

89. A Petition

By Robert Ernest Vernède

ALL that a man might ask thou hast given me, England,
Birthright and happy childhood's long heart's-ease,
And love whose range is deep beyond all sounding
And wider than all seas:
A heart to front the world and find God in it, 5
Eyes blind enow but not too blind to see
The lovely things behind the dross and darkness,
And lovelier things to be;
And friends whose loyalty time nor death shall weaken
And quenchless hope and laughter's golden store— 10
All that a man might ask thou hast given me, England,
Yet grant thou one thing more:
That now when envious foes would spoil thy splendour,
Unversed in arms, a dreamer such as I,
May in thy ranks be deemed not all unworthy, 15
England, for thee to die.