R. Graves, Goodbye to all that

**A. Chap.12, pp. 88-9**

Going towards company headquarters to wake the officers I saw a man lying on his face in a machine-gun shelter. I stopped and said: ‘Stand-to, there!’ I flashed my torch on him and saw that one of his feet was bare. The machine-gunner beside him said: ‘No good talking to him, sir’. I asked: What’s wrong? Why has he taken his boot and sock off?’ ‘Look for yourself, sir!’ I shook the sleeper by the arm and noticed suddenly the hole in the back of his head. He had taken off the boot and sock to pull the trigger of his rifle with one tow; the muzzle was in his mouth. ‘Why did he do it?’ I asked. ‘He went through the last push, sir, and that sent him a bit queer; on top of that he got bad news from Limerick about his girl and another chap’. He belonged to the Munsters – their machine-guns overlapped the left of our company – and his suicide had already been reported. Two Irish offices came up. ‘We’ve had several of these lately’, one of them told me. Then he said to the other: ‘While I remember, Callaghan, don’t forget to write to his next of kin. Usual sort of letter; tell them he died a soldier’s death, anything you like. I’m not going to report it as suicide’.

**B. Chap. 18, p. 163**

As I took the men back, I heard a couple of shells fall somewhere behind us. I noticed them, because they were the only shells fired that night: five-nines by the noise. We had hardly reached the support line on the reverse side of the hill, when we heard the cry: ‘Stretcher-bearers!’ and presently a man ran up to say: ‘Captain Graves is hit!’ That raised a general laugh, and we walked on; but all the same I sent a stretcher-party to investigate. It was Richardson: the shells had caught him and Corporal Chamberlen among the wire. Chamberlen lost his leg and died of wounds a day or two later. Richardson, blown into a shell-hole full of water, lay there stunned for some minutes before the sentries heard the corporal’s cries and realized what had happened. The stretcher-bearers brought him down semi-conscious; he recognised us, said he wouldn’t be long away from the company, and gave me instructions about it. The doctor found no wound in any vital spot, though the skin of his left side had been riddled, as we saw, with the chalky soil blown against it. We felt the same relief in his case as in David’s: that he would be out of it for a while. Then news came that David was dead. The regimental doctor, a throat specialist in civil life, had told him at the dressing-station: ‘You’ll be all right, only don’t raise your head for a bit’. David then took a letter from his pocket, have it to an orderly, and said: ‘Post this!’ It had been written to a girl in Glamorgan, for delivery if he got killed. The doctor saw that he was choking and tried a tracheotomy; but too late. Edmund and I were talking together in ‘A’ company headquarters at about one o’clock when the adjutant entered. He looked ghastly. Richardson was dead: the explosion and the cold water had overstrained his heart…

**C. Chap. 20, p. 181-2**

I heard the explosion, and felt as though I had been punched rather hard between the shoulder-blades, but without any pain. I took the punch merely for the shock of the explosion; but blood trickled into my eye and, turning faint, I called to Moodie: ‘I’ve been hit’. Then I fell. A minute or two before I had got two very small wounds on my left hand; and in exactly the same position as the two that drew blood from my right hand during the preliminary bombardment at Loos. This is took as a lucky sign…On piece of shell went through my left thigh, high up…The wound over the eye was made by a little chip of marble…This, and a finger wound which split the bone, probably came from another shell bursting in front of me. But a piece of shell had also gone in two inched below the point of my right shoulder-blade…My memory of what happened then is vague. Apparently Dr Dunn came up through the barrage with a stretcher-party, dressed my wound, and got me down to the old German dressing-station at the north end of Mametz Wood. I remember being put on the stretcher, and winking at the stretcher-bearer sergeant who had just said: ‘Old Gravy’s got it, all right!’ They laid my stretcher in a corner of the dressing-station, where I remained unconscious for more than twenty-four hours. Late that night, Colonel Crawshay came back from High Wood and visited the dressing-station; he saw me lying in the corner, and they told him I was done for. The next morning, July 21st, clearing away the dead, they found me still breathing, and put me on an ambulance for Heilly, the nearest field hospital. The pain of being jolted down the Happy Valley, with a shell hole at every three or four yards of the road, woke me up. I remember screaming. But back on the roads I became unconscious again. That morning Crawshay wrote the usual forms of condolence to the next of kin of the six or seven officers who had been killed. This was his letter to my mother…