

" A NATION'S GRATITUDE."

When England was in danger not many years ago,
Across the sea a few brave hearts were sent,
Light-hearted and contented, singing as they go
As though they were on some pleasure bent.
Yet these men knew that stern work lay ahead,
Vague rumours of a mighty foreign horde,
Who filled a little nation's hearts with dread
And put innocent women and children to the sword.

These few brave heroes their task fulfilled,
Though they were ever sorely pressed.
And many a score of them were killed,
Their lives laid down for those loved best.
But I am not going to bore you, friend,
With a harrowing tale of war,
For all of you know how in the end
Millions were sent, and the cry still for more.

Now when these brave lads went forth to the fight
They were cheered with promises galore,
"Land and a cottage will be yours alright,
When you've made safe old England's shore.
Your job in the mill for you we will keep,
If the dangers of warfare you'll brave."
But many have gone to everlasting sleep,
With a rude cross o'er a lone soldier's grave.

And now the war is over and many are safely back,
The mighty German hordes they're soundly thrashed,
With heavy hearts they tell you, they've got the sack,
And all the gilded promises are smashed.
Some left nice homes, and a business as well,
With their children and homes so dear,
And now they've come back from the gates of Hell,
Find all in the grip of the base profiteer

When the enemy were advancing with their lust for blood and rape,
Their hapless victims no mercy would they give
Ever pressing forward, but many who would escape
Fled to the sea that they still might live.
But Britain to the rescue very quickly came,
These refugees were taken to our shore,

Broken-hearted, sore and weary, but they were not to blame,
Clothing, food and houses were given by the score.

But what of our workless ex-soldiers, you say,
A great many have no house at all.
There's one they can enter if they wish to stay,
But it's nothing like Donnington Hall.
So it's up to us all to help where we can,
To scare off the wolf at the door.
So tighten your belt and look like a man,
And don't let them think that you're poor.

***Written and composed by T. G. MAYNARD,
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Many of the soldiers returning from WW1 were bitterly disillusioned. Many wrote short poems which they sold copies of on the streets, just to raise a few coppers. The one above was written by my Uncle and published in the Birmingham Post. He was a Birmingham man.

A former resident of Ettington has shown me a cutting from an unknown newspaper which reprinted a leaflet with another poem which whilst not as bitter shows the hardship often faced by returning soldiers. This poem is reprinted below.

Bob Allso

(Bob is a member of Dene Valley U3A and has made a major contribution to our Great War in the Villages Study Group)

**THE UNEMPLOYED
EX-SOLDIER'S
APPEAL**

PRICE TWO PENCE

Kind friends and good people I am now on my way
Travelling the country without any pay
Ex-Servicemen's Bills I carry for you
To purchase one from me or shall I say two

Do not be angry, my approaching you so;
And if you can't help me please ask me to go
You don't need to worry, I take no offence;
So long as you treat me with brief common sense

To get work just now is not easily done
For most of the vacancies are well over run
Control over these things we cannot obtain
So must wait for times normal to come back again

Meantime I must live the best way I can;
And make my appeal to every good man.
So just buy a copy and try if you please,
My desires, my wishes, my wants to appease.

PLEASE NOTE –

*If you do not purchase this bill it will be collected with thanks
and civility.*