

THE STIRRING STORY OF DERRING-DO

The following extraordinary, interesting letter is from John Campion, a soldier of the 88th Connaught Rangers, an Irish regiment, at the time in Canada, to J. Edward O'Connor, the well known barrister of Winnipeg. It details as faithfully as a camera the struggle that went on on the Canadian border during the American war of secession in the effort of Michigan smugglers to procure British soldiers or sturdy Canadians as substitutes for rich American citizens who had been drafted for their bloody war with the south. The blood money paid for British subjects as high as \$1,000 a head and without any doctor's examination.

The heroic figure which stands out in this dramatic recital of things gone by is that of the famous Capt. Jack Allan, of the Northwest Mounted Police fame. The character of this Canadian soldier is told with faithful minuteness and to his old comrades who served with him and under him he stands as the Chevalier Bayard of the Western plains, "Sans Peur, Sans Reproche." The captain, of course, has now been a resident of Winnipeg for some years, and this absorbing description of a few of his manly deeds on the Canadian border, on the Wolseley expedition and on the African plains verifies again the apt expression that "Truth is stranger than Fiction."

Was a Connaught Ranger

Sir—I am on my way from China back to Halifax to see my only brother before going back to Ireland, where I was born 79 years ago.

In the 88th Connaught Rangers I was taken on the strength when I was twelve years old and posted to the band as one of the buglers and went with the 2nd battalion to the Crimea in 55 and was wounded at the storming of the Redan when we were beat back twice until the sailors from the Lancaster battery came up to relieve us, but their scaling ladders were too short and they were badly cut up, the poor fellows trying to make a bridge with their back to rest the ladders on. I was invalided home with a heavy draft on the troopship Pelican, and came to Canada in 1863 with my father and mother.

Joins Royal Canadians

I was transferred to the Royal Canadian rifles and was in Capt. Moran's company, and sent to a place called Chatham in upper Canada in 1864, and I enlisted in a regiment in Quebec going for service on the frontier in October, 1864, with Captain Alleyne and Lieut. Prendergast and sent to Windsor opposite to Detroit and shortly after I was told, off for special duty by order of Col. Osborne Smith to report myself to Sergt. Jack Allan.

Myself and Corp. Donely of the Royal Canadian Rifles were put in plain clothes to look out for the crimps on the other side of the border line from Detroit who made a business of smuggling our men across and selling them to the substitute brokers who paid as high as a thousand dollars for the American citizens who were drafted and had to go to the front or supply a substitute.

Stealing English Soldiers

I like the duty as we did no parades or drills and our sergeant was one of the best men I ever served under. He was a soldier from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet and I think he took a fancy to me after we caught the first one of the gang, a shoemaker from Detroit, who had planned to smuggle Private C., an old 30th Regiment man who had served in the Crimea. He gave me the information in old Tom Johnstone's tavern near the Ferry Hill in Windsor, and I reported to the sergeant and he had him in the room in the Hiron's house at the top of the Ferry Hill where we used to change our clothes off and on to disguise ourselves and passed the signals to make no mistake as it was a very cold day and the ice was running very thick in the Detroit river which was frozen out about 100 feet from the shore and C., said that he was to be down on the ice about 9 o'clock and be ready to answer his whistle with the words, "All right, Donovan," and then run for his skiff which he was to have on the edge of the frozen ice sharp on the time when "first post" was sounding, but he was not to bring any firearms with him as he would have a gun and would shoot him if he tried any double cross work on him.

Blood Money

Then when he was enlisted he would get \$500 when he signed on and when he was delivered to the recruiting officer on Peach Island he would be given another \$400 as he would keep \$100 as his commission. Then Sergt. Allan told him he would get a pass for him to be absent from barracks until 10.30 and he was to report to me at 9.15 at Johnstone's tavern with cloak and cape and his waist belt and side arms under it. Meantime, he was to take his further orders from me. Then he dismissed him with a warning against talking to anyone about it and particularly ordered him not to enter the canteen. Then he turned to me and said: "Send Corp. Donely to me at once," and when he came he said: "I told you off last night to watch the train and the ferry boat for that crimp and gave you a picture of him and warned you that he might be carrying an old green carpet bag for a blind and to watch behind the flour barrels at the gang way under the big lamp and take him as he was going on board. Now the man walked on within four feet of you

and had one of our men with him who carried a cheap black satchel and wore glasses. They came from Sarnia. I saw them when they got out of the car and the man with the satchel had his ammunition boots on. Now they didn't stay in the car as they should have done when it went on the boat to avoid the custom officer but walked on as passengers from Windsor. Now I am returning you to duty and will notify Capt. Donovan that there is no charge against you but that you are not just suitable for this work." Then he turned to me and told me to keep C.—in sight as he was liable to get drunk if alone, and the next day I was in orders as corporal and private companion to the 3rd Victoria Rifles and was in orders to replace Corp. Donely who was returned to duty at his own request. I gave Private C.—his pass in case anything should happen if the military police found him after 9.30 at night.

Locating Smugglers

Then I went with Sergt. Allan to the station as he was going to Detroit to locate Donovan with his bird and he said he would be back not later than 8.30 at the room and again warned me about C.—and we stepped behind some barrels where I gave him my pistol. He told me to take his as I was passing the room and I went to Johnstone's hotel and found C.—who I thought had been drinking and when I charged him with it he said he had a couple of glasses of beer. I took him into a side room and warned him that if he took any more, I would send him to the guard room and turn in his pass to the sergeant of the guard.

The Justice of the Barrack Room

This brought him up standing as he was afraid of Sergt. Allan who had given him a terrible thrashing on Christmas morning behind the cook house before reveille sounded when he took the place of Private Young whom the blackguard had hit the night before with a scrubbing brush when the lad was saying his prayers by the side of his cot and the poor lad went to Sergt. Allan's small room in the corner and reported what had happened when we all heard the answer quite distinctly. It was, "I should send the fellow to the back yard before reveille goes and thrash him soundly. I will take the responsibility and will tell of a man to see that you get fair play. This will be better than having him spend Christmas in the guard room." Then he called for me just as lights out was sounding and I went into his room and he warned me to have Private C.—parade half an hour before reveille at the cook house and to parade Young at the same hour and place and, to see fair play between them as C.—was known to have used his teeth in a previous encounter at Kingston with one of the Grand Trunk brakemen who suffered the loss of parts of an ear, but as the sergeant was giving me the orders, he was writing on a slip of paper telling me that Young would sleep in his room and he would sleep on Young's cot and would parade in front of C.—with only his shirt and drawers on as they looked so much alike that the paymaster took them for brothers. I was to lock the barrack-room doors.

I warned C.—against clinching or standing over his apportion when down. He must get back to his corner. He weighed 187 pounds, nearly 40 pounds heavier than the sergeant, but in exactly 20 minutes C's face was cut to ribbons and the sergeant was hardly touched, but he stopped and made himself known, telling me this was better than spending his Christmas in the guard room and he hoped it would be a lesson to him, and it was, but if he afterward got into the guardroom he would ask if Sergt. Allan was on or off duty. He was a fine soldier when sober, but when drunk he was the most mutinous blackguard I ever soldiered with, an ugly brute, quarrelsome and wicked and your only protection against him was a club. He did two regimental and one general courts martial while we served up there, but no matter where he was found when drunk Sergt. Allan would only say, "come on" and he would follow him like a dog.

Red Coated Lichinvar

I saw him once when he was orderly to the officer commanding, when, of course, he wore his waist belt and side arms (the sword bayonet) and when he came off duty he got drunk in the town before going back to his barracks to report and I was coming up the front street and saw several negroes near the place where they were having a colored wedding and they came running towards me in a very excited manner, saying that a soldier was in and had taken possession of the bride and beaten the bridegroom and driven the others out with his bayonet. I looked in and saw who it was, and when I came out I told him he had better not go near him as he had his side arms, and to pacify the negroes, I said I would go for Sergt. Allan, and asked the policeman to keep them back until I returned. I found the Sergeant at the room. He had just come back from Chatham and turned in for a smoke, but he got up and we went over.

He Steals Black Bride

He asked the policeman to keep the crowd back while he went in, and there he found C.—with a quart of beer on a table beside him and his sword bayonet out of the scabbard lying ready for any emergency and poor bride, with all her finery on, was sitting on his knee, while the bridegroom, with a bad gash on his head and bleeding like a stuck pig, was lying on the floor between them and the door. Sergt. Allan just went up and touched him on the

shoulder, and said, "stand up." Then he gave me his own handkerchief and told me to bind up the groom's head. I had to lift him to do it. His bride was crying and took him away, and was ordered to button up his tunic and was about to put on his waist belt and side arms, when the sergeant said, "I'll take them. You are a prisoner," to which C.—was going to make some objection, saying he was still on duty as orderly, and was not drunk, but he had his master in front of him and he knew it. The sergeant told me to go out and tell the policeman to clear the crowd and call a cab. I confess I didn't like to leave him alone with this blackguard, but I dare not say a word. I knew my man too well, so that I went out and had some difficulty among the excited crowd, chiefly American deserters, of whom the little town was full. The negroes though, had all gone as there was no bond of sympathy between them. I told the policeman and he was afraid that the negroes might come back in a body.

Collapse of the Rioter

He called a cab and I went back as quickly as possible and I found C.—standing as quiet as a lamb with the sergeant standing with his belt and side arms slung over his arm, which he handed to me and told me to lead straight to the cab with C.—behind me while he followed in the rear. Then we drove to the guard room just in time, as the negroes were seen coming from the village, led by the bridegroom with his head bound up with a red bandana. C.—was handed over to the main guard and was given a regimental court martial and got the full allowance or 42 days imprisonment with hard labor and sent down to the jail at Sandwich to serve out his sentence and Sergeant Allan took him down, and when he was getting a receipt from the jailer he gave him a plug of tobacco in case the rules of the jail would allow a prisoner to smoke, and C.—found out that he had done so and although a bad ruffian, he would have died for the sergeant. That was the kind he was.

Drinking Again

Now, I go back to when I found C.—at Johnstone's Tavern, having had some beer and I warned him what I would do. I ordered supper for him and told him I would come for him after I had met Allan when he got back from Detroit at 8.30 and he promised me that he would not touch anything more and would be ready to go down with me when he heard last post sounding to meet the crimp and as I was going out I asked Johnstone not to give him any more drink and to keep him from going out. I then met Allan at the ferry, according to orders. It was near 9 o'clock and went to the room together.

How They Bought Canadians

He added, he had located Donovan at his rendezvous, a little fru- store near Woodward avenue, kept by an Italian named Gianelli, who was a little shy as to his Bourbon whisky with his soft drinks to his friends and was willing to risk about the price being paid for substitutes. He heard of \$1,000 being offered for one but he didn't pay the doctor although he heard that soldiers from the Canadian side did not have to go before a doctor and he thought he knew of a man who would get me \$1,200 half of which would be paid when I signed the roll and I promised to call again. He returned me my pistol and told me to get back for C.—as it was near last post, but when I got to Johnstone's he had gone and I hurried down to the Crawford house.

Given the Frog's March

There I was informed he had been seen with one of the military police, who asked him for his pass, and he refused to show it to him and took off his waist belt to strike him but he was knocked down with his swagger stick and the town patrol took him in charge. He was drunk and was carried frogs' march fashion which was the only way to handle a fractious prisoner those days, face downward. But it cured the worst of them, particularly if it was found necessary to put a bugler boy to ride across the small of his back to keep him from struggling.

Allan's Plan of Campaign

At the time was now nearing for the Donovan capture, I hurried back to the room and reported and got a reprimand for not securing him when I first found he had been drinking. It was now too late to get C.—under any circumstances. He could not be trusted when not perfectly sober and Allan said, "I will nip this fellow myself at any cost. Get me my cloak and cape and I will play the C.—role, and if he escapes me there will be no one to blame but myself, as you must not be seen but to take this rope and stand by, lest there may be two of them as it would hardly be safe to leave a stiff on the edge of the ice. If he is to come away from it any distance at all he will draw it up on the solid ice, but if he suspects and is alone, he will not leave the skiff at all but will hold it with a boat hook and be ready to shove off into the floating ice if everything is not just as he expected it. Now if you hide yourself close by and the signal is not right, he will shove off and take his chances in the floe ice, and shore he will drift along the edge and you could throw your grappling irons with the off chance of hooking him. Then he will cut your rope and shoot or take his chances on a big cake of ice and give you the empty skiff, but don't open fire on him unless I call on you. If he suspects any trap laid to catch him, he will have a pal with him to remain in the boat ready to shoot to save him that will justify me in returning his fire and the signal for you to close in quick

and — will get them both but these are contingences that may not arise. In my opinion, he will be alone as these fellows are willing to take big chances for the money and he will have sized up C.—as an easy mark lacking brains enough to give him away in his greed for the big money. Just then we heard the warning before "last post" and got on the solid ice just as it was sounding. I had my rope coiled under my coat. The night was cold and dark. I moved toward the ferry and got as near to the edge of the floating ice as I could and lay low. I heard quite distinctly the movement of a boat in the ice and then heard it being pulled up on the solid ice.

Allan Captures American

Then I heard a low whistle and the answer "All right Donovan," then "Come quick, come quick, my boat is freezing," then a pistol shot and some sounds as if they were running, then I heard the sergeant twice calling, "Halt, or I'll fire," then like something heavy falling on a boat and a sound as of oars being used and more noise as if somebody had fallen in the bottom of the boat and the words: "Take that," and what sounded like a terrible thud and a fall. This all happened in a couple of minutes as I was running in the direction—no easy matter in the dark as I had to be guided by the noise—but I finally saw the boat in the floating ice not more than 20 feet out and a struggle was going on although I couldn't see, it was too dark, but they were being carried further out and I called out twice before I got an answer, when the sergeant called back "All right, He got me, but I have him now, Throw your rope when you see a chance."

Exciting Struggle in Detroit River

I heard the prisoner using foul language which satisfied me he was being tied but as I didn't know which way the current would carry them. I was getting anxious for his safety until he called out to me to flash my lantern and carry it along, which I did keeping as close to the floating ice as I dare, while trying to get a flash on him without any effect, but I could hear that he was working either with a pole or an oar through the ice, while I kept my lantern as high as I could which was a help to guide him. When I heard him say, "Lie quiet, you cur, or I will drown you." Then he called to me to get my rope ready as he was foul of a flake of ice which he couldn't break through, but he had made fast to it and looked like setting outward when he asked me to test the flake and then throw the rope. I had to be careful but by tapping the flake with my stick, it sounded strong enough and I stepped on it and threw my rope just in time as it had moved out nearly two feet to land on the solid ice after he called to me to hold on. All the while he helped with a boat hook until the current gradually carried it toward the opposite shore leaving the skiff in some open water where I got a glimpse of it now with my lantern and was ordered to haul away followed by a strong expression and an order to "lie down you treacherous cur."

Ties Him Around the Neck

This was a tug on my rope, made me slack up a little for a moment, then I was told to haul away and when he jumped out he told me to untie the prisoner who I found fast with two big hitches around his neck and over the rear thwarts. This explained to me without asking any question, why he called on me to slack up.

Stabbed With Boat Hook

On comparing notes I found he had a hole through the left side of his face which was done with the boat hook when Donovan was being captured, after firing one shot which missed the mark. He ordered me to remove the bracelets from the prisoner who was poorly clad and both were wet and ice covered. I noticed, as he handed me the key of the cuffs that he was covered with blood now frozen to his cane and it revealed also a terrible looking gash in his face. I ventured to say that he was hit. He said, "Yes, the prisoner fired one shot, as I was jumping into the boat after him and then jabbed me with his boat hook, after pitching his pistol overboard. Now lead on your lantern and go straight to the guard room." Then turning to the prisoner: "Keep close up and make no attempt to run for it will be my turn." We kept the middle of the street after we passed the Hiron's house and through a dense crowd all the way. We landed him in the guard room and the sergeant went to the hospital. After reporting to the orderly officer, Mr. Fraser of the Quebec company, he then told me to report to Sergt. McCord and ask for a couple of fatigue men to have the stiff hauled up to the station and notify the corporal of the patrol to take it over until further orders and hand over the boat hook to the main guard as it might be wanted at the trial. I carried out the orders and went with the fatigue men and hauled the skiff over the ice. The bottom of it looked like the floor of a slaughter house and the point of the boat hook was covered with frozen blood, but the prisoner himself was bespattered with blood which he was anxious to explain came from the sergeant when he was tying him in the boat, but when shown the boat hook he was dumb.

Awful Fight in Open Boat

I went to the hospital the next day but the hospital sergeant would not allow me to see him until the doctor had made his rounds and as I was a witness at the orderly room at 11 o'clock, I said I would come at 3.30 when I came off duty. I appeared before Capt. Alleyne

who took orderly room and stated what I knew in the C. case, he being charged with being drunk and disorderly in Windsor and resisting the patrol escort and was given five days in the cells. I went to the hospital after noon and was allowed to see my sergeant, but his head was so swollen they were afraid of erysipelas setting in. He told me that he gave the signal when challenged and waited to see his next move when he called out "Come quick, come quick." He said: "I closed on him and he bolted for his boat and jumped in and seemed to slide the whole length of it, but the impact carried it into the floe ice and I had to jump or be left. He fired point blank at me from the stern of the boat lying down, just as I jumped in, and he threw the pistol overboard and from a kneeling position he drew the boat hook to the position of shortened arms and before I could duck my head, it was driven through my left cheek carrying the upper teeth with it and pulled back for another thrust when I landed on him and I don't know what prevented me from killing him and throwing him overboard—a sense of duty, I suppose. I was bleeding like a bull and savage enough for any foul act, but I did not handle him gently in turning him over and putting the darbies on him. He squealed when I had my knee on the small of his back to bring his hands and wrists together and when I pulled led on the rope after you jumped o the solid ice, I wanted more to put round his neck and over the hind seat which kept him well braced underneath and if he had struggled or attempted to roll when I began to use the boat hook, he would have choked himself, and he wasn't a suicidal party.

We only want Costello now and the whole gang will be broken up. I had to get away as the hospital sergeant said that the orderly officer and Col. Osborne Smith were coming to visit the patients—now sir, I find that my train goes out in fifteen minutes and I was very anxious to have seen my old sergeant, now Capt. Jack Allan.

A Proud Record

I remember when he was gazetted captain in 1865 after the breaking up of the big cadet camp when he passed the possible number of marks and was given command of No. 4 company, the color company, over the heads of the oldest officers in Canada, such as Col. Lord Alymer, Col. De Salaberry and others who were in his company, but he deserved it all and more, and Col. Wolseley knew his man when he introduced him to the minister of militia—as the only cadet in Canada who couldn't be plucked for his examinations without the war office would publish a new drill book. He took first in everything, cavalry, artillery, and infantry and in competition with Capt. now Lt.-Col. Fox, in charge of the army gymnasium and small arm training school, London. I was present in the theatre on Cote street, Montreal, at the garrison assault-arms in 1867, when Capt. Allan, boxed, fenced and out-pointed Capt. Fox, then of the 10th Regiment in everything, getting 9 out of the 10 points in single stick loose play, getting even points in fencing and getting the decision easily in boxing. I won £20 on that occasion, for I knew what he could do, and Capt. Fox was counted about the best of the garrison lightweights among the officers, but I could keep on and fill a big book about our captain who never missed a chance to fight for his

To the Gates of Hell

It was in the blood and he couldn't help it; but you could count on one thing, as certain as death, he would never ask a man to do what he would not do himself and do it quick, and any man who served under him would follow him into the gates of Hell, for he would always be in front and the men of his boat crew in the Red river expedition could tell of his gallant conduct in saving his men from death by drowning. I met one of them five years ago in Vancouver, and he recounted the whole thing to us at the Badminton hotel, saying that thirteen of them owed their lives to the captain. This man's name was Mannix. He was a sergeant in the boat at the time and I met him in Victoria, B.C.

Should Have Victoria Cross

He told me that he had a brother in the boat—a corporal—who was living near Battleford, who steered the boat after the captain jumped overboard with the tracking line in his mouth and swam to the shore but all the details were so vividly given that I could just imagine I was looking at him, because I know just what he would do without any thinking about it any more than cracking a walnut. There was one thing I particularly noted in Mannix's account of it.

A God-Fearing Soldier

He laid the whole thing to Providence for he said that God could only have put strength into a man to enable him to swim in such a terrible place where one false stroke would have carried him over the falls and the boat and crew would follow and no one would ever have known what had happened to them any more than is known about the event now because it was the act of one of the best men that ever carried a sword.

Chosen By Vicount Wolseley

I won't take second place to any man who ever wore the King's uniform, and when Col. Wolseley chose him to go up the Kaminitiquia river from Thunder bay he knew what he was doing but you never could get him to say anything about himself. He looked upon (Continued on Page Eight)