

THE OPTIMIST.

Were you ever up against it, with your belt's last hole drawn in,
And the shrapnel and the splinters flying round like merry sin,
And you couldn't hear your rifle for the high explosive's din,
And you knew that things could get no worse, and then you
 had to grin?

Were you ever up against it, in a shell hole for a while,
With the Willies searching for you, with all their measly guile,
And your tongue swelled up for water, and the water half a
 mile,
And you knew it was the limit, and then you had to smile?

Were you ever up against it, when the chunk was cut in half,
And the lice were thick upon you, like a blinking general's staff,
And the Allemands had shelled the run before you had a quaff,
Then you knew the worst was over, and you had to have a
 laugh?

But if suppose you hadn't grinned, but just sat down to cry,
And by shifting your position got a nice one in the eye,
Not "a cushy," or "a blighty," but a one that made you die,
Don't you think the smile, or grin, or laugh, were better than
 the sigh?

Bollezeelle, France, February, 1916.