

very delightfully, but I am sure you think again and again while singing "Keep the Home Fires Burning" that it is not you that keep the home fires burning. Oh, thank God, people of America, that you live in this happy, in this beautiful land, so far away from the havoc and the ravages and the tragedy of war. "Keep the Home Fires Burning." Remember your home fires are burning to-day because myriad home fires in another nation have been put out. Your homes are free through the sacrifice of other homes in their defense; your little children are safe and happy through the sacrifice of countless thousands of little children in other lands. "Keep the Home Fires Burning." Your home fires are burning in the shelter of those front lines stretching across the fields of France, the frontier of your country is not your own coast, it is this trench carved line across the fields of France.

You know I have sometimes walked up and down those front line trenches in the cold, rainy, inclement weather and I have seen the little fires of the lads in the line, little fire buckets, just buckets with holes knocked into them, and a handful of coal or wood or charcoal, and there they were burning and sputtering fitfully in the moisture of the trenches. I have looked at them and thought, what pitiful fires they are! I looked again and I said: "No, they are grand fires, the grandest fires in the world, because they were the advance guard of the fires of freedom the wide world over." Oh, yes, keep the home fires burning, but remember it is only possible for you to do this in the shelter of the life and sacrifice of your lads in the line.

But, oh, how much it has cost France, that line 400 miles long? What is the breadth of the area of devastation? You take the enemy front line, 400 miles long; the front line trench, a jagged, irregular line. Behind it, a quarter of a mile behind, you have the support line; and then, behind that again, about a mile behind, you have the reserve line. Behind that other lines and other lines and other lines, back, back, back, to the line of their great guns, so close together you can hardly distinguish one battery from the next.

Between their trenches and ours you have No-man's land. People have asked me: "How wide is No-man's land? How far away were you from the enemy's trenches across No-man's land?" And they are sometimes surprised when I tell them that for seven weeks I was fighting in a certain sector of the trenches, the closest point of which was about 35 yards from the nearest point of the enemy trenches. We could hear them speaking together plainly, we could hear them shouting to ourselves, we could hear them speaking to us sometimes in quite uncomplimentary terms and on more than one occasion I have heard our lads returning with interest the compliments.

A tiny little British Tommy, he was a very tiny chap, brought in a big, burly Prussian officer and, as they stood together, it was interesting to see the lofty way in which this Prussian officer looked down upon the English Tommy. He looked down upon him from every point of view, rationally, physically, socially and intellectually and every other way until you wondered how there was anything left of that little Tommy. He said to him at last, very disdainfully: "You fight for money." Just fancy, you bankers, fancy a man telling a British Tommy that he fights for money,—and you know how much the poor fellow gets? Twenty-five cents a day; he fights and dies for 25 cents a day,—when he gets it, and there are all sorts of deductions for insurance, for fines (Tommy has a genius for fines), for all sorts of things, and if you look at the pittance that remains, you know, it is positively cruel to tell Tommy Atkins that he fights for money. (Laughter.) Oh no, oh