

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05488-1 - The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1868

Various

Excerpt

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THE  
NAUTICAL MAGAZINE  
AND  
NAVAL CHRONICLE.

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JANUARY, 1868.

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MY TRIP TO NEW YORK.

DURING the grand struggle between the Northern and Southern States of America, I took on board a large cargo of cotton at one of the Mexican ports for New York. As it had come from Texas in sundry blockade runners, grave doubts were entertained that the Custom House officials might raise doubts on arrival; but having taken the precaution to land it on Mexican soil before leaving, I felt pretty easy on this rather delicate point, for I believe it was without precedent.

This cargo was a very good example of the enormous fortunes which were realized during the war. It had been bought in Texas at fifteen cents per pound, sold in a Mexican port for thirty-nine cents, and, a fortnight afterwards, fetched eighty-seven cents in New York.

We had fifteen passengers on board, one of whom had run the blockade in a schooner, but, through ignorance of nautical affairs, had been wrecked in the lower part of the Gulf. I believe he was a Yankee, but always passed for a Canadian. His dry humour often amused us during the voyage, but, like many of his countrymen, he had rather a contempt for an Englishman's love of the bath. As we neared New York, one of those biting north-westerns came down upon us, and from great exposure, I got chilblains on two of my fingers. He remarked, "Well, Cap'en, you are always getting into a bath, and must expect them things. Now I never took a bath all my life, and never had a chilblain. I can tell you another thing which happened to my daughter. I had been away to China for two years, and when I returned I found her looking mighty bad. 'Wife,' says I, 'what's wrong with Sally?' 'Well, I don't know; she's been ill near about a year. Doctor makes her take a bath every morning.' 'Bath!' says I, 'That does it. I'll have no more of them.' In a few days she was a' most well; and you should see her now,—fat as a porpoise."

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I was very glad to get a New York pilot on board after our very stormy passage. These men, either from their constant intercourse with Englishmen, or from voyaging to foreign countries, lose much of the peculiar manner of speaking which their countrymen have, and are fine hardy fellows. In the heaviest weather they are ready to board a ship; and it is almost impossible to near the coast without being pushed up by one of their magnificent pilot schooners.

Our first words were, "Is Charlestown fallen?"—for on that depended the success of the voyage. "No; and not likely to for many a day." Crossing the bar, we stopped off Staten Island for the Health Boat, and I was much annoyed at a little "contretemps" which ensued. The main discharge pipe was well out of the water, and, just as the boat touched the side, the engineer, not wishing the condensers to fill, moved the engines without orders, and sent a stream of water into the boat which drenched every one to the skin. Having obtained pratique, we steamed on for the City. I was much struck with the noble bay, and admired the wisdom of its founders in choosing such a site. Probably no city in the world is so well situated for commercial purposes, standing as it does, at the mouths of two deep rivers, with quays and wharves running for miles along both, and capable of almost unlimited extension. The largest ships lie afloat at all times close alongside, and take in or discharge their cargoes.

On landing, I had to go to the City Hall to answer sundry questions of the authorities. I must acknowledge that, to use one of their own remarks, I felt considerably dumbfounded when I understood what was expected of me. A dialogue will, however, best explain it. My interrogator was a mild-looking gentleman, with a good-humoured leer in his keen grey eye.

"Well, Captain, you have a large quantity of cotton on board. I hope a lot of it belongs to yourself, for it was a bold stroke your bringing it here."

"I am sorry to say that not a bale is my property."

"Ah, that's bad! But anyhow the owners of it ought to give you a dollar on every bale. They will more than double their money in a fortnight. Now then, let us to business. Here is your list of passengers. I want all the particulars concerning each. Thomas Smith,—where was he born? What is his age, his height, colour of hair, complexion and eyes? What is his profession? Where does he come from? Is he going to stay long in the States, or is he going back with you? Has he any peculiar marks about him? Is he married or single?"

I stared in blank amazement to be asked such questions about people whom I had never seen till they came on board, and, owing to sea-sickness, some not then. Seeing my amazement, he said, "Come, you will recollect enough about 'em. Go a-head!"

I described each to the best of my ability, and told him I would not be answerable for its correctness. He then handed me the Bible, and said that was all he required. Seeing that I was not satisfied to swear to the correctness of my statement, he added, "Well, Cap'en,

since you are so squeamish, you can put your nose to the book, that will do us. Your agent will pay the head-money." Thus ended my interview here.

In New York all the regular line of steamers have their appointed wharves to go to, and the pilot takes them alongside on arrival. But, before the casual caller can obtain one, he sees a practical proof of the much-boasted Republican institutions. I went to the Harbour Master's Office for an order to go alongside a wharf to discharge the cargo. There was no berth vacant, was the reply, either on the James or East rivers. But I had seen several, and, pulling out my pocket book, I enumerated them. "I guess they are all taken, sir. The 'Jane Woodfall' goes there, and the 'Flying Eagle' here, etc., etc., and this,—Oh! that is going to be rebuilt. I left in despair, and went to the consignee. He laughed, and said, Oh! you are not acquainted with our institutions. The Harbour Master goes in with the Government, and their tenure of office being short, they will do nothing without a bribe. I will send one of my clerks with fifty dollars and arrange the business. We returned thus armed; but I had nearly spoiled the whole by innocently offering the head man the bribe. His subordinate, however, gave me a quiet nudge, and said, "You don't suppose that officer could be bribed, do you, give it me, I'll fix it for you." I subsequently learnt that the head man was a butcher, who had never been to sea in his life, but who at the election had commanded the greatest number of votes, and was returned accordingly.

The berth was high up on the East River, and I soon discovered that nothing was safe without the most vigilant watch was kept day and night. In order to be on my guard, I hired a policeman for two and a half dollars a night. All went well until the cargo was nearly discharged, when one night I was aroused from my sleep by shouts, throwing of stones, etc. Hurrying on deck, I met the policeman returning on board, very much out of breath, and swearing in a fashion which only Yankees can do.

"What is the matter?" said I. "Well, Cap'en, I guess I've 'arned them two and a half dollars this night, anyhow! Some darned thieves tried to steal one of them zeroons of cochineal. Did you not hear them a stoning me?" I thanked him for his zeal, and next day informed the consignee of the incident. He looked grave, and said, "Have you counted your cotton bales on the quay?"

"No? Then do so, for depend upon it that policeman is a rascal who is in league with thieves, and pretended to protect the cochineal while his confederates helped themselves to something else. I know their tricks well, but am afraid nothing can be done, our police are so bad."

On returning to the ship, I found a bale of cotton missing, but could never find any traces of the thieves. I discharged the policeman, who had the cool impudence to ask me for a gratuity, and a letter of recommendation to any captain who might require his *trustworthy* services!

All nations, except England, have a treaty with the United States by which deserters are given up to merchant ships or retained in jail

until the ship is ready for sea. This arrangement gives foreign ship-masters a great advantage over English. The former have only to complain to the police if crews desert, and steps are immediately taken to secure them. With us it is different; for no sooner does the ship touch the wharf than she is pounced on by a swarm of crimps,—scoundrels who surpass in rascality their brethren in England in villainy. Now it so happened that New York was not mentioned in my Articles of Agreement, but being only a port of call on my way home, neither myself nor the Consul thought it any infringement to go there. The crimps, however, held out such inducements of high pay, and persuaded Jack that their laws would compel the payment of wages to the date of their arrival in New York if they wished for their discharge that fourteen immediately refused duty. Now, in New York all the work of loading and unloading is done by stevedores and lumpers. I was, therefore, easy on that point, and stopped their rations. As I had expected, they all left the same day; and shortly afterwards I received a summons to attend the Court and show cause why I refused to pay Mr. John Smith the sum of two hundred and thirty-seven dollars for wages fairly earned. I must explain that the American law allows any number of seamen belonging to one ship to make their claims for unpaid wages in the name of one of their body—hence the large amount claimed by Mr. John Smith.

I forget the name of the Court where the case was to be tried; but on arriving there, I found His Honour the Judge sitting on a stool behind a high desk, with his hands in his pockets, and his hat over his eyebrows. His great object just then appeared to be to work the stool backwards, until his shoulders touched the wall, and then jerk himself upright again. When my case came forward he called out, "Who appears for the defendant?" "I do," said a determined looking man, to my great surprise, for I had resolved to conduct my own case,—“and may the case be dismissed?” “On what grounds, Judge?” (I must remark here that the judges, like every other official, are elected for the term of the Presidentship only, and then retire into private life, although they never lose their title). “That you have no jurisdiction here over this case,” was the answer, “and it must be tried in the Marine Court.” “Then the case is dismissed,” said the Judge. I thought it singular that a Judge should be on the bench who did not possess a sufficient knowledge of the law to know what cases came under his jurisdiction. Trifling as this incident is, it is not a bad exponent of the vicious system pursued in America. I thanked my defender, who refused any fee, and withdrew.

Having informed the Consul, he said, “Your troubles are not yet over. They will have you up before the Marine Court, and there you will not have the slightest chance against a sailor. I will, however, give you a certificate under my seal stating that having in the presence of both parties investigated the case, I find the men have no cause of complaint, and are deserters.

The next day I received a summons to attend the Marine Court. When my case came on I walked up to the Judge, and handed him

the English Consul's certificate of desertion. Casting a contemptuous look at the consular seal, he exclaimed, "We don't acknowledge that thing here!" and, amidst applause, threw it violently from him. For some reason, I believe, that a trial cannot come off until four days after the charge has been made. My case was put off till the following Monday, and this was on Friday, and I was ready for sea. It is by such trickery as this that a shipmaster is frequently compelled to pay an unjust claim for wages as the Court is aware that a steamer must sail to time. I was determined not to yield to such injustice as to pay the claim, and resolved to leave the case in the hands of my consignees and get bail for the ship. Having gone to a lawyer recommended by them. I was surprised to find he was the gentleman who had behaved so handsomely in the first Court I was summoned to. Having given him a careful sketch of the affair, he informed me that he could arrange it for a few dollars. "How?" I asked. Oh! I know the lawyer well who is for your men. One of those low rascals who is always on the look out for such dirty jobs, but is at all times ready to throw his clients overboard provided he can ensure his fees from the opposite side. Meet me there at two o'clock this afternoon.

Great was my annoyance on returning to the ship to find a sheriff's officer in charge, who presented me with a very small and very dirty card, on which was marked "Judge Lynch." The officer was a very civil young fellow, and informed me that he had only just been elected to his appointment, and bewailed his hard fate at having to remain by the ship on Sunday in lieu of walking with his lady-love. I informed him that I had strong hopes of adjusting the claims that afternoon, and wished him a pleasant morrow. At two o'clock I rejoined my lawyer, and found him closeted with his opposite member. The following dialogue then took place:—

Mine—"Winthrop," (I remember the fellow's name) "the Captain here will give you fifty dollars to quash this affair, as he is ready for sea, and does not want to be delayed." Opposing lawyer—"Judge, you must think I'm mighty foolish to give up such a case as mine for the small sum of fifty dollars; besides, do you think I would sell my clients in such a way?" Mine (with supreme contempt)—"You sell your clients? Yes, or anyone else whom you could make a cent by. I will increase it to sixty dollars, and (pulling out his watch and laying it on the table) I give you ten minutes to consider over it; so go into the next room, and please yourself about returning. But, mark me, Winthrop, you know me well, and if you are fool enough to refuse not a penny will you get.

Before the time had expired the door opened, Winthrop walked in, and said, "Well, Judge, I guess I'll take them sixty dollars, but you are mighty hard on a fellow,—and what will my clients say?" "Bah! Sit down and write a receipt, and when the ship is clear you shall have the money."

I now related the seizure of the ship by the sheriff's officer.

"That is awkward," said the Judge "as the Hall is closed. Tomorrow will be Sunday, and by Monday your ship would be seized

again. Here, Winthrop! the Captain says the officer is green, sit down and write a note to him stating that the dispute is settled, and he may pack up and be off. He won't know any better, and Judge Lynch may settle the matter with him afterwards." Then, turning towards me, he said coolly, "Should he not take the bait, Captain, pitch him overboard."

I suggested that it would be better to take him to sea, and put him on board a pilot schooner outside. "Ah! that's better," said the Judge.

The sheriff's officer greedily swallowed the bait, and left immediately. I then made arrangements with the crimp to have the seamen I had engaged for the run home brought on board at daylight, after I was clear of the wharf. For, be it understood, when these gentlemen have put their charges on board they use every means to favour their desertion, and the whole of the seaman's wages having been expended, he is only too ready to meet their views. Bad as the crimping system is in England, it is not half so atrocious as it is in New York, where it is legalized. In the former the sailor has a certain amount of clothing and a bed of straw given him, but in New York, those who were mustered on the quarter-deck of the — on that dreary Sabbath morning had neither beds, blankets, nor a change of clothes! Although it was the end of November, many were scantily clad in a pair of dirty ducks and a checked or ragged flannel shirt. My heart almost failed me on enquiring into their profession, for I saw at a glance that not more than three of their number were seamen. One had been a drummer in Meade's army, a second a homœopathic doctor, a third a pastry cook, and so on. Amidst the storms of a severe winter passage this subsequently pressed heavily on me and the few good seamen on board, as it was impossible to get many of them out of their berths. For the first time in my life I felt there was some excuse for the bad treatment which men received in American packet ships, for there are times when the aid of all is frequently a question of life and death, and I was subsequently so placed.

As we were leaving the wharf a clerk from the broker's office came down in great haste to inform me that, believing I could not get clear of the Court, they had forgotten to take out the pass for the guard ship at Staten Island, without which no ship could go to sea. I resolved to try it, even if stopped, as I was informed I was sure to be.

A second difficulty now sprang up in the shape of a dense fog, and the pilot refused to move until I had taken all responsibility. This I immediately promised, and, after clearing the city, the fog lifted a little, but a thick drizzling rain followed. As we neared the guard-ship, the pilot said, "Have your pass ready, sir." All ready, I replied, showing him a large official-looking envelope which I had picked out from among my papers. The rain poured down, and I could see the guard-ship crew under their awning waiting to go into their boat, so, steaming up close alongside, I held up the envelope, called out, "Here you are, sir!" and the next moment a puff of wind blew it out of my hand into the sea. Being judiciously weighted, it

sank before the boat could reach it. On seeing this the American officer good naturedly called out, "All right, sir! go a-head!" Shortly afterwards the fog again closed in, and we were compelled to anchor in the Narrows. So thick was it, that not long afterwards we heard a large steamer run on shore. Although we could not see her, but subsequently heard it was one of the Inman line, from Liverpool.

The following morning we bade adieu to New York, and with a light fair wind started for England. I believe I have remarked that all the blades of the propeller were broken, and now the ship was deep no more than six knots could be attained under steam alone. Nothing of importance occurred until we were launched to the eastward of Cape Race on the Great Circle for Cape Clear. The barometer had fallen slowly with the wind from north-west (always a bad sign), but I had resolved to run, as the gale had increased so fast that I could not with my crew handle the heavy topsails and foresail although close reefed.

Some of the events which occurred on this passage may be deemed fabulous, as it is scarcely within the bounds of possibility for any ship to be nearer destruction than mine was without going altogether. In a few hours the wind was blowing a hurricane, the ship scudding dead before it to the south-east. The biting north-west wind appeared to blow through us, and hail-stones, as large as Barcelona nuts, cut our faces when driving before the fierce squalls. Except in these squalls the sky overhead was clear, but the horizon was never visible, being enveloped in a dark slate-coloured haze. The sea was streaked with long lines of white foam, or covered with spindrift, and the waves surpassed in height and magnitude any I had ever seen in the course of many years of a sea life. While the crest of one was rolling a-head of the jib-boom, the next would be far a-stern, so that our ship looked no larger than a gull between such huge masses.

Our first narrow escape was in this wise:—At eight o'clock in the evening I was standing on the break of the poop, looking with a mingled admiration and awe at the giant waves rolling and breaking under the moonlight, sometimes so close that it appeared impossible to clear them. Suddenly the weather helmsman shrieked out in a tone of despair, "The rudder is broke!" Running aft, I put my hand to the wheel, and felt in a moment that its connection with the rudder was gone. Amidst all the din of the storm those words of the helmsman had penetrated below, and every soul on duty, including the skulking wretches who had remained below since the gale commenced, were on the poop in a few minutes to man the relieving tackles. During this interval, I cannot say how long, the hand of God (I write it with all reverence) had alone steered the ship as she scudded at twelve miles an hour over that terrible sea. On she went, like the flight of an arrow, neither diverging to the right hand nor to the left. I must here explain that the rudder was not broken, but the steering apparatus having been originally keyed on the wrong way by some unskilful mechanic, had from the unusual strain loosened the key and slipped out of gear. In a few minutes, with the aid of the staves of a bucket, the wheel was again serviceable.

After midnight the wind lulled suddenly, and now came another danger. With sail, and the engines driving at seventy-six revolutions (contractor's speed was fifty-two), we had succeeded in keeping before the sea. But this lull reduced the speed considerably, and in a few minutes we felt the dangerous effects. One wave had broken a little short; the second came on, and I held my breath. It rose (I am not romancing) as I had remembered seeing in my youth a huge boa constrictor rise over a rabbit, and broke clean over the heads of the men at the wheel. I thought that men and wheel must both have been swept away; but like English seamen, when the wave cleared away, they were standing coolly at their stations, although one was seriously injured. It then ran along on either side, leaped into the life-boats on the bridge, and split them in two like the blow of an axe, flattened a third, which was turned bottom up on the main hatch, and filled the waist with water. This made the ship so sluggish that she appeared to stand still in the water; and fully expecting a few succeeding waves would wash us all overboard, I said to myself *Foundered at sea*. Mercifully no wave of importance followed this till the waist was again clear, and thus we escaped.

From this period of our voyage to England we had constant bad weather, and I have seldom felt more thankful than when we ran alongside of the dock wall in the Mersey, and I saw my New York runners leaping on shore without waiting to make the ship fast. Poor fellows! their kits were, if possible, scantier than when they came on board on that dreary Sunday.

I have crossed the Atlantic since many a time in winter and summer, but have never met with such a gale as that of November, 1863.

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#### NOTES DURING A VOYAGE BETWEEN ENGLAND AND THE BLACK SEA.

(Continued from page 625 last Volume.)

THE advantage of a short paper is that if it has in it anything of a useful practical kind, it is likely to be noticed; and as my last "notes" were short enough to claim such an advantage, I hope the remarks about backing an anchor, when there is no room to drive will not escape the attention of seamen. How many vessels would be saved by adopting this practice when requisite, may be inferred from the simple fact, that to one ship foundering at her anchors, there are a hundred wrecked by driving on shore, and although a good offing is always to be preferred to a doubtful anchorage, yet it is to be observed that a ship with good ground tackle has often ridden out a very heavy gale in a troublesome sea, by backing the anchor with a kedge, and running over the whole cable. But to return to Balaclava Bay. About noon the signal was made for the transport *Dinapore* to enter the harbour, and seeing a steamer on her way to us, our anchor was up



and hawser ready by the time she got alongside, and we entered the harbour in so hard a squall that nothing but a very quick helm and a sharp look out kept us from knocking against the rocky sides of this narrow entrance. The first sight of Balaclava harbour with its cram of ships, and its surroundings of tents was one to be remembered, and as there was not a vessel among them, without war material or provision for the army on board, it impressed one with a sense of very earnest, real war going on, and the whole scene was an immense camp, with a steep shored lake full of the invading fleet in the centre.

We warped into our berth near to a ship loaded with *gunpowder*, and as a vessel was towed out on fire the same day, and we had other alarms of fire afterwards, we never felt quite easy about our neighbour, for glad as seamen always are to shut the sea gates, especially after a month's voyage, we wished ourselves on the other side of them whenever we heard the alarm of fire rung out from the bell of every ship in the harbour. This would sometimes happen at night, and then there was no certainty whether it was not an accidental blaze or a Russian fire ship crept in under cover of darkness. Had this been an English harbour full of Russian ships the whole would have been destroyed by fire without any extraordinary skill or daring, and it appears a strange circumstance that the Russians made no attempt of the kind, for with their knowledge of the entire navigation of the Black Sea and the waters connected with it, I don't see what was to prevent them from fitting out fire ships and rocket shoots in the *Sea of Azof* for burning the English transports in a place so favourable for their destruction by fire; and also the French fleets, in the two bays to the westward, offered a fair chance of destruction by a small well handled flotilla of fire ships, manned by resolute and devoted crews, and it is known that when well-officered, the Russians are both resolute and devotees.

The Crimean war had at the time of our arrival been stripped of its "pomp and circumstance." The privations, sufferings, and losses of the army had destroyed all its glitter, and the weariness of a protracted siege had damped its ardour, while to add to all this, there was a want of accord between the chiefs of the two armies, and as in point of numbers we were very inferior to our French allies, we had not the might in the councils of war to carry measures opposed to the French view of things. The Royal Commissioners, sent from England to enquire into the condition of our army, took up their quarters on board the *Dinapore*, and so we heard a little of what was going on, and among other things, that had the English views been adopted after the battle of the Alma, the combined forces would have marched right on to Sebastopol, and so have ended the Crimean war after the first battle. For it was known afterwards that there was nothing to prevent our marching right into the place during the panic of the Russians, after their unexpected and sudden defeat at Alma.

We rarely heard any music but the sound of the bugle, or saw a decent uniform, and I remember on one occasion, when riding out to the Greek Monastery, passing an officer of the Coldstreams who made such a sorry figure on a wretched half-starved horse, that he would

have passed for anything in the world rather than for a guardsman. He was going in search of a feed of grass for his hungry animal, so we rode together, and near to the chapel of the monastery, where we heard the fine bass of the monks chaunting the service, and it was a very strange blending of sounds, their deep rich voices, with the boom of the siege guns thundering heavy shot into the midst of those, for whose safety these monks were praying. Yet such is war, which seems of all irrational things on this sad earth to be one of the most irrational, and what it really is can never be known by hearing and reading about it—its horrors, massacres, and atrocities must be seen, and whoever saw the six hundred slain—English, French, and Russians heaped together in the Redan trenches, or who happened to be in Sebastopol the morning after the retreat of the Russians, and seen the dead lying about all over the town, and in all the hospitals—whoever saw all this and a great deal besides, might well ask, “for *what* is all this slaughter?” No sight struck me more than that of a group of six dead Russian soldiers with their wounds freshly bandaged. In two cases the bandages had not been completed, while a little way off lay the shattered body of the young surgeon with his valise of bandage rolls and coarse lint, and in his left hand a loose bandage red with blood, while his right hand had been shot away. This group was close to a heavy gun, and it seemed that while their wounds were being dressed, a *shell* must have fallen among them and its explosion killed them all—the poor young surgeon also, while busy with his work sharing the fate of the men whose lives he was trying to save. There was hardly a house in the town not riddled with shot, and to give an idea of the immense quantity of these fired into the place—I counted not less than *fifty* lying on the floor of a church not larger than St. Stephen’s at Westminster, the bell of this church had been shattered by a shot, and its fragments lay scattered about, and I brought away one of these with the intention of having a small bell cast from it, on which might be engraved a brief sad legend.

During our stay in the Black Sea, we took a cruise to *Kertch* and to *Sinope*. What struck us most at the former place was the wreck of the *Museum*, and at the latter place, the wreck of the Turkish fleet. Both of these tell very sad stories, one the rifling and barbarous destruction of a collection never to be replaced; the other, not of a naval battle, but of a *slaughter* not to be exceeded in inhumanity in the annals of any nation, savage or civilized.

W. C. P.

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THE discovery of tin, in large quantities, in the Dutch East Indies, has so reduced prices that the Cornwall mines of England can no longer be worked at a profit. Machinery recently put up at a cost of fifty thousand dollars has been sold for four thousand dollars. Seventy-eight mines have been wound up compulsorily, and twenty thousand miners thrown out of employment.