

UNCLE BEN'S STORY.

BY GEORGE H. COOMER.

Uncle Ben was long past going to sea, but his stories of the deep were always interesting, for they were tales of experience, and not of imagination. I recall one of them in particular, the incidents of which occurred in his youth, a little previous to the war of 1812.

"At that time," he began, "sailors had more to dread than now; for they were in constant dread of impressment by the British. Sometimes they would be picked up while on shore in the English ports, and whisked off on board a man-of-war; but oftener they were seized on the broad ocean—taken right off their own decks, and compelled to serve among strangers.

"How would it look at this day for a British officer to come on board an American vessel and order the captain to muster his crew, just as slaves are brought out for an auction sale in the West Indies? Think of it! What would the newspapers say? What would the people say? What would the President say? Wouldn't there be a call to arms from Maine to California? And wouldn't every man in the county, capable of shouldering a musket, be eager to volunteer for the honor of our flag?"

Uncle Ben looked full of enthusiasm as he said this; full, too, of a just indignation at remembered wrongs.

"But habit," the old mariner resumed, "is everything. Our people had got in the way of looking upon England as having a kind of ownership of the ocean, and it took them a long while to forget this inherited feeling.

"Why, some of our vessels, brought to by the British cruisers, would be left with hardly men enough to work them into port. And yet, our folks took it as a matter of course, seeming to think that nothing could be done about it. Wasn't England the 'mother country?' they said, and the 'mistress of the ocean'?"

"Before going to sea, I got what was called a 'protection,' telling where I was born, how old, how tall I was, and what color my eyes were. The very fact that an American sailor should be obliged to procure such a writing, with such an object, was enough to fill one with shame. But, still worse, the thing did no good.

"A 'protection,' in so far as regarded the danger of impressment, was worth just its weight of blank paper, and no more. It is true that the British professed to seize only their own countrymen; but, in reality, they paid no attention to any affidavit of birth. 'We want men, and will have them,' they said; and that ended the matter.

"All my sea-going acquaintances had the like passports, subscribed and sworn to in proper legal form, and as humiliating, under the circumstances, as if in so many words they had asked John Bull to grant the bearers the liberty of sailing on his big pond.

"The one I carried answered very well for three years, simply because it never happened to be called for, and then, finding myself grown too tall and robust to answer the description, I got another.

"At that time I was going to Lisbon in the ship *Rebecca*. The captain was an excellent man, named Eddy, whose family lived directly across the street from ours, and who had known me from my birth.

"The entire ship's company was made up of our townspeople, so that when we went out of port it hardly seemed like going away from home, we had so many family associations in common.

"The *Rebecca* reached Lisbon in about thirty days, and our stay there was very interesting. The foremast hands being all sober and well-informed men, there became treasured up in the forecastle a great deal of entertaining knowledge concerning the Portuguese and their country.

"We had all heard the story of the destruction of old Lisbon by the tremendous earthquake of 1755, and imagination vividly painted the scene as we looked up and down the Tagus.

"At the time we were there Marshal Junot, with French army, had possession of the city, for Napoleon had then just laid his hand upon Portugal.

"I shall never forget the appearance of those French troops. Every morning they used to turn out for exercise, and I assure you they were no holiday soldiers. The grenadiers, especially, were very imposing, for they wore huge bearskin shakos, and were, besides, taller than the others.

"When, finally, we had secured our cargo of wine and dates, and were once more at sea, every one thought how much he would have to tell upon getting home; for all of us had friends, and dear ones, too, who would be glad enough to hear every little incident of the voyage recounted.

"We took the route usually followed at this day by vessels from the south of Europe, standing northwardly until in the latitude of the English Channel, although considerably to the west of it. Thence we headed nearly in a direct course for the United States.

"Our west longitude was now fast increasing, but we had not run long in this direction when a sail was observed bearing down upon us, and, as she drew nearer, we discovered her to be a brig-of-war.

"She fired a shot ahead of us, and Captain Eddy gave orders to haul around the mainmast. He looked terribly vexed and stern, but he was in the lion's mouth, and could not help himself.

"So the *Rebecca*, with her fore-top-

sail aback, lay tumbling in the sea, with her headway entirely stopped.

"The British cruiser also hove to, with her jib and staysail loosely flapping, and the canvas on her mainmast holding her where she was. Then a Lieutenant, with a number of marines, came on board of us. The vessel alongside, he said, was his Majesty's brig *Falkirk*, Captain Downs.

"First he asked for the *Rebecca*'s papers, and, having read them, ordered our Captain to have all mustered afloat.

"You have no authority," said Captain Eddy, "to command me in such a manner. My men, I presume, are all on deck, and you can see them. I shall make no special muster of my crew."

"The British Lieutenant looked surprised and angry.

"Go forward, Corporal," he said to the petty officer of the marines; "take a couple of men with you, and rouse out any of his Majesty's run-a-ways that you find in the forecastle. I will teach you, sir," he added, addressing Captain Eddy, "to respect an order coming from one who bears a commission from the King of Great Britain."

"No one was found in the forecastle, for the very good reason that we were

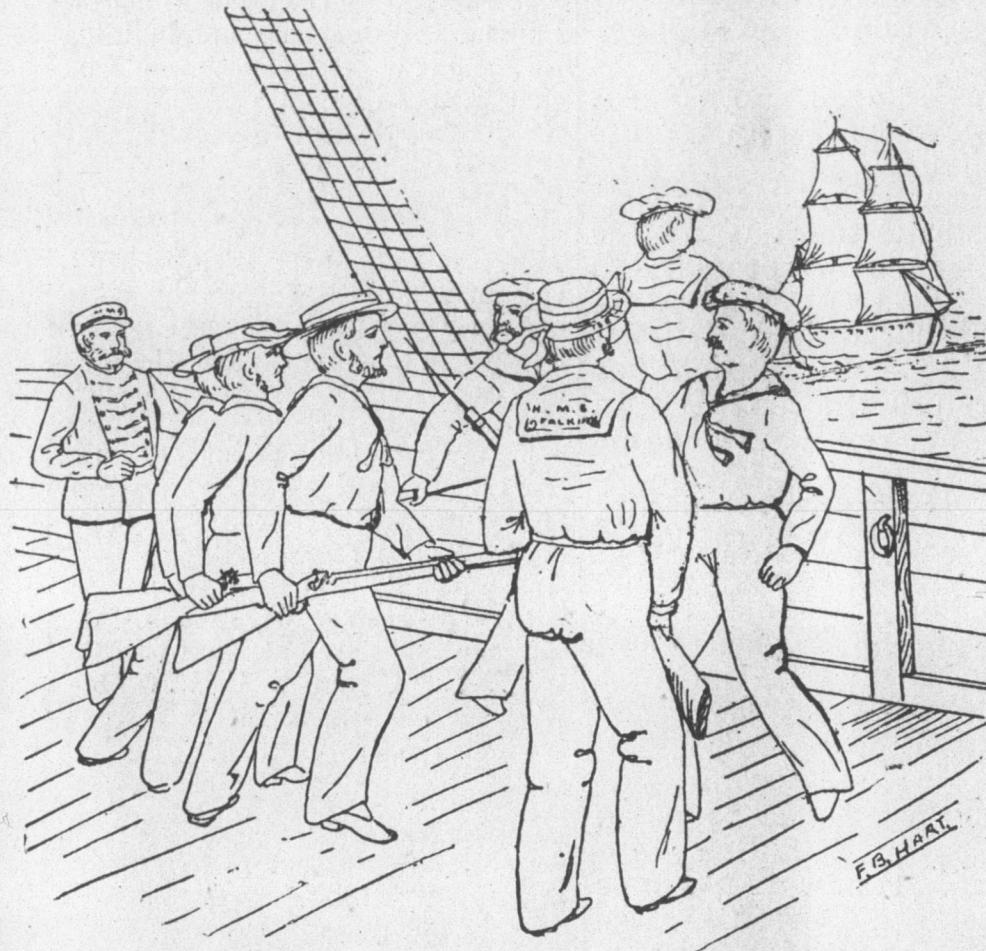
tain Downs should be found willing to stand a trial upon the question, in the courts of England, he may rest assured I shall be there!"

"Such a declaration would have been astounding to the British Lieutenant could he have believed the American shipmaster in earnest; but, as it was, he replied simply by some allusion to 'Yankee insolence,' and repeated his command to the corporal to bundle us into the boat.

"A semi-circle of bayonets fairly pushed us to the gangway, and, though we turned desperately upon the sharp steel, it was only to receive wounds which, if not deep, were at least painful.

"Captain Eddy, forcing his way between the soldiers and ourselves, shook hands with us heartily before we went down our good ship's side into the English boat.

"Don't be down-hearted, my good lads," he said; "I'll see you through. This matter isn't to stop here! If they take you, they take me. And, remember," he added, with emphasis, "that even English law does not sustain this thing. The officer at my elbow knows this as well as I do. Or, at least, if you do not, sir," he continued, addressing the Lieutenant, "you are ignorant of the laws of your own country."



THE RED COATS DROVE US DOWN AT THE POINT OF THEIR BAYONETS.

all above-board. And now the Lieutenant proceeded to arrange us in a rank before him, ordering up his marines with their bayonets to compel obedience.

"We numbered eight before the mast, all having 'protections,' made out in good faith, and supposed to cover the necessary ground. With a strong appearance of contempt the British officer went through the farce of reading them. Then he tore in two my own and those of three of my shipmates, crumpled them in his hand, and threw them overboard.

"You four are all English," he said; "that is plain enough. I care nothing for your lying Yankee protections; you have only to get into that boat and return to your duty to your King and country."

"We refused positively. But what was the refusal of four unarmed sailors, with the bayonets of ten marines at their breasts, and a twenty-gun brig-of-war lying hardly a cable's length away?

"Sir," said Captain Eddy, turning to the Lieutenant, "I appeal to your humanity and your honor. These young men are my neighbors when at home. They are true-born Americans. I have known them from childhood, and have always been well acquainted with their families. If you take them you commit an outrage such as even your own Government would not sanction."

"I have heard such talk before," said the officer. "It is what they always say. You Yankees should have learned before this that the royal navy is not to be defrauded by your miserable evasions. Such papers as I have just thrown overboard pass among you from hand to hand, answering for Yankees and foreigners alike; but you perceive they have failed to serve their holders in this case."

"Then, turning to the marines, he added: 'Corporal, see that these men are got into the boat without delay.'

"The red-coated soldiers encompassed us, putting the points of their bayonets through our clothing; and the Corporal attempted to take me by the collar, but recoiled upon seeing my fist drawn back for a blow.

Captain Eddy looked sternly in the face of the Lieutenant. "So, sir, you are resolved?" he said.

"Yes," replied the officer, "and I wish you to understand it. I have the power to take these subjects of the king, and that power I shall use."

"Very well," returned the Captain; "I am helpless to resist. But, sir, if you can take my men, you can take my vessel. Here, on the spot, I surrender the ship *Rebecca* to Captain Downs of his Britannic Majesty's brig *Falkirk*!"

"When you brace forward, I shall follow you. You will probably outsail me, but, in that event, I shall make for the first English port, delivering up my ship as a prize captured upon the high seas by his Majesty's cruiser.

"I will test this matter of impressment to the very bottom; and, if Cap-

"We could not hear what Captain Downs said, but that his attention was wholly fixed upon his singular pursuer was very evident. Both himself and the Lieutenant gazed at her through their glasses, and apparently made her the subject of a very animated discussion.

"On the following night it was almost calm. The *Rebecca*, however, fell upon a stronger current of air than ourselves, and in the morning had got ahead of us.

"The English sailors, who by this time had gathered a pretty correct idea of what was going on, talked of the 'bully row' there would be, should the Yankee captain arrive at Portsmouth before them, and report his vessel a prize!

"The *Falkirk*'s commander walked the quarter-deck rapidly, often glancing in our direction, and, as we judged, saying something about us to his officers.

"For three days, with intervals of light breeze, calms, and fogs, we continued near 'Chops of the Channel,' the vessels changing more or less their relative positions with the unsteady puffs of air, yet never getting very far from each other. And all this time Captain Downs seemed in a state of irritation.

"On the evening of the same day we were once more decidedly ahead, and, before morning, saw the steady beacon from the lighthouse on the western end of the Isle of Wight. We were nearing the great naval anchorage at Spithead, between the island and the mainland, where the harbor of Portsmouth is situated.

"As the day broke, a ship was observed off our quarter. Lighter and lighter grew the sky, and more and more familiar the appearance of the accompanying vessel.

"Confound the miserable Yankee!" cried Captain Downs, at last out of patience, and grown terribly nervous with his three or four days of suspense. "Can it be that he really means to follow me into port? I'd no idea the would carry his contemptible folly to this extent!"

"He had, indeed, good reason to feel disturbed, for there, before his eyes, and not two miles off, was the *Rebecca*, bearing straight up for Spithead.

"No doubt he thought of the Board of Admiralty, the Court of King's Bench, the interminable discussion in Parliament, and all the wearying complications, both national and international, which this vexatious matter involved. And who could say how many individual cases might be held up to the light, which would reflect little credit on his Majesty's service, and still less on the immediate actors?

"Upon his own side he might plead the countenance of immemorial custom; but would he not be confronted with that broad construction of English law which is the guarantee of personal liberty? And besides, would not the Yankee Captain be abundantly able to prove the nativity of the four impressed men?

"Every moment we were getting nearer to Portsmouth and Spithead; but so, too, was the *Rebecca*. Soon the affair of our impressment would be noised over all England, and thence borne to the ears of our countrymen at home. Soon Captain Eddy and the remainder of his crew would stand up in the English courts, testifying to the wrong that had been done us.

"Our feelings were intense. We ceased to regret what had happened. We thought only of the noble sympathy and resolute conduct of our true-hearted Captain. How wretched our condition but for this.

"Still the *Rebecca* came steadily along, making what headway she could with the light breeze, and almost holding her own with the *Falkirk*.

"But suddenly Captain Downs stopped in his fifty-foot walk.

"Lieutenant Vane," he said, "see the brig brought to the wind, and the main-yard laid aback."

"In a few minutes the *Falkirk* was lying motionless.

"Now," continued the Captain, "see the cutter called away. Put those four Yankees into her, and send them aboard the ship!" Then, with a sorry attempt to cover his mortification, he added: "Possibly there has been some mistake. At all events, the fellow has followed me long enough to deserve something at my hands, and he is welcome to the lubberly scoundrels!"

"In fifteen minutes we were on the *Rebecca*'s deck, but it was a midshipman, and not the Lieutenant, who escorted us there.

"As we climbed over the ship's rail, Captain Eddy seemed as much rejoiced as ourselves. Grasping each by the hand, he welcomed us with a sympathy that went to our hearts.

"It's sooner than I expected," he said, "but I meant to see this whole matter of impressment overhauled, and I would have had you at last."

"We tried to express our thanks, but could not say all we felt. And oh, how cheery it seemed once more to haul at the braces of the good Yankee ship, and obey the tones of Yankee officers.

"Home and friends were before us, and in a few weeks we reached the United States, there to relate to wondering ears our four days' experience as impressed sailors, and tell every one how much we owed to a captain who had proved himself such a friend in need and so worthy of his position."

The Emperor of China has a new umbrella which requires the strength of ten men to carry it. The Emperor says the man who can steal that umbrella can have it.

PRINCETON JUBILATES.

COMMEMORATING THE FOUNDING OF THE OLD LOG COLLEGE.

A throng of 25,000 people present at the exercises—President Harrison makes a short address to the assembled multitude—other speakers.

The old log college celebration, under the auspices of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, was begun Thursday on the old Tennent farm, near Hartsville, Bucks county, Pa., where the college was originally located.

The farm is about twenty miles from Philadelphia. Thursday's exercises were really commemorative of the founding of the Presbyterian church in the United States. The log college was established in 1726 by William Tennent, and flourished until 1742, when Princeton college was founded. It may be said that the Princeton institution sprang from the primitive college established by Tennent. When the celebration was first talked of President Harrison promised to attend, and he has kept that promise by coming here together with Postmaster-General Wanamaker, Mrs. Harrison, the Rev. J. W. Scott, and Private Secretary Halford.

The President and his friends arrived from Washington Wednesday evening and spent the night at Mr. Wanamaker's country home at Jenkintown. Early Thursday morning the party started for the place where the exercises were held, driving in carriages over the old York road for a distance of eight miles. Tents had been erected on the Tennent farm and an immense crowd from the surrounding country was present. There were also many prominent Presbyterian divines. A long program of exercises had been arranged, and at 11:20 the services of the day were opened by the reading of a verse of Scripture by the Rev. Joseph Beggs, D. D., of Philadelphia. Then followed a prayer by the Rev. L. W. Eckard of Abington, Pa., to whose energetic work the success of the day's celebration is due.

At 1:30 the President, leaning on the arm of Mr. Wanamaker, entered the large tent and was given a most enthusiastic reception. They were followed by the rest of the party, and all took front seats on the raised platform. The ladies carried beautiful bouquets. Gov. Beaver, who was also of the party, received a generous ovation when he ascended the platform. As soon as the distinguished visitors were seated the first paper of the day was read by the Rev. D. K. Turner of Hartsville. The address was descriptive of the founding of the log college. The speaker was followed by the Rev. R. M. Patterson, D. D., LL. D., of Philadelphia, editor of the Presbyterian, who delivered an address on "Log College Evangelists."

The Rev. Dr. Murray, dean of Princeton college, delivered a spirited address, and Rev. Richard McIlwaine, D. D., LL. D., read a paper on "The Influence of the Log College in the South."

President Harrison was then introduced and was cheered by the 25,000 present. Mr. Harrison spoke substantially as follows:

"I have had illustrated to me here today one of the consistent tenets of the Presbyterian church. Nothing, I assure you, short of a robust embodiment of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints in the person of our distinguished brother, the chairman, who has just introduced me, could have overcome the difficulties which seem to be in the way of those who attend celebrations. I thank you for your hospitable treatment of me and mine to-day, but I must say that I have much pleasure in being here, for every impulse of honest pride which stirs your hearts moves mine. I am glad to stand here at the source of a great movement. I am glad to be here to help celebrate one of those great impulses springing from a small beginning. I don't want to exalt unduly the Presbyterian church, and yet I think historians who have been untouched by partisanship testify that it has been magnificently pushed onward. Let us take no backward steps. Let us continue to merit the favor of God and do His work until the world shall cease to move. Steadfastness is our characteristic. Our enemies have called it obstinacy, and there are occasions when even that trait and characteristic has its service. Let us, my friends, continue to be steadfast to the faith nurtured and strengthened on this sacred spot. Let me kindly thank you for this most cordial and brotherly greeting. Let me wish that this day will close as auspiciously as it has opened. Let me hope that these scholarly addresses which will convey new thoughts to your minds and that you will carry away from here pleasant recollections of the day's celebration."

After the singing of the hymn, "Nearer, My God, to Thee," a lunch was served of which the Presidential party and the prominent members of the presbytery partook. After lunch President and Mrs. Harrison and the Rev. Mr. Scott drove back to Mr. Wanamaker's at Jenkintown. In the afternoon the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine of Nevill, Pa., delivered an address on "Presbyterians of the Cumberland Valley." Gov. Beaver read a speech eulogistic of the log college and its founders, and Postmaster-General Wanamaker also spoke. President Knox and others closed the speech-making. Letters from ex-President McCosh of Princeton and Gov. Green of New Jersey were read, and also a letter written in 1757 by Gilbert Tennent, son of the founder of the log college. The exercises closed with a benediction spoken by the Rev. Mr. Scott, the father of Mrs. Harrison.

OBITUARY.

Death of David D. Lloyd of the New York Tribune Staff.

At New York, recently, David D. Lloyd, one of the Tribune staff, died suddenly while walking in the street at Weehawken, N. J., of angina pectoris. For some years past Mr. Lloyd has been suffering from heart trouble. Mr. Lloyd was born in this city in 1831. He was successively reporter of the Tribune, private secretary to Chief Justice Chase, day editor of the Tribune, its Albany and Washington correspondent, and then an editorial writer on the paper. As a dramatist he is known as the author of the plays "For Congress," "The Woman Hater," "The Domine's Daughter," and had just completed a play called