

in huts now—ushered in the day with a tune on the gramophone. Curse his memory! Then the scurry to get breakfast over, for it takes some time for everyone to be shaved and washed so as to look his best at battalion parade. This parade, by the way, was called in order to convey to the men certain messages—a happy Christmas to one and all from our Colonel, and numerous friends in Canada. But perhaps the most important of all that the Colonel had to tell us was the announcement that we leave for France at an early date. It was almost with difficulty the men refrained from cheering. It was a most welcome announcement, for truth to tell, we are all heartily sick of Salisbury Plain, with its ceaseless rain and mud; besides, it is bringing us nearer to the trenches, and it was to get to them that we left Canada. When Colonel Leckie wished us many happy returns of the day, there was just a slight touch of pathos in his voice as he said that at a crisis like this we could not all hope to see another. Of course not; but that carries no terrors.

After parade, a rush is made for the hut to await the Christmas mail—greetings and gifts from loved ones in Canada, and in the Old Country. What a weird collection these gifts are! Christmas cakes, socks, mince pies, sweaters, woollen caps, butter-scotch, mits, tobacco. And then there is the general share-up of the cakes and sweets, for each one shares with another. The forenoon passes swiftly and with some anticipation, for, tell it not in Gath, we are getting away from the ordinary Mulligan dinner. Let me say what Mulligan really is—it is a sort of a cross between Irish stew and heaven knows what; and after five solid months there is a touch of sameness about it. However, on the day of all days, a visit to the kitchen reveals the fact that a beanfeast is in store. Turkey, roast beef, plum pudding, all the usual Christmas fare is in preparation. There is no general fag, and each and everyone takes his share in the cleaning of the hut and the peeling of the potatoes. A word of special praise is due to the cook. There is little rest for him, and his duties are of the most arduous. Rain or shine, he must be at his post, and so one's sympathy goes out. By the way, who was it