

## NAUTICAL REMINISCENCES.

The following nautical reminiscences of Captain Rudlin were read by Miss Marguerite Saxton, of Washington, D. C., the celebrated dramatic reader, at a banquet recently held to celebrate the 1,000th trip of the *Islander*:

I wish to present to you a short history of Victoria and its nautical affairs since the year 1859, when our worthy host, Captain Rudlin, landed in Esquimalt. Victoria was a city of tents, with a population of 8,000, chiefly miners. There were only two steamboats, the "Beaver" and the "Otter," belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. The "Beaver" was about 70 or 80 tons, and was built in Green's yard, Blackwell, London. She was launched in 1835, and was the first steamer on the Pacific Ocean. She carried the mails and passengers to Spertown, on the Fraser. Captain Rudlin left Victoria in June, 1859, for Sapperton, leaving at 3 a. m. and arriving at 8:20 p. m. (note the length of time). It is 75 miles to that point, and he made the trip in eighteen and a half hours, which was thought quick work, and the people were well satisfied.

Captain Rudlin's next experience was in the steamer "Emily Harris," of 40 tons, to Nanaimo. Previous to the running of this boat, people had to come from Nanaimo in schooners and canoes, and Mr. Bryn, the present lighthouse keeper on Discovery Island, brought his bride to Victoria in a canoe—a voyage which took two days to accomplish with favorable weather. The "Emily Harris" carried fifty or sixty tons of coal, and took fifteen hours to go a distance of 75 miles. This was a summer boat to the "Badger," and carried the mails to Comox once a month—when the weather permitted.

The next boat built was the "Cariboo Fly," (built in Victoria,) which was a fine boat and a credit to her owner and builders. She was designed for the trade between Victoria and the then new town of New Westminster; but she blew up on her third or fourth trip, as she was going out of Victoria harbor, killing several, among whom were her captain and his brother, the second engineer (James B. name), being two of the five brothers who all lost their lives steamboating in this country.

About a year after this, the Hudson's Bay Company purchased the steamer "Enterprise," and ran her to New Westminster five trips a week for one summer. The people were well served.

The "Fideliter" next came out from England, belonging to the Vancouver Coal Company, to carry the mails between Victoria and Nanaimo; but she was not suitable to the business, and the Government put on the "Sir James Douglas," commanded by Capt. Clark, our present Harbor Master. She ran for a number of years, until she broke down. Upon this occurrence, the late Mr. Spratt placed the "Maude" on that route, to carry the mails twice a week, together with the "Cariboo Fly," which ran up to the time he sold out to the Canadian Pacific Navigation Company. The "Enterprise" had been on the Westminster route for about the same number of years.

The Pioneer Company promoter, who was the respected father of our present worthy manager, Captain John Irving, came over from Oregon in 1858.

The Hudson's Bay Company then bought the "Olympian"—now the "Princess Louise"—from Captain Finch and Captain Wright, of San Francisco. The directors of the company were much dissatisfied at the purchase, saying she was far too large for their trade, and never would be required in

this country. She was then considered a 12-knot boat, and is to this day running between Victoria and Westminster in the winter season, and is a fine boat.

The way ports progressed with these advantages, yet there are now some of the inhabitants not even satisfied with the good service she gives. We will take, for instance, Mr. Mawdsley, who says he does not wish to spend five or six hours, which includes so many stoppages, on a boat in travelling 35 miles; but has to throw himself upon the courtesy and kindness of our worthy manager to allow the "Islander," an 18-knot boat, to stop for him.

This boat, which is a twin-screw, was built in Glasgow in the year 1888, and came to Victoria round Cape Horn in the same year. Her engines were built by Dunsmuir & Jackson, of Govan, and do them great credit, as, after the excessive wear and tear of four years running, Mr. Thompson, the Government inspector, pronounced them last survey (taken one month ago) as good as when they came out. She is also fitted up with a magnificent service of electric light, of the Brush Swan plant, supplied by Patterson & Cooper, of London and Glasgow. All the machinery, including the electric light, is in charge of Mr. A. Brownlee, the chief engineer, who is keeping them in the very best condition, doing himself great credit. This is shown by the machinery itself.

Now, the commander of this ship "Islander"—Captain Rudlin—who has had charge of her since she came out, commenced his seafaring career in British Columbia 30 years ago, sailing schooners for the first eight or ten years, and then he went on to the "Emma," a boat of about 40 tons, acting as a tow-boat, towing the schooner "Black Diamond" to Nanaimo and back in the coal trade. From her, he was transferred to the "Grappler," towing logs and ships. From there to the "Beaver," which was at this time bought by the B. C. Towing and Transportation Company from the Hudson's Bay Company. Her engines were constructed by Boulton & Watt, and were of the original side lever or "Grasshopper" type. The pistons were packed with rope, which caused considerable inconvenience, the boat having to be often anchored for the purpose of repacking the pistons. Compare the pressure of five pounds in this cylinder to that of the "Islander" of 160 lbs. to the square inch, would render such rope-packing inadmissible.

From the "Beaver," the Captain was again transferred, this time to the "Alexander," which was then considered the best tug boat in these waters, and from her he went into Mr. Spratt's employ, and commanded first the "Maude," then the "Cariboo Fly," and then the "Wilson G. Hunt," until in the year 1883 the Canadian Pacific Navigation Company bought out Mr. Spratt, buying Captain Rudlin with the boat.

He then took charge of the "Enterprise;" from there to the "Rithet," then to the "Princess Louise," afterwards to the "Yosemite," and finally he took command of the "Islander," which he holds to this day, having made a thousand trips in her, and may he make many thousands more, as he is a universal favorite with the travelling public, whose comfort and safety he is so anxious for and is continually catering to; our genial manager, Captain Irving, (who is a thoroughly practical steamboat man), puts into Captain Rudlin's hands the opportunities of making all his passengers comfortable, as if he himself was in charge.

I wish to show you how the Canadian Pacific Navigation Company has increased under the management of Captain Irving. When that company bought out Mr. Spratt, he was running the boat to Westminster himself, with Capt. Rudlin on the Nanaimo route and Captain McCulloch running the "Princess Louise" on the Northern route in the summer season and the "Otter" in the winter, and Captain

"Reliance," the only boat on the up-river route. Captain Irving bought the "Yosemite" for the Company, and brought her up from San Francisco, where she had been running on the Sacramento River. He had hog-chains put in her, and she was thoroughly overhauled, and is to-day a stronger boat than when she came up. She was put on the Westminster route for the summer. He also bought the "Sardonyx" and the "Danube," which is a fine boat running on the Northern route, with a capacity of 1,000 tons, also the "Islander," of which boat we have already given an account. Captain Irving was running a boat himself at the time of the first formation of the Company.

And now let us compare the crews of the "Enterprise" and the "Islander." That of the "Enterprise" consisted of eighteen, all told, and of the "Islander," 62, and this boat carries more freight in two months than was ever done in a whole year on the Nanaimo route. The mail matter alone last month amounted to 788 bags.

The islands and way ports between the different cities have made rapid and substantial progress, owing mainly to the service of this Company. For instance, take Plumper Pass, the chief stopping place between Victoria and New Westminster, the population of which has within the last three years more than doubled, owing to the increased settlement, the most important improvement being the erection of a large and magnificent summer hotel, second to none in the province, which will have the effect not only of materially adding to the prospects of the island, but also increasing the traffic of the steamboat Company.

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