

HOW "THE CAT" KILLED THE CANADIAN NAVY.

On a bright, crisp day in the autumn of 1910, the cruiser "Niobe" steamed up Halifax harbor. The press despatches told of the intense enthusiasm of the population, how the inhabitants crowded the piers and other view points and lustily cheered as the initial ship of the Canadian navy dollicked along to her berth at the Dockyard. Of course the press despatches simply lied. Halifax is accustomed to seeing battleships, whole fleets of them, and the real thing at that. A whole squadron of the King's navy entering the harbor excites no interest. Not because Halifax does not welcome them. On the contrary, the real, Simon-pure bluejacket holds awarm spot in the affections of the people of Halifax. If you see a tipsy jack tar rolling along the street, no one runs to get out of his way. It is not on record when or where a British man-of-war's man insulted a lady in this city. Moreover, he is a good spender, and that counts in a mercantile country. But I am drifting, somewhat.

Young Canada "Talks Back."

When the "Niobe" arrived from England she had a crew of English sailors on board. They were mainly reservemen, and many of them had left their homes and firesides with the idea of returning at an early date. Their places, they understood, would be filled by recruits, young Canadians, and as soon as the experienced old salt had broken in the new material the Englishmen would return home. Their recruiting commenced. First, half a dozen Halifax lads put on the uniform. The "Niobe" would go on a cruise to the Spanish main and other places of which they had read and the spirit of adventure thrilled their young breasts. Others came from the Province of Quebec, from Ontario, from Prince Edward Island and other points, and when the next autumn came around there were about one hundred Canadian lads busily learning the man-o-war trade.

Again the "Niobe" sailed up the harbor. No press despatches told of an enthusiastic welcome home. The "Niobe" had been on the rocks and was being towed home by a British man-of-war, the "Cornwall." Steamers of the Marine and Fisheries Department acted as escort. It was, in-

deed, a sad home-coming. Then the "Niobe" went into dry dock, and her day of home week excursions was at an end.

Just about this time one of the recruits, one of the boys who had signed on before the mast, being a Canadian boy, "talked back" to somebody and an introduction to the "cat" followed.

And just here the Canadian navy, as a Canadian manned navy, fell down. A Canadian youth may take a certain amount of punishment from his school teacher, but when he is taken before the commander of the ship, solemnly charged with a breach of discipline and sentenced to receive a certain number of "strokes" from the cat-o-nine-tails, the case assumes a very different aspect.

And Gets the "Cat"

The shrill whistle of the boatswain sounds between decks, and over decks. The deep-throated boatswain's mate bellows from bow to stern the command: "All hands witness punishment." The lad is bared to the waist. An able-bodied seaman stands with the "cat" uplifted and the "strokes" are applied. That is all very interesting. It is in the interests of discipline. It is necessary for the wholesome training of the recruit.

All the same, it does not appeal to the Canadian lad, and when he discovered that it was the rule and not the exception, he decided to be the exception himself, and accordingly gave the rule a wide berth.

I have no hesitation in saying that this incident sounded the death knell of the Canadian navy on the lines laid down. No Canadian boy will stand for that kind of discipline. To him it is humiliating, degrading.

And up to this time not one able-bodied fisherman had entered the service. It is true a small number of adults joined, but they were mainly mechanics, who felt that the service would give them good wages, a steady job and a soft time. They became disillusioned in time. Boys and men began to take "French leave."

The Government, or rather the headquarters staff of the Canadian navy, had great faith in the fishermen of Nova Scotia. They had an idea that our fishermen would willingly leave the nets and join the service.

This idea was based on false premises. Our fishermen are an independent class. They have comfortable homes, own their own boats if shore fishermen, and own shares in the schooners if bank fishermen. They make good money and live well and calculate to "loaf" several months in the year. How anyone got it into his head that this class would willingly accept life on a man-of-war with all its lirksome discipline and small pay, that these men would leave their comfortable homes and families and their independence, is beyond comprehension.

Then came a change of administration, the "Niobe" came out of dry dock and once more took her old berth at the Dockyard. "And there we thought she'd lay until the dawn of day" until we heard the new idea, the Canadian volunteer navy service.

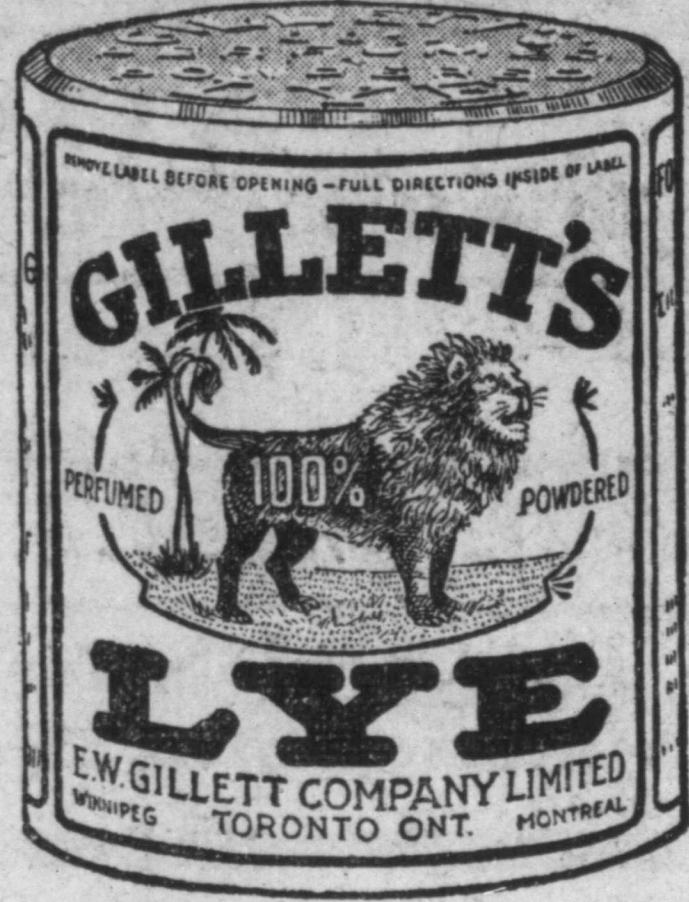
The New Idea Popular

If this idea is carried out there will be no trouble in recruiting. If the plan is to drill on the same principle that the militia is drilled on, the first call for recruits will fill the "Niobe" to overflowing. Just imagine recruiting a crew for a trip through the West India islands during the winter months. That will appeal to Young Canada all right. It will touch him in the right spot. It will give him a chance to see some of the world, to earn a little money at a time of idleness, escape from the rigors of our winter and have a fairly good time generally.

The man who thought that thought should be knighted. He has solved the problem. He will give the Government what it wants, a chance to teach the young Canadian how to shoot, so to speak. There are hundreds of young fishermen even, who will be delighted to go into training on a man-of-war for three or four months a year under such conditions. And three or four months on board the "Niobe" will work wonders. It will give the youth an insight into naval life, it will teach him to man a warship and it will teach him discipline.

To-day the "Niobe" is moored at the dockyard. Half a hundred men live on her. They are in a measure attached to the naval college. She has to be kept in good order. At the dockyard there is a full staff, but no

GILLETT'S LYE EATS DIRT



navy to look after. The new idea will remedy all that. It will be popular from the word go and of great service notwithstanding.

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LOG OF THE "F.P.U."

Pres. Coaker's Story Of His Trip To The North

July 8th.—Left St. John's at 11 a. m., reached Pouch Cove and anchored. Blowing a westerly gale; remained all night. Several fishermen came on board.

Fish plentiful here; few traps, doing well.

July 9th.—Wind strong, veered to N.E. Left Pouch Cove to cross Conception Bay. Water rough, strong breeze.

Reached Caplin Cove about noon. Received splendid reception. Thos. Cull and several fishermen came on board; remained about an hour.

Left for Grate's Cove. Met Friend Bursley of Caplin Cove and stopped to examine his "Coaker" engine.

Passed number of Bay de Verde friends who fired guns and cheered.

Great Welcome

Arrived at Grate's Cove about 4 p.m. Place decorated with bunting. People assembled to receive us. Held Union meeting in the S.U.F. Hall at 8.30 p.m. Large audience present. Spoke for couple of hours. Meeting full of Union spirit and closed with ringing cheers about 11 p.m. Splendid night. Lodged with Friend Thistle, the popular Chairman of the Local Council.

Miss Maud Avery and Miss Thistle sent presents of mats for use on board the "F.P.U."

Charlie busy all evening adjusting motor engines—"Coaker" and "F.P.U.'s"—and put them in good order.

Fishery at Caplin Cove, Lower Island Cove, Bay de Verde and Grate's Cove so far almost a blank. Scores of hook and line men have not salted a quintal of fish while three-fourths of the traps don't average 3 qtls. One trap at Grate's Cove 200, another 100, while all the rest don't total 50. Nester had worse fishery in this locality.

Wind and Lap

July 10th.—Left Grate's Cove at 10 a.m. to cross Trinity Bay. Had fair weather half way to Catalina. Wind veered to N.N.W. blowing a gale, which soon caused big lap. Boat behaved splendidly and engine worked well, and after a tough tussle we conquered wind and wave and reached that magnificent mariner's haven—Catalina.

As soon as the people recognized the boat the flag poles were quickly decorated with bunting and the fishermen gave us a few rounds of musketry as a salutation of welcome.

No fish. The whole catch don't exceed 250 qtls for the whole locality. Hook and line nothing.

Reports for Catalina published in the Government daily returns untrue for one would judge from them that

Catalina had secured a fair share of fish. The fishery here was never worse. The prevailing winds unfavorable for this shore.

Splendid Meeting

Held Union meeting at L.O.A. Hall. Large attendance. Friend Efford of Port de Grave Council present and addressed the meeting. He is here awaiting favorable winds to proceed to French Shore in schooner.

I spoke for two hours, dealing with various matters of pressing public importance. The Union fire burns as strong as ever here and the welcome was whole hearted.

Store under Joseph Perry's care is doing a satisfactory business. Catalina is the natural business centre for Trinity and Bonavista districts and will under the guidance of the F.P.U. become a commercial port of considerable importance before many years.

While here I was the guest of Friend White, the popular and energetic Chairman.

Visited Old Friend

After the meeting I visited Captain Richard Hicks—an old and devoted friend—who is now at the point of death. He said good-bye—the long long good-bye that always causes the strongest men to pause a moment and think of the Great Beyond—and as he bestowed his choicest blessings upon me I thought of the

death-bed scene just a year ago at Boyd's Cove when another of my devoted and beloved old friends passed Over Yonder in my presence. Poor Hicks, he was a worthy citizen, highly esteemed and respected, and many at Catalina will deeply regret his early departure from amongst them.

The Prospero arrived about midnight and Mr. Tremholme—who had been to Green Bay attending to engine troubles—joined us.

July 11th.—The weather continue unsettled and a N.E. breeze again control the sea, making the water too rough for fishing or trap hauling. We are therefore content to await favorable weather snugly at anchor in Catalina.

(To be continued)

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