an' sings,
An' we talks about our rations an' a lot of other things,
An' we thinks o' friends in England, an' we wonders what they're at,
An' 'ow they would admire for to hear us sling the bat. 1

An' it's best foot first,...

It's none so bad o' Sunday, when you're lyin' at your ease,
To watch the kites a-wheelin' round them feather-'eaded trees,
For although there ain't no women, yet there ain't no barrick-yards,
So the orficers goes shootin' an' the men they plays at cards.

Till it's best foot first,...

So 'ark an' 'eed, you rookies, which is always grumblin' sore,
There's worser things than marchin' from Umballa to Cawnpore;
An' if your 'eels are blistered an' they feels to 'urt like 'ell,
You drop some tallow in your socks an' that will make 'em well.

For it's best foot first,...

We're marchin' on relief over Injia's coral strand,
Eight 'undred fightin' Englishmen, the Colonel, and the Band;
Ho! get away you bullock-man, you've 'eard the bugle blowed,
There's a regiment a-comin' down the Grand Trunk Road;

With its best foot first
And the road a-sliding past,
An' every bloomin' campin'-ground exactly like the last;
While the Big Drum says,
With 'is "rowdy-dowdy-dow!"--
"Kiko kissywarsti don't you hamsher argy jow?"²

1 Thomas's first and firmest conviction is that he is a profound Orientalist and a fluent speaker of Hindustani. As a matter of fact, he depends largely on the sign-language.

2 Why don't you get on