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Arch
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1914-1918
War.

Diggers' Poems

INCLUDING

"The Landing at Gaba Tepe"

BY

Returned Soldiers

The wild flowers bloom around their graves;
The sad sea breeze that blows
Sings, "Never a coward came from the land
Where the wild clematis grows."

Price - One Shilling

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[Arch 472]

Diggers' Poems

ANZACS.

What means these great white ships at sea,
Ploughing their Eastward track,
Bearing their mangled human freight,
Bringing the spent men back?
They mean that New Zealand has been there:
They mean she has played the game,
And her wonderful sons have won their share
Of everlasting fame.

Battered and worn and war scarred—
Those who had left their land
Strong in their glowing manhood,
By England to take their stand.
Those who had sailed when the war-cloud burst
Out on a distant foam,
To the tune of "New Zealand Will Be There"—
Thus they are coming home!

What means these absent numbers,
The gaps in the stricken line?
You will find the graves which tell you
On the trail by Lonesome Pine.
On the slope of Aki Baba,
On Kaja Chemen's brow,
They died the death of heroes,
As New Zealand's sons know how.

Eager for battle, they leapt ashore
At the cove where their name was won;
They stormed the cliffs of Sari Bair.
Where the death-trap gullies run:
In the lead-rent scrub by Krithia,
On the banks of the Kereves Dere,
High on the shell-swept ridges—
New Zealand has been there!

There is silence on the beaches now,
The battle-din has fled
From the gullies, cliffs and ridges.
Where they charged up, fought and bled.
There's a little cove that's sacred—
North of Gaba Tepe Hill—
To the glory of the men who died,
And a name that never will!

And now on the fields of Flanders,
'Tis eternised once more,
At Polygon Wood and Broodseinde,
At Pozieres, Armentieres, Messines,
Bapaume and Bullecourt,
By the frozen Somme and Aisne,
In the snow-clad front-line trenches—
New Zealand is there again.

There are great white vessels sailing,
And they hear the joy and pain,
And the glory of New Zealand's sons,
Who have not bled in vain;
Tho' crippled, helpless, maimed for life,
Tho' more than death their loss,
There is more than life in the glory,
Of the burden of their cross.

Greater than jewel-decked Emperor,
Greater than ermined King,
Clad in their faded suits of blue,
The men that the white ships bring.
What tho' their crown a bandage,
Stretcher or cot their throne;
Splints or a crutch their sceptre—
The ANZAC name is their own!

AUSTRALIANS.

(Written after hearing a wealthy merchant
speak disparagingly of Australians).
"We are not cotton-spinners all, but some love
England and her honour yet."

We stand on the shore of Durban,
And watch the transports go,
To England from Australia,
Hurrying to and fro,
Bearing the men of a nation
Who are heroes to the core—
To stand or fall by the motherland,
And they're sending thousands more!

We've watched the ships returning,
With the cripple and the maim,
With limbs that trail and falter—
Theirs an immortal name.
The deathless name of "Anzac,"
That thrills from Pole to Pole,
The remnants of the heroes
On the long and glorious Roll.

And now in their tens of hundreds
Come the men to fill their ranks,
And what can we do to show them
Our love, our pride, our thanks?
We can't do much (I own it),
But give them a passing cheer—
While the real elite beat a shocked retreat—
Why, they saw one drinking beer!

O God, could we show these misers
The path that the Anzacs went!
Could they rest in their beds at night-time?
Or live in their damned content?
Could they talk with a sneer of Australians
When one or two get drunk?
I'd rather a drunk Australian
Than a wealthy Durban funk!

He's a better man than you are,
You dear teetotal saint!
You do not drink—you will not fight!
What wonderful restraint!
We stand on the shore of Durban,
For we're not all made like you,
And the glorious name of "Auzac"
Thrills us thro' and thro'.

But all we can do is to cheer them,
And throw them an orange from the shore;
We're not millionaires, like some are,
Or perhaps we would try to do more.
They're coming in tens of thousands,
And here's to their honour to-day—
Here's to the Sister Dominion
Who is showing us the way!

—By E.M.C., a South African.

A SOLDIER'S FAREWELL.

Farewell, dear New Zealand, the land our birth:
Farewell to the loved ones, our homes and our
hearth;
No more the sweet wattle, all laden with gold,
For one glimpse of its beauty we'd love to behold.

Now sails the big transport far over the sea,
Three cheers for New Zealand, the land of the free;
If ever we return to your bright, sunny shore,
It will be when our fighting is needed no more.

Farewell, dear New Zealand, it may be for a while:
It may be for ever, our dear sunny isle;
No matter, our level land, wherever we be,
We'll fight for you, honour and liberty.

Then cheer for us, pray for us, help us to win,
For our home and our country, for kith and for kin;
Good-bye, dear New Zealand, until we return
To the land of the kiwi, the kauri and fern.

JIM.

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X We were mates, were Jim and I—X
Mates right from the start,
From when we went to camp together,
Until he fell shot through the heart.

We joined the same battalion,
We trained at Trentham Camp;
And many the weary mile we marched,
Through mud, and snow, and damp.

We had finished up our training,
And were ordered to the front,
To join the boys out here in France,
And help to bear the brunt.

We were sitting in our dug-out,
A' yarning of olden times,
When the order came to "Stand to,"
We were wanted down the lines.

At last the scrap was over,
Just a scrimmage, that was all;
We never even stopped one,
Though we saw others round us fall.

We were sitting in a dug-out,
Just a hole dug in the ground,
With a roof made out of sandbags,
To keep the bullets off, flying round.

It was one morning in December,
We were fighting in the snow,
And it wasn't the kind of fighting
That you see in the picture show.

We were sitting in a shell-hole,
Out there in "No Man's Land,"
Waiting for the signal to go
At 'em man for man.

We hopped in his front-line trenches,
And were bombing side by side,
When a sniper's bullet copped him:
That's how my clobber died.

He was just a rough New Zealander,
One the "Frenchies" call "Tres bon,"
And I miss him something awful,
And I'm lonely **now he's gone.**

Although I'm **badly wounded,**
Perhaps I'll **fight no more:**
We've done our best together,
Good-bye, Jimmy, "Au Revoir."

A SOLDIER'S DREAM OF HOME.

On a shattered field of battle,
By a camp-fire gleaming bright,
There a soldier-boy lies dreaming
Of his home sweet home to-night.

He can see the blue ridged mountains
Of New Zealand's sunny shore;
He can see the wild clematis
Blooming by the old home door.

He can hear the hush-bird singing,
Oh, how happy there he seems,
Tho' on a field of battle,
At home in a land of dreams.

All the world's in bloom before him,
Not a vision of cruel war;
All are scenes of peace and gladness
As they were to him before.

As he dreams of his dear mother,
Tho' so far across the main,
In his dream he softly murmurs,
I am with you once again.

That sweet dream of home is over,
He has bid them all good-bye;
As again he slowly awakens,
From his heart there comes a sigh.

For the scenes he loved have left him--
They are fading o'er the foam;
Just a dream of tender memories,
That's a soldier's dream of home.

LEAVE!

A wandering thought, a tender heart,
Is that which gives the pain,
As duty calls a life abroad
To baffle wind and rain.

Yes, here in France we'll have to stay,
We mean to stay, that's more;
Unless the Huns will meet our views,
And all our rights restore.

For months we've boiled and still go on,
And wonder all the while,
When can we tread the muddy road,
That carries, "Yes," a smile.

At last the message comes along,
Imagine our delight,
To think at last, we're homeward bound,
A refuge in our plight.

We pack our relics safe and sound,
And swing along with glee,
To catch the first train of the night
That takes us to the sea.

We're off, it matters not how long,
Before the journey back;
We nestle in the carriage,
Of the big smoke on the track.

It crawls through space towards the sea,
It fails to know our need
To get away from Flanders,
For a week at lightning speed.

The engines speak, we glide along,
With God's good luck and speed;
We place a life-belt round our waist,
In case of any need.

Then shortly after the haze appears,
What can it really be?
A steep incline of whiteness
With its face towards the sea.

Eight days of peace and gladness,
Eight days of joy and bliss;
How sweet to see one's parents,
And to feel their "good-night kiss."

No shells are bursting round us;
Our ears hear not the guns;
And thanks to England's navy,
We need not fear the Huns.

MOTHER, WE MEET AGAIN.

Why are you sad, dear mother?
Ah, why should you worried be?
The same blessed Providence, mother,
Is ever watching over me.

Think of these words, dear mother;
Hope is my guiding star;
Claim it as yours, dear mother,
Whilst I am from you far.

My thoughts are ever turning,
To you they seem to roam;
And my heart is ever yearning
For the quiet scenes of home.

'Tho' on a field of battle,
Do you think I once forget
The sunbird and the wattle,
Memories that cheer me yet?

If fancy thou art near me;
And I often breathe a sigh;
When a comrade scarce can hear me,
And the winds alone reply.

Of do my home-thoughts wander
Over the restless main;
And in your ear I whisper,
Mother, meet me again. *yes me nie*

THE LANDING.

~~You may talk of Balaclava,
And of Trafalgar Day;
But what about our gallant boys
That landed at Suvla Bay?~~

There were Turks along the hillsides,
Our boats they were trying to smash;
Till our Monitors came into action,
To make the final dash.

I've been asked to describe a battle,
Which our memory always will keep;
To our Boys it was a great victory—
The landing at Gaba Tepe.

On the 25th morning of April,
Sunday, I know, was the day;
So now to describe to you plainly,
'Twas our Grand Fleet led the way.

The order is given, "All Ready!"
In lifeboats we all disembark,
To take part in this awful battle
And play such a wonderful part.

It was only a partial Division;
Some had seen service before
In bringing to a final decision
An affray on a Turkish shore.

Of New Zealanders there were not many,
Still other Brigades were at hand;
But the gallant old Third boys were chosen
To make the dread trial to land.

They only numbered Four Thousand,
The cream of New Zealand's flock;
And gallantly they marched into action,
A chip off the old British block.

Next came the First and Second,
The Fourth and one heavy gun;
When hard pressed, the Australians
Came up to finish the fun.

With assistance from more of our Navy,
And boat loads of Troops, Khaki Clad;
We all started off gay and hearty,
Not one lad fainthearted, but glad.

Then, to the small boats that were landing,
Came the furious bursting of shells;
There were hundreds of wounded and dying
And many were drowning as well.

But on, on they came through the waters,
Eager and mad for a fight;
Each lad knew it would be slaughter,
But a contest for a cause and a right.

At last we effected a landing,
But thousands lay wounded and dead;
All that remained were a handful,
To the Germans and Turks up ahead.

But our lads took all before them,
With rifle and bayonet in hand;
They drove every Turk in disorder,
Far back in his own native land.

Positions and trenches seemed hopeless,
For inch after inch they were mined;
Still gallant New Zealanders and English
Left none of their courage behind.

Over mined trenches and dug-outs,
Onward we dashed without fear;
Forcing those Turks to surrender,
And shouting with cheer after cheer.

But after shelling and firing a village,
Came an order: "Retire into Line,"
And the sight our eyes saw at the finish
Until death, will never leave mine.

THE BOY WHO WENT AWAY.

There's a mother somewhere thinking,
Thinking of her son to-day;
Whilst for us he's bravely fighting
In the thickest of the fray.
How her heart fills up with sorrow
As the postman leaves the gate,
Knowing not what's in the letter—
Be it glad news or be it fate.

On her careworn brow there's sorrow,
It has claimed its resting-place;
Where red roses once were blooming
On her kind and gentle face.
As she kneels alone in silence,
Just to lisp a fervent prayer,
That God on high may shield her son
On a battlefield somewhere.

Oft in fancy there she sees him,
Through each sad and lonely day,
As he was when just a baby,
Nestling by her side to play;
But it's just the cause of fancy,
For we know that he's not there;
When the brave are fiercely fighting,
He has gone to do his share.

With the heart's love of their country,
Victory glowing on each face;
Like this boy who left his mother,
Other mothers' sons you'll trace.
From death's ranks muffled war drums
He'll come marching home some day,
When you're not the slightest thinking
Of the boy who went away.

DOWN IN OUR TRENTHAM CAMP.

(May be sung to the air of "Tennessee.")

I'm so lonely, oh, so lonely,
In our Trentham Camp;
Not worth a penny stamp,
I'm worse off than a tramp;
Father, Mother, Sister, Brother,
All are waiting me;
I'm getting thinner, miss my dinner,
And my Sunday's tea.

(Chorus)

Down in our Trentham Camp,
That's where we get the cramp,
Through sleeping in the damp,
We're not allowed a lamp;
All we can hear there each day
Is left! right! all the way;
Sergeants calling, Lance Jacks bawling,
Get out on parade;
We go to bed at night,
You ought to see the sight,
The earwigs on the floors
All night are forming fours;
If we're in bed in the morning,
You will hear the Sergeant bawling:
"Show a leg there! Show a leg there!"
Way down in Trentham Camp.

GONE—BUT NOT FORGOTTEN.

Your New Zealand Sons are sleeping, far over in
a lonely land;
They did their best, along with the rest, and
that's how they died and fell.
They showed the world New Zealand's lads knew
well the way to die;
And they sleep there, and they sleep there, quiet
where they lie.

Shrapnel Gully is on their left, Quinn's Post is
on their right,
Anzac Beach is at their feet, where the waves
sing day and night;
Around them sea and barren land, over them
sky,
For we left them, for we left them, sleeping where
they lie.

The wild flowers bloom around their graves;
The sad sea breeze that blows
Sings, "Never a coward came from the land
Where the wild clematis grows."

THE PARTING.

Dear little love, don't fret,
'Tis best that I should go;
At the Empire's call,
To stand or fall,
Against this treacherous foe;
You know I shan't forget,
So, dear little love, don't fret.

Dear little eyes, don't weep,
It fills my soul with pain
To see you cry,
For look, the sky
Has a rainbow in the rain,
And death is only sleep.
So, dear little eyes, don't weep.

Dear little heart, don't break,
For should the fates decree
That I no more
See New Zealand's shore,
Then truly say to me,
I died for England's sake:
So, dear little heart, don't break.

FROM SHOVEL TO SAM BROWNE.

Should you be lazy, dull and slow, and dopey as
a mule,
You'd be like X, whose troopmates swore he was
a perfect fool;
But fluence aids commissions, a traditional army
rule,
X soon was swanking with a "star" slung at him
—Trentham School.

Promotion in the N.Z.E.F.—that makes the
troopers smile,
Here's further information how X rose in rapid
style;
This "one-star" leader of ——— troop lacked
strategy and wile,
And in civilian life at business failed to make
his pile.

At blanky blank for leading men he won his
"second star."
X wasn't on this "stunt" at all, but further back
by far,
Mugging some red-lipped "Hebe," behind a Cairo
bar!
Shows dizzy heights are oft attained in some hired
motor car.

While squadron leader X got slewed, his troops
led "bush" one night,
He wandered round in circles (this just whisper
—X was Tight)—
But as no casualties occurred, H.Q. said such
foresight
Deserved recognition—gave X captain's rank and
right.

"Square Dink!" promotions come so fast, among
ourselves we laugh,
For further laurels X has won, the subject of
much chaff:
Gained on some "Demonstration Stunt," where
brains X left quite half,
So red tabs now and crown X wears, he's Majah
on the Staff!

"THE POISONER'S" M.M.

A "poisoner" won the M.M. true!
Just pull the other leg, "Dig," do!
"Too right," cook "Greasy Jack" looks proud
And sports a decoration loud,
He won his honor dinkum fair,
His offsidars and troopmates swear.
Don't "wake him up" with statements rash,
You know when roused he's fond of "lash."

—— Troop missed this last "stunt," you know,
Detailed on prisoner escort go;
The lucky "cows" stoush seldom get,
They camped near Rewchon through the wet.
Last April tenth, when "Jacko" shelled,
Remember?—we "the Pimple" held;
H.Q. since "issued" out a few
"Troop Decorations" like they do.

One went, of course, for work that day
To Greasy's troop, who missed the fray;
As none had deeds of valor done,
Moot question who the bauble won.
Their Sergeant said, decide they must,
Knew their decision he could trust;
For Sergeants their three chevrons keep
By details oft not probing deep.

Well, "Dig," of course, they got the "dice,"
Spun who should wear the ribbon "quies."
Old Greasy threw eighteen (the main),
He "headed" all his mates, that's plain,
So now he elevates his chest,
And wears a ribbon on his breast;
For that's how "Greasy" won the fame
Of M.M. tacked on to his name!

IN APPRECIATION.

Dear stranger, I've read your grand verses,
With brave and true heart shining forth;
And whatever the trials or reverses,
How grandly you noble men fought.

The landing amid the shells falling,
While comrades drop dying, or drowned;
How can I suppress this sad feeling
Or hide a sad heart with a frown?

With numbers decreasing you pressed on
And firmly stood to your guns;
Can I find any words to express
Our pride in New Zealand's brave sons?

Ah, yes, it was grand, and we know it,
True metal showed forth in you all;
You went without coaxing or conscrip.,
And answered your country's first call.

I called you a stranger, but surely
I'm entitled to call you a friend,
For did you not go forth so truly
And offer your life to defend?

Oh, would there were more men just like you,
As brave, as bold, and as true;
To help our tired men in the trenches,
Carry this great struggle through.

