

The Daily News

The Leading Newspaper and the Largest Circulation in Northern B. C.

Published by the Prince Rupert Publishing Company, Limited

DAILY AND WEEKLY

TRANSIENT DISPLAY ADVERTISING—50 cents per inch. Contract rates on application.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES—To Canada, United States and Mexico—DAILY, 50c per month, or \$5.00 per year, in advance. WEEKLY, \$2.00 per year. All Other Countries—Daily, \$3.00 per year; Weekly, \$2.50 per year, strictly in advance.

HEAD OFFICE

Daily News Building, Third Ave., Prince Rupert, B. C. Telephone 58.

BRANCH OFFICES AND AGENCIES

New York—National Newspaper Bureau, 219 East 23rd St., New York City.

SEATTLE—Puget Sound News Co.

LONDON, ENGLAND—The Clougher Syndicate, Grand Trunk Building, Trafalgar Square.

SUBSCRIBERS will greatly oblige by promptly calling up Phone 98 in case of non-delivery or inattention on the part of the news carriers.

DAILY EDITION.



THURSDAY, OCT. 26

A NEW IDEA IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

From Virginia comes the novelty of municipal government administered by a general manager whose prototype is to be found in every large corporation. This scheme, which is known as the "Staunton plan," after the city where it is in vogue, is a modification of the commission form of government.

Three years of experimentation have been satisfactory to Staunton, with a population in excess of 12,000 and one of the most enterprising communities in Virginia. When, in March, 1908, it was decided to give the general manager a chance, it was a guess that councilmen, having their private affairs, could not reasonably be expected to give their time and services gratuitously to the community. This, it was pointed out, led naturally to indifference and to the administration of affairs by a select few or by contractors interested in public work.

Under the new plan, it is reported that this system of favoritism is a thing of the past.

In his new book, "City Government by Commission," Clinton Rogers Woodruff, secretary of the National Municipal league, refers at length to the "Staunton plan," also quotes John Crosby, president of the Commission council of the municipality. Says Secretary Woodruff in one place:

"The constitution of Virginia requires cities to maintain their mayor and council, and in cities of the first class (those having a population of 10,000 or more) two branches of the council are required. Therefore," Mr. Crosby tells us, "Staunton was unable to abolish the council and adopt a commission form of government. However, as the provisions of the code permit the council to establish such offices as may be necessary to conduct properly the city's affairs, the idea of a general manager was conceived."

In the main, the terms of the ordinance adopted by the Staunton council and authorizing the general manager, prescribe:

That the two branches of the council shall appoint yearly, in July, "an officer to be known and designated as 'general manager.'"

That the general manager shall receive a yearly salary to be fixed by the council and shall employ a paid clerk.

That the general manager "shall devote his entire time to the duties of his office, and shall have entire charge and control of the executive work of the city in its various departments and have entire charge and control of the heads of departments and employees of the city. He shall make all contracts for labor and supplies, and in general perform all of the administrative executive work now performed by the several standing committees of the council, except the finance ordinance and auditing committees. The general manager shall discharge such duties as many from time to time be required of him by the council."

PASSING COMMENT

The proprietor of the Journal is not in favor of Commission government. He much prefers the kind that allows a party Mayor to hand him advertising pap at double rates, and makes the public pay the bill. The opposition of the proprietor of the Journal to Commission government is a tribute to Commission government.

COMING

FOR 4 NIGHTS

FOR 4 NIGHTS

EMPRESS THEATRE

in new plays

MAY ROBERTS

and her company

Monday Ev'g, October 30

A Comedy by Victorien Sardou

"DIVORCONS"

Read The Daily News

And Get All the News

THE
Pillar
of
LightBy
Louis
TracyCHAPTER I.
FLOTSAM.

All night long the great bell of the lighthouse, slung to a stout beam projecting seaward beneath the outer platform, had tolled its warning through the fog. The monotonous ticking of the clockwork attachment that governed it, the sharp and livelier click of the occulting hood's machinery, were the only sounds which alternated with its deep boom. The tremendous clang sent a thrill through the giant column itself and pealed away into the murky void with a tremolo of profound diminution.

Overhead, the magnificent lantern, its eight-angled circle of flame burning at full pressure, illumined the drifting vapor with an intensity that seemed to be born of the sturdy granite pillar of which it was the fitting diadem. Hard and strong externally as the everlasting rock on which it stood, replete within with burnished steel and polished brass, great cylinders and powerful pumps, the lighthouse thrust its glowing torch beyond the reach of the most daring wave. Cold, dour, defiant it looked. Yet its superhuman eye swept to pierce the very heart of the fog, and the furnace-white glare, concentrated ten thousand-fold by the encircling lens of the dioptric lens, flung far into the gloom a silvery cloak of moon-like radiance.

At last an irresistible ally sprang to the assistance of the unconquerable light. About the close of the middle watch a gentle breeze from the Atlantic followed the tide and swept the shivering wreath landward to the northeast, whilst the first beams of a June sun completed the destruction of the routed spectre.

So, once more, as on the dawn of the third day, the waters under the heaven were gathered into one place and the dry land appeared, and behold, it was good.

On the horizon, the turquoise rim of the sea lay with the sheen of folded silk against the softer canopy of the sky. Towards the west a group of islands, to which drifting banks of mist clung in melting despair, were etched in shadows of dreamy purple. Over the nearer sea-floors the quickly dying vapor spread a hazy pall of opal tints. Across the face of the waters glistening bands of silver in fairy lights. The slanting rays of the sun threw broadcast a golden mirage and gilded all things with the dumb gladness of an English summer's day.

A man, pacing the narrow gallery beneath the lantern, halted for a moment to flood his soul afresh with a beauty made entrancing by the knowledge that a few brief moments would resolve it into maturer and more familiar charms.

He was engaged, it is true, in the unromantic action of filling his pipe, a simple thing, beloved alike of poets and navvies,—yet his eyes drank in the mute glory of the scene, and, captive to the spell of the hour, he murmured aloud:

"Floating on waves of music and of light,
Behold the chariot of the Fairy Queen!"

Celestial couriers paw the unyielding air;
Their filmy pennons at her word they furl,
And stop obedient to the reins of light."

The small door beneath the glass pane was open. The bonnet within, gleaming an auburn burn, heaved for an instant and popped his head out.

"Did you call me?" he inquired.

The matter-of-fact words awoke the dreamer. He turned with a pleasant smile.

"To be exact, Jim, I did call somebody, but it was Aurora, Spirit of the Dawn, not a hard-bitten seafarer like you."

"Oh, that's all right, cap'n. I thought I heard you singin' out for a fight."

The other man bent his head to shield a match from a puff of wind, thus concealing from his companion the gleam of amusement in his eyes. His mate sniffed the fragrant odor of the tobacco longingly, but the Elder Brethren of the Trinity maintain strict discipline, and he vanished his task without a thought of broken rules.

He left a piece of good advice behind him.

"If I was you, cap'n," he said, "I'd turn in. Jones is feelin' A this mornin'. You ought to be dead beat after your double spell of the last two days. I'll keep breakfast back until three bells (9:30 a.m.) and there's fresh eggs an' haddock."

"Just a couple of whiffs, Jim. Then I'll go below."

Both men wore the uniform of assistant-keepers, yet it needed not their manner of speech to reveal that one was a gentleman, born and bred, and the other a bluff, good-natured, horny-handed A. B., to whom new-fangled eggs and recently cured fish appeared far more potent than Shelley and a summer dawn at sea.

He who had involuntarily quoted "Queen Mab" turned his gaze seaward again. Each moment the scene was becoming more brilliant yet nearer to earth. The far-off islands sent splashes of gray, brown and green through the purple. The rose flush on the horizon was assuming a yellow tinge and the blue of sky and water was deepening. Twenty miles away to the southwest the smoke of a steamer heralded the advent of an

—that she was the Princess Royal, homeward bound from New York to Southampton. From her saloon deck those enthusiasts who had risen early enough to catch a first glimpse of the English coast were already scanning the trimly rugged outlines of the Solly Isles, and searching with their glasses for the Land's End and the Lizard.

In a few hours they would be in Southampton; the afternoon in London—London, the Mecca of the world, from which, two years ago he fled with a loathing akin to terror. The big ship out there, panting and straining as if she were beginning, not ending, her ocean race of three thousand miles, was carrying eager hundreds of pleasures, an odyssey of the great city. Yet he, the man of the great city, and silently starting at the growing bank of smoke, a young man, too; handsome, erect, with the clean, smooth profile of the aristocrat,—had turned his back on it all, and sought, and found, peace here in the gaunt pillar on a lonely rock.

Strange, how differently men are constituted. And women! Bah! A hard look came into his eyes. His mouth set in a stern contempt. For a while his face bore a steely expression which would have amazed the man within the lantern, now singing lustily as he worked.

But as the harp of David caused the evil spirit to depart from Saul, so did the music of the morning chase away the lurking devil of memory which sprang upon the lighthouse-keeper with the sight of the vessel.

He smiled again, a trifle bitterly, perhaps. Behind him the singer roared genially:

"Soon we'll be in London Town,
Sing, my lads, yee ho,
And see the King in his golden crown,
Sing, my lads, yee ho."

The man on the platform seemed to be aroused from a painful reverie by the jingle so curiously a propos to his thoughts. He tapped his pipe on the iron railing, and was about to enter the lantern—and so to the region of sleep beneath—when suddenly his attention, trained to an acute sense of danger, was attracted by the sound of some object seemingly distant a mile or less, and drifting slowly nearer with the tide.

At this hour a two-knot current swept to the east around and over the treacherous reef whose sunken fangs were marked by the lighthouse. In calm weather, such as prevailed just then, it was difficult enough to effect a landing at the base of the rock, but this same smiling, water-veiled became an awful, raging, tearing fury when the waves were lashed into a storm.

He pocketed his pipe and stood with hands clenched on the rail, gazing intently at a white-painted ship's lifeboat, with a broken mast and a sail falling over the stern. Its color, with the shimmering of ocean wilds, the broken spar and fading down to the surface of the sea, had prevented him from seeing it earlier. Perhaps he would not have noticed it at all were it not for the flashing wings of several sea-birds which accompanied the craft in aerial escort.

Even yet a landsman would have stared insolently in that direction and declared that there was naught else in sight save the steamer, whose tall masts and two black funnels were now distinctly visible. But the lighthouse keeper knew he was not mistaken. Here was a boat adrift, forlorn, deserted. Its contour told him that it was no local craft straying adventurously from island to mainland. Its unexpected presence, wafted thus strangely from ocean wilds, the broken spar and tumbled canvas, betokened an accident, perchance a tragedy.

"Jim!" he cried.

His mate, engaged in shrouding the gleaming lenses from the sun's rays, came at the call. He was lame—the result of a wound received in the Egyptian campaign; nevertheless, he was quick on his feet.

"What do you make of that?"

The sailor replied with more than a gesture. He shaded his eyes with his right hand, a mere shipboard trick of concentrating vision and brain, for the rising sun was almost behind him.

"Ship's boat," he answered, laconically. "Collision, I expect. There's a bin no blow to speak of for days. But they're gone. Knocked overboard when she went tack aback by a squall. Unless them birds—"

He spoke in a species of verbal shorthand, but his meaning was clear enough, even to the sentence left unfinished. The craft was under no control. She would drift steadily into the Bay until the tide turned, wander in an aimless circle for half an hour thereafter, and then, when the ebb restored direction and force to the current, voyage forth again to the fabled realm of Lyonsnes.

For a little while they stood together in silence. Jim suddenly quitted his companion and came back with a glass. He poised it with the precision of a Bisleymarksmen and began to speak again, jerkily:

"Stove in forward, above the water line. Wouldn't live two minutes in a boat like that. I'm sure the mate can't make it out. And there's a couple of cormorants perched on the gunwale. But she'll pass within two hundred yards on her present course, and the tide'll hold long enough for that."

The other man looked around. From that elevated perch, one hundred and thirty feet above high-water mark, he could survey a vast area of sea. Except for a few distant brown specks which betokened a shoal of Penzance fishing-smacks making the best of the tide eastward—there was not a sail in sight.

"I think we should try and get hold of her," he said.

"That's kept his eye glued to the telescope."

"Tain't worth it, cap'n. The salvage'll only be a pound or two, not what an extra survivin' comes in use for, an' we might tie her up to the buoy on the off chance until the relief comes or we signal a smack. But what's the good o' talkin'? We've got no boat, an' nobody'd be such a fool as to swim to her."

"That is what I had in mind."

Jim lowered the glass.

"I saw the first time I've ever heard you say a d—d sailing judgment, Stephen Brand."

There was no warring judgment in his voice now. He was angry, and slightly alarmed.

"Why is it so emphatically silly, Jim?" was the smiling query.

"How do you know what's aboard of her? What's them fowls after? What's under that sail? What's that lyp' crumpled up forward? Dead men, mebbe. If they are, she's conveyed by sharks."

"Sharks! This is not the Red Sea. I am not afraid of any odd prowler. A once—Anyhow, I am going to ask Jones."

"Jones won't hear of it."

"That is precisely what he will do, within the next minute. Now, don't be vexed, Jim. Stand by and sing the hymn if you can't get a word out of the water. Have no fear. I am more than equal to Leander in a sea like this."

Jim, who trusted to the head-keeper's veto,—awed, too, by the reference to Leander, whom he hazily associated with Captain Webb,—made no rejoinder.

He focused the telescope again, gave a moment's scrutiny to the steamer, and then re-examined the boat. The stillness of the morning was solemn. Beyond the lark splash of the sea against the Gulf Rock itself, and an occasional heavy surge as the swell revealed and instantly smothered some dark tooth of the reef, he heard no sound save the ring of Stephen Brand's boots on the iron stairs, as he descended through the lantern, the library and office, to the first bedroom, in the lower bunk of which lay Mr Jones' keeper and chief, recovering from a sharp attack of sciatia.

During one fearful night in the March equinox, when the fierce heat of the lamp within and the icy blast of the gale without had temporarily deranged the occulting machinery, Jones experienced an anxious watch. Not for an instant could he forego his duty. Owing to the darkness of the night it was necessary to keep the light at full pressure. The surplus oil, driven up from the tanks by weights weighing half a ton, must flow copiously over the brass shaft of the burner, or the metal might yield to the fervent power of the column of flame.

The occulting hood, too, must be helped when the warning click came, or would jam and fail to fall periodically, thus changing the character of the light, to the bewilderment and grave peril of any unhappy vessel striving against the exterior turmoil of wind and wave.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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