

CROSSES OF WAR

POEMS BY

MARY RAYMOND SHIPMAN ANDREWS

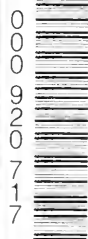
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BOOKS BY MARY R. S. ANDREWS

PUBLISHED BY CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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August First	<i>net</i>	\$1.00
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CROSSES OF WAR





Somewhere in France

CROSSES OF WAR

BY

Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews

Author of "The Perfect Tribute," "Her Country," etc.



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NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1918

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Published October, 1918

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**THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO
MY GENTLEST READER
MARCIA SHANKLAND ANDREWS**



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CROSSES OF WAR



A GODSPEED

God speed Old Glory when she takes the road to France!
Through the thundering of the legions where the bugles
play advance

God speak: "The fight is mine. Carry you my con-
quering lance."

God speed Old Glory on!

God send Old Glory first and foremost in the fight!
Fling her far, O God of battles, in the van, for the right.
Lift our hearts up to our freedom's flag of red-and-blue-
and-white.

God fling Old Glory far!

God guard Old Glory clean through battle grime and
sweat!

Consecrate the men who serve her so that none may
e'er forget

How the honor of the colors lies within his keeping yet.

God guard Old Glory clean!

God bring Old Glory home in honor, might, and pride!
Battle-black and bullet-slashed and stripes streaming
wide,

Gorgeous with the memories of men who greatly died—

God bring Old Glory home!

THE VIGIL

LIKE some young squire who watched his armor bright,
Kneeling upon the chapel floor all night—
Where glimmering candles on the altar glowed,
And moonlight through the Gothic windows flowed—
And prayed, with folded hands, that God would bless
His sword, and keep him true, and give success—
So, kneeling, Lord, before Thine altar light
A nation asks for help before the fight.

Grant us the prayer of that boy knight of old—
Strength to be steadfast, courage to be bold,
Such passionate love for the dear flag we fly
That each who serves it holds its honor high—
Simple, large gifts that soldiers need, O, Lord,
Grant the young nation for its unsheathed sword;
And for our captains in the perilous way
A vision widened to an unknown day.

We keep our vigil; send to-morrow glorious;
Let not the world go down; bring right victorious.
Kneeling in prayer before Thine altar light
The nation asks Thy help to fight Thy fight.

A CALL TO ARMS

In memory of Captain Philip Killburn Lighthall, who offered to his country, on the deck of the "Tuscania," "the last full measure of devotion."

IT is I, America, calling!
Above the sound of rivers falling,
Above the whirl of the wheels and the chime of bells in
the steeple
—Wheels, rolling gold into the palms of the people,
Bells ringing silverly clear and slow
To church-going, leisurely steps on pavements below—
Above all familiar sounds of the life of a nation
I shout to you a name.
And the flame of that name is sped
Like fire into hearts where blood runs red—
The hearts of the land burn hot to the land's salvation
As I call across the long miles, as I, America, call to
my nation
Tuscania! Tuscania!
Americans, remember the *Tuscania!*

Shall we not remember how they died
In their young courage and loyalty and pride,
Our boys—bright-eyed, clean lads of America's breed,
Hearts of gold, limbs of steel, flower of the nation indeed?
How they tossed their years to be
Into icy waters of a winter sea
That we whom they loved—that the world which they
loved should be free?
Ready, ungrudging they went, each one thinking, likely,
as the moment was come
Of the dear, starry flag, worth dying for, and then of
dear faces at home;
Going down in good order, with a song on their lips of
the land of the free and the brave
Till each young, deep voice stopped, under the rush of
a wave.
Was it like that? And shall their memory ever grow
pale?
Not ever, till the stars in the flag of America fail.
It is I, America, who swear it, calling
Over the sound of that deep ocean's falling,
Tuscania! Tuscania!
Arm, arm, Americans! Remember the *Tuscania!*

Very peacefully they are sleeping
In friendly earth, unmindful of a nation's weeping,
And the kindly, strange folk have honored the long, full
 graves, we know;
And the mothers know that their boys are safe, now, from
 the hurts of a savage foe;
It is for us who are left to make sure and plain
That these dead shall not have died in vain;
So that I, America, young and strong and not afraid,
I set my face across that sea which swallowed the bodies
 of the sons I made,
I set my eyes on the still faces of boys washed up on a
 distant shore
And I call with a shout to my own to end this horror
 forevermore!
In the boys' names I call a name,
And the nation leaps to fire in its flame
And my sons and my daughters crowd, eager to end the
 shame—
It is I, America, calling,
Hoarse with the roar of that ocean falling,
Tuscania! Tuscania!
Arm, arm, Americans! And remember, remember the
 Tuscania!

FLOWER OF THE LAND

THE land is like a garden with a blossoming of boys.
All across a continent, from the wide Atlantic's boom-
ing,
To the hoarse Pacific breakers, shouting deep trium-
phant noise;
All across a thousand prairies; from the Rocky Moun-
tains' looming;
From the farms and from the cities, out of villages like
toys

Pour the boys!

Everywhere—oh, my country, everywhere
The flower of America has sprung to sudden blooming.

Steady flowing, never-ending, never heeding rank or
races,

Eager faces set and sober, toward the cloud of battle
lowering—

Hear the swinging of battalions, see the young, unfear-
ing faces.

Thousands upon crowding thousands, iron muscles,
steady faces,

Out of snows and out of bayous, out of fields and cities
towering,

Rich and poor, from lordly mansions, out of tiny homes
like toys

Stream the boys!

Everywhere—oh, my country, everywhere

The harvest of the land we love has ripened to its flower-
ing.

For the God of Hosts has lifted up our soul to be a na-
tion;

He has silenced them who doubted that we knew his
trumpet voice;

He has set us on a mountain top to suffer for salvation,
Has crowned us and has cleaned us with suffering and
salvation.

And—to answer if our hearts are fixed on riches and on
toys—

Lord, the boys!

Not for gain—God Almighty, not for gaining

We are offering our flowering for a bulwark to crea-
tion—

Lord—our boys!

THE BABY AND THE BABY

I

SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA

I AM The Baby.

I own this room and everything that's in sight.

I own the pink blankets and all the pillows and this brass
crib that's so shiny and bright.

I'd like to suck the crib, but I can't, because it doesn't
come close to my mouth

Like bottles and woolly blankets; anyhow it's mine,
east to west and north to south.

That couple of old persons around twenty who refer to
themselves as "father" and "mother"—

They're mine, too, and when I'm engaged with impor-
tant thoughts they're a bother.

Yet there's a dreamy satisfaction in owning them, and
in seeing them make fools of themselves to amuse me.

The Person in Skirts assures me often that nobody shall
abuse me

Because I'm her ownny-wowny lamby-petty—I wonder
why she thinks that sort of asininity

Is appropriate to me, fresh from the stars and the whirl
of infinity?

I fix her with a cold stare, but she only says: "Look,
Teddy!
He acts as if he knew us, and owned us, and scorned us
already!"
Yet I'm getting used to their queer games, and they be-
gin to appeal to me.
It seems it's they who soak me in pink blankets and
adoration and every day deal to me
Through my nurse and my minions in general the sundry
warm bottles and such
Which are the real facts of the universe and please me
very much.
The Person in Trousers—one day he was left alone with
me
And I stared up and he stared down, frowning hard, as if
he'd pick a bone with me.
So after a while I remarked: "Bh!" and he laughed,
and he said: "You little cuss,
Suppose we seize this chance for an interview, just us."
And he bent over my crib and to my astonishment lifted
me,
Though I knew that, after he'd once gripped, not for
worlds would he have shifted me.
But he got me up safe in his huge claws, and held me,
and, you know, it was nice,
Though his hands were so gentle and terrified, they were
comfy, and strong as a vise;

Then he looked at me, very much as the Person in Skirts
looks, which I didn't know he knew how,
And he whispered straight at me: "Little cuss, there's
going to be one horrid big row
If you don't get all that's coming to you, love and care
and food and chances.
If you don't, it's your father will know the reason why,
and such are the circumstances."
Then he laid me down, as if I were trinitrotoluol at least,
And I googled up at him, and laughed, much like a fish
at a feast.
And since then I like him to come, and to touch me,
and I rather
Am inclined to consider it's a good asset to have a
father.
Anyhow he's mine. And the Person in Skirts, which
is perhaps the best thing I own, she's mine, too.
And the nurse, and the half nurse, and the nursery and
—you see that blue silk shoe?
I just kicked it off—that's mine; I'd so like it to chew.
And all these woolly and silk things lying around,
I own them and everything—the Person in Skirts said
so—all the house down to the ground.
I'm fat and rosy and stuffed and pampered and happy,
and maybe
There's anything you can think of better to be than
an American baby.

II

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE

I am The Baby.

The Person in Skirts that I own says it that way when
she comes home at night;

She says it in French, and hugs me, and then for a minute
I'm warm, and things seem right,

And I gurgle and goo at her, but soon I begin to whimper
a scrap,

For I've been cold and lonely and hungry all day, and
I want to tell her about it, as I lie in her lap.

And she understands, for she rubs me nicely awhile, and
holds me close,

And then she puts me down and fusses about and cooks
me the nastiest dose!

Now what do you think? Instead of a warm bottle of
milk, white and delicious,

She boils grass and such stuff—yes, she does—in water,
and I hear her whispering: "It isn't nutritious."

And she feeds it to me, and I hate it, and howl and kick
and squeal,

And then she cries into it, and I get tired—for it doesn't
give a fellow strength, that meal.

I get so tired I can't howl or kick any more, and so I
lie still,
And make a small whimpering noise, and try to beg
with my eyes to be fed my fill—
Which is what a baby's entitled to, else why did he
have to come?
Heaven knows I didn't ask to start living in this land
of gun and drum.
So the Person in Skirts—she says she's my mother, and
she's thin and sad and white—
She puts me to bed and lies down beside me, but neither
of us sleeps much all night.
Next morning she kisses me, and wraps me in a shawl,
and steals out of the door and away,
And then I'm alone, and vaguely scared, and it seems
like a week long, all day.
Maybe two or three times a kind person comes in and
takes me up and comforts me and then tries to
cram down me
That nasty grass tea, till I wish I were an extra puppy
and they'd drown me.
I really can't drink that stuff. And the only reason I
keep on going,
Which I sometimes think is a mistake in a country
where grass tea is growing,

Is because I'm glad, nights, when the Person in Skirts
comes back,
And also because, once in a blue moon, there's a large,
deep-voiced Person in Black
Called the Curé, who brings me real milk—just a little,
but oh, isn't it fine!
And when I see it coming, warm and white, I'm in such
a hurry that I whimper and whine
For pure joy, and the Curé smiles a bit, watching me, and
says I'm the hope of France;
But how can a chap be the hope of France when he can't
get enough food to have a chance?
And the Person in Skirts whispers things about my
father, whom she calls her lost hero so sadly—
Somehow I've gathered that a father's a thing that gives
babies what they need badly.
I wish I had a father. If I couldn't have that, then I
wish some other babies' fathers would give me a
place to stay—
A warm, light place, with persons in it while the Person
in Skirts is gone all day.
And maybe they'd let me have some food that wasn't as
bad as grass tea.
Do you think, if their babies have plenty and some left
over, the other babies' fathers would do that for me?

PLAYMATES

TIME was when you were comrade to the old,
Friend to the sorrowful, grown tired of breath;
Now all the buoyant hearts and heads of gold
Run to your arms, O Death!

Time was when you could terrify the bold,
When seasoned warriors shivered at your breath;
Now boys go singing down into the cold
Seas where you wait them, Death!

Time was when loss and grief and dust and mold
Were all the message of the parting breath;
Now youth and gladness of the world enrolled
Laugh through your veil, O Death!

Time was life seemed at end, the story told
When the dear clay was emptied of dear breath;
Now sudden vision lights a wisdom old—
Life but begins with death.

O grave, how may your ancient victory hold
These bright, unconquered ones, careless of breath?
O playmate Death, whose hand they rush to fold,
Where is your sting, O Death!

CAMPING

QUEER—three old pals like you and Bill and me,
Who've camped so many summer moons together,
Should get our camping half the earth apart,
 This August weather.

Odd—when our tastes are very much alike,
We've picked such widely different situations
—Though Bill and I have hit the same old trail
Among the hills which seem like close relations.

You know the lake, the long, low house of logs;
To every querying leaf you know the answer
In light and shadow on these forest walls;
 You—off in France, sir!

You know the *Allée Verte*, the Golden Pool,
The sunny sand-bar where your moose was standing;
You know the way the boats lie up the bank
Under the birch and alders 'round the landing.

But Bill and I don't even know the town
Where "A. E. F." means You, across the billow;
Yet know it's home—because Old Glory waves
 Over your pillow.

A gray old port that Julius Cæsar saw;
Transports all brown with singing warriors, hailing
From shores that Cæsar never heard of; thus,—
It's all I know—imagination's failing.

I picture lines of barracks on a hill—
Or is it in a valley? Horses tramping,
Mighty guns rumbling, regiments at drill,
Hoarse orders shouted—is that like your camping?

Ours is another sort; the peaceful days,
The smiling mountains; yet at any minute
We'd leave this heaven for that hell, to be
 With you, and in it.

We two can't fight. Though Bill, at fifty odd,
Hankers to be an Ace, through clouds a-kiting;
But War Departments scorn the likes of us;
 You'll do our fighting.

We think it safe with you; we think *You'll* win
The war, and personally nab the Kaiser;
Yet—only come back home! We'll never ask
Medals and honors—just your lifted visor.

But if the Great Adventure calls you, lad,
Cutting you free of Life's uncertain tether,
You'll wait a while, beyond, for Bill and me?—
And then, sometime again, we'll camp together.

AMERICA VICTORIOUS

WE shall go down at length to the gates of the sea,
We who have waited and watched and prayed from afar,
To welcome our fighting-men who have made earth free,
Our boys, home from the war.

Crowded the transports there, at the gates of the sea,
Pouring out rushing figures, khaki-clad,
Men roving of eye in the search for you and for me,
Home at last, and very glad.

The bands shall play in the streets of the gates of the
sea,
The crowds shall cheer, and the flags shall paint the sky,
Wild bells shall peal, to the conquering lines, jubilee—
But some shall be dim of eye.

Oh you, standing desolate there at the gates of the sea,
For a step not heard in the marching ranks, and a face
Whose eager smile to your face on earth cannot be—
Oh you, take heart of grace!

As his comrades come homeward without him across
the sea—
Guard him his glory of gladness in ultimate splendor,
Render them honor whole-hearted and smiling—as he
Would have rendered them honor, so render.

America beloved! Who shall stand one day by the
 sea
Bright-faced for the sons who come to the meeting
 glorious,
Wistful-eyed for the voices whose greeting may not
 yet be,
Rejoice for your shining army forever free,
America beloved—victorious!

THE BOY IN FRANCE

STEEPED in hot haze of the August afternoon
The garden dreams in a many-splendored trance;
The locusts drone a long, insistent tune;
And the boy—the boy's in France.

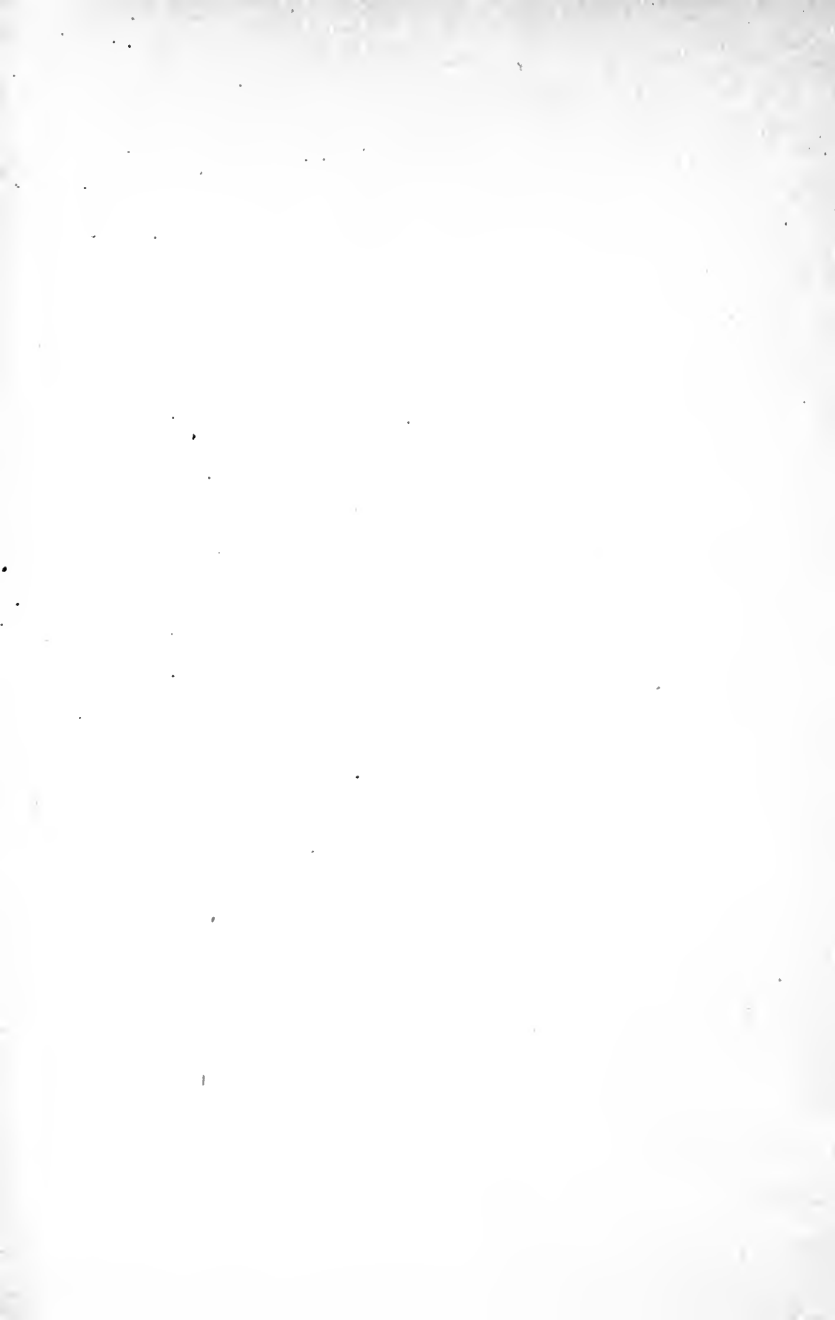
Down the stone steps the rose-pink phloxes stand,
Like delicate sculptures, through the breathless day,
Brilliant yet shadowy, as the bright, vague land;
And the boy—the boy's away.

The dogs about the terrace listless lie,
Waiting a springing step they used to know;
We wait, we also—and the days crawl by;
The boy—we miss him so.

Green fields reach over hills to fields of gold;
Far off the city glitters, gay but wan;
The radiant scene breathes loneliness untold;
The boy—the boy is gone.

Sudden his service flag's impetuous story
Flashes a bugle note across the flowers;
Sudden the aching loss is pride and glory;
He *is* in France—he's ours!

Lad of my heart! From all across your land
One thought wings to that land of old romance;
One proud America stretches a loving hand
To the boy—the boy in France.







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