

## Private MacLeod's Christmas Present.

It was Christmas Eve. Private MacLeod of the — th Nova Scotian Regiment had the "blues." There was no getting around it, he had as bad a fit of the sulks as ever a "Tommy" had. And why? The six feet two of Scotch brawn and muscle that constituted the physical make-up of "Mac," as he was known to his comrades, were wholly and entirely disappointed,—every last inch of them. Before leaving home with the first contingent, as he bade his tearful "lassie" good-bye, he had made her promise to send him a Christmas cake, which had failed to come. Every day for a week before he had eagerly watched the postman making the rounds of the trenches with glad news from home for the lads at the front, but each day had brought him nothing, and as Christmas drew near he sank to the uttermost depths of despair.

The Allies had made wonderful progress since the middle of November, when the Canadian troops first took the field. Then they were holding the Germans in check along the Belgian frontier and the Aisne, but slowly and surely they had pressed back the forces of the invaders along the whole battle-front. Inch by inch the foe had given way, overcome by the sheer spirit of their opponents, until now the German border formed the line of conflict, and Belgium once more was free. The Canadians had been placed on the extreme west wing, where time after time they had aided their British brothers in hurling back the desperate mass attacks of the Germans as they vainly sought to turn the Allies' flank. Such was the general situation of the war in the West; the Russians in the East were rapidly narrowing the distance between the vast hordes of their main army and Berlin.

It was snowing heavily as Private "Mac," on outpost duty for the early part of the night, peered through the falling flakes toward the German lines. Driven from village to village the foe had put up a stiff resistance when the Canadian Corps had taken B——, an important frontier town in C——, and all indications seemed to point toward a mighty attempt to recapture it in the morning.