

once Meetscheele village in their first wave of assault, and afterwards closed round Mosselmarkt. Here in the desert of shell-craters and wreckage there were some concrete cellars and forts, one of them being used as a battalion headquarters and another as a field dressing-station. Over a hundred prisoners were gathered in from this neighbourhood, not in big batches, but scattered about the ground in shell-craters and cellars. Three German field-guns were captured, with other trophies, including stores of ammunition. It will never be known how many prisoners were taken yesterday. Many of them never reached our lines, and never will. They were killed by their own barrage-fire, which swept over all this territory when the enemy knew that he had lost it. Rain fell in the afternoon and more heavily to-day, in sudden storms which are broken through at times by bursts of sunshine gleaming over all the wet fields, so that there is far visibility until the next storm comes and all the landscape of war is veiled in mist. It is a dreary and tragic landscape, and though I have seen four autumns of war and the long, wet winters of this Flemish country, the misery of it and the squalor of it struck me anew to-day, as though I saw it with fresh eyes. In all this country round Ypres, still the capital of the battlefields, holding in its poor, stricken bones the soul of all this tragedy, and still shelled—yesterday very heavily—by an enemy who even now will not let its dust alone, there is nothing but destruction and the engines of destruction. The trees are smashed, and the ground is littered with broken things, and the earth is ploughed into deep pits and furrows by three years of shell-fire, and it is all oozy and liquid and slimy.

Our Army is like an upturned ant-heap in all this mud, and in the old battle-grounds they have dug themselves in and built little homes for themselves and settled down to a life of industry between one shell-crater and another, and one swamp and another, for the long spell of winter warfare which has now enveloped them, and while they are waiting for another year of war, unless Peace comes with the Spring.