

# A NAUTICAL EXPLOIT

A CHAPTER OF ENGLISH NAVAL HISTORY.

On the morning of March 18, 1862, the Liverpool ship *Emily St. Pierre* (William Wilson, captain) arrived within about twelve miles of Charleston and signaled for a pilot. She had made a long and tedious voyage of four months from Calcutta bound for St. John, N.B., calling at Charleston for orders, if Charleston was open. If the Southern port was blockaded Captain Wilson's orders were to proceed direct to the British port of St. John, N.B. The ship had formerly belonged to Charleston, but since the outbreak of the civil war she had sailed under the English flag. Her nominal owners were Messrs. Fraser, Trenholm & Co., Liverpool, a firm doing an extensive business, who had very close relations with the Confederate or Southern States, for whom they acted as bankers and agents in this country.

The ship was hailed by a vessel which proved to be the Northern cruiser *James Adger*, and in response Captain Wilson hauled up his courses, backed his mainyard and lay to. An American naval lieutenant and a score of men came on board and demanded his papers. The manifest showed an innocent cargo, 2,000 bales of gunny bags, and the registration of the ship as English was in due order. The captain demanded permission to proceed, Charleston being blockaded, to his destination, the British port of St. John. The lieutenant refused, and referred the matter to his superior in command; and the two vessels proceeded into Charleston roadstead, where they arrived at 2.30 in the afternoon.

Captain Wilson was ordered on board the flagship of the blockading squadron, the *Florida*, where he was kept for two hours in solitude and suspense. At last a flag officer, Captain Goldboro, came to him and said they had decided to seize the *Emily St. Pierre* on several grounds. He asserted that she carried contraband goods of war, namely, saltpetre; that her English registration was not bona fide; that many articles on board had been found bearing the name of Charleston; that the same word had been scraped out on her stern and substituted by the name Liverpool; that Captain Wilson had not disclosed all his papers, but had been observed from the *James Adger* to throw overboard and sink a small parcel, probably of incriminating documents.

Captain Wilson protested and appealed to the maritime law of nations. But in vain. He was informed that the law courts of Philadelphia would adjudicate the matter, and finally Captain Wilson was invited to take passage in his vessel to Philadelphia and to place at the disposal of the navigator his charts and instruments. The invitation in form was in fact a command. He returned to his vessel to find that his crew had all been removed with the exception of two, who were not sailors, the steward and an Irishman named Matthew Montgomery, and the cook, a German named Louis Schelvin, hailing from Frankfort-on-the-Main. These were merely passengers, and with them was an American engineer, who had obtained permission to take passage to Philadelphia.

The prize crew who took charge of the vessel consisted of Lieutenant Stone, of the United States navy, in command, a master's mate and twelve men—fourteen in all; with the American passenger fifteen. The moment that Captain Wilson stepped again on board his own vessel he formed a resolution to recapture her and take her home. He was bold enough to think that it might be possible to recapture the ship even against such odds. An unarmed man, aided by the questionable support of an Irish steward and a German cook, was practically powerless against the fifteen of the crew. On the other hand, Captain Wilson was a brawny, big framed Scotchman (a native of Dumfriesshire), a thorough seaman, determined in resolve, cool and prompt in action.

He called the steward and the cook to him in his stateroom and disclosed the wild project he had formed. Both manfully promised to stand by their chief. This was at 4.30 on the morning of March 21, the third day out from Charleston. Captain Wilson had already formed his plan of operations and had prepared to a certain extent for carrying it out. With the promise of the cook and the steward secured, he lost no time, gave them no chance for their courage to evaporate, but proceeded at once in the darkness and silence of the night to carry out his desperate undertaking. He was prepared to lose his life or to have his ship; that was the simple alternative.

It was Lieutenant Stone's watch on deck, and the prize master's mate was asleep in his berth. The English captain went into the berth, handed out the mate's sword and revolvers, clapped a gag made of a piece of wood and some marline between his teeth, seized his hands, which Montgomery, the

steward, quickly ironed, and so left him secure. The lieutenant still paced the deck, undisturbed by a sound. Then across to another stateroom, where the American engineer lay asleep. He was also gagged and ironed silently and without disturbance. His revolvers and those already secured were given to the steward and the cook, who remained below in the cabin. Captain Wilson went on deck.

Lieutenant Stone was pacing the deck, and the watch consisted of one man at the helm, one at the lookout on the forecabin and three others who were about the ship. For ten minutes Captain Wilson walked up and down, remarking on the fair wind and making believe that he had but just turned out. The ship was off Cape Hatteras, midway of their journey between Charleston and Philadelphia, the most easterly projection of the land on that coast. It was difficult navigation thereabouts, with cross currents and a tendency to fogs, affording the two captains a subject for talk.

"Let her go free a bit, Captain Stone; you are too close to the cape, I tell you, and I know."

"We have plenty of offing," replied the lieutenant. And then to the helmsman: "How's her head?"

"North-east and by east, sir," came the reply.

"Keep her so. I tell you it is right," said the lieutenant.

"Well, of course I'm not responsible now, but I'm an older sailor than you, Captain Stone, and I tell you if you want to clear Cape Hatteras another two points east will do no harm. Do but look at my chart; I left it open on the cabin table. And the coffee will be ready now." And Captain Wilson led the way from the poop to the cabin, followed by the commander.

There was a passage about five yards long leading from the deck to the cabin, a door at either end. The captain stopped at the first door, closing it and picking from behind it an iron belaying pin which he had placed there. The young man went forward to the cabin, where the chart lay open on the table. "Stone!"

He turned at the sudden, peremptory exclamation of his name. His arm upraised, the heavy iron bolt in his hand, in low but hard, eager, quick words, "My ship shall never go to Philadelphia," said the captain. He did not strike. It was unnecessary. Montgomery had thrust the gag into the young lieutenant's mouth; he was bound hand and foot, bundled into a berth and the door locked. Three out of the fifteen were thus disposed of. There was still the watch on deck and the watch below.

The construction of the *Emily St. Pierre* was of a kind not unusual; but still not very common. The quarters of the crew were not in the forecabin, but in a round house amidships. The name does not describe its shape. It was an oblong house on deck, with windows and one door. From the poop or upper deck at the stern over the cabins and staterooms and the passage before mentioned, there was a companion stair on the port side leading to the deck at the waist, while a similar companionway at the stern led down to the level of the deck, which could also be approached direct from the cabins through the passage.

In this space behind the poop was the wheel, slightly raised for the steersman to see clear of the poop, and there was a hatchway leading to the lazarette hold, a small supplementary hold usually devoted to stores, extra gear, coils of spare rope and so on. Nothing that might be done on this part of the deck could be seen therefore from the waist of the ship, nor vice versa, except by the steersman, who was elevated by a step or two above the level.

Coming on this part of the deck from the cabin Captain Wilson called to the three men who were about and, pointing to a heavy coil of rope in the lazarette, ordered them to get it up at once—Lieutenant Stone's orders. They jumped down without demur, suspecting nothing, as soon as the captain shoved the hatch aside. They were no sooner in than he quickly replaced and fastened the hatch. The three were securely trapped in full view of the helmsman, whose sailor's instinct kept him in his place at the wheel.

"If you utter a word or make a move," said the captain, showing a revolver, "I'll blow your brains out;" and then he called aft the lookout man, the last of the watch on deck. The man came aft. Would he help to navigate the ship to England? No, he would not. He was an American. Then would he call the watch? He would do that. And eagerly he did it, but the next moment he was laid low on the deck and bundled unceremoniously into the lazarette with his three companions, the hatchway replaced and secured, Captain Wilson standing on guard at it.

Meanwhile the watch below had been called and was astir. When sailors tumble out they generally do so gradually and by twos and threes. The first two that came aft were quickly overpowered, one at a time and bound. The third man drew his knife and rushed at the steward, who fired, wounding him severely in the shoulder. It was the only shot that was fired. Finding that cook and steward and captain were all armed, the rest of the watch below quietly surrendered and submitted to be locked in the round house, prisoners of the bold and resolute man who, in the course of an hour, had thus regained possession of his ship against overwhelming odds.

The first thing was to wash and bandage the wounded shoulder of the man who was shot, the next to put all the prisoners in the round house under lock and key. Four of them out of twelve volunteered to assist in working the ship rather than submit to the tedium of imprisonment. The irony of fate! Not one of them could steer except one and he imperfectly. And the courses are set, and topsails, lower and upper, are drawing, and the topgallant sails too. Pray Heaven this wind may last and no stronger!

The lieutenant was admitted to the captain's table under guard and on parole. The meal over, he was ushered into his stateroom and locked in. Once a day only—for the captain is captain and crew combined—bread and beef and water were passed to the prisoners in the round house; no more attention than absolutely necessary could be spared to them.

For thirty days they sailed with westerly gales behind them. They made the channel in safety, and the code signal was hoisted as they passed up the channel. On the morning of April 21, exactly one month since her course was altered off Cape Hatteras, the *Emily St. Pierre* threaded the devious channels which lead into the broad estuary of the Mersey, the anchor fell with a plunge and an eager rattle of the leaping cable chain, and the ship rode stately on the rushing tide.

Much was made of Captain Wilson during the next few days. All England rang with applause of his brave exploit. Meetings were convened, presentations were made, speeches were delivered to an extent that might have turned the head of a less simple and true hearted man. Large sums of money were subscribed, of which plucky Matthew Montgomery and honest Louis Schelvin, the cook, got their share. But probably the happiest and proudest moment of his life was when the captain stood on deck on the day of the arrival, his wife by his side, beside her the owner of the ship, Charles K. Priobean, of Fraser, Trenholm & Co., while he narrated in simple words the story of his exploit. His big beard was torn and ragged, his eyes bloodshot with weariness and lack of sleep, his face haggard, weather-beaten and drawn; but he was a man of whom all England was proud—a man to inspire her with the faith that the race of heroes does not die.

## AMERICAN RAILROADS

THEIR GROWTH THE WONDER OF THE CENTURY.

The invention of the steam engine in 1773 attracted advanced thinkers to the possibility of the locomotive. The American Railway, published by Scribners, gives a detailed history of the growth and development of the railway system.

The first locomotive was invented in London by Richard Trevithick in 1804, but it could not make steam, and could therefore neither go fast nor draw a heavy load. It was of little practical value. But in 1829, when a competitive trial of locomotives was made on the Liverpool & Manchester Railway, the Stephenson, father and son, presented the Rocket, which by the aid of a steam blast, which was kept constantly blowing the fire, enabled the locomotive to make steam enough to draw ten passenger cars at the rate of thirty-five miles an hour.

In this country the Delaware & Hudson Canal at Honesdale, Pa., was the pioneer in railroading, and in 1827 this company built the Carbondale Railroad under construction, connecting the coal mines with the canal. This road was sixteen miles in length and was opened in 1829, to be operated by stationary engines. The first locomotive in this country was run over this road August 9, 1829.

Mr. Horatio Allen, who is still living near York, went to England in 1828 to study the subject of locomotive building. He had a commission from the Delaware & Hudson Canal Company to purchase rails for their road, and also their locomotives to be built in England upon plans to be decided upon by himself after his arrival in that country. This was before the trial of the Rocket on the Liverpool & Manchester Railroad. The result of Mr. Allen's investigations was to produce in his mind a confidence in the multitubular boiler, which is now universally used for locomotives. An order was given to Foster, Roetuch & Co., at Stonebridge, for one engine whose boiler was

to have riveted flues of comparatively large size, and another order was given to Messrs. Stephenson & Co., of Newcastle-on-Tyne, for two locomotives with boilers having small tubes. The engine built by Foster, Roetuch & Co. was sent to this country and tried at Honesdale August 9 of that year. Its name was the Stonebridge Lion, and it was run on its trial trip by Mr. Allen, to whom belongs the distinction of having run the first locomotive ever used in this country. The two locomotives built by Messrs. Stephenson & Co. were sent to this country, but there is no record of their use.

The first railroad which was undertaken for the transportation of freight and passengers in this country on a comprehensive scale was the Baltimore & Ohio. Its construction was begun in 1828. Peter Parley's "First Book of History," used as a school book half a century ago, says of this first railway: "But the most curious thing at Baltimore is the railroad. I must tell you that there is a great trade between Baltimore and the States west of the Allegheny mountains. The Western people buy a great many goods at Baltimore and send in return a great deal of Western produce. There is therefore a vast deal of travelling back and forth, and hundreds of teams are constantly occupied in transporting goods and produce to and from market. Now, in order to carry on this business more easily, the people are building what is called a railroad. This consists of iron bars laid along the ground and made fast, so that carriages with small wheels may run along upon them with facility. In this way one horse will be able to draw as much as ten horses on a common road. A part of this railway is already done, and if you choose to take a ride upon it you can do so. You will mount a car something like a stage and then you will be drawn along by lead horses at the rate of twelve miles an hour."

The Baltimore & Ohio had fifteen miles of road in May, 1830. The question of locomotive power was under consideration for some time.

In 1829 and 1830 Peter Cooper experimented with a little locomotive on this road. At a meeting of the Master Mechanics' Association in New York in 1875—at the institute which bears his name—he related with great glee how on the trial trip he had beaten a gray horse attached to another car. The boiler of Peter Cooper's locomotive was about the size of a flour barrel. The flues were made of gun barrels. The whole machine was not larger than a hand car of the present day.

The De Witt Clinton was built for the Mohawk & Hudson Railroad, and was the third locomotive made by the West Point Foundry Association. The first excursion trip was made with passengers from Albany to Schenectady August 9, 1831.

In 1831 the Baltimore & Ohio Company offered a premium of \$4,000 "on the most approved engine, which shall be delivered for trial upon the road on or before the 1st day of June, 1831, and \$3,500 for the engine which shall be adjudged the next best." The requirements were that the engine when in operation should not exceed three and one-half tons weight, and must on a level road be capable of drawing fifteen tons, exclusive of weight of wagons, fifteen miles per hour.

In response to this call three locomotives were produced, but only one was made to answer any useful purpose. This engine, the York, was built at York, Pa., and brought to Baltimore over the turnpike on wagons. After undergoing certain modifications it was found capable of performing what was required by the company.

In August, 1831, the locomotive John Bull, which was built by George and Robert Stephenson & Co., of Newcastle-on-Tyne, was received in Philadelphia for the Germany & Amboy Railroad and Transportation Company. This is the old engine which was exhibited by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company at the Centennial Exposition of 1876. After the arrival of the John Bull a number of engines were imported to America by the Stephensons. Most of them were of what is known as the Planet, which was a form of engine that succeeded the Rocket.

In all these locomotives the axles were held by the frames, so that the former were always parallel with each other. This made it difficult to turn curves.

This was remedied by John B. Jervis, who constructed an engine with a main driving axle rigidly attached to the engine frame, and only one truck, or "bearing carriage," consisting of two pairs of small wheels attached to a frame and fastened to the engine frame by a king-bolt.

In 1834 Ross Winans, of Baltimore, patented the application of the principle which Mr. Allen had proposed and adopted for locomotives "to passenger and other cars." He afterward brought a number of actions at law against railroads for infringement of his patent, which was a subject of legal controversy for twenty years. Winans claimed that his invention originated as far back as 1831, and was completed and reduced to practice in 1834. The dispute was carried to the Supreme Court of the United States, and was decided against the

plaintiff after an expenditure of \$200,000. It involved the principle in which nearly all cars in this country are now and were then built.

In 1834 Henry R. Campbell, of Philadelphia, patented the use of two pairs of driving wheels and a truck. The driving wheels were coupled by rods. The principle has been generally adopted in this country.

From these comparatively small beginnings the magnificent equipment of our railroads has grown. From Peter's Cooper's locomotive, which weighed less than a ton, with a boiler the size of a barrel, and which had difficulty in beating a gray horse, we now have locomotives which will easily run sixty and can exceed seventy miles an hour, and others which weigh seventy-five tons and more.

A comparison of the engine built by Peter Cooper with the modern standard express passenger locomotive shows the progress which has been made in fifty years. There have been many modifications in the design of locomotives to adapt them to the changed conditions of the various kinds of traffic of to-day. An express train traveling at a high rate of speed requires a locomotive very different from one which is designed for hauling heavy freight trains up steep mountain grades. The engines at first had four wheels, but now they have eight and ten.

The early cars resembled the stage coaches of that day. The Mohawk & Hudson road in 1831 had six cars. The next step was to join these coaches together and build cars with compartments. It was opened September 27, 1825, with a "goods train," as the freight train is called in England, but this also carried a number of passengers.

The following notice, which appeared in the Baltimore newspapers, was the first time-table for passenger railway trains published in this country:—

"RAILROAD NOTICE.

"A sufficient number of cars being now ready for the accommodation of passengers, notice is hereby given that the following arrangements for the arrival and departure of carriages have been adopted and will take effect on and after Monday morning next, the 5th instant, viz.: A brigade of cars will leave the depot on Pratt street at 6 and 10 o'clock a.m. and 3 and 4 o'clock p.m., and will leave the depot at Ellicott's mills at 6 and 8.30 o'clock a.m. and at 12.30 and 6 p.m.

"Way passengers will provide themselves with tickets at the office of the company in Baltimore, or at the depots at Pratt street and Ellicott's mills or at the Relay house, near Elk Ridge landing.

"The evening way car for Ellicott's mills will continue to leave the depot, Pratt street, at 6 o'clock p.m. as usual.

"N.B. Positive orders have been issued to the drivers to receive no passengers into any of the cars without tickets.

"P.S. Parties desiring to engage a car for the day can be accommodated after July 5."

A passenger train of the Mohawk & Hudson railroad, which was put on in October, 1831, between Albany and Schenectady, attracted much attention. It was hauled by the English engine "John Bull," and driven by an English engineer named John Hampson. This is generally regarded as the first fully equipped passenger train hauled by a steam power engine which ran in regular service in this country. During 1832 it carried an average of 387 passengers daily.

From this train to the New York limited with vestibuled sleepers, parlor car, dining car, library, bath room and barber shop marks the advancement of railway time in America in half a century.

His Ruling Passion.

Many years ago, near Nashville, Tenn. lived an old fellow—Dan Crawford. He had a small farm, but he did not give any more attention to agricultural pursuits than a solute necessity demanded. The main part of his time was spent wherever he could find any one who was willing to bet with him. It made no material difference whether he bet on or on which side he bet. The amount of his bets was necessarily small. He had been known to bet his hat and coat on the toss of a cent.

He was taken down with fever and the doctor considered his case hopeless and bluntly told him so.

"Bet you I don't die, doctor," said Dan.

"What's the use of betting, replied the doctor. Who'd pay if I won?"

"That's so, said Dan weakly; and ag' you've got it all on your side if I took your medicine. Say, Doc?"

"Well,

"When a feller dies they say that he turns angel and has wings.

"Yes.

"You expect to, don't you?"

"Yes, I trust so.

"Well, Doc, I'll bet you two to one we meet over there that I'll beat you again."

"Dan recovered from that illness, but was mad at the doctor because he would bet with him on his recovery.