

In front is the fighting line, where trench after trench, wayward as rivers, wind discreetly through meadow and village. By day you can mark it by whirling lyddite fumes rising from the ground, and puffs of smoke curling in the air ; at night it is a flare of star-shells and lurid flamed explosions colouring the sky line with the lights of death.

Under the moon and stars, the line of battle, seen from a distance, is a red horizon, ominous and threatening, fringing a land of broken homes, ruined villages, and blazing funeral pyres. There the mirth of yesteryear lives only in a soldier's dreams, and the harvest of last autumn rots with withering men on the field of death and decay.

Nature is busy through it all, the grasses grow green over the dead, and poppies fringe the parapets where the bayonets glisten, the skylarks sing their songs at dawn between the lines, the frogs chuckle in the ponds at dusk, the grasshoppers chirrup in the dells where the wild iris, jewel-starred, bends mournfully to the breezes of night. In it all, the watching, the waiting, and the warring, is the mystery, the enchantment, and the glamour of romance ; and romance is dear to the heart of the young soldier.