

**NEWFOUNDLAND SOLDIERS
OF OLDEN DAYS**
By OLD TIMER.

CORNY QUIRK was beginning all over. It was the season when the Boniface of the "London Tavern" reaped the golden harvest.

The Christmas home festivities were over, and the "man o' the house" dropped into Corny's to hear the news and indulge in the usual holiday gossip.

The officers from the garrison; the merchant who didn't get "home" the previous Fall; the leading mercantile agents, and an odd foreign captain, as well as the Secretary from Government House and occasionally His Excellency himself and any distinguished stranger that happened to be visiting the town, occupied the spacious billiard-room and participated in, or watched the game, while they quaffed their tawny port at a shilling the bottle.

The well-to-do fisherman and an occasional soldier sat round the tap-room, but the large kitchen with the great chimney where five or six men could sit on the settle on each side of the big fire blazing on the dog-gons, not to mention the stools placed where all could see the blaze, was reserved for the favoured ones, the fish-killers, the skippers, the leading master-watches, with a sprinkling of non-commissioned officers from the garrison.

Here, while the merry tale went round, they smoked their pipes and drank their calabogus, a beverage that they claimed was almost as cheap and delicious as new milk, with "not a headache in a punchon of it" as the old saying had it.

With the summer's operations all closed, sufficient wood cut and hauled for the winter, and before the preparations for the sealing fishery had begun, the long nights between Christmas and the first of February were given up to social enjoyment, and during that time especially the favourite resort for the well-to-do residents of town, where they held all their public and social meetings, and where were found the equivalents of our present-day clubs, was the old "London Tavern," then in the heyday of its popularity.

One night in the Christmas season nearly a hundred years ago, the general host radiated good-humour, as he went from room to room seeing that the wants of the customers were well supplied.

In addition to the regular habitues, some of the n. c. officers and men of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, just returned from active service in Canada, after helping successfully to give American pretensions its quietus, but more than ordinary interest to the occasion.

In the place of honor before the blazing fire in the big kitchen, sat Sergeant Patrick Ahearn, now a pensioner, in all his glory, with one medal and several scars. With his pipe and glass both busy, he was detailing the adventures of the Regiment since it had left the town some years previously.

In 1812, the Americans made a strenuous effort on the Great Lakes and elsewhere to capture Canada, and the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, which had the honour to be placed in the fore-front in many hot engagements, acquitted themselves, as the historians tell us, like the tried and true veterans they were. They participated in nearly every engagement and at Mackinac, Detroit, Queenstown Heights and Ogdensburg, they helped effectively to put the enemy on the run.

At the battle of York (now Toronto) on April 27, 1813, they fought bravely, but without avail. The place was garrisoned with a mixed company totalling between six and seven hundred men, consisting of the Royal Newfoundlanders, the Glengarry Rifles, a few of the 49th Regiment, the King's or 8th Foot, with a few dozen Chippewa and Mississauga Indians, in war-paint and feathers, under the command of Sir Roger Hale Blicaffe.

His artillery was very inferior even for that time. It consisted principally of some old eighteen pounders, that had been left in the hands by a French regiment that had occupied the site some years previously.

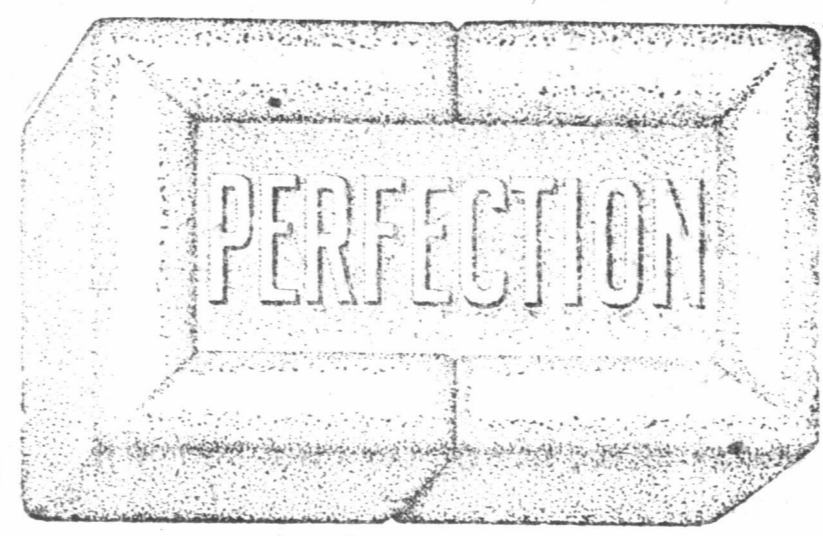
But the ingenuity of the Newfoundlanders was equal to every emergency. They could turn their hand to nearly any kind of work, from yampering a boat to building a boat. They raised the old eighteen-pounders, mounted them on pine logs, clamped them with iron hoops to the timber, and thus mounted a formidable stand of artillery.

Just after dawn on the morning of the 27th April, the Americans came down in force, the Commodore's ship, a square-rigged three-master, led them. A brig followed, and then fourteen schooners, most of them little ones, but from everyone flashed the

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Sailors Cling to Superstition of Old Times

SAILORS are the most superstitious people in the world. Anything they can't understand they explain by magic, or something supernatural. And at sea there are many things that no man can understand. Let a young fellow who would pooh-poo the idea of putting off anything until Saturday or next week because Friday is an unlucky day ship before the mast and inside of six months he'll be like all the rest of the old salts, full of signs and superstitions about this and that. It must be the influence of the sea; it changes a man, I don't know just how, but it makes him ready to believe in almost anything.

I think that one of the beliefs most common among seamen of all classes is the idea that a cat on board ship will cause her to meet with gales. The old saying is that "a cat carries a gale in her tail," and the average sailor believes that when a cat frisks about the deck she is raising a storm. The belief that one can whistle up a wind is also found pretty generally among seamen, although those of the younger sort do not believe these things so firmly as do most of the older tars. In my younger days I remember boys having their ears boxed by the captain or the mate who caught them whistling about their duties, and these men thought that if the youngsters whistled long enough rough weather would result.

It is curious how sailors dislike a cat and how the name is associated with so many things that are unpleasant to a sailor. The cat-o-nine-tails is well known enough, and no sailor has any love for the gear used in raising the anchor, such as the cat-head, the cat-fall, the cat-hook and the cat-back. The pig seems to be second to the cat in the bad reputation it has on board a ship, and there are some other things that are unlucky to have on the water. All luck is supposed to desert a vessel that carries a dead body.

Among sailors I know of but one thing that is considered to bring good fortune to a vessel, and that is a child. The presence of a child during a voyage is always thought to be a good omen, and it is believed that no ship will sink that has a child on board. On the other hand, women are

thought unlucky. I cannot tell the reason for this unless it is that a ship is the least comfortable place for a woman in the world and the least suitable. Certain classes of people fall under the sailor's taboo. But of all the people whom the sailor detests, the lawyer is looked upon with the greatest dislike. The name "sea lawyer" is the worst term that one sailor can use toward another, and is bitterly resented. Lawyers are particularly unlucky to have on board.

Regard Finns as Wizards. These are some of the unluckiest things which sailors believe, but in addition to these things are many others in which they place more or less faith. I have seen many old tars who believed that Finns, or Laplanders, had magic powers. The Finns are a strange, silent people, and have the reputation of being wizards. It is thought that they can use this power for either good or bad, and as they are somewhat feared by the average sailor he takes pains to be on good terms with them. It is generally believed that a Finn has a great deal of control over the winds. They can raise a storm by spells, and it is unwise to anger them. I have heard old sailors tell of certain Finns who were members of the same ship's company with themselves in past voyages, who could send messages to about "Tons" on shore by gulls, which would light upon the rigging at their call and repeat to the relatives of the Laplander the message he whispered to them. They also told of a Finn who had a bottle of liquor, from which he could drink several times every day without lowering the contents. It always remained just so full, day after day and week after week. There are also men of some other nations who are thought to have more than ordinary powers.

Some of the older sailors believe that it is possible to "buy a wind," as they call it, and by this is meant getting the favor of certain persons who have control over the elements. There are not many sailors alive now who put much faith in this, although I have heard of a commodore in the British navy who, not over twenty years ago, said that he knew where he could buy a wind if he needed one. This belief is fast dying out among younger men.

Some distance below lay the Scorpion at anchor. She was larger and a swifter sailer than the Tigress and carried heavier metal. In a previous engagement she had done destructive work on British schooners, with her twelve and twenty-four pound balls, which she threw with deadly effect.

While clearing away decks and securing prisoners, they wondered if the crew of the other craft had heard the noise of the swivel. A scout was sent out in a canoe, and in due time returned and reported that the Scorpion was still at anchor and apparently had not been alarmed by the reports of guns. They got all canvass on the Tigress and started down towards her.

The weather was undergoing one of those autumnal lulls that the sailors call "breathing spells." They did not make much headway, and it took them all day September 5th to get in sight of the quarry. Just towards evening the Scorpion rounded a headland and dropped her anchor about two miles from the Tigress, which, with the Stars and Stripes still flying from the peak, bore down on her. When within a dozen yards, the Scorpion, still unsuspecting, warned them not to foul her. The answer from the Tigress was a broadside from the swivel gun. Up through her opened hatches poured a half a hundred blue-jackets and red-coats, and in another minute the Tigress was close alongside, and her broadsides, before any effective resistance could be made, had complete charge of the deck, and the Scorpion became an easy prize--much easier than the Tigress had been, as only one seaman suffered any injury.

With the rising sun next morning the Stars and Stripes came down to rise again immediately, but never more to reach the track, for above them in the glad sunlight, soared the "meteor flag of England."

The Commanding Officer took these two vessels which had all but annihilated British power in the Upper Lake region, and after refitting them, made them into the beginning of what afterwards proved a victorious British fleet. The Tigress became His Britannic Majesty's sloop of war Surprise, and the Scorpion was renamed the Confidence.

The crews were landed as prisoners of war and they were marched across the Province of Upper Canada to Lake Ontario for transportation to Quebec, where they stayed till after the termination of the war.

After several other engagements, in which the banner of victory was shown alternately by the British and

their chivalrous American opponents. Eventually the last invader was driven across the border, and peace declared.

The warships, in accordance with a mutual agreement, that no armed vessels should ever again be stationed on the Great Lakes, were turned into peaceful traders, and all batteries were dismantled.

It is worthy of note, that so well has the pact been kept, that for a hundred years, the whole borderline between the two nations has been policed by a handful of Customs officers.

At the close of the war the Royal Newfoundlanders returned to St. John's, and the whole population turned out to give them an ovation. And for many a year after, when the Christmas season came, and the old cronies gathered together around the Yule log in the London Tavern to enjoy their pipe and glass and the oft-told tale of bygone times, no one could take the place of honor from Pensioner Sergeant Ahearn when he de-scanted on the doughty deeds of his old regiment, and showed how they effectively contributed to the finishing of the American War by their success in the cutting out of the Tigress and Scorpion.

[Author's Note--The old guns referred to by Sergt. Ahearn as having been mounted on pine logs instead of gun carriages, and clamped with iron hoops by the Royal Newfoundlanders, may be seen to this very day, guarding the gate at Old Fort, Toronto, Ont., and the remains of the Scorpion are still visible in Colborne's Basin, Penetanguishene (i.e. White Rolling Sands) Harbour, Ont. For verification of the dates, and places we are indebted to Mr. C. H. J. Silder, author of that very interesting volume, "In the Wake of the Eighteen Twelves." [See "In the Wake of the Eighteen Twelves," page 159.]

The Fighting Unknowns.
First Countryman--We're doin' fine at the war, Jargo.
Second, Countryman--Yes, Jahn; and so be they Frenchies.
First Countryman--Ay, and so be they Belgians and Booshians.
Second Countryman--Ay, an' so be they Allies. I do be uncertain where they come from, Jahn, but they be devils for fightin'--Punch.
He (as the team goes by)--Look! There goes Ruggles, the halfback. He'll soon be our best man.
She--Oh, Jack! This so sudden! down alternately by the British and Harvard Lampoon.