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Old Time Seal Killing

Some Remarkable Events--Interesting Stories of a Generation Ago

By James Murphy

When a bill, relating to the seal-fishery was introduced into the Assembly in 1891, asking for the modification of that one time lucrative industry, the Hon. Dr. Skelton, of the Upper House, remarked that 50,000 seals taken by handsmen would be of more benefit to the people generally than the largest voyage ever yet taken by the steamers. There was more truth than poetry in the remarks of the hon. gentleman, who, I am glad to remark, is still in the flesh. Many a man in days gone by had built up a lucrative business, and many families were rescued from the iron grip of poverty by the will of an All-wise Providence, who permitted the wealth of the ice-floes to come within their reach. The spring of 1841, thousands of seals "struck in" near the land, the Methodist clergyman at Grate's Cove succeeding in killing and sculping nine and hauling them to the shore "like a man." Four springs afterwards twenty thousand seals, were hauled ashore by the men of Bonavista, while it was computed that about 20,000 more were caught by the inhabitants of the Bay generally. One spring the ice was so tightly packed against the land that the seals came ashore as they could find no means to get through the ice. It is said that a number of men killed 1,500 seals in the bushes where they had gathered the said spring.

The spring preceding the fire of June 9th, 1846, seals were numerous off the Narrows of St. John's. A vessel named "William Warren," called after her owner, the grandfather of William Pearce, Esq., First Clerk of the Department of Public Works, contrived to get a load about five miles from Cape Spear. Two well-known pilots, Messrs. Cantwell and Vinicombe, boarded the "William Warren," James Carroll, master. They informed him of a body of seals close by. Carroll gave orders to his crew to get on the ice, one part of them went ahead killing, the other kept sculping.

The residents of Notre Dame Bay "struck it rich" in 1862. The spring of that year over one hundred thousand seals were hauled ashore by landmen. It is known in sealing parlance as the "First Green Bay Spring." Some say "the spring that the women and dogs made forty pounds a man." Women took part in the tussle, and did noble work. Knives were very rare and it is recorded that a man gave another a seal worth two dollars and fifty cents for a sheath knife. The "Second Green Bay Spring" was the spring of 1864, when a number of vessels were lost. My father was out that spring in a Harbor Grace vessel and he didn't get back to port until well up in June. All their fat then "run to oil." This spring first saw steam prosecuting the seal-fishery. Two steamers were fitted out at Dundee, Polynia and Camperdown. The former broke her propeller, got one seal, and brought in the crews of the Roxana and Capt. Peter Cummings' vessel.

Desertion prevailed at St. John's. Hundreds of destitute sealers, who had lost their ships, were here seeking employment. Soup kitchens were established to help the starving citizens.

Mutiny in Przemysl Before Surrender

Petrograd, March 23.—Mutiny broke out in the starving garrison at Przemysl, and General Kusmanek surrendered to the Russians to prevent a disgraceful revolt, according to dispatches to the war office this afternoon.

On Sunday afternoon the Austrian commander ordered 20,000 of his troops to participate in a savage attack upon the Russian lines on the south. His object was a desperate dash that would cut a gap through the line of the besiegers and enable at least part of the garrison to fight its way to safety.

Several units refused to move. Officers dashed back and forth along the Austrian lines, threatening to execute the mutineers. They stood their ground, however, and were joined by other groups who threatened to march out and lay down their arms to the Russians unless they were given food. In a futile effort to arouse his troops to one last dayonet charge, the Austrian commander issued a most stirring appeal. A copy of his last order, wired here afternoon, follows:

Commander's Final Appeal

"Heroes of the Austrian army. I now announce my last summons. The honor of our army and our country demands that I lead you to pierce with points of steel the iron circle of the enemy. Then we shall march on until we join a nearby Austrian army. We have shared our last provisions. We must open the way. We shall open it!"

General Kusmanek called a conference of his commanders. At a meeting that lasted until nearly midnight it was decided to surrender. Hasty efforts were made to destroy the inner forts before the Russians entered the city.

The war office today insisted that the Russian force investing Przemysl was "never large and composed of territorials and reservists," but gave out no figures. It was stated that the number of Austrians captured when the city fell "exceeded our expectations," but no exact figures were given.

Following a night of hysterical demonstration the Petrograd populace continued to parade the

SOME TIPS FOR NEW TOMMIES

Little Hints That Should Be of Use To All Recruits

Always carry a tin-opener with you.

Hold your breath for a second just as you fire.

It is very inadvisable to borrow caps or helmets.

When passing a military funeral, always salute the coffin.

Don't forget to swing your arms while you are marching.

Always place the butt of your rifle in the same position on your shoulder.

Practice "sweeping" the cartridges from the clip in one movement only.

Always wash new woollen socks before wearing them—if you want to avoid blisters.

Remember that careless use of the "gauze" will wear out the bore of your rifle sooner than anything else.

Should your pull-through break while in the rifle, don't try to remove it yourself. Take it direct to the armorer.

Bring your right elbow well to the fore when aiming your rifle, and a better hollow will be formed in the shoulder to receive the butt.

Never place flannelette in the third loop of your pull-through. That loop is only to be used to remove the pull-through if it should jam.

Get one of your lady friends to fit cotton neckbands to your woollen shirts. Cotton won't shrink, and so your collar won't half strangle you after it has been washed.

You will find a woollen cap and a woollen muffler will come in handy at night. If you haven't room for both, take the muffler, as then you can use it for either purpose.

Always keep the "lines" clean while you are camping. Regard the throwing of waste matter on the ground as a crime. It really is, for the waste soon decays, and may cause disease.

One of the best methods of cleaning cooking utensils is to wipe them with a tuft of turf and water, for turf is a splendid cleanser. Never leave food sticking to pans, for it soon decays.

When you are given a piece of tough fatigue work that necessitates you rolling up your sleeves, always roll them up the wrong way—that is, turn the cuffs "outside in." They will stay up longer this way.

Be sure to take some extra buttons with you. Use the usual sew on ones. Patent buttons are less likely to stand the strain which will be imposed upon them when you are marching with heavy equipment.

Indigestion is frequently caused by bad teeth. Bad teeth cannot masticate the food properly, and so indigestion follows as a matter of course. Every soldier should buy a tooth brush, and use it well. Clean the teeth after every meal, and especially at night.

When firing at 100 yards range, aim—

One foot in front of a man walking.

Two feet in front of a man trotting.

Three feet in front of a horseman galloping.

Four feet in front of a horseman galloping.

These distances should be increased or lessened proportionately for different ranges.

If Russia had gone in for the good-roads movement the Germans would probably be in Warsaw now.—Charleston News and Courier.

streets today, waving the allied flags. Crowds formed in front of the newspaper offices singing hymns.

Austrian Spy On Canadian Transport

Through the watchfulness of the cruiser Essex a spy was caught on the Canadian transport Megantic, which arrived in Liverpool March 8, with the 22nd Battalion of Artillery, recruited at Kingston, and containing a number of men from Toronto. The culprit captured was an Austrian, who when the steamer was in Queenstown harbor, signalled with an electric torch through a port hole. The treachery was discovered by men on the battleship, who, in turn signalled to the Megantic and the offender was placed in custody.

The incident is mentioned in letters which have come to hand from the artillerymen, among them being one from Gunner Albert Patrick, who, writing on the Megantic on the date of the boat's arrival, states:

"The 22nd Battery and colors have arrived safely at Liverpool after an exciting trip across from Queenstown in which we were surrounded by cruisers and torpedo destroyers. We stole out of Queenstown under cover of darkness, leaving the Missanaie and Southland at Queenstown. I believe they were very anxious about our cargo, as well as the troops aboard. But, anyhow, Britannia still rules the waves, and we got here safe. The boys are all well.

How Spy Was Caught

"There was one spy on board, but he did not belong to the artillery. From investigation, it appears that he was caught in the act of signalling with a small electric torchlamp out of a porthole, by the cruiser Essex, in the early hours of the morning of the 4th of March. The Essex signalled the Megantic, and they caught the spy red-handed. He is believed to be an Austrian, and was caught at his game just as we were rounding the 'Old head of Kinsale,' just outside the harbor of Queenstown. More news later."

Major W. R. Riordan, a native of Belleville, commanding the 22nd Battery, writing on board the transport, states:

"We have had a very fine winter's voyage across the Atlantic so far, and expect to be in England Friday or Saturday, March 5th or 6th. We left Halifax Tuesday morning at 8.20 on February 2nd. Just before leaving port I received 12 dozen cholera belts from the Woman's Patriotic Association of Madoc, for my men. This will enable me to give one to each of my men, an article most acceptable to all."

A LITTLE MORE LIGHT DESIRABLE

Mr. Lloyd George perhaps did not throw as much light upon the result of his negotiations with the Finance Ministers of France and Russia as was desirable. But he said enough to make it fairly clear to the well informed what has really been agreed upon. He told the House of Commons on Monday that the first practical suggestion the three Ministers had to consider was that of a joint loan. They rejected the suggestion on the ground that the credit of the three great states is not equal; and that therefore, it would be a costly, and even a wasteful proceeding. At the moment, at all events, the credit of the United Kingdom is the best in the world. Only a few weeks ago she was able to borrow 350 millions sterling, the largest sum ever raised in a lump by any government, at a rate which, including everything, such as repayment at par and the like, did not exceed 4 per cent. Where as Russia at the beginning of this week raised 10 millions sterling of one-year Treasury bills at 5 1/2 per cent. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that Great Britain can borrow much more cheaply than Russia. Similarly, it would be easy to show that as things stand at the moment she can likewise borrow more cheaply than France. There seems, therefore, a strong argument in favor of the decision arrived at by the Ministers. While however, a joint loan for the three great Allies was put aside, it was agreed that advances should be made to the small states. The three Ministers decided that each of the great allied countries should contribute a portion of every loan made to the small States who were either in with us now or propose to come so later on; that the responsibility should be divided between the three countries and that at an opportune moment a *fatale casu* should be deated to cover the advances either already made or to be made to those countries outside the three great Allied European countries.—London Statist.



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