

**GONE TO THE WAR AND
OTHER POEMS IN THE
LINCOLNSHIRE DIALECT**

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Gone to the war and other poems in the Lincolnshire dialect by Bernard Gilbert

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BERNARD GILBERT

**GONE TO THE WAR AND
OTHER POEMS IN THE
LINCOLNSHIRE DIALECT**

WORKS BY BERNARD GILBERT

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Belgium, 1914

*In spring I sowed the corn,
All green and lush it grew,
I hoed it row by row
The pleasant summer through.*

*The rain by night refreshed,
The sun by day gave strength,
With care I watched it change,
The harvest came at length.*

*At sunrise, when, this morn,
I left my wife and child
To reap the golden corn,
With happiness I smiled.*

*By midday came the storm,
Iron and blood by turn,
Ruin to beat me down,
Havoc to slay and burn.*

*Death fell upon my farm,
His sickle in his hand,
The dykes are flush with blood,
And corpses hide the land.*

*The corn lies in the rut,
Ploughed down by Death's own share,
My child went underfoot,
My wife . . . I know not where.*

*My cottage shows one fang,
One beam, amid the wreck,
That marks where I shall hang
At sunset . . . by the neck.*

GONE TO THE WAR

AND OTHER POEMS IN THE
LINCOLNSHIRE DIALECT

BY

BERNARD GILBERT

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1915

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DEDICATED
TO
J. REDFEARN WILLIAMSON

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Gone to the War

He's gone to the war, he's gone to the war,
I doan't care a rap if I see him noa more;
He lethered me reg'lar, Saturday night,
When he collared his wages and allers got tight;
I'm sure I prefer to be single by far
Now he's gone to the war, now he's gone to the war.

His waages was thirteen and sixpence a week,
Wi' extry in harvest, but that was to seek
A cottage—nowt else—made up all our paay,
And when you've ten childer that's not much a daay;
He gev me nine shillings, it didn't goa far:
But now I have plenty—he's gone to the war.

A little bit more'n a shilling a daay
To feed 'em and cloathe 'em and bills for to paay;
The grocer he hated me going to shop,
And as for the butcher—we lived upon sop!
Water and bread, water and bread,
On plenty of water our childer was fed.

We was allers in debt 'coz we couldn't keep out,
Except at the pub, where noa credit's about;
If I wanted to find him I knawed where to goa:
He would be at the "Bull" wi' his mates in a row.
I slaaved at my work while he sung in the bar,
But I'm getting it back now he's gone to the war.

The sarjint popped in and he saw half a dozen—
Our Tom, Arthur Bates, Willie Jones and his cousin :
“ There’s plenty of vittles, and little to do,
“ Wi’ a suit of good cloathes and a medal or two ” :
They all joined together to have a last drink,
And that sarjint he snapped ’em afore they could wink.

He telled me about it : I said nowt the while,
I had to look solemn and try not to smile,
Because I should get—in the paper I seed—
Nearly two quid a week, and noa husband to feed !
“ You can send me a quid and still save on the rest ” ;
I nodded my head and said that would be best.

“ Each week you can send it, I’ll leave my address,
“ And when the war’s done I’ll come back to you, Bess.”
Soa off he went smiling to Lincoln, full sail,
Wi’ cheering and shouting and plenty of ale ;
I cried till he’d gone, then set off for to seek
The man what was handing out two quid a week.

Two quid a week ! two quid a week !
Who wouldn’t sell husbands for two quid a week ?
Noa drink and noa bother, noa quarrelsome brutes
What’s nasty and dirty and sleeps in their boots ;
I pretended to cry, but I laughed in my cheek—
I’d swap forty husbands for two quid a week !

He come hoam on Sat’dy the colour of chalk,
They’d very nigh killed him to judge by his talk ;
He’d marched and he’d sweated wi’ noa chanch to
shirk,
Not sin’ he was born had he done soa much work ;
He cried like a babby to get in the door,
And when it was Monday, he cried all the more.