

Random Reminiscences

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When I got on deck there lay a German submarine at a little distance, watching us.

"She had struck us all right and we were sinking. The boats were off and away. They had forgotten me in their hurry and I had been so fast asleep that I had never even felt the shock of the torpedo. Well, I found a couple of planks and jumping overboard, I swam for all my might. It wasn't a minute after I struck the water that the old ship went down.

"I swam towards the Germans and called to them to pull me aboard, but the men on deck only laughed and shouted back at me in their infernal lingo which I don't understand. Then they turned and scuttled off and you had better believe I cursed the brutes to some purpose. The beggars! How I hated them! But the German is an uncivil beast even in peace and he is a million times worse in war.

"I spent the next couple of hours slipping off a thousand slippery planks and trying to get a little nearer to the shore. Luckily, I am a good swimmer and the water was warm or I wouldn't be here now. Then, along came an Italian fishing smack and rescued me and took me into Genoa. I must say they treated me well. The United States consul there, who by the way is an Italian, gave me a suit of his own clothes and ten pounds in English money and they shipped me to London as a distressed seaman with my pockets fuller than they had been for some time past. From London they shipped me back here and as my money is nearly gone again, I suppose I shall be off once more before long, and getting torpedoed again. The boats? Oh, they all landed safely, though one was three days at sea, but we lost all the horses, poor brutes.

"Have any of you seen anything of the war in the East?" he went on. "I had one voyage to Salonika, and I tell you there's where you see the picturesque side of the war. We started for Alexandria but we were wirelessed just past Malta to go to Salonika.

"How am I to describe one of the most talked of cities in the world to you who have not seen it?

"Crawling up the side of a mountain—like a picture from the Holy Land—camped in by English and French soldiers, modern to a dot—punctured with the minarets of Turkish mosques, ancient to a degree—flanked by the walls where Saul of Tarsus drove home hard his amazing novel thesis to the minds of the doubting Macedonians—for this is Thessaly and this the Thessalonica of the Acts.

"I wish I could show you the beauty of it all—the great grey French gunboats in the bay—the sliding submarines—the ghostly, grey, venomous torpedo boats; all the pomp and wickedness of war as it never struck me before. Over the peace of the night or the glory of the morning in the Aegean sea, night and day, never ceasing, the low ominous thunder of the British guns sounded, guarding the Serbian frontier fifty miles away. If I never realized it before, I realized then that we are winning the war. I tell you Britain wins!"

He looked round him with flushed cheeks, as if ashamed of his sudden enthusiasm.

"Well, I must be going," he said. "So long, boys."

He stuffed his pipe in an inner pocket and with a nod to the crowd, went out. His departure seemed to have a discouraging effect. One by one, they hobbled or wheeled off in various directions.

From the rear came a voice, irresistibly musical:

"Here we are, here we are, here we are again,

We beat you on the Marne and we beat you on the Aisne

We kicked you out of Armentieres and here we are again."

"What's the noise out there?"

"Oh," came a voice from under blankets, "it's that disturbing Irishman, 'Short,' with his 'Dublin Fusiliers' anthem, again."

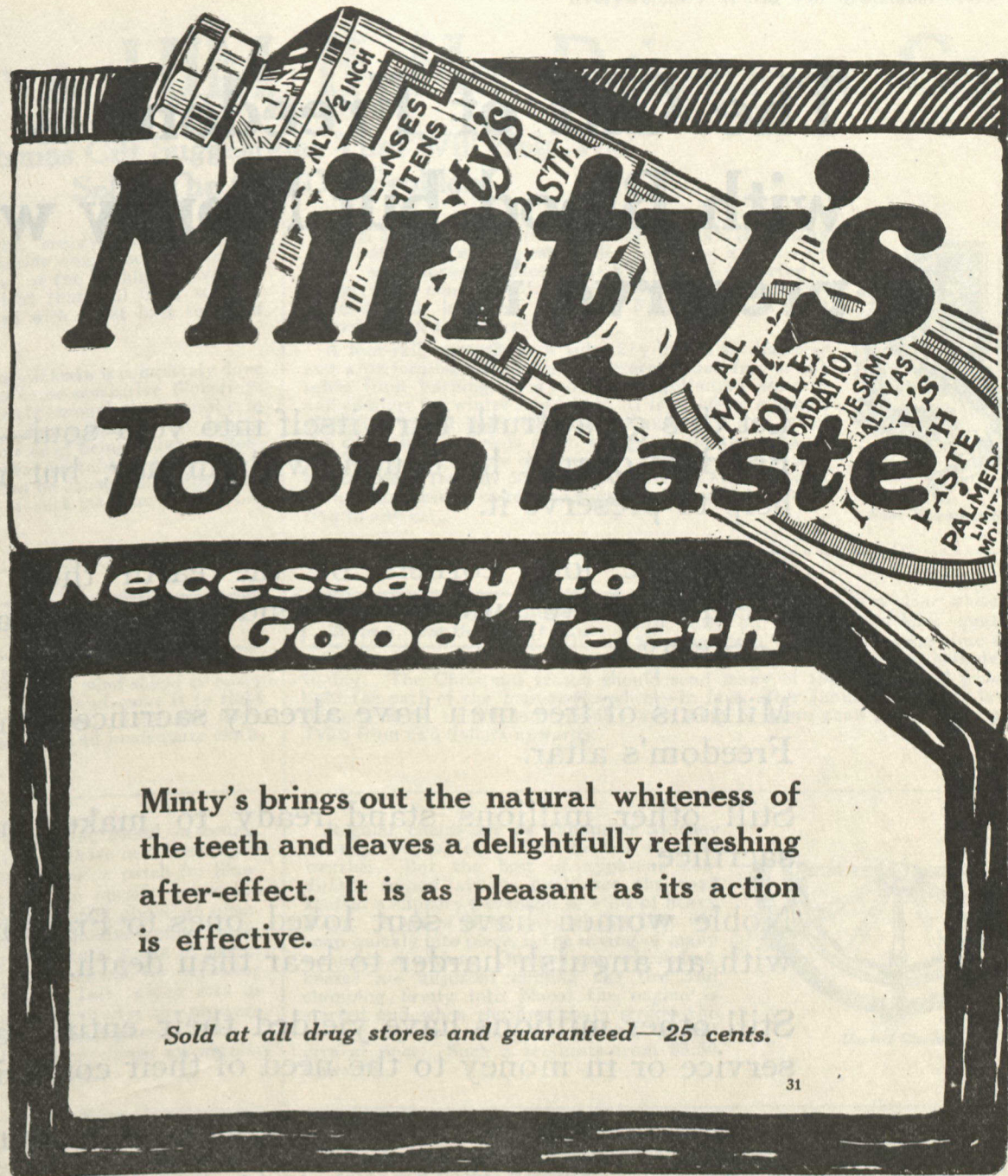
After much persuasion, the singer was subdued and a stillness seemed to take possession of the place.

The only non-resident left, the lone Private who tells you this, gathered himself together and lost himself in the night without.

HISTORIC LANDMARKS

When you read of the destruction in Belgium and France, the devastation of so many of the historic landmarks, do you ever stop to think that right here, in Canada are landmarks that should be more dear to us?

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SOME BOY OR GIRL will get this dandy Shetland Pony. I WANT YOU to have an equal chance with every boy and girl. I want every family in Canada who takes this paper to have an equal chance.

BOYS AND GIRLS should send their own names. Fathers and Mothers should send the names of their children.

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