

"What did 'they' care if I broke my blinking back." I pictured myself with a broken back, sticking head down in a wet shell hole. Now the Corporal was humming aggravatingly, "Smile, boys, that's the style. S-o-o"—and a fresh hatred burned in my breast. "If I only had him there, the creature who wrote that song—if I *only* had him, I'd pack his d—— old kit bag for him. Here I tripped over a wire, and have since decided it was just at that point my reason deserted me. I pitied myself profoundly.

Of course, eventually we did arrive at what was left of our ditch—one always does. I was almost sorry—I rather fancied myself lying in that shell hole, could feel the tears rising at sight of my poor abused feet emerging solitary from the black mire. Perhaps some tender-hearted passer-by would tarry long enough to place a little cross there: "Here lies an unknown Canadian; he died of Fatigue." Before I had time to weep over this pathetic image, however, I was sound asleep in the dug-out, relishing in long contented snores the graveyard air — ! — !! — !!!

How it started is a trifle hazy to me, but I remember first a big Fritz with a white sling on a stick peering over the parapet and treating us to a most engaging smile.

"All right," he grinned, reassuringly, "Id iss all over."

"The sky?" I asked wearily.

"No, no, idiot, der *var*!"

"The what?" I gasped; then seized him by the hair and dragged him into the trench.

"Man! man! Tell me straight, you're not joking.

A richly decorated Gold Hat ploughed round the traverse. "All-right, boys," he shouted, cheerily, "Clean up; it's all over." Dizziness swept over me and I lowered my head between my knees. When I looked up, to my astonishment Fritz and the Gold Hat were locked in a brotherly embrace.

"Ja, Ja," the Boche was saying, "in vun hour, out there?" and he pointed a muddy finger towards No Man's Land, "in vun hour."

I looked out warily, and a most amazing sight met my astounded eye. Bob-tailed Fritzes were scurrying about like rabbits at sundown, with plates and bottles, white tablecloths, glittering silver, hampers and (incredible sight!) chairs, and what on earth could that green conical affair be? Sure enough, a Christmas tree! With a roar of delight I smashed in the glass of the nearest periscope.

Up and down our trench was a splashing and whooping. Two greasy stomach-robbers came rushing past, elbowing the good-natured Gold Hat, digging Fritz in the ribs, waving their helmets like maniacs, and singing hoarsely "Only one more kit inspection, only one more church parade."

I clasped my aching head wearily in my hands, and gave it up. Pretty soon a friendly hand slapped my shoulder. "You wouldn't care for a drop, old man, eh?"