

GENERALS DIE IN BED

dragging my wounded foot after me. I will find one of the killed and take his water-bottle.

I slide into a large shell crater. A man lies huddled at the bottom.

It is Broadbent.

One of his legs hangs by a mere strip of skin and flesh to his thigh. He opens his eyes and smiles weakly. His face is bathed in sweat and pain. His lips move slightly. He is speaking. I put my head close to his and listen.

"I can't look at it—tell me is it off?" he whispers.

I lift his head up and give him a drink of the water I have found. It is luke-warm. He drinks.

At the bottom of the hole there is a wide black pool of blood. His partly-amputated leg is twisted at a grotesque angle—suddenly the strip of skin and flesh breaks. The leg moves a little.

"Tell me is it off?"

I cannot answer him.