

What the Stay-at-Homes Miss.

Sometimes, we poor blighters, to whose lot it has fallen to fight for the great principles of Justice, etc., and all that sort of thing, are apt to envy, just a little, the comforts of our fellows, whose infirmities or whose sex prevent them sharing our discomforts. But, with all their luxuries, we can console ourselves with the reflection that they have missed one thing, at least, which comes to all of us periodically (?)—if we survive the periods—which is appreciated more intensely than anything they can experience. Without more beating about the bush—I mean, they have never been “ON LEAVE.”

No, they have never hung round a railhead

rushing through that beautiful peaceful countryside of Kent? Do you remember the first sight of the dear, dirty rows of chimney-pots of London Town; the first London Smell; the rush and roar of the great terminus when, finally, you reached your destination? When you get the hump and envy the “unfits” at home—ponder these things, and then pity them instead.

Did these unfortunates ever find such a welcome at home as you found—when you returned from the Valley of the Shadow? Did they ever love England as you love it—now you’ve risked your life for the Empire I don’t think so.

But wait a bit—I’ll bet they never appreciated



A GROUP AT THE SCHOOL.

24 hours or more, waiting for the cursed train to start for the coast. They have never shivered for twelve hours in a French railway carriage, with two broken windows, on the way to Blighty. No, sir, they have never cursed as I cursed last Thursday week, when I arrived at Boulogne at 10.30 ac emma—and the blankity boat left at 10.25 ac emma. Lastly, they have never pulled into Victoria Station, London, Eng., two hours late—when their wife (I think that’s right, though it sounds queer) has waited for two hours at Charing Cross, and gone home—50 miles away—because she was told that no leave train would arrive there that night.

These are some of the joys of leave, and as memories they are most enjoyable.

But there are others. Do you remember when you set foot on the quay at Folkestone, and heard the blessed English language spoken by civilians again? Do you remember the train

the bright lights and luxury of Prince’s, or the Troc., or Simpson’s, or the punch and beefsteak pie of the Cheshire Cheese, or the curry at Gow’s in the Strand—according to your taste or the weight of your pocket—as you did during those gorgeous days. None in the whole theatre laughed so heartily as you did at the crazy antics of George Robey or Leslie Henson, and yet again—none of the Stay-at-Homes ever felt the perfect peace of mind which you experienced as you knelt in the little church in your native village on Sunday.

Well, if I haven’t proved it to you I have convinced myself that we, who live in filth and squalor, who go on without sleep, and endeavour to kill Huns between-times, are extremely favoured people. Anyhow, I’m out of breath now, so I’ll stop. But I’m mighty glad I am not a Stay-at-Home.

L. J.