

**"THEY HELD THEIR GROUND."**

Grey broke the light of that Sabbath dawn  
On the English pickets,  
Gold rose the sun o'er the unreaped corn  
And the Hainault thickets.  
Through the park at home, where the young rooks  
caw'd,  
And the dew lay deep on the churchyard sward,  
Went Mary, arisen to meet her Lord—  
While Mons must be held for England.

Clear broke the day as the bugles blew,—  
Who shall hear them to-morrow ?  
Sternly the thunder of Edom grew,  
And the tally of sorrow.  
Right wing, left wing, centre attacked,  
Legions launched like a cataract,  
But the English stood to their plighted pact,—  
Yes, Mons must be held for England !  
Pitiless noon, when the screaming shard  
Left the air acrid,  
But they looked on Malplaquet and Oudenarde  
So the soil was sacred.  
And they thought (who knows ?) on some Surrey  
lane,  
On some mother's kiss, or some school refrain,  
And they tightened the girths of their saddles again  
Since Mons must be held for England.

Red set the sun in the angry skies  
Ere the fight was over.  
White were the beams of the cruisers' eyes  
By the cliffs of Dover.  
News—ill news—for Namur is lost !  
No need for the Eagle to count the cost.  
But Mons was the merest hill at the most,  
Yet Mons had been held for England.

Lord, Who hast known what a slain Son is,  
Judge Thou their labour !  
Lifted they eyes to the vanities ?  
Deceived their neighbour ?  
Sift Thou the souls that are utterly Thine,  
Clean are those cold hands of covert design ;  
Silent they lie in their last long line,  
Who died to hold Mons for England !