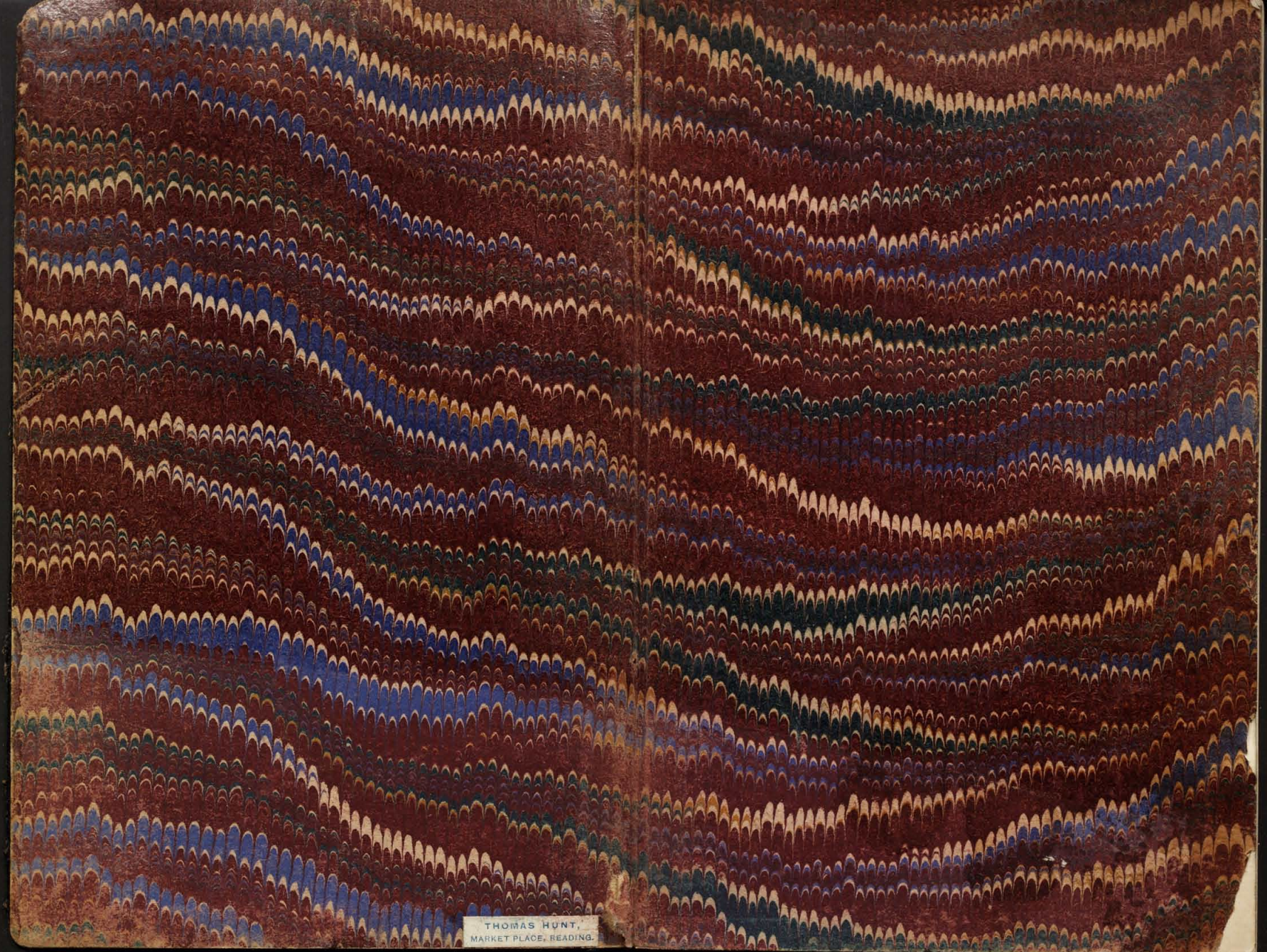


T.P.N'S POEMS.



THOMAS HUNT,  
MARKET PLACE, READING.

Luton Culture 2014

Poems (10-called)

by  
T.P.N.

An Alphabet.  
Active Service - 1914-1915

A is the Art of riding a bike  
on pairs, thro' mud, past hoops, and such like

B is the rasher of Bacon we fry  
[now I'm assured that pigs fly, + fly high]

C is for Canada - far spreads the fame  
of the deeds that are done by those bearing her name

D is for Dick' mach, amazed quite a lot  
by guns of all calibre trained on the spot

E is for Eric, just one of my kind  
his dis-like for a wash is all that I mind

F is for Forsyth - junior O.C.  
as mad as a hatter but as nice as can be

G is for "Gunny", who joined us in Jan:  
'methodical's' hardly the word for the man

H are the Huts, where the problems of war  
are solved by the Staff for 12 hours or more

---

I is the Infantry, set upon killing  
the whole German race for the sum of no shilling

---

J is for 'Jim', alias Corporal Rata  
he sits in the Office, but his brain's out of date

---

K is for Kitchener, Kounting, and King  
if the three were forgotten, we'd all chuck the thing

---

L are our Letters, worth more altogether  
than pay, a tobacco, or even fine water

---

M Must Mean Motors, Motorbikes, Motorcars  
essential to Men who are worshipping Mars

---

N are the Nights, mostly foul, seldom fair  
illuminated by searchlight, explosion, or flare

---

O is Our Officers commanding the lot  
if you ask my Opinion he Ought to be —

(censored)

P is the **P**atrie, a boon and delight  
to the men of all ranks that have come out to fight

"Q" is an office involving 'red tape'  
still it does keep the army in some sort of shape

R is the **R**ot that you **R**ead by the **R**eam  
of victims & so on, which aren't all they seem

S is for **S**ugar - "Surely" **S**ay **S**ome  
"The highly **S**ugared is better than none

T is for **T**homas, be it Atkins or self,  
at **T**ime they made them come down from the shelf

"U" in contact with 'sabineomania'  
which brands men for life with the word "Lusitania"

V is the **V**ictory we hope for next year,  
it will come in the end, tho' the cost may be dear

W's the **W**etter - on this much depends  
what comfort **W**'s have shown since the **W**ar ends

X stamps composers of rhymes such as this  
to avoid complications, 'I'll give it 'a miss'

---

Y is for Ypres - sample has been said  
of the horrors one finds in this "City of Dread"

---

Z stands for Zeppelins - obvious word  
to make use of for Z! but they are so absurd.

---

I'm glad there's no more of these letters to go  
I'll just get 'em censored if you wait half a sec'.

April. 1915.

On 'leave' for the 1st time from

Active Service - Nov 30<sup>th</sup> - Dec 5<sup>th</sup> 1914

I once came home and spent much time  
in shaking hands & kissing  
and why? because I'd come from war  
all 'wounded', 'sick', a 'missing'!

I wandered here, I wandered there  
received a small oration  
and why? because I'd come from war  
with various preservation!

Hope next time that I return  
I'm all the 'one and only'  
and why? because I've left my pals  
still sticking it, but lonely.

The work I've done would scarcely fill  
one line of all the story,  
So why should I return alone  
and wrongly take their glory?

Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> 1914

A Sunday in April 1915

Reverence shone softly on the crumbling walls  
of buildings, victims of a thwarted Power -  
front in this midst a church's remnants show -  
4 ruined walls - a shattered tower

Hard by I paused to watch a devout band  
of Belgian women entering in to pray  
amid the ruin - dwellers in a land  
was witnessing death's struggle day by day

A mile in front a long thin khaki line  
across 'freedom' to the sea on left which  
clashes, the roar of heavy guns - a sign  
of skilled aim - of master mind.

I gazed and thought of days long past  
of home, of services on Sunday held -

\* \* \* \*

a puff of smoke! dreams faded fast  
that's twice today this road's been shelled!

April 1915

The entry of the Cricket season 1915

Active Service.

A stream runs past us down below -  
a shimmering mass of H<sub>2</sub>O -  
Beyond, a field contains - alas!  
a quantity of thick long grass.  
One day the Padre came to call  
and brought a cricket bat and ball  
At once we started them and then  
[there was it too much time to spare]  
we soon began to hit about  
until the rest of us were 'out'  
& remained. Now free from care  
I smacked the ball high thro' the air  
Down, down it dropped and with dismay  
I saw it seek the uncut hay -  
"It's lost", I cried, and hastening  
to jump the look and find the thing,  
I tumbled - caught my clumsy foot  
and struck my knee upon a root.  
In pain I rolled upon the grass  
and suffered quite a time to pass [before

or so it seemed, 'er I could bring  
myself to go and find the thing.  
In vain I searched - I swore, 'I'm' afraid  
in fact I don't know what I said!  
But there, 'twas lost for good and all,  
his wronnee's cricket ball!  
My thoughts returned then to my knee  
which kept on much annoying me.  
I rested therefore - sore displeased  
until the pain was somewhat eased.  
At 5 it ceasedly hurt at all  
[I went again to find that ball]  
at 6 the pain came on again  
at 7 I nearly turned profane!  
At 8 I found sleep would not come -  
my knee was really hurting 'some'.  
I rose - resolved to take my chance  
and visit a Field Ambulance.  
A kindly man bent down and found  
a swelling - which he bandaged round.  
I hobbed back, not awfully quick -  
[he'd said "I must report you sick"]

my soothing Lady Nicotine  
a glass of beer, some 'aspirin',  
brought sleep, was lying on my back  
within my little bivouac -  
At 7 I woke, but stiff of knee  
I only walked with diff' culty.  
Obeying, "reported sick"  
to those who played the dirty trick  
of leaving me to lie all day  
within a loft, once to need for hay -  
where now all those with ailments small  
await the lynch-eyed doctor's call -  
and here I am! - it's 6, I'll bet -  
the fellows hasn't seen me yet!  
Tomorrow I am going back  
if poss: to seek my bivouac  
and try to rest my swollen knee  
in antiseptic company.

June 1915.

The Observation post of Schepenberg.

Artistic Service.

This is the tale of the General Staff  
and how, on thinking it over,  
they hid them away 3 miles and a half  
to a hill which the Huns had forgotten to 'strafe'  
when they still had their minds set on Dover

---

from the dawn of day till a winter's eve  
they succeeded in observation.

They thought they could see Berlin, believe  
and therefore a number of successes achieved  
from the top of that slight elevation.

---

Many and long were the wires they laid  
to the top of this eminent pinnacle;  
and the worst of it was that the General took  
the rest of us none, though all were afraid  
of a venturing, pure and simple!

---

Strange was the crowd that seized his best  
"linemen", and "clerks" together  
"cyclists" and "checks", all appeared on the coast,  
but this is perhaps the cream of the list  
the staff had forgotten the weather —

---

For day after day it was rain & mist  
or a gale of no mean dimension  
a wonderful hailstones large as men's fist  
or sleet, which men's clothes couldn't hope to resist,  
but always crowned their excursion

---

So instead of the views that they hoped to obtain  
overlooking the whole situation,  
they could barely discern (a windmill hard-by)  
thru' the mist and the rain  
a windmill hard-by, which be-giddied the train  
yet supplied some small recreation

Our hopes are as high as hopes ever are  
that repentance will come if their folly  
that return will be made on foot or by car  
to the chateau of Rd, by the "Spout des Cats"  
Here at least we can handle a bottle

Feb. 1915.

Willing Slavery

Although I am a man, and she  
but a girl, a child compared with me  
Although I think I've seen a lot  
of Europe in the Fighting Post  
Although I talk of being 'free'  
yet I'm the abject slave of 'B'

---

Although I thought myself so grand  
when I became a sergeant, and  
my parents, uncles, aunts, brothers  
wrote "B.E.F." on all my letters  
and thought me wonderful because  
I just did what my duty was -  
in spite of even Europe's troubles,  
I am the abject slave of 'Butcher'

---

You ask me how this comes to pass?  
I am engaged to her, you ass!

Dec 1915.

Dec Tag - Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> 1915

Time was when I despised the folk,  
who got engaged or married  
in time of war - I thought the rule  
of 'Country first' had quite misearied -

---

But now I've had to change my mind  
myself, I've found my "me and only"  
Even clouds of war are silver-lined  
so what's the point in being lonely?

Dec 1915

Ode to a Wisdom Tooth.

Cursed be the day, 'o 'Wisdom' mine  
that thou didst think to pierce my gum  
destined to trouble my enamel line  
and hurt me 'some'

Why didst thou choose a time of year  
to go and sit thy blackened root?  
knowing too well that I, alas, was far  
from success, bute?

That was wrong! I've had thee sent  
along a road the Kaiser knows full well  
to be one well-known to many a Tinton gent:-  
The Road to Hell!

But stay! I will forgive thee still,  
if, as you merit, this business thou'lt make  
thine

Torture the face of Kaiser Bill  
as thou didst mine!

Subd - Aug. 20<sup>th</sup>. 1915

My Signet Ring.

Only a signet - token of a tournament  
of Tennis on the local county-ground  
wharcon, a week or so before the war  
success I found.

12 months went by, the ring remained  
adorned still the finger of my hand  
in spite of long and fearful wanderings  
in foreign land

no town had seen the honors to be found  
when nations versus nations combat long  
in death's grim struggle, to decide the fate  
of Right and Wrong

At length the one of us fell sick -  
the shores of England once more were in sight  
a blessed hour, when we retired to bed  
'tween sheets, that night!

In time a convalescing stage began,  
and frequent calls were made upon the nurse  
in going up to Ludell St in Town  
to see that Nurse!

---

Two months elapsed, when late one night  
we 3 were tightly in a taxi cab -  
The driver helped a compact to be sealed -  
we got engaged!

---

But orders strict are found in hospitals  
forbidding costly jewelry and things  
of value - but they don't well object  
to signet rings?

---

So was at length my sheepy golden friend  
adorned a finger piece for those mine.  
Farewell then! for no better fate can be  
than that is mine!

Dec. 1915

"Bubbles"

I call her "Bubbles" - why, you say?  
because she 'bubbles' all the day  
with mirth and laughter overflowing  
and never for a moment showing  
spirits low or mind depressed -  
it is for that I love her best!

Dec 1915

"Night Outy". Dec 21. 1915

It seems to me unreasonable  
[almost as though to spite us]  
that when things are 'seasick'  
they've put my 'B' on 'nighters'

Yes - it is most regrettable,  
and I'd half kill the nighters  
for conduct unforgettable  
in putting 'B' on 'nighters'

Xmas Eve. 1915.

- "Charlie" = Lt C.P. Symonds R.A.M.C. - Médal militaire  
 "the Hobber" = Capt F.G. Hobson - W. Yorks Regt - 'despatches'  
 "Eric Bury" = 2. Lt. E.L. Bury - R.E. 'despatches'  
 "John" = Lt J.A. Scrutton - R.E. 'despatches'  
 "Hugh" = Lt. H.V. Scrutton - Northumberland Fusiliers  
 Military Cross & 'despatches'  
 "the writer" = 2 Lt T.P. Norris - A.F. 'despatches'

Original B.E.F. consisted of 4 divisions only -  
 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th.

## The Six Undergraduates

Half a dozen undergraduates with nothing much to do, when War broke out in August, thought they'd like to see it so they hied them down to Chatham, filled <sup>through</sup> with mingled <sup>hopes and fears,</sup> and were listed all as corporals in the ROYAL ENGINEERS. They were issued out with clothing, arms, equipment and <sup>the like,</sup> and each to his surprise received a brand new motor-bike; for they wanted other means than "wire" to get despatches thro'. So they fixed on undergraduates, to see what they cd do. There was Charlie and "the Hobber", Eric Bury, John & Hugh, and the writer was the 6th & honoured member of the crew. Only seven days they waited 'ere embarking over-seas with the army that had only four divisions, if you please! In France they separated, and "the half a dozen" cursed, when Charlie and "the Hobber" were ordered to the "FIRST". But when orders came to tell the rest to go & join the "THIRD" they thought it devilish lucky, & not one of them demurred. By day & night for many weeks, I venture they'd their fill, & if they'd not been undergrads, they wd have been there still: But later on & one by one they sought the King's commission, and handed in their "dozen rounds" of "WEBLEY" ammunition.

A.D.C. to Major-General Laurie - C.R.A. 2nd Corps.

recommended for the V.C. by his own Brigade Major.

Hooge - June 16th 1915.

But that was many a month ago, and each has lost his bet, that peace would reign by Xmas, for warfare rages yet. So now they've turned to wider spheres, commissioned everyone and I'll just mention how each stands, & then I think I've done. Big Charlie stopped a shrapnel bullet somewhere near his thigh & thought that on recovering, he'd join the men who fly, but not to fly himself, but rather tend them when they fell, as a doctor in the "R.A.M. Corps", & a married man as well! "The Hobber", always pushful, very quickly climbed the tree, he's a captain on the Staff, eh what? & married too is he! Old Eric's even taken a wife, and's as happy as can be; he also wears a scarlet hat, for he's an A.D.C.! and John's a signal officer & leads a cushy life, and he believed it necessary for him to take a wife! The bravest of the bunch perhaps is proved to have been A "V.C." nearly came his way - he well deserved it though for once when things were going wrong in making an attack, he organised, tho' wounded twice, some men to drive them back. I've made no mention of the 6th - he's miles behind the rest, he simply answers "yes" and "No", whenever he's addressed.

So now that this my tale is told, this wish is surely mine that not long hence we'll meet again for sake of AULD LANG SYNE.

T.R.M. Dunstable. May 1916

Perhaps?

"last night a bombing-raid took place . . . . ."

British Communiqué

When's'er at home I took my paper through  
and read "a bombing-raid took place last night,  
" in which we took a prisoner or two,  
" destroyed a score, and put the rest to flight",  
I'm apt to think upon it in a callous way,  
disperse it from my mind, and take an  
int'rest rather in the FRENCH communiqué  
to help us to digest my eggs and bacon.

Just now my callousness is full replaced  
with feelings of anxiety and fear  
for those who are to give the BOSCH a taste  
of British steel, a thousand yards from HERE!  
— Tonight another raid's been ordered by the "DIV."  
[this too you'll briefly read of in the paper]  
callousness be blotted! some may not live  
to tell the stirring tale — and yet some may per-  
haps?

The Trenches June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1916

Daphne .

Daphne's in the orchard  
not so far away,  
Oh tiptoe, wise, and wary  
she is hunting for a fairy  
in her wonderful imaginative way,  
I can see her in the distance  
tripping, gaily, over the ground  
preening, preening, prancing slightly —  
[I must question her politely  
as to what she's found!]

Daphne's just a tiny tot  
little more than four —  
All her ways are quite delightful  
She knows nothing of the spiteful  
wanton ways and tragedies of war —  
She is just a ray of sunshine  
shedding light wherever she goes —  
and to me the darkest hours  
seem but passing April showers  
where the rainbow shows —

Daphne? aren't you coming?

It is time for tea —  
Tis a long time I've been sitting  
by this window with my knitting  
and your story-book still open on my knee —  
Then, I see her now returning!  
munching up the grassy track  
Lee! she seems in haste — excited!  
[Yes! and I am so delighted  
that she's coming back!]

31. 10. 18.

#### VISION.

I've seen her, I've seen her  
Beneath an apple-tree;  
The minute that I saw her there  
With stars and dewdrops in her hair  
I knew it must be she.  
She's sitting on a dragon-fly  
All shining green and gold;  
The dragon-fly goes circling round  
A little way above the ground —  
She isn't taking hold.

I've seen her, I've seen her,  
I never, never knew  
That anything could be so sweet;  
She has the tiniest hands and feet,  
Her wings are very blue.  
She holds her little head like this —  
Because she is a queen;  
(I can't describe it all in words)  
She's throwing kisses to the birds  
And laughing in between.

I've seen her, I've seen her —  
I simply ran and ran;  
Put down your sewing quickly, please  
Let's hurry to the orchard trees  
As softly as we can.  
I had to go and leave her there,  
I felt I couldn't stay,  
I wanted you to see her too —  
But oh, whatever shall we do  
If she has flown away? R.



