

FAMOUS WAR POEMS

IN ALL ages and in every country Mars has rivaled Venus in providing themes inspiring to poets. Fascinating as are the pages of history, it is safe to assert that more men and women have gathered vivid impressions of warriors and wars from the lyric celebration of these persons and events than from the more substantial prose chronicles.

Martial music is not alone that which is supplied by fife and drum. Musicians whose instruments are but words and rhythm have been able to make their message ring in the hearts of men and to stir emotions as deep and passionate as those which sound the response to the tramping of regiments, the military hand and the thrilling note of the bugle.

The pride of war is perhaps nowhere more sharply limned in verse than in Browning's much-loved poem "Incident of the French Camp," in which the dramatic quality of the French soldier stands out in such sharp relief against the stern and terrible background of death on the field:

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP.

You know we French stormed Ratisbon:
A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our stormy day;
With head outthrust, you fancy
how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

Just as, perchance, he mused: "My
plans
That soar to earth may fall,
Let once my army leader Lannes
Waver at yonder wall."
Out 'twixt the battery smoke there
flew
A rider, bound on bound,
Full galloping, nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's neck, a boy;
You hardly could suspect—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed
Scare any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his
breast
Was all but shot in two.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by
God's grace
We've got you, Ratisbon!
The Marshal's in the market place,
And you'll be there anon.
To see your flag-bard flap his vans
Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him!" The chief's eye
flashed, his plans
Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes,
"Your wounded!" "Nay," the soldier's
pride,
Touched to the quick, he said:
"I'm killed, sire," and his chief
beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.

THE SWORD SONG.

By Charles Theodore Körner.

"The Sword Song," written by Charles Theodore Körner, a German poet, who fell in battle when he was only 22 years old, is a shrill with the wild joy of an elder age of fighters, many of whom appeared to rejoice in the fight for its own sake. The sword song was found in his pockets as he lay dead on the field. It afterward became a great favorite with German youths and has been used as a serenade by students of the universities and other bands of young men.

Sword by my left side gleaming,
What means thy bright eyes' beam-
ing?
It makes my spirit dance
To see thy friendly glance.
Hurrah!

"A valiant rider bears me;
A free-born German wears me;
That makes my heart so bright;

That is the sword's delight."
Hurrah!

Yes, good sword, I am free,
And love thee heartily,
And clasp thee to my side,
E'en as a plighted bride.
Hurrah!

The trumpet's solemn warning
Shall hail the bridal morning
When cannon thunders wake
Then my true bride I take.
Hurrah!

Why in the scabbard rattle,
So wild, so fierce for battle
What means this restless glow
That makes me tremble so?
Hurrah!

"Let me not longer wait;
Love's garden blooms in state,
How, in the sun's bright beams,
And many a bright deathbed."
Hurrah!

Now, then, come forth, my bride!
Come forth, thou rider's pride!
Come out, my good sword, come!
Hurrah!

"Oh, in the field to dance
The glorious wedding dance!
How, in the sun's bright beams,
Bridelike the clear steel gleams."
Hurrah!

Then forward, valiant fighters!
And forward, German riders!
And when the heart grows cold
Let each his love unfold.
Hurrah!

Then let your hot lips feel
That virgin cheek of steel;
One kiss, and wee beside,
Him who forsakes the bride!
Hurrah!

Now let the loved one sing;
Now let the clear blade ring,
"Till the bright sparks shall fly,
Herald of victory!"
Hurrah!

For hark! the trumpet's warning
Proclaims the marriage morning!
It dawns in festal pride,
Hurrah, thou iron bride!
Hurrah!

NASEBY.

A favorite war poem of English and American schoolboys, as well as those of older growth, is the "Naseby" of Massaulay, which with such energy and fervor and in such ringing accents sets forth the valorous spirit of the old Roundheads:

Oh, wherefore come ye forth in triumph
From the north,
With your hands, and your feet,
and your raiment all red?
And wherefore doth your rout send
forth a joyous shout?
And whence be the grapes of the
wine press which ye tread?

Oh, evil was the root, and bitter
was the fruit,
—And crimson was the juice of the
vintage that we trod;
For we trampled on the throng of
the haughty and the strong,
Who sat in the high places and
slew the saints of God.
It was about the noon of a glorious
day in June,
That we saw their banners dance
and their cuirasses shine,
And the man of blood was there
with his long scented hair,
And Astley, and Sir Marmaduke,
and Rupert of the Rhine.

Like a servant of the Lord, with his
Bible and his sword,
The General rode along us to
form us for the fight,
When a murmuring sound broke out



and swell'd into a shout
Among the godless horsemen
upon the tyrant's right.

And hark, like the roar of billows
on the shore,
The cry of battle rises along their
charging line;
For God! for the cause! for the
church! for the laws!
For Charles, King of England,
and Rupert of the Rhine.

The furious German comes, with his
clarions and his drums,
His bravoes of Alsatia and pages
of Whitehall;
They are bursting on our flanks;
Grasp your pikes! Close your
ranks!
For Rupert never comes but to
conquer, or to fall.

They are here—they rush on—we
are broken—we are gone—
Our left is borne before them like
stubble on the blast.
O Lord, put forth thy might; O
Lord defend the right!
Stand back to back in God's name!
and fight it to the last!

Stout Skippen bathe a wound—the
center hath given ground.
Hark! Hark! what means the
tramping of horsemen on our
rear?
Whose banners do I see, boys? 'Tis
he! thank God, 'tis he, boys!
Bear up another minute! Brave
Oliver is here!

Their heads all stooping low, their
points all in a row,
Like a whirlwind on the trees,
Like a deluge on the dikes,
Our cuirassiers have burst on the
ranks of the accurst,
And at a shock have scattered the
forest of his pikes.

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND.

There are few more ringing songs
of war in any language than the
well-known apostrophe of Thomas
Campbell to the men of the British
navy:

Ye mariners of England
That guard our native seas!
Whose flag has braved a thousand
years,
The battle and the breeze!
The

(Be blessings on the glorious
pair)
Before us pass'd, I saw them not,
I only saw a cap of hair.

Your orthodox historian puts
In foremost rank the soldier thus,
The red-coat bully in his boots,
That hid the march of men
from us.

He puts him there in foremost rank;
You wonder at his cap of hair;
You hear his sabre's cursed clank;
His spurs are jingling everywhere.

Go to! I hate him and his trade,
Who bids us so to cringe and
bend,
And all God's peaceful people made
To such as him subservient?

Tell me, what find we to admire
In epaulets and scarlet coats,
In men because they lead and fire,
And know the art of cutting
throats?

And what care we for war and
wrack
How Kings and heroes rise and
fall?
Look yonder, in his coffin black,
There lies the greatest of them
all!

To pluck him down and keep him up
Died many million human souls;
'Tis 12 o'clock and time to sup;
Bid Mary heap the fire with coals.

He captured many thousand guns;
He wrote "the Great" before his
name;
And, dying, only left his sons
The recollections of his shame.

Though more than half the world
was his,
He died without a rood his own,
And borrowed from his enemies
Six foot of ground to lie upon.

He fought a thousand glorious wars,
And more than half the world was
his,
And somewhere now, in yonder
stars,
Can tell mayhap what great-
ness is.

THE SONG OF THE CAMP.

By Bayard Taylor.

"Give us a song," the soldiers cried,
The outer trenches guarding,
When the heated guns of the camps
allied
Grew weary of bombarding.

The dark Redan, in silent scoff,
Lay, grim and threatening, under;
And the tawny mound of the Mala-
keff
No longer belched its thunder.
There was a pause. A guardsman
said:
"We storm the forts tomorrow.
Sing while we may; another day
Will bring enough of sorrow."

They lay along the battery's side,
Below the smoking cannon;
Brave hearts from Severn and from
Clyde,
And from the banks of Shannon.

They sang of love and not of fame;
Forgot was Britain's glory;
Each heart recalled a different
name,
But all sang "Annie Laurie."

Voice after voice caught up the song
Until its tender passion
Rose like an anthem, rich and
strong—
Their battle eve confession.

Dear girl, her name he dared not
speak,
But as the song grew louder,
Something upon the soldier's cheek
wot!

Washed off the stains of powder,
Beyond the darkening ocean burned
The bloody sunset's embers,
While the Crimean valleys learned
How English love remembers.

And once again a fire of hell
Rained on the Russian quarters,
With scream of shot and burst of
shell,
And belowing of the mortars!

And Irish Nora's eyes are dim
For a singer dumb and gory,
And English Mary mourns for him
Who sang of "Annie Laurie."

Sleep, soldiers, still in honored rest,
Your truth and honor wearing;
The bravest are the tenderest,
The loving are the daring.

CAVALRY SONG.

By Edmund Clarence Stedman.

In the "Cavalry Song" from "Allow
of Monmouth," the wild clamor of
battlefields finds an expressive echo:

Our good steeds snuff the evening
air;
Our pulses with their purpose
tingle;
The foeman's fires are twinkling
there;
He leaps to hear our sabers
jingle!

Each carbine sends its whizzing
ball;
Now, clang, clang, forward all,
Into the fight!
Dash on beneath the smoking dome;
Though level lightnings gallop
near!

One look to heaven! No thought of
home;
The guerdons that we bear are
dearer.

Cling! Clang, forward all!
Heaven help those whose horses
fall!
Cut left and right,
Now, comrades, bear our wounded
back,
And leave the foeman to his
dirges.

WHEEL!
The bugles sound the swift recall!
Cling! Clang! backward all!
Home, and good night.

INDIANS NOW IN FRANCE.

The Indian troops on the battle
line in France furnish one of the
most picturesque features in the
war of the nine nations.

The British force in India num-
bers about 75,000; the native con-
tingent 160,000, besides 25,000 re-
serves and 20,000 troops of native
Princes. As all heavy artillery is
British-manned, a field division
consists of mixed units totaling
3708 British and 8153 natives, long
accustomed to fighting side by
side. Deducting garrisons and de-
tails, the field army is 150,000 men.
About half of this is probably in
France, say 20,000 British and 55-
000 native troops.

And what an army! Its native
contingent belongs mainly to a
civilization that was old when
Germany was a forest and the
early Britons stained their naked
bodies blue with woad. The San-
scrit elements of their speech are
the parent tongue of Aryan Eu-
rope. There are no better cold-
weather troops than the Northern
Indian army, with its many veter-
ans of Chitral and high Tibet.
There is no army of the size that
had such field practice.

The hope that India would grasp
for home rule was destined to dis-
appointment. Home rule for India
is a long way off until the Indians
settle which race shall do the
ruling. Meanwhile the keen little
Gurkhas and the Sikhs and the
bearded Maharrats—turbans, caste
marks, brilliant costumes, dark,
fiery faces, as if they had just
stepped out of a Kipling story—
tread the soil of Europe for the
first time in the cause of the Brit-
ish "raj" and its allies. It is a
precedent not likely to be forgot-
ten in Europe or India.—New York
World.