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STORY OF THE GREAT RACE BETWEEN THE PARIS AND TYNE CREWS, AND THE TRAGIC DEATH OF RENFORTH

How 15,000 People Travelled to Renforth and Cheered the St. John Crew on to Victory

A Wonderful Scene as the Race Was Begun, With Every Vantage Point Occupied By Eager Spectators—The Tragic Death of Renforth and Its Effect on the Citizens Who at First Thought He Had "Sold Out"—Those Who Officiated.

The following account of the great race on the Kennebecasis river on August 23, 1871, fifty years ago next Tuesday, between the Paris crew of St. John and the Tyne crew of England, and of the death of Renforth, is taken from The Telegraph of August 23, 1871. It is well worth reading:

As early as 3 o'clock yesterday morning there was life and bustle in the streets that indicated the coming event. Many had been up all night, making music in the streets, and others had arisen from bed to be among the first to reach the scene of action. At 4 o'clock a crowd had collected at the depot and the train left with a load of passengers. At half past another load left for the scene. By this time many vehicles were en route, filled with people. At five the darkness had given place to a cold gray mist, and the train was literally packed, the people going over the sides of the cars in their haste. The road between the city and Riverside was dotted with teams, the drivers urging their steeds forward as if fearing to be late at a barouche. The scene at the Kennebecasis was a remarkable one. The railway from Torryburn cove to a point a mile and a half distant was covered with a motley mass of humanity, there being many women among them. Along the beach a thin skirmish struggled, and pickets were visible as outlooks, many a careless boy or ambitious man being perched among the branches. Small parties sat around lunch baskets and ate their breakfast although the air of the morning and their ride had given them keen appetites. Old women dealt out apples and gingerbread from stands along the roadside fences. Carriages came rattling in, trains arrived with thousands, the regiments on the rail became brigades on the embankment, and these became whole corps d'armée on the entire river front. The grand stand and the other erections were gay with bright colors of ladies' garments. Under the alders, their heads resting on mossy stones or pieces of wood, lay many a peaceful sleeper who drank in long draughts of "nature's sweet restorer" in the utmost placidity. Little boys ventured out on the water on rafts constructed with much haste and little engineering skill. Rowboats plied on the river, and sailboats passed to and fro. The fleet of woodboats at anchor kept up their sails, and yachts glided gracefully back and forth. The fawn had arrived from Fredericton at an early hour, and was anchored in the stream. Tugboats, steamers, and woodboats constantly arrived and took up positions in the line, their decks covered with people. A long line of small boats were fastened to a boom stretched away from the judges' boat and bands of music on board the steamers discoursed music that was certainly not sweet as heard across the waters.

As the hour of seven approached the faces of the throng became anxious. All were eager to see the contest, and there was just enough breeze and ripple to render it uncertain. Mr. Jones, the referee, was seen wending his way along the beach with a very grave countenance. To all questions he answered as one not having authority. At seven the breeze died away, the sun shone out from the mist and blended the expectant mass of human beings, the dresses and banners, with the tints of the woods and fields, and photographed a picture on the brain of every beholder that will long remain undimmed. All who were present did not behold it, however. The cause that made such a scene possible absorbed the attention of most of the spectators, and in straining to catch a glimpse of those about to contest for the championship of the world, they overlooked all the loveliness and glory that the restlessness of humanity and the repose of nature con-

spired to produce. Weatherwise people looked at the fleeting mist, sniffed the air, shook their heads and said that a breeze would soon come, and then anxious wishes were expressed for the start to be made before it should come. What an uplifting of faces there was in that vast throng when the Tyne men paddled out from the shore. The hearts of all were stirred. There were no indifferent ones in that multitude. All were hoping, praying for the success of their favorites. The sleepers aroused themselves as quickly as though cannons had been fired near them. The boys climbed higher in the trees, and those who had been sitting stood. When the boats were side by side how the people were excited. The maidens allowed the arms of their protectors to encircle them without regard to the publicity of the occasion, the timid forgot to guard his pocketbook, the pickpocket forgot to steal and the old ladies mounted their stands, regardless of the gingerbread trodden underfoot. When the pink shirts showed in advance, what a wave of sound arose from the excited throng and echoed among the hills! When clear water was seen between the stern of the St. John and the bow of the Queen Victoria, while the rapid stroke of the Tynesiders showed they were doing their best, how the anxiety of the people changed to gladness, and voices and hats went up for joy! How the wise and foreseeing individual, who has so fine a faculty for planning villany for others, poked his neighbor in the ribs and said: "I told you so. A gun game. Halifax will tell the story. Renforth has sold out." How the man who had for weeks been deprecating the qualifications of our men and toadying the Tynesiders, appealed to all to bear him witness that he had been sure of our boys winning all along! How the people who had been so sure that they would really wear their limb from limb for fragments to keep as memorials of the day! And then there was the scramble for the cars, the people as eager to get away as they had been to come, and all under the impression that one train ought to take away as many as seven trains had brought, no rest for the soles of their feet. The steamers and woodboats, and yachts and canoes were soon in motion and, as the breeze had freshened considerably, the scene was a lively one. People cheered everywhere and shouted themselves hoarse. Joy reigned supreme, except in the small circle gathered around the dying athlete. The others were ignorant of his fate, or their minds would have been hushed.

Now we shall endeavor to describe the race itself, the forty minute struggle that opened so brilliantly and had so melancholy termination.

Preparing for the Contest.

The night mist still nestled amongst the trees as both crews rose about half-past four, and, donning their ordinary clothes, started out for a brisk walk in the vicinity of their respective quarters, just as grey twilight was merging into day. They looked well, and the likeness of Renforth's eye and his fine condition were remarked on by many who met the English quintette. Both crews breakfasted at about the same hour and spent the time until a little after six in talking with their friends. Then they began to look to matters more immediately connected with the struggle so soon to come off. Mr. James Shackhouse, umpire on the part of the St. John men, had remained at their quarters all night, and he, with the referee, Hon. Thomas R. Jones, accompanied them to the shore and on board the official tug, and their boat, the St. John, was rowed out by Robert McLaren, their spare man, and Mr. James Belyea. The tug was run up to position, outside the outer starting buoy, and the St. John crew and their friends awaited the appearance of the Englishmen.

At three minutes past seven o'clock the Renforth crew were ferried to their starting stage, and when they were placed on it, Bright, the spare man, paddled the Queen Victoria out to them. Renforth got in first after putting his oar through the rowlock and took his seat, the boat being steadied by Bright; Kelley took his seat next, followed by Chambers, Percy getting down to his place about the same time. They all had on white guernseys, and Bright and Chambers wore blue caps. Renforth wore a brown American driving cap, and Kelley's cap was an old one, originally blue, but somewhat faded. They put off at eight minutes past seven o'clock, and at once paddled across to the starting points, taking up a position about fifty yards ahead of the official steamer. Many on the shore who had not seen the St. John crew's boat or recognized the men on the tug, began to ask: "Where is the Paris crew?" "Why are they not here?" etc.

"Gentlemen, said Renforth to the Paris crew on the tug, "are you ready?" "Yes," came promptly from the St. John men as, at sixteen minutes past seven, the St. John boat was put into the water, and the crew, wearing pink shirts and caps, got in quickly. At this time the wind, which had been blowing very lightly seemed to increase to about a three knot breeze, but it died away again and the river was almost perfectly smooth at twenty-eight minutes after seven. The Englishmen had taken off their guernseys and caps, and as they sat upright in their boat they looked the personification of muscular development. The St. John men bared their heads but kept on their pink shirts. They sat square up and the countenance of each was firm, if not grim, in its expression. St. John won the toss and chose the outside, and the boats were backed up to their respective buoys.

"Now, give us the word," said Fulton, "the sooner the better," and he, as well as the others of the St. John quartette showed impatience to be away. Both boats, however, were slightly out of position, and they were ordered back. When they again ceased moving the St. John boat still had an advantage of six inches.

"Back your boat a little, Fulton," said Mr. Jones, and the St. John men moved to the desired position.

"Gentlemen, are you ready?" said Mr. Jones.

"Ready," came from Fulton and Renforth simultaneously, and the orblades of the eight men sank slowly in the water.

"GO!"

"Go!" was pronounced very sharply, and with distinctness, by Mr. Jones, at exactly thirty-four minutes past seven o'clock, and eight of the best oarsmen that ever manned a boat surged back, their craft springing away like arrows under their powerful stroke. Such a magnificent sight as the two boats presented for the first two hundred yards has seldom, if ever, been witnessed in aquatic life. Fulton had struck at forty-four, and Renforth at forty-two, at the first, but Renforth settled down a little at the end of that distance, and had not gained on St. John. Soon Renforth started, but St. John had begun to draw ahead inch by inch. A quarter of a mile up the course and St. John was half a length ahead. Still on, and clear water was shown between the stern of the St. John and the bow of the English boat, and when half a mile had been covered, Fulton was sweeping off at forty-one strokes to the minute, and Price was steering a beautifully straight course. The other boat was taking a rather sweeping course, as if determined to close the widening gap. It was of no avail, however, for the St. John men were thoroughly on their mettle and the gap was widening, when Renforth turned his head and giving a look at his opponent's boat, dropped his oar, threw up an arm and would have fallen overboard had he not been caught by Kelley, who supported him, while Percy

and Chambers rowed the shell ashore. Cries of "fraud," "shame," "sold out," "where's his pluck?" and similar expressions were heard on all sides, and amid the most intense excitement the St. John boat sped on. The race from that moment was a bit of magnificent rowing, the stake boat being reached in eighteen minutes, official time, and the whole race accomplished in 39 minutes 26.3 seconds.

The scene at this stage of the proceedings, on the steamers and other craft, can hardly be described.

Those on the judges' boat shared in the excitement of the throng. Mr. Oldham danced around the stand, exclaiming that his crew had to run ashore to escape a foul. A row nearly took place on account of John Bright withdrawing money he was putting up on the Tyne, and Mr. Jones was obliged to forbid any person to interfere in discussions between the umpires and himself.

Another scene was occasioned at the finish. The owners of small boats, seeming to take a clear course of no consequence since the race was decided, rowed and sailed across the course, creating the greatest excitement on the judges' boat. The referee shouted until he was hoarse, and other interested parties stormed wildly.

"Who's got a pistol to shoot the wretch with?" said one. "Will they keep off?" said another. The referee then heeded two men to enter a gig and row out to some boats and get them out of the way. Mr. Oldham, Tyne umpire, objected to the boat leaving, and said the referee had no authority to send it off. Mr. Jones yielded the point, and the boats kept encroaching and the men on the judges' boat kept frantically yelling to them to keep off. One or two of the intruders came within stone's throw, and a shower of pebbles and lumps of coal made them clear the track in short order.

The breeze that sprang up just before the start had considerably freshened, and the water was far from smooth. When

within half a mile of the judges' boat, Fulton increased his stroke to forty-four and came in amidst the wildest cheering from shore, embankment, tree tops, woodboats, steamers, mast heads and small boats. The official time as announced by Dr. Walker, and recorded by Dr. Allison, was 39 minutes, 26.3 seconds. The men were cool and fresh looking, not one of them exhibiting signs of fatigue, their breathing being as regular as before they started.

"What aided Renforth? What did he break?" asked a dozen voices.

"He has broken his heart," answered Ross, "because he was beaten." "How far did you lead them?" cried all in breath, as they patted the backs of their men with more energy than gentleness. "Let me dress first," said Fulton, "and then I'll talk." After the men got dressed they passed around their hats and took up a collection for the Tyne crew. On reaching the shore they were borne through the throng, clapped on the back, hugged, and otherwise made to feel the joy inspired by their triumphs.

When the Paris Crew had drawn away about two lengths in advance of the Renforth Crew, Kelley relates that he said to Renforth: "Now, Jim, for a doze—meaning an extra spurt such as had served them a good turn at and near the beginning of the race. Kelley, observing no visible response, spoke to him a second time in the same terms, only to hear his comrade say in a half smothered voice, "Harry, Harry." Meantime Renforth's body suddenly inclined forward, and immediately after he fell back into Kelley's arms, asking to be rowed to the shore, and sinking into a swoon. The boat was speedily turned shoreward, and taken as quickly as circumstance would permit, to a point a few yards above the Railway wharf. The shouting thousands poured down over the railway embankment and the beach to meet the unfortunate men, some shouting for victory, while others gave expression that the race had been sold, and others expressed heartfelt sympathy for the Englishmen. Mr. Walton, of the Newcastle Chronicle, descended from the carriage in which he and our reporter were keeping abreast of the race and hurried to the water's edge.

The man appeared to be dead as he was carried up and across the railway and put in a carriage on the main road. Percy and another friend or two entered the coach in which he was placed, and they were driven in great haste to Torryburn. Renforth meantime lying in a state of insensibility. His appearance in the coach was appalling, and his face and his naked arms and shoulders presented a death-like pallor. Having arrived at the Claremont House a few minutes past 8 o'clock he was carried to his room and placed upon a bed. A messenger was immediately despatched for medical aid, and in less than fifteen minutes Dr. Johnston entered the room. Meantime what a few minutes before had been a perfect picture of human strength lay apparently all lifeless and cold. The breathing was slight and his pulse seemed chilled in both heart and limb. Scarcely had Dr. Johnston commenced an examination of the patient when Dr. McLaren arrived. By this time, how-

ever, he had so far revived as to be able to speak. He was known to have frequently suffered from epileptic fits, and being asked if it was one of these, he responded firmly in the negative, "It was no fit this time, and he added: "I'll tell you what it is"—but his sentence was cut short by his sufferings. He tossed himself about upon the bed, complaining chiefly of distress in the region of the chest and showing signs of difficulty in breathing. Dr. McLaren ordered the rubbing of his spine and extremities continued and an increased supply of fresh air. A cerous, almost transparent, liquid oozed from his mouth, and this as time went on became slightly tinged with blood. A little brandy and water so cleared his mouth, that again he spoke audibly. He assured the bystanders that he had not long to live, and soon pit-said: "Good-bye, Harry; good-bye, boys." These, with a few interlarded utterances, which seemed to refer to the sad mishap and to his friends across the water, were his last words. He once or twice subsequently gave tokens of his desire not to be disturbed by the rubbing of his cold feet, hands and limbs; but the difficulty in breathing so rapidly increased, that his own assurances of his speedy end were but too painfully evident.

Scarcely had the doctors reached the Claremont House before crowds of anxious persons clustered about the premises eager to hear what was the matter. Dr. McLaren soon assured those about him that pulmonary apoplexy or congestion of the lungs was the cause of all the trouble. The doctor tried bleeding first in the right arm, but with only limited success in that quarter—a very few thick, ink drops slowly trickling from the punctured vein. Two similar experiments, but with more avail, were then tried on the left arm; but bleeding, and warm flannels, and fresh air were all in vain. From about half past eight o'clock he sank very rapidly and at a quarter before nine the great oarsman breathed his last, if indeed he can be said to have much as breathed at all during the last six or eight minutes that other signs of lingering life were perceptible. The scenes of Renforth's precarious condition during the throngs outside the house were mingled feelings of doubt and sadness; but the bustle of the place subsided into painful silence when Dr. McLaren's appalling announcement of his death was made. Those thousands who but a few minutes before gave demonstrations of joy at the victory which then was sure—for the old and trusted four, were now shaken as a bolt from the blackest of clouds; and their next anxiety was for a last look at the angular features of a last form of the great Tyne champion.

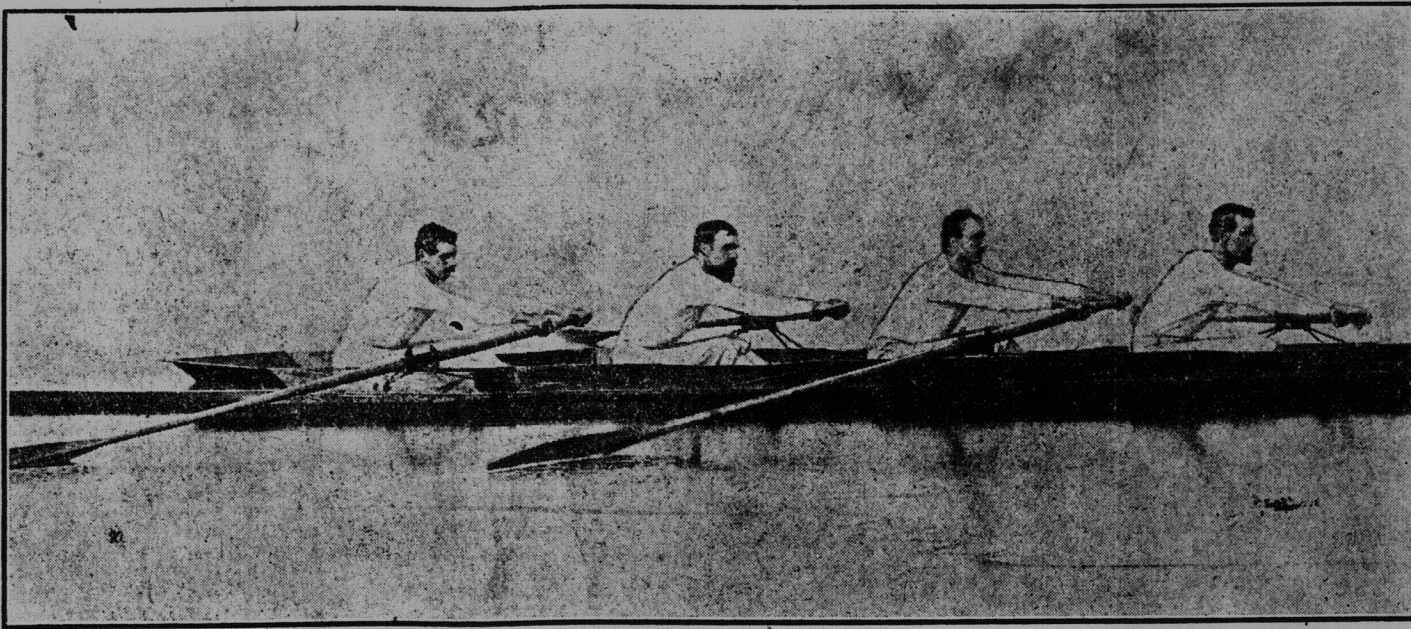
We cannot depict the scene within doors. The surviving three—namely, four—seemed to have suddenly parted with a very brother, while their demonstrations of grief were almost rivalled by the warm-hearted Englishmen and not less sympathetic colonists by whom in that sad hour they were surrounded. The wife of yesterday whose loving lines the last mail had brought to the champion, was now in one short hour an unconscious widow; and the sturdy water men who were wont for their departed comrade shed also a tear for the orphan daughter of eight months.

Inquest and Post Mortem.

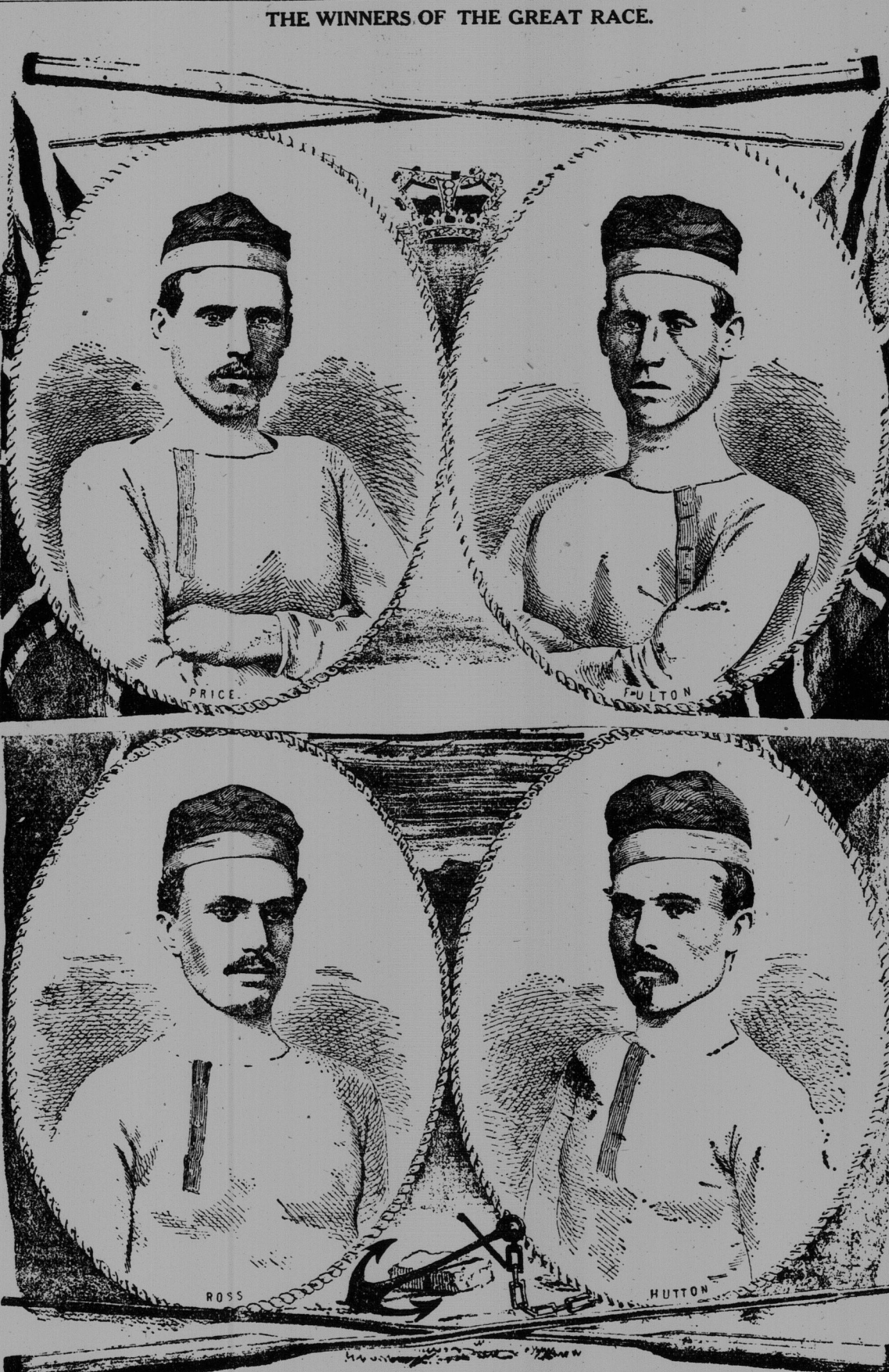
Some delay was experienced in securing the services of the coroner. At about forty minutes past two o'clock, however, Coroner Earle arrived, and the following jury were duly summoned and sworn, viz: James Donville, foreman; James Trueman, George A. Wood, Alexander Robinson, Jr., John Murphy, John Melick and Timothy J. Cronin. The body of the deceased was then reviewed by the jury. A very generally expressed desire for a post mortem examination having been made apparent to the coroner, Dr. McLaren was directed to perform that office. The inquest was accordingly adjourned until this (Thursday) morning, then to meet in the room over the dead house in the city gaol. At the request of the friends of the deceased, the post mortem was delayed a few hours, and until Dr. Wade, assistant surgeon to H. M. F., could be present on their behalf. The examination was ultimately made by Dr. McLaren, assisted by Dr. Wade, and in presence of Drs. Walker and Earle, Jr., and of some of the jury and a few others. The result fully confirmed the original opinion of Dr. McLaren, as expressed by Dr. Bayard and several other medical gentlemen who, during the day, visited the remains of the deceased. Among the witnesses announced to appear today at the inquest

(Continued on page 11.)

THE WINNERS OF THE GREAT RACE.



The Paris Crew, Composed of Robert Fulton, Elijah Ross, Samuel Hutton, George Price.



The Tyne Crew With Charles Hordine and James Price

The Ward Brothers, James Lee, Joshua, Gilbert, Charles, Henry.