

Brain Bairns



Margaret MacKay MacTavish



BRAIN BAIRNS
A collection of short verse
by
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Belleville, Ont., Can.

TO
the memory of
MAJOR (THE REV.) ROSWELL MURRAY
MacTAVISH, B.A.,B.D.,M.C.
who passed to his long rest at St. Omer, France, on
February 6th, 1919,
this little book is lovingly dedicated.

Soldier Son! In peace and warfare
Sternly was thy metal tried.
It rang true.
With gallant comrades
Now you're sleeping, side by side.

In what wider spheres of service
Your freed spirit now may roam
We know not.
But here or yonder,
You are in your Father's home.

A WIFE'S MEMORIAL
Recalling her companionship for years,
I bring these wreaths, besprinkled with my tears—
These wreaths—the product of her fertile mind,
And emblems of a cheerful heart refined—
I place them, mindful of her love and trust,
Above the tomb that holds her sacred dust.
—W. S. MacTavish.

TO MY BRAIN BAIRNS

I fear you're no sae vera guid,
I'm sure ye are nae fine:
A mither's no a judge, ye ken—
But what ye are, ye're mine.

Sae gang yer ways! To some bring faith
To plod a longer while;
From some puir wean wipe a tear,
And gie instead, a smile.

And should ye guide some wanderer hame,
Some lonely soul beguile,
I'll lay me doun at last and sigh,
"Ah weel! It was worth while".

CANADA

Canada! Canada! Dear native land!
From ocean to ocean thy Provinces stand,
As, linked hand in hand in Confederacy,
They face, all undaunted, thy high destiny.

Canada! Canada! though but a child,
A giant art thou, with thy youth undefiled.
Engirt by three oceans, upon thy broad breast,
Rise mountains in grandeur, lie great lakes at rest.

Canada! Canada! Gather to thee
The strength of thy mountains, thy lakes' purity;
The breadth of thy prairies; the light of thy skies:
That to noble nationhood thou mayest rise.

Canada! Canada! Honor thy God!
Who laid thy foundations so deep and so broad:
Who moulded thy past: and who in His good time
Will bring to fruition a future sublime.

WAIT THOU ON GOD

Wait thou on God, my soul!
In humble reverence raise thine eyes
To Him Who hears thy faintest sighs:
On Him thy burden roll.
Jehovah will supply thy needs,
Direct thy thoughts, control thy deeds;
Wait thou on God, my soul!

Wait thou on God, my soul!
When sorrows threaten to o'erwhelm,
Then know His hand is on the helm,
He'll comfort and console.
His love will wipe away each tear;
His word will strengthen, bless and cheer;
Wait thou on God, my soul!

Wait thou on God, my soul!
When passing through temptation's fire
He will not let thy spirit tire,
He'll keep thee pure and whole.
His strength will bear thee safely through,
His grace will keep thee faithful, true;
Wait thou on God, my soul!

Wait thou on God, my soul!
So shalt thou daily upward rise
Like eagle wings through azure skies,
Naught earthly shall control.
Thy race, unwearied, thou shalt run,
Nor faint until thy work be done;
Wait thou on God, my soul!

*The above verses were set to music by Miss Bertha
Tamblyn, Toronto.*

LIFT HIGH THE CROSS

Lift high the cross, ye ministers, who in the prophet's
place,
Proclaim My truth! Tell out My love to all the human
race:
For I, if I uplifted be,
Will draw all men to Me.

Lift up the cross, ye teachers, who love truth and liberty;
'Tis only in My cross men find the love that makes them
free:
But I, if I uplifted be,
Will draw all hearts to Me.

Lift up the cross, ye mothers, when your little ones are
near;
Tell how I loved and how I died, that they might know
no fear:
And I, if I uplifted be,
Will draw each child to Me.

Lift up the cross, ye missionaries, who toil beyond the
sea:
Bring to the seeking, darkened souls, the light of Cal-
vary;
And I, if I uplifted be,
Will draw these souls to Me.

Oh, mighty Magnet! Love supreme! the Christ of Cal-
vary!
Lift, lift the cross in mart and home, on land and on
the sea:
For I, if I uplifted be,
Will draw the world to Me.

THE EMPTY TOMB

The empty tomb! The empty tomb!
Oh ye who weep, here's room, here's room
For all earth's sorrow: Bring thy load
And cast it in where He abode.
The Lord is risen, is risen indeed!
Eternal homage is His meed.

The empty tomb! The empty tomb!
No more despair need darkly loom
O'er loved ones passing through death's door—
'Tis open wide forever more.
The Lord is risen, is risen indeed,
Sing, laud and praise His glorious deed.

The empty tomb! The empty tomb!
Oh mortals sing: Here's hope—not doom!
Death's bonds are riven: The Christ is free:
The grave has owned His victory.
The Lord is risen: So ye shall rise
And be with Him in Paradise.

A MILE

O we journeyed once, my steed and I,
On the way to meet my love:
And the way was smooth, and the sun did smile,
And my steed was swift—yet each weary while
Did my heart impatiently sigh and cry
"O a long, long way is a mile".

But we journey now, my steed and I,
And my love is by my side:
Though the road be rough, though the clouds up-pile,
Ah, her sunny smile doth the way beguile,
While my heart doth happily sing and sigh,
"O, a short, short way is a mile!"

HE TOUCHETH THE HILLS

(Ps. 104:32)

He toucheth the hills—they arise
And His praise in the dawn-fire proclaim,
As the fog-wreaths ascend to the skies
Like incense, from altars aflame.

He toucheth thy life, when He lays
Opportunity's wand on thy soul;
Will you answer in anthems of praise?
Will insence of service up-roll?

He toucheth thy life year by year,
With the fingers of memory sweet:
Will the listening cheribum hear
Your gratitude rise to His feet?

He toucheth thy life in thine age
With the beauty of crimson and gold:
And He filleth thy days page by page,
With bounty and blessings untold.

He toucheth the hills, and they smoke—
For they serve Him as serve Him they must—
Will you, one of His well-favored folk,
Say No! when He calls you to trust?

*Lines suggested by a sermon preached by Rev. R. G.
Stewart, B.D., Belleville, Thanksgiving Day, 1925.*

A WINTER PRAYER

As pure—as snow, new-fallen, that wraps
In ermine robes, the frozen lea;
That, smoothly curving, warmly haps
The sleeping flower, the slumbering bee—
Lord, make Thou me.

As clear—as icicles that gleam
And sparkle from each naked tree;
That multiply each stray sunbeam
And swaying, tinkle melody—
Grant me to be.

As strong—as wintry blast that sweeps
All-conqu'ring, over mount and sea;
Or frost, that binds the bounding deeps
And makes a pathway, broad and free—
Lord, make Thou me.

As warm of heart—as fires that blaze
On winter hearths, and there set free
The summer heat; where children raise
Cold hands, and laugh in happy glee—
Oh, make Thou me.

MOTHER

I love you, my Mother, I love you the best:
Way down in my heart you're the Queen o'er the rest.
I love your soft hair, 'tis so ripply and white
I love your sweet lips, for their smile is so bright.
I love your calm eyes, they're so steadfast and true—
Clear windows where always your great soul shines
through:

I pray God to bless you and give you His best
Of health, wealth and happiness, love and sweet rest.
You've aye lived for others, you've earned it, you see,
The best that He has, darling Mother of me.

THE FATHER'S CALL

Return unto Me, O My children!
Far, far have ye wandered of late
Away from the paths of the upright—
Far into the by-ways I hate.
Return! Return!

So long have I called, but ye heed not:
Ye seek but for pleasure or gain;
O list to the message now brought you
By angels of sorrow or pain.
Return! Return!

So cold have ye grown in My service:
So listless the praise that ye sing;
No longer the incense of worship
Makes holy the offering ye bring.
Return! Return!

My vineyards lie broken, untended;
My sheep are oft scattered and torn;
Return to your first love and service:
Return—or too late ye may mourn.
Return! Return!

Return to the zeal that once filled you
When first on My name ye believed:
Return to the joy that once thrilled you
When first ye My pardon received.
Return! Return!

Return, and the windows I'll open
Of heaven, and on you shall pour
Rich blessing—your cup overflowing—
Of hope, joy, and peace as of yore.
Return! Return!

THE EASTER MESSAGE

After the nights of weeping,
After the long, long days,
The Magdalen found her Lord
And knelt in glad amaze.

Crushed hopes had almost withered,
Faith almost drowned in grief;
His loving "Mary!" flooded
Her soul with swift relief.

"Raboni! Master beloved!
I worship! I adore!
Lo, prostrate here I promise
To leave Thee never more."

"Daughter, arise!" His accents
Fall on her eager ear.
"Go ye, tell My disciples—
And Peter—I am here".

Tell it to souls in sorrow
In sin and sorest need,
The hope song of the ages—
"The Lord is risen indeed!"

ONE OF GOD'S THOUGHTS

The dawning sunbeams flashed to-day
On winter's crystal air,
A scene so strangely beautiful
So wonderfully fair—
It seemed a thought from God's own heart,
Writ large o'er all the land—
So pure, so bright, so glorious,
So dainty, yet so grand!
Upon the ground an ermine robe
Is strewn with diamond dust;
Each twig and twiglet, weed and stalk,
In gem-embedded crust
Reflects the sunbeams; maples sway
Their load of brilliants, hung
On every fragile, shining spray.
And giant kings might loll at ease
On forest tops that seem—
Swayed by each vagrant, passing breeze—
Like couch of silk agleam.
That row of glassy spears enfolds
A rainbow in each dart;
And topaz, rubies, pearls appear
In every ice ball's heart.
The sturdy upright poles are clad
In steely armor bright;
And binding them together stretch
The ropes of silvery light.
All day a fairy melody
Is played by sun and wind,
With gentle murmur, twinkling crash,
In harmony combined.
Then night comes down with magic wand,
And lifts each twinkling spark,
Placing it back with other stars,
In heaven's glorious arc.

GOOD-BYE, BRAVE BOYS!

"Good-bye! Good-bye!"
The word resounds
O'er all the country far and wide;
'Tis shouted by the multitude,
And whispered by the fireside—
"Good-bye, brave boys!"

"Good-bye, brave boys!"
We speak the words
With pride and anguish in our heart.
But go! go! Crush the tyrant's power,
And nobly play the soldier's part!
"Good-bye, brave boys!"

"Good-bye, brave boys!"
Your duty done
Return to Canada once more;
And then from every heart and home,
Shall surge the shout from shore to shore:
"Welcome, brave boys!"

"Good-bye, brave boys!"
And though, perchance,
When peace returns, some still must lie
In lonely graves in that far land,
Grieve not! They've heard the Master's cry:
"Well done! Brave boys!"

Written on the occasion of the entraining of troops at Kingston, May 3, 1915. The authoress was at that time convalescing in the Kingston General Hospital, after an operation.

THE STATURE OF THE PERFECT MAN

"The Lord will perfect that which me concerns".
Oh, blest assurance! But one slowly learns
To trust His gentle, wise perfecting.
We struggle on beneath the growing weight
Forgetting that His power is so great
To help; His love so all protecting.

We faint and falter neath the load of sin;
The goal of purity we fail to win;
Yet turn deaf ears to His sweet pleading—
"Oh come, ye heavy-laden, come to Me!
Give Me thy load; I'll carry it and thee:
Oh pass not, pass not by, unheeding!"

But if we come, and bring, with bitter tears,
Our guiltiness, our weakness and our fears,
Our helplessness to Him confessing,
He bears us on the everlasting arms;
Enfolds us close, and stills our souls' alarms;
Our hearts, our lives, our love possessing.

There do we strength for every weakness find;
There do we learn His wondrous, loving mind;
Each day from Him new grace receiving:
Until His plan for us is fully wrought,
And He has us to His own image brought,
For us perfection's crown achieving.

THE FEAST

Come, ye children, well-beloved,
Lo, the feast is spread for you!
Christ, the Host, awaits His brethren,
Bids them welcome warm and true.

Break the bread, as He was broken,
Broken that ye might be whole.
Taste its sweetness, let its richness
Stay the hunger of thy soul.

Take the cup—His life is in it—
Drink and live, ye weary men!
Find forgiveness, hope and healing,
Strength to build your lives again.

Hast thou feasted? Known the gladness?
Go, bring others to His board.
'Tis for all, this wondrous banquet
Of the Christ, the risen Lord.

Then when earthly feasts are over,
Lo, a banquet spread above,
Where our Christ will pour forever
The sweet chalice of His love.

THE CHURCH DEFICIT

The shame of it! The blame of it! 'Tis surely some bad
dream!

Is Christ's Church bankrupt? Is its power lost? Ah, so
'twould seem.

"Go ye", He said, and forth they went, each noble-
hearted one:

They labored long, they suffered much, but so His work
was done.

Then came the words "Cut down your work; shut
hospitals and schools;

Let heathen perish, sick ones die; we need our pence."
Ah, fools!

"'Tis but a little thing", ye say, "this deficit of ours"—
"A dollar each". But think. Ye fight 'gainst Satan
and his powers:

Shall Christ's hosts falter? Beat retreat? Ah, never!
But ye will

Accept His bounty and refuse His treasury to fill!

Oh, rouse ye, Christians, rise and give—give—give ere
'tis too late!

Should one soul perish through your sloth, your guilti-
ness were great!

The shame of it! The blame of it! That He should have
to sue

For that which is His own! Oh, give your Saviour-King
His due!

MY REST ROOM

I have a chamber in my heart,
Love-lit and treasure strewn,
Where I may rest when life is hard,
At midnight or at noon.

No gold can buy, nor time destroy
The riches hidden there—
The jewelled joys, the golden days,
The pictures, priceless, rare.

A downy head upon my arm;
A babe's first wond'ring smile;
A boy's sweet, shy caress—ah, these
The weary heart beguile!

A youth is there in college gown—
A soldier, khaki-clad—
Leading his troops to victory—
My lad! My little lad!

A grave is there, but what of that?
No tear my eyelid swells;
It holds but hope and promise bright—
'Tis sown with immortelles.

So in my little room I'll keep
While life itself shall last,
The treasures of the bygone years,
The fragrance of the past.

OUR PRAYER

(Ps. 86:16)

Father above, whose name is Love,
We raise clasped hands on high:
Thou did'st not spare Thine only Son,
But gavest Him to die.
Thou know'st the pangs that rend our hearts;
Thou know'st the boon we crave:
O give Thy strength to Thy servants, Lord:
The sons of Thine handmaids, save!

Give us the strength to speed them forth
With smile and word of cheer—
Our husbands—other selves—and sons,
To us, than life, more dear.
Give us the strength to work and wait,
The loneliness to brave;
O give Thy strength to Thy servants, Lord:
The sons of Thine handmaids, save!

Lord, go with them as forth they fare
To face their country's foes:
Grant them the courage and the strength
That purity bestows.
O bid Thine angels compass them
On land and on the wave!
O give Thy strength to Thy servants, Lord:
The sons of Thine handmaids, save!

If we must weep for some who sleep—
A foreign soil their bed—
May victory yet crown the cause
For which their blood was shed.
And gather to Thyself, we pray,
The lives they nobly gave;
Then give, Lord, give to Thy servants, strength
The sons of Thy handmaids, save.

DAWN O'ER MADOC TOWN

Nestling in the valley—
Resting on the hills —
Madoc town lies silent
Save for sleepless rills.

New-fallen snow enfolds her
In a robe of white:
Soft, from skies above her,
Breaks the dawn's faint light.

Slow the crimson glory
Mounts the eastern sky,
Till the snowy hill tops
Blushing 'neath it lie.

Here and there and here—see
Clouds of incense rise
From each hidden hearth-fire,
Floating to the skies.

Now they soar in hundreds
Through the clear, still air—
Soft white plumes of silver,
Never sight more fair.

Forth the sun in splendor
Bursts upon the scene,
Throwing golden glory
Through the silvery sheen.

Wake, O Madoc sleepers,
Wake and kneel and pray,
To the God Whose glory
Gilds each new-born day.

TO THE HEROES OF WAR-RIVEN HOMES

Have you given your best, Oh father,
At the call of your country's need?
When your brave soldier boy marched away
Did the strong heart within you bleed?
Is the seat at your table empty?
Does that step greet your ears no more?
Has the light of your eyes departed?
Is your heart now left lone and sore?

Have you smiled a good-bye, Oh mother,
While your breast throbbed with untold pain?
Does your heart oft grow sick with longing
For the laddie who may be slain?
Do you fear when each morning dawneth
What the news of the day may be?
And do visions and night dreams haunt you
Of that carnage across the sea?

Think not ye "All my care was fruitless!
All for naught was my man-child given:
'Gainst the forces of armed evil
Through that son, for the right ye've striven.
Think not ye that his life is wasted
If his life for his land he give:
Who for love of his country dieth
In the life of that land shall live.

Not for naught shall these heroes suffer!
Not for naught is your sacrifice!
Right shall conquer, and o'er these war-clouds
Shall the star of world peace arise
And forever on you, home-heroes,
Shall His rich benediction fall
Who spared not His only be-gotten
But offered Him up for us all.

WELCOME

Belleville old-time maids and men
Welcome to your home again:
Though you wander far and wide,
Belleville's lure will still abide.

Now she calls you home once more:
Home, to lovely Quinte's shore:
Home, to Moira's placid stream:
Home, where tender memories teem.

Faces that you loved are gone;
Forms familiar are withdrawn;
But though some afar may roam,
Belleville still is Home, sweet Home.

Still the stately trees and lawns,
'Neath the sunsets and the dawns,
On the hills to east—to west—
Are by Bay-born breeze caressed.

Still the Church spires, slender, tall,
Colleges and schools, recall
How the eager feet of youth
Found the paths of life and truth.

So the city calls to you,
Loving, loyal hearts and true—
Belleville matrons, maids and men
Bid you welcome home again.

Written for the Belleville Reunion and U.E.L. Celebration in Belleville in June, 1924.

ON TO ZORRA!

MacDonald, Sutherland, MacKay,
MacKenzie, Ross, MacPherson—
The clans are gathering: pass the word
To ilka chiel and person.

Come Angus, Colin, Donald, Tam,
And likewise sturdy Sandy—
By motor, train, or aeroplane,
Or anything that's handy.

Come Janet, Christie, Jessie, Jean,
And ilka bonny Flora—
Pit on yer bonnets, plaids and shoon,
And step awa' tae Zorra.

'Tis Woodstock calls us, city dear
How far so e'er we're roamin'
And when July comes next, her sons
Wull a', like birds, be homin'.

The Prince is askit, did ye ken?
Oor gallant Prince, sae charmin';
We'll show him bonny horses an'
The vera best o' farmin'.

The Highlands o' Ontario
Wull gie him welcome royal:
For in the Empire, there are no
Subjects mair leal and loyal.

So come ye ane, and come ye a'!
In Zorra we'll foregather—
Canadian sons of Scotia dear,
The maples frae the heather.

Written for the Old Boys' Reunion in Woodstock, July, 1927.

RECIPE FOR A POEM

You take your pen and fill it up
With Al fountain ink;
A piece of paper, too, you need
To hold the thoughts you think.

You dress these thoughts in words most choice
A metaphor or two
May be thrown in with good effect—
Be sure your rhymes are true.

A classical allusion will
For some improve the taste—
Though others, cultured less, may deem
Such flavor a pure waste.

Dilute with milk of kindness sweet;
Spice—hot as summer noons;
Of acid, just a single drop;
Of sentiment, two spoons.

Knead well the whole most carefully;
A paring knife you use
To make it fit exactly in
The metre pan you choose.

Bake slowly, till at last you find
'Tis done a golden brown;
Then send it to the Editor—
And see him turn it down!

NEIGHBORS

Behold a theme unique in time—
Two neighbor nations, holding
The flag of peace and righteousness,
A continent enfolding!

Neighbors, who share each other's joys:
Each other's sorrows lighten:
Who play together, and who strive
Mankind's outlook to brighten.

No need have they of armed force,
Of rattling of the sabre:
For friendship's bonds, more strong than steel
Unite each to his neighbor.

Though rogues may flout, and fools declaim,
And mischief-makers labor,
Each nation's heart beats loyal to
The true heart of its neighbor.

O God give statesmen strong and wise
To these two noble neighbors,
That righteousness and truth always
May crown their mutual labors.

That on this continent so vast,
These virile neighbor nations
May keep their heritage for aye
From war's vile profanations:

May hold aloft the flag of peace
By mutual strong endeavor:
And make this continent God's land
Of righteousness, forever.

YOURS OR MINE?

When the liquor curse is legalized
It must have its toll of men—
Of the husbands dear, the brothers fine—
Say, will they be yours? Or mine?

When the liquor curse is legalized
It must have its toll of boys—
Of the lads round whom our hearts entwine—
Say, will they be yours? Or mine?

When the liquor curse is legalized
It must have its toll of hearts—
For some hearts must break, and some repine—
Say, will they be yours? Or mine?

Ere the liquor curse was legalized
It garnered its toll of votes—
Of the unused vote, and the vote supine—
Say, did it have yours? Or mine?

That the liquor curse be soon outlawed,
Sisters, let us strive, and pray
That our God will keep in His care divine
All HIS SONS—both yours and mine.

LIFE'S RADIO

Could we raise Faith's aerial
And tune our hearts to hear,
What harmonies divine would greet our eager listening
ear!

Perchance the angels' choruses
In wondrous chords would roll,
Like bursts of martial music clear, down o'er the wait-
ing soul.

Perchance from some mysterious place
Within the cloud or wind,
Dear voices, loved and lost awhile, would thrill the
hungry mind.

From distant lands, and long past days,
From every age and clime,
The throbbing cadences would bring their messages
sublime.

And e'en, perchance, by listeners in,
The voice of Him Whose word
Hushed winds and waves on Galilee, might in our winds
be heard.

Ah, life would richer, fuller be,
Could we but learn to know
The strains of purest joy that lie within Life's radio!

THE SOLDIER'S SWEETHEART

Long ago you left me,
Soldier love of mine,
For your country called you
Far across the brine.
So you said hood-bye, dear,
In your khaki fine,
And you whispered tenderly,
"Be true to me:
Be true to me:
Be true to me:"
Ah, you whispered tenderly
"Be true to me".

Blue your laughing eyes were,
Bright your sunny hair,
Strong your arms about me—
Did you hear my prayer?
Not in spoken words, dear,
Not breathed on the air,
But my heart cried pleadingly
"Stay, love with me:
Stay love with me:
Stay, love with me:"
Ah, my heart cried pleadingly,
"Stay, love, with me."

In the dusk we parted;
Then I stood each night
Raising empty arms, dear,
To the stars so bright;
Praying God to keep you

Safe through His great might.
Ah, my heart prayed ceaselessly
"Bring him to me:
Bring him to me:
Bring him to me:"
Ah, my heart cried ceaselessly,
"Bring him to me."

Far in sunny France, love,
'Neath your cross, you lie:
But above the billows
Can't you hear my cry?
None can fill your place, dear,
None can solace me:
For my heart calls sobbingly
Dear love, for thee:
Dear love for thee:
Dear love for thee:
Ah, my heart calls sobbingly,
Dear love, for thee.

Now I'm weak and ill, dear,
And I think maybe,
God will call me soon, dear,
Then I'll be with thee!
Then I'll be with thee dear,
Through eternity:
Oh, my heart sings joyously
"I'll be with thee:
I'll be with thee:
I'll be with thee:
Oh, my heart sings joyously
I'll be with thee!"

THE MASTER'S HANDS

The Master's hands—the baby hands—
All dimpled, rosy, soft!
Ah, Mary loved them much, I ween,
And kissed them long and oft!

The Master's hands—the boyish hands —
Sun-browned and marked with toil
At Joseph's bench—the hands that ne'er
A sinful deed did soil.

The Master's hands—the healing hands—
So tender, strong and brave!
Out-stretched to help the needy ones,
The wandering ones to save.

The Master's hands—the nail-pierced hands—
O Master, 'twas for me
They bore the agony and shame
Upon the accursed tree.

The Master's hands—the welcoming hands—
E'en now by faith I see,
Out-stretched from yonder heavenly shore
To welcome—even me!

WHEN YE PRAY—BELIEVE

O weary, troubled, seeking souls,
Would ye His help receive?
Come, kneel and tell Him all your woes,
And when ye pray, believe.

Believe that from His love-full heart
Great streams of mercy flow
To cleanse from e'en the stain of sin
And every good bestow.

Then o'er your burdens, troubles, quests,
Let not your spirits grieve:
All that ye ask He promises,
If praying, ye believe.

ON THY DAY, LORD

Not with thunder's crashing might,
Not with lightning's flashing sword,
But with gently growing light,
Thou hast waked our spirits, Lord.

From the darkness of the night,
From the region unexplored
Of the sleep-land—to the light,
Thou hast called our spirits, Lord.

Now as in Thy house we kneel,
Sit together at Thy board,
May we each Thy presence feel,
Feed our hungry spirits, Lord.

Not with judgment swift and stern,
But with love's all quickening word,
As we journey t'wards life's bourne,
Strengthen Thou our spirits, Lord.

TO THOSE UPON THE HILL

(Woodstock Reunion, 1927)

Comrades of to-day who greet
Old time friends in homes and street—
Let us keep a quiet hour,
Drop a tear and place a flower,
On the sacred hill where sleep
Those whom memory will keep
Close enshrined within our hearts
Until life itself departs.
Father, Mother, Sister, Friend,
Whose dear forms with dust now blend,
Resting on that sacred hill—
Are your spirits with us still?
Do you know we meet once more
Where you lived and loved of yore?
Do you know the tears oft rise,
Hearts grow sad and laughter dies,
Thinking of the things we miss,
Out-stretched hand and welcoming kiss?
Yet no word from you, we know,
Would check song, or laughter's flow.
As you joyed in yesterday
You would bid us joy to-day.
Sleep on dear ones, 'tis His will
On your quiet, restful hill.
We must each pursue our way
Till His great re-union day.

TO DR. M. C.

(accompanying a lamp)

When the dusk of twilight falls
And my busy doctor calls
Home at close of day—
May this light upon his page
Woo to rest, his cares assuage
With its rosy ray.

When the dusk of life draws near,
And the heavenly lights appear,
May the loving touch
Of the great Physician, heal
All his woes; his welcome seal
With His Inasmuch.

TWO VOICES

Sad Doubt sighs, "The outlook is hopelessly drear.
The earth with dead grasses is sodden and sere.
The hollow-cupped waters are leaden in hue.
The trees toss bare branches all black and askew.

The clouds fill the heavens, forbidding and dark,
All heavy with storm threats and prospects that cark.
The wind wails most wildly, then sullenly sighs;
The light waneth slowly, then suddenly dies.

But sweet Trust comes whispering, "Lo! 'neath the sod
New rootlets are formed by the finger of God.
New grasses will grow, and new flowers will bloom;
The storm clouds will pass, and the sun pierce the gloom.

The leaves and the blossoms will cover the trees
The wild winds give place to the scent-laden breeze."
So cheer thee, O sad soul! Let Trust have full sway.
"If winter be here, then Spring's not far away".

A RECRUITING CALL

Rouse ye for Britain—Motherland dear!
Foes fierce assail her. Sons, who will hear?
Forth to her service—forth in your might!
Strike for the cause of freedom, truth and right.

Rouse ye for Britain! Nursed at her knee,
Think what you owe her, Canada free!
Her foes are your foes! Haste to her side:
Forth! Forth! ye gallant sons—our nation's pride.

Rouse ye for Britain! Clear rings the call.
Haste to defend her, she needs you all!
Gather around her—loved Motherland!
Stand in this darkest hour at her right hand.

Rouse ye for Britain! She stands for all—
God, home and honor: naught must befall.
God bids you forward. Strong in His might,
Strike for the cause of freedom, truth and right.

MY WEDDING RING

Circlet golden! Pledge of love
Like the love in heaven above!
Priceless, plain: no gem inset
Could ere improve.

Joys and sorrows, laughter, tears,
Thou hast shared throughout the years.
Still thou shin'st, untarnished yet:
Time but endears.

Comes the day when in the tomb
Rests this ringed hand? In the gloom
Gleam thou on: Love, grief-beset,
Will yet rebloom.

Dust the hand. But love shall be
Indestructible like thee:
And shall hail in triumph yet
Eternity.

THE FATHER'S SMILE

Look up, O trembling child, His smile
Is waiting to greet you all the while.
Just say "I'm sorry", He'll understand
And dry thy tears with tender hand.
Look up, O weary child, and trace
The pity and love in His dear face.
Just say "I'm tired", He'll understand
And gently soothe with loving hand.
Look up, O lonely child, look up,
And ask Him to fill Life's empty cup:
Just say "I need Thee", He'll understand
And closely clasp thine out-stretched hand.
His smile is sweet; He yearns for thee
With tenderest love and sympathy:
Just look now into His face divine
And softly say "Thy will is mine".

"MY GRACE"

"So much, so much in the fields a gleam:
So weak, so weak oft the reapers seem:
But the Master cheereth each lovingly,
"My grace is sufficient, dear heart, for thee".

Chorus—

My grace is sufficient for thee—for thee,
My grace is sufficient for thee.
Though the dark clouds lower, the lightnings dart,
My grace is sufficient for thee, dear heart.
So light, so light is the heart, love-blessed:
So dread, so drear when by loss oppressed;
But the Master whispereth tenderly,
"My grace is sufficient, sad heart, for thee".
So bright, so bright are the paths we crave:
So dark, so dark is the river's wave:
"Fear ye not, fear not", saith the Pilot brave
"My grace is sufficient to guide, to save".

TO THE SHUT-INS

Shut in! Ah, dear hearts, does the time seem long
Away from God's world of beauty and song?
Shut in with your weariness, pain and dread,
Does faith oft grow faint, and does hope seem dead?

Shut in! Yes, 'tis hard! But from fires that glow
Down deep in the furnace do heat waves flow.
And through hidden wires, close covered from sight,
Comes power that brightens the city's night.

Shut in! But the lowliest room may hold
An altar more precious than burnished gold.
And power will come to the hearts that raise
Their incense of gratitude, prayer and praise.

Shut in! Yes dear hearts, but never alone!
Beside you there standeth a Form well known;
Shut in—but with Him Who the winepress trod:
Shut in, praise His name, with the loving God.

COME YE APART

"Come ye apart and rest awhile".
The tender Saviour told His band
Of weary followers, worn with toil
On Galilean sea and land.
"Come ye", He pleads, and leads the way
By quiet waters, still and deep.
When night shades fall and stars hold sway
"He giveth His beloved sleep".

"Come ye apart", He calls us now
When Sabbath calm succeeds the care
Of crowded week. Upon our brow
He lays the healing balm of prayer.

"Come ye apart": Sometimes 'tis pain
That bears His tender message "Rest!"
But when we heed, how great the gain!
To be with Him is to be blessed.

TO R. M. M.

1915

Son of my heart, where art thou?
Ah, the wild wind wails without!
Does it storm o'er thy trench in Flanders,
O'er thy dark, shell-swept dugout?

Son of my heart, where art thou?
Dost thou lie perchance on the field
Where the battle raged in fury,
And men died, but would not yield?

Son of my heart, I see thee
A babe in my cradling arms:
Ah, close to my breast I pressed thee,
To shelter from life's alarms!

Son of my heart, I gave thee,
The gift to the Giver, then.
He took the dear gift, and called thee
To tell of His love for men.

Son of my heart, thou'rt showing
That love in thy life to-day,
As thou givest thy life that others
To freedom may find the way.

Ah, son, dear son! God guard thee
Through battle, fire and dearth,
To proclaim again to weary men
The Gospel of "Peace on Earth".

1919

Son of my heart, where art thou?
Ah! the wind is wailing where
Thy weary body resteth
'Neath the sod of St. Omer.

Son of my heart, they brought me
Thy khaki tunic. There
Next thy heart my poor lines nestled
When you passed at St. Omer.

Had they a message, dear one,
To tell of my love and prayer?
Were they a little comfort
When you passed at St. Omer?

Ah son, dear son, God's purpose
Is best, and we know somewhere
He is keeping the lad whose body
Lies sleeping at St. Omer.

CREEDS AND KINDNESS

Not creeds, but kindness, is the need
Of this old world, the poet sings.
But is it true? The world indeed
Needs kindness. But can you
Supply that need, unless your heart
Be cleansed and anchored by a creed?

A creed that says "Our God is One,
And we are brothers through His Son".
It is not kindness that will cry
Peace! Peace! where peace is not. His word
"I send not peace, but piercing sword"
Was kindness true, and yet the world
Would call it harsh. 'Tis kindness true
That wields in time the surgeon's knife—
That probes down deep where sin is rife.

So creeds and kindness are not foes.
From one, the source, the other flows.
And while time lasts, this truth we'll see—
As a man's creed, his life will be.

TO THE TOWER

of St. Peter's Church, Madoc.
Sentinel on the hill top!
Watcher above the town!
For long, long years the tower
Voiceless and mute, looked down.

Firm wrought by faithful workmen,
On rock foundation high,
A part of God's own temple,
Pointing to God's own sky:

It saw the hills in verdure,
Cradling the lakes so blue;
And sighed when winter mantled
Their beauty from its view.

And oft the wanderer homing
Espied it from afar,
And knew his journey ending—
It was his guiding star.

It heard the fierce storms mutter,
The mighty thunders roll:
And from God's house ascending,
The incense of the soul.

But not a word it uttered,
As on the long years sped,
And one by one its builders
Were numbered with the dead.

But lo! one day, a miracle!
Rejoice, O tower, rejoice!
Thy long mute watch is ended—
At last thou hast a voice.

Now thou can'st chime a welcome
When wanderers return—
Can'st mark the hours till summer
Sets free the laughing burn.

Can'st tell the weary, sick ones
That though the night be drear,
The morning light is coming,
The dawn is very near.

Can'st call the Father's children
To come and kneel and praise
The God Whose bounty filleth
With joy the passing days.

Long life to thee, O tower,
And may thy new-found voice
Bring glory to the Father,
And make His Church rejoice.

The above lines were recited by the authoress on the occasion of the dedication of the new clock in the tower of St. Peter's Church, Madoc, October 10th, 1927.

RETURNED MEN

Returned—from the fiercest war of time:
Returned—from the scenes of filth and grime!
Returned—with their bodies broken, marred:
Returned—with their very souls deep scarred.

Returned—to a country, safe and blessed:
Returned—to their homes? their kindred? rest?
Returned—oft, alas, with shame we see—
Returned—to suffer, pain, poverty!

Returned—with vices? Ah, war leaves taints!
It may breed heroes, but seldom saints.
Returned—Oh, ye smug ones, think again—
In God's sight, we're all "returned men".

Returned—when the warfare of life is o'er,
When home lights brighten on yonder shore—
If we now withhold the loving touch,
Can we hope to hear His "Inasmuch"?

TO D. V. S.

Greatheart! who earnestly did yearn
O'er ills in Church and native land;
Who sought the best: for truth did burn:
Gave struggling good a strengthening hand.
True friend: we prized thy genial smile;
Thy ready laughter; hand-clasp warm.
Strong heart and brain, that all the while
Could wisely plan for sun or storm.
Beloved one! o'er those most dear,
The home ones—father, children, wife—
The pall has fallen. O Christ draw near;
Bring balm to hearts with sorrow rife.
Thou'st passed beyond—we cannot see
Those gates of pearl, those streets so fair.
But well we know thy Master'd be
The first to bid thee welcome there.

THOUGH AN HOST SHOULD ENCAMP AGAINST ME

A million men may mean much might,
And many guns much noise—
But more were needed to o'er throw
The trustful Christian's poise.
Nor fear, nor fate, nor force, nor flash
Of potentate's broad sword
Can make him tremble, or divide
The Christian from His Lord.
Armenia's soil may be blood-drenched,
Her refuge foreign sod:
She stands unconquered yet, and owns
No Master but her God.
All hail, Armenia! Loyal land!
Thy name shall honored be
When persecuting nations pass
Into oblivion's sea.

FAREWELL

"The tumult and the shouting dies".
Behind the smile, the tear drop lies.
The time has come when we must part—
And O dear friends, it wrings our heart.

You came to us from homes afar,
By boat and train, by yacht and car.
We've reminisced for seven days,
Recalling other times and ways.

Our orators have talked for you;
Our grand parades have walked for you;
Our pageant has been played for you;
The kilties were arrayed for you.

Our sweetest flowers have bloomed for you
The very air perfumed for you;
Fond greetings from the flags and trees
Were fluttered by the passing breeze.

Now all are sad that you must go
And every heart is filled with woe.
But Belleville matrons, maids and men
Cry "Bon voyage" and "Come again!"

IS THERE NO FAITH?

Is there no faith? ye ask, and turn
To seek for it in College halls.
Your quest is fruitless? Ye must learn
Faith dwells in hearts, not earthly walls.

"Not to the wise and prudent is
My truth revealed". Ye do not find
Because ye seek amiss. Go ask
The babes—the pure in heart and mind.

Is there no faith? Go ask the Pauls
Who've journeyed forth to far-flung lands,
Bearing the Gospel torch which lit
Faith's fires afresh midst heathen bands.

Is there no faith? Ask Hannahs who
To-day bend low o'er Samuel sons—
Their hopes fulfilled, their prayers heard,
They KNOW these are His little ones.

Is there no faith? Oh seeker, know
Faith will not from the world depart
While Christ can find a temple in
A single humble, contrite heart.

SHALL WE YIELD?

Valiantly our fathers wrestled
On the battlefields of yore,
When King Alcohol, the monster,
Held his sway from shore to shore.

Naught recked they of taunts or terror!
Naught of foes both fierce and strong!
Forward still they bore the banner
Through the struggles grim and long.

Theirs the honor—ours the blessing—
Of the freedom that they won:
Now another battle's raging—
Shall their work be all undone?

"God forbid it". Let the answer
Ring o'er fair Ontario.
We, the children of these sires,
Once again shall rout the foe.

What we have we'll hold, and newer,
Wider conquests we shall gain:
And our country, free and prosperous,
Free, God willing, shall remain.

SCARLET VERSUS KHAKI

A scarlet flower by the wayside hung,
Sunning her petals gay;
And as on the breeze she lightly swung,
She gazed on the trampled clay.

"Ah me!" she cried, "You are plain of hue!
And rougher grow each day!"
"Alas", sighed the clay, "'tis but too true!
Yet I make a strong highway".

A gallant troop cantered into view,
All clad in scarlet bright.
"You see", cried the flower, "they wear my hue!
Are they not a charming sight?"

But, ere the night, the traitorous hue
Betrayed that troop to the foe,
They fell like petals—that gallant crew,
And the land was filled with woe.

The flower is gone: gone the jackets red:
The troops that pass that way,
Now khaki-clad, to victory tread
In the hue of the humble clay.

THANK GOD FOR FRIENDS

The old friends, the new friends,
The tried friends, the true friends!
We may have drifted far apart,
But aye they live within our heart—
Thank God for friends!

We ne'er were rich in lands or gold,
In worldly gear or power;
But O the wealth, the untold wealth,
Of Friendship's priceless dower!

He is not poor who hath a friend,
Nor homeless can be ever,
Who hath a home within some heart,
A refuge sure forever.

So here's a song to all the friends
Whose love our path hath brightened;
Who soothed our sorrows, shared our joys,
And every burden lightened.

The old friends, the new friends,
The tried friends, the true friends!
We may have drifted far apart,
Yet aye you live within our heart—
Thank God for friends!

THE HIGHER (?) CRITICS

They have sat at the Master's board,
And have fed from His word divine;
Just as Judas, the traitor base,
At His table did oft recline.

Yet they've taken the children's bread
And have cast it unto the dogs;
E'en His wonderful miracles
They have shrouded in Doubt's dark fogs.

Ah! surely the dear Master sighs—
"They have shared in My bread and cup,
But now, as the Scripture foretold,
'Gainst Me is their heel lifted up".

Just a kick for His loving care:
Just contempt for the bread of life:
Just betrayal of trust bestowed;
Just a sowing of seeds of strife.

True, the word of the Lord stands firm—
But how will it be in the end
With those who, through doubt-dealing words,
His little ones cause to offend.

TO MOTHER

(on the day of her death)

If my poor pen could but portray
Her spirit filled with light
Which, though we would have bade it stay
Before our eyes took flight.

I'd paint it as a gentle dove,
All white and pure and true,
With wings outstretched to heaven above,
As on its way it flew.

Now she has gone to meet her God,
And wondering we stand
And see her placed beneath the sod,
And know it was so planned.

Now fold your wings poor tired bird,
You have done naught but good,
Nor ever jarring note was heard
May we do as she would.

For oft when weary, heart-oppressed
We flocked home to the nest
She sheltered us close to her breast.
And there we found a rest.

—GLADYS

FOR THE WEE - ANES

THE HONEY BEE

Honey bee, honey bee, whither away,
Flying so happily day after day?

I seek the sweet dew in the red clover's heart;
From blossom to blossom to cull it, I dart.

Honey bee, honey bee, why do you haste?
Rest here a while and your sweet burden taste.

The winter is coming the flowers to blight—
The daylight is passing and then comes the night.

Honey bee, honey bee, who put the dew
Into the flower cups, ready for you?

He who made the mountains and filled the deep sea:
He loveth His creatures—He careth for me.

THE GRANDMA DANDELIONS

She came one day, my grandchild Ruth,
And laid upon my knee
Her dandelions. On her cheeks
The rose bloomed prettily.

I placed upon her sunny head
A dandelion gay,
And said, "These flowers, like thee, sweet girl,
Bright locks of gold display".

She came again another day,
And said with wondering glee,
"The flowers' locks have all turned white!
They're Grandma's now, LIKE THEE".

DILLY DALL AND SHILLY SHALL

There was a boy named Dilly Dall,
Who would not do his work;
He had a pal, named Shilly Shall,
Who also was a shirk.

Said Dilly Dall to Shilly Shall
"Let's play the whole day through!"
Said Shilly Shall to Dilly Dall
"That's what I like to do!"

When Dilly Dall became a man
He had no food to eat;
And Shilly Shall was just as poor,
And so they begged for meat.

The people said, "We can't feed you:
Why don't you go to work?"
"We don't know how", said Dilly Dall,
"We only learned to shirk".

"If you won't work, then you can't eat!"
The people did reply.
So Dilly Dall and Shilly Shall
Just laid them down to die.

They slept all day, they slept all night;
And when they woke again,
They found their stomachs full of naught,
Their bodies full of pain.

"I say, old pal," groaned Dilly Dall,
"This dying is hard work!"

"I' faith, you're right", sighed Shilly Shall,
"I move we once more shirk".

So up they got and went to work,
And found at set of sun,
That work well done, became to them
The very best of fun.

ON GUARD

My Daddy is a great big man,
They say " 'bout six foot four";
(Although I never saw but two—
One on each leg—no more).

My Daddy is a sodger, too;
And 'fore he went to fight,
He taught me how to "Shoulder arms",
And "Halt!" and "Face 'bout right!"

He said "My son, you'll stand on guard
For Mother when I'm 'way,
And fight the tears that try to steal
A march on her each day".

So now I'm watching every day;
And I know how to fight:
For when they come, I just shout "Halt!"
P'sent arms, and hug her tight!

TO BETTY— AGED TWO

Dainty, dimpled, dancing fairy:
Lovely laughing little cherie:
Eyes of blue—
Deepest hue—
Seem to look me through and through.

Wilful, winsome, wistful girlie:
Mischievous-seeking late and early:
Curls of gold:
Firmly hold
In their meshes, sunbeams bold.

Pretty, pouting, prattling maiden:
Priceless bark with promise laden:
Years so few—
Only two—
Harbor far ahead of you.

Ten times two is twenty, dearie—
And the years go fast, I fear me;
Clasp me tight,
For their flight
Bears my baby from my sight!

THE UNINVITED GUEST

Babyland a picnic planned,
'Twas to be a day most grand!
Neighbors, cousins, friends, they send
Invitations without end.

But alas! they o'erlooked one!
They forgot to ask the sun.
So behind a cloud he hid,
And the raindrops came unbid.

Then each little face grew long,
Hushed was happy laugh and song;
Till the sun peeped out to see
Where those picnickers could be.

How those happy babies cheered
When the sun thus reappeared!
All the raindrops ran away
And the sun came out to stay.

There's a moral right in sight,
For each little Baby bright—
When you plan for picnic fun
Don't forget to ask the sun.

NEIGHBORS

Oh, we have such lots of fun,
Bess and Lou and Bob and me,
From the morn till set of sun,
For we're neighbors, don't you see?

In the winter on our sleighs,
Down the hills we swiftly glide,
Or beside the fire's warm blaze
Watch the shadows leap and hide.

Then in summer, when we four
Get our hoops agoing—my!
Down the road and past the store,
How our hoops and heels do fly!

Do we sometimes quarrel, you say?
Bess and Lou and Bob and me?
Well, not much, we'd rather play,
For we're neighbors, don't you see?

And we learned a text one, too,
"Love your neighbor", so you see,
We must loving be and true,
Bess and Bob and Lou and me.

WHO LOVES ME BEST?

Who loves me best? My father?
I know his love is strong?
He works so hard to keep me,
And hugs me close and long.
He listens to my troubles
And drives away my fears
Oh yes, I know he loves me
And holds me very dear.

Who loves me best? My Mother?
Her love is wondrous too.
So deep, so kind, so tender,
So thoughtful and so true:
She nurses me in sickness
And soothes with gentle touch;
I know without her telling
My mother loves me much.

Who loves me best? My Saviour?
Ah, yes I think 'tis He!
He left His Father's mansions
To die on Calvary.
'Twas He who gave me father
And mother and the rest—
Ah, without doubt 'tis Jesus,
My Saviour, loves me best.

TROUBLES AND BUBBLES

Sometimes things go wrong at our house,
Sister's cross and I am "trying",
Then the Mother, wise and knowing,
Gets the pipes and sets us blowing
Bubbles bright and bubbles fair;
And the troubles with the bubbles,
Soon go flying, flying, flying
Through the air.

'Tis such fun to see them growing,
Swelling, shining, bursting, dying,
Or like rainbows softly beaming,
Every color in them gleaming,
Lightly floating here and there,
That our troubles, like the bubbles,
Soon go flying, flying, flying
Through the air.

So, if things go wrong at your house,
And the children get to sighing,
Get the pipes and set them blowing,
And their hearts with joy o'erflowing,
Bubbles big and bright and fair:
And the troubles, with the bubbles,
Will go flying, flying, flying,
Through the air.

WHEN THE SNOW LIES DEEP

Oh, the best time of the year
Is the winter cold and clear,
When the snow has covered all the hillside steep!
Ah, the jolly sleigh-bells ring
And the happy children sing
When the snow lies deep.

Oh, the merry, merry days
When the heavy-laden sleighs
Down the hillside, like the storm-winds, wildly sweep!
Oh, the fun and frolic when
All must struggle up again
When the snow lies deep.

Oh, the sturdy forts that rise,
Tow'ring upward to the skies,
As the snow is rolled and piled up heap on heap!
And the shot and shell of snow
Wages war on every foe,
When the snow lies deep.

Ah, there's no true-hearted boy
But whose heart is filled with joy,
When the winter king has come his reign to keep
For there is no end of fun,
When the winter's well begun,
And the snow lies deep.

HIDE AND SEEK

A wee bird once swung on an apple tree
And warbled his love song so cheerily.
A pussy cat watched on the ground below,
As quiet as any sly puss you know.
"If I could but catch him", purred she, purred she,
"He'd make a nice dinner for me, for me".

The wee bird soon dropped to the ground beneath,
The pussy cat grinned till she showed her teeth.
"Ah, ha!" purred the pussy, "I think perchance,
If I crouch and leap, this will be my chance".
She crouched and she leaped through the air, the air,
The wee bird she sought was not there, not there.

For quickly he flew to another tree
And trilled out his music more merrily.
While pussy cat licked her fat chops and sighed—
So much disappointed she could have cried—
The wee bird swung chanting "Home free! Home free!
You'll not make a dinner of me, of me."

SLEEPY TIME

"I don't want to go to bed, boo-hoo:"
Sobbed a sleepy little boy I knew.
But the birds as they flew overhead,
Sang "Tweet, tweet, 'tis time to go to bed" .

From the garden chirped the chicks, "Peep, peep,
Now 'tis time for us to go to sleep";
And the sleepy calves beneath the shed,
Called "Moo-oo, we want to go to bed".

From the nests still comes a sleepy song,
And the calves their drowsy "Moo" prolong;
But within the house there's silence deep,
The rebellious lad is first asleep.

CARL'S QUESTIONS

I wonder why the happy days
Are never half so long,
As rainy days, or other days
When every thing goes wrong?

I wonder why the naughty things
Are what I like to do?
While good things often seem so hard;
I think it's queer, don't you?

I wonder why I don't like work,
But always do like fun?
I wonder why my dog beats me
In every race we run?

I wonder why grown folks get tired
Of answering questions so?
When I get big, I'll tell the boys
'Bout everything I know.

To M. G. and J. dear
 (My own three rogues) I give this book
 I hope the rhymes now gathered here
 Will mem'ries bring of cushioned nook,
 Where smiling lips and roguish eyes
 Gave lavish mead of children's praise;
 When the shy bard in this so wise
 Here tested first these simple lays.

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