**Channel Firing Thomas Hardy**

That night your great guns, unawares, Shook all our coffins as we lay, And broke the chancel window-squares, We thought it was the Judgment Day

And sat upright. While drearisome Arose the howl of wakened hounds: The mouse let fall the altar-crumb, The worms drew back into the mounds,

The glebe cow drooled. Till God called, “No; It’s gunnery practice out at sea Just as before you went below; The world is as it used to be:

“All nations striving strong to make Red war yet redder. Mad as hatters They do no more for Christes sake Than you who are helpless in such matters.

‘That this is not the judgment-hour For some of them’s a blessed thing, For if it were they’d have to scour Hell’s floor for so much threatening . . .

“Ha, ha. It will be warmer when I blow the trumpet (if indeed I ever do; for you are men, And rest eternal sorely need).’

So down we lay again. “I wonder, Will the world ever saner be,” Said one, “than when He sent us under In our indifferent century!”

And many a skeleton shook his head. “Instead of preaching forty year,” My neighbor Parson Thirdly said, “I wish I had stuck to pipes and beer.”

Again the guns disturbed the hour, Roaring their readiness to avenge, As far inland as Stourton Tower, And Camelot, and starlit Stonehenge.

*April 1914*

**Men Who March Away Thomas Hardy**

What of the faith and fire within us Men who march away Ere the barn-cocks say Night is growing gray, To hazards whence no tears can win us; What of the faith and fire within us Men who march away!

Is it a purblind prank, O think you Friend with the musing eye Who watch us stepping by With doubt and dolorous sigh? Can much pondering so hoodwink you? Is it a purblind prank, O think you, Friend with the musing eye?

Nay. We see well what we are doing, Though some may not see-- Dalliers as they be-- England’s need are we; Her distress would leave us rueing: Nay. We well see what we are doing, Though some may not see!

In our heart of hearts believing Victory crowns the just, And that braggarts must Surely bite the dust, Press we to the field ungrieving, In our heart of hearts believing Victory crowns the just.

Hence the faith and fire within us Men who march away Ere the barn-cocks say Night is growing gray, To hazards whence no tears can win us; Hence the faith and fire within us Men who march away. *1914*