

# CHRISTMAS WITH THE 27th BATTALION.

SEVERAL weeks previous to Christmas the most interesting topic of conversation and speculation among the boys of the Battalion was as to whether we would be IN or OUT on Christmas day.

Bunches would gather together and start calculating so many days in, so many days out, so many days at this point, so many at that; all arriving at different results, and cursing each other fluently.

However, the popular date set for reaching our rest camp appeared to be December 23, "Fritz" and other things permitting, and this date happened to be correct.

The weather, strange to say, was all that could be desired—bright, and in spots even dry, and save for the absence of snow, quite seasonable.

Among the 78 different varieties of rumours that continually infest the Battalion, one was most insistent and prominent, and that was that we were to have a real Christmas dinner; but for fear that the rumour, as usual, might turn out to be unfounded, most of the men made terrific onslaughts on the various parcels, of which every one seemed to have one or more.

The carol singing on Christmas Eve, indulged in by some of the musically inclined, was certainly a howling success, as the party collected some 23 drinks of various kinds, many smokes, and a bad cold or two.

One other incident of the festivities was much enjoyed by those who participated. One of our corporals, happening to go out of his hut at a late hour of the night, happened upon a bibulous individual, profanely struggling with a very large box in a very deep and moist ditch. He was quite drunk (the individual, not the corporal); he had started out from—he didn't remember where—with two, or it might have been three, cases

of champagne, he didn't remember which; he had lost his regiment, his cap, his way—everything but one case of wine and his thirst. It was quite cold, and knowing that frost spoils good wine, and also that it might prove uncomfortable sleeping in the ditch, the corporal grasped the stranger's hand in friendship and led him and the case carefully into the hut; not, however, before making exhaustive enquiries as to whether the missing case might not be discovered. The wine was much appreciated, and the bibulous one sped on his way the next morning, with many pressing invitations to call again—when he had discovered the other two cases.

Rumour number 78 proved to have some foundation in fact: we were going to have a real Christmas dinner, provided by the C.O. himself.

At quite a fashionable hour for dining, the Battalion paraded to the largest building in the village. It was, or had been, a school, and the interior was indeed Christmassy and seasonable with its lavish decorations of bright green, red-berried holly and coloured bunting.

The band was in attendance and in excellent form, adding much to the pleasure of the evening.

In a very short time when all were seated the dinner appeared. Roast turkey and dressing (real, not canned), vegetables, plum pudding, all washed down by that excellent beverage (but whisper it not in Winnipeg these days) made from hops and other things.

It was quite one of the brightest spots in the history of the Battalion, and that the Colonel's kindness was appreciated goes without saying.

After dinner there was more music by the band, songs, quartettes, etc., by members of the Battalion, and the National Anthem brought to a close a Christmas that will linger long in the minds of those who participated Somewhere in Flanders.

A. J. B.



Officer (returning in a hurry from No Man's Land): "Sentry, have I wriggled on to your confounded bayonet?"

Sandy: "Aye, Sir; but wriggle back again like the devil. Ye've only seven inches to go!"

## RUM.

The parapets have all caved in and dug-outs tumbled down, You're up to the knees in Belgium mud of thick and sticky brown;

You're slipping here, you're falling there, in a hole you'll sometimes get,

Oh! it's nice to be on sentry-go when the weather's cold and wet. And you carry on until it's time for you to quit,

When your relief will come along to do his little bit; Then you roll up in a blanket and away to rest you creep,

Where the rats will keep you company whilst you lie fast asleep;

But ere dawn breaks along the trench an order's coming through, The word is passed quite rapidly the boys must all "Stand to!"

They climb on to the fire-step and get a trifle mixed, But soon you'll see them at their posts with all their bayonets fixed;

Then suddenly along the trench there comes a ghostly form. The boys all stand there ready their duty to perform.

It creeps along quite cautiously, "My God!" we hear; "they're come!"

"Who have?" they ask; "the Huns?" "No chance," hoarse voices shout; "IT'S THE RUM!"

## WILL SOMEONE PLEASE TELL US—

HOW that new "Acting Adj." of ours and his erstwhile platoon-sergeant managed to work their way to London, after that ever popular order cancelling all leave came out?

Where the Q.M. salvaged that horse of his?

Who is the officer who contracted *trench teeth* while on leave?

What officer refused to take off his slippers and shot flares up the chimney of his dug-out?

Who introduced "Who" to "Muckle-Sandy"?

If it is true that the Q.M. has been invited to attend a quiet little wiring party in the front line, guests to bring their own housewives?

Who is the private in the machine-gun section who greased the legs of the tripod with anti-frostbite to keep them from getting trench feet?

## NOT REALLY.

ONE OF THE LATEST DRAFT: "Does that band really belong to 'A' Company? It don't play no Scotch Airs."