RUDYARD KIPLING'S NEW POEM.

The Absent-minded Beggar.

1
When you've shouted "Rule Britannia"—when you've sung "God Save the Queen"—
When you've finished killing Kruger with your mouth—
Will you kindly drop a shilling in my little tambourine
For a gentleman in distant, redoubled South?
He's an absent-minded beggar, and his wanderings are vast—
But we and Paul must take him as we find him—
He'll set on active service, viping something off a state,
And he'll leave a lot of little things behind him—
Duke's son—cook's son—son of a hundred kings—
(If they hurried horse and foot going to Table Bay?)
Each of 'em doing his country's work—and who's to look after their things?)
Pass the hat, for your credit's sake; and pay—pay—pay—

2
There are girls he married secret, asking no permission to,
For he knew he wouldn't get it if he did—
There is gas and coals and victuals, and the house rent falling due—
And it's more than rather likely there's a kid—
There are girls he walked with casual, they'll be sorry now he's gone—
For an absent-minded beggar they will find him—
But, it ain't the time for serum, with the winter coming on—
We must help the girl that Tommy's left behind him—
Cook's son—Duke's son—son of a belted Earl—
For him of a Lambs' publicans, it's all the same to-day—
Each of 'em doing his country's work (and who's to look after the girl?)
Pass the hat, for your credit's sake, and pay—pay—pay—

3
There are families by thousands, far too proud to beg or speak,
And they'll put their sticks and bedding up the spout,
And they'll live on half-nothing, paid 'em perusal once a week,
'Cause the man that earned the wage is ordered out—
He's an absent-minded beggar, but he hears his country call,
And his regiment didn't need to send to find him—
He chucked his job and joined it—so the job before us all
Is to help the home that Tommy's left behind him—
Duke's job—cook's job—gardener, baronet, groom—
Mews or palace or paper-shop—there's someone gone away—
Each of 'em doing his country's work—(and who's to look after the room?)
Pass the hat, for your credit's sake; and pay! pay! pay!

4
Let us manage so, later, we can lock him in the face,
And tell him, what he's got much prefer—
That while he saved the empire, his employer saved his place,
And his mates (that's you and me) looked out for her—
He's an absent-minded beggar, and he may forget it all,
But we do not, what his pocket's to remind him—
That we send 'em to the cupboard while their daily homeward Paul—
So we'll help the home that Tommy's left behind him—
The girl and wife that Tommy's left behind him—
Cook's house—Duke's house—home of a millionaire—
(Fifty thousand horse and foot going to Table Bay?)
Each of 'em doing his country's work—(and what have you got in store?)
Pass the hat, for your credit's sake; and pay! pay! pay!

Let us proceed with the sale of the poem at sixpence each to be handed over to the patriotic fund.
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