
THE WHITE COMRADE

Until the stretcher-bearers came at dawn.
"So the White Comrade often comes, my friends,"
He said to us, and smiling, mused awhile.
"These fields are not so difficult in death;
Whether we live or die it all seems one.
He has come back to us because we die
As He did, long ago, for love of man."

Often we talked of Edward, and he seemed
To march beside us down the bright French roads.
We moved into the firing line once more.
So close the German lines, there only lay
An orchard, in the loveliness of May,
Between us and the armies of the Huns.

Sometimes I think that Festubert will hold
Rank equal with St. Julien, for those
Who lived through its abandonment of fire.
It was the Gunners' day. We had to shell
Those trenches that were fortresses indeed,
And pouring hell's own native thunder out.
The orchard lay between us, and it seemed
We simply had to take that place by storm.
They tried to ditch us with their hedge of wire;
We plunged and made for gaps, and all the while
They rained on us artillery fire, until
Ear drums were stilled and nerves quite ceased to
work;
Machine gun, shrapnel, rifle-fire as one