

[Page 38 - Gobineau's Portrait of Sydney, 1859](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 53](#)

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'sss Every talent is available on board. Sailors are carpenters, decorators, florists, lighters, painters and masters of all the liberal arts. If asked, they would build without hesitation a cathedral, a theatre, a gymnasium or a riding school. The ballroom was soon ready. The deck, with its cannons removed, was transformed into a huge tent whose roof and walls were made from signal flags. Chandeliers, made with bayonets whose cartridge cases were transformed into candle holders, were suspended from ropes wrapped in red bunting; the binnacle and the capstan became enormous jardinières where tropical plants and exotic flowers denied us by the climate were replaced by branches of fir. Other fir trees, placed in various corners, offered a pleasant bit of greenery. It goes without saying that the flags of Britain and France occupied a place of honour above the musicians' gallery. However, the feast had no political overtones whatsoever. Hosts and guests had, for the moment, only dance on their mind and it is just as well for I must admit to a very weak spot: the music. To be frank, the only practitioner of this art was a sailor to whom a bugle had been given and who received ten cents in addition to his daily pay to blow into this contraption. He certainly showed good will but, either because, as he pretended, the bugle had holes in the wrong spots, or as his detractors pretended, he had more boldness than talent, this bugle gave out the most desperate sounds. Not even a martial ear could like it and, therefore, it was unanimously decided that this type of seduction would be banned from the program. However, what would be provided for the dancers? A petty officer brought good news. He revealed the existence of a drum forgotten on a lower deck and, with this, a sailor brought a fife. This double discovery was greeted with joy; unfortunately, nobody could play the fife. Also, despite the undeniably pleasing sounds emitted by both instruments, it must be admitted that a fife and a drum do not constitute a civilized dance orchestra. Only negroes have been known to be contented in this way. CZJ'BELL BUOY] Seafood & Steak RESTAURANT Baddeck, N.S. 295-2581 In our embarrassment the second naval surgeon, a very pleasing young man, offered to play the violin. It was thought that a tone violin might not produce the desired effect in a ballroom readied for six hundred persons. However, we had to deal with reality and, after a great deal of deliberations, it was agreed that the violin would be the principal instrument of the orchestra, being supported by the drum and that, from time to time, good-will musicians would try to wring out some sort of sounds from the fife, at any rate sounds that might add a little variety to the musical part of the evening. Even if everything was not absolutely perfect, from a musical point of view, the evening, nevertheless, promised to be faultless under the infinitely more serious heading of gastronomy. The four cooks of the Gassendi and the T6nare: those of the captains and of the officers, had held meetings and this pooling of so much talent promised spectacular results. Sailors were sent by these illustrious chefs to various shops in town. The startled population was treated all morning to the spectacle of embarkations from the ships bringing aboard every exquisite foodstuff that could be bought from the flour



and smoked meat shops. The populace's imagination, which is easily aroused by talk of food, as in all English-speaking countries, knew no bounds at the thought of the delights that awaited, that evening, the town's elite. At last, night came and, just as the lighting of the tent and of the ship was completed, barely had the coloured lanterns, the candles, the chandeliers, been lit, the officers dressed in their best uniforms, that the embarkations from both ships as well as those from the town began to ferry the guests aboard. I pride myself on being too scrupulous an historian to exaggerate. The crowd was small. Sydney's society is more refined than numerous. All in all, there were some fifteen ladies dancing and five or six local gentlemen dancers. From the ranks of our officers, there were wise men who had taken more pleasure in the preparation than they were anticipating in the ball itself. However, the enthusiasm of the dance coupled with the marvellous gusto of the dancers, made up for the numbers and eight o'clock had not been rung on the bell by the watchman that the ball was in full swing; the violin was playing furiously, the drum rolled as if it was possessed, the fife whistled like a rattlesnake, and on tunes that their authors would not be able to recognize, we danced without stopping, quadrilles, waltzes, polkas, mazurkas, one after the other. The sailors, who had received permission to watch the festivities through the openings in the hangings, rolled-up especially for them, showed on their large and happy faces their deep satisfaction. They could not imagine anything better.

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