

## THE WINTER MONTHS

be the handshaking and hymn-singing that had characterised the first Christmas of the war; a routine order had been published forbidding such demonstrations of good feeling, but it was hardly necessary—flame projectors and asphyxiating gas had attended to that!

Everything was very peaceful in the little hamlet when we arrived, however. It was a clear, starlit night, a little snow in the fields, and the dark silhouettes of the houses and church loomed up against the clear sky. The little church was in darkness—no midnight mass was being sung this year—and we slipped into our various billets in silence, very tired and not a little homesick.

Christmas Day the men were marched into Bailleul, where a big dinner was given them by the officers of the battalion. In the evening another dinner was held for the officers themselves. There were the usual toasts and speeches, and before the party broke up Captain George T. Richardson asked for a few minutes' silent prayer for those who would not be present at our next dinner. It was a wonderful tribute to his sincerity that this was granted, for the evening was well advanced, and soldiers, as