

important. I lay there watching them with half-closed eyes. One was resting with his head on the parapet (which is permissible as long as the other keeps a sharp watch), but to my horror I saw the other, after about ten minutes, turn round, sit against the parapet with his back to the enemy, and deliberately drop his head on his arms and go to sleep. We now had no one keeping watch over us at all, and there was nothing to stop the Germans creeping over and bayoneting a trench full of sleeping men. My first instinct was to march the sentry straight off under arrest, then I remembered the penalty, and that he was only a boy, and that it was many days and nights since the men had had proper sleep. So I crept towards him, gave him a crack under the jaw with my fist, which would effectively keep him awake for the rest of his turn of duty, said, "You dare to turn round with your back to the enemy," and lay down again. I remember waking up uneasily every quarter of an hour through the night and looking to see if the sentry was keeping awake, and being reassured by a plaintive snuffling as the boy looked ahead and rubbed his chin.