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CANTEEN CLASSICS

RHYMES OF THE K.P.

ALFRED EGGERS



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CANTEEN CLASSICS

Rhymes of the K. P.

BY

ALFRED EGGERS



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CANTEEN CLASSICS

MUD

It's rainin' out t'night—

Nothin' but Mud in sight
Hell's afloat— It's the Devil's note,
With Mud in yuh're eye an' Mud in yer cry—
In Mud yuh die— an' yuh wonder Why—
Yuh're blood's blood an' not Mud.

A Soljers a shell an' crust—

Maybe he's made o' dust—
But beefs his fodder—not Mud an' Water.
His belly'll rust an' sour an' bust
—An' if it's dust, yuh wonder, just
Why blood's blood an' not Mud.

We'd fight with naked souls,

Charge through live hot coals—
An' welcome 'em gladly— Leave 'em most sadly—
Kiss 'em good bye! Throw 'em up high—
Lay down an' die— Then we'd know why
—Blood's blood an' not Mud.

SAMMY

Yuh're crabbin' on double time,
Bucklin' the flank an' file,
Dodgin' the ooze an' slime,
Draggin' the column a mile—
When it's blouses an' belts an' bay-o-nets
For Dress Parade— Yuh're stallin' sets
Yuh up—sublime.

It's gen'ral's yuh are—maybe,
Buckles an' bars an' stripes—
Hell! Wait'll the enemy's
Drillin' yer yellah tripes.
When yuh're struttin' an' cuttin'—an' worse than
that—
You'll get no drag on the size O' yer hat—
Yuh Gutter Snipes.

But Brother o' mine 'over there',
Here's my hand on it.
I'm Sammy-the-Devil-may-care—
Champin' a rusty bit.
A holdin' dead fast tuh yer strong hand clasp—
Swearin' from now 'till yuh hear me gasp
To do my bit.

Rhymes of the K. P.

The soljer'n was not in my game—

—Killin' the weak's no creed—

But in the Just God's Name

Whose afraid to bleed?

The blood o' great men'll not dry on my feet,

Order the Charge Sir— Blow no Retreat—

There'll be no need.

Yuh're catchin' the quick-step stride,

Red's shot into yer eye—

Fight's a eatin' yer hide,

Rushin' to say 'Good-Bye'—

When yuh're ordered out—an' go Over the Top—

Hold Up! Don't Drop! There's a place to stop—

On the other side.

RAW RECRUITS

I've lathered thim mornin' an' night,
A given' thim squads left an' right—
They be knowin' as mules—
—Such a Dam lot o' fools—
But they'll fight.

The most o' thim's Bow'ry New Yorks—
As healthy an' sthrappin' as storks—
They'll get haythinly dthrunk
Most undacently dthrunk—
Thin they'll fight.

Of the rest—they're a mongrel crew—
Scientifics—an' what not—an' jew—
Wid a crazy quilt patter—
They march—such a clatter—
Can they fight?

I'd as leaf trust the wild cats as thim—
They're that hungry and cautious an' slim—
Whin me back's to the lot—
Thim eyes run me hot—
Can they Fight!

Rhymes of the K. P.

Sez the Cap'n to me whin they came,
 'They're a gang that's oncommonly tame'—
But the tail av his eye
 Give his statement the lie—
 'They Can Fight'

I say't without shamin' the mules—
 Give me thim in preference to fools,
For me tongue's raw an' sore
 Wid the way I 'ave swore
 At thim jewels.

THE CAMEL CORPS

D'yuh call to mind the day—Johnny Boy—

Whin the canteen held a pint or more o' Joy
Whin we thought no more o' water, thin we did o'
Pharaoh's daughter

But that day is gone ferever—Johnny Boy—

D'yuh hear that gurglin' growlin' kind o'
snore—

He's a dreamin' o' the canteen, that's no more,
He's arguin' an' prayin', but yuh can't tell
what he's sayin'

The're a takin' him to jine the Camel Corps.

Sterile water fer the thirst—Johnny Boy—

Yuh're a schooner full o' germs, Ship Ahoy!
Whin Yuh're reg-lar in yer diet—yuh never durst
to try it

Wid foamin' tanks o' beer—Johnny Boy.

It's yer health they're fer protectin' from the
germs

An' the Medic Corps is offerin' no terms,
Oncondishinul surrender, sez our bloody bold
defender

To the Camel Corp—But how me gullet burns.

Rhymes of the K. P.

I've sinked the stalest schooner ever shipped,
An' I've never had me pig digestion tripped,
But this biled an' filtered water, makes me stomik
take a flopper

Like no soft an' clammy thing I ever gripped.
Oh me eye, it's o' me health an' nothin' more
Good men throwin' 'way their lives—an' by
the score,
But I know their tinder passions, fer a dryin'
up me rations
An' enlisten' o' me in the Camel Corps.

It's the germs we're fightin' now—Johnny Boy—
Half a million more 'n 'or less—as they deploy
Through our weakened constitushion, where they
start a revolution

Wid a profilactiz gun we mus' deestroy—
An' a pint o' beer would do it an' no more,
An' the pleasure of it—makes me gullet sore,
But they've made us gentle sodjers, wid no
wulgar wet exposures
We're a marchin' wid a dirty Camel Corps.

Canteen Classics

I'm drunk t'night an' bold—Johnny Boy—
Fer I run agin a beer-besot decoy—
An' somehow he knowed t'was pay-day, an' sez he
 are yez a laydy
Fer to look at— Would yuh be a china toy?
 An' me anger riz up hot an' so'd me gore,
 Take a holt me b'y, sez I— Strike from the
 shore!
An' I filled his eye wid beer foam, 'till he
 couldn't find his way home—
I'm a sodjer of a dirty Camel Corps.

THE DESERT

Down by the stream, 'neath shading palm,
Bold in it's brave array,
Rank and Column of courageous, calm,
Light Soldiery, marched away.

And they sang their songs of victories won,
And prophesied more, when this march was done.

Straight through the molten morning sun—
Straight in the eye, it gazed,
Spreading its great dead wings of dun,
Over the might man raised.

And they bristled with banter and jest and joke,
—Holding at nought, its fire-wind cloak.

Clear, the mirage of success lured on,
Tempting their love of fame—
Feeding their lips and their limbs, now dun
And dry as the desert flame.

But their jest was chilled in the desert night
And its image was black, in the morning light.

Canteen Classics

Time is the desert's friend and foe—
Slow, its idle embrace,
Taking its toll, in drop by drop flow—
Holding a snail's pace,
 But they crowded the desert—as on they flew,
 Counting it little, they never came through.

Wide is its withering waste at noon—
Snuffed is the light of man—
Spectre like host in the pale of the moon,
Sinking beneath its span.
 And its pity of man is as light as his jest
 As it tears his shroud from his funeral rest.

THE POLKA DOT BRIGADE

From the old adobe block-house, to our bat'ries on
the coast,

We lay, a steamin', swearin', tobacker starvin' ghost.
The Spaniard's diggin' trenches—a yella streak o'
shame—

An' the Big Chief in his blankets, with our horse
bat'ries gone lame

Then we straggled up the trail, a howlin', hag-
glin', mass—

'Till their Mauser's messed the front rank, an'
cut us down like grass

The finest of his regiment were fallin' round
him, dead—

His fat'll simmer down below—for goin' off his
head.

An' the wavin' grass was clingin' like a burnin'
blanket-roll,

To shed the devil's bullets, in the hellish seethin'
hole;

But a shamle's what we found it, for we couldn't
pump a shell,

With the order 'Wait for Orders', just a ridin' us
to Hell.

Canteen Classics

The trail was dammed with dyin' and the bullets overhead

Were comin' thick, an' shriekin', like a flyin' roof o' lead.

The sun—a burnin' ball o' flame was layin' on our backs—

An' we a squirmin' den o' snakes—a throwin' off our packs.

—The thirst was makin' devils of that haughty human host,

Their tongues swelled black agin their teeth—for stayin' at their post

“What Orders Sir?” “Shall we Advance?” On every hand the cry,

But all they got's an answer shriekin' overhead—
“To Die”

The regimental officers a cursin' the delay

With no retreat—an' death in front—“Who wants to lead the way?”

Where under God Almighty's Sun—was such a sight as this?

A Yankee—layin' down his arms to give defeat a kiss.

Rhymes of the K. P.

With the bullets comin' thicker an' we dyin' in a
hole—

The block-house stuck upon the hill, a grinnin'
tauntin', goal—

A Shout went up—from every side, "Who's that?"
The livin' prayed.

"Advance! Advance! We'll follow yuh— The
Polka Dot Brigade!"

A Stragglin', staggerin', reelin', mob, broke
from the woods and charged

A hail of shot and shrapnel, without a piece
discharged,

Each man a fightin' for a cause, more sacred
than his blood,

An' laughin' at the enemy, in whose death trap
he stood.

"Hold—Its Murder! Howlin' Murder, to charge
a trench that way!"

—The Cowboy cheers rang in our ears—"To win
or lose the day!"

The Black Bridgade no longer stayed, to scour with
the dead.

On every hand a little band, or one his lone game
played.

Canteen Classics

They marked no time—without a line—up
San Juan Hill
—Their achin' limbs and bulgin' eyes, a breath-
in' courage still—
To wipe the sting of shame, that cut a deeper
wound than lead
And turn the page o' sour defeat, to one that
could be read.

An' up that heavin' half-mile hill, more dyin' than
were left,
A totterin' mob—a cursin' job—an' of its head be-
reft
Charged on, in blind courageous strength, to where
the Spaniard lay—
And feebly cheered the colors—smeared—but they
had won the day.
We're laggin' an' a braggin' o' that hollow
vict'ry still
But no "Army Code o' Morals" lead that
charge up San Juan Hill
To cattle rangers, clubmen, clerks, an' rust-
lers on a raid—
The vict'ry goes— The whole world knows—
The Polka Dot Brigade

THE TRAMP! TRAMP! TRAMP!

When yuh hear the "Call to Colors"
Clip the frosty mornin' breeze,
An' the clickin' o' yer molars
Starts yuh shakin' at the knees—
—Yuh're passin' raw remarks—
—"Dam—That windjammer barks"—
But the Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!
Pulls yer chin up with a clamp.

Where's the joy in starin' Mud-Mad
Through a screen o' stinkin' sweat—
Cringin' cryin' like yer soul had
Soaked in brine that's bitter wet.
—Yer liver's white as death—
—Somethin's catchin' at yer breath—
When the Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!
Pulls yer chin up with a clamp.

Live barbed wire's just catchin' tendrils,
Burstin' Shrapnel's Squirrel Shot
When aroun' yuh blazin' blood spills
An's a leapin' out Red Hot.
—A knifin Snaky Sting—
—They've got yuh—Dam the thing—

Canteen Classics

When the Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!
Pulls yer chin up with a clamp.

Burnin' blood don't quench the achin'
Gripin' thirst that's at yer throat;
Nor'll forked lightnin' rakin'
Through yer brain, make Hell remote.
—A Writhin' Wrigglin' Clod—
—In Death he's cursin' God—
'Till a—Tramp—Tramp—Tramp—
Pulls his chin up with a clamp.

TINA

Twice she tried to run me through,
Screamin' wild—the blade she threw;
Hissin' like a snake—and blue.

Greeneyed Tina; Wigglin' Tina;
With a blazin' belt, between a
Fizzy head and twinklin' toes.

Crouchin' with a feline glint,
Emerald sparks of changin' tint
Leapin' from her eyes like flint.

Sneakin' Tina; Squirmin' Tina;
Tender, lovin', she-hyena—
Teeth—two shinin' iv'ry rows.

Hold your devil dyed desire.
You're a fiend with head afire;
Nerves a quiverin' like a wire.

Purrin' Tina; Playin' Tina;
Actin' like you'd always been a
Cherub with a stubby nose.

'DOBE MAID O' MINE

Cactus tempered 'dobe maid—'dobe maid o' mine;
Laughing 'cross the Rio Grand—Rio Grand and
thine;

Dancing eyes and curling lashes,
Trembling tears in diamond dashes;
Smiling, sugared, crimson lips,
Kisses—humming-bird—like tifs—
Living to your finger tips,
'Dobe Maid O' Mine.

Hundred-hearted 'dobe maid—'dobe maid o' mine;
Bonded to no close conventions—Dancing on, be-
nign;

Raven crowned, unpunished glances
Stealing through me—swift entrances;
Heart of fickle fabric spun,
Love! Oh Love! You are but one
Flaming high and dying; Done;
'Dobe Maid O' Mine.

Daughter of the Sun and Stars—'dobe maid o' mine;
Guided by the sage and palms—never to repine;
Thoughtless of a soldier's rations.
Satisfied with fleeting passions,

Flaming bird of paradise—
Why would you be otherwise?
Knowing—How could I despise?
'Dobe Maid O' Mine.

Careless of a nation's wrath—'dobe maid o' mine;
Treading each and every path, even 'cross the line;
Tossing lightly waging forces,
Like your tambourine discourses;
Eagle of the mountain pass,
Courage—none can you surpass,
Tattered, proud, impulsive lass,
'Dobe Maid O' Mine.

Olive-throated 'dobe maid—'dobe maid o' mine;
No green ivy tendril stings, 'round your heart en-
twine;
Little as you have to offer
Of fine gold—and still you proffer
Yellow buds, in bleeding hands—
Nourished by the desert sands—
Cactus blooms—Who understands?
'Dobe Maid O' Mine.

OUR PAY

It's not for the Gold that we get,
Much less for Goals we've set—
But for satisfied pride that we've turned aside—
That we've laughed at—and learned to forget.

The Duty—The Cause and the Strife
Hold high our hopes, hung rife,
But The God On High, rests His hand when we die
On the best we have loved in life.

The Toil that has trodden and torn,
Brings Riches, unmarred, unworn;
For the comrade who died, whom we watched be-
side,
Has blessed us—and left us to mourn.

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