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SPECULATION

Most of us have had dealings in Real Estate at one time or another. Many of us have met fluent tongued orators, armed with a plan and a proposition, and have parted with our cash in exchange for experience. Not always of course, but sometimes.

Apparently there are men in the Canadian contingent, with whom land speculation has become such a habit, that even in the face of death and under the very eyes of the Hun, they must ply their persuasive trade.

Recently, when a certain battalion was « in », there were no dug-outs in the trenches, and one of the boys promptly pre-empted a hole under the parapet. From this neither threats nor entreaties could draw him.

As a habitation it was nothing to write home about. The decorations were done mainly in mud. Almost any building inspector would have condemned it on sight. It was neither safe nor sanitary, but at least it was a shelter of sorts from the weather and the « whiz-bang ».

Noticing this, a man with the speculator's eye offered two francs for the hole.

He knew the battalion was broke. He knew this particular private was an easy-going creature and a lover of the produce of Belgium, and yet, by reason of his disgusting wealth, he sought to purchase the ease and safety of a fellow soldier. For two paltry francs in Baileul notes he induced him to endanger his health and imperil his limbs and his life. (Government property too).

The joke was on the speculator in the end, for no sooner had the transaction been completed, the papers signed, sealed and delivered, than the original owner of the hole in the wall collected the nicest « blighty » you ever saw, a « blighty » at once the delight and despair of the entire Medical Detail.

Shortly after the blighted one had been tied up and ticketed, the Germans blew up the whole trench.

So you see, it sometimes pays to sell on a rising market.

FLANDERS AS A HEALTH RESORT

« Flanders, as a health resort, has never been properly appreciated by a careless and superficial public ». This announcement, which recently appeared in a well-known London contemporary, contains a remarkable and obvious truth. After some experience of the health-giving properties of Belgian air at 2 a. m. on a stormy night, we are disposed to agree, and even to carry the statement a little further.

If you are bored and blasé ; if life, for you, has become a dull uninteresting round of distasteful duties ; if you desire fresh thrills and new excitements ; if you would feel the blood coursing madly through your veins ; if you yearn for a life of primitive simplicity uncontaminated by needless and hurtful luxury — join the army and come to Flanders. The stimulating effects of the crescendo whistle of approaching shrapnel are truly amazing. Fat men, family men, men whose lines were obviously laid for fire-side ease and domestic placidity, have been known to be stung to an astonishing activity at the sound ; to perform feats of strength and marvels of speed quite incomprehensible to the civilian. If you would fathom the secret of their sudden access of youthfulness, there is only one way — join the army.

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The wiring detail had just reached the shattered village, when the Hun began to plaster it with high explosive. Naturally the men hunted cover. There's no use stopping to argue with large lumps of cast-iron flying through the air. « Frenchy » got separated from the others and ran right into the Wiring Officer.

« Where are you going ? » the W. O. demanded. « I dunno, but I'm going pretty quick » answered « Frenchy ».

« Where are the other men ? » asked the officer. « Back there somewhere » said « Frenchy ».

« There's nothing to be scared about », said the W. O. « These are only a few « whiz-bangs ».

« Whiz-bang » barked « Frenchy » : « Whiz-bang, by damn, full-grow ! »