

It was at this moment something burst in my brain. The Gold Hat, one arm round Fritz's waist and an inane grin under his tooth-brush moustache was sticking a bottle of some unfamiliar amber-coloured liquid under my nose. I shall always remember with intense satisfaction that I rose to the occasion,

"To His Majesty the King!" I intoned gravely; then, losing all restraint, I yelled "Gimme it!" They both watched me, fascinated, as the golden stream slid down my throat. In a very few minutes the sun burst forth in unaccustomed warmth. I know it was the sun for I could feel it.

"Forwaarts Englander!" shouted Fritz in happy tones, and we all three cleared the parapet in a single bound. All the dead men had mysteriously disappeared. There was evidence that unusually zealous line orderlies had been at work here. What was the Army coming to? Looking like a white swichback, straggling at perilous angles among the shell craters, a long white table sprawled itself, and, no doubt, as tables are said to have done from time immemorial, it groaned beneath the weight of delectable viands which embellished it. Whether the table really was genuine or a contrivance of Bath mats, or the tablecloth only a fraudulent affair of sandbags my exalted spirits prevented my noticing, but of the eatables there was no doubt. Ranged about the banquet were grey and khaki alternately, all grinning assinely, raising mess tins, putting them back on the board with long-drawn "A-ahs" of supreme content, only to jerk them up again.

"Vill you some durkey haf?" murmured a deep Teutonic voice in my ear. I ate like one in a dream (strange that!)

Up rose a bearded Bavarian. "Ordair!" he thundered, hammering the table with his bayonet-haft. "Col. Von Steben will now sing 'Lebenslabberjochewobschagen'!" I was wondering how any man could sing that without dislocating his jaw, when my kindly neighbour whispered in my ear that, translated, it meant "Now this bloody war is over." Sure enough, it was, too, and we all roared the chorus in two languages. The merriment swelled to sublime heights over the pudding and brandy. The Gold Hat leapt to the table. "Gentlemen," he yelled, "gentlemen and Germans, after two and a half years of suffering and bloodshed, this terrible and unprecedented war is over. Here in my hand I hold a signed copy of the Kaiser's unconditional surrender to the Allies"—p—p—pup—pup—pup—

He was stammering now, his face apoplectic, working in pitiful convulsions; now it was fading ashen grey. A chill of horror swept over the Christmas gathering. "P-p-pup--pup-p-pup-pup." It was horribly like a machine gun. SMASH! What was that?

"Wake up, ye sons o' guns, wake up! He's coming over!" Somebody kicked my heels, "Wake up!"

"Who's c-c-coming over?" sleepily.

"Who the hell *would* be coming over, ye mutt! STAND TO!"