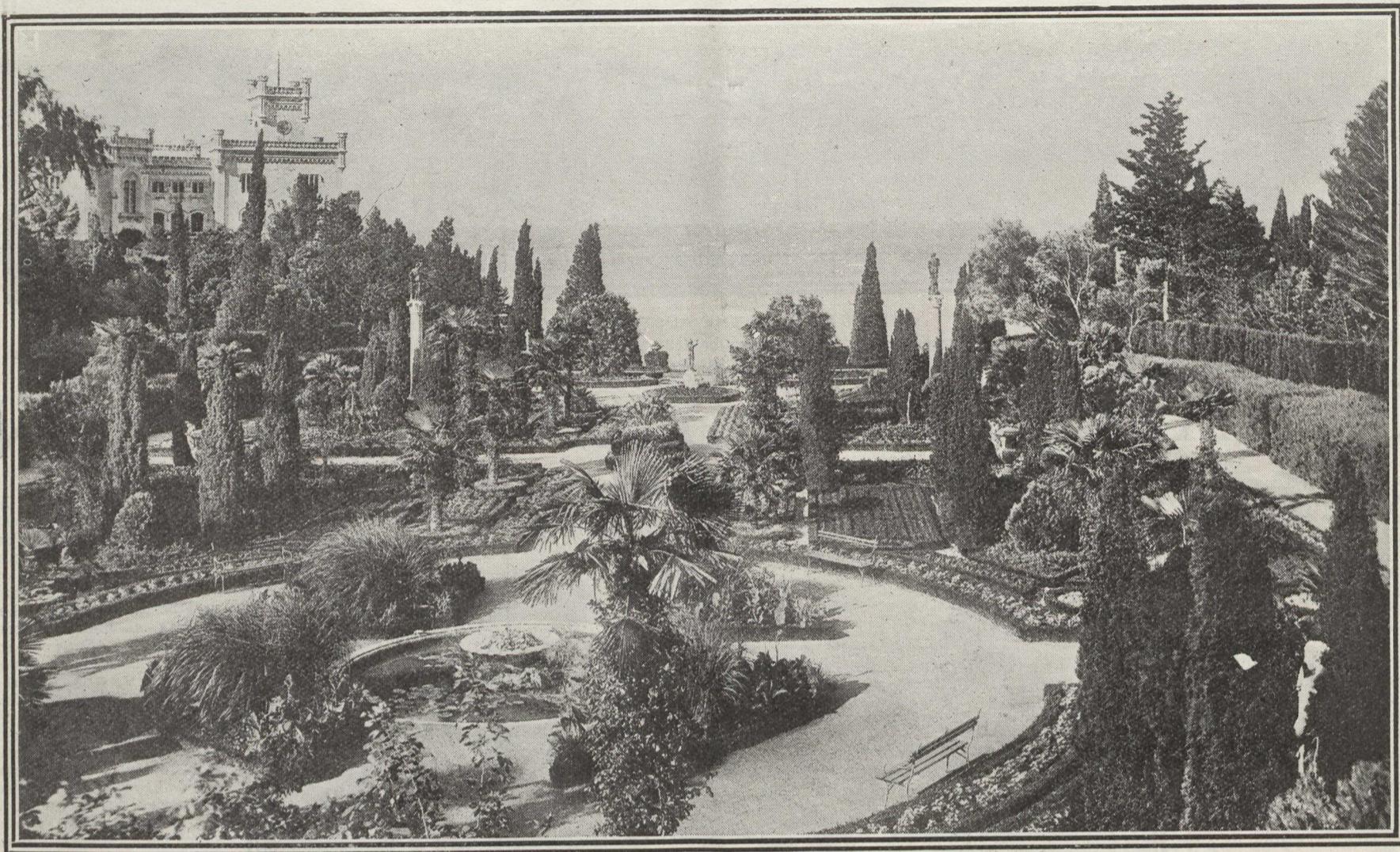


WILL WAR EFFACE THIS BEAUTY SPOT?



Trieste is the greatest port in Austria and the fourth city of the Kingdom. Of its hundred thousand people, three-fourths are Italians. Indeed, it is Italian in architecture, language and customs. For several centuries it was a free city under Hapsburg protection. Previous to that it was Venetian, as the whole

Istrian Peninsula is historically Venetian. Trieste and the Peninsula passed into Austrian hands in the Napoleonic period.

These are the Maximilian Gardens, and in the distance the Maximilian Palace overlooking the Bay. An Italian army is already knocking at the gates.

SIDELIGHTS ON KITCHENER'S ARMY

Our Special Correspondent with Kitchener's Army is Having a Unique Experience for a Canadian. The Warmer Weather and his Promotion seem to be Making him more Cheerful, and in this he Probably Reflects the Present Spirit of the Largest Citizen Army that the World has ever seen

London, May 27, 1915.

By G. M. L. BROWN
Bombardier, Ammunition Column

SINCE my last Courier letter I have travelled the length of England, observed various camps, talked with men from scores of regiments and have had ample opportunity to compare conditions in "Pleasant Vale," where I am now stationed, with those in the country at large.

As a result, I feel constrained to write, at last, my long heralded article, Kitchener's Army at its Best. And I think I can safely assert that while there may be camps less fortunately situated or less ably administered, than mine, there are scores in which conditions are equally ideal; while on the other hand none at all faintly resemble "Seabright" as I knew it in the early weeks of the year. Indeed, "Seabright" itself is to-day a veritable Elysium compared with the pest hole that I found it, though to me it is an Elysium with a distinct Stygian background. And so, with this final tribute, I shall let it fade from my memory.

From "Seabright" we were drafted to "Lighton," which is one of England's most noted watering places; and here we found to our intense delight that we were to be billeted out in well-appointed homes, with comforts, and even luxuries provided, and amply paid for, by a generous and contrite Government.

We were not the first, nor the fifteenth, such draft, I afterwards learned, to be sent from some unsanitary camp to recuperate in a seaside or mountain resort, and "Lighton" alone has received thousands of wretched, homesick recruits, to be fed and fattened and sent on their way rejoicing. "Lighton," incidentally, must itself have increased considerably in avoirdupois by the process, for several thousand soldiers in billet meant a weekly bill of several thousand pounds (the exact allowance for billeted men is, I believe, 19 shillings and threepence), which, to a city of boarding houses in an off season is not to be despised.

It was at "Lighton" that I was first selected for office work (on the promise that I might eventually resume my drills), and here I and my three hundred

comrades discovered that we had been bodily, and quite unceremoniously, transferred from the —teenth Battery to a newly-formed Ammunition Column, to which I have already referred, a transfer more conducive to safety than to honour. Let me explain:

In a Division of the British Army there are so many Brigades of Artillery, each made up of several Batteries and served by a common Ammunition Column, the task of which is to transport the shells from a line ten to fifteen miles in the rear to various points within easy radius of the guns.

But there is likewise a Divisional Ammunition Column—a sort of "also ran" affair, whose function it is to fetch the ammunition from over the green fields, far away, and gingerly deposit it at this high-water point of danger, where the Battery Column receipts for the goods and derisively speeds the parting guest! Safe? Possibly not so safe as a Yonge Street crossing at 2 a.m. on a Sabbath morning, but a perfect haven of refuge compared to—say Broadway and 42nd Street during the noon-tide scrimmage.

SUCH are the tricks of Fortune! Transferred to a secondary or cross-country steeple-chase column from the glorious —teenth Field Battery, whose original fighting complement fell almost to a man while defending the rear of our much-battered army in its heroic retreat from Mons. Never shall I forget that sorrowful little band of survivors—eleven in all, four whole in limb and seven wounded—that crept unheralded back to their home depot. And one of the seven, a pathetic little bugler, a mere lad of fourteen or fifteen, just able to crawl out into the sunshine and gaze at the prosaic, almost unreal scenes about him, the while he fitfully mused in his boyish way on the hideous inferno that had engulfed his comrades, but from which he had miraculously emerged to hobble, in aged immaturity, into a strangely misplaced manhood. This little bugler is the most pathetic victim of the war that it has yet

been my chance to encounter, but oh, if one could view the gruesome scene in its entirety, what battle-hardened war-lord could withstand the heart-rending strain.

To return, however, to "Lighton," with its luxurious billets, its sham drills, and make-believe discipline—here was a state of things that had it not been for our coughs and anaemia might well have been regarded as a travesty upon our profession. Warriors we certainly were not, but rather chocolate soldiers of a rather crude order, who haunted the tuck shops, made love-trysts in the dimly-lighted streets—before or after tattoo, it made no difference—and casually learned of the progress of the war from the concluding reels at the ubiquitous moving picture shows.

But alas and alack—likewise "My Word!"—our *dolce far niente* had an abrupt ending, for what should break out in our ranks but cerebro-spinal meningitis, alias Spotted Fever, the dread disease that many Englishmen have kindly but erroneously attributed to the coming of the First Canadian Contingent. Its origin in this case was clear, for it broke out almost simultaneously in—well, the very place I decided not to mention again—and so still further augmented the death-rate directly chargeable to overcrowding and lack of sanitation.

In our lot, three, I believe, fell victims to this new scourge, and those of us who had not been unduly exposed to infection were wrenched from our happy homes and sent packing to a neighbouring village, where, for a month, we remained in practical isolation. Ten weeks, in all, we were stationed at this dreary village, which I shall name "Queenston," and ten weeks of honest, much-needed drill they proved to be. Except for your scribe, who was appointed Chief Office Clerk with sundry responsibilities and privileges already set down in my narrative.

HERE it was that I originally essayed to write this letter, taking "Queenston" as my text, until two glaring defects began to obtrude upon my vision—first, the contentions among our officers, most of whom, I regret to say, are from overseas, and