

ARMS AND THE MAN

ing or eating imperturbably. What is there to make a fuss about ?

Of course, if an outsider like myself spoke at such times of the day's fighting, the men would lighten up with the interest of professionals, anxious to explain things. "We were on in that ball-room show"; "The—— and the —— caught it hot there"; "Nice little bit of shooting the Germans did there"; "Never knew we were hit and stood like sillies"; and then perhaps a stiff argument about the merits of "Ruddy Jim" or "Old Cough-drop," which would, as likely as not, prove to be two of the enemy's batteries that had been giving murderous trouble.

No wonder the foreign comrade, with his serious conception of the great danger and great issues that lay behind such affectionate nicknames, would listen astonished, and wonder how they "keep it up." Keep it up? It is just themselves! Unimaginative, humorous, businesslike men at their work, boys in their ways of thought and speech off duty.