

Our Merchant Marine Heroes.

A Tribute to Their Bravery

(By H. F. SHORTIS.)

For the past four years every effort has been made to chronicle the deeds of daring and heroism of our brave countrymen who have so nobly distinguished themselves, both in the army and navy, and thus have reflected undying honour and glory upon Newfoundland. All this is perfectly correct, and we cannot do too much to hand down to posterity the heroism of our countrymen in both branches of the service, which has won immortal fame in the history of the world's war. It may be that very many acts of heroism will be passed over, either through neglect, or through ignorance of the fact that the Newfoundland Regiment, which has covered itself with glory, is wholly composed of Newfoundlanders, the descendants of those hardy and adventurous pioneers who came here from England, Ireland and Scotland many years ago, and who figured so conspicuously in many a hand-fought battle in defence of their adopted country when it was invaded by foreign foes upon several historic occasions. Their descendants were actuated by the same love of liberty, and wherever the battle raged the fiercest, the Newfoundlander was to be found in the front, whether it was upon the land or sea. We have only to go back to the American Civil War to illustrate this fact, when two thousand hard and practical Newfoundland seamen, trained in the dangers and cold of the Arctic regions, were to be found in the Federal Navy, distinguishing themselves by their heroism, valor, and contempt of danger, and very many of them rising to responsible and remunerative positions in the service of Uncle Sam. All this is very well, but, unfortunately, we have very little written upon these matters, as the great majority of our brave countrymen who survived the terrible struggle of the Civil War never returned to Newfoundland, as they became subjects of the United States, and it is only from letters received or the statements of those who did return that we know anything at all about the prominent part played by our countrymen in that terrible war waged in the cause of liberty and right, the success of which meant the preservation of the United States. It is true that from time to time a few brief sketches have been given through our magazines and the Evening Telegram, but the details were very limited, and thus we have lost this opportunity of doing full justice to our brave seamen who have covered themselves with glory, fighting in the cause of freedom, under a foreign flag. The same may be said with regard to our countrymen who fought in the Cuban war of Independence, as well as that of Chili and other countries. Actuated by an inborn love of adventure, nurtured amongst the icefields of their own coast and that of Labrador, they sought the scenes of dangers, and distinguished themselves upon all occasions by their bravery, heroism, hardihood and determination. From childhood they cherished a love for seafaring life. It was second nature to them, and their fame for agility and seamanship was world-renowned, and their services were eagerly sought after and availed of by every country in case of emergency. Where danger or adventure was at its height, there was to be found the Newfoundland seaman—even in far off Japan.

And we have the same spirit of adventure and contempt for danger animating our seafarers of the present day as that which animated our brave countrymen of half a century ago, or as far back as the seventeenth century, when they defended our shores

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stration taking place before the Emperor's palace, they decided to make an addition to the large concourse of people who had assembled there to celebrate the Emperor's birthday. Amongst those present were the foreign ambassadors, the officers of the warships of various nationalities, clergy, the public officials, military, etc., with six or seven bands of music and many thousands of citizens of all classes. The principal event of the day was the Grand Parade and review in which thousands of Brazilian soldiers and sailors from the ships of war took part. Of course Dom Pedro, the Emperor of Brazil, was the cynosure of all eyes, and courtiers, funkeys, admirals and generals, ambassadors and other representatives, with the elite of the city, were elbowing each other to receive a patronizing smile of recognition from the august personage who occupied the throne of that country, a scion of the proud and haughty House of Braganza of Portugal, but who had to abdicate some years afterwards when Brazil adopted a Republican form of Government, which has been retained up to the present moment.

The Emperor Dom Pedro sat in state under a canopy beautifully decorated for the occasion, with the best of music Brazilian musicians could produce, playing the national anthem, and the bands of the American, English, French and other warships in port taking their part in turn. The chief officers of the State were there, also the representatives of different nationalities, and everybody else from prince to beggar. After a time there was a lull in the music and manifestations of loyalty, etc., and Dom Pedro's eyes wandered over the thousands of spectators alighted upon the stalwart figure of the captain of the main-top of the Lancaster, Mr. Duggan, and His Majesty beckoned to him, but, of course, Mr. Duggan never, for a moment, thought it was to him the honour was done, and remained in his place in the front rank of the spectators. The Emperor, seeing that Mr. Duggan did not move, sent one of his attendants to request him to come forward as His Majesty wished to speak to him, and Mr. Duggan, not the least bashful, went towards the Emperor, the crowds making a passage-way for him, and stood before the Sovereign, feeling a little uneasy, as public affairs were beginning to be somewhat complicated in that country even at that time, and he was not certain but some charge might have been laid against him.

However, he was determined not to show the white feather, and stood up manfully before the Emperor, waiting for His Majesty to address him. After inspecting his splendid physique, his sailor-like appearance, with his neat and becoming uniform, and his dauntless air, His Majesty addressed him, asking him "whence he came, how long he was at sea and how long in the navy, etc., and congratulating him on his appearance," the illustrious prince of the ancient dynasty of Braganza, then reached out his princely hand and warmly shook that of the Newfoundland sailor-man, and when the Emperor released Mr. Duggan's hand, the latter found three or four gold pieces of large denomination resting in his palm. Amongst other questions the Emperor asked him was, "how he liked the service?" and it is my firm belief that Dom Pedro was feeling his way to induce Mr. Duggan to enter the service in the Brazilian navy, but Mr. Duggan was not a man who would accept any inducement to do a dishonourable act, as he was bound to the American navy for three years, and all the jewels in the crown of Brazil, or even the crown itself, would not induce him to accept service under another flag.

The next day, Mr. Wilson, an Englishman, who was editor and proprietor of a paper published in the city of Rio Janeiro, came out with three or four columns, giving a full and detailed account of the event, which was copied in the American papers,

and the brave and adventurous Newfoundland seaman from the West End of St. John's became the hero of the hour, and justly so, because, perhaps never before was such an honour done to a sailor, more especially in those days when the kings and queens were not imbued with that spirit of democracy as that by which they are actuated to-day. To be selected from amongst fifty or sixty thousand people, unsolicited, would be sufficient to drive the aspirants for tin-pot titles out of their mind, even in these days, when democracy is the order of the day, and plays such a prominent part in the ruling of the world, and will continue to do so until something else turns up.

Now is the time for those who are appointed to write up and transmit to posterity the deeds of daring, the heroism and adventure of Newfoundlanders who have taken such a prominent part in the Great War. It will be nothing short of a crime if we neglect to do so, and to accomplish this task successfully we must do full justice to our brave and fearless countrymen who manned our Mercantile Marine during the eventful period, and who were the means of enabling our merchants and business men to conduct the trade of our country successfully, when it was impossible for them to procure outside assistance in tonnage to convey our products to market in the great centres in the Mediterranean, Brazil and elsewhere, in defiance of all the German submarines, raiders and pirates which infested the waters on both sides of the Atlantic. I am not certain how many of our ships have been torpedoed and sunk, but I should say this can be easily ascertained from the records which are kept in our Customs Department. But even these records are not sufficient. We must have details, and the right way to go about it, is to ascertain those details from our brave seamen in our mercantile marine who were participants in these events, and who suffered untold hardships in playing their part in the trade of our country by carrying our products to market at the risk of their lives and returning with the necessities for home consumption. Many of our brave captains and crews have had their vessels torpedoed, and again risked their lives only to meet with the same experience, and others have been confined in German prisons for twelve months and more, subjected to every indignity and suffering, and been released a few weeks ago to return to their homes and families. Amongst these I may mention Capt. Burke and his crew. It is also probable that many of our vessels which have been lost during the past four years were the victims of the nefarious and blood-thirsty propaganda of the German naval authorities of the Tirpitz and Capelle kind, who caused the indiscriminate destruction of all shipping from the smallest fishing boat up to the ocean greyhound and leviathan Lusitania. Then, taking everything into consideration, the history of the Great War and the prominent part that Newfoundland has taken in it cannot possibly be a correct and complete compilation of facts without full justice being done to the imperishable deeds of daring performed by our Newfoundland seamen in our Mercantile Marine. We have had experience enough in the past, covering a period of three hundred years, as to what assistance can be given by reference to the records. Even our histories, such as they are, would be literary skeletons if we were not fortified with the traditions which have been handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Then let us not depend wholly upon the records, which after all only inform us that such a vessel was torpedoed in the Mediterranean and the captain and crew had been rescued and conveyed to Malaga or elsewhere. This is not sufficient, we want details, and these details must be obtained from the captains and crews who were the victims of German brutality, and then in writing up the history of the war in which Newfoundlanders were second to none, not alone will full justice be done to our immortal Royal Newfoundland Regiment, and the heroism, daring and skill of our men in the navy, but, justice will be done to our world-renowned sailors in our own Mercantile Marine, who braved the storms of the Atlantic at all seasons of the year, as well as piratical warfare of the German Sea Lords and their submarines and raiders, to perform their part in enabling Newfoundland to carry the trade with other countries and to which we may attribute the prosperous condition of commercial life we have to-day, in comparison to most of the other countries which have been in a state of commercial stagnation and semi-starvation. And this prosperous condition of affairs may be attributed to the daring, hardihood and contempt of danger which has, from time immemorial, been the chief characteristic of the captains and crews of the Newfoundland Mercantile Marine.

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being made in the measurement of lobsters that will be allowed to come on the market. Experience during the past few years shows that the demand for lobsters measuring more than 11 inches is growing less and

less because the hotels and restaurants find there is no room for them. It is now proposed that lobsters measuring more than 11 inches shall not be taken, and in water as seeders.

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