

SIBERIAN FORCE IS INTERESTED

Strange Sights and Sounds Encountered

Chinese Are Useful — Cheerful Coolies Sing as They Lift—Odd Sights in Vladivostok—Soldiers Letters Tell the Story

(Toronto Star.)

Here are interesting letters from a Toronto officer with the Canadian Expeditionary Force to Siberia, describing the voyage across the Pacific and the sights and sounds in that most cosmopolitan city in the world just now—the port of Vladivostok:

"With the Canadians on the Siberian Expedition:

"The advance party of the force, Col. Elmsley and staff, with about 500 soldiers of the Canadian infantry, left Vancouver on the early evening of October 11, on the Empress of Japan, the first Canadian soldiers to begin the voyage across the Pacific. As the troops marched on board and as the ship was made ready to sail, the scene varied little from that presented in 1914 when our first overseas troops embarked for their Atlantic voyage. From the lower port-holes could be seen pictures which made us forget that we were not already in the Far East. Oriental faces peered from every port-hole. Chinese faces very different in expression, or the lack of it, from those one sees everyday in Canada. They made an indelible impression on our minds.

"As a waiter on board ship, John Chishman was found to be one of the most efficient ever met with. The uniform is a white Chinese smock, very plainly cut. The head boy wears a blue one in the same pattern, of that beautiful Chinese blue somewhere between the Copenhagen and the robin's egg blue. The faces of these Chinese boys are all as different as can be and have a quietness which seems lacking in our western faces.

"It was a good thing for the soldier that he took in the surroundings at those first meals on the steamer, for he soon found that many meals were not for him. The ocean air grew colder as the vessel took its northward course, and the troops could be found in groups about the hatches, which provided the luxury of warm air coming up from below. Soon the ship's time was given over to drill and bugle calls, gongs for dinner and sports. Hockey was the great favorite, and from the skilled fashion in which checking was done there must have been some near professionals about.

Enjoyed Song Services.

"For several days, or during the first week of the voyage, the ship's course followed along the mountainous chain of the Aleutian Islands. At the end of the first week the ship crossed the gap into the Behring Sea.

"Some whales were sighted, as the course lay through waters where the smaller whales feed, the Russian sealing grounds being about 400 miles away.

"One of the special features of the trip were the Sunday song services. Both Sundays the sea was very rough, so that something of the occasion was lost. However, the boys made the best of it, and very lusty singing resulted. On the third Friday the Empress was in the Sea of Japan, and horribly rough weather was encountered. The northern islands of Japan were sighted, and before long the ship passed through the straits and a very welcome sight met the soldiers' gaze—a lighthouse in the distance, the first in many a long day.

Eye-Opener for Recruits.

"Vladivostok, Saturday, October 27.—Arrived at last. You never could imagine without the aid of eyes and the objects just what pictures are presented. A few minutes after the boat docked about 100 coolies appeared in old clothes which might have been those of their grandparents, judging by the rag and color and patches. They came to unload the ship and have a curious little one-horse or pony wagon. The old rags are marvellous. One old chip was covered with a fur coat of many different colored skins. He had an unkempt black beard and particularly amused our fellows as he moved around. Some of the coolies wear old army coats stolen, like enough, from the Russian stores. Of these stores there remain several million dollars worth, dotting the hills and covered with canvas. The coolies are a cheerful lot and I think we spend the greater part of the day watching them unload the boat. I have not seen the town yet, but report says it is awful except for the main street, and I quite believe it from the appearance of the Chinese at the wharf.

"This side of the world may be an eye-opener for the raw soldiers for the quarters are going to be the most primitive. The stage production 'Chu Chin Chow' is the nearest to the noises one hears as the coolies sing together before lifting their burdens. They get in splendid unison and lift with a certain workman-like exclamation. The new sights are most exhilarating. The coolies are alone worth the trip to the east. The journey is long and very wearisome, but the new sights and sounds somehow seem to make it all worth while.

All Nationalities There.

Wednesday, Oct. 30. We are now settled for a while. This is perhaps the most cosmopolitan city in the world just now, and one needs only to stand a moment in the principal thoroughfare to see representatives of all the nationalities, English, American, Canadian, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Turkish (prisoners of war), German (prisoners of war), Poles, Czechs and a very few French. There are all sorts and conditions of costumes in footwear, although the high boot is the common type. The American Red Cross seems to be supplying most of the refugees with clothes. These refugees appear natural as for our streets. The street types are now so incongruous that I do not notice them as I did two days ago. My western ideas the coolies and Japanese women are the most picturesque, also the new Russians, who attire themselves in the craziest of uniforms with swords. Almost all wear military cap and civies or a combination of civies and military clothes, and other combinations. The Czechs have a splendid band and a wonderful hymn, which they played at the wharf on our arrival. One has to know French for the Russian high class and Russian for the ordinary commercial transactions. I find it fairly easy to pronounce their words, but progress in learning the language is very slow.



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MILDRED GUNDERMAN, AGED SIXTEEN YEARS, CONFESSES MURDER.

Elmira, Dec. 19.—Mildred Gunderman, alias Mildred and Dolores Smith, sixteen years old of this city, today confessed to the murder of Leo Martin at Youngstown, Ohio, early last September, according to an announcement made by the police today.

The girl was taken into custody here last night on an old warrant issued in 1917 charging her with juvenile delinquency for running away from home in the fall of that year. When she returned from Youngstown last night with her father, she was turned over to the police. Martin was attached to a carnival show, the police say. Thus far the girl refuses to reveal the motive.

ONTARIO FARMERS ASK FOR RECIPROCAL TRADE WITH U. S.

Toronto, Ont., Dec. 19.—Reciprocal free trade with the United States with every form from A to Z in the demand of the United Farmers of Ontario. They will not be satisfied now with the reciprocity agreement of 1911, which affected natural products only, but want the

tariff bars swept away on manufactured articles as well, if the United States will do the same. Amid tremendous cheering they passed a resolution to that effect at their convention in Labor Temple this afternoon. And free trade with the United States is to be one of the "bright planks in the Ontario farmers' platform."

Joffre an Immortal. Paris, Dec. 19.—Marshal Joffre is now formally numbered among France's forty immortals. The victor of the Marne was made a member of the French Academy this afternoon.

Point in His Favor. "I'll take back some of the hard

things about Wagner's music," remarked Mr. Gilberry. "Even though he was a German?" "Yes, I learn from a paper Mrs. Gilberry has written for her music club that Wagner was once driven out of Germany, for showing his contempt for the German government."