

## Heroes and Historic Landmarks of the Oldest Colony.

Address Delivered by Mr. H. F. Shortis in 1915.

The following address, delivered before the Star of the Sea Association by Mr. H. F. Shortis just at the time when in 1915 the Nfld. Regiment was receiving its baptism at Gallipoli, will be found of great interest, now that attention has been directed to our historic associations.

"A wise nation preserves its records, gathers up its mementoes, decorates the graves of its illustrious dead, repairs the great public structures, and fosters national pride, and love of country by perpetual reference to the sacrifices and stories of the past."

(Hon. Joseph Howe.)

As a rule a lecturer standing on the platform prefaces his discourse with the somewhat stereotyped and cryptic remark, "I feel somewhat timid in coming before such a large, intelligent and discriminating audience." Now I do not feel that way at all. The larger the audience I see before me, the greater I am pleased that more of our people will hear for themselves the stories of our country and her heroes. The more intelligent the better, because I shall have no difficulty in having my words understood, and the more discriminating they are, the greater is the hope that my little errors or omissions will be passed over with kindness and consideration, or, to use a familiar expression, that I will be "let down easy."

You must not think that I am going to treat you to a tornado of eloquence, or an archipelago of figures. I propose to address you in the good old Anglo-Saxon tongue, and tell you the stories of our countrymen as handed down to me, and in part witnessed by myself.

The real history of this country has yet to be written. It is true that we have some histories, which are of valuable importance, but they are chiefly taken from documentary evidence and refer to the Church, Courts of Justice, responsible Government, Lawyers, Politicians, etc., etc., but very little reference is given to the people of this country, who after all made it what it is to-day. To write a History of a country, we must write the history of its people, and to do this we must go in amongst the people themselves and make them talk. It is at the family fireside we shall hear the traditions of our country, and is not tradition the very keystone of history? These traditions are handed down from generation to generation, and the people of the outposts particularly, owing to their environments, and most retentive memories are full of tradition, handed down by those who were perhaps participants in the events themselves, or received an account of them from their ancestors, who took as active part in them. These traditions if collected and handed down in print, would not only fill many large volumes, but very interesting ones also. And this is not to be wondered at. Look at Ireland and Scotland particularly, as well as England! May it not be said that they are surrounded by a halo of tradition. Documentary information is good enough sometimes to the historian, but it often happens that it is not reliable. Those who peruse the documents took good care not to be too charitable in their remarks to life in a less prosperous condition to those, and at the same time left no means untried to minimize their own faults and glorify themselves; but the people are the judges, and time separates the good from the bad. If we wish to hear of the dangers, hardships, adventures and patriotism of our people, we must go amongst them. In the present crisis, to their credit be it said, several of our business people have gone amongst our people at considerable expense and inconvenience to themselves, and explained the true condition of affairs, and the great reason there is for them to rally to the standard in defence of King and Country and Empire. Many of these poor people have never seen a soldier,

and know very little about armies, still I maintain that a spirit of patriotism remains smouldering in the people of the outposts. It needs only to be fanned into flame by our leading speakers going amongst them, and telling them the true conditions of affairs during this terrible war, and convincing them that their very liberty, their homes and families, and their country, are even the life of the Empire itself is at stake before the march of the Teutonic barbarians, despots and vile murderers.

Here in St. John's and many of the outposts, are the sound of the first cannon had died away on the fields of Belgium, the crust of our selfishness and indifference was broken, and a flame of duty, loyalty, and patriotism leaped forth never before witnessed in British's Oldest Colony. Delegates were sent to the chief outposts and harangued our countrymen to rally to the Union Jack, even as the Athenian orators of old harangued their countrymen from the hillsides, which look down upon the blue waters in the Bay of Salamis. And they met with a ready response, and yet there is much to be done. Britain and her King calls her sons to rally to the standard, both on sea and land. Will Newfoundlanders prove recreant to their duty?

Patriotism next to religion is the noblest sentiment planted in the human breast. Ancient Rome attained the meridian of her glory through the patriotism of her sons, and Greece, which in turn with Rome, attained the proud title of Mistress of the World, climbed to that envied distinction by the inborn love of country, which was the birthright of her people. If we go down the vast corridors of the ages, we shall find this was the stimulating agency, the fulcrum upon which rested the lever that raised the nations of the earth into prominence, and gave to the world its refinement and civilization. It was the same spirit of patriotism that enabled the heroes who commanded, and those who fought under them, to withstand and capture the supposed invincible Armada of the proud Spaniard, and gave to Britain the undisputed title of "Mistress of the Seas."

It was the same spirit that hurried back the legions of Napoleon at Waterloo, and consigned him to the Island of St. Helena, and it was the same spirit of patriotism that was to be found in Russia, Afghanistan, South Africa and elsewhere in more modern times, and which culminated in the formation of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen, of which Newfoundland forms an important part, and of which we are all so proud to-day. Newfoundlanders are ever ready to give practical proof of their loyalty and patriotism. The fires of liberty and equal rights, taken from the temples of our Motherland by our ancestors, shine out as brightly and as steadily in the Colonies of the Empire to-day, as they did in England, Ireland and Scotland in the past, and in no country more brilliantly and more steadily than in British's Oldest Colony, Newfoundland, whose sons are ever ready to support Britain's King and Britain's flag. We are proud of our ancestors of English, Irish and Scotch stock, and when the emblems of their nationality, the Rose, Shamrock and Thistle are united for any one grand object, as they are to-day, as never before, they can snap their fingers at all competitors, and uphold the honour of King, country and Union Jack, whether it be amongst the roar and smoke from cannon upon land, or sea, or in the peaceful pursuits of Commerce or Science.

England's stalwarts bore it afar. Scots have raised it high, Cambria's warriors side by side With Erin's went to die.

They built the Empire far and wide, Where Liberty had no lack, Where Freedom and Truth may safely reside.

In the shade of the Union Jack.

In giving this lecture about our heroes, I find that there is material for half a dozen lectures. We have had so many heroes that I find it necessary to confine myself to a very few words about each, and keep as close as I can about our Military and Naval heroes. I could name scores of heroes among our old Sealing Captains, who risked their lives for their men, who by their pluck and ingenuity turned impending disaster into success.

We have had Governors here who reckoned not for their own promotion, but pointed out to the British Government in spite of their instructions that the desire of Newfoundlanders was the right policy to follow. Such Governors we will always remember as our heroes. Governor Max, who was here in 1881, was one of the immortal Six Hundred. Governor Duckworth was the great hero of the Dardanelles. Governor Greaves was another mighty hero of Great Britain. We have had many heroes among our Merchants, Politicians and Min-

isters. Men who have fought as only heroes can for the good of their country, and gained the estimable boon of Responsible Government. Men who rid this country of that incubus, the French Shore Question, and the exaggerated claims of United States Treaty rights. Heroes who fought for the Bait Act. Our village Hampden, who dared the British Commander to tear down a Lobster Factory. Although these men stood almost alone at the moment, their courage and heroism will never be forgotten by an appreciative people. But let us start from the beginning. What a hero John Cabot was to come out here in search of unknown lands? What a hero Sir Humphrey Gilbert was, well and truly called the Father of the British Empire beyond the seas. We recognize his heroic feelings when in danger he refused to be separated from his brave comrades on that little Ten (10) ton pinnace in which he was crossing the Atlantic.

Here is another hero, Capt. Richard Whitbourne, who spent the best part of his life in Newfoundland, and who tells us that he had been here so often that the country was as familiar to him as the English Channel. We know he was here in 1580, as master of a ship. In 1583 he was an eye-witness at St. John's when Sir Humphrey Gilbert took possession of the country in the name of Queen Elizabeth. In the year 1588 he served under the Lord Admiral as Captain of his own ship, fitted out at his own expense against the Spanish Armada. He was too modest to mention his own exploits on that renowned occasion, but there can be no doubt that he did render valuable services to His Queen and country, for he tells us a record of them was made in the Book of the Whitehall Court, and we do know that a recompense was made to him by the Privy Council for expenses incurred on his own ship, also two other ships and a pinnace, so that the charge of victuals and the wages of the men employed should not be burdensome to him. That is a hero we should all be proud of, and emulate in every way. His only reward is the imperishable glory of being recorded as one of the saviours of England.

During the year or two after the Spanish Armada, about 800 Spanish and Dutch vessels, were destroyed or captured by the English. What a time of fighting it must have been for these old sailors frequenting our coast. They were just as anxious for a fight with the Spanish Dons as they were for their dinner.

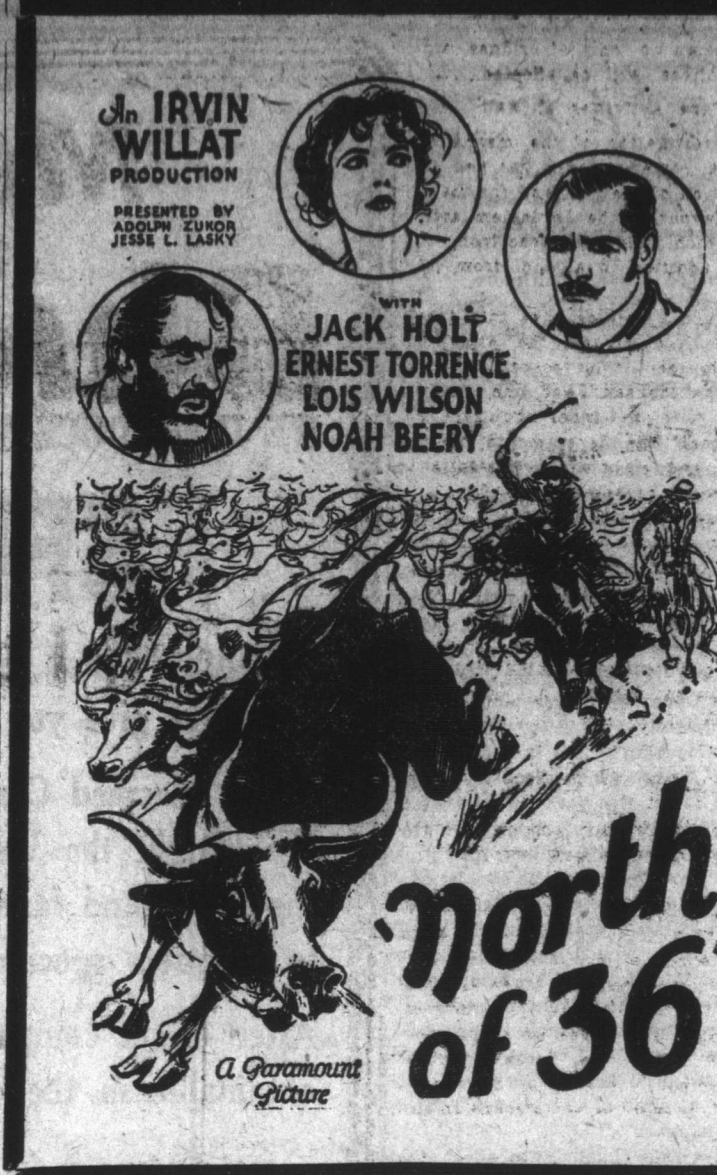
Sir Walter Raleigh tells us in his records that in the year 1594 the Spanish Government sent three men-of-war here to capture the Newfoundland fleet, which was then one hundred fishing vessels. Raleigh wrote the Premier of England, Lord Cecil, that if this danger befell the Newfoundland fleet, it would be the greatest calamity that could befall England. It shows what an important factor our Newfoundland trade was at that time; and the Spaniards recognized the vital point to hit England's ascendancy. In 1601 the Spaniards made another attempt to intercept the Newfoundland fleet. In 1603 the French made their first attempt to destroy our Newfoundland shipping, and did damage to the extent of £240. We can readily see that Newfoundland was the cock-pit for fighting between these nationalities for many years before and after the launching of the Invincible Armada.

In 1610 John Guy and his heroic band of settlers came to Newfoundland, and his spirit in denouncing and even-land, and a new era started in the tually driving Peter Easton and his practical crews from Newfoundland waters.

In 1620 we hear of a combat between the English and Portuguese at Petty Harbor.

In 1625, 27 Newfoundland ships and 200 persons were captured by Turkish pirates. This wasn't as bad as Peter Easton, who took 300 men in one year from Conception Bay, but you can imagine what fighting there must have been, and how many heroes laid down their lives.

In 1628 Lord Baltimore writes to the British Government from Ferryland, that on August 25th, a French Admiral with three ships and 400 well armed men captured two of his ships then fishing at Cape Broyle, where



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der, and the British flag was hoisted on the Citadel. Kirk placed his brother in charge, and returned to England with the good tidings. Quebec remained a British possession for several years, but was handed back to France during the infamous reign of Charles II.

(To be continued.)

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