

nightmare, giving me no rest. I could think of no other thing. And the silly questions of the people! It was disappointing. These did not understand either. It was just the universal gulf existing between the soldier and the civilian mind. Like all my kind, I took refuge in silence, so that again I heard "How is it that none of you fellows who come back will ever tell anything about what happened to you over there?"

When we told them they doubted us, or read the wrong meaning into the facts of our recital. They were a bloody-minded lot, always curious about that horrible side of it which we sought so desperately to forget. There was that one stock question: "Did you actually stick a bayonet into a German?" and "What did it feel like?"

One man said to me. "I don't believe this war is half so bad as you fellows make out or else those of you I have seen didn't have any tough times. Anyhow, I never hear you say anything about it."

These ghouls would never dare to ask me for the painful details of a horrible death in a sick-room, or the suffering of loved ones. War is both those things on a monumental scale, with trimmings of filth and sordidness unknown in quieter deaths. Women, for the most part, seemed to understand. They looked at one with sombre eyes and asked no questions. And when they spoke it was of the suffering. Perhaps it is their quicker sympathy, greater powers of imagination? I do not know. But so it was. But the men; they spoke of charges and the glory of them and asked for details.

For a long time I eschewed the companionship of my kind, seeking solace in forgetfulness. But that was bad; so then I plunged into a premeditated gayety holding my nose and taking that like the medicine of the doctor. And gradually, I began to get a grip on things and on myself. I began to enjoy myself and life, laughed without forcing, took interest in the small things of life. But always in the back of my mind that knowledge which made my nights a hell of horrid dreams of blood and war and weariness, forced on me the thought that in all this talk of slackers I was the biggest slacker of them all; for I knew how bad a time my comrades over there were having; I had not the excuse of these others, of ignorance; I knew. And I could never rid myself of the feeling that