

OUR CHRISTMAS.

WELL, now that we have recovered sufficiently from our Christmas and New Year's festivities to be able to collect our thoughts, we will attempt to put down on paper a record of our pleasant occasions, so that our children and children's children may read and know that once in a while at least their dads in the Great War had a season of merriment.

That's a frightfully long and involved sentence—but not half as involved as some of those uttered by speakers at these Christmas dinners!

To get back to our turkey and plum pudding. The battalion knew that in the ordinary course of events it would be impossible to Fletcherize on turkey on Christmas Day itself, for on that day our motto would be "Business as usual." Therefore the days immediately preceding the festive day were chosen. Each Company and specialist section had its own particular Christmas Day, while some officers and men had them "many and often." For instance, our statistician estimates that the C.O. and Adjutant ate at least seven real Christmas dinners and a round half-dozen dinners with a decided Christmas or New Year's touch to them. We understand that this heroic exploit is to receive special mention in the second volume of that official and illuminating document *Canada in Flanders*.



BILL: "Say, Archibald. This paper says that every good-looking fellow who comes back after the war is going to have a whole flock of girls after him!"

ARCHIE: "Oh! dash it all! I can see I shall be having a frightful time dodgin' 'em."

Now, while these more prominent officers, were carrying out this vigorous programme of dining, solely in response to the many calls made upon them for their presence, the same excuse cannot be offered for some of the junior officers. The manner in which some of these disposed of turkey and goose and plum-pudding, to make no mention of the more liquid forms of refreshment, was quite shocking, and would not be believed if set down in cold print.

But for real honest-to-goodness downright eating of the aforementioned turkey and plum pudding, one had to attend a company dinner. If there was one man at one of these dinners that didn't set new records, we'd like his name and regimental number! "B" Company started off one night and had a gay and glorious time. "A" followed, and tried to beat "B's" record. "C" came the third night and furnished a spasm all its own. "D" had the fourth night, and proved its might as "trencher-men." In between whiles the Signal Section, various company messes, and headquarters officers' mess got all fussed up and had little parties of their own.

And through it all, the band played merrily on. Much of the enjoyment and spirit of festivity of this pre-Christmas week was due to the great work done by our band. Here's a special toast to each and every bandsman!

And to the Y.M.C.A., whose hut was so generously loaned every night.

And then, after a few days' interlude, the season of dining was re-opened again, this time in — (we nearly said it that time). Bombers, Scouts, and Machine Gun Sections took the lid off the old town and their expense accounts, and had a royal time of it. And of course, smaller and more recherché parties were held here, there, and everywhere.

Finally, a long health to the one feature above all others that made this Christmas really "Christmassy"—and that is to the parcels and all the dear ones who sent them to us. What did it matter if the post office was swamped, and some of the cakes and candies and good things were a bit late? That simply added to the fun, for every fresh parcel meant another feast.

So passed Christmas, 1916, and New Year's 1917. We enjoyed them. But here's to Christmas, 1917, and New Year's 1918, which we will spend in "the old home town" in Canada.

MARIE DUFOY'S REVENGE.

A TRENCH GHOST STORY.

I.

PAUL DUFOY had lived his twenty years on a Western Canadian farm, with his parents and sister. Paul had been born in Canada some two years after his parents had settled on their homestead, which they had taken up on emigrating from their old home in France to the new "Land of Promise." It was the evening of Paul's twentieth birthday, in August, 1914, when the news of the outbreak of war reached the Dufoy farm. Paul enlisted in the fight for freedom.

II.

It is night-time in the trenches. A pale crescent moon sheds a faint light over the dreary scene. At rare intervals a flare soars into the air, throwing in ghostly relief tree stumps and torn earth.

Private Paul Dufoy, 65432, is on sentry duty. An unusual stir in the trench near him made him doubly on the alert. Suddenly an amazing thing happened. A woman appeared in the trench beside him! She spoke to him. "You are Paul Dufoy, son of Raymond Dufoy," she stated, in a low, clear voice. Paul's mind was a confused whirl of tales of spies and their cunning devices. But his tongue refused to say the words he thought. The woman came close beside him—so close that he could see her face, pale, distressed, the face of a typical French girl of some nineteen summers. She wore a dress of some black material, cut low at the throat. On her bosom was a little silver brooch, fastening a knot of French tricolour ribbons.

"Have no fear, my kinsman," were the words Paul heard. "I am your father's sister, Marie." The voice paused, leaving Paul as one bound by a spell.

"For the sake of France and all that is dear to you," she continued, "heed every word I utter. Then my soul at last will rest in peace. During the war of 1871 I lived on the farm at the left of the wood yonder. You can see it from where you stand. When my fiancé, Jules Bovet, was called to the Colours he gave me this brooch and tricolour as he bade me farewell. Ten days later the Prussians came. An officer with ten men rode up to our door demanding food and drink and beds. We did all we could. The officer saw my tricolour. He ordered me to take it off. I refused. He tried to force it from me. I struggled. He became enraged and was cruel and brutal. As I struggled with him, I caught his hand between my teeth. He roared with pain, drew his revolver, and I died—but it was for my country's colours.

"Now, this very night, in that same farm yonder, even in the same room, is a Prussian officer, the son of my murderer. With him are men. They are putting telephones into the room. Do your duty, Paul Dufoy. Revenge my death and strike a blow for beloved France."

The next moment Paul was alone. A crescent dimly lit the tangled waste of No Man's Land before him. Had he been asleep at his post and dreamed this thing? The question troubled Paul. His vision to him was too real. He even thought that in the distance, over yonder in the farm near the wood, he could hear a woman's voice calling, calling—for a just revenge.

III.

In this war, many strange things have happened. It was strange, perhaps, that Private Paul Dufoy, 65432, should have had a vision in the night. It was stranger still, perhaps, that his Colonel, to whom he told his story, should have planned an attack on the farm the next day. But it was strange that a Prussian officer and his battalion staff should have been counted among the dead in that farmhouse! Or was it strange that a prisoner should have related that his Colonel was the son of the late German General "Iron" von Herzog? Or that, what was well known, that von Herzog had had only one hand, for he had lost the other by poisoning in the Franco-Prussian War of 1871?

But if you ask him, Paul Dufoy will tell you quite seriously how that Prussian lost his hand, and, if you care to listen, he will relate how Marie Dufoy's murder was revenged half a century later.