

REDBURN THE SAILOR.

THE STORY OF HIS CRIME AND OF ITS PUNISHMENT.

A Celebrated Murder Case that Excited Great Interest in St. John—An Execution During Holiday Week—Singular Instance of Calmness on the Brink of Eternity.

While the Mispick tragedy, of which I gave an account some weeks ago, far eclipsed anything in the nature of crime ever known in New Brunswick, there was a case, eleven years previous, which excited a very deep interest in St. John. It was that of Charles Redburn, hanged on the 29th day of December, 1846, for the murder of a shipmate on board a vessel lying at this port. It was a simple enough case of killing, but the subsequent behavior of the condemned man excited a great deal of sympathy on his behalf, and strenuous efforts were made, but in vain, to secure a reprieve. I find among those who were then living and conversant with the facts a strong opinion now that the sentence should have been commuted. Like the case of the boy Patrick Burgen, in 1828, it was an instance where the present generation might be glad to undo the work of the past.

Redburn, as he called himself, though his true name never was known, was cook on board the barque Jane Hammond, of St. John, owned at that time by the estate of William Hammond, deceased. He was a Swede, said to be of very respectable family, and was about 35 years of age. He bore a good character aboard ship, was not quarrelsome in his nature, and seemed in no way a man likely to kill another.

The Jane Hammond, commanded by Captain Oliver Healey, arrived at St. John from Liverpool on Monday, the 2nd of November, 1846. Redburn was ashore on Tuesday and remained ashore all night, making merry after his voyage over the ocean. On Wednesday morning he came aboard, feeling the usual effects of a spree, and bringing with him a bottle of liquor. With this he treated some of the crew, and went to the galley to prepare breakfast. There had been some tricks played on him, and he had been provoked into a state in which a very slight thing would exasperate him. While in the galley, one of the crew, Patrick Carling (or Kerley) went to him and asked for his breakfast. Redburn's reply was, "I have done a damned sight too much for the whole of you already," retreating perhaps to the liquor he had given them. Carling, unfortunately for himself in this instance, was a teetotaler; his heart had not been warmed with a libation, and he did not enter into the spirit of the remark. He retorted, "You have not done more for me than anybody else has, and if you do not give me my tea I will take it myself." He then dipped his pot into the boiler, and while he was doing so Redburn said, "If you do not take it, I will throw it over you." Carling got his tea and went forward to the windlass, where he began to eat his breakfast.

Presently Redburn, who had evidently been much annoyed at some remark made by Carling, came out of the galley and went forward to where the sailor was standing.

"You do not remember when you were at home eating potatoes, and salt and water?" said Redburn.

Another sailor, John Burns, here interposed with the remark that there were better men than Redburn or any of his countrymen, who had been brought up on that kind of food.

"Never mind him, Jack, do not bother him," said Carling, and Redburn returned to the galley. Soon after this, Carling went to the galley, leaned one shoulder against the side of the doorway, and reaching in shook Redburn by the collar of his shirt and said, "If you are a man you will come out and take it up. Wait until after breakfast and we will then see what you have to say." Then Carling walked back to his former position at the windlass.

Redburn then did something which operated very strongly against him on his trial. He went to one of the crew and borrowed a sheath knife, which he had been in the habit of getting for cutting meat and other galley work. He seemed quite calm. Getting the knife he rubbed it up a little on the grindstone, and five minutes or so later he came out of the galley with the knife in his right hand and a tin quart measure of greasy hot water in his left. Approaching Carling, he threw the hot water on his head.

"What was that you did to me in the galley a little while ago?" demanded Redburn.

Carling had turned away his head as he felt the hot water, and he cried out, "I'm scalded!" Redburn immediately plunged the knife into Carling's back, at the right side, penetrating three inches, and completely dividing the lower rib. On feeling the knife, Carling shouted, "I'm stuck! I'm stuck! I'm stuck!" grappled with Redburn and then ran around the deck, falling into the arms of some of his messmates, who supported him.

Redburn, in the meantime, had gone back to the galley, where he laid down the knife and walked to where the sailors were supporting the dying man.

"I did it and I suppose I will be hanged for it," said Redburn. Immediately after this he was seized by Captain Healey and others, put in irons and afterwards sent to the jail.

Carling was removed to the marine hospital, where he died a few hours later.

A coroner's jury having found a verdict of wilful murder, it became necessary to call a special session of the supreme court to deal with the case. In the ordinary course of things there would have been no session until the regular circuit in January, but as the witnesses in this affair were seafaring men, and it was not desirable to detain them, the special court was held on Tuesday, the 24th of November, His Honor Geo. F. Street, who had been appointed a judge the previous year, presiding.

The grand jury found a true bill, and the prisoner, when arraigned, pleaded not guilty, and said he would be ready for his trial on the following day.

The prosecution, at the trial, was conducted by Hon. W. B. Kinnear, solicitor-general, while Redburn was defended by Robertson Bayard and Hon. John H. Gray. The jury was composed of the following well known citizens: William Hughson, foreman; Henry Hood, James G. Lester, Edward E. Lockhart, Charles J. Melick, William L. Avery, Thomas Crozier, Charles Calkin, Stephen H. Fought, Thomas Gard, Richard Thomson, Henry Vaughan.

The witnesses were few in number, and the principal one was John Burns, who deposed to the facts as already given. This witness, in cross-examination, was asked if he had boasted that Redburn would be hanged and that he would be "the boy to put the nails in his coffin." He denied saying this, but it was afterwards proved, by the evidence of two witnesses not connected with the affair, that he had used these words. In addition to these witnesses for the defence, Captain Healey gave Redburn a good character, while John Willis, keeper of the jail, deposed that when the prisoner was brought there he was much excited and appeared to be under the influence of liquor. Later in the day he seemed much grieved at what he had done, though he did not then think the wound would cause Carling's death.

The contention of the counsel for the defence was that the killing amounted to manslaughter, but not to murder. The solicitor-general, while very moderate in his address, pointed out that nothing less than murder could be shown. Judge Street, after reviewing the testimony and pointing out the law as to what constituted murder, felt it his duty to say that, from the evidence before the court, there did not appear such provocation for the act as would reduce the charge below that of murder, as laid on the indictment.

The jury, after an absence of two hours, found the prisoner guilty of murder, recommending him to mercy on account of his previous good conduct. Sentence was deferred until the following Friday, the 27th. While the occurrence has no bearing on the case, it may be here stated that the night following Redburn's conviction was remarkable for one of the most furious storms of wind, snow and rain, which had nothing to compare with it in the memory of the citizens, except the fearful gale of December 31st, 1819, when the newly erected barrack building at Lower Cove was blown down and the brig May Bell lost, with all her crew, on Partridge Island. Nor does there seem to have been as severe a storm in subsequent years until the Saxby gale, on the 4th and 5th of October, 1869. The storm of November 25th and 26th, 1846, did a great deal of damage around the city. Trees were uprooted, chimneys blown down and roofs of houses lifted until the buildings looked like wrecks. During Thursday the shutters were kept on many of the stores to prevent the windows being blown in and smashed by flying slates and other debris blown from the roofs. Ships were driven from their moorings at the wharves, and one new ship all ready for sea was driven ashore on a ledge off Rankin's wharf. Many smaller vessels were much injured, and a fishing schooner was sunk at the end of the North wharf. A schooner was wrecked off St. Martins, with loss of life, and much other damage was done in the Bay and along the coast.

Redburn was brought into court on the morning of Friday, the 27th, when Judge Street, who showed much emotion, passed sentence of death. In doing so, he besought the prisoner to look back and consider how he had sent a fellow creature into eternity with all his sins upon his head, with but little time to repent and prepare himself for another world. A greater privilege would be allowed the prisoner, and he would have space for repentance, but his life, which under ordinary circumstance might have lasted long, must be sacrificed, through his own act, by the law. He begged the prisoner to repent of the past and prepare for the future. "No matter how guilty you have been, you may yet at last be pardoned from the Throne of Grace, and your sins may be forgiven. Religious men will attend you and give you their assistance, but you must remember that they can only assist, and you yourself must seek for mercy." The judge added that he saw no point in the evidence which would justify him in an application for a mitigation of the sentence. It would be useless for him to hope for pardon or reprieve. His Honor then concluded: "The sentence of court is that you shall be taken from this place to the jail of the city and county of Saint John, from whence you came; from thence, on Tuesday, the 29th day of December next, you shall be taken to the place of execution, where you shall be hanged by the neck until you are dead; and may the Lord have mercy on your soul."

Redburn bore his sentence manfully, while the judge and the large concourse of spectators were very much affected. When the murder was committed, there had been a popular demand for strict justice, and a fear that the guilty should escape. As soon as Redburn was convicted, the wave began to turn the other way, and many were anxious to see him saved from the gallows. Letters were written to the press and long discussions ensued on the question of capital punishment. The bearing of Redburn during and after the trial impressed many in his favor, but however far allowance for his provocation could be

made by human nature, the evidence clearly made his crime murder. He resigned himself to his fate and welcomed the ministrations of those who sought to bring peace to his mind.

The execution took place at the east end of the present jail building, which was then a new structure, having been occupied only about five years. The style of gallows used was one, I think, which had never been tried here before, and has never been used since. It was designed to be on the same principle as the apparatus which, in recent years, was in favor in New York and other cities of the United States. It was the weight and pulley style. From the east window of what is now the second story of the building, a stationary beam projected, at the outer and inner ends of which were pulleys through which the rope ran. At the end of the rope inside the building was a heavy weight, held in place until the proper moment, when its release and fall would instantly jerk upward the end which held the noose. This, it will be seen, was a different arrangement from the weighted lever, used in later years, though the theory was the same, and the arrangement itself essentially the same as a modern American method. In all these plans, the condemned is supposed to be jerked from the platform so violently that his neck will be dislocated. Where there is any blunder about the adjustment, he is simply strangled, and the thorough efficiency of the old-fashioned drop, properly calculated for the weight of the condemned, is contestably demonstrated.

In the instance of Redburn, the blunder was in allowing so very little slack to the rope that, instead of a sudden jerk and dislocation, there was simply a very rapid hoisting. The effect was much the same as in an execution at a yard-arm, which was possibly what a sailor might desire, whatever the public might think.

There was another thing in regard to this execution which, as a matter of sentiment, gives one an unpleasant feeling. Of all times of the year, the date fixed was in holiday week, when the world was rejoicing over Christmas and its memories. Perhaps the judge felt that he could not in justice to the prisoner set the time any earlier, and it seems to have been the fashion to allow, in justice to the public, no more than a month between sentence and execution.

The morning of the 29th of December was bitterly cold, but this fact, of itself, would not have prevented a large concourse had not the sheriff, James White, kept the hour he had fixed a secret from the general public. The weather was too severe for many, except a determined few, to be on hand early, prepared to wait several hours, if needful, and as the sheriff had made his calculations to have as little delay as possible, the attendance of the curious was small, as compared with that at executions in previous years.

Redburn came out upon the temporary platform which had been laid upon the ground, wearing no coat and having a checked sailor shirt. Attending him were Revs. Robert Irvine, (presbyterian), Samuel Robinson (baptist), and Alexander Stewart, (episcopalian). The condemned man listened attentively to their words, and not only seemed perfectly calm, but proved that he was in a very singular way.

The hangman, whose identity was concealed by a mask, was a small-sized fellow who, either from nervousness or stupidity, was unable to properly adjust the noose. Redburn perceived this, and turning to the keeper of the jail, quietly said: "This man does not know how to fix it, Mr. Willis. I wish you would come and see to it."

Thereupon Mr. Willis stepped forward, and with the tears running from his cheeks, did the last grim office for the man for whom he had felt such deep respect. A moment later the signal was given, and the law had satisfied its claim for the murder of Patrick Carling.

This incident I have from an eye witness. I do not think it has ever before appeared in print.

Redburn was the first hanged at the new jail. Eleven years later he was followed by Slavin, the last man hanged by public execution in St. John. ROSLYNDE.

ONEMEANING FOR "O. K."

In Russia It Is Used to Denote a Certain Fervent Patriot.

"O. K." has another significance than the one usually attached to it. In Russia O. K. used to mean a mysterious brilliant writer who filled columns of the Moscow Gazette and Russia with letters in favor of an Anglo-Russian alliance. The mystic letters meant Olga Kireeff, one of the most prominent of all the fascinating set of social-political Russian luminaries, says the New York World.

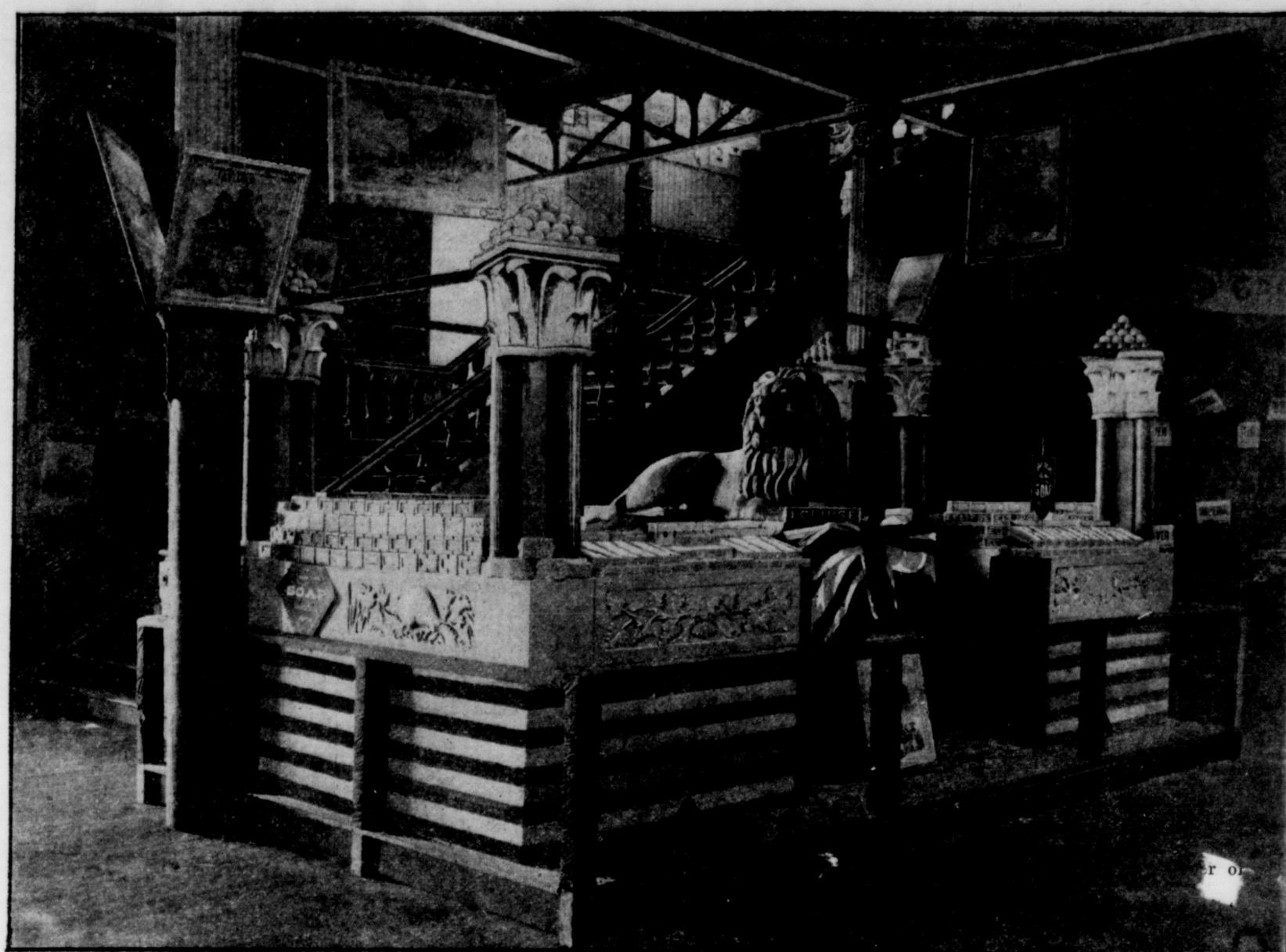
She was the only daughter of a distinguished Russian family, and the godchild of Emperor Nicholas, and led the usual life of the upper class Russian girl until her marriage with Gen. Novikoff. She was the typical leader of the social diplomatic set for awhile, but was not seriously interested in politics until one of her brothers was killed in the Russo-Turkish war. Then she awoke suddenly to the fact of political life, and, believing that had England and Russia been on friendly terms such sacrifices would not have been necessary, she became an earnest advocate of an alliance between the two countries.

In England she has many friends of distinction. Kinglake, Hon. C. P. Villiers, Bernal Osborne, Prof. Tyndall, Gladstone, Carlyle, John Bright, Prof. Freeman, and Froude are all personal friends of hers, and some of them supporters of her views. She always stays at Claridge's when she is in London, and it was to her that Kinglake wrote the well-known nonsense verse:

There is a fair lady at Claridge's
Whose smile is more charming to me
Than the smiles of ninety-nine marriages
Could possibly, possibly be.

"Minnie, aren't my roses nice?"
"Yes, very pretty."
"But don't you like their perfume?"
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Another George Washington.

The tramp knocked softly at the kitchen door, and the nicest, sweetest old lady in the world met him. He chuckled quietly, for he thought he had struck a regular bonanza find.

"Beggin' your pardon, lady, but can I get a bite to eat here?" he asked humbly. "Are you very hungry?" she responded like a mother.

"Yes, lady."

"You are out of work, I suppose?"

"Yes, lady; I have not done a lick of work since the first day of June."

Something in this statement made him chuckle again, but she did not hear him, as she stepped to the cupboard to get a piece of pie. She came back and stood with it in her hand before him like a Lady Bountiful, and his mouth began to water.

"And how long before that?" she asked, with something in her tone that crushed him.

"Lady," he gasped, "I cannot tell a lie. Good morning," and he walked out of the yard while she set the pie back for the next one.

The Ladies Protest.

At Baku on the Caspian, a society has been formed to abolish hand shaking and kissing, on the ground that bacilli are propagated by such personal contact. The ladies, however, have protested against this to the governor general.

A timid Chinaman dined with the young ladies of a certain seminary a few weeks since. His laconic remark at leaving was—"Too much plenty girl."

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