



CAPE TOWN.

[FOR THE LAND WE LIVE IN.]

A Trip to Cape Town.

It was the end of October, 1862, when the "Oneco," hauled out into the stream from her moorings at pier No. 12, North River, New York, en route for Melbourne, Australia. There were over 200 of us on board as passengers, and the most of them were from different parts of Canada, Quebec, furnishing rather more than its quota.

Our skipper, Capt. Peterson, was a weather-beaten old salt of a very diffident unassuming disposition, closely attentive to his duties and accommodating to his passengers. The quarter deck was about the last place to look for him, unless some emergency necessitated his presence there, and it would have puzzled anyone to have picked out the commander when he was mixed up with the foremost hands, as he was quite as ready to take a hand in carrying out his orders, as in giving them. At the same time he was an excellent disciplinarian, and his own son who was before the mast received no more recognition nor any different treatment than was accorded to the other sailors. I remember that in beating into Port Philip's heads the skipper of an English vessel, who was rigged out in his long shore toggery, directing the speaking trumpet at our quarter deck and dictating the course we should pursue, much to the amusement of Capt. Peterson, who perched on the maintop-sail yard, was picking out his own course and directing the movements of his vessel. If we were taking the wind out of the Englishman's sails, our skipper didn't propose to take a leeward position if he could help it, and he succeeded in holding the "right of track."

A day or two after we were under way and parting with the tug off Sandy Hook, we proceeded on our voyage.

The "Oneco" had been one of several vessels chartered for the Australian trade, by Lewis Tappan, whom many of my read-

ers will remember as having been connected with the Lennoxville smelting works, about the year 1864, or during the time of the Eastern Townships copper mining boom. The New York agents were the Cameron Bros., one of whom, I believe, is now Sir Roderick Cameron. Mr. Tappan and myself have had many a pleasant hour in talking over his charter party connection and discussing the very lively shipping business of New York, during the rush which followed the discovery of the Australian gold fields.

Anything that could run before the wind was mustered into the service, and although there was less of the "old tub" lines about the "Oneco" than some of her consorts possessed, her leeway was almost equal to her headway, on a beam breeze.

Our first experience of rough weather was in the gulf stream, where a gale carried away the vessel's cross-jack yard, and created havoc amongst the hen coops and pig pens. Some forcible arguments made use of by Ned Croker and others of our Quebec shipmates, saved the swine from a watery grave and furnished the passengers with a supply of fresh meat, a very acceptable change of diet.

As we soon acquired a sea-air appetite, there was a good deal of grumbling in regard to the quantity and quality of the ship's supply of rations, and the matter being brought to the notice of Capt. Peterson, he gave orders to broach cargo and increase the supply, so after that there was no trouble until we ascertained that Ned Croker changed the destination of some of the dishes as they were passed down from the galley, so that a great deal of what was intended for the port messes went to Ned's friends on the starboard side.

This difficulty was obviated by appointing Mike Ellsler champion of the port side, and as he and Ned were well matched physically, the equal rights principle was very substantially carried out. When Mike's

voice proclaimed "Duff an' banes for the larboard," the proper party was on hand to receive them as they were passed down the hatchway.

Ned and Mike used to quarrel like two lawyers in the interest of their clients, and like the lawyers would sit down together and enjoy the tid-bits as the reward of their labors. I met Mike two or three years after on the Forest Creek diggings, and almost the first thing he referred to was the zeal and energy he had displayed in the "Oneco" commissariat. With a brogue that would have created jealousy in the heart of Ned Cream, he said "Faith b'ys, its little ye know the way I did be fightin' for ye's. Sure but for me, ye's ud be dead an' overboard."

One day when some 1500 miles on our course we took advantage of a dead calm to take a swim. One of my shipmates, a Quebecker, by the name of Lawlor, was a good swimmer, and ventured some distance from the vessel. Before he could get back a breeze sprang up and he had great difficulty in getting aboard. We hadn't seen any shark then, but two or three days later we got hold of an eight footer, and the sight of him as he floundered on the deck, prevented any more displays of swimming feats. After that when we went overboard a sail was lowered and concealed us from the sight of any ocean prowler.

Old Mr. Waterson, of Quebec, was an ardent fisherman and had a line baited with four or five lbs. of salt pork, always dragging from the taffrail, much to the annoyance of the ship's officers, but after a cry of "shark! shark!" had called him from the mess table a few times, only to drag in a dry codfish hooked broadside to, or something else requiring a strong pull, hitched to his line, the old gentleman gave up shark fishing in disgust.

Near the equator we were becalmed for about a fortnight, and suffered very much from the heat which melted the tar on deck. With an awning spread over the quarter deck we found it more comfortable there, as the heavy swell always created a current of air underneath. Unfortunately the capacity of the quarter deck wasn't equal to the space requirements of the passengers, and those who couldn't get there, had to pass the time as they best could.

Two or three degree south of the equator we caught the south-east trade winds, and while they lasted we experienced the pleasantest part of our voyage, as for several days we bowled along without shifting sail, or changing course, and every day sighted five or six vessels.

When in sight of the Rock of Trinidad which is fully described in Capt. Maryatt's "Frank Mildmay," we sighted a vessel astern which overhauled and passed us during the day, and turned out to be the "Gayhead" from Boston, bound for the Cape of Good Hope. She was a new vessel, making her first trip, and had left Boston the day before we left New York. We afterwards came together about midway between the South American coast and Tristan d'Acunba, and lay near each other all night, boats passing between the two vessels. She was the prettiest sight I ever saw at sea, as she floated gracefully as a swan, the moon shining on the bellying canvas, while the shadows obliterated all trace of the vessel's hull. Alternate songs and choruses by the crew of each vessel