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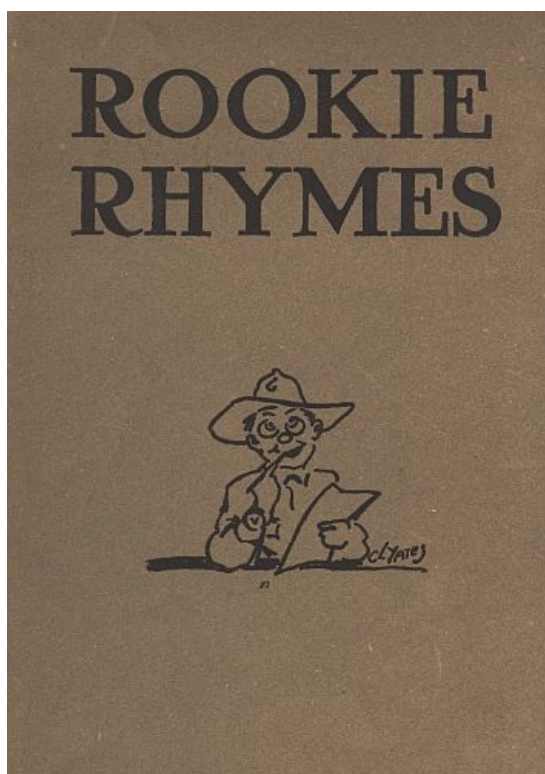
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ROOKIE RHYMES, BY THE MEN OF THE 1ST AND 2ND PROVISIONAL TRAINING REGIMENTS, PLATTSBURG, NEW YORK ***





ROOKIE RHYMES

[3]

BY
 THE MEN OF
 THE 1st. and 2nd. PROVISIONAL
 TRAINING REGIMENTS
 PLATTSBURG, NEW YORK
 MAY 15—AUGUST 15
 1917



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ROOKIE RHYMES

[4]

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FOREWORD

[15]

*River that rolls to the restless deep
From sylvan-born placidity,
Stained issue of the undefiled*

*By your own wayward will exiled
From the crystal lap of a land-locked sea,*

*Read me the meaning of your mood.
The waters murmur as they flow,
"Strife is the law by which we live;
Stagnation, our alternative:
This is the only truth we know."*

*The tides of mortal toilers meet
To merge their rhythms in bloody fray,
And, wave to wave, their armies call—
Nay, summon us that we shall all
Assume the role we choose to play.*

*So, at the cry, in loyal breasts,
As smaller self-concern recedes,
Still burns the old Achillean fire,
Still eager questing souls desire
Not life but living, not days but deeds.*

PART I POEMS

[17]

STANDING IN LINE

[19]

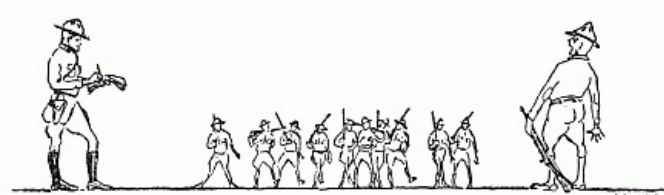
When I applied for Plattsburg I stood for hours in line
To get a piece of paper which they said I had to sign;
When I had signed I stood in line (and my, that line was slow!)
And asked them what to do with it; they said they didn't know.

And when I came to Plattsburg I had to stand in line,
To get a Requisition, from five o'clock till nine;
I stood in line till night for the Captain to endorse it;
But the Q. M. had one leggin' left; I used it for a corset.

We stand in line for hours to get an issue for the squad;
We stand in line for hours and hours to use the cleaning-rod;
And hours and hours and hours and hours to sign the roll for pay;
And walk for miles in double files on Inoculation day.

[20]

Oh, Heaven is a happy place, its streets are passing fair,
And when they start to call the roll up yonder I'll be there;
But when they start to call that roll I certainly will resign
If some Reserve Archangel tries to make me stand in line.



[21]

THE FIRST TIME

My legs are moving to and fro
I feel like a balloon;
How my head swims, first time I go
To boss the damn platoon.

My throat and mouth are full of paste
There's nothing in my hat;
My belt is winding round my waist
But where's my stomach at?

Our Christian Science Battery
Without a gun or horse,
Is just a simple oversight,
That will be changed, of course.

But while we're waiting patiently,
And longing for the day,
They have a funny little game
They make us fellows play.

Bill Hallstead *simulates* the gun
He's sort of short and fat
And doesn't look much like a gun,
But he's pretty good at that.

And they've elected me a horse,
Off-horse of the wheel pair;
I tie a white cloth on my arm
So they can see I'm there.

[23]

Then when the battery is formed
With each man in his place,
They line the "pieces" in a row
Just like a chariot race.

Bill Barnum's "Greatest Show on Earth"
Has not a thing on us;
We tear around the old parade
And kick up *clouds* of dust.

For it's gallop all the morning long,
They never let us walk.
Why, it gets so realistic
That I whinney when I talk.

I wouldn't be a bit surprised
If I should hear some day
That instead of mess they'd issue us
That 14 lbs. of hay.

And so I'm looking for the man
The one who said to me:
"You don't want to be a 'doughboy,'
Go and join the battery."



[24]

THEY BELIEVE IN US BACK HOME

"Lots of love to our lieutenant,"
Writes my mother;
And the letters from my brother
Contain facetious remarks about "majors" . . .
He calls me "The Colonel" and laughs. . . .

But they mean it seriously,
Those back home.
They can't seem to realize
How shaky is our berth up here . . .
How every "Retreat" means a brief respite;
Each "Reveille" the dread
Of some more foolish blunder . . .
Some new bone-play.
And yet sometimes our timid vanity
Blossoms under the warmth of their regard;
Our hopes take strength from their confidence in us.

[25]

There came a blue envelope in the mail today.
A square envelope delicately scented with myrrh. . . .
And she ended with
"Adieu, cher Capitaine."

That very morning
I started even our sphinx-faced commander
By bawling out: "Right dress—MARCH!"

"Adieu, cher Capitaine,"
She had written,
And I can see the flecks of soft star dust in her eyes
As she thought it.

Bitterly I swore at my luck . . .
Then
Sent her that photograph taken of me
On July Fourth. . . .
Of me astride the horse of an officer.
I scrawled a jest under it.

[26]

But what else could I do?



[27]

ODE TO A LADY IN WHITE STOCKINGS

[29]

Lady, in your stockings white,
As you flutter by the road,
You inspire me to write
An ode.

Though upon my manly back
There reposes half a ton,
Why repine against a pack
Or gun?

Though the fire-tressed orb
Makes mirage upon the street;
Though the baking soil absorb
My feet;

Though the Sergeants stamp and rave;
Though the Captain's eye is flame;
Pray, how should my heart behave—
The same?

[30]

I become a thing of steel,
Buoyant none the less as cork;
Radiant from hat to heel
I walk.

Lady, in your stockings white,
Don't you note my altered step?
Don't you feel, enchanting sprite,
My pep?

"AVOIRDUPOIS"

[31]

I sing the song of a Fat Man
Out on the skirmish line,
With a pack chock full of lead and bricks
A'hanging on behind.

Maybe you think it's funny
When you're out there on the run,
Beside all that equipment
To be pullin' half a ton.

The Captain has a heart of stone
It makes no odds to him;
He's there to teach you to skirmish,
And you'll skirmish fat or thin.

D'you suppose he gives a tinker's damn
If when you're lying prone,
The pack comes up behind your ears
And whacks you on the dome?

[32]

He just hollers "fire faster,"
Though he knows you couldn't hit
The broad side of a barn door,
If you were fifty feet from it.

He doesn't care a little bit,
If you're gasping hard for breath,
He's there to teach you to skirmish,
If you skirmish yourself to death.

Oh, well, it's true about fat men
Being always full of fun,
Good Lord, they've got to be,
'Cause they can neither fight nor run.



[33]

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

Your lips say "Go!"
Eyes plead "Stay!"
Your voice so low
Faints away
To nothing, dear—
God keep me here!

God end the war,
And let us two
Travel far
On Love's road, you
And I in peace,
Never to cease.

Your lips say "Go!"
Eyes plead "Stay"—
Ah, how I know
What price you pay.

THE PLATTSBURG CODE

[36]

1

By Lake Champlain, where Bourbon tossed
The dice of fortune and romance,
Where red-coats won and red-coats lost,
We soldiers train to fight in France.
Though with no pomp and elegance
Of gold-laced beaux, we have their same
Old code of pluck and nonchalance—
"God give us guts to play the game."

2

May winds that sing like troubadours
Of musket, sword and daring deed,
And ideals won in early wars,
Inspire each warrior to succeed;
To fight that nations may be freed,
And through all hardships make his aim
The punch of old-time heroes' creed—
God give us guts to play the game.

3

And if to-morrow—who can tell?—
We hike along a hot white French
Highway, exposed to shrapnel shell,
Or occupy a first-line trench,
'Midst poisoned gas and dead men's stench,
And hand grenades that burst and maim;
May not all hell our spirit quench—
God give us guts to play the game.

[37]

4

If through entangled wires and mud,
Charging the Boche, we madly run,
With comrades dropping, dyed with blood,
And sickening sights and sounds that stun,
And in death's duel meet the Hun
'Midst shell holes, smoke, and battle flame,
Steel clashing steel and gun to gun—
God give us guts to play the game.

[38]



A CONFERENCE

I was sleeping in the barracks,
A week or so ago.
And in the midst of pleasant dreams
I heard the whistle blow.

Lord, how I hate those whistles!
Well, it was time to "rouse,"
So we marched down 'mongst the thistles
Beside the old ice house.

I looked around in misery,
At last I took a seat,
With nothing to lean up against
And no place for my feet.

As I sat there in the drizzle
Of a good old Plattsburg rain,
I wondered if I'd fizzle
The lesson once again.

[39]

The captain, who, like Nero
Observing Rome in flames,
Was seated on a packing-box
Perusing all the names.

"Mr. Whitney, won't you tell us
Of patrols both front and rear?
Speak up, Mr. Whitney,
So the men in back can hear."

"And please now, Mr. Warnock,
Just tell us if you will
What you'd do with this problem
If you were Sergeant Hill?"

"No! I'll ask you if I want you;
Never mind the hands.
Warnock, *you* are Sergeant Hill,
Just call out your commands."

"Whitney! Warnock! Gee, what luck!"
I chortled in my glee.
My name is Brown, t'was very plain
He'd never get to me.

[40]

So I listened to the questions
And the answers one by one,
And wondered if that 3rd degree
Was ever to be done.

I thought of cups with handles on,
Of napkins and clean hands;
I thought of all the pretty girls
That live in *Christian* lands.

I thought of cakes, and pies, and things,
I thought of home in pain,
And wondered if I'd ever sleep
Till 9 o'clock again.

I wished I had some lager beer
Or a nice silver fizz;
When, "Mr. Brown, you tell us
What a special order is."

I rose, saluted, brushed my pants
Then mutely gazed around.
I stood transfixed; the Captain said
"Sit down, Mr. Brown!"

SUNDAY IN BARRACKS

[41]

Little silences
Sit in the corners
Munching their finger tips.
I lie stretched flat upon my bunk. . . .
I count the cracks in the pine-boards above me.
I am alone.
These others who fill the air with talk
About right and wrong . . . life and death . . .
With heavy-nailed footsteps
And sometimes heavier profanity . . .
What becomes of them on Sunday?
Dinners . . . the beauty of women . . .
Pretty talk.
Camaraderie beside the lake . . . fellow for fellow,
What does it matter?
My little silences slide along the floor . . .
Clamber up my bunk
To grin at me in my loneliness. [42]
Then I think of the millions
Who have none for whom to be lonely,
French, English, German, Russ. . . .
What does it matter the language?
We are all one,
Levelled in solitude.

And I laugh at the silences,
And laugh to see them scurrying back to their corners,
Gibbering.

THE BALLAD OF MONTMORENCY GRAY

[43]

I
Since we came to Plattsburg Training Camp
Upon the 12th of May,
A lot of clever candidates
Have fallen by the way;
But the strangest fall among them all
Was Montmorency Gray.

II
Monty was a clever lad,
As bright as bright could be;
He came up days ahead of time—
Ahead of you and me—
And got in strong right from the start.
O a clever lad was he!

[44]

III
For Monty was an Officer
Of Uncle Sam's Reserve;
His uniform was spic and span
In every line and curve;
And what he lacked in other things,
He made up for in nerve.

IV
He learned the I.D.R. by heart
Before the 1st of June;
He used to study late at night,
And in the morning soon;

No wonder that the Captain let him
Lead the 1st Platoon.

V

He asked the cutest questions
In the study hall at night;
He knew the difference between
A Cut and Fill at sight.
And when it said: "What do you do?"
He always did just right.

[45]

VI

He memorized the map from
Chestnut Hill to Steven's Run;
He didn't have to draw a scale,
As we have always done;
He *knew* that you could see Five-Six—
Ty-Six from Six-O-One.

VII

And then this tragic episode
Of which I write occurred.
It happened sometime in the night
Of June the 23rd
That Montmorency stole away,
And left no sign or word.

VIII

We found at dawn that he had gone
And left us in the lurch.
The Colonel sent detachments out
For miles around to search;
A strong patrol to every knoll,
To every house, and church.

[46]

IX

They found no trace in any place;
It caused a lot of talk;
They wired down to every town
From Plattsburg to New York.
As it was plain he took no train
He must have had to walk.

X

'Twas well into the Fall before
The mystery was cleared.
(They'd never heard a single word
Since Monty disappeared),
When the Colonel had a caller,
An old farmer, with a beard.

XI

He said his name was Topper,
And he lived in Table Rock,
And what he told the Colonel
Gave the Old Man quite a shock;
They were closeted together
Until after ten o'clock.

[47]

XII

From Gettysburg to Plattsburg
Mr. Topper came to say
How he'd found a man in uniform
Down near his home one day,
Who, judging from his clothing, must
Have walked a long, long way.

XIII

He told the sad and tragic tale
Of how he came to find,
While on his way to Hershey's Mill
With a load of corn to grind,
The young man wandering on a hill,

And wandering in his mind.

XIV

He took him to his farmhouse, where
For seven weeks he lay
And talked and muttered to himself
In a most peculiar way.
He gave his name before he died
As Montmorency Gray.

[48]

XV

He seemed more sick than lunatic,
Mr. Topper had to grant;
As meek and mild as a little child,
He did not rave or rant,
He only cried, until he died:
"You ought to, *but you can't!*"



[49]

ALWAYS WITH ANOTHER FELLOW

GIRLS

[51]

They wander everywhere about
The dears in pink, the dreams in yellow,
With fetching smile, with pretty pout,
And always with another fellow.

They spend their mornings baking cakes,
Their afternoons in making cookies;
And, oh! the soul within me aches—
Their sweets are all for other rookies.

Often, when 'neath their eyes we pass,
I hear some maiden sigh divinely,
And murmur to another lass,
"Dear, isn't *Jackie* marching finely?"

Ah, girls, a sorry lot is his—
Dull are his days, his nights are dreary—
Who knows no maiden where he is,
Who has no dame to call him "Dearie."

A LAMENT

[52]

(AFTER C. LAMB)

All, all are gone, the old familiar glasses
That used to range along the fragrant bar;
Gone, all are gone, and in their places
Milk, Pop and Dietade its beauty mar.
The Big Four now has turned to Prohibition,
Anhäuser Busch no longer sells at par,
Bar-maids have joined the Army of Salvation,
The voice of Bryan governs from afar;
All, all are gone, the old familiar glasses,
Where once they glistened on the fragrant bar.

THE MANUAL

[53]

Did you ever run into the butt of your gun,
Or dig the front sight with your nose?
Did your stomach turn over and stand up on end,
When you dropped the damn thing on your toes?

When coming to Port did the rifle fall short,
And the swivel ram into your fist?
When the rest did present did you so intent
Find a count that the others had missed?

And when at "Inspection" you clutched to perfection,
Then shot up the piece with a thrust,
Was there some dirty pup who pushed your cut-off up
So your bolt dug a cave in the dust?

Then when on the range your windage you'd change
For the flag that the Anarchists wave,
And the old cocking piece smeared your nose with red "grease,"
Did you learn what it meant to be brave?

[54]

How your old back did ache when you got the bad breaks
With the rifle that now has such charms,
And I'll make a good bet that you'll never forget
That exhausting old Manual of Arms.

THOSE "PATRIOTIC" SONGS

[55]

I

To put the pay in patriot
Is the order of the day.
And some delight to sing of fight
For royalties that pay.
The louder that the eagle screams
The more the dollars shout,
And, if you please, atrocities
Like this are handed out:—

(Chorus)

I love you, dear America,
I love the starry flag,
We're proud to fight for you-oo-oo;
We never boast or brag.
We always will remember you,
We always will be true;
Maryland, my Maryland! hurrah, boys, hurrah!
As we go marching on to victory.

[56]

II

That some are actuated
By intentions of the best,
Is surely clear, and so we fear
To class them with the rest.
And yet conceive some long-haired chap,

Or sentimental miss,
Who takes the time to fit a rhyme
To music, say, like this:—

(Chorus)

I love you, yes, I love you,
And when I'm across the sea,
I'll take your picture to the front,
'Twill always be with me.
I shall not mind the bullets
When I am far away,
You'll be a soldier's sweetheart,
My girl in U. S. A.

[57]

II

To make the war more horrible
Some chap will surely try
To set to rag the starry flag,
And dance the battle cry.
We only hope we may be spared;
It did not fail to come,
A dashing trot of shell and shot,
Of bugle call and drum.

(Chorus)

That khaki glide! O! that army slide,
It seems to say:
"March away, march away!"
I feel so queer each time I hear
The music of that military band.
It's just too grand!
Fills me full of joy and pride,
See them marching side by side,
That's just the good old khaki glide!



[58]

SATURDAY P.M.

I

When you've had a shave and a shower,
And have picked up all the news;
When you've donned your Sunday Stetson
And your shiny pair of shoes;
When your work for the week is over,
You think that you are through.
You're wrong, my son, you're wrong, my son
There's something more for you.

It's the needle, the needle,
The prophylactic needle.
There's a hungry surgeon waiting
And he's waiting just for you.

[59]

II

Tho' you lasted through the horrors
Of a test in skirmish drill,
And proved yourself a captain
When you bellowed "Fire at will!"
You are very much mistaken
If you think you've finished then;
There is something after luncheon
For all the Plattsburg men.

It's the needle, the needle, etc.

III

Tho' you stood a strict inspection
And your dirty gun got by;
Tho' you'd grease spots on your breeches,
And the Captain winked his eye;
Tho' you ate your fill at dinner,
And enjoyed a Lucky Strike;
There is something at one-thirty
That I know you will not like.

It's the needle, the needle, etc.

[60]

IV

Tho' you proved yourself a hero
After three hours in the line,
And when the doctor jabbed you
Just said, "Let's have a shine!"
And smoked a large-sized stogie
And thought that it was fun,
My noble-hearted candidate,
You'd only half begun.

It's the needle, the needle, etc.

V

When you woke up at twelve-thirty
In a state of some alarm,
To feel a tortured muscle
In the region of your arm;
When you heard the groaning barracks,
You wiped your brow and said:
"Two million more next week-end,
And I guess that I'll be dead."

[61]

The needle, the needle,
The prophylactic needle.
You softly damn the surgeon,
And his needle tinged with red.

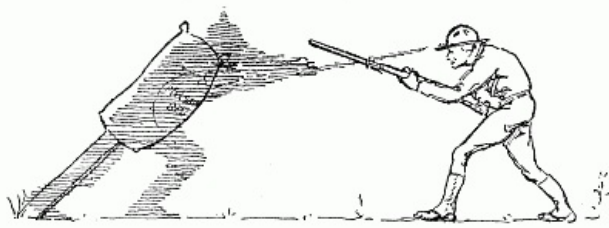
HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED

[62]

When first I landed in this camp
I used to write most every day
To all my friends I left behind,
And ask them what they had to say
About the old town and the girls,
Or what they thought about the war;
And in return the daily mail
It brought me letters by the score.

But now my friends write me and ask
What keeps me from replying,
And when I answer, "It's the work,"
Why, they just think I'm lying.
So now the letters I receive
Are few and very far between;
They're mostly from my family
And never any from a queen.

[63]



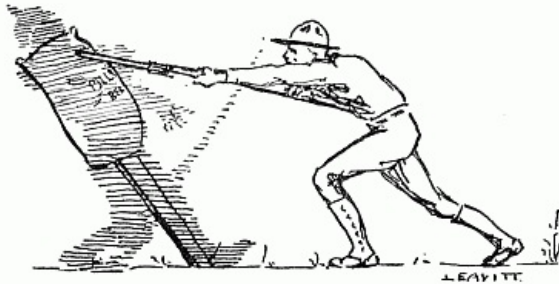
ARMA FEMINAMQUE

No man would doubt a woman's nerve,
We know you're brave enough;
You put a man to shame at times,
You're tender—and you're tough.
And yet I feel, with all your grit
And talk of cave-men stuff,
That you're sorter out of place
When I'm twistin' up my face,
A-thrustin' and a-jabbin' with my gun-knife.

There's some things in this queer old world
That's awkward things to see,
They can't be tied with ribbon
And they can't be served with tea.
They're not the least bit sociable
And women—as for me,
I wish you'd stay away,
While I'm training for the day
That I'm goin' to get in action with a gun-knife.

[64]

This ain't no country club affair
Of smiles and clever skill;
There ain't no silver cups around
When doughboys train to kill.
It's you or me—and do it quick,
A simple murder drill.
So I want no women 'round,
When I'm tearin' up the ground,
A shadow-pointin' Boches with my gun-knife.



OUT O' LUCK

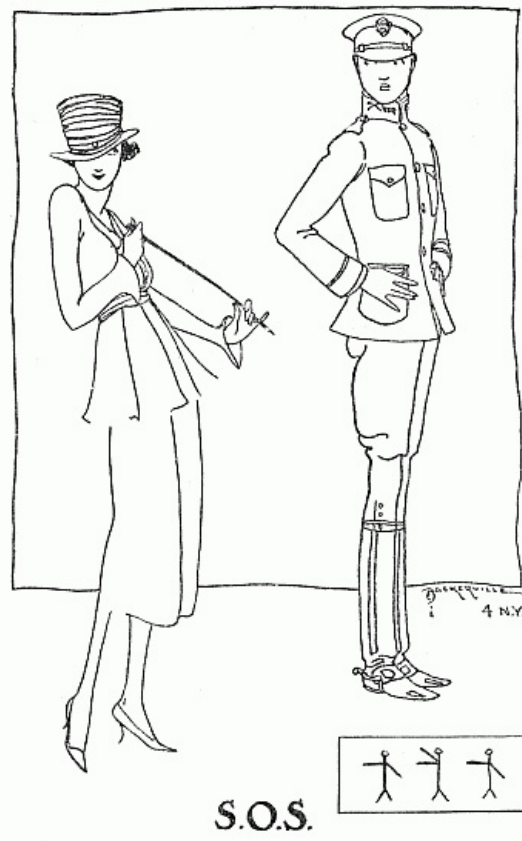
[65]

If, in spite of hopes and promises, your pay day doesn't come,
If the sergeant antedates the call, or Friday's fish is bum,
Or the waiter empties soup on you—don't let 'em see you glum.
You're out o' luck, that's all. You're out o' luck.

If you must deploy your skirmish line with nothing in your dome,
Or send supporting picket-lines to countermarch the Somme,
The chances are you've guessed it wrong and "may as well go home."
You're out o' luck, that's all. You're out o' luck.

If you drop between the battle-lines and no one finds the place,
Or jump into a pit and drive a bay'nit through your face,
Or try to stop a ten-inch shell and leave an empty space.
You're out o' luck, that's all. You're out o' luck.

[66]



SHERMAN WAS RIGHT

[69]

You may talk about your marching
 And your stiff, close-order drill;
 You may cuss out recitations,
 And of skirmish have your fill;
 The difficult manoeuvres
 Which you do most every day
 May get your goat like everything,
 And spoil your Plattsburg stay.
 But for me it's far, far harder
 Makes me feel more like a prune,
 To march at strict attention
 Past the Hostess House at noon.

TROOPSHIP CHANTY

[70]

The sea is green as green-pea soup
 And half-way down the green-o,
 A U-boat's lying snug and tight
 All bellied out with dynamite,
 And twenty guns between-o!
 And twenty guns between-o!

So scrape yer hatchways clear of brine,
 And bawl yer jolly song-o.
 For if she "blows," my lads, why, then
 We'll blow her back to Hell again,
 With compliments along-o!
 With compliments along-o!

THOSE RUMORS

[71]

He sauntered in
 With a knowing grin,

The news he'd been to hear;
We knew right well
He'd come to tell
The latest from the rear.
"A hundred went," he said, "to-day,
"Five hundred more must go they say;
"Looks bad, Bill, guess you're on your way;
"Darn few of us can hope to stay.
"I got this straight from a friend of mine,
"A friend of his in Company 9,
"Heard from a friend in Company 10,
"That Company 5 lost fifty men."
With this you'd think
Our hopes would sink,
It ought to change our humor.
We knew the source,
So smiled of course,
It was an L. T. rumor.

WAR'S HORRORS

[72]

I hate to talk of a Regular
Without the proper respect;
But given a chance to criticize,
There's a bunch that I'd select.
And they are those musical miscreants,
Those malefactors of noise,
Those rookie Second Cavalrymen,
The amateur bugle boys.

They blow retreat,
And from head to feet
Coagulate your spine;
Or at company drill
They send a chill
A-shivering down the line.
Just try to salute
To their twittering toot,
Their yodeling, rasping groan,
Their blithering bleat,
And you'll swear that they beat
The Hindu quarter-tone,
By Gad!
The Hindu quarter-tone.

[73]

THE CALL

[74]

Spring to arms, ye sons of freedom,
Lift your country's ensign high;
Join her undefeated Army,
Succor France, her old ally.
Stand for freedom, truth and justice,
Crush the Prussian tyrant's power;
Emulate your worthy forebears
In their Homeland's crucial hour.
Britain, mother of your nation;
France, her hope in ages past;
Belgium, home of peaceful people,
Seared by foul oppression's blast;
Russia, newly born to freedom;
Seeking honor, God and right,
Call on you to aid in crushing,
Prussianism's cursed blight.
Are ye men? Then meet the challenge
As your fathers did of old;
Help the cause of all the races,
With your muscle, brain, and gold.



BEANS

[77]

Consider then the Army bean
 So various and quaint.
 Sometimes we find they're just plain beans,
 And then again they ain't.
 They're funny shades of yellow,
 Brown, green, and red, and white;
 While striped and spotted, polka dotted
 Beans our taste delight.
 But nix on beans Manchurian,
 And beans of age Silurian,
 Which same could stand a buryin',
 When they come on—Good Night!

FORWARD "?"

[78]

On the parade,
 Soft and low,
 Rookie hiccoughed,
 "Forward, Ho!"

Another youngster
 Feeling smart,
 Tried to shout,
 "Forward, Hart!"

One requested,
 "Forward, How!"
 From somewhere else,
 There came a "Yow!"

* * * * *

Perhaps a mile or so away
 We heard not "Harp!" nor "Harch!"
 But stalwart Major Koehler's voice
 Thunder, "Forward, March!"

CHANT OF A DERELICT

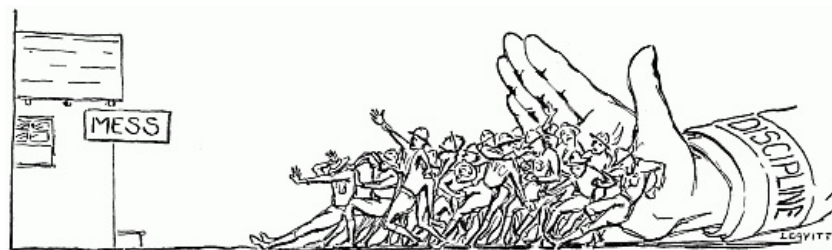
[79]

Sad is my song, mates, for I've got the axe,
 I've got to go, I've got to go;
 Farewell to Plattsburg and life in the shacks,

Home I must go, I must go.
Told not to let such a small matter grieve me,
Sent to the parents who hate to receive me,
Hearing my story, they'll never believe me,
I've got to go, got to go.

No more to sleep in a two-story bunk,
Back I must go, I must go;
No more to sag 'neath a pack full of junk,
Home I must go, I must go.
Leaving the books I could never have learned,
Buying a straw hat—the old one was burned—
Even the wrist watch must now be interned,
Back I must go, I must go.

Here is the moral of this plaintive cough,
Sung as I go, moaned as I go; [80]
Here is the reason for my sounding off,
Now as I go, as I go:
Comrades in arms, oh! be prompt at formations,
Neat in your dress, and observe regulations,
Else, you, like me, will rejoin your relations,
Home you must go, you must go.



MESS? YES!!

PREOCCUPATION

 [83]

The captain stops and yells to me,
"Wake up there, rear rank number three!"
And then, perchance, he makes some mention
Of how I do not pay attention.
But is it *my* fault? No, it's you,
With your persistent eyes of blue,
That halt the flow of reason's stream
And make me dream and dream and dream,
Until the captain comes and—well,
To put it plain—he gives me *Hell*.

INOCULATION DAY

 [84]

My blood the surgeons fortify
With antiseptic serum;
The dread bacilli I defy,
What cause have I to fear 'em?

We form outside the pest-house door
At one o'clock precisely,
But if we get our dose at four
We think we're doing nicely.

And in our arm the surgeon stabs
A hypodermic squirter,
E'en as the hungry hobo jabs
His fork in a frankfurter.

I'm full of dope for smallpox germs,

For typhus and such evils,
For broken heart and army worms,
For chestnut blight and weevils.

[85]

I'm doped against the bayonet
Wielded by German demons;
But no one seems to think I'll get
Dear old delirium tremens.

DON'T WEAKEN

[86]

When you feel on the bum and the outlook is glum,
And you're wonderin' what's comin' next;
When most every thing's drear and life loses its cheer,
And the Skip and Reverses are vexed;
If this Plattsburgish heat knocks you clean off your feet,
Or your bunkies they ain't even speakin';
Keep your shirt on your back, don't knock over the stack,
It's a great life, if you don't weaken.

When they launder your sock till it ain't fit to hock,
When they shrink up your shirt like a rag;
If you blister your toes and then sunburn your nose
And then can't even go on a jag;
Why, you're sure out of luck, but just pass the old buck,
Keep a stiff upper lip like a deacon;
Though you shoot ten straight blanks do not kick with the cranks,
Summon a grin and don't weaken.

[87]

If you're late for retreat and must police the street,
If at reveille you're still in your bed;
If your girl sends you flags which some other cuss bags,
Or they clip all the hair off your head;
If the mess comes out burned,
So your stomach gets turned,
Or the "upper man" keeps you from sleepin';
Don't you growl, that won't help,
For they'll dub you a whelp;
Can the grouch—but don't weaken.

THE THREE

[88]

Three dead men rose on nimble toes
Above the frozen clay;
And as they sped, each of the Dead
Told how he died that day.

Said one, "I sent the Regiment
To safety as I fell."
The Second cried, "Before I died
I hurled the foe to Hell."

As for the Third, he spoke no word
But hastened on his way,
Until at last a whisper passed:
"How did *you* die today?"

"There was a maid slept unafraid
Within a hut," he said.
"I searched the place and for a space
I thought that all had fled.

[89]

"But her breast glowed white in the morning light
As the early dawn grew red;
Tiptoe I came in lust and shame
And stood beside her bed.

"And there I fought an evil thought

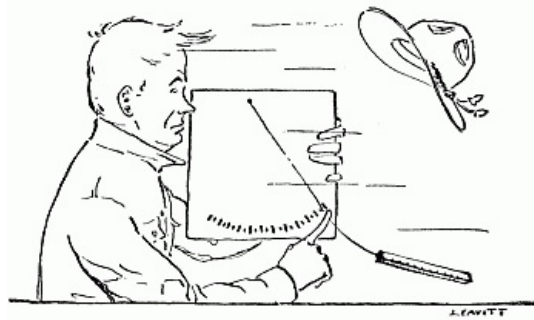
And won—and turned to go;
Then as I went into my tent
A bullet struck me low."

The others heard and spoke no word
(For dead men understand),
But 'round they turned and their deep eyes burned
As they gripped his leaden hand.

TO THE LITTLE BLACK DOG

[90]

We see you in the morning
When Reveille implores;
We meet you in the evening
At end of daily chores.
On march, fatigue, or drilling
Our friend we find you still,
With kindly, pleasant bearing
And independent will.
You're small, you're thin, you're homely,
You're battered, scratched, and lame;
But in our tasks before us
Pray God we be as game!



[91]

WHEN EAST IS WEST

See that man in khaki clothes,
Squirring in the dust;
Toying with a sketching board,
Uniform all mussed.
Squinting 'long a little stick,
Grunting fit to bust—
 Turning out a road sketch
 For his Captain.

First he drills a "starting point."
Then he takes a "shot;"
Someone's scare-crow gets a line,
Closes Jones's lot.
Paces stiffly down the road,
Worried—tense—and hot—
 Turning out a road sketch
 For his Captain.

[92]

Now an "intersection point;"
Watch the compass turn.
Think to see him finger it
Bloomin' thing would burn.
Missed an inch by motor truck;
Eyes it proud and stern—
 Turning out a road sketch
 For his Captain.

Plants an orchard in the road;
Leaves a forest bare.
Runs a railroad through a house;

Fakes a village square.
Twenty contours in a swamp,
Thirteen in the air—
Calls the thing a road sketch
For his Captain.

TO MY SWEETHEART

[93]

I love you when the bugle
Calls, "Awake, the day's begun!"
I love you as we work and
Sweat and drill beneath the sun.
I love you at retreat, and
When the sun sinks out of view;
Sweetheart of mine! quite all the time,
I—love—you.

PLAY THE GAME

[94]

When everything goes wrong
And it's hard to force a song,
The proper stunt we claim,
Is to grin, and play the game.

If things break worse than fair,
Say the Frenchmen, "*C'est la Guerre.*"
Which to them is just the same,
As to grin, and play the game.

If you find the mess is punk—
Kidney beans and other junk—
Try to eat it just the same;
Stretch a grin, and play the game.

When for nothing you've been bawled,
Though you've done your best get called,
And you know you're not to blame;
Force a grin, and play the game.

When we're hit by some big shell,
And almost catch a glimpse of hell;
When we think how close we came,
We'll just grin, and play the game.

While our work is being done
We will show the mighty Hun,
In the land from whence we came,
How we grin, and play the game.

When the last long line is passed,
And the victory's ours at last,
Greater far will be the fame,
If we've grinned, and played the game.

[95]

THE STADIUM, PLATTSBURG

[96]

I hear the mighty song of singing men
Crashing among the pine-trees through the night,
And thund'ring, trumpet-wise, down every glen,
A song to France, whose soul is bleeding white.

But hark!—out rings a deeper, stronger cry.
A Nation, which has newly learned to give,
Is singing as its sons go forth to die,
Because, God knows, they're going forth—to live!

O little Maid of France, who rests in Heaven,
 Crowned with the Lilies Three (and Lilies Seven),
 Send us the clear-eyed Faith that came to thee,
 Praying beneath the pines, in Domremy.

RUBAIYAT OF A PLATTSBURG CANDIDATE

[97]

Awake! 'tis morning, though it should not be—
 Come, can the yawns, it's speed they want to see—
 And stagger forth upon a hostile world,
 In flannel shirt and cotton pants O. D.

Before the phantoms of the night were done,
 Methought I idled somewhere in the sun,
 Debating whether beauty to pursue,
 Or touch a bell, and cultivate a bun.

And lovely maids in garments pale did seem
 To shimmer round me in continuous stream,
 Each with a glass of something in her hand,
 And then I turned—and lo! it was a dream!

And ere the cock crew he that stood before
 The barracks, shouted "Half a minute more!
 Belts, bayonets, and pieces—on the jump—
 And signal-flags and alidades," O Lor'!

[98]

I sometimes think that never battles din
 Were so unwelcome as the words "Fall in!"
 Nor any victory could taste so sweet
 As French vermouth with ice and Gordon gin.

Yesterday's problem 'twixt the Red and Blue
 Involved our journey down the Road Peru;
 The day before we took the Peru Road—
 I'll bet a hat we're there to-morrow, too.

Myself when fresh and full of zeal and spunk,
 Hung on the words whence wisdom should be drunk;
 But this was all the harvest that I reaped—
 To say "as fast as possible" is punk.

Platoon commanders, captains by the score,
 Each takes his turn—and then is seen no more;
 But no one ever thinks of him again
 One half so kindly as they thought before.

To-day's commander, with commands profuse,
 To-morrow to the rear rank will reduce.
 Think, and you know not what he meant to say—
 He knows not neither, so—ah, what's the use?

[99]

Waste not your hour to criticize or blame,
 You would have done it worse, or just the same.
 Better to pack your troubles with your kit,
 To keep your shirt on, and to play the game.

Some for the shriek of shot and shell, and some
 Sigh for the bottle of New England rum.
 Oh, face the facts, and let the fiction go—
 I'll bet "*la vie des tranchées*" will be bum.

One moment's rest, then back into the mill
 With butt and point to lacerate and kill.
 I often wonder what the Germans teach
 One half so cultured as our "Bay'net Drill."

For war is hell, and Plattsburg not a jest,
 And yet, by gravy, we will do our best,

Till submarine and Kaiser are forgot,
Or Angel Gabriel hollers out, "At rest!"

DREAMS

[100]

Says Captain Peek to Company Two,
"Let's have an exam to-day;
"So get your rifles and bayonet, boys,
"And fall in right away.

"Line up whenever you're ready to go;
"At route step do squads right:
"Light up your pipes, roll up your sleeves,
"We'll try to make this light."

With joyful faces they march to parade,
Fall out and rest on the grass.
"Will someone please perform right face?
"We'll let slight errors pass."

Then Captain Peek shuts up that book
"I won't give one black mark.
"Officers, beat it; get the hook!
"I'll drill you right till dark.

[101]

"You seem to know the drill all right;
"Don't bother about those maps;
"Put on your 'civies' as fast as you can,
"And don't come back for taps."

'Twill be thus perhaps in a happier land,
When they've run that American drive,
Where we drill in white all armed with harps;
But not while our Cap's alive.

A 2nd REGIMENT "WHO'S WHO"

[102]

Major Collins is careful of
His regiment's health.
Lemonade and other things,
Taken on march,
Have been known to cause
Soldiers to die, and pie?
Perish the suggestion! 'Tis
Safe to bet the major
Was not born in New England.

If in a deep wood or desert vast
One would never be lost
With Captain Barnes. He knows
How to orient the landscape
By sun or star.

Lieutenant Meyer is tall,
He holds his hat on
By a strap
Under his chin.
A cyclone couldn't blow it off.

[103]

Captain Latrobe came on
From Texas way,
"Sif bofe" his saddle
And himself. He might as well
Have saved the freight on the saddle,
For he has no horse to ride on.
He leads his steedless troop
On charger invisible.

Arnold, Major now, fares better.
His horse is real
And has white feet.
Do not talk to his
Command while it is marching,
Nor count for the men, or
The winning smile will
Turn into a volcano,
And you will be reduced to
A shapeless mass. Beware!

Carr's horse is black,
And a beauty, too,
But neighs out loud; hence
Never should be used to patrol.
The enemy would listen, and
Know you were near.

[104]

The straightest man
On horseback is,
Doubtless, Wainwright;
And he doesn't lean backward to do it, either.

Matthews has a deep voice;
No ear trumpet is needed to hear his commands.
He believes in exercise.
His men should be able to
Throw Samson or Sandow,
If they are not dead
By August Eleventh.

Waldron knows how to patrol—
At least he wrote a book
For thirty cents.
He next should write a book on how
To spot a periscope when we cross the sea.
If we don't know that, we'll never
Spot anything else
But bubbles on the ocean's face.

[105]

Capt. Goodwyn just came up
From Panama, and brought
Chivalry with him.
It's as hot here as there,
But he is showing us how
To make it hotter
For certain people
To the eastward.

There is a fat Q.M.,
Whose name is
Unknown, but not his form.
Once seen
Never forgotten;
He must have
The keys to the ice-box.

EUREKA

[106]

It may be from hot Tallahassee,
It may be from cold northern Nome,
But there's nothing that can be compared with
That BIG little letter from home.

FOURTH COMPANY, N.E. SONG

[107]

'Way up in Plattsburg, right near the northern border,
They sent us off in May,

There for three months to stay,
So we could all become lieutenants.
Then when they put us all in comp'nies
We made New England Four.
It's the finest little company
That ever did Squads Right and ran into a tree.
New England, you've got to hand it to us—
Good old Company Four!

'Way up in Plattsburg—that's where they make us soldiers—
They drill us every day.
Damn little time for play,
'Cause when we do not drill we study.
New England number four's our comp'ny,
We're always full of pep.
Now if you want some men for good, hard work
You'll always find this company will never shirk.
New England, you've got to hand it to us—
Good old Company Four!

[108]

PART II

SONGS AND PARODIES

[109]

LONG, LONG TRAIL

[111]

(Air: There's a Long Trail)

There's a long, long trail before us,
Into No-Man's land in France,
Where the shrapnel shells are bursting,
And we must advance.

There'll be lots of drill and hiking,
Before our dreams all come true,
But some day we'll show the Germans,
How the Yankees come through.

WILLIE'S PA

[112]

(Air: Solomon Levi)

I

O, Willie Jones's fond mamma brought him to Plattsburg town,
To see his father at the Camp go marching up and down;
And Willie grew excited as the band began to play,
And when he saw his papa march, the people heard him say:

(Chorus)

"O, look at him, Ma-ma, ain't he simply grand?
See the way he holds his gun and swings his other hand.
The Captain's walking up in front, and now he's calling 'hep,'
And everyone but my papa is marching out of step."

[113]

II

O, Willie Jones, he loved to see the soldiers marching by,
He went down to the target range to see the bullets fly,
And every time they made a shot, he cried "Ain't that a beaut!"
And clapped his hands in glee to see his papa start to shoot.

(Chorus)

"O, look at him, Ma-ma, see him hold his gun,
And every time he shoots it off it hits him on the bun.
He puts his hand around the thing and gives an awful pull,
The red flag there is waving, O! it must have been a bull."

COMPANY 2 NEW ENGLAND

[114]

(Air: "Lord Geoffry Amherst")

Oh, good old Uncle Sam declared a war on Kaiser Bill,
When, his pledges "Bill" neglected to fulfill;
And the War Department ordered that a training camp should be,
So they sent us up to Plattsburg, don't you see?
So they sent us up to Plattsburg, don't you see?
And the men from all New England came along and gathered there,
And the companies they chose with greatest care.
But out of all the candidates selected but a few
To organize New England Number 2.

(Chorus)

Oh, Captain Peek and Company Two
They'll be names known to fame the whole world o'er.
They will ever be glorious
When the Hohenzollerns reign no more.

TO THE RESERVE CAVALRY

[115]

(Air: The Infantry, the Infantry, with Dirt Behind Their Ears)

I

The Cavalry, the Cavalry, they haven't any horse,
They're taking riding lessons by a correspondence course,
You'd think they were equestrians to hear the way they talk,
But when it comes to riding, why! We always see them walk.

II

The Cavalry, the Cavalry, are marching down the street,
The Cavalry, the Cavalry, with blisters on their feet,
The Artillery is mounted now and ready for the course;
But we never see the Cavalry with any kind of horse.

WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO DEUTSCHLAND

[116]

(Air: Hit the Line for Harvard)

We're on our way to Deutschland,
We're Yankees through and through,
And we'll show the Huns of Germ'ny
What the U. S. A. can do.
With France and Old England,
Victory or die;
And we'll give a rousing cheer, boys,
As the allied flags go by.

I WANT TO BE A COLONEL

[117]

(Air: I Want to Be Back Home in Dixie)

I want to be, I want to be, I want to be at least a Colonel,
Have the Majors handing me salutes, and a man to black my boots.
I want to be, I want to be, at least a Colonel, C-O-L-O-N-E-L,
Hold down a desk and give the captains Hell.
I want to be, I want to be, I want to be a Colonel *now!*

I WANT TO BE A DOUGHBOY

[118]

(Air: I Want to Be a Yale Boy)

I want to be a doughboy,
Doughboy tried and true;
I want to be a doughboy,
With a hat cord of baby blue.
I want to be a doughboy,
Do as the doughboys do;
So, papa, if I can
When I get to be a man,
I want to be a doughboy, too.

OUR BATTLE HYMN

[119]

(Air: "Battle Hymn of the Republic")

I

We have heard a lot about a place they call "Somewhere in France,"
And we're going "Over There" to put some pep in the advance;
"There's a long, long trail before us," but you bet we'll take the chance,
As Five goes marching on.

(Chorus)

Glory, glory, for we're going to beat the Hun,
Old Hindenburg will execute a new strategic run,
And Kaiser Bill will find he has no place beneath the sun,
When Five goes marching on.

II

We are handy with the rifle and the bayonet and such;
And though Fritz is used to running and is sort of hard to touch,
We will show him when we get there that it doesn't matter much,
When Five is marching on.

[120]

(Chorus)

III

You may say that we're not modest, but our faults we will confess,
We hate to rise at Reveille, we're not too fond of mess;
And we never, never, never get a good line at Right Dress,
But we do keep marching on.

(Chorus)

IV

Now all you other fellows who are going overseas,
Just remember that we guarantee the foeman to appease;
So when you hear we're coming you may rest or stand at ease,
When Five goes marching on.

(Chorus)

NEW ENGLAND WILL BE LEADING

[121]

(Air: John Brown's Body)

New England will be leading when we're marching up the Rhine,
New York will be the rear guard and we'll leave them far behind,
We'll conquer German cities and we'll capture Kaiser Bill,
As we go marching on.
Glory, glory to New England!
Glory, glory to New England!
Glory, glory to New England!
As we go marching on.

[122]

ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER RHINE

(Air: "Through Those Wonderful Glasses of Mine")

Germany, we're coming over, we are going straight to France;
We are praying for a chance,
Just to make your soldiers dance.
Kaiser Bill, your doom is coming; take a tip, old top, RESIGN!
For we'll drink beer in June,
By the light of the moon,
On the banks of the River Rhine.

"THE SIMULATING OF THE GREEN"

[123]

(Air: "Wearing of the Green")

Oh, Major dear, and did you hear the news that's going round?
We Cavalry must simulate till horses can be found;
We gallop and we single-foot as handsome as can be,
But on our own two feet we ride—a horse you'll never see.
'Tis the most amazing spectacle that's ever graced the green;
A hundred men a-riding where no horses can be seen.

Oh, Colonel dear, ye'll grieve to hear Artillery's the same,
Compared to simulating guns, a horse is rather tame;
Last night I was the left rear wheel—it made me mighty sore,
But dommed if I will be the swab and crawl inside the bore.
'Tis the most amazing spectacle that's ever graced the green,
A-firing rounds and salvos where no cannons can be seen.

[124]

DON'T SEND ME HOME

[125]

(Air: Don't Take Me Home)

Don't send me home, please don't send me home.
Tell me, where did I make that break?
Oh, oh, oh, oh, have a little pity.
I'm a poor candidate, in search of war I roam.
I'll do anything you want me to, but don't
Send me home.

COMPANY NINE

[126]

(Air: "Far Above Cayuga's Water")

Hark, ye Rookies, to the chorus
Of old Company Nine;
Captains, Colonels, all adore us,
When we fall in line.
Tho' we're doughboys, we're not slow boys,
Thanks to Sargeant Hill;
And when we take our stand in Deutschland,
Lord help Kaiser Bill!

In the morning at the warning,
"Clothes on Company Nine!"
Feeling rocky, into khaki
Jumps our valiant line.
We shun strawberries in the valley
Off the Peru road,
But in mess shack none can beat us
At the order "Load!"

[127]

In Pabst-less Plattsburg, bone-dry rookies,
Waiting for our kale,

Our healths we drink in foamless bumpers,
Full of Adam's ale.
But when the "Sammies" take their Münchener
On the river Rhine,
The toast will be to old New England
And to Company Nine.

WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO EUROPE

[128]

(Air: "My Wife's Away in Europe")

We're on our way to Europe,
And we won't come back.
And we won't come back.
We're going to shoot an awful pill
Into the hide of Kaiser Bill.
Von Hindenburg can't stop us;
We laugh at him, hee! hee!
We've shot the pistol twice before,
Can't hit the side of a barn door.
We're on our way to Europe
To lay Bill cross our knee.

COMPANY 5 SONG

[129]

(Original Music by Mr. H. T. Morgan)

1

On guard! We're always on our toes;
Plattsburg has taught us pep.
We're good at being Red or Blue,
But oh, that step!
Though we may lose a few patrols,
Just watch the Allied drive.
Right where they reach the Rhine, there
You'll find New England Five.

2

Forward! We're on our way to France;
We'll make it hot for Fritz.
With bayonet or rifle,
Watch us score all hits.
Heads up! We're after Hindenburg,
We'll show him we're alive;
When we get through with him, he
Will know New England Five.

DOUBLE TIME

[130]

(Air: Tammany)

Double time, double time!
We're the boys with running feet,
And we never mind the heat.
Double time, double time!
Battr'y three, you always see at
Double time.

Double time, double time!
On the run we always keep,
We even do it in our sleep.
Double time, double time!
When we eat our food goes down at
Double time.

Double time, double time!
Always jump and run like Hell,
Faster than a British shell.
Double time, double time!
Boche can't hit us, for we move at
Double time.

[131]

Double time, double time!
It's the surest road to fame,
If you live and don't get lame.
Double time, double time!
Hammond's favorite outdoor sport is
Double time.

THE 8TH NEW ENGLAND

[132]

(Air: Michael Roy)

The Eighth New England Infantry is the one that shows them how;
If Kaiser Bill could see us drill, the war would be over now.
Out in front of the Hostess House, as we go marching by
Where the ladies are sitting, they drop their knitting, and all begin to cry:
"For oh! For oh! What a wonderful company!
It must be either the General Staff or Company 8 N. E."

If Elihu Root could see us shoot out on the rifle range
He'd send us to Russia to help lick Prussia—oh, what a glorious change!
If General Pershing could hear us cursing the whistle that blows too soon,
There'd be a decree that reveille would come in the afternoon.
"For oh! For oh! What a wonderful company!
It must be either the General Staff or Company 8 N. E."

[133]

MARCHING ON THE RHINE

[134]

(Air: Rocky Road to Dublin)

When marching on the Rhine, boys,
We'll be singing this song
As we're marching along.
When marching on the Rhine, boys,
On our hunt for Kaiser Bill,
We'll shoot the Germans out of France,
We'll keep them on the run;
When we get there the world will know,
New England has begun,
To fight for Uncle Sammy.
We'll do our best,
And never will rest,
Until Old Glory rises to the sun.
Over the sea, boys,
Over the sea to Victory,
New England will fight on forever.

EGGS—AGERATED

[135]

Since I've come to Plattsburg
I've eaten so many eggs,
That feathers now adorn my skin,
And spurs are on my legs.

WITH APOLOGIES TO KIPLING'S "THE VAMPIRE"

[136]

A fool there was, and he made his prayer,
(Even as you and I)
Tho't he would hold down a colonel's chair,
So he came up here to do and dare,
But the skipper decided he wasn't there,
(Even as you and I).

Oh, the days we waste, and the pay we waste,
And the work of our hands and feet
Belong to the days we did not know,
(And now we know we never could know)
Enough to stand still at retreat.

Oh, the sleep we lost and the weight we lost,
And the things we had to eat
Can never come back to make us want,
(We hope they can't and pray they sha'n't)
If they did we'd admit we were beat.

[137]

The fool was stripped to his foolish hide,
(Even as you and I)
And they wouldn't let him be rear guide,
(So some of him lived, but the most of him died)
And he stayed a "rookie" just outside
(Even as you and I).

FINIS

[138]

*There's a lot that's pretty funny in the life we lead up here,
The problems and the hikin' and the mess;
But sometimes when I'm all alone I get a little blue,
And that's the way with everyone, I guess.*

*I often sit and wonder what it's really all about,
And what the end of all this will be;
It seems almost impossible that we will be at war,
And see the things a soldier has to see.*

*It's something more than just parade and something more than drill,
And something more than hiking in the rain.
It means that lots of friends we've made are going over seas,
And some of them will not come back again.*

*There's not a single man of us who really wants to fight,
And maybe die somewhere in France—but then,
It's war, and since it must be done, we'll try to do it right.
God willing, we'll acquit ourselves like men.*

[139]



[141]

With the Rookie to the End.



Transcriber's Notes:

Table of Contents: The page numbering in the Table of Contents is off by one beginning with THE CALL which the Table of Contents indicates should be on page 73. It actually begins on the next page. By the end of the book the page numbering is off by two. The final poem "Finis" is on page 138. I have edited the links in the Table of Contents so that the reader will go to the correct page even though the original page numbers have been retained, i.e. clicking on the link for 136 will take you to page 138.

Closing quotes were added to both stanzas of the poem "THE 8TH NEW ENGLAND" which begins on [page 132](#).

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ROOKIE RHYMES, BY THE MEN OF THE 1ST AND 2ND PROVISIONAL TRAINING REGIMENTS, PLATTSBURG, NEW YORK ***

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