

Tom's Book of
Poems.

FAIRIES.

THERE are fairies at the bottom of our garden!

It's not so very, very far away;
You pass the gardener's shed and you
just keep straight ahead;
I do so hope they've really come to
stay.

There's a little wood, with moss in it
and beetles,
And a little stream that quietly runs
through;
You wouldn't think they'd dare to come
merrymaking there—
Well, they do.

There are fairies at the bottom of our
garden!
They often have a dance on summer
nights;
The butterflies and bees make a lovely
little breeze,
And the rabbits stand about and hold
the lights.
Did you know that they could sit upon
the moonbeams
And pick a little star to make a fan,
And dance away up there in the middle
of the air?
Well, they can.

There are fairies at the bottom of our
garden!
You cannot think how beautiful they
are;
They all stand up and sing when the
Fairy Queen and King
Come gently floating down upon their
car.
The King is very proud and *very* hand-
some;
The Queen—now can you guess who
that could be
(She's a little girl all day, but at night
she steals away)?—
Well—it's ME!

SOME VERSIFICATIONS
CONCERNING
EAST AFRICA.

62

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et.

①

AN
EAST AFRICAN
ALPHABET

12. 2. 17.

Mkindu

An East African Alphabet

- A is Assigned to the African Aunts,
which Auntie About in my shirt & my pants
- B are the Baudas we Build in the Bush
when not for the moment engaged in a 'push'
- C is for "Chai" - 'Swakili' for 'Tea' -
if this issued us more, more Contacts we'd be
- D is the Daressalaam-ian Base -
It's not long ago that we captured the place
- E might mean Enemy - but better 'the End'
for it's there & there only that our thoughts ever tend
- F is the Fever that Few can Frustrate -
even I have had more than my share up to date
- G is of course the de Gussate German
we'd all be delighted to preach him a sermon
- H is for HAIG - tho' it's HOSKYN'S out Here
who's Holding the Cards for victory this year
- I is the Issue of rum that we get
If we're lucky - to help us to combat the wet.

- J. are the "Jumbos" - on them much depend
our supplies - & so further the ultimate end
- K's KIBAMBAWE - not suited at present
to those who are sick, or perhaps convalescent
- L is the Lowliness - not infrequently felt
when you're banished away 'mid the Bush or the Veldt
- M Must Mean Mails, Mosquitoes, or Mules
for all 3 agree in observing no rules
- N are the Noises disturbing the NIGHT
from Hyenas that laugh - to mosquitoes that bite
- O is the Office - or Origin whence
springs a form of beasts 're' attack or defence
- P. are the Prosimians found in all climes
though we're no earthly use for such men in these
times.
- Q. is Quinine quite the Quickest thing out
to ward off attack when malaria's about
- R. are the Rations - just now Rather Rare
it's Really quite true we received better fare
- S Simply must be assigned to the Sun
they say that this country's the hottest but one

T is the Terribly Tedious Trek

with the sweat running down from your face and
your neck

U we connect with submarine

which brands men for life with the word

V is the Vengeance one nation exacts ^{"LUSITANIA"}

from another whose crimes have been proved to be

W hat With William the Father & William the Son ^{facts}

who have Wantonly plotted & planned every one

'X' 5 times over, (it stumped me at first)

is the brand that I dream of for smacking my

Y are the Years taken out of your life ^{thirst}

when you've devoted a dozen to this miserable

"Z" is a letter denoting a section ^{strike}

(denoting) of signals which Dowding has
brought to perfection

And so I've been through once again A-Z

but my brain's far too small for the size of
my head.

②

" 1 F — "

with most exceptional apologies to R.K.

26. 2. 17.

Mkindu.

- IF you're pleased to be as hot - well as hot as you can be,
so to run with perspiration that you simply cannot see;
- IF you're fond of ceasless kicking miles & miles into the bush,
when you're very much mistaken into thinking its a "Push";
- IF you're ready to be bitten by mosquitoes all the way,
or attacked by irritating ants the blessed livelong day;
- IF it pleases you to wade thro' marshy swamps up to your neck,
or to find yourself negotiating mountains in your back;
- IF you really rather like it when you're only flour & rice,
& you hate the thought of beer - 'deeming puddles' just as nice
- IF you're proof against Malaria, and proof against the Sun,
and proof against the Dysentery, the bane of every one;
- IF you're pleased to be 6000 miles away from kith & kin,
& prefer to have no letters with news of Home therein
- IF you don't mind "nottin' doin'" when you're banished
with not a place to go to, not a thing to do all day;
right away,
- IF you love the thick-lipped native & his filthy dirty ways,
& enjoy a climate tropical, 'what anybody says

THEN you're a blinkin' marvel & the place for you's out here,
so come along! & be "a sport", & swoop" with me, old dear!
but stay! what of your "kaspers" [or whatever I shd style 'em]
for you are obviously an inmate of a LUNATIC ASYLUM!

3

A PASSING SHOW

(being the chronicles of Draft 118 for
B.E.A from embarkation at Devonport
to disembarkation at Dar-es-Salaam)

20. III. 17

Mkudu.

One typically English Day,
the Adjutant looked in to say
"you'd best be getting under weigh,
"you're lucky! you're for B.E.A!"

[Adjutants are terse, you see,
'least, when they wd get rid of us].

I therefore packed the things I'm rich in -
Pattens & Pipes - & went to MITCHIN; (✓
a most delightful little spot,
as you may find [or you may not
when seven weeks have passed away,
and you are still "for B.E.A"!]
and there I found it was my fate
to be "O.C. Draft 118" -
forced to await in ample leisure
some "embarkation" General's pleasure.
we drilled we marched, we marched we drilled,
& that was how our time was filled

over

But soon a mutual understanding,
'tween men and "officer commanding",
grew up and helped to make amends,
by making all the best of friends.

At length arrived the longed-for day —
another "Adj" looked in to say,

" Goodbye, old fellow, off you go!

" your train will leave at 'so 6.50' "

[I told ya Adjutants were terse,
besides it makes another verse!]

By stealthy means + subtle craft
they hatched off my little draft,
and e'en the sun arose, we'd caught
the detailed ship at DEVONPORT.

To each, our disappointment deep —
the fact his friends were all asleep,
for each, I think, sustained the hope he
might impress them in his 'topse'!

over

But cheerfully we went aboard,
and all of us with me accord
proceeded to investigate
a 'liner-transport', up-to-date,
with quarters for 2000 men
(almost a floating cattle-pen!) -
to learn that when they spoke of "port",
it wasn't quite the ~~the~~ kind you thought!
that when a ship is subdivided,
you do not speak of "rear", as I did!
But yet, how specially fine it
'tis to sail upon the "briny".

[But just about the 2nd day
a member thought the other way,
each yied in miserable sport to
cast his bread "upon the water",
in fact to prove himself unwater,
in getting rid of what he'd eaten!]

over

But Time, Dispeller of Despair,
stepped in to heal their "mal de mer",
[it was 'up to' him to rest it soon,
I mean of course the draft's spittooon!]

For 20 days we saw no land ←
got rather bored with 'seascapes', and
soon organized some concerts, sports,
boxing, & tournaments of sorts,
whereby we thwarted if we'd got any
natural feelings of monotony.

On deck one morn I scrambled out,
asking "what's all the noise about?",
found simply that they'd sighted land,
a promontory - a spit of sand -
in fact each found he couldn't curb an
insane interest in DURBAN!

In time of course we landed there
and thought we'd but an hour to spare,

over

so rushed around, and little thought
a 3-weeks' stay would prove too short!
But that's what happened - and I'll bet
each owes a very heavy debt
of gratitude for all the favors
the people made of each of us,
surpassing possibility
in boundless hospitality.

The day came round to say farewell
[to make exchange of Heaven for - well!],
and as the Transport slid out,
we raised a most unholly shout,
striving to give expression credit
to all our pent up gratitude.

Another week had passed away
and we were anchored in a bay,
gazing perhaps with apprehension
upon a port I shall not mention,

For there's the chance the censor might — ?
but "somewhere in G.E.A.'s" alright!

They sent a crazy, crewless craft
to take on shore my little draft —

They lost no time — they made no bones —
in separating Smith from Jones:
and when they ceased to operate,
I found they'd murdered "118" —
and though I muttered, standing there
"Que voulez-vous"? + "c'est la guerre",
I knew that nought could make amends
for robbing me of all my friends.

* * * *

So with this wicked 'mutilation'
I'll use, long due, consideration,
and stop myself conglomerating
verse upon verse of idle prating
concerned with just the martial topic
[of interest wholly microscopic]
of "how amazingly soon it's
possible to break up units!"

(4)

"RICE"

[dealing with a 'food problem' at a time when G.H.Q. staff left the RUFIGI RIVER for drier more commodious quarters up the line during the period of "the rains" Feb-June 1917]

21. 3. 17.

Mpaungar.

Now with the coming of "the rains", when G.H. Quarters
deem fit to scurry back to somewhere dry
I think it's 'up to' them to see there's brought us
left as we are, (and they alone know why),
some nice change of ration
instead of rice, e.g., for which they've such a passion!

Back they have gone & left us to our sorrow
to vegetate astride RUFIGI's banks;
"DARESALAAM", you ask, "or MOROGORO?"
I know not — take no further interest, though —
except that he who caters
shd send us, say, a hundred-weight of "taters"

But what a hope! I know that frugal feeling
begotten of brassed-latticed "gents", well fed
on food piled & drink piled high from floor to ceiling
in some great Ordnance store or shed:

We'll see no "taters"

But rice and rice again, to aggravate us!

Small consolation now to see it stated
by Mr RUNCIMAN (of old repute)
that "spuds are very greatly over-rated,
"rice makes a splendid substitute"!

Poor idiot misguided
you very obviously have never tried it!

[See Daily Mirror, Jan 2, 1917]

So must we make it our resolve to lump it—
[and after all they say it well sustains
the body;]—whilst the KAISER blows his trumpet
and we are hibernating for "the rains"—

The rice I'm really dreading
is what they'll serve to kattle at my wedding!

5

ODE

"TO AN ONION"

[being additional comments upon
the food problem during the rains"
in the RUFIDI, 1917]

29. 3. 17.

Mfangas.

Time was when I despised thee well,
deemed thee some bastard product of the soil,
cursed thee for thy loathsome taste & smell -
abane! from which is horror to recoil!

No pleasure then to see thee on my plate,
boiled in thy jacket (just for pity's sake),
or, mutilated, fried - to serve as mate
to some poor lone well-toughened piece of
steak.

But times have changed - [you'll find me now
[a hungry savage banished far away
[where all I think of resimoly is how
[I'll fare with reference to my rations for the
day]

please turn over.

Now 'tis my fondest hope - that tho' of old
I cursed thee for a "hell-begotten veg:",
thou wilt forgive me all - not leave me "cold
struggling as I am to take the edge
from off an appetite - not over 'keen' -
with rice, and 'wealy', & the noxious bean.
A hundred of thy race, I say, (if on my feed)
would ill-succeed in sat'isf'g us my greed!

* * * *

In short, I'd be exceptionally a funny 'un
if I continued us, to shun an onion!

!!
112

— " —

⑥

"BUBBLES"

19.8.15

France

Eliza

I call her "Bubbles" - why, you say?

because she bubbles all the day
with mirth and laughter overflowing,
and never for a moment showing
spirits low or mind depressed -
and that is why I love her, best

— " —

⑦

"THE BUZZER"

[to be found outside, as well as
inside Signal Officers -]

11. 4. 17.

Mpausa's.

I know a noisome, winged pest,
which nightly sleep & comfort vexes —
[possibly you may have guessed,
I am referring to mossquitoes]

So soon as e'er the sun has set —
As a warning that there's trouble coming —
almost immediately I'll bet
you'll hear a ~~couple~~^{hundreds} of them humming

Once they're out on forage bent
you'll be helpless to prevent it,
and you'll find 'tis their intent
just to leave you quite demoralized

"Got him that time", you'll exclaim,
striking hard some hapless feature
of your long tormented frame,
hoping to have killed the creature —

Successful you may be or not
but in sooth you are forgetting
he has comrades on the spot,
known for "aiding and abetting"

Thus altho' you may succeed
in effectually striking
one you're caught, about to feed,
[say upon your wrist, a lightning]

yet his friends'll take his place —
Wherefore now your satisfaction
at the murder? if your face
promptly's bitten to distraction

Yes - you're powerless in defence
they'll devour you - that's quite certain
'cos you're seldom got the sense
to take cover 'neath your curtain

Thus on Africa's Eastern shores -
shores the Indian Ocean washes -
we can't gain the World's applause,
'cos we fighting Bugs, not Boches!

and in passing contemplation
think upon the debt the fleet owes
to the sea - for preservation
from carnivorous mosquitoes!

⑧

"ME MISERUM!"

[added in reply to H.W.A. No 9. Coy 3/N.R.
requesting the auth. to make
a/mnth. at Bridge.]

16. 4. 17.

Mpangar

In taking note about this 'area'
N.B. its pregnant with 'malaria'
so, sadly I'm unfitted quite
to take a hand at Bridge tonight —
and more — it is my firm belief
that I shall ~~surely~~ die — (I grieve)!

— 1. —

9

"SPEED BONNY BOAT....."

[relating to a small ferry upon which,
which alone, the white Nigerian Bde
depended for food during the heavy
rains on the Rufiji in Feb - May 1917]

20. 4. 17.

Mpangas

Just now from tropical rain
the river rather full is,
and I am nervous for the strain
imposed upon ropes & pulleys,

which go to help the tiny boat
that constitutes "the ferry"
to cross, recross, & keep afloat -
a ticklish business - very!

When first the make the crossing here
and you could see the bottom, I
assert we had nought else to fear
but "crocs" and hippopotami;

Here was with one continuous roar
a swirling torrent rushes -
oblivious to either shore,
engulfing trees and bushes.

And always there's the problem, now
the river's daily rising,
when's'er the ferry crosses, how
to keep it from capsizing;

For on that solitary boat we all
depend for our existence —
it being what others choose to call
the "food for our" subsistence".

Proo' food it is, but welcome — yes!
to "keep the home-fires burning";
and after all, as you might guess,
to do without we're learning!

Wherefore our thoughts too often turn
to when the ferry's tossing,
showered in spray from stem to stern
forever it's risky crossing.

So here's to all the men afloat!
particularly, e.g.,
those who steer our ratin-boat
across the Great Rufiji!

— " —

10

"DULCE ET DECORUM EST..."

OR

TRISYLLABILITIS

[added to a pair of boots which took 4.
another many hundreds of miles in
comfort until worn completely through
top & bottom]

22. 4. 17.

Mpangas

A Time of War brings many a last farewell,
and more - a most unreasonable mortality
'mongst men (and other things), so let us dwell
one moment on a personal fatality.

Unlooked for and unthought has come the day,
[Enfin, mon dieu, ce n'était pas désiré!]
for me, addressing just a pair of boots to say
"Farewell! you've done your bit"! [O dieu irac!]

Too true! farewell it is, my leathered friends,
[I wonder if an equal blow to them it is,
[to bid adieu, when every thing depends
[on comfortably enclosing one's extremities!]

True to the end - your praise of nursing
you've brought me thro' the tedious-tick-monotony,
never to beat-up feelings giving "tongue"
[that is of course assuming that you've got any!]

So long as I could always find you sound
in 'sole' and body, as that lay at DUNSTABLE,
when I "attested" both of you and found
you suited to me (and the village constable!)

So long indeed I've always trusted you, content
knowing that I might always put my money on
that most unusual gift of yours, head'u-scut,
I never raising blister, corn, or bunion!

Down trodden you have been at heel, and yet
there's been of coming parting no presentiment;
I knew I'd never any cause to fret
until I lost your 'sole', & so your sentiment.

But now at last you've reached th' appointed goal -
the day of "Kingdom Come" - "ποὶ ποὶ τὰ δὲ ἄρ' αὐτῶν!"
Warm tears & pray'rs for your departed "sole"
'tis meet for me, your master, to assign a few.

No easy task 'twill be to fill your place —
Once more that sense of shame! that little blush! as
trying to find my courage, keep my face,
I ask for "size eleven-fives" in "vestle crackers"!

O monstrous rhyme! apology I crave,
hoping that in your certain animosity,
O reader, you'll have pity for a knave
fast in the fatal clutches of verbosity!

* * * *

'Tis Sunday too! would rather I were home
to his use where some choir a tuneless anthem
or else at least contentedly to roam ^{hums,}
amid my garden, nodding with chrysanthemums

11

"CREDIT TO WHOM CREDIT IS DUE"

5. 5. 17.

Mpangas

There's a country far away
where the Germans once held sway -
but it's not the same today
as of yore

Now, in spite of all precautions
there's a very small proportion
of "the apple" left - the portion
called "the core"

But it's obviously plain
with regard to this campaign
if it wasn't for the rain
(and supplies)
we'd have had it all decided
long ago, and thus provided
cause for gratitude (as I did,
swatting flies)

But as I said before
Now they've only just "the core"
of the "apple", (nothing more)
in their grip —
When once it ceases raining
& we start again campaigning,
there'll be sought for their remains,
but "the PIP" !

Any credit for the show
is as usual sure to go
to the people whom the fox
's never seen,
but who can beat the practical,
strategical or tactical
success of prophylactical
QUININE ?

12

"MAILS"

5. 5. 17

Mpaugas

When you're feeling rather bored or pessimistically inclined,
for the moment discontented with the lot to you assigned,
When you've got a touch of 'fever', or of something of the kind,
What a wonderful physician is a Mail!

Though accustomed you may be to disconcertingly abuse
the Authorities responsible for keeping back the news;
Should "a something in the air" cause a sudden change of
views,
You can bet your bottom dollar it's a Mail!

When you've been on quarter rations, or have felt you'd
rather die ^{rather die}
than eat of the Maize-meal or rice that they provide;
Should quite suddenly you find that you are amply "satisfied",
The reason for it's obviously a Mail!

When you see no earthly reason why the war should ever end,
& you think that you have something like a life-time skill
in upholding all those principles we're fighting ^{to spread} to defeat,
Then it's time you had a tonic — say, a Mail!

over

Wherefore let me raise my glass, or better still my 'file',
[for I've sought to drink but water & its taste is simply vile.]
to all those charming people who think it worth their
to endeavour to provide me with a Mail! ^{white}

13

" SOME 'NEWS' ANCE "

[..... increased tax on tobacco at
1/10^d in the pound Reuters Telegram.]

7.5.17.

Myra's

Ill-fated news throughout the camp is spreading,
Like as a flame fanned by some fickle breeze,
News of a kind we've long in fear been dreading
Waiting in apprehension - ill at ease

What matter now these glorious successes,
Nobly yet with what sacrifice, attained!
What time the sod of strife redtressly progresses
O'er crimson battle-fields of France, blood-stained!

Of what avail the news that Turkey's fate is
Trembling in the balance, nay, but surely sealed!
Crushed as she is on Tigris and Euphrates
Broken in spirit, daily forced to yield

What solace now can we obtain by learning
Of Africa's deliverance from the Hun,
What comfort that the world is now discerning
The blood-red setting of the Teuton Sun?
over

M-fated news! Rather would I aez "the Crack o'
Doom", (as foretold in prophecies profound),
than learn they've taxed "Man's Comforts", tobacco -
a further one and twupence in the pound!

14

"A SINE QUA NON"

11. 5. 17

Mpasas

What are these pests, red, black, or yellow,
whose presence prompts the stoutest fellow
like some Basque Bull to follow?

Ants!

What means this hole of vast activity?
This eight-foot heap of red 'passivity'?
(piled long before my own nativity)

Ants!

What means this frost-turned soil extending
across some path you may be wending,
something with movement, never-ending?

Ants!

And whence these sudden deprivations
on what we're forced to call our ration?
and why these fervent execrations?

Ants!

And since just now ~~surely~~ it's wise to take an
int' rest in your food, unshaken, —
what's all the hubbub round the bacon?

Autos!

And why this quaint and subtle dealing,
in suspending from the ceiling
strange utensils, jam-concealing?

Autos!

And who, when govmandering ceases,
decide that useful rest and peace is
to be found in our valises?

Autos!

What foes are there, by Zeus Almighty!
that drive us into headlong flight, e—
— winking heart/self pray'rs for "Blighty"?

Autos!

— " —

15

"A. WARRIOR BOLD"

22. 5. 17

Mpangas

In Africa there was a man,
Of whom the World might say
That many a mighty risk he ran,
As many a soldier may -

Un-numbered foes would gather round
To drive him from his lair -
Some would attack 'by underground',
And some again 'by air'

But fearlessly and warrior-wise
He faced this hostile menace
From foes who happened to comprise
The Insect - Reptile genus.

Each day he slew a million out,
Mosquitoes knew no space
[The one would undermine his pants
[The other 'bomb' his face!]]

Tarantulas & Millipedes
deployed about his feet -
the subtle thrusts of snakes took heads
of darts, to defeat -

Frogs, lizards, hornets, ticks-flies,
chance Scorpions, and rats,
Chauncous with roving eyes,
green Grasshoppers, and Bats,

would all combine to shake his nerve,
and give him cause to think
what were his chances to preserve
himself, his food, his drink!

But one, among so many - yet
his foes he kept defying
with such success that you may bet
he didn't "do the dying"!

Yes - there he stands defiant still
this warrior bold and mighty!
[profoundly though, he hopes he will
soon make return to 'Blighty'!]

16

"WHIT MONDAY 1917"

29. 5. 17

Mpangas

[Whit Monday, 28th inst, will be observed as a general holiday in the Bde, except that guards, picquets, and patrols will be found as usual

extract from Bde Order 27.5.17. Mij. Bde]

Some subtle sense of humour is undoubtedly displayed in an order from the Staff of the NIGERIAN BDE, which ordains that we should recognize the 28th of May as a day of recreation, and "a general holiday".

The principle no doubt is quite correct and very sound, but when "guards, patrols, & pickets" are as usual to be ^{found} it is possible the infantry will feel inclined to say that they won't be much affected by this "general holiday".

I should also like to mention that where Signals are ^{concerned} [a unit who, if anyone, a 'holiday' has earned]— They will have to carry on in the usual tiresome way, so that they cannot participate in any "holiday".

Now the men who are responsible for directing our "Supplies" [the men you keep an eye on, get to know, if you are wise!] must perform their usual duties, so at least we hope & pray, though it means for them surrendering a "general holiday".

And the men who man the Hospital, may justly wonder why they may not take the "holiday", and let their patients die, for instinctively as soldiers, they shd haste to obey an order from headquarters for a "general holiday".

The Faridkots who ply the "Great Rufis; Katic Boat" seem also to possess a chance as usually remote, as the Carriers, 'Intelligence', or Agents in their pay, of obtaining much advantage from this "general holiday".

.x .x .x .x

Thus it's difficult to realize exactly what is meant by the order "as a holiday, Whitunday shall be spent" - I presume it's nothing more than just the "regimental" way of proclaiming that the Staff will take a "General Holiday".

Q. Bread is 'the Staff' of life - what is the life of 'the Staff'?

A. One Big Loaf!

FOUR SENTIMENTALITIES

1. "WINTER: 1917"
 2. "A Soliloquy"
 3. "J.A.R."
 4. "Love and a Cottage"
- " —

(17)

1. "WINTER 1917"

[with apologies to the Tattler]

12. 5. 17.

Mfansas

I care no more about this War
of deadly machinations -
I only know that frost, and snow,
and cold, has forced "my B" to go
into warm combinations ^{me}.

!! EN.

18

2. A SOLILOQUY
OF THE
RUFIGI

12.5.17

Mpangar

Do I behold the flaming sun
arise, whilst shadows flee —
proclaiming our new day begun,
Dear heart, I think of thee!

Do I behold this mighty stream
Tumbling towards the sea,
Tossing with fleecy foam — I dream,
Dear Heart, and think of thee!

Do I behold this mountain high
frowning in majesty
on shimmering plains of green, I sigh
Dear heart, and long for thee!

Do I behold the dainty wings,
the gorgeous 'lingerie',
of butterflies, and birds, and things —
Dear heart, I think of thee

Do I behold the crimson glow
of sunset — fair to see!
what time the evening Zephyrs blow,
dear heart, I think of thee!

Do I behold the moonlight's beam,
lighting my couch and me,
then let me close mine eyes & dream
all night, dear heart, of thee!

19

To

"J. A. R."

[born 1892 - killed in action 1916]

Capt. 7th South Lancs Rgt

16. 5. 17

Mpassas

Mighty of limb, of great outstanding presence,
humble, affectionate, and courteous to all —
Such were your attributes — & such the essence
of all you offered at your Country's 'Call'

Countless your friends of every generation,
World-wide your fame on Tamesis or Cam,
Worshipped by one, who tho' no blood-relation
knew you as a brother — once shared your 'pains'

You had no bloodstained lust for killing,
That priceless gift — humanity — was yours,
Yet did your Country, find you not un-willing,
Quickly to uphold a Rightful Cause

O cruel fate! but fate, how glorious,
[we must forget our loss beyond redemption]
to lead your men on battlefields victorious,
There to make your sacrifice Supreme!

Even so you died - [Facing an impious Kaiser
[whose crimes inhuman none can see forget]
Champion of Right! of Wrong, a sure Despoiler!
True to the end to principles self-set

* * * *

To carry on all heedless of the sorrow
that rips our aching hearts, still unmet with
To strive each day unceasingly to follow ^{pain,}
humbly, but surely, in his train,

This be our part - our main endeavour,
so may we serve him best - so feel the pride
in this his epitaph, to stand for ever
"Nobly he lived, more nobly yet he died"!

20

LOVE AND A COTTAGE

26. 5. 17

Mpaugas

I had a bag of 'baccy,
a faithful briar too -
I filled the bowl and sat me down
to smoke - and think of you!

I had a way-worn letter
in writing that I knew,
and valued as a priceless gift -
because - it came from you!

I had a tiny flower
drooping as flowers do
but pressed - yes pressed into my heart
for nice adorning you!

I had a faded photo,
a wide-encompassing view
of all the best-loved memories
I owned and prized - of you!

Please God, I'll have the fortune
one day to bid 'adieu'
to destinies now willing me
to live apart from you!

We'll have a l'il cottage
a l'il garden too,
and we will room our English home
together — me and you!

(21)

additional to
A few general COMPLAINTS
voiced

in a 'COMPLAINT' book,
[belonging to the regular mess



Mr. T. P. O'Connell
Allied Conference

for its
ed



When you come to the end of a 'perfect' day
and you sit in your bath and think —
you will find it is nearly always the way
that you haven't the time for a drink
in a Press where the members assemble in state
to the absurdly punctual sound
of a gong, which harshly proclaims "you're late",
with a subsequent "drinks all round"!

When you come to the end of a 'perfect' meal
and your soup's been a plate of fat,
and your fish has recalled a performing seal,
and your meat a carnivorous cat;
when your serviette, on the cloth, on both
as black as a 'nigger' are found,
then you're bound to let loose a ^{blasphemous} ~~damned~~ oath
and I'm damned if it's "drinks all round"!

Complaints

- i. Owing to Press at 7pm, no time for a drink
- ii of an expensive forfeit, if late
- iii of the food generally
- iv of a forfeit instituted for swearing when unavoidable

22

"HUN-KIND!"

(3. Aug. '17)

27. 8. 17.

Schardels

One day, I think it was the 3rd,
a little contact was occurred —
a force, of which I numbered one,
set out to strafe the wily Huns,
who always when we start a 'push'
betakes himself into the bush,
thus hidden to await his pleasure
to annoy us at his leisure.

This time, they said it was our duty
to occupy HILL TANDAMUTI:

Thus on the 3rd at break of day
we found ourselves well on our way —
Soon, very soon, some shots rang out
showing that there were Huns about,
singly, collectively, or both,
but hidden in the undergrowth.

The troops we had became engaged —
a miniature battle raged —

[the 'push' became a sad misnomer
for we were up against a 'boma'!]

our thoughts, attention, were in front
with those now bearing all the brunt
of heavy concentrated fire
from them who simply would not tire
of pumping lead into the bush
and stopping our intended 'push'
Wherefore our transport, disregarded,
foolishly we'd left unguarded
so ~~that we~~ ^{we were} alarmed to hear
a sudden firing in our rear.

Back we quickly went to find
the them had crept up from behind,
rushed the baggage, stores and kit,
(and an ambulance with it),
helped themselves to all they needed,
then as silently needed

whence they came, because they knew
~~that~~ ^{shd catch} if we caught them, what we'd do!
— Not a very great disaster —

seldom has a Hun run faster -
once he really tumbled to it
that we were in hot pursuit!

BUT one sequel, people mostly
disregard, affects us closely -

and o reader, you'll show pity
surely? if I close my ditty

with this fact (I'll whisper it)

that I LOST MY BLINKIN' KIT !!

A Quarrel and the
Settlement thereof -

1. 9. 17.

Schardels

Lt Norris' wire to Lt Innes 're' the
persistent retention by the latter, of
'shovels G.S. 4' belonging to the former

Sigs LA

"Hold your receipt for shovels G.S. 4, what
about them" — Sigs LZ.

Lt Innes to Lt Norris, in reply:-

Lt Norris.

Receipt admitted, dear old boy,
as earth-pins, they're in our employ,
but as you love them from afar
I'll send them in by motor-car,
tomorrow -

- Innes L

Godfrey I think

Here's a 'dinky' little banda at MTAMA!

It's not so very, very far away;

you cross a river bed & you just keep straight
ahead;
do so hope it's really come to stay!

Here's a little box with straw in it & bottles,
and a little stream of spirit running through;

wouldn't think they'd dare to get intoxicated
there—
well — they do!

Here's a 'dinky' little banda at MTAMA —

they often hold a dance, I'm told, at nights;

can go there if you please & enjoy yourself at ease
forget about the recent bloody fights.

Did you know that they can sit upon the 'skengies'
give 'em all 'kiboko' to a man,

and dance away in there to some merry tunesful
air?

well — they can!

But 1000 miles away in Africa, I'd be pretty sure to
a hornet's nest about me if I once began to sing

'What the deuce is it to you? What d'you mean?
we cannot see"

No - I know you can't - nor can you know how much
she is to me

So I suppose, as best I can, I'll have to 'stick' it where
and content my self with softly swearing - [nothing
I am
more than D-!]
and long for such a time when personally I may
just show them how they're 'left', when I take her
right away

I'll sit & only think of her as flitting to & fro
with a 100 eyes upon her, wherever she may go -
as pretty, as a picture - ! guess I see her sunny smile,
as she makes each grateful patient think his
heart is with the while!

There's an angel in a hospital a-flitting to & fro
with a 100 eyes upon her, wherever she may go -
She's as pretty as a picture - I can see her ^{smiling}
As she makes each grateful patient think his 'hurt'
is worth the while:

Now I'm quite convinced the 'sister's' last intention is to
cut it all because so easy with a 'nurse' to do ^{stink} work
and what importance is it if a double portion falls
upon the 'nurse' "each stupid man an angel always calls."

I'm also pretty certain that the others in the ward
don't mean to 'swing the lead' simply if there are need,
but why not? when there's an 'angel' always there,
will gladly do their 'dressing' in addition to her ^{and also alone} own?

(You see) I know a thing or two about the subject of my
play and I'm not so stupid, so short-sighted as I seem -
I just long to give them all a little something of my
to teach them how to 'play the game' or something ^{mind} of the
kind.

Endell St Hospital.

"Endellers" Eba. There

7. ENDELLERS

26.10.17

NJANGAO

Regiment

emblem of the Signals is a Mercury with wings
'the high-falutin'' for the telephones & things!
we'll have to change the banner & get a new one
they've 'been aware' & sent us up a CABLE-LAYING
PLOUGH!

is on a silly side-shoo, but we've Signals all the
we wd go so far to think they've even made a
I wd beg to differ - for I'd like to mention how
we've been so humbly presented with a CABLE-LAYING
PLOUGH!

day of corkin' sun when we were sweatin' on a
had halted for a moment & set up office in the bush
rumour of a mail nearly caused a blinkin' row
the only thing that reached us was a CABLE-LAYING
PLOUGH

we'll have to make surrender of that Mercury
might have the face to stick it with the telephones
if we're going to train to use a CABLE-LAYING
PLOUGH!
match the train of oxen, we'll have to have
a COW!

27

"Back to the land"

24. 10. 17

NJANGAO

We heed but one man in this 'area' —
Too often dull, relentless, cold —
Too often stricken with malaria,
but sometimes, worth his weight in gold!

He's master of our joy, our sorrow —
To him we look to learn our fate —
[Will fortune smile on us tomorrow,
or frown, as customary of late?]

His word is law, and yet we know
he will not purposely forget us —
his "G.O.C. the F.P.O.",
the man who dishes out the letters!

26

CUSTOS TABULARUM

18. 9. 17

Schae del s.

we steal by hidden paths & tracks,
we slide through thorns & bushes,
we move expecting flank-attacks, —
a feature of these 'pushes')

we tramp, we lunge, we crawl, we creep
through prairie grass and thicket,
we stumble forward half asleep, —
we wonder how we stick it !)

we murmur under moon and stars
in braubly wildernesses,
we linger loudly cursing 'Haro', —
for all his 'brastlinesses' !)

on again! —
and finally to our throes
the Huss[^] is our saviour —
or men may come and women may go
but we'll tick on for ever !

25

'THE PUSH'
[TIME - 2 a.m.]

17.9.17.

Schardels.

[after TENNYSON'S sonnet
'THE BROOK']

Some soothing strains broke forth at first —
— but when the interest flagged, I was
found to say we interspersed
a quantity of 'Rapture'!

But whether 'rag' or 'sentiment',
lilacious or fearful,
it filled us with supreme content
and made us all more cheerful

Thus do we rival now, by right,
a cruiser or a "man o'
war", in sailing forth to fight
embracing a piano!

Then suddenly there dawned a day,
when enterprising Sappers,
challenged a higher rate of pay
as pianoforte-kidnappers!

They yoked them to with wonderful skill
three shifts of thirty 'porters'
whose ardour never gave, until
they'd fixed it in our 'quarters'!

Four miles of track, a hill or two,
the two posts separated -

[a journey which I'll trouble you
should not be underrated!]

We cared not that each '3rd' or '5th'
'larded' in discordant manner -
successfully we turned it with
a motorcyclist's spanner!

because the objects of his "Hats"
landed their own faces
and hacked their way up to his gate! —
— [the sequel known of course, is!]

The farm became a forward post —
'twas manned by five and forty
Indians — who for the most
part scored a pinus/orte!

Some time in solitary state
it stood there meditating
why none had summoned it of late
to hum its hymn of hating

of warfare (the guerrilla kind)
we wearied, tired, and grew sick -
Eager some novelty to find,
we thought about some music

It chanced a Hun, some previous date,
when he was safe and thought he
might to learn the "Hymn of Hate",
purchased a piano forte!

This he installed upon his farm -
its strains produced contentment,
filled him with "Hate" — and then alarm
and subsequent resentment

24

"MUSIC HATH CHARMS"

2. 9. 17.

Schaedels

[being the tale of how a Stein-piano was
brought from one post to another by hand]

Here's a 'dinky' little banda at MTAMA!

It's not so very, very far away;

you cross a river bed & you just keep straight
ahead;
do so hope it's really come to stay!

Here's a little box with straw in it & bottles,
and a little stream of spirit running through;

wouldn't think they'd dare to get intoxicated
there—
well — they do!

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they often hold a dance, I'm told, at nights;

can go there if you please & enjoy yourself at ease
forget about the recent bloody fights.

Did you know that they can sit upon the 'skengies'
give 'em all 'kiboko' to a man,

and dance away in there to some merry tunesful
air?

well — they can!

29

'SIGS - MTAMA'

[with profuse apologies to a 'Punch'
artist - see frontispiece]

27.10.17

NJANGAO

But 1100 miles away in Africa, I'd be pretty sure to
a hornet's nest about me if I once began to sing

'What the deuce is it to you? What d'you mean?
we cannot see"

No - I know you can't - nor can you know how much
she is to me

So I suppose, as best I can, I'll have to 'stick' it where
and content my self with softly swearing - [nothing
I am
more than D-!]
and long for such a time when personally I may
just show them how they're 'left', when I take her
right away

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but why not? when there's an 'angel' always there,
will gladly do their 'dressing' in addition to her own
^{and also alone}

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play and I'm not so stupid, so short-sighted as I seem -
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we move expecting flank-attacks, —
a feature of these 'pushes')

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we stumble forward half asleep, —
we wonder how we stick it !)

we murmur under moon and stars
in braubly wildernesses,
we linger loudly cursing 'Haro', —
for all his 'brastlinesses' !)

on again! —
and finally to our throes
the Huns, ^ is our saviour —
or men may come and women may go
but we'll tick on for ever !

But the doctor, on inspection,
 [with his well-known predilection
 for evacuation, speedy,
 of the wounded, sick, and weary] 7
 said at once, "He'd better go
 down to Lindi on the "tow" -"

Thus was I once more 'at large'
 stumping from bed to barge -
 'set me down amongst a host
 of others labelled 'for the coast' 8
 [they shd never have allowed it
 'tbe so grossly over-crowded.]

It was dark, and cold, and windy,
 'ere we put ashore at Lindi,
 where (forgive the old refrain!) 9
 I went straight to bed again!

Once arrived I went to bed —

"But you can't stay here," they said 4
 in excited tones — then calmer:—
 "we will send him to Mtana!"

Willy-nilly, weak and worn
 I went on at crack o' dawn
 thirty five to forty miles,
 softly murmuring the whiles
 at the superhuman folly 5

Of a journey on a trolley,
 which when once you turned your back
 promptly left the metal track!

Yet we reached our destination
 ["S2 C. Clearing Station"]

where I went to bed again 6
 fondly hoping to remain
 for a day or two (or longer)
 with the chance of getting stronger

Diagnosed as "Dys. and Mal."

Stages

They sent me into hospital,
drowned me in Quinine all day
'til the fever went away,
fed me on tinued-milk and-jelly,
to conciliate my belly —
[But the jelly, never 'set'
so they, haven't cured me yet!]

For 14 days I talked about
& wondered when I would 'get out' —
At length they said "what ed be grander?
send this patient to Ndanda!" 2

Thus I crossed and went aboard
a much delapidated 'Ford',
& lost my sedentary powers
thro' being tossed about for hours 3
o'er a god-forsaken road
'leading to my next abode.

J.T.O.

"Death or Glory"

being a terse description. What
is meant by the word 'evacuation'
in the medical dictionary.]

17. xii. 17.

Hospital - Darro Salaam

rough-hewn pencilled cross, a mound
fresh turned soil, a piece of wood —
or outward tokens that you found
terrible rest — e'en where you stood

Directing into safety those
Who quickly to obey contrived
To shelter safe — yet mourn, God knows
how deep, you whom they well survived

O cruel fate to snap the stem
Of such a flower of nature's art! —
and we are left — to envy them
perhaps? — yet even so a part

for me remains at once to fill
but poorly, yet as best I may —
Mine to preserve your spirit still!
Mine to uphold your memory, each day!

To C.G.D.

[Capt 87th Punjabis - Bde Major
Col. 3 - killed in action 20/xii/17
MAKONDE PLATEAU -]

6. xii. 17

Massassi Mission

and carry once again his load of cable,
mile after mile along the sandy way -
the path, perhaps, of victory, if we're able
to stick this sort of Spartan life each day -
I am, I'd like to see you once again
my ugly shengie! though it gives us pain
(and you!) to beat you every day, in vain
to try and teach you ^{better} ~~quicker~~ to play!

is he now? the pride of all the section,
shuffled game, but haltingly, behind;
played a part that suited to perfection
accout' miss, to watch a vacant mind;
low, so spent in years, so spare of limb?
t' this was also very true of him,
brain too blurred, no eye too crossed, too dim,
not his careless comrades, when they died!]

is he now? why now shd we seem fond o'
his dirty ways, his tumbled head?
shd we miss this cross-eyed Kaffirondo,
now, for all we know, may well be dead?
yet this unpremeditated gap
all can feel, that none can fill! — mayhap
need to strike him wholly 'off the map',
he should make return to us instead,

30

'SALAMANI'

31. 10. 17.

NJANGAO

There's a 'dinky' little banda at MTAMA
you cannot think how 'spitable' they are!
I haven't time to think before you're asked to
they seem to hear you coming ^{have a drink} for - after!
The host is very proud & very handsome.
A guest - how can you guess who he'd be?
He's been hard at work all day, but at night
he steals away!

Well - it's ME!

is a sister in our ward - + a pretty sister too
+ lovely feet and ankles, + eyes of azure blue,
+ a craze for silken stockings - be they white or
+ rumour tells of 'blue ones', but it's always
"not today"!

's an apron + a cap just as white as driven snow
curls that come a-popping when the wind begins
to blow
+ a dinky little cape with a broad + crimson
band
a very extra special one when "royalty's at hand"!

sometimes think there're far too many officers
on board
'o', to tell the truth, there's only 30, thank the lord :)
- 30's far too many - guess I think it wd be fine
had the opportunity to drown the Kurutz-uins!

in mind, I'd make it plain to her I'm not the
sort of man
content to find my name amongst "the also ran"
+ a craze for silken stockings - be they white or
black or grey
I want to see those "blue ones" which she won't
bring out "today"!
put on

33

"Betty"

7.1.18

A.M.A.S. 'Guildford Castle'

What a very lengthy story!

Let me hear it "Death or Glory"!

for it's famous to survive

such experiences, alive!

Reader, think me not insane

if I go to bed again!

10 pm. Lights out.

'Til they made me understand
that we were about to land

In time of course we got ashore,
[it took an hour or two (or more)]

Then it seemed my duty plain
to get into bed again!

12

They summoned even then: "Tomorrow
you are booked for Morogoro!"

But devoutly thankful, I
can expose it for a lie

Though 3 days & nights have passed,
Though my die be not yet cast,
yet can I without resort

13

say they haven't moved me yet!

and I've got my peace & quiet

(and a change to chicken-diet!)

Yet another doctor came,
 asked my ailments, regiment, name.
 Fondly hoping still for rest
 I considered it was best
 to reply with mock humility
 that I suffered from 'asthility'! -
 [No knowledge what it meant, I had,
 but it sounded pretty bad] -
 He exclaimed at once in fear,
 "man, we cannot keep you here,"
 "we will wire to D.S.M.
 to send you on by boat to them!"
 [When shall I get peace and quiet
 or a change from milky-dick?]

10

By the time I got aboard,
 I was very nearly floored -
 weak in body, soul, and brain
 I got into bed again!

11

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31. "To C.G.D."

32. "Death or Glory"

33. "Betty". ? Werd or Cousin

