

THE VOYAGE OF THE CLIPPER SHIP "CHALLENGE" CAPTAIN "BULLY" WATERMAN FROM NEW YORK TO THE PACIFIC IN 1851.

By A. E. Wheeler.

MY FATHER was a sea captain, and I, having been brought up on the north shore of Long Island sound, early had a longing to go to sea. My boyhood days were spent in studying and still I had a mad frequent coasting trips between Boston and Philadelphia in sloops and schooners. My parents objected to my seafaring proclivities. When I was about 14 years old, hoping to cure me, my father arranged to ship me with Captain "Bully" Waterman, thinking one voyage with him would be medicine enough.

His ship was the Challenge, just launched from Webb's shipyard at the foot of Sixth street, New York. She was what was then known as a full clipper with a beautiful round stern, long, clean run, and very sharp bow, which, when sailing on the wind, cut the water like a North River steamer. She had a short quarterdeck, not reaching to the mainmast, the exception of the galley and the house for six boys just abaft the foremast. She was very lightly sparred, with three sky sails yards. The main yard was 120 feet long, with single topmasts, this being before the day of double topmasts, with four reef bands in each. There were single reefs in the topmasts' sails, and she was rigged with studding sail on all the royal, topgallant and topmast yards, with an immense lower studding sail boom over 50 feet long, and ringtail sail from the end of the spunk boom and water-tail from the end of the flying jib boom. All this cloud of sail made an immense amount of running gear. The foremast, mainmast and the mizzen topgallant sails were made of 12-3 cord duck, and when wet were so hard to handle as boards.

I joined the ship a few days after she was launched, and after a few days at the shipyard we were towed to the foot of Wall street to complete rigging her, bending sails, reeling the running gear and loading cargo for San Francisco. After finishing we were hauled into the river abreast of Governor's island, with all sails bent and furled by the riggers and everything in ship shape for sea. She was then the handsomest ship ever seen in New York harbor and attracted the attention of thousands of citizens from that city and Brooklyn.

The Bostonian clipper ship Flying Cloud, Captain Cressy, had sailed a few days before and along South street New York a war of rivalry between the two ships and captains. The Flying Cloud was a full clipper, was reported to have been built in New York City. Captain Waterman also had made several quick voyages in the Sea Witch and in the old square-rigged ship, and had made a passage from Hongkong to New York in 84 days.

After almost 60 years it is difficult to realize the excitement and rivalry among shipping men that existed at that time. Both ships were towed to the foot of Wall street, the first of the American clipper fleet that, until the days of Admiral Semm of the Confederate steamer Alabama, crowded the Atlantic. Until 1865 there were as many, if not more, American ships in Liverpool, Hamburg, Amsterdam, London, Hongkong as those of any other nation. They virtually monopolized the East India, China and Australia trade. Once the Stars and Stripes came waving from the masthead of American ships in every sea, bay and harbor of the world. Now the clipper has almost disappeared. A number of the finest floating foras, but very few ships. A sailor of the navy now has more to do with a monkey wrench than a Marlin spike, or sighting a gun than knowing how to pass a wooden peg. And the clipper yard in a gale of wind. But to get back to the voyage.

Hard Master. Captain Waterman had the reputation of being a very hard master at sea, and it was only after several days that a crew of 60 men, Greeks and Italians, English and French, Dutch and every other nationality under the sun, four mates, cook and steward were secured. There were also four passengers and six of us boys who were learning to be sailor men. We were towed to Sandy Hook, expecting to go to sea immediately, but coming down, trouble began. The captain and mates were so difficult to get along with that the Flying Cloud was well on her way, we had to anchor inside the Hook, with the captain and mates ashore.

Just then the packet ship Guy Manning from New York arrived. The captain, a boat having on board the first mate, who had had trouble on the passage and was afraid to go up to New York, put off from her and came alongside of us. This man was immediately secured by Captain Waterman and, getting under way, put to sea at once.

Douglas, the new mate, was a very large man, weighing over 200 pounds. He was brutish by nature, and this disposition had been cultivated and intensified by his experience in the Liverpool packet trade. If there were any of the old-time sailors of the late forties and early fifties of the last century still living, they can tell you what he means. He would rather have a knock-down fight with a lot of sailors than eat a good dinner. When he saw that he began the first evening out. I was called into his room to hold a piece of candle while he overhauled his chest for something that he wanted. I had not held the candle to suit him when a ship sailed by his head and the stars I said something, now I don't know what. He grabbed me, forced the piece of candle into my mouth, and made me do it. I never said a word nor made any complaints, and took my medicine like a man. At the end of the voyage he seemed to delight in making it as rough and unpleasant for me as he could. Indeed, he did the same to every one under him. Even the second mate came in for a share of his knock-down and drag out the entire passage. The men soon grew surly.

Captain "Bully" Waterman was as thorough a shipmaster as ever walked the quarter deck. He always was vigilant to take advantage of every wind, knew exactly how long his spars would stand the strain, and watchful of the man at the wheel to see that he steered a straight course. At night he was especially watchful. With a compass hanging over his head, he could tell, at any moment, just how she was heading. In strong winds at night he relied on no one but himself as to how long he could carry sail or how much the spars would stand. We never lost a spar the entire trip, and I have held the log-reef many times when she would be going an 18 knot clip.

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AERIAL WARFARE WILL BE NEXT

"When I dip into the future far as human eye could see; Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be—

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew From the nation's airy pavies grappling in the central blue."—From Tennyson's "Locksley Hall."

WRITING under the title, "The Aerial Battleship," Carl Dienbach and T. R. Mac Mechen, in the August number of McClure's magazine, tell of the possibilities of aerial warfare, which they assume must come with the advance of air craft. The Zepplins type of battleships and the heavier, non-air type as light cruisers. At the outset they assert that the successful use of a rapid-firing gun, capable of throwing nearly 60 1.5 inch shells a minute, from the deck of the Zepplin, "means the end of armaments within the next 10 years." Striking as this statement is, the evidence presented in support of it by the writers is still more striking. They show that the two air-craft constructed by Count Zeppelin, the corresponding heavier, non-air type as light cruisers. At the outset they assert that the successful use of a rapid-firing gun, capable of throwing nearly 60 1.5 inch shells a minute, from the deck of the Zepplin, "means the end of armaments within the next 10 years." 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