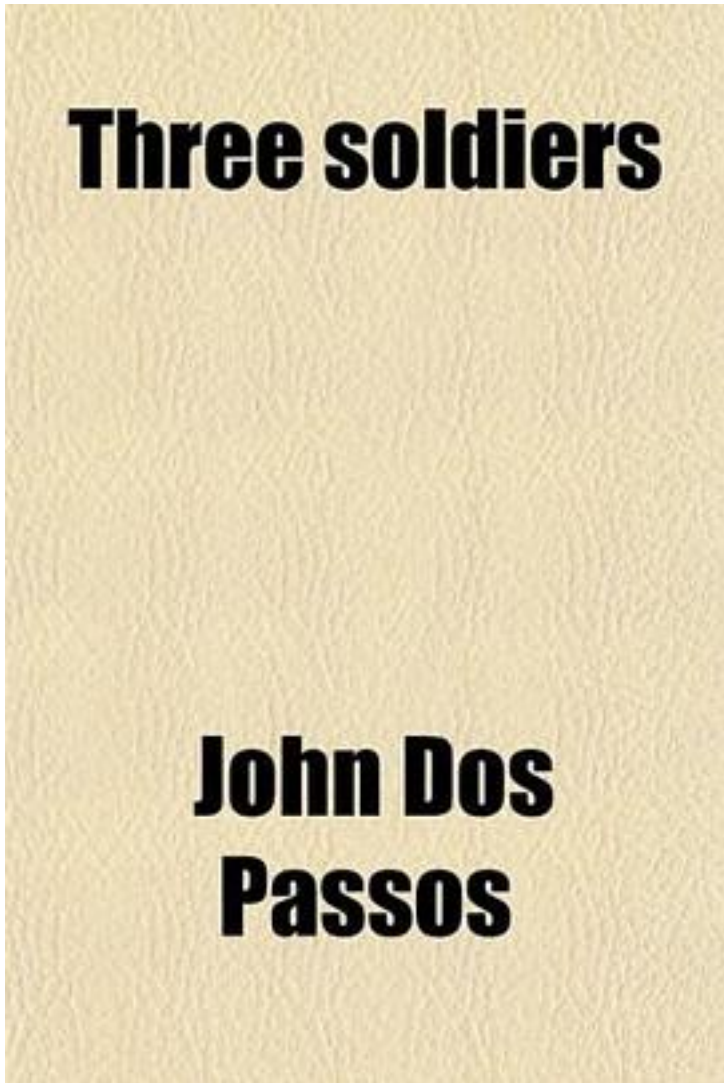


# Three soldiers



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Purchase of this book includes free trial access to [www.million-books.com](http://www.million-books.com) where you can read more than a million books for free. This is an OCR edition with typos. Excerpt from book: Part Three: MACHINES The fields and the misty blue-green woods slipped by slowly as the box car rumbled and jolted over the rails, now stopping for hours on sidings amid meadows, where it was quiet and where above the babel of voices of the regiment you could hear the skylarks, now clattering fast over bridges and along the banks of jade-green rivers where the slim poplars were just coming into leaf and where now and then a fish jumped. The men crowded in the door, grimy and tired, leaning on each other's shoulders and watching the plowed lands slip by and the meadows where the golden-green grass was dappled with buttercups, and the villages of huddled red roofs lost among pale budding trees and masses of peach blossom. Through the smells of steam and coal smoke and of unwashed bodies in uniforms came smells of moist fields and of manure from fresh-sowed patches and of cows and pasture lands just coming into flower. "Must be right smart o' craps in this country. . . . Ain't like that damn Polingnac, Andy?" said Chrisfield. "Well they made us drill so hard there wasn't any time for the grass to grow." "You're damn right there warn't." "Ah'd lak te live in this country a while," said Chrisfield. "We might ask 'em to let us off right here." "Can't be that the front's like this," said Judkins, poking his head out between Andrews's and Chrisfield's heads so that the bristles of his unshaven chin rubbed against Chrisfield's cheek. It was a large square head with closely cropped light hair and porcelain-blue eyes under lids that showed white in the red sunburned face, and a square jaw made a little grey by the sprouting beard. "Say, Andy, how the hell long have we all been in this goddam train? . . . Ah've done lost track o' the time. . . ." "What's th...

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