

# Camp–Hong Kong Volunteers

By Robert Simpson

1.

If you feel that “Anno Domini” is wearing out your power,  
Or think that Hong Kong mists have fogged your brain;  
Your digestion’s getting weak, and your temper turning sour,  
As you daily note the flesh you lose or gain;  
If you’re worried by that parrot-cage resemblance to your tongue:  
If you’re feeling far from grand,  
Don’t go taking Monkey Gland:  
Join the M.I., go to camp, and you’ll feel young.

2.

If you find you can’t recapture, with each quick succeeding drink,  
That fine old youthful rapture of a joy exceeding measure;  
If after too long in the East, you’ve at last begun to think  
That gins are just a habit not a pleasure;  
If you feel so low you want to sit around the lounge and sneer  
At the youngest pup or griffin  
Who can lap it up at tiffin;  
Join the M.I., go to camp, and love your beer.

3.

If you’ve only just come East, and would rather not “go West”  
Prematurely, for the lack of bracing air;  
If you want to fill your lungs with a little of the best,  
Sleeping in the starlight and “dossing” anywhere;  
If someone once has taught you that in street, and house and bed  
You can never get enough  
Of Old Nature’s stiffening stuff;  
Join the M.I., go to camp, and forget that morning head.

*Robert (R.K.M.) Simpson was Professor of English at the University of Hong Kong 1921-1954(?). Though preceded in that position by J.D. Wright, it was largely through Simpson’s efforts that the department was created and developed.*

4.

If you've been in umpteen battles, or gone camping many a year,  
And feel the pals you've met there were the best;  
If those pals are most dead now, but you think you'd like to hear  
The others laugh as they did, curse like them and gibe and jest;  
Smoking pipes, around the piano, in the canteen lamplight's flare,  
Singing songs that they sang when  
They were hearty living men;  
Join the M.I., go to camp, you'll find them there.

5.

If you think the pride your fathers took in arms  
And your fathers' fathers' pride has proved worth while;  
You'll find even China ponies have their charms,  
You'll acquire a taste for leather, steel and style.  
The red corpuscles of your blood cry out for horse and gun.  
For we never can abolish  
Love of war—and spit and polish,  
So join the M.I., go to camp, as the breed has always done.

6.

Join the corps, and go to camp, if your wife will let you leave her;  
7 a.m. to 8 p.m. was our gaff one Saturday.  
But it earned a thirst, a wash, a drink, all full of "joie de vivre"  
For Dowb held Old Mac in a new Thermopylae.  
The compass was left clamped: the Moonlight Follies has a run  
On the gleeful repartee  
Of "Join hands across the sea"—  
Join the M.I., come to camp and share the fun.

7.

Hark! the sergeant on parade vents the morning-after's spleen  
On the bloke who was his drouthy pal last night—  
If you're feeling blue with cold, or you're very fresh and green  
You might think that in the circs it's not polite.  
Then that hotchkiss gun won't work, no matter how you try!  
Oh there's lots to try your pride,  
Learn to see the funny side;  
Join the M.I., it's a lark—when the paddy fields are dry.