

While these preparations were going on I took a stroll down the ditch to battalion headquarters, hoping to find somewhere to leave my greatcoat instead of having to carry it. Battalion headquarters were behind a small house at the junction of a cross-roads. Here other people had collected—the stout officer, the doctor, and an artillery observing officer. The artillery observing officer was in telephonic communication with a heavy battery about two miles back, to which he was sending back messages about possible targets and the effect of fire. Outside the scout officer was making an early lunch off a piece of ham which he had found in the mess-box. I joined him, contributing a biscuit.

“The Major is an ass, you know,” he said; “he will go showing himself.”

He pointed to our senior major, a very gallant officer indeed, but a man who had, as the scout officer said, an unfortunate tendency to expose himself to fire. He was at the moment standing at the cross-roads, beyond the shelter of the cottage, looking through his field-glasses in the direction of the enemy's lines. The cross-roads at which he