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# XMAS GIFTS!

## Handkerchiefs!

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## Fifty-Eight Years Ago.

### Historic Race Between Two Local-Built Greyhounds.

(By H. F. SHORTIS.)

Fifty-eight years ago John Snow, Sr., the well known undertaker, was a castaway on Barnegat Beach, N.Y. He was a cabin boy on the Newfoundland ship, Tasso, which was wrecked there in December, 1856, and was one of the four saved, eight of the crew perishing. In the rescue of the four the life saving rocket was used for the first time on the American coast. The rocket shot, from the shore, carried a light line, which on reaching the ship was used to haul from the shore a life car suspended from a hawser, and in this car the four were saved. The Tasso was from Rio Janeiro for New York and was commanded by Capt. Goldsworthy—Halifax Chronicle.

The above extract was taken from a Halifax, N.S., paper and published in the columns of your contemporary, the Evening Herald, on Tuesday last. It is very probable that the Mr. John Snow referred to is a Newfoundlander, and I am sure that it will interest the old gentleman to know that there is still alive one who sailed in the Tasso the same year that she was wrecked on Barnegat Beach, New York. I refer to Mr. James Cullen, who was then a boy of sixteen years old, and who can relate most interesting events in connection with our mercantile marine in these days, when it was at the zenith of its glory and our

sailors were recognized as the best in the world for pluck, perseverance and capability; no hardship could overcome them, and no danger could terrify them. They were eagerly sought after by shipowners and master mariners to go on voyages, either to the frozen North towards the Pole, or the burning sun of India, Africa or South America. In their youth a spirit of friendly rivalry existed amongst them and each vied with the other to accomplish the most dangerous undertaking first. The Tasso was a great favorite with the sea-faring people of St. John's fifty-eight years ago and more, and it was thought that nothing afloat could overhaul her; but she at last met her match, and this was accomplished by another local built ship, and a considerable amount of money changed hands upon that memorable occasion. This is how it happened, and there are many living in St. John's to-day who remember the "great ocean race" that plucked the laurels from the Tasso, and probably old Mr. John Snow, of Halifax, may remember it also.

About sixty years ago there stood prominently forward amongst our ship-builders two men, either of whom was looked upon as the mercantile marine of our country.

It would be difficult indeed for any person, no matter how proficient in nautical affairs to award the prize to either one or the other. Each had a glorious record—having built and launched the most famous of our fleet. Although several of the vessels were employed in plying between Europe, South America and elsewhere, it somehow happened that one was a week or more ahead in starting, and thus nothing definite could be decided regarding their sailing qualities, the expertness of the crew or the capabilities of the masters. The names of these great master-builders were Michael Kearney, of St. John's, and Jonas Newhook, of New Harbor, Trinity Bay. At last the opportunity occurred of deciding for once and for always the point as to which should bear the palm. Each of the famous ships held a notable record: the Rothesay, of Harbor Grace, built by Kearney, and owned by Puntun and Munn, having made the run from the above port to Liverpool and back in thirty-eight days, and the Tasso, built by Newhook, owned by Stabb, Rowe and Holmwood, St. John's, had a record which was considered hard to beat, even by the clippers which were built and manned by British master-workmen and sailors on the other side of the Atlantic. The Rothesay was commanded by Capt. Taylor, and the Tasso by Capt. Goldsworthy (not Goldsworthy, as stated by the Halifax Chronicle) and each was manned by as hardy and as competent a crew as ever water wet.

In the year 1856 the good ship Tasso, barque rigged, built in '53 or '54, sailed from the wharf of Stabb, Rowe and Holmwood, bound for Demerara, British Guiana, and upon her arrival found moored near where she dropped anchor, the full-rigged barque Rothesay, of Harbor Grace, which arrived only a few hours in advance. The two ships discharged and loaded with sugar, the Tasso bound to St. John's, and the Rothesay to Harbor Grace. As a matter of course

Great Rivalry Existed between the two captains, and as a natural consequence the consignees, the friends of the captains and the crews, became most enthusiastic over the prospect of such a glorious opportunity to test the sailing qualities of the two famous ships. The two captains bet ten pounds sterling on their respective ships; the consignees took a hand in, and the sailors bet according to their means. As the Rothesay had to go to Harbor Grace it was decided that the result should be final, upon the first to arrive and report at Cape Spear, St. John's. The two ships left Demerara at 3 p.m. on a beautiful day in July, with a light breeze, and every inch of sail that they could carry on them. Each captain and crew saw their rival with everything drawing, going through the water like a sword-fish. The sun soon set, and the tropical night overcast the rival ships. The next morning came and there was no sign of the Rothesay from the look-out of the Tasso. There was a fine breeze blowing, and the Tasso was slipping along at the rate of nine knots with scarcely a ripple under her bows. Favourable weather continued until the fourteenth day out when about 2 a.m. Cape Race light was seen, and the ship hauled up for the land, and as the day broke she was near the Cape being enshrouded in mist. When the sun rose the mist disappeared and the look-out sighted a sail well in towards the shore; but, thought the captain

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and crew it could never be the Rothesay. After a little while they made out that it was a full-rigged barque, and then it was known that it was their rival. Then came the tug of war—Greek to Greek—the pride of the Newfoundland Mercantile Marine. The Rothesay was further towards the land than her rival and managed to catch occasional puffs of wind from the headlands, and

Passed the Winning Point.

—Cape Spear—in advance of the Tasso. When the Tasso arrived at Cape Spear the Rothesay was off Sugar Loaf and thus won the race, which I should say was more interesting than some of the International races which take place at different periods, and which are nothing to boast of when we take into account all the benefits that are to be derived from modern improvements in the art of ship-building. The voyage of the Tasso occupied forty-one days from the time she sailed from the wharf of Stabb, Rowe and Holmwood (now the lower premises of Alan Goodridge and Sons) until she

was moored there again on her return from Demerara. And now it falls to my lot to record the final history of those famous ships—the champion Rothesay and her worthy rival, the Tasso. Some time after the Rothesay ran ashore at Western Bay Head (Bay de Verde) during a heavy snowstorm; she was then also under the command of Capt. Taylor, and Edward Condon was chief officer. Capt. James Pike, of Carbonara, was one of the crew, as was Johnny Fennell. I did not know the whole of them, but my memory has played me a dirty trick and their names have escaped me just at present. After considerable difficulty and great expense she was floated off and towed to Harbor Grace by the old steamship Ellen Gishborne, and was turned bottom up at Munn's eastern wharf where a new keel was put in her. When this was accomplished she was righted again, and the services of the fire engine "Medlock" were brought into requisition, and as this famous machine was provided with extension handles capable of permitting about fifty men to work on each side, she was quickly pumped out, and was once more upright on her new keel. Before she ran ashore she was barque-rigged with spanker, gaff-top-sail and mizzen-topmast-staysail; but afterwards she was rigged as a brig and her name changed to Terra Nova. She was lost during the great gale of October 9th, 1867, at Indian Tickle, Labrador, and thus passed away the pride of our local fleet, which for many years may have met her equal; but there was nothing afloat to show her stern to Kearney's.

Chef-d'Oeuvre,

the Rothesay of Harbor Grace. The Tasso was three hundred and three tons, about sixty tons larger than her successful rival. The career of this splendid specimen of local-built vessel was forever finished during a great gale in December, 1856, while on a voyage from Rio Janeiro, Brazil, to New York, with a cargo of coffee. When off Sandy Hook the full fury of the hurricane burst upon the ship, and notwithstanding the heroic efforts of the captain and crew, she was driven against the rocks. Four of the crew, three St. John's men and an Englishman named the lift-boy, but they had barely entered her when she was swamped by the heavy sea and breakers, and the four of them were drowned. The captain and the re-



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mainder of the crew remained on board the ship, and their terrible condition being observed by the watchmen on shore, efforts were quickly made to save their lives. A life-saving rocket, with a line attached was fired in the direction of the ill-fated ship, but it failed to reach, and five times the effort was repeated, and at the fifth, most fortunately, the rocket carried the line on board the Tasso where it was quickly secured by the crew. Communication was now established between the Tasso and the life-savers on shore, and a hawser was attached to the line, which was also secured by the shore people, after which a life-saving car was sent on board over the hawser, pulled back and forth by those on either end until all the unfortunate mariners were safely landed. It is worthy of note that the rescue of the crew of the Tasso from the wreck was

The First Trial

of the life-saving rocket on the American coast, and, at the time, caused the greatest interest amongst ship-owners and mariners, as well as the people generally of the old world and the new. As far as I know there are now only three men alive to-day who sailed on either of the two famous ships—the Tasso and Rothesay—one is Captain James Pike, of Carbonara, of the latter ship, the other is our genial friend Mr. James Cullen, of the former, and now we have the old gentleman, Mr. John Snow, of Halifax, who was also on the Tasso on her voyage when she was wrecked, an account of which is taken from the Halifax Chronicle and published at the head of this sketch.

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