A SAGA OF THE SEA

Nearly all my life until I was 16 years old was passed on large Yankee sailing ships, plying the Seven Seas. These ships, commanded by my father Capt. Lemuel G. Means were the Alice Ball, James Cheston, the Industry and the Zouave. They were all managed by Mr. Vernon H. Brown, who for many years was a prominent and progressive ship broker of New York City. He was also the head director for years in the Hanover North and the Seaman's Bank for Savings besides a director in several insurance and other financial institutions. As the American agent of the Cunard S. S. Co., his name became familiar to the nation. He was a man of sterling integrity and possessed an attractive and charming personality which impressed itself idelibly on my mind. I mention Mr. Brown in this composition as he managed our ships and his honesty and generosity in providing for our welfare contributed in no small degree to the happy years our family spent on his ships. My father was one of his favorite shipmasters and had command of his last sailing ships. Mr. Brown allowed my father to take his family with him. The family usually consisted of mother, a sister, a teacher and myself. There never was any change made for the keep of the family - which must have been no small item as our larder was besides the necessities, provided with many luxuries.

It may not be amiss here to state that my direct ancestors were all sea faring people and among the early settlers of Cumberland Co., locating at Old Orchard in 1718. My grandfather was a grandson of the early settlers. The Means family for years made their home at Old Orchard, Biddeford, Cape Elizabeth and Stroudwater. One of my uncles lost his life in a winter's storm when his schooner was wrecked near Rockland, Me. A cousin Capt. Irving Sawyer in trying to make New York in a snow storm was wrecked at Barnegat, N.J. a few miles from Sandy Hook. He and his wife perished while their infant daughter was saved being the first one rescued in breechess buoy by the life saving crew. Another cousin was the only one of a crew of seven who survived the wreck of the three masted schooner John R. Maxwell at Cape Hatteras. Both of these wrecks were among the most sensational and thrilling of any of the tragedies with which our coast is so familiar.

(A detailed account of these maritime disasters) I have cited these instances to show that those who follow the sea for a occupation have more perils and dangers to meet and more thrilling experiences than those of almost any other vosation.

My earliest recollection is of the sea. Theseships were the only home I knew as a boy and I had perfect confidence in the seamanship of my father, his extentensive experience as a master, in his sound judgment andhis ever watchful and vigilant quidance when the ship was in any danger zone. In making land in heavy weather he would scarcely leave the deck for hours and then only for a bite and a few minutes rest. I had grown up to have not only explicit confidence and faith in my father'but in the seaworthiness of our ship to feel that it mattered not how harsh the gale the ship could weather any storm. I know now that at times we were in perilous situations but to me then with my holdlike faith in my father and the ship I was unafraid.

Three times I made the trip around Cape Horn - once in the Alice Ball and twice in the James Cheston. Cape Horn is proverbial for rough seas and heavy gales especially in the winter when icebergs was another grave menace. Until a sailor has rounded the Horn at least once he is considered a novice regardless of his service. But after his baptism at the Horn - where Old Neptune displays all the tricks in his bag - he is entitled then to enjoy all the rights and privileges of a full-fledged sailor. One of my earliest recollections are among the most sensational and thrilling of any of the tragedies with which our coast is so familiar. The facts of each make a facinating story on which I need not dwell here. I have cited theses instances to show that those who follow the sea for a livelihood have more perils and dangers to meet and consequently more thrilling and interesting experiences than those in almost any other vocation.

One of my earliest recollections was the voyage around Cape Horn in the clipper ship Industry. We were carrying a cargo of guns and ammunition to the Peruvian government. Chilli and Peru being at that time at war. When we reached Cape Horn it was in the dead of winter, the sea was full of icebergs and a sharp lookout had to (be) keptfor them all the time. One gale followed another in almost unbroken succession. The wind was constnatly against us. The head wind and gales would not have been so bad had it not been for the intense cold. This made it difficult to handle the ship, all the ropes frozen and stiff. Against these terrible gales it seemed as if we could not make but little

headway. What was gained one day we lost the next. From 50' South on the East Side to 50' South on the West Side we were 55 days. A chart showing each days position, made by father, hung for several years in the New York Chamber of Commerce. After battling the cold, the ice and head gales for nearly two months the crew was nearly exhausted, having had little rest night or day. One incident in the Horn stand out prominant in memory. A man working on the topsail yard slipped and fell. I was in the cabin door and saw him fall. He struck the deck never moved a muscle, was killed instantly. The next day we buried him at sea. The main yard of the ship was backed, the crew all assembled amidship, father read the service from the Bible and the body consigned to the sea. This was an impressive and solemn scene. With less than 30 people on board after being associated with each other quite closely for over two months when one is taken you feel a grief and sorrow that comes from the loss of a friend.

We finally weathered the storms of Cape Horn and with fair weather and favoring winds we soon made Valpariso without being intercepted by the Chilian war vessels. How delighted we were to be safe in port once again.

The American consul there then was Genl. John C. Caldwell who was a general in the Civil War, a lawyer of outstanding ability and a distinguished oratoe. He was a graduate of Amherst but a Maine manwhose home was East Machias. He seemed to take quite an interest in me. I guess because I was a boy from his home state. He called me "Young America". The boat was never lowered if my father went but I went with him. I never had to ask, "Father can I go?" We were inseparable companions. I knew he always wanted me with him. I have walked miles and miles in a foreign port holding on his little finger and hardly allowing him out of sight even for a moment. On going ashore the American consulate was always the first place we went in a foreign port. An incident occurred at Valpariso I have never forgotten. One day in General Caldwell's office he passed me a silver American half dollar and said if I would tell him what bird was on it he would give it to me. Without hesitating a moment I said " anyone would know that was a crow". As he said "its yours". I guess the reward was given more for my 'cocksuredness' rather than my knowledge.

One night while in Valpariso an American ship, anchored close to us burned toa total loss. I remember my father (coming and taking me out of bed,wrapping me up in a blanket) waking me up and taking me on deck in his arms to view this wonderful sight -(Valpariso is a fine

harbor). The night was clear, the sea quiet, scarcely a ripple breaking the surface of the water. Valpariso is a fine and beautiful harbor nestling at the foot of the Andes. That night it teemed with vessels from all parts of the world. At that time all ships had tarred hemp rigging, it was several years after this before wire came int use. The tarred rope made the fire very spectatcular. A blaze would start at the rail on a hemp rope saturated with tar and with a serpentine movement rapidly scook the top. It was only a short time before the entire ship was in flames. The harbor and sky were illuminated and all objects showed in bold relief. It was a spectacular sight and one you could never forget.

One would hardly expect ships at this period to be equipped to fight pirates. Around the mast in the cabin of the Industry were at least a dozen long handled pikes or spears which were there for that purpose. They were a grewsomer reminder of a not far distant time when the sea w was infested with pirates. In fact even then piracy was quite common in the Mediterranean, West Indies and the China Sea, but it had been practically wiped out at that time. Still when we were in Hong Kong in 1879 there were several pirates hung for capturing an American ship and killing the captain and his wife. My father was invited to the hanging, but did not care to go.

Our ship was sold at Valpariso. We came back in a steamer to Panama. Then transferred across the isthmus to another steamer for New York.

Immediately after returning my father was given the command of the ship James Cheston - being also owned by Vernon H. Brown. We made another voyage in the James Cheston around Cape Horn to Valpariso. In rounding the Horn it was not in winter. Cape Horn is proverbial for rough seas and heavy gales at all seasons. Until a sailor has rounded the Horn at least once he is considered an apprentice or an ordinary seaman but after his baptism at the Horn where Neptune displays all the tricks in his bag he is taken into the inner circle and crowned an able seaman with all the priveleges and benefits of the craft. This time we encountered only ordinary head gales and had no difficulty. As soon as we unloaded our cargo we loaded guano at the Okinacho Islands which we took to Rotterdam, Holland. Soon we returned to New York. My father had followed the sea constantly since he was 12 years old. He was now

over 50 and he decided to find something congenial at home where life would be less strenuous and periless. His home was at Millbridge he accordingly went back there, built the Atlantic House, quite a large building which he operated for about 2 years as a hotel. The hotel was a success financially but when his old employer Vernon H. Brown insisted that he come and take command of the Zouave his longing for the sea returned and he yielded once again to its lure and facination. The Zouave was a beautiful ship, built at Richmond, Me.- all her timbers oak, her rivets and bolts copper. Her cabin and staterooms were commodious and attractive. The woodwork was all finished in heavy white enamel and gilt. She was a wonderful seaboat and dry as a bone in any weather. The only voyage I ever knew her to be logy and ship water was when she was loaded beyond her rating. She was not considered a 'clipper' but when loaded to ordinary capacity was very fast. In fact comparing favorably with the 'clipper' ships built especially for speed. The first trip we made in the Zouave was up the Mediterranean to [illegible], then over to Odessa. The ship had a light cargo of [illegible] for [illegible] and locomotives for the Russian Government at Odessa. On that trip we passed an English bark. We went by her almost as if she were standing still. The captain shouted to us through his megaphone saying "Captain, you sail like a steamboat". I remember another instance where our speed was quite gratifying. We were in Manilla with Capt. Pierce of the clipper ship 'Lodoga' and Capt. Pierce in speaking of his ship always called her 'The Clipper Ship Lodoga'. We went from Manilla to Iloilo to load sugar for New York. On the voyage home early one morning we saw an American ship ahead. As soon as father saw her he said "By gracious I believe that's the Lodoga". We were coming up on her quite fast and soon we went by her on the leeward side, so near our yards almost touching. Both ships were loaded light. Of course we were glad to meet an old friend at sea and were especially delighted to think that the Zouave was faster than the Lodoga - of whose speed we had heard so much.

One of my earliest recollection was the first voyage we made around the Horn. I was then 4 years old. We were carrying guns and ammunition to the Peruvian government. When we reached the Horn it was in the dead of winter and was intensely cold. One head gale followed anoher in succession. The sea was teeming with icebergs. Sometimes it seemed impossible to make progress against the storms. What we gained one day we would lose the next. The cold and ice made it difficult to handle the ship-all the ropes frozen and stiff. One man lost his hold and fell from the fore topsail yard striking the deck killing him instantly. The next day we buried him at sea. A burial at sea is an impressing and solemn occasion. All hand are gathered at midship, the ship brought to a standstill by backing the main yards, the captain reads the burial service and some appropriate verses from the Bible. Then the body seed in canvas and weighted with stones is consigned to the sea.

in ship shape. The pilot came and soon a large tug boat to take us out of the pier and nearly down to Staten Island where the course was clear and we could sail under our own power. With a favoring wind we soon passed Sandy Hook and before the Sandy Hook Light Ship was reached the pilot bid us good bye and left us in a boat that was waiting for him. Here we were lightly loaded with sugar for Smyrma and locomotives and tenders for Odessa. The Zouave had just come from the dry dock where her copper was cleaned and being loaded so she had her maximum speed, she was exceptionally fast-comparing favorably in speed with most of the Yankee clippers. Despite the fact that we 'laid to' off the Azores, in 19 days we passed Giberialta. Just before we reached Smyrna we passed an English bark so fast the Captain shouted to us through his trumpet, "Captain you sail like a steamboat". How strange and fascinating everything was at Smyrna. The camels, the donkeys, the strange dress of the men with their bloomer pantaloons. Such delicious white grapes I have never found elsewhere. In fact there were thrills galore without being held up by bandits when we tried to visit (to visit) the old fort ruins on the side of the mountain. As we did not respond to their demand for 'bakshish' they threw rocks from their sling shots at us and one of the missles hit a donkey. We wereglad to get back to ship safely.

After leaving Smyrna and before entering the Dardanelles near the entrance there a terrible gale. We anchored in the best harbor available and used both of our heavy anchors, even then father was quite worried lest they would not hold and that we would be driven on a lee shore a wreck. Halfway through the straits we had to present our papers and health certificates to the Turkish officials on shore as always when the boat was lowered I got to go, taking my place as always at the side of father. After recieving the papers with a pair of long tongs and smoking them over a fire the official shook hands with us. This was at Gallipoli where the English were stopped in the World War and where they suffered appalling casualities. After a days run we were in Constantinople, where we were about a week. The city was built right down to the edge of the sea and scattered all over were lofty towers or minarets attached to the mosques where at evening they set up a terrible wailing-which is supposed to be a prayer. In leaving

Constantinople for Odess we had to pass through the Bosporus Straits- 20 miles long, separating Asia from Europe- famed for many historical events in ancient history. Here is where the American Roberts College is located. They had not seen a ship for years flying the Stars and Stripes so when we passed they accorded us an enthuistic greeting. It seem like an oasis in the desert to find our flag flying from a building in a foreign land. Until then we did not know about Roberts College, so it was an agreeable surprise. The temperature at Constantinople was like Sept. or October in New England tho it was Dec. A few days brought us to Odessa. Oh! what a contrast there was in the temperature. We arrived one evening and the cold was so intense the next morning the men walked ashore on the ice. Here we were frozen in for 3 months but as we made some pleasant acquaintances ashore and among the English steamboat captains and as I remember the time was spent quite pleasently.

On the way back we stopped at Traponi where I see from father's account book which Jennie sent me bought a cargo, of salt there on the ship's account. We brought this to Gloucester. But evidently Mr. Brown made a better sale in NY so he met us there and without landing we proceded to New York.

I shall not weary you with our wanderings thereafter. Sufficient to note that we soon loaded a cargo for Breman Haven, Germany, then back to New York where we loaded oil for Liverpool. Here it was father rented some rooms and we kept house until we were ready to sail back for New York. As I remember it father thought then he would retire from the sea. Uncle Andrew then took the ship and made another trip to Germany. On the way over he lost rudder and had a terrible time in getting a jury-one to work and lost the old Chinese cook that had been with father a long time kept insisting if "if the captain was here so he called father it would be fixed in short order. HOwever when the ship came back Mr. Brown chartered her with oil for Yokohama. He wrote father and insisted on his coming back and take charge of her for the trip. This he finally consented to do.

I have not time to describe this trip to China and Japan and do not want to tire you. Suffice it to say that the ship was by far too heavily loaded. She did not have her accustomed speed and was sluggish in riding the waves. We had ordinarilly fair weather until we reached the Cape of Good Hope when the worst gale in my experience struck us. It was of real hurricane proportions. In running with the wind the

shipped so much water amidships that father was afraid she would be swamped and he was also afraid to bring the ship to the wind for if we happened to strike one of those mountainous waves when we were coming to in the trough of the sea it could be the end of us all. Finally he decided there was less danger in facing it than running with the wind and that was the order he gave. I can never forget the tense moments when this was being done. We all seemed to realize the danger. The first thing the ship did after coming to the wind was to put her bow away under a big wave then her stern under. This was the only time I ever knew water to pour down in the after cabin. After that f first plunge she seemed to ride the waves good. Perhaps it was because she gained headway again. After this gale we had fairly fair waether to the Straits of Sunda-103 days from New York.

I see that I must omit even a cursory glance at the many interesting experiences from here on. We were in Yokohama 2 or 3 months, then Nagasaki, then Hong Kong, Manilla, Illolho - to Boston.

Father had looked forward quite a while to the time when he could retire from the sea. He had followed it almost continuously since he was 12 years old. At 18 he commanded the brig Martha Washington and after a Mediterranean trip he sailed into Jonesport, his home, under full sail.

Before going on the Japanese-China trip when he planned on retiring before he built a house at Millbridge and here is where he decided we would make our home. The house was of the ordinary New England type, 2 stories painted white, with barn and shed all connected. It was located in the bend of the Main St. road where it made a slight turn. From the bay window in the parlor we had an unrestricted view of the street either way. It was a well built, comfrotable house. The parlor and sitting room was tastily and well furnished making them attractive and homey. However the small room, with bay window