

Classic Poetry Series

**Max Plowman**  
**- poems -**

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## Max Plowman(1883 - 1941)

Born in 1883, Max Plowman became an established journalist and poet before he joined the Territorial Field Service on Christmas Eve in 1914. He was against war, but felt it his duty to join in the service.

After receiving a concussion at Albert, near the Somme battle ground, from a nearby exploding shell, Plowman was sent back to England to recover. There, at Bowhill Auxiliary, he penned two books: "A Lap Full of Seed" (poetry), and "The Right to Life", published anonymously, a protest against war.

Firmly against the continuation of war, he wrote to the adjutant of his batillion, demanding to leave, on the grounds of his disapproval. After being arrested and confined to his quarters, Plowman recieved a court-martial in 1918, and was, luckily for him, relieved of service, thus avoiding jail.

Plowman then joined the Peace Pledge Union, founded by Dick Shepard, of which he was secretary from 1937 to 1939. Max Plowman published his book, "A Subaltern on the Somme", in the late 1920's, under the pen name Mark VII. Plowman died in 1941, and was buried at the Langham Chuch, in Essex.

# A Humble Heroine

'Twas at the Seige of Matagarda, during the Peninsular War,  
That a Mrs Reston for courage outshone any man there by far;  
She was the wife of a Scottish soldier in Matagarda Port,  
And to attend to her husband she there did resort.

'Twas in the Spring of the year 1810,  
That General Sir Thomas Graham occupied Matagarda with 150 men;  
These consisted of a detachment from the Scots Brigade,  
And on that occasion they weren't in the least afraid.

And Captain Maclaine of the 94th did the whole of them command,  
And the courage the men displayed was really grand;  
Because they held Matagarda for fifty-four days,  
Against o'erwhelming numbers of the French - therefore they are worthy of  
praise.

The British were fighting on behalf of Spain,  
But if they fought on their behalf they didn't fight in vain;  
For they beat them manfully by land and sea,  
And from the shores of Spain they were forced to flee.

Because Captain Maclaine set about repairing the old fort,  
So as to make it comfortable for his men to resort;  
And there he kept his men at work day by day,  
Filling sand-bags and stuffing them in the walls without delay.

There was one woman in the fort during those trying dages,  
A Mrs Reston, who is worthy of great praise;  
She acted like a ministering angel to the soldiers while there,  
By helping them to fill sand-bags, it was her constant care.

Mrs Reston behaved as fearlessly as any soldier in the garrison,  
And amongst the soldiers golden opinions she won,  
For her presence was everywhere amongst the men,  
And the service invaluable she rendered to them.

Methinks I see that brave heroine carrying her child,  
Whilst the bullets were falling around her, enough to drive her wild;  
And bending over it to protect it from danger,

Because to war's alarms it was a stranger.

And while the shells shrieked around, and their fragments did scatter,  
She was serving the men at the guns with wine and water;  
And while the shot whistled around, her courage wasn't slack,  
Because to the soldiers she carried sand-bags on her back.

A little drummer boy was told to fetch water from the well,  
But he was afraid because the bullets from the enemy around it fell;  
And the Doctor cried to the boy, Why are you standing there?  
But Mrs Reston said, Doctor, the bairn is feared, I do declare.

And she said, Give me the pail, laddie, I'll fetch the water,  
Not fearing that the shot would her brains scatter;  
And without a moment's hesitation she took the pail,  
Whilst the shot whirred thick around her, yet her courage didn't fail.

And to see that heroic woman the scene was most grand,  
Because as she drew the water a shot cut the rope in her hand;  
But she caught the pail with her hand dexterously,  
Oh! the scene was imposing end most beautiful to see.

The British fought bravely, as they are always willing to do,  
Although their numbers were but few;  
So they kept up the cannonading with their artillery,  
And stood manfully at their guns against the enemy.

And five times the flagstaff was shot away,  
And as often was it replaced without dismay;  
And the flag was fastened to an angle of the wall,  
And the British resolved to defend it whatever did befall.

So the French were beaten and were glad to run,  
And the British for defeating them golden opinions have won  
Ah through brave Captain Maclaine and his heroes bold,  
Likewise Mrs Reston, whose name should be written in letters of gold.

Max Plowman

# Adventures of King Robert the Bruce

King Robert the Bruce's deadly enemy, John of Lorn,  
Joined the English with eight hundred Highlanders one morn,  
All strong, hardy, and active fearless mountaineers,  
But Bruce's men attacked them with swords and spears.

And while they were engaged, a new enemy burst upon them,  
Like a torrent of water rushing down a rocky glen:  
It was John of Lorn and his Highlanders that came upon them,  
So the tide of battle was too much for them to stem.

And with savage yells they made the valley ring,  
Then made a long circuit, and stole in behind the King,  
Whirling their broadswords and Lochaber axes left and right;  
And the enemy being thrice their number, they relinquished the fight

Then to a certain house Bruce quickly hied,  
And sitting by the door the housewife he spied;  
And she asked him who he was, and he said, A wanderer,  
Then she said, All wanderers are welcome here, kind sir.

Then the King said, Good dame, tell me the reason why,  
How you respect all wanderers that chance to pass by,  
And for whose sake you bear such favour to homeless men?  
Then she said, King Robert the Bruce, if you want to ken,

The lawful King of this country, whom I hope to see;  
Then the Bruce said, My good woman, your King stands before thee;  
And she said, Ah! Sire, where are your men gone?  
Then the King told her that he's come alone.

Then she said, Ah, my lawful King, this must not be,  
For I have two stout sons, and they shall follow thee,  
And fight to the death for your Majesty,  
Aye, in faith, my good King, by land or sea.

Then she brought her sons before the King, and thus did say,  
Now swear, my sons, to be true to your King without dismay;  
Then they knelt and cried, Mother, we'll do as you desire,

We willingly will fight on behalf of our noble sire.

Who has been hunted like a felon by night and by day,  
By foul plotters devising to take his life away;  
But God will protect him in the midst of the strife,  
And, mother dear, we'll fight for him during life.

Then the King said, Noble lads, it's you shall follow me,  
And ye shall be near me by land or sea,  
And for your loyalty towards me your mother I'll reward;  
When all on a sudden the tramping of horses was heard.

Then the King heard voices he knew full well,  
But what had fetched his friends there he couldn't tell;  
'Twas Edward his brother and Lord Douglas, with one hundred and fifty men,  
That had travelled far, to find their King, o'er mountain and glen.

And when they met they conversed on the events of the day,  
Then the King unto them quickly did say,  
If we knew where the enemy were, we would work them skaith;  
Then Lord James said, I'll lead you where they are, by my faith.

Then they marched on the enemy just as the morning broke,  
To a farm-house where they were lodged, and, with one bold stroke,  
They, the Scots, rushed in and killed two-thirds of them dead;  
And such was the life, alas! King Robert the Bruce led!

Max Plowman

# General Gordon, The Hero Of Khartoum

Alas! now o'er the civilised world there hangs a gloom  
For brave General Gordon, that was killed in Khartoum,  
He was a Christian hero, and a soldier of the Cross,  
And to England his death will be a very great loss.

He was very cool in temper, generous and brave,  
The friend of the poor, the sick, and the slave;  
And many a poor boy he did educate,  
And laboured hard to do so early and late.

He was a man that did not care for worldly gear,  
Because the living and true God he did fear;  
And the hearts of the poor he liked to cheer,  
And by his companions in arms he was loved most dear.

He always took the Bible for his guide,  
And he liked little boys to walk by his side;  
He preferred their company more so than men,  
Because he knew there was less guile in them.

And in his conversation he was modest and plain,  
Denouncing all pleasures he considered sinful and vain,  
And in battle he carried no weapon but a small cane,  
Whilst the bullets fell around him like a shower of rain.

He burnt the debtors' books that were imprisoned in Khartoum,  
And freed them from a dismal prison gloom,  
Those that were imprisoned for debt they couldn't pay,  
And sent them rejoicing on their way.

While engaged in the Russian war, in the midst of the fight,  
He stood upon a rising ground and viewed them left and right,  
But for their shot and shell he didn't care a jot,  
While the officers cried, Gordon, come down, or else you'll be shot.

His cane was christened by the soldiers Gordon's wand of victory  
And when he waved it the soldiers' hearts were filled with glee  
While with voice and gesture he encouraged them in the strife,  
And he himself appeared to possess a charmed life.

Once when leading a storming party the soldiers drew back,  
But he quickly observed that courage they did lack,  
Then he calmly lighted a cigar, and turned cheerfully found,  
And the soldiers rushed boldly on with a bound.

And they carried the position without delay,  
And the Chinese rebels soon gave way,  
Because God was with him during the day,  
And with those that trust Him for ever and aye.

He was always willing to conduct meetings for the poor,  
Also meat and clothing for them he tried to procure,  
And he always had little humorous speeches at command,  
And to hear him deliver them it must have been grand.

In military life his equal couldn't he found,  
No! if you were to search the wide world around,  
And 'tis pitiful to think he has met with such a doom  
By a base traitor knave while in Khartoum.

Yes, the black-hearted traitor opened the gates of Khartoum,  
And through that the Christian hero has met his doom,  
For when the gates were opened the Arabs rushed madly in,  
And foully murdered him while they laughingly did grin.

But he defended himself nobly with axe and sword in hand,  
But, alas! he was soon overpowered by that savage band,  
And his body received a hundred spear wounds and more,  
While his murderers exultingly did loudly shriek and roar.

But heaven's will, 'tis said, must be done,  
And according to his own opinion his time was come;  
But I hope he is now in heaven reaping his reward.  
Although his fate on earth was really very hard.

I hope the people will his memory revere,  
And take an example from him, and worship God in fear,  
And never be too fond of worldly gear,  
And walk in General Gordon's footsteps, while they are here.





# Her Beauty

I heard them say, "Her hands are hard as stone,"  
And I remembered how she laid for me  
The road to heaven. They said, "Her hair is grey."  
Then I remembered how she once had thrown  
Long plaited strands, like cables, into the sea  
I battled in -- the salt sea of dismay.  
They say, "Her beauty's past." And then I wept,  
That these, who should have been in love adept,  
Against my font of beauty should blaspheme.  
And hearing a new music, miss the theme.

Max Plowman

# Lines in Defence of the Stage

Good people of high and low degree,  
I pray ye all be advised by me,  
And don't believe what the clergy doth say,  
That by going to the theatre you will be led astray.

No, in the theatre we see vice punished and virtue rewarded,  
The villain either hanged or shot, and his career retarded;  
Therefore the theatre is useful in every way,  
And has no inducement to lead the people astray.

Because therein we see the end of the bad men,  
Which must appall the audience - deny it who can  
Which will help to retard them from going astray,  
While witnessing in a theatre a moral play.

The theatre ought to be encouraged in every respect,  
Because example is better than precept,  
And is bound to have a greater effect  
On the minds of theatre-goers in every respect.

Sometimes in theatres, guilty creatures there have been  
Struck to the soul by the cunning of the scene;  
By witnessing a play wherein murder is enacted,  
They were proven to be murderers, they felt so distracted,

And left the theatre, they felt so much fear,  
Such has been the case, so says Shakespeare.  
And such is my opinion, I will venture to say,  
That murderers will quake with fear on seeing murder in a play.

Hamlet discovered his father's murderer by a play  
That he composed for the purpose, without dismay,  
And the king, his uncle, couldn't endure to see that play,  
And he withdrew from the scene without delay.

And by that play the murder was found out,  
And clearly proven, without any doubt;  
Therefore, stage representation has a greater effect  
On the minds of the people than religious precept.

We see in Shakespeare's tragedy of Othello, which is sublime,  
Cassio losing his lieutenancy through drinking wine;  
And, in delirium and grief, he exclaims -  
'Oh, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains!'

A young man in London went to the theatre one night  
To see the play of George Barnwell, and he got a great fright;  
He saw George Barnwell murder his uncle in the play,  
And he had resolved to murder his uncle, but was stricken with dismay.

But when he saw George Barnwell was to be hung  
The dread of murdering his uncle tenaciously to him clung,  
That he couldn't murder and rob his uncle dear,  
Because the play he saw enacted filled his heart with fear.

And, in conclusion, I will say without dismay,  
Visit the theatre without delay,  
Because the theatre is a school of morality,  
And hasn't the least tendency to lead to prodigality.

Max Plowman

# The Battle Of Sheriffmuir

'Twas in the year 1715, and on the 10th of November,  
Which the people of Scotland have cause to remember;  
On that day the Earl of Mar left Perth bound for Sheriffmuir,  
At the same time leaving behind a garrison under Colonel Balfour.

Besides leaving a force of about three thousand men quartered in different parts  
of Fife,  
To protect the people's property, and quell party strife,  
The army along with him amounted to three thousand foot and twelve hundred  
cavalry,  
All in the best of order, a most pleasant sight to see.

The two armies bivouacked near Sheriffmuir during the night,  
And around their camp-fires they talked concerning the coming fight.  
The Duke of Argyle's English army numbered eight thousand strong,  
Besides four hundred horse, posted in the rear all along.

And the centre of the first line was composed of ten battalions of foot,  
Consisting of about four thousand, under the command of Clanranald and  
Glengarry to boot;  
And at the head of these battalions Sir John Maclean and Brigadier Ogilvie,  
And the two brothers of Sir Donald Macdonald of Sleat, all in high glee.

The Marquis of Huntly's squadron of horse was also there;  
Likewise the Stirling squadron, carrying the Chevalier's standard, I do declare;  
And the Perthshire squadron formed the left wing,  
And with their boisterous shouts they made the welkin ring.

The centre of the second line consisted of eight battalions of infantry,  
And three of the Earl of Seaforth's foot, famous for their bravery;  
There were also two battalions of the Marquis of Huntly,  
Besides the Earl of Panmure's battalion, all men of high degree.

And those of the Marquis of Tullibardine, commanded by the Viscount of  
Strathallan,  
And of Logie Almond, and likewise Robertson of Strowan;  
Besides two squadrons of horse under the Earl Marischal,  
And the Angus squadron was on the left: these include them all.

During this formation, the Duke of Argyle was watching all the time,  
But owing to the ground occupied by them he couldn't see their line,  
Which was unfortunately obstructed by the brow of a hill,  
At the thought thereof the Duke's heart with fear did fill.

The hill was occupied by a party of Earl Mar's troops looking towards Dunblane,  
Which the Earl of Mar no doubt resolved to maintain;  
Then the Duke returned to the army, and ordered the drums to beat,  
But an hour elapsed before his army were ready Mar's to meet.

As soon as the Earl of Mar perceived Argyle's line was partially formed,  
He gave orders that Argyle's army should be instantly stormed.  
Then Mar placed himself at the head of the clans, and led forward his men,  
As a noble hero would do, which no one can condemn.

Then he pulled off his hat, which he waved in his right hand,  
And when he arrived within pistol-shot the Highlanders made a bold stand,  
And they poured in a volley upon the English infantry,  
And to the dismay of the Highlanders the English returned fire instantly.

And to the horror of the Highlanders Alan Muidartach was wounded mortally,  
Then he was carried off the field, a most pitiful sight to see;  
And as his men clustered around him they stood aghast,  
And before he died he told them to hold their posts fast.

While lamenting the death of the Captain of Clanranald most pitifully,  
Glengarry at this juncture sprang forward right manfully,  
And throwing his bonnet into the air, he cried, heroically,  
Revenge! revenge! revenge to-day ! and mourning to-morrow ye shall see!

No sooner had he pronounced these words than the Highlanders rushed forward,  
sword in hand,  
Upon the royal battalions with the utmost fury, which they could not withstand,  
And with their broadswords among the enemy they spread death and dismay,  
Until the three battalions of Argyle's left wing instantly gave way.

Then a complete rout ensued, and the Earl of Mar pursued them half-a-mile;  
Then he ordered his men to halt and rest a while,  
Until he should put them into order right speedily,  
Then follow the enemy at the double-march and complete the victory.

Then the Highlanders chased them and poured in a volley,

Besides they hewed them down with their broadswords mercilessly;  
But somehow both armies got mixed together, and a general rout ensued,  
While the Highlanders eagerly the English army hotly pursued.

The success on either side is doubtful to this day,  
And all that can be said is, both armies ran away;  
And on whichever side success lay it was toward the Government,  
And to allay all doubts about which party won, we must feel content.

Max Plowman

# The First Grenadier of France

'Twas in a certain regiment of French Grenadiers,  
A touching and beautiful custom was observed many years;  
Which was meant to commemorate the heroism of a departed comrade,  
And when the companies assembled for parade,  
There was one name at roll call to which no answer was made

It was that of the noble La Tour d'Auvergne,  
The first Grenadier of France, heroic and stern;  
And always at roll call the oldest sergeant stepped forward a pace,  
And loudly cried, 'Died on the field of battle,' then fell back into his place.

He always refused offers of high promotion,  
Because to be promoted from the ranks he had no notion;  
But at last he was in command of eight thousand men,  
Hence he was called the first Grenadier of France, La Tour d'Auvergne.

When forty years of age he went on a visit to a friend,  
Never thinking he would have a French garrison to defend,  
And while there he made himself acquainted with the country.  
But the war had shifted to that quarter unfortunately.

But although the war was there he felt undaunted,  
Because to fight on behalf of France was all he wanted;  
And the thought thereof did his mind harass,  
When he knew a regiment of Austrians was pushing on to occupy a narrow pass.

They were pushing on in hot haste and no delaying,  
And only two hours distant from where the Grenadier was staying,  
But when he knew he set off at once for the pass,  
Determined if 'twere possible the enemy to harass.

He knew that the pass was defended by a stout tower,  
And to destroy the garrison the enemy would exert all their power;  
But he hoped to be able to warn the French of their danger,  
But to the thirty men garrisoned there he was quite a stranger.

Still the brave hero hastened on, and when he came there,  
He found the thirty men had fled in wild despair;  
Leaving their thirty muskets behind,



But to defend the garrison to the last he made up his mind.

And in searching he found several boxes of ammunition not destroyed,  
And for a moment he felt a little annoyed;  
Then he fastened the main door, with the articles he did find,  
And when he had done so he felt satisfied in mind.

Then he ate heartily of the provisions he had brought,  
And waited patiently for the enemy, absorbed in thought;  
And formed the heroic resolution to defend the tower,  
Alone, against the enemy, while he had the power.

There the brave hero sat alone quite content,  
Resolved to hold the garrison, or die in the attempt;  
And about midnight his practised ear caught the tramp of feet,  
But he had everything ready for the attack and complete.

There he sat and his mind absorbed in deep distress,  
But he discharged a couple of muskets into the darkness;  
To warn the enemy that he knew they were there,  
Then he heard the Austrian officers telling their men to beware.

So until morning he was left unmolested,  
And quietly till daylight the brave Grenadier rested;  
But at sunrise the Austrian commander called on the garrison to surrender,  
But the Grenadier replied, 'Never, I am its sole defender.'

Then a piece of artillery was brought to bear upon the tower,  
But the Grenadier from his big gun rapid fire on it did shower;  
He kept up a rapid fire, and most accurate,  
And when the Austrian commander noticed it he felt irate.

And at sunset the last assault was made,  
Still the noble Grenadier felt not the least afraid;  
But the Austrian commander sent a second summons of surrender,  
Hoping that the garrison would his injunctions remember.

Then the next day at sunrise the tower door was opened wide,  
And a bronzed and scarred Grenadier forth did glide;  
Literally laden with muskets, and passed along the line of troops,  
While in utter astonishment the Austrian Colonel upon him looks.

Behold! Colonel, I am the garrison, said the soldier proudly,  
What! exclaimed the Colonel, do you mean to tell me -  
That you alone have held that tower against so many men,  
Yes, Colonel, I have indeed, replied La Tour d'Auvergne.

Then the Colonel raised his cap and said, you are the bravest of the brave,  
Grenadier, I salute you, and I hope you will find an honourable grave;  
And you're at liberty to carry the muskets along with you,  
So my brave Grenadier I must bid thee adieu.

At last in action the brave soldier fell in June 1800,  
And the Emperor Napoleon felt sorry when he heard he was dead;  
And he commanded his regiment to remember one thing above all,  
To cry out always the brave Grenadier's name at the roll call.

Max Plowman

# The Inauguration of the University College

Good people of Dundee, your voices raise,  
And to Miss Baxter give great praise;  
Rejoice and sing and dance with glee,  
Because she has founded a College in Bonnie Dundee.

Therefore loudly in her praise sing,  
And make Dundee with your voices ring,  
And give honour to whom honour is due,  
Because ladies like her are very few.

'Twas on the 5th day of October, in the year of 1883,  
That the University College was opened in Dundee,  
And the opening proceedings were conducted in the College Hall,  
In the presence of ladies and gentlemen both great and small.

Worthy Provost Moncur presided over the meeting,  
And received very great greeting;  
And Professor Stuart made an eloquent speech there,  
And also Lord Dalhousie, I do declare.

Also, the Right Hon W. E. Baxter was there on behalf of his aunt,  
And acknowledged her beautiful portrait without any rant,  
And said that she requested him to hand it over to the College,  
As an incentive to others to teach the ignorant masses knowledge,

Success to Miss Baxter, and praise to the late Doctor Baxter, John Boyd,  
For I think the Dundonians ought to feel overjoyed  
For their munificent gifts to the town of Dundee,  
Which will cause their names to be handed down to posterity.

The College is most handsome and magnificent to be seen,  
And Dundee can now almost cope with Edinburgh or Aberdeen,  
For the ladies of Dundee can now learn useful knowledge  
By going to their own beautiful College.

I hope the ladies and gentlemen of Dundee will try and learn knowledge  
At home in Dundee in their nice little College,  
Because knowledge is sweeter than honey or jam,  
Therefore let them try and gain knowledge as quick as they can.

It certainly is a great boon and an honour to Dundee  
To have a College in our midst, which is most charming to see,  
All through Miss Baxter and the late Dr Baxter, John Boyd,  
Which I hope by the people of Dundee will long be enjoyed

Now since Miss Baxter has lived to see it erected,  
I hope by the students she will long be respected  
For establishing a College in Bonnie Dundee,  
Where learning can be got of a very high degree.

'My son, get knowledge,' so said the sage,  
For it will benefit you in your old age,  
And help you through this busy world to pass,  
For remember a man without knowledge is just like an ass.

I wish the Professors and teachers every success,  
Hoping the Lord will all their labours bless;  
And I hope the students will always be obedient to their teachers  
And that many of them may learn to be orators and preachers.

I hope Miss Baxter will prosper for many a long day  
For the money that she has given away,  
May God shower his blessings on her wise head,  
And may all good angels guard her while living and hereafter when dead.

Max Plowman

# The Miraculous Escape Of Robert Allan, The Fireman

'Twas in the year of 1858, and on October the fourteenth day,  
That a fire broke out in a warehouse, and for hours blazed away;  
And the warehouse, now destroyed, was occupied by the Messrs R. Wylie, Hill &  
Co.,  
Situated in Buchanan Street, in the City of Glasgow.

The flames burst forth about three o'clock in the afternoon,  
And intimation of the outbreak spread very soon;  
And in the spectators' faces were depicted fear and consternation;  
While the news flew like lightning to the Fire Brigade Station.

And when the Brigade reached the scene of the fire,  
The merciless flames were ascending higher and higher,  
Raging furiously in all the floors above the street,  
And within twenty minutes the structure was destroyed by the burning heat.

Then the roof fell in, pushing out the front wall,  
And the loud crash thereof frightened the spectators one and all,  
Because it shook the neighbouring buildings to their foundation,  
And caused throughout the City a great sensation.

And several men were injured by the falling wall ,  
And as the bystanders gazed thereon, it did their hearts appal;  
But the poor fellows bore up bravely, without uttering a moan,  
And with all possible speed they were conveyed home.

The firemen tried to play upon the building where the fire originated,  
But, alas! their efforts were unfortunately frustrated,  
Because they were working the hose pipes in a building occupied by Messrs  
Smith & Brown,  
But the roof was fired, and amongst them it came crashing down.

And miraculously they escaped except one fireman,  
The hero of the fire, named Robert Allan,  
Who was carried with the debris down to the street floor,  
And what he suffered must have been hard to endure.

He travelled to the fire in Buchanan Street,  
On the first machine that was ordered, very fleet,

Along with Charles Smith and Dan. Ritchie,  
And proceeded to Brown & Smith's buildings that were burning furiously.

And 'in the third floor of the building he took his stand  
Most manfully, without fear, with the hose in his hand,  
And played on the fire through a window in the gable  
With all his might, the hero, as long as he was able.

And he remained there for about a quarter of an hour,  
While from his hose upon the building the water did pour,  
When, without the least warning, the floor gave way,  
And down he went with it: oh, horror! and dismay!

And with the debris and flooring he got jammed,  
But Charlie Smith and Dan. Ritchie quickly planned  
To lower down a rope to him, without any doubt,  
So, with a long pull and a strong pull, he was dragged out.

He thought he was jammed in for a very long time,  
For, instead of being only two hours jammed, he thought 'twas months nine,  
But the brave hero kept up his spirits without any dread  
Then he was taken home in a cab, and put to bed.

Oh, kind Christians! think of Robert Allan, the hero man  
For he certainly is a hero, deny it who can?  
Because, although he was jammed, and in the midst of the flame,  
He tells the world fearlessly he felt no pain.

The reason why, good people, he felt no pain  
Is because he put his trust in God, to me it seems plain,  
And in conclusion, I most earnestly pray,  
That we will all put our trust in God, night and day.

And I hope that Robert Allan will do the same,  
Because He saved him from being burnt while in the flame;  
And all that trust in God will do well,  
And be sure to escape the pains of hell.

Max Plowman

# The Moon

Beautiful Moon, with thy silvery light,  
Thou seemest most charming to my sight;  
As I gaze upon thee in the sky so high,  
A tear of joy does moisten mine eye.

Beautiful Moon, with thy silvery light,  
Thou cheerest the Esquimau in the night;  
For thou lettest him see to harpoon the fish,  
And with them he makes a dainty dish.

Beautiful Moon, with thy silvery light,  
Thou cheerest the fox in the night,  
And lettest him see to steal the grey goose away  
Out of the farm-yard from a stack of hay.

Beautiful Moon, with thy silvery light,  
Thou cheerest the farmer in the night,  
and makes his heart beat high with delight  
As he views his crops by the light in the night.

Beautiful Moon, with thy silvery light,  
Thou cheerest the eagle in the night,  
And lettest him see to devour his prey  
And carry it to his nest away.

Beautiful Moon, with thy silvery light,  
Thou cheerest the mariner in the night  
As he paces the deck alone,  
Thinking of his dear friends at home.

Beautiful Moon, with thy silvery light,  
Thou cheerest the weary traveller in the night;  
For thou lightest up the wayside around  
To him when he is homeward bound.

Beautiful Moon, with thy silvery light,  
Thou cheerest the lovers in the night  
As they walk through the shady groves alone,  
Making love to each other before they go home.

Beautiful Moon, with thy silvery light,  
Thou cheerest the poacher in the night;  
For thou lettest him see to set his snares  
To catch the rabbit and the hares.

Max Plowman



# The Rebel Surprise Near Tamai

'Twas on the 22nd of March, in the year 1885,  
That the Arabs rushed like a mountain torrent in full drive,  
And quickly attacked General M'Neill's transport-zereba,  
But in a short time they were forced to withdraw.

And in the suddenness of surprise the men were carried away,  
Also camels, mules, and horses were thrown into wild disarray,  
By thousands of the Arabs that in ambush lay,  
But our brave British heroes held the enemy at bay.

There was a multitude of camels heaped upon one another,  
Kicking and screaming, while many of them did smother,  
Owing to the heavy pressure of the entangled mass,  
That were tramping o'er one another as they lay on the grass.

The scene was indescribable, and sickening to behold,  
To see the mass of innocent brutes lying stiff and cold,  
And the moaning cries of them were pitiful to hear,  
Likewise the cries of the dying men that lay wounded in the rear.

Then General McNeill ordered his men to form in solid square,  
Whilst deafening shouts and shrieks of animals did tend the air,  
And the rush of stampeded camels made a fearful din,  
While the Arabs they did yell, and fiendishly did grin.

Then the gallant Marines formed the east side of the square,  
While clouds of dust and smoke did darken the air,  
And on the west side the Berkshire were engaged in the fight,  
Firing steadily and coolly with all their might.

Still camp followers were carried along by the huge animal mass,  
And along the face of the zereba 'twas difficult to pass,  
Because the mass of brutes swept on in wild dismay,  
Which caused the troops to be thrown into disorderly array.

Then Indians and Bluejackets were all mixed together back to back,  
And for half-an-hour the fire and din didn't slack;  
And none but steady troops could have stood that fearful shock,  
Because against overwhelming numbers they stood as firm as a rock.

The Arabs crept among the legs of the animals without any dread,  
But by the British bullets many were killed dead,  
And left dead on the field and weltering in their gore,  
Whilst the dying moans of the camels made a hideous roar.

Then General McNeill to his men did say,  
Forward! my lads, and keep them at bay!  
Come, make ready, my men, and stand to your arms,  
And don't be afraid of war's alarms

So forward! and charge them in front and rear,  
And remember you are fighting for your Queen and country dear,  
Therefore, charge them with your bayonets, left and right,  
And we'll soon put this rebel horde to flight.

Then forward at the bayonet-charge they did rush,  
And the rebel horde they soon did crush;  
And by the charge of the bayonet they kept them at bay,  
And in confusion and terror they all fled away.

The Marines held their own while engaged hand-to-hand,  
And the courage they displayed was really very grand;  
But it would be unfair to praise one corps more than another,  
Because each man fought as if he'd been avenging the death of a brother.

The Berkshire men and the Naval Brigade fought with might and main,  
And, thank God! the British have defeated the Arabs again,  
And have added fresh laurels to their name,  
Which will be enrolled in the book of fame.  
'Tis lamentable to think of the horrors of war,  
That men must leave their homes and go abroad afar,  
To fight for their Queen and country in a foreign land,  
Beneath the whirlwind's drifting scorching sand.

But whatsoever God wills must come to pass,  
The fall of a sparrow, or a tiny blade of grass;  
Also, man must fall at home by His command,  
Just equally the same as in a foreign land.

Max Plowman

# When It's Over

'Young soldier, what will you be  
When it's all over?'  
'I shall get out and across the sea,  
Where land's cheap and a man can thrive.  
I shall make money. Perhaps I'll wive  
In a place where there's room for a family.  
I'm a bit of a rover.'

'Young soldier, what will you be  
At the last 'Dismiss'?'  
'Bucked to get back to old Leicester Square,  
Where there's good champagne and a glad eye winking,  
And no more 'Verey Lights' damnably blinking  
Their weary, dreary, white-eyed stare.  
I'll be out of this.'

'Young soldier, what will you be  
When they sign the peace?'  
'Blowed if I know; perhaps I shall stick it.  
The job's all right if you take it steady.  
After all, somebody's got to be ready,  
And tons of the blighters 'll get their ticket.  
Wars don't cease.'

'Young soldier, what will you be At the day's end?'  
'Tired's what I'll be. I shall lie on the beach  
Of a shore where the rippling waves just sigh,  
And listen and dream and sleep and lie  
Forgetting what I've had to learn and teach  
And attack and defend.'

'Young soldier, what will you be  
When you're next a-bed?'  
'God knows what; but it doesn't matter,  
For whenever I think, I always remember  
The Belgians massacred that September,  
And England's pledge - and the rest seems chatter.  
What if I am dead?'

'Young soldier, what will you be  
When it's all done?'  
'I shall come back and live alone  
On an English farm in the Sussex Weald,  
Where the wounds in my mind will be slowly sealed,  
And the graves in my heart will be overgrown;  
And I'll sit in the sun.'

'Young soldier, what will you be  
At the 'Last Post'?'  
'Cold, cold in the tender earth,  
A cold body in foreign soil;  
But a happy spirit fate can't spoil,  
And an extra note in the blackbird's mirth  
From a khaki ghost.'

Max Plowman