

## Heroes and Historic Landmarks of the Oldest Colony.

Address Delivered by Mr. H. F. Shortis in 1915.

(Continued.)

fore been taken by the French. He had 16 guns in his own ship, and managed to get 14 guns more, and within one month he built four forts. The men of the place seeing Holman's bravery and prudent management, came to his assistance. It is recounted in the records that the French arrived with two powerful frigates with ninety guns, who put in a heavy night for five hours, but Holman and his crews so battered them, that they ran away, leaving anchors and chains and eighty to ninety Frenchmen as prisoners. This so discouraged the enemy that they gave over their intended raid to spoil the trade of the whole country. It is pleasing to tell that our hero, Capt. Holman, received the thanks of the Lords of the Admiralty for his gallant services, and they presented them with a gold medal and chain for defeating the French on this occasion. It is a shame on us in Newfoundland that we have nothing to commemorate Christopher Martin and William Holman, and in fact very few know their names, but they showed an example of heroism for us all. 1698 was a memorable year for Newfoundland, and there must have been many heroes, but only the names of a few have come down to us. Early in this year Chevalier Nesmond, with a large French squadron, attacked St. John's, but two hastily constructed forts, one at Chain Rock and the other on the opposite side, defended the entrance. Nesmond's powerful fleet was completely routed by the valour of the Newfoundland crews. Later in the year D'Arville and his trained soldiers made the greatest effort ever put forward by the French to take possession of Newfoundland. Finding that St. John's was impregnable from the sea they determined to attack by land. After the English ships had left the coast in September, this daring enemy started the horrors of a winter campaign, and spread desolation and misery at every harbor from Placentia to Ferryland, and thence up the shore to St. John's. At Petty Harbor a desperate fight occurred, where 36 of the inhabitants were slain. Hearing of this fight, St. John's men went to the assistance of their friends, but a mile outside of St. John's they encountered the French on the Southside Hills. There were 400 disciplined French troops, but these courageous planters stuck to it, until 34, nearly half of their number, were slain. Then they retired in good order to Fort William, near where the Prince's Rink now stands. The unfortunate settlers in St. John's found themselves without ammunition or supplies, and no officers to command or lead in the defence. For three days they held the Fort. One of their number, William Drew, was captured, and barbarously treated, and they threatened to scalp every prisoner. As there was no food in the Fort, terms of surrender were arranged. All were to depart for England, but the French commanders dishonorably evaded it. The invaders continued their march to Portugal Cove, and thence around Conception Bay, in the middle of winter. This was a great military feat, but they met their match when they reached Carboner Island, where the Harbor Grace and Carboner people, to the number of two hundred, had determined to defend themselves against all attacks.

John Pynn was the leader, ably assisted by Davis and Garland, and put up the most heroic defence that even Lord Kitchener or Baden-Powell could wish for. Several attempts were made by D'Arville to land on the island, but they were all repulsed. At last they went all around in boats with ninety picked men ready for a desperate attack. There was one spot, the Bench Rock, still pointed out, where they made a determined effort to land, and were challenged at pistol shot distance. The French version says that they were able to touch the rock with their hands, and ready to leap ashore, but the tradition at Bristol's Hope, says, that one man did jump ashore, but he was driven back off the Bench into the water. When we remember that Carboner Island is about three miles in circumference, and being attacked in the dark by six boats, and no one knowing where they were going to land, it must have been an exciting time for the small garrison, who must have been scattered in all directions. After finding their best efforts failed, D'Arville continued his march down the North Shore, then across to Old Perlican and up to Heart's Content. Here an Irishman had built a small fort made of boards, with port holes above and below, and in it he had thirty men besides women and children. The French version says they surrendered on being summoned, but I don't believe it. I pin my faith to the local tradition, which still tells of a fierce battle with the French at New Perlican, which is quite near the entrance to Heart's Content coming up the shore, and in a celebrated "Look Out." It is a most likely spot where a defence would be put up. This place still goes by the name of Bloody Point, and everyone will tell you that it was a fight with the French. Who ever heard of an Irishman having surrendered on being summoned? Is that what we heard about the Connaught Rangers a few days ago. I will never believe that French version. The very mention of an Irishman in charge belies this statement, and only proves that there is another hero, whose name is unfortunately forgotten, and shed his own blood, and that of a good many Frenchmen, before they were finally overcome. D'Arville now took the short cut across from Heart's Content to Carboner to finish his work by capturing the island. He arrived on the 17th January only to find that the garrison had succeeded in taking several of their men prisoners. D'Arville, finding that he could not succeed in taking this Gibraltar of Newfoundland, by fair means, resorted to treachery. He entered into negotiations for exchange of prisoners. The place agreed upon was just out of gunshot of the island. For trivial excuses the French Commander raised a dispute, seized the English leaders and kept them prisoners. No doubt he thought when their leaders were gone the others would quickly surrender. But they reckoned wrong that time, and it showed the pluck and courage of that noble two hundred fishermen, who refused all terms of surrender and held out to the bitter end. Ten days later D'Arville had to admit his failure to take Carboner Island and left again for Trinity Bay. If I wasn't writing about Newfoundland heroes I would mention of D'Arville's exploits in Hudson Bay, where he defeated the English at all their important stations, destroyed their fleet of men-of-war, and captured their great stronghold, Fort Nelson. When you read of their exploits you can get some idea of the men our humble Newfoundland fishermen were fighting against. His journeys to Hudson Bay and sea fights were simply marvellous, and old John Pynn, Davis and Garland were men who showed him the stuff real Newfoundland heroes were made of. The losses in this way in 1696 were tremendous. Ferryland alone is put down at \$60,000.00, and that is nothing compared to St. John's, Harbor Grace and Carboner. What must have been the destitution of this raid to the people of Newfoundland at this time? We know from the Census in 1675 that there must have been fully 2,000 people living here during the winter. When we think of the suffering they had to undergo with the sacking and pillage by these Frenchmen and Indians, then the burning of their houses in mid-winter, and no chance of getting any provisions till the following spring, it must have been terrible. We know something of what the great fire in 1892 was, and what suffering had to be undergone; but that was in mid-summer, and assistance was sent from Halifax within two days, and every kind of relief offered; but if that fire had happened in mid-winter and no opportunity of relief offered for four months, and not that alone but a pitiless enemy standing guard over you demanding everything you held dear, you can get some idea of what the Newfoundland settlers had to undergo, and I am not exaggerating when I say our Newfoundland heroes were ten times worse off than over the stories we hear of Belgium to-day. It was only after this destruction of all the Newfoundland settlements that the English Government was aroused to send assistance by soldiers and navy to help in defending the country against these invaders.

In reading Abbe Bandolin's journal, while it gives interesting facts, we must remember that it was intended for French readers, and therefore accounts of British bravery is minimized to a mere nothing; but happily

we have some fragments of actual occurrences that give us some facts of what did happen. Only a few lines come to us about John Bartlett, a young man who lived with his family on Little Bell Island in Conception Bay. He anticipated an attack and had a cannon on the cliff. To make believe he had a considerable force, he had scarecrows dressed up. The French attacked him with two barges filled with soldiers. With a well directed shot he sank one barge. That man Bartlett deserved the Victoria Cross. His valor was unquestionable, and such were the deeds of the men who won our British Empire. There were probably fifty men in these two boats, and here was one young man who attempted the impossible. He defied the lot of them, and by his ingenuity and resourcefulness won a complete victory. What bravery that man did show! How long would he and his family live if the Frenchmen had landed and found what fools he was making of them? They would have quartered and hanged him to the nearest post as an example to any others who would play such tricks on them.

I have no doubt there are some of your readers who have heard of Skipper Jim Wilcox of Brigus, who always went by the name of Britainer, and his son after him was the Young Britainer. I want to tell you how Jim Wilcox got the name of "The Britainer." It was back in the French wars in the early part of the past century. Capt. Wilcox was out fishing in one of the small covered-in jacks, and had two men and a boy besides himself. They had done very well, and had a nice bit of fish, and were ready for home when one of the large French bankers came along with a crew of twenty-five men. In those troublesome times "might was right," and the Frenchmen thought it was an easy way to get their fish by ordering the boat to come alongside and hand over whatever fish they had to them. They halted, Capt. Wilcox told him to come alongside, but to their surprise he took no notice of them. They at once got out the big row boat and twenty of the crew started in chase of him and were soon alongside. Jim Wilcox was one of those small sturdy set men who feared nothing, and when he saw the boat alongside he looked for a weapon to defend himself. There wasn't a gun or anything of the kind on board—the only thing he could get was an axe, but he stood up to the gunwale of that little boat and swore a mighty oath. I won't give the words exactly, but he said that "Not a d— Frenchman would ever come aboard while there was a Britainer aboard." He kept his word, and that boat made one attempt after another, but that valiant little hero with the hatchet was more than a match for them, and the Frenchmen had to give up their intended raid. You can well believe that story was repeated many a time when the crew got back to Brigus, and the name of Britainer stuck to Jim Wilcox for the rest of his life, and that of his son after him.

When I get started telling stories I cannot stop, so now I must give you a typical one about the seal fishermen. There were not many herds amongst those men that will forever be the greatest romance in the history of Newfoundland life that it is hard to make special mention, but I don't believe there was a greater exploit than that of Capt. Wm. Bartlett, who sailed out of Brigus about one hundred years ago in quest of seals. It wasn't an iron clad or even a wooden steamer that he had, but one of those old-fashioned shallops, an open boat of about twenty tons with movable

deck boards. Judge Prowse tells us that these old shallops never went past the headlands, but Capt. Billy Bartlett did. He hoped to find the seals at Baccalieu, but they weren't there, so he followed on to Cape Bonaville; still there was no ice there, so he said, "Boys, we will follow on till we get them." He followed on to the Funder; still there were no seals, so he told the boys, "We will follow on again"—and he followed and followed on till they reached the Spotted Islands on the Labrador Coast, and there, off Hiscop's Island they met the ice, and lots of seals. They soon loaded her and drifted south with the

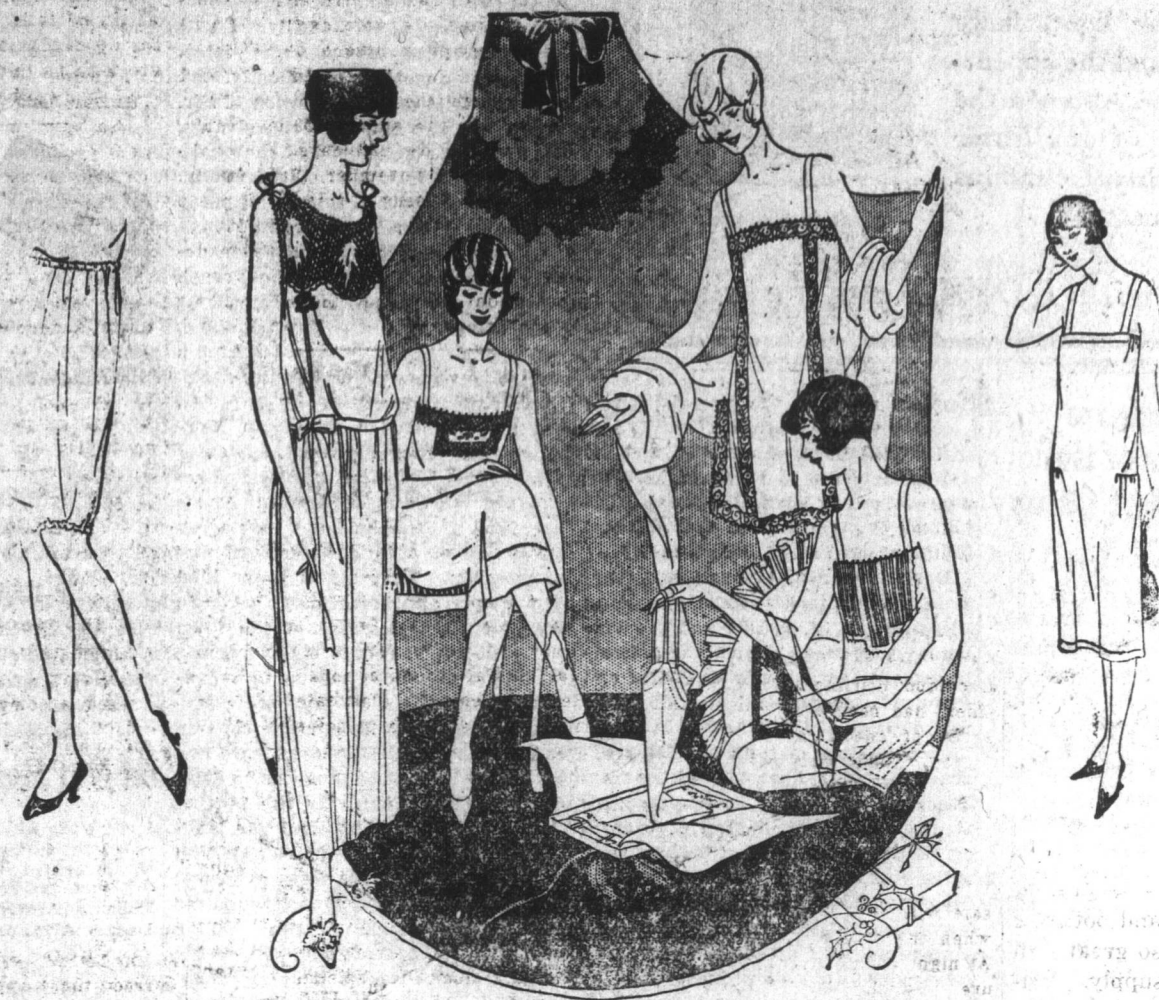
ice until they reached the latitude of Conception Bay. Talk of heroes, but who ever heard of an ordinary mortal going to Labrador in mid-winter in an open boat? When we hear of such men we wonder if they are only things of the past; but history repeats itself, and Capt. Bob Bartlett, one of his descendants, even beats that record to-day in the voyage of the Karluk. He tells his story as if it was all in a day's work, how he brought the old Karluk through many dangers; but when her doom was sealed he saved his crew, and if the scientists had followed his advice they would also be alive to-day. We have already heard of D'Arville's Military Exploit, of a two hundred mile tramp during a Newfoundland winter, but here was Bob Bartlett tramping 1100 miles in the depth of an Arctic Siberian winter with one lone Eskimo, who was frightened out of his life, that they would meet a stranger. What anguish

Bartlett must have suffered when he reached the first settlement, looking for assistance, to find the only two families living there were on the verge of starvation, and instead of getting relief for himself, he at once divided his slender stock of provisions with them. For days his legs and feet were benumbed and powerless from constant soaking in the icy water and

(Continued on 8th page.)

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