

## A Christmas Letter Home

The Christmas Day Truce.

GLoucester CORPORAL'S DESCRIPTION.

Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Philpotts, 56, Clifton-road, Gloucester, have received a letter from their son, Corporal James Philpotts, 1st Royal Warwick Regiment, in which he describes the Christmas Day truce on a portion of the fighting line. Writing on Christmas Day, he says:—

"We came back into the trenches last night after a four days' rest, and the Germans were in a good mood. They were singing and cheering and they wanted to come over and talk to us. Then during the night they massed a few instruments and gave us some fine tunes. They gave us, first of all, 'Home Sweet Home,' and that made us think a bit. I was thinking of three words, and I could picture home. . . . But, cheer up all, I shall be home soon. They played us some carols, and then they did us the great honour to play our "God save the King" first, which we sang to and they cheered us, and then they played their own, which they sang to and we cheered to the echo. Then the most wonderful thing is to-day. Although there is no armistice, we have by mutual consent stopped all firing, and are going half-way to their trenches, and they half-way to meet us, unarmed, and we are changing fags and cigars and plum duff and buttons for souvenirs. We are shaking hands and chatting, and some of them close here are waiters and theatre band-players from England, and talk good English. They told the Somersets they could fetch their dead in from a charge the other day; but I will not talk of these things until I come home. I have seen it all and am still fit to fight. The Germans have the news that Russia is absolutely beaten and the French no good, but they admit we are the best fighters and the best men. They can trust us, and for a change we are trusting them, and walking about on top of the trenches in broad daylight."

Continuing his letter later, Corporal Philpott adds: "Here is Monday after Christmas, and we are still at truce. We have not fired a shot this four days. I have had some cigars, and I have two Germans' autographs for souvenirs. They say they are Saxons and near relations to us, and therefore will not fire again until we do. We are doing everything in broad daylight which we usually have to do in the dark, and then chance our lives at that. I mean fetching wood, water, vegetables and such things. I am hoping this letter will get through to you complete, because it is interesting to see the history of Waterloo and the Crimea repeating itself with the truce. Mind, it is only our lot and the Somersets at peace. If the English papers only knew, as I expect they will, it would seem to be a lie, but when I come home I can show the German autographs to prove it."