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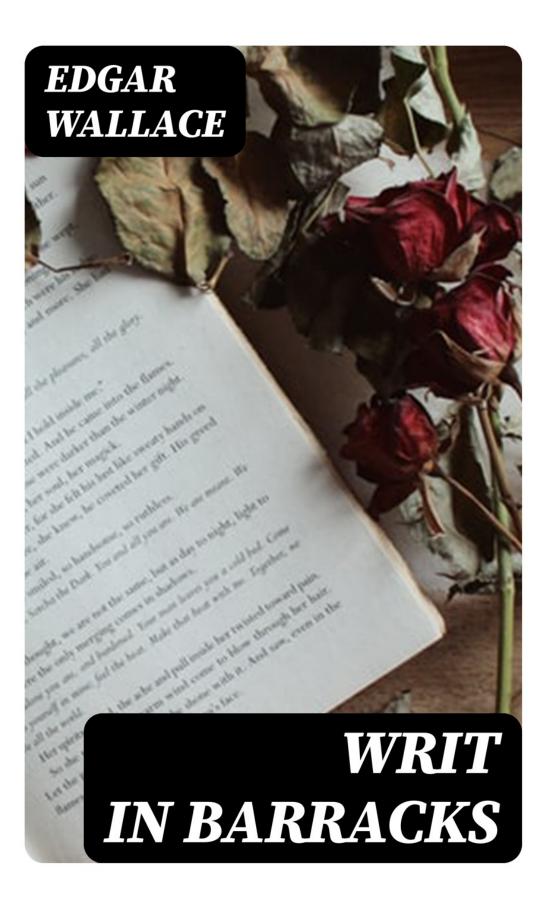
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**Edgar Wallace** 

## **Writ in Barracks**

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NATURE FAILS THE COLONEL'S GARDEN THE PEOPLE TO CECIL JOHN RHODES, WHEN LONDON CALLS! п

#### DEDICATION

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TO THE RANK AND FILE OF THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS AMONGST WHOM I SPENT SIX HAPPY YEARS OF MY LIFE, THIS COLLECTION OF VERSES MOSTLY WRITTEN IN BARRACKS IS ADMIRINGLY DEDICATED RONDEBOSCH April 4, 1900

'Ginger James' appeared originally in the 'Daily Chronicle,' 'Make your own Arrangements' in the 'Pall Mall Gazette,' as also did 'T. A. in Love.' 'Legacies' is reproduced by the kind permission of the 'Daily News,' and 'Arthur' and 'Her Majesty has been Pleased—' of the 'Evening News.' Most of the others are new to the English reader.

#### WAR

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A tent that is pitched at the base: A wagon that comes from the night: A stretcher—and on it a Case: A surgeon, who's holding a light. The Infantry's bearing the brunt— O hark to the wind-carried cheer! A mutter of guns at the front: A whimper of sobs at the rear. And it's *War*! 'Orderly, hold the light. You can lay him down on the table: so. Easily—gently! Thanks—you may go.' And it's War! but the part that is not for show.

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A tent, with a table athwart, A table that's laid out for one; A waterproof cover—and nought But the limp, mangled work of a gun. A bottle that's stuck by the pole, A guttering dip in its neck; The flickering light of a soul On the wondering eyes of The Wreck, And it's *War*! 'Orderly, hold his hand. I'm not going to hurt you, so don't be afraid. A ricochet! God! what a mess it has made!' And it's *War*! and a very unhealthy trade.

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The clink of a stopper and glass:
A sigh as the chloroform drips:
A trickle of—what? on the grass,
And bluer and bluer the lips.
The lashes have hidden the stare....
A rent, and the clothes fall away....
A touch, and the wound is laid bare....
A cut, and the face has turned grey....
And it's *War*! 'Orderly, take It out.
It's hard for his child, and it's rough on his wife,
There might have been—sooner—a chance for his life.
But it's *War*! And—Orderly, clean this knife!'