

up something cruel. Why can't they knit 'eels to 'em if they will mike socks? Don't they know 'ow? My missis what's at 'ome she can knit a sock as 'll fit, an' she can mike shirts too—a shirt-maker she was by trade an' out of work now. Why don't they pay 'er to mike them instead of sending us shirts what won't button proper with one sleeve up an' the other down an' what comes apart if yer looks at 'em 'ard?"

He held up a strange grey garment, and shook it wrathfully.

"This 'ere, now. What's the good of night-shirts to us, out 'ere? And all prickles as mikes yer flesh turn to touch it? An crowshay mats to put under yer saddle? Oo's got the time to think of things like that?"

With supreme disgust he opened a small biscuit tin.

"An' what's in 'ere? A lot of foul old pipes—not a new one among 'em nor an ounce of clean bacca. . . . I arks yer, what's the bloomin' use of these? Do they think we want their old pipes? Not —— likely. 'Ere I am loaded up like a tinker's cart an' all of us just as bad. . . . As if we 'adn't enough to carry in the ordinary way. I'd like to 'ave the lot of 'em out 'ere for 'arf a day just to see what fightin's really like

. . . If they must do something, why don't they look after the missis an' the kids at 'ome, an' let us know they're doin' it?—it 'ould ease some of us a lot. Why don't they let us know as 'ow they'll find jobs for all of us when we gets 'ome? 'Stead of which they all wants to come out with the Red Cross—to the front, if yer please, to tie us up. 'Eaven 'elp us if we falls into their 'ands is what I say. Nurses is all right—they knows their jobs, but these other women if they was to see a field 'ospital after an action they'd faint away in 'eaps. Fat lot of good they'd be. When it comes to that, they're a long sight better out of 'arm's way, a-loading of us up with trumpery which we can throw away. May be it'll do the Germans some good. I'm a-lightening of my load now. . . ."

His voice seemed to grow fainter, and without warning he vanished, leaving the ground covered with a motley collection of boxes, pots, and garments. I picked up the nearest one, the nightshirt so scornfully described, prickly in texture with crooked sleeves. It seemed unaccountably large and heavy, so much so that I bent for closer inspection, and perceived, by the sunlight streaming through the window, that it was my own blanket.

(With apologies to
"The Bystander.")

