

WEEK-END NOTES.

CHAPTER XXVIII.
(J. C. MORRIS.)

It was in the last half of the seventies that the Dundee ships first prosecuted the sealing voyage off the coast of Newfoundland. For long years these ships had sailed far north to Greenland for the purpose of prosecuting the whaling voyage, and their prowess and success were established at Dundee. At that date our sealing voyage was at its height, and although only a few sailing ships were left, there was a fleet of some thirty steamers, which took their place. With such a big catch of seals as was then brought to port, it was only reasonable that very glowing accounts were circulated as to the financial return from this source. So it came about that the Dundee Sealing and Whaling Company of William Stephen & Sons tried their luck in this direction; and for that purpose they built, what at that time was considered a wonderful ship, she being about nine hundred tons, and bark rigged. As many of our readers are aware the ship was named the *Resolute*, and was commanded by Capt. Adams. Captain Adams was comparatively a young man, and a very good looking man, and during his visit to St. John's he became very popular, and was well liked. The first venture was made by sailing direct from Dundee to the ice fields, but not much success was achieved, and the steamer continued on to her northern destination.

On the Arctic's first arrival at St. John's, she had very severe weather, the harbor being frozen over. The Arctic brought her whaling crew from Dundee to the number of about fifty men, but the sealing crew of about two hundred and fifty men, was shipped here at St. John's. On the whole, the Arctic was fairly successful, and other ships followed, all being built especially for the purpose. The second ship to arrive was the *Aurora*, commanded by Captain Fairweather, followed the next spring by the good ship *Thetis*, which ship, though for a long while in other waters, is now one of the remaining small fleet of sealers. The *Thetis* is still ornamented with a beautiful figure head, which is one of the few reminders of those features of shipping, which we have already written of. The barkentine *Clutha*, which is some fifty years in the trade, also has an ornate figure head.

The early stages of the Dundee Company's operations were sufficiently successful to induce others in Scotland to form a second company, and they made their headquarters at the southside premises, formerly occupied by Stabb, Rowe & Co. Amongst their ships were the *Esquimaux*, *Norwhale*, and *Polynia*. These latter two ships were built by Lady Franklin as an expedition to search for her husband, Sir John Franklin, who was lost in Arctic exploration. The upper Dundee Company, as they were called, also built some new ships, amongst which were the *Resolute* and *Terra Nova*. The latter ship is still with us, and is commanded by our gallant commodore, Captain Abraham Kean. For some ten or fifteen years these Dundee ships seemed to have been very successful, but after that the interest began to wane, and some of the ships were lost, notably the *Arctic*, and in the meantime William Stephen died, and whether because of financial loss, or because of lack of interest, the two companies finally wound up, and like the Arabs they "folded their tents and sped away." Thus it is that to-day, the name is but of the past, and the Dundee boats which some had expected would have established the sealing voyage, are gone with their sister ships, and evidently gone no more to return.

During the operation of the Dundee firms in St. John's their business and their crews added considerably to the industry and wealth of the port, and the ships made considerable local history. The *Norwhale* and the *Polynia*, being ships of the early Victorian age, were very quaint when compared with the new ships, such as the *Arctic* or *Resolute*. But there was one other ship which incidentally made port at the beginning of the Dundee operations, and for quaintness she surpassed anything that had entered port for long years before. Her name was the *Xanthus*; she was a Peterhead whaler, and having left early for the voyage she got driven in this direction and made port and immediately got in communication with her owners at Scotland. As is known by many people, the firm of the late Moses Monroe was agent for the Dundee ships, and so the same firm became agent for the *Xanthus*. On a reply being received from Scotland it



was decided that the *Xanthus* should prosecute the sealing voyage out of St. John's before proceeding to Belfast's Land on her whaling voyage. The ship was given in command of the late Captain James Power, and a crew of about one hundred men signed on, and she got off with the fleet. To many of us the name was strange and of course sent us to our histories and to our Greek literature; but it was the quaintness of the ship and her conjected appearance about deck which chiefly attracted our attention, for we were better sailors than Greek scholars. She was barque rigged and was not more than two hundred and fifty tons gross. The Dundee ships were very fortunate in their career and came through with very little accident and but few fatalities, one of which happened on board the *Xanthus*, and it happened so simply that it made the tragedy all the greater. The ship left port about ten a.m. and was in the wake of the other ships, which had made their different channels through the ice in the harbor. The ice in the Narrows was mostly drift ice and extended out to the Bay, but there was a good deal of slob or slob. As the *Xanthus* passed Chain Rock and continued through the Narrows, her progress was impeded by the pressure of the ice, and she not being a very powerful boat, the crew, as was customary, were ordered out to prize the ice from the ship's bow. Prizing and blasting at that time were quite a feature in seal hunting. The ship was just clearing the Narrows, and was abreast the Highhouse, when she was thus caught. Several of the crew got their prizing sticks and jumped out on the ice, most of them getting over the ship's side amidstships. Amongst those who jumped was one of the crew proper, a young Scotchman of about 25 years of age. The young man evidently did not understand the ice like our people, and it seems he did not look before he leaped; but he made a spring from the bow, upon what he thought was hard ice, when, to the horror of all the crew, it was seen that just where he jumped was mere slob and down he went and was never seen afterwards. At duty's post the young man went down in an instant. It was simple, we say, but it was tragic all the same, and the quaint ship *Xanthus* was minus one of her brave men. Another accident, occurred on the steamship *Esquimaux*, which was in port getting ready for her whaling voyage. There was some little thing wrong with the propeller and Mr. Samuel Walsh, one of the most beautiful and popular men of his day, went down as diver; but through some misunderstanding in the signals a mistake was made and the brave man was suffocated. Samuel Walsh was a master man—a man who was destined to have a place and a say in his country. He was but thirty-two years of age and his death was a blow, felt keenly by the entire community. Thus came the Dundee boats, and thus they operated, and thus they passed away. Their name now is but a lingering reference, and all their prowess and all their strength is, as Kipling says, "One with Nineveh and Tyre."

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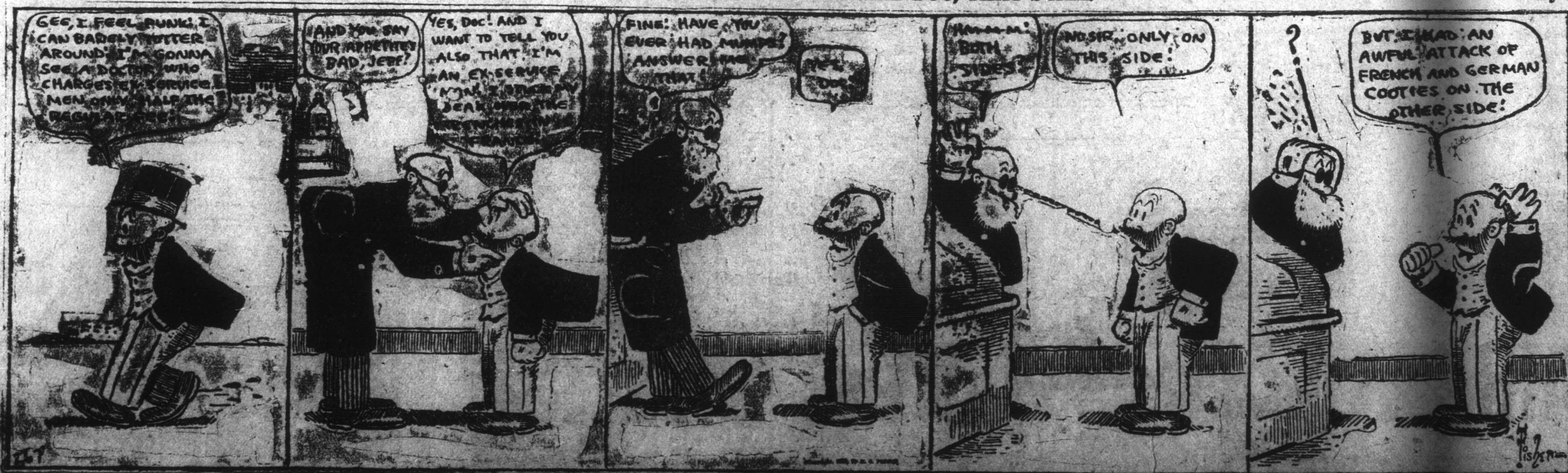
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THE OLD BOYS.



THE OLD BOYS.

In Punktown's shady public square green benches line the path, and many greybeards gather there, to ventilate their wrath; the government is out of whack, its bulwarks are a wreck, and so they spit it up the back, and smite it in the neck. The old boys' shoes are never shined, their pants are never creased, their whiskers flutter in the wind which bloweth from the east. And no one heeds what they may say, nor

cares what they may do; their shabby duds give them away; they're dead ends, they are through. Of course it's true that sterling worth may be 'neath humble dress; some of the great ones of the earth were slovens, I confess. But such exceptions prove the rule, and we in haste decamp when some old greybeard starts to drool, if he looks like a tramp. But if a man who is attired in raiment up to date, hands out some sentiments inspired, we listen

till it's late. We gather close about his knee like children when they hear some mystic tale of boneset tea disguised as Volstead beer. The frowzy greybeards in the park are worthy men, in sooth, but they have lost ambition's spark that fired them in their youth. Their hair is full of burs and hay, their fingernails are blue; so no one heeds what they may say, or cares what they may do.

Y'Never Know, Y'Know.

Great was the excitement behind the scenes of the Terrace Theatre, for it was the first night of a new play, and upon such occasions all concerned are worked up to a great pitch of nervousness lest it should be a failure.

The author was standing at the back of the stage watching the first scene being set up.

After looking on in silence for a few minutes, he turned to the stage manager, who was close by him, and remarked: "I say, that's a peculiar-looking scene shifter over there."

"Yes, he is," replied the other. "He's an Eskimo."

"An Eskimo?" said the other. "An Eskimo? What on earth made you take him on?"

"Oh, I thought it would be a comfort to see one happy face if the play turns out to be a frost."

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