

**ARBROATH ABBEY,
AND OTHER POEMS**

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Arbroath Abbey, and other poems by W. M. Watt

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W. M. WATT

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AND OTHER POEMS**

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BY

A PRISONER OF WAR

(Sapper W. M. WATT, N.Z.E., Author of "An
Anzac's Moods," Etc. Etc.)

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE STRATEGIST	7
JOHN BULL	10
THE BLACK HOLE OF LILLE	11
VERMIN	13
A PRISON ELEGY	15
I GO FROM THERE	17
LIFE	18
A PRISONER OF WAR	19
YPRES	21
PORK AND BEANS	22
THE EPIC OF LILLE	24
THE HUN APOLOGIST	32
SAINT ARMAND	36
A PRISON SONG	37
A FOOL OF SORTS	38
ON PARTING WITH MY LAST PAIR OF SOCKS	40

	PAGE
LILLE	41
TWO HUNDRED DAYS	44
ON RECEIVING A GIFT OF BOOKS	47
GIVE ME THE MAN	48
WAKENING	49
I DON'T HATE FRITZ	51
JOHNNY RUSS	54
ENGLAND, 1916	56
RUMOURS	58
ORCHIES	60
ARMENTIÈRES	61
TO A FRIEND: W. S. C.	61
THE PRISONER OF WAR'S PRAYER	62
A PRISON DREAM	66
ARBROATH ABBEY	71

THE STRATEGIST

THERE was a brilliant strategist
From Whitehall in our line,
Each morning his battalion
Would shave and wash and shine.
His men were food for snipers
In all their glory sheen,
For he had been at Wipers
And on these things was keen.

When in the trench and shell-holes
The mud contents were dry,
The tea and coffee dixies
Furnished the sole supply.
But he'd make his ablutions
Or fair or foul the sky,
Under approved conditions,
Or know the reason why.

He saw that in their rations
His men had naught to spare ;
'Twas not good in the trenches
To have a plenteous fare ;
But he himself was dainty,
His dugout near the lines,
An oasis of plenty,
Teemed with rich foods and wines.

THE STRATEGIST

Before he left the sector,
A bold course he conceived ;
He'd teach old Fritz a lesson
Before he was relieved.
His men from early morning
Kept shining up till noon,
Then he, trench tactics scorning,
Could not begin too soon.

It was a stroke of genius,
If genius had been there
To guide lest it deflected,
Or shortened in the air.
And when all things were ready
He ordered the advance ;
The waves went over steady,
Fritz ne'er had such a chance.

At first he seemed to falter,
O'ercome with blank surprise,
But when the guns got talking
He to the chance grew wise.
In no man's country falling
Like ripened swathes of grain,
The man loss was appalling,
The leaders all were slain.

The ranks, shell-swept and broken,
Back to the trench retired ;
Stunned with the heavy losses
And many in rags attired ;
And where their comrades perished,
With shell and shrapnel torn,
Wild vows were made and cherished
Long after that red morn.

THE STRATEGIST

9

That night we left the sector
In more or less disgrace,
While our so brilliant Dugout
In England found a place.
But none with welcome met him,
To help none volunteered,
Though for him, to forget him,
Some place was commandeered.