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 Royal Tobacco Store, Water Street.

OUR SHORT STORY

**DAWSON
OF
DANTZIC**

By WALTER LENNOX

THE Dawson domicile was not particularly inviting from without: it was by no means comfortable, within. It consisted of three or four cubby-holes; the kitchen into which we were ushered was the only part of the establishment to which even the name room could be applied.

The furnishings were in keeping with the rest of the abode—a deal table, whose top might be improved by a scouring; two or three chairs improvised from flour barrels, sundry empty bottles, and a heterogeneous assortment of delf which was not of Sevres pattern. The stove seemed as if it had a grudge against polish manufacturers; and the floor, to have been reserved as a depository for the rejectamenta of the last meal.

"The missus"—so she was introduced to us—was engaged in a culinary operation which seemingly did not call for the virtue which is next to godliness; and she informed us that she would "have somethin' ready fer us in a jiffy!"

Not knowing the precise horological length of a "jiffy," Fletcher and myself decided to take a stroll.

We discovered that Dantzig was a very picturesque spot, and we found some traces of the old regime when Breton fishermen piled their trade in these parts.

In the rear was a lagoon, nothing of the Venetian brand, but a splendid salt-water basin which rose and fell with the tide. We crossed the "gut" between the lagoon and the creek, and sat down for a whiff. Fletcher, who seemed to have most inquisitive instincts, drew my attention to a cutting at the north-west corner.

"Looks like a culvert, Lennox."
"Wonder what that's for?" He went out to investigate. "Culvert alright; but 'tis backed up on the inside with cobbles. Perhaps the old cuss drains out the lagoon for some reason or other!"

Then Caleb joined us, to announce that dinner was ready. Fletcher, the inquisitor, asked Caleb if he had ever been railroaded. "Naw," he replied rather deprecatingly, "been fishin' all me life."

"Though you might have been," urged Fletcher, "pretty good hand at building culverts."

"Culvert—what's that?"
"Oh!" said Fletcher, "that's what we railroad chaps call such things as that"—he pointed to the outlet.

"Oh! that's somethin' to keep the water out of the barrisway when the tide's high."
"Looks like a 'cock-and-a-bull' story," remarked Fletcher as we moved towards the house.

The kitchen had undergone a cleaning process in the interim; and Fletcher said something about fumes and outimum condimentum. We had a jolly good meal of fried fish and flap-jacks. It was, really epicurean, as in addition to the menu supplied by the "missus," Caleb had dug out some delicious lobsters (notwithstanding that it was "close season"), and a generous supply of liquids which would make a diner at Sherry's look envious.

Fletcher, of course, made a remark; and our host informed us that he got his supplies of liquids from Miquelon. We had no scruples about the fact that such wares were contraband.

Mrs. Caleb apologized that she had no milk: "Cows is gone dry," uttered Caleb in explanation.

"Now, Caleb! you're fibbin'. The cows ain't here any more." Further developments elicited the information that the kine had been seized by the Game Protection Society as Caleb, who had

been poaching beaver out of season; had not the wherewithal in cash to satisfy the demands of 'them d— game fellers whats pokin' their noses into every poor man's way o' livin'. Why, ye kin hardly keep fur enough now, to make a pair o' mitts!"

We sympathized with the poor toiler whom these ruthless gentlemen of the game preservation contingent were persecuting so relentlessly!

"Railroad fellers, eh?" Caleb ejaculated, "you're a long time ye?"

We tried to explain to him the technical difficulties of running try lines and the rough nature of the country in the rear; but our proffered information did not seem to impress him.

"If you fellers only make it with wile, I'd show you a lead from that big tolt yonder to Sand Point; you could almost drive a kerrige over it now."

Well, we thought it would save us an amount of useless bush-wacking, and offered him \$20 to blaze the trail. He came back to camp with us.

During the evening he regaled us with stories of "the pirates and smugglers of times ago," took a hand in a little game of 45's and cleaned us out of every loose dollar in our possession. The old duffer tried to pour balm upon wounded feelings and offered us some wholesome advice: "Nex' time you fellers get into the game, be sure ye take down that lookin' glass there behind ye." He had been reading our hands all through the evening!

He then opened an old nunny-bag, containing a pair of overalls and what he termed a "shiftnin'" (change of clothing) and produced some liquid refreshment, presumably from the reserve stock at Dantzig. It was decidedly effective.

When we became somewhat mellow, he produced a bundle of very dirty paper, unwrapped it very gingerly, and laid out on our improvised drawing-table two be-daubed sheets—maps he informed us. The hieroglyphics looked more undecipherable than the drawings?

Regarding them, we were informed that they were "as old as the hills." Fletcher interposed, by doubting if Adam could write so well! then winking knowingly, he pointed to the water-mark—"Newton 1895"—and at the same moment acquiescing in Caleb's asseveration regarding their antiquity.

"Many a good yellow piece they've put in me pockets; not a soul knows the place but meself; and there's lights gardin' it every dark night! Ought to see the lights now?" We went out.

Away to the north-west, there

were lights! We were not seeing things that are visible only when the perceptive faculties are abnormally acute under the influence of the juice of the grape. I have seen them repeatedly since; so have others. The nature of this peculiar phenomenon has not been explained. The lights possibly are phosphorescence; but the "St. Elmo of Mings Bay" is historic.

"Them's the pirates lights," explained Caleb; "and everybody's skerd o' them excep' meself."

That this extraordinary occurrence had anything to do with the dollars which Caleb Dawson had, at certain intervals was entirely disproved by a nosy Revenue Inspector who was the presiding officer at the uncovering of a sub-aqueous receptacle of smuggled goods when Fletcher paid another visit to Dantzig.

Some days later we located a splendid lead, and ran our try-lines. But we did not discover that some two miles north of us, Caleb Dawson had several beavers in captivity, awaiting the arrival of a Nova Scotia trader whose prices for fur were usually satisfactory.

We had reached the terminal point, and whilst plugging a revision, our chain-man fell in and Fletcher started to a nearby settler to find a substitute. He came back with an old chap (the young folks were all off to the fishing grounds) who proved to be a veritable local encyclopedia.

We were now plotting near May Point. As we sat in the gloaming one evening, Fletcher remarked casually: "What an ideal place for a Light-House! Wonder why they've built it over at Point aux Morts!"

Humphreys—our chain-man—gave us the explanation.

Seawards for nearly fifteen miles there are shoals and reefs innumerable; and if a beacon were placed at this point, it would be of little utility to the fishing fleet, when making the land. Besides the skippers of the fleet usually got their bearings from Colomber (some ten miles off).

"But," he continued, "there used to be a mysterious beacon here many years ago, and many valuable cargoes were picked up in the cove yonder. Vessels mistook the glim for Connaigre Light, and stood inward, invariably coming to grief."

"The mystery of this beacon has never been really solved. That it was a lantern set up by some wrecker is pretty evident; but the miscreant has never been located."

"However," he went on, "some of the old fishermen seem to know him; and the finger of suspicion points to an old chap, Dawson—Caleb Dawson, nicknamed 'old douse the glim.'"

"Nothing is known of Dawson's antecedents; he is undoubtedly of French origin, and was probably a castaway whom some fishermen picked up off the Miquelon shoals. He speaks French like a native of St. Malo."

"So our friend Caleb has been pulling the wool over us!" remarked Fletcher.

(To be continued)

MOST DIFFICULT WORK ON GAL-LIPOLI, SAYS PTE. WM. KEARNEY.

HALIFAX, N.S., Feb. 6.—Private Kearney, of St. John's, Nfld., who was wounded at the Dardanelles, arrived by the Cathaginian from Liverpool. He said that the most tiresome work at Gallipoli was duty which required four hours at the listening post, and not the slightest noise made. An enemy had to be disposed of with the bayonet or butt of the rifle.

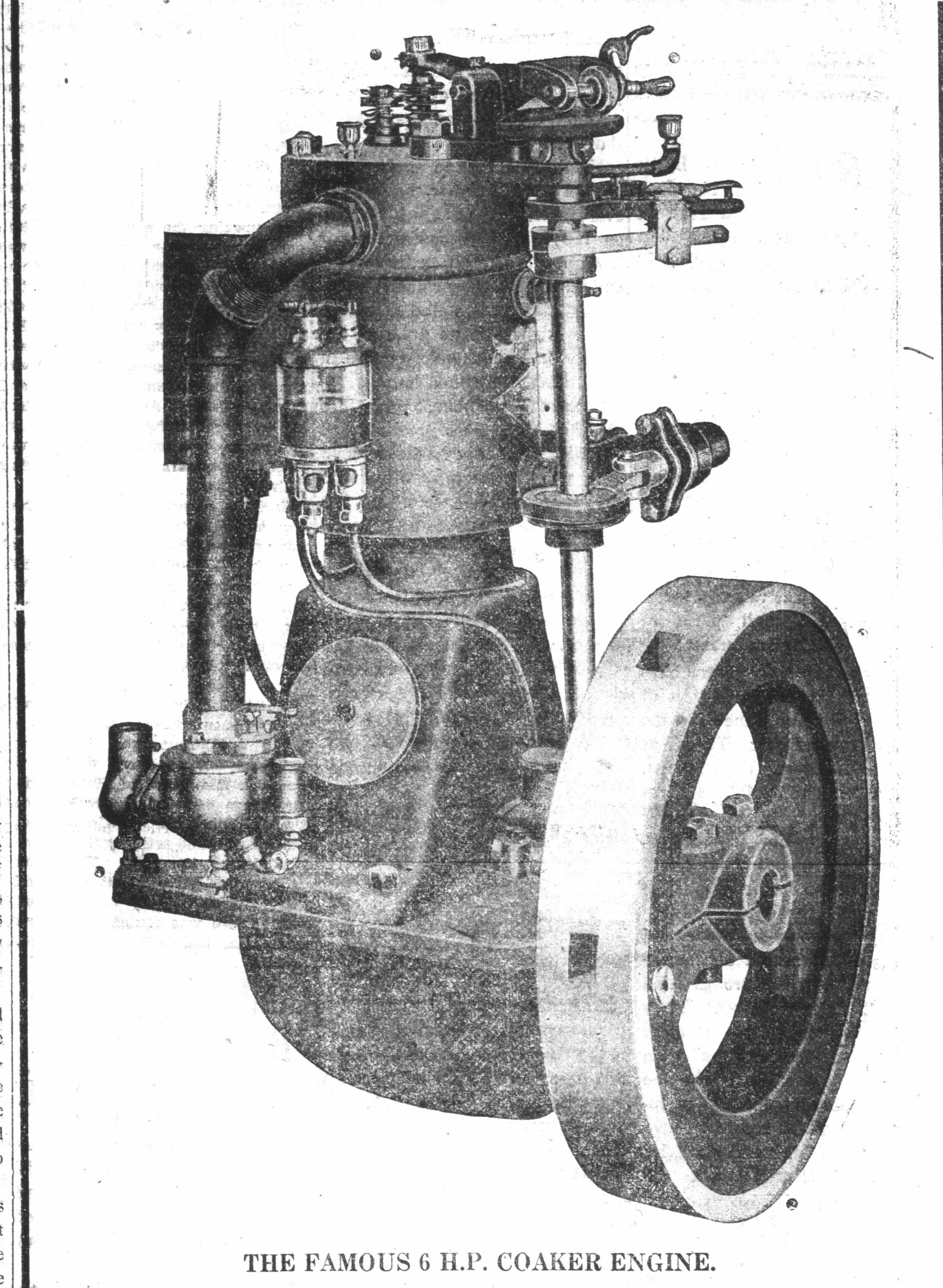
POSSIBLY.

Shortly after the death of one of England's great poets, one of his devoted admirers visited the little village where the poet had lived and died. The stranger entered into conversation with an old man, a native of the village, remarking sadly on the death of the poet.

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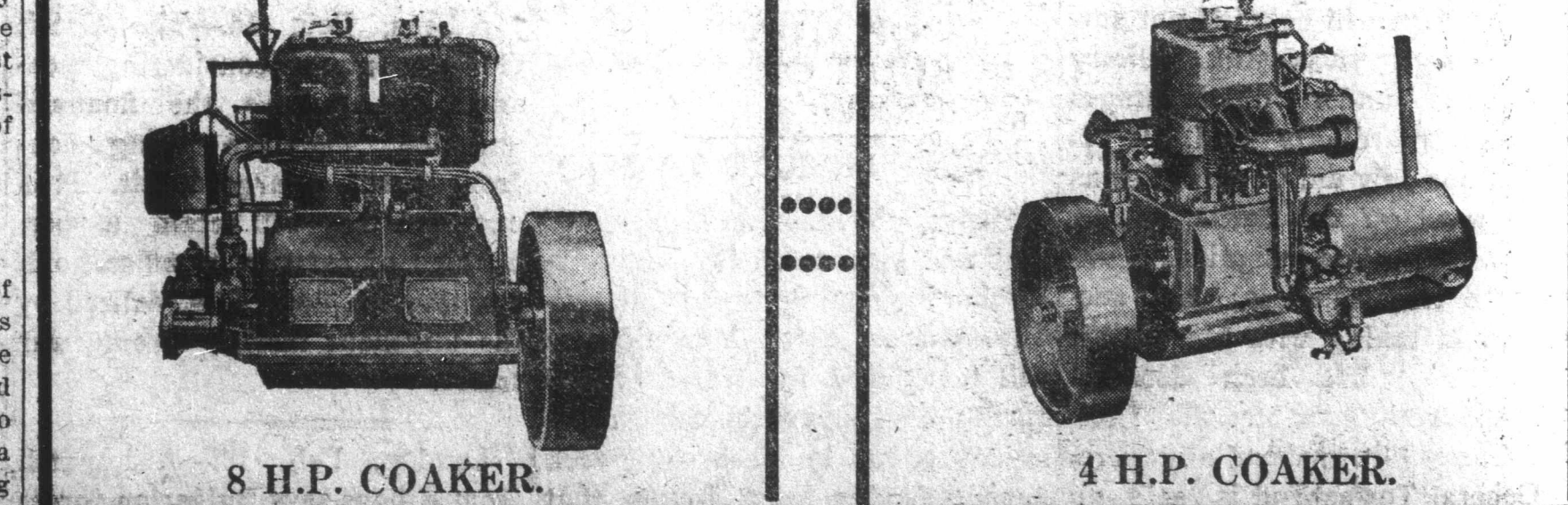
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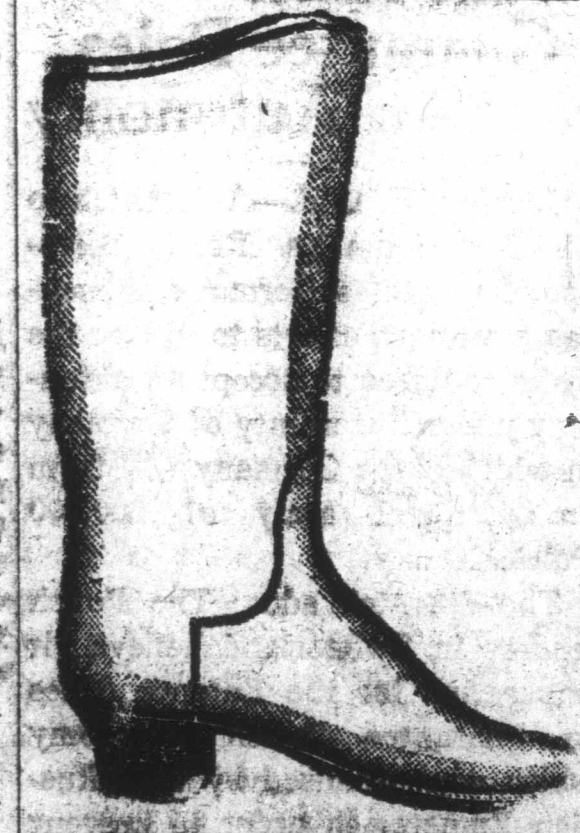


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