

On the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armistice at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War I  
publish this letter cum "Prayer" written by my maternal grandfather just  
before he died at the battle of the Somme. (Michael Holmes)

*Dedicated to His Most Gracious Majesty King George the Fifth*

Hear O King of mighty nation  
Most illustrious Sire  
Where'ere the need for arbitration  
May thy labours never tire  
Gracious Sire when thine the task  
Peace to make or for to mar  
Grant the prayer thy people ask  
Banish all grim thoughts of war

Perpetual peace needs a creator  
War grows more hideous year by year  
Souls are flung before their maker  
Yet we think our conscience clear  
Shall we dare to ask God's blessing  
On our instruments of war  
Other nations fondly caressing  
Thoughts that they God's chosen are

O God of battles is our cry  
With victory crown our arms again  
The foe also to God draws nigh  
O God of battles is their refrain!  
Hear the cry of wounded soldier  
Midst the carnage and the strife  
"For God's sake give me water"  
As he battles for his life

Cries for water not for glory  
As he parts with all that's dear  
Stains the field all red and gory  
Not for him the ringing cheer  
Like beasts of prey that growl and gloat  
At the blood of the worried  
With insane hurrahs they drown the howls  
Of souls to Eternity hurried

With a cry and a rush to death they go  
With a lust for revenge from a newborn hate  
Wars pestilent march and gaping jaw  
Turns men into fiends incarnate  
Overhead the smoke doth dim the sky  
The battles o'er 'tis won or lost  
With scent of blood vultures draw nigh  
For O my God, what has it cost?

Not ours to say how men shall die  
Nor yet the innocent suffer pain  
But ours the cause of mournful cry  
That echoes from the blackened plain  
Come choose your dead 'tis yours by right  
As corpses they turn with sickened gaze  
Come choose them by the pale moonlight  
Or lights from homesteads all ablaze

Yet they say all men are brothers  
Slain the father of children dear  
Hear the groans of widowed mothers  
As they try to stem the tears  
Shall we at the passing of the dead  
Remain unmoved nor shed a tear  
Or question cause too well that led  
To scenes of strife and sorrow drear?

Can God above look down  
on sights as these with smiling face?  
Or looking up we see a frown  
And feel ashamed, and in disgrace  
See the waves of Peace are rolling  
Shall we take them at the flood?  
Or with nations be embroiling  
And be swamped in seas of blood

Shall we then our friendships sever?  
Shall we then unsheath the sword?  
Shall we then have war forever?  
Shall we sow and reap discord ?  
Lo! We hear a sound in wonder  
That does set our hearts aglow  
Voices like a clap of thunder  
Peeling forth a mighty "No!"

Where are the seed of British race?  
Thrown to the winds with bonds of blood  
Be friends of Peace, the foes of hate  
Upholders of the common good

Peace in thought, as well as deed  
Peace in motive and in prayer  
Peace in heart as well as creed  
And at home and everywhere

"Let there be Peace"

Private Edward Darlington Loyal N.L.Reg't.  
d. 20.11.1916