

drove teams of pack-mules up tracks under fire, or unloaded shells from trains that went puffing to the edge of the battle-fields. It was all part of the business of war. Wounded men who came back from battle were dealt with as so many cases of damaged goods, to be packed off speedily to make way for others. There was no time for sentiment—and no need of it. I used to go sometimes to an old mill-house on days of battle. During the Flanders fighting thousands of wounded men came to this place as a first stage on their journey to base hospitals. The lightly wounded used to sit in a long low tent beside the mill, round red-hot braziers, waiting in turn to have their wounds dressed. These crowds of men were of many battalions and of all types of English, Scottish, and Irish troops, with smaller bodies of Australians, New-Zealanders, Canadians, South-Africans, Newfoundlanders. They were clotted with mud and blood, and numb and stiff until the warmth of the braziers unfroze them. They sat silent as a rule, with their steel hats tilted forward, but there was hardly a groan from them, and never a whimper, nor any curse against the fate that had hit them. If I questioned them they answered with a stark simplicity of truth about the things they had seen and done, with often a queer glint of humour—grim enough, God knows, but humour still—in their tale of escape from death. Always after a talk with them I came away with a deep belief that the courage, honesty, and humanity of these boys were a world higher than the philosophy of their intellectual leaders, and I hated the thought that we have been brought to such a pass by the infamy of an enemy caste, and by the low ideals of Europe which have been our own law of life, that all this splendid youth, thinking straight, seeing straight, acting straight, without selfish motives, with clean hearts and fine bodies, should be flung into the furnace of war and scorched by its fires, and maimed, and blinded, and smashed. Only by the dire need of defence against the enemies of the world's liberty can such a sacrifice be justified, and that is our plea before the great Judge of Truth. Such thoughts haunt one if one has any conscience, but when I went among the troops on the roads or in their camps, and heard their laughter after battle or before it, and saw the courage of men refusing to be beaten down by the vilest conditions or heavy losses, and was a witness of their pride in the achievements of their own