

BELGIUM

sequious, exaggerated respect. All the soldiers did that, boys and old men—all in terror, all obsequious, the old fawning and cringing even more than the young. . . . And the young officers strutted carelessly by, striking their puttees with their *cravaches*, indifferently acknowledging their salutes.

Just ahead was the little village, and across the road a barricade of sand bags and stones and wood piled as high as my head. And there was a hut with a low door, and from it at our approach there emerged a little man in grey uniform, grey hair, grey eyes and pince-nez, a mild-mannered little man, introduced as Captain X—, who commanded the company stationed at that post—it was his trenches we were to visit. His little hut had a roof of corrugated iron, with sod on top of it; inside, a table with a telephone, some books, some papers, a cot, a washstand, a picture on the wall, a little stove for cold days. And there and thus he lived.

Near by was another hut, with earth thrown over it; and the little grey Captain drew back a curtain at its entrance, revealing soldiers curled up in frowzy bunks, sleeping heavily after their night in the trenches. And the air inside was not pleasant.

The road had now become the main street of the village and the barricade thrown across it, the Captain explained, was necessary because the road was in the direct line of fire from the English trenches. To reach the German trenches we had to cross the road, edging close up to the barricade, to the houses on the other side. The houses were all empty and silent; all the houses in that poor little town were empty and silent; not a window was left in one of them, not a door; the walls were riddled and split by bullets and shrapnel, the bricks