

That wins strange might from trial, smiting hard  
When all of life seems out. He who had been  
For all the weary siege but ruler set  
To watch and chide ; to hunger too and grin,  
So that he shamed the weaklings when they drooped.  
The "old man" of our camp-fires, silent, grim,  
Much feared but little loved, stood forth the Lord  
To break our prison bars and let the day  
Into our hearts.

The drums had beat tattoo,  
When from his tent went forth the orderlies  
Swift through the camp with word for all our men  
To make them ready forth to march ere day.  
To march, yea, willingly, straight to the sky  
Or straight away to Hell ; but how to fare  
As else than ghosts along those well-blocked ways,  
No living man could guess. Yet quick we came  
With shouldered packs that made us glad to lean  
Each 'gainst the other, for we were starved men  
And bent beneath our burthens : sadder lot  
Ne'er gathered neath the moon. Lo, there he stood,  
Our sometime "old man," now our very Lord,  
With that upon him to bid heads lift up  
And quaking legs stay firm. Then came the word  
Straight to our hearts, "We march on to the north ;  
They hold the roads ; we'll hew ours through the woods  
Straight to our brothers, or we'll leave our bones  
Where they will show men marched." Oh, what a shout  
Rang from that peak and far down in the vale,