THE CHICAGO HOME AGAIN

An Eventful Cruise in European Waters by the White Ship.

RECEIVED EVERYWHERE WITH HONOR

Special Attentions Paid to Capt. Mahan—The Man-of-War's Visits to Many English, French, and Spanish Ports.

The United States cruiser Chicago, recently detached from duty as flagship of the European station, arrived at this port yesterday, and came to anchor off Tompkinsville, S. I.

The vessel's twenty-one months' cruise in European waters has been a most eventful one. Everywhere she was received as a welcome guest. Hers were triumphs of peace, and these were due to the distinguished officer who commands the vessel, Capt. A. T. Mahan. He is the author of the now famous book, entitled "Influence of Sea Power on History," and when he was in English ports there were none too proud to do him honor.

He was made such a lion of that the bluff old Admiral, whose blue pennant flew from the mizzen peak, was said to have become jealous of the attention shown his subordinate. One reputable witness has stated that when a troop of professors visited the Chicago to pay a visit to Capt. Mahan, the doughty old Admiral, who was standing on the poop and glowering at the crowd filing into Capt. Mahan's cabin, thrust his hands deep into his trousers pockets and observed feelingly to the officer of the deck:

"Forty years in the navy, and commanding a blank, blankety literary bureau!"

The orders to Capt. Mahan, detaching him and his crew from service on the European station, and directing the return of the Chicago to the United States, were received at Algiers, and, Feb. 21, the homeward-bound pennant, 380 feet long, was hoisted at the main truck of the great white cruiser. Only those who have been on a man-of-war on such occasions, when the decks echo and re-echo the glad refrain, "Homeward bound," and bright, happy faces are apparent everywhere, know what it really means to "break" the homeward-bound pennant.

Although actually prepared for the return home, and ship looking as bright and clean and trim as paint and varnish and constant watchfulness of the executive officer can make her, and with a hundred indications otherwise that departure for the home land is quite near, a score of things may step in to delay departure or change destination, but when sailing orders are really received, and the gay homeward pennant is streaming away from the masthead to far astern, it rarely happens that changes of orders occur.

Then it is that the final preparations are made for the return home, be the passage long or short; the conditions of everything rapidly change; the last few desirable curios and trinkets for the "best girls" are purchased; there is a premium on pens, ink, and letter paper among the blue-jackets; men who are not quite "short timers" are fearing transfer to the "new flagship" and being left behind on the station, while others, without any apparent reason, actually solicit transfer, and for the time being a deluge of petitions of all sorts is showered upon the commanding officer. But the best of good temper generally prevails—all due to the homeward-bound pennant at the masthead, which, by the way, is always purchased by a subscription among the ship's company, sometimes representing a very handsome sum.

Rear Admiral Kirkland, who relieved Admiral Erben, directed that the Chicago should start on her homeward trip from Algiers Feb. 21, and at the same time the San Francisco, to which vessel he had transferred his flag, left the harbor bound for Alexandria, Egypt. The Chicago stood out of the port at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, quickly followed by the new flagship. When the two ships drew together, side by side, the men of both vessels mounted the rigging, lusty cheers were exchanged, and a couple of hundred caps were flung from the Chicago in the direction of the San Francisco, a customary farewell compliment when ships part company on such occasions.

When the last cheers sounded from the men of the Chicago, a figure "very like a man" was seen to fall overboard from aloft, out of the fore rigging, but it was only a dummy cast into the sea, symbolising the throwing of Jonah into the deep to propitiate the storm fiends and invoke a season of fair weather for the homeward bound ship.

The Chicago reached Gibraltar Feb. 23; sailed thence Feb. 28, and anchored at Funchal, Madeira, March 3, where coal and stores were received. From Madeira, whence the Chicago sailed March 4 to the Island of Bermuda, where she anchored March 16, the weather was exceptionally fine and pleasant, with a sea almost smooth throughout, but from Bermuda to New-York, a distance of 680 miles, a half gale of wind was blowing nearly all the way, and a heavy sea pounded the ship and caused her to roll and pitch in the most disagreeable manner.

The influence of casting Jonah's effigy into the sea, off Algiers, did not extend evidently any further than Bermuda, for the storm fiend had things pretty much his own way after the cruiser left that island.

During the cruise in Europe the Chicago entered forty-four ports, in Ireland, England, France, Portugal, Morocco, Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Egypt, Algeria, Belgium, and Gibraltar, besides visiting harbors in the islands of Malta, Minorca, and Madeira. Cowes Roadstead, the gayest of all places in the English yachting season; Havre, Tangier, Malaga, Barcelona, Marseilles, Genoa, and Algiers were visited twice in the ordinary cruising routine; Southampton, England, and Lisbon, Portugal, three times, while Gibraltar, that interesting and always mystical fortification, was visited on five different occasions, as the Chicago passed in and out of the Mediterranean. Queenstown and Kingstown, Cherbourg, Villefranche, (convenient to Nice, Monte Carlo, and the beautiful coast of the Riviera,) Naples, La Grana Bay, Smyrna, Mersina, Alexandretta, Beirut, Alexandria, Malta, Gravesend, Antwerp, Minorca, and Madeira were each visited once.

The longest sojourn was at Villefranche, where sixty-six days were passed in port, most of the time being occupied with repairs to the machinery of the ship. Fifty-eight days were spent in the harbor of Algiers, awaiting the arrival of the San Francisco on the station and preparing for the return to the United States; for fifty-two days the cruiser was anchored in the river Scheldt, near the quaint old city of Antwerp, during the international exposition, and the long stay there was occasioned by the English merchant steamer Azov colliding with the Chicago, tearing a hole in the flagship's side large enough for a man to walk through.

The next longest stay, forty-one days, was in Southampton Water, England, where Rear Admiral Henry Erben, by reason of reaching the age of retirement from the active list of the navy, hauled down his flag as Commander in Chief on Sept. 6, and the Chicago awaited the arrival from the South Atlantic station of Rear Admiral W. A. Kirkland, who hoisted his flag at the mizzen of the white cruiser Sept. 12, 1894, where it remained until Feb. 16, when the Admiral with his personal staff officers exchanged to the San Francisco in the harbor of Algiers. The whole cruising distance covered by the Chicago, from one port to another, since leaving and returning to the United States, amounts to about 19,000 knots, or 21,880 miles.

The few figures introduced into this brief summary of cruising are interesting, because they show how incessantly the flagship was kept moving about, from point to point on the station, when not compelled to remain in port by some circumstance of more than ordinary moment.

In the early months of 1894 the Chicago made the circuit of the Mediterranean Sea, in and out of ports along the southern shores of Europe as far as Naples, passing thence to the City of Smyrna, the most eastern portion of the station; then among the islands of the Grecian Archipelago, afterward touching at the less-known and rarely-visited harbors on the Syrian coast; and so on to Egypt, Malta, Algeria, and out through the Straits of Gibraltar, with the intention of showing the flag in the ports of Northern Europe; but, as Mr. Rudyard Kipling asserts, "that is another story."

With the exception of the four places specially mentioned, where the detention was due to unusual circumstances, the figures of the cruise show an average of something like only ten days' stay in each of the other ports included in the itinerary. The navy, at least that portion of it represented by the Chicago in European waters, was very frequently "sent to sea"; and, although endless mediums for instruction and enjoyment were presented among the life and scenes and traditions of the "effete monarchies," there were, also, frequent drills and exercises, and the ship's routine to follow up closely, with visions of magnificent foreign fleets and military pomp, to yield material for serious study; tangible lessons which cannot be too constantly impressed upon the minds of seamen, whether wearing gold lace or white tape, who are loyal to the interests of the navy in which they serve.

The visit to the harbor of Cherbourg in July, 1893, at a time when a French fleet was assembled for annual manoeuvres, was an occasion of surpassing interest. Besides the magnificent battleships Suffren and Victorieuse, bearing flags of Vice and Rear Admirals, the squadron of the North drilling in the roadstead and harbor consisted of about ten other powerful vessels, torpedo gunboats, and twenty-four torpedo boats.

No more impressive or instructive spectacle could have been presented for the study of naval seamen; and, outside of Villefranche, six months later, three divisions of the French Mediterranean fleet, which included the Formidable, Hoche, Neptune, Devastation, Magenta, and other models of naval construction, in command of Vice Admiral de Boissoudy, were engaged in evolutionary exercises.

Opportunities of witnessing such powerful ships in fleet manoeuvres are rarely permitted to American seamen, and they were sights not readily to be forgotten. These magnificent fighting fabrics afloat, and the shore fortifications which abound in Europe, are objective lessons for all men who keep their eyes and minds alert for study and information.

While by no means fulfilling all the requirements of a modern war ship compared with recent years, the Chicago was an object of interest among the people at many of the ports visited; and among the visitors to the Commander in Chief and Capt. Mahan have been many famous personages. Of course, eminent naval men of all countries have visited the ship at different points during the cruise, and not a few distinguished army officers—English at Gibraltar and Malta, French at Cherbourg, Marseilles, and Algiers, and Spanish at Malaga and Barcelona.

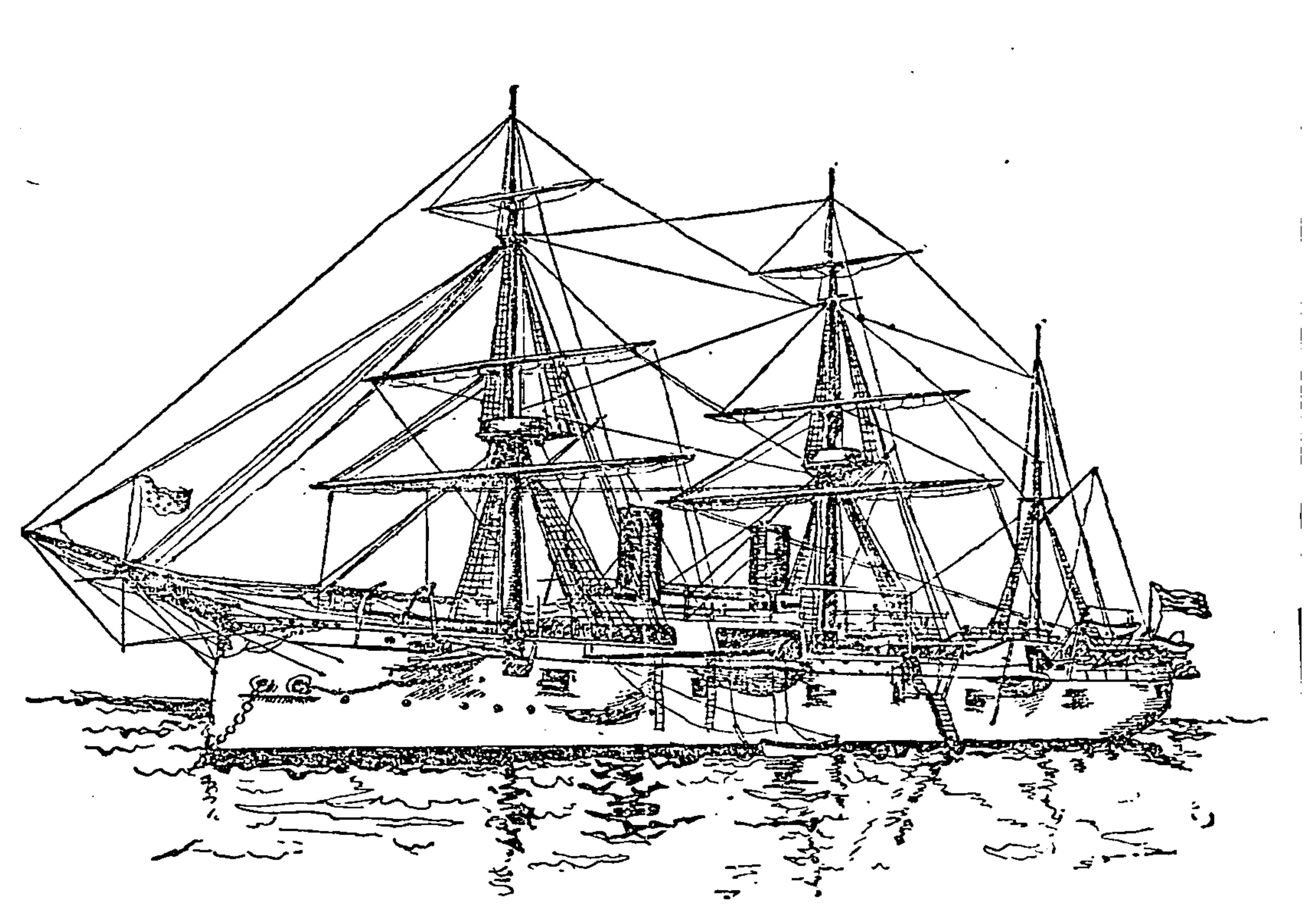
Other visitors were the Viceroy of Ireland, Lord Houghton, at Queenstown; Prince Henry of Battenberg and Princess Beatrice, accompanied by the Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein; General the Duke of Connaught and Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, at Cowes, Isle of Wight; the Marquis of Salisbury, with members of his family, made a most informal and pleasant little visit at Nice. There also came Prince Mohammed Ali, brother of the Khédive of Egypt; Theodore Kossuth, at Naples; Admiral Sir Michael Culme-Seymour, at Malta; Mr. Henry Irving, at Gravesend; Earl Spencer, First Lord of the British Admiralty; the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, at Cowes; Felix Faure, at Havre, now President of the French Republic, and Prince Louis of Battenberg, at Algiers. Distinguished Americans visited the ship everywhere, and it has been no small satisfaction to them to see the flag of their country, at the peak of the fine cruiser, conspicuous to the eyes of the world.

One of the many events to be remembered in connection with the cruise of the Chicago is the visit to Gravesend, in the River Thames, below London, in the Summer of 1894, when circumstances changed an ordinary routine call into an occasion of almost national importance. The brilliant receptions tendered to Rear Admiral Erben and Capt. Mahan, indeed the courtesies extended to every one wearing the United States uniform, were of a character socially unprecedented in American naval history since Admiral Farragut's visit to England in 1867. Although the weather was abnormally perverse for the merry month of May, being often wet and cold, there was no lack of warm hospitality. For five weeks there was no diminution of it. Henry Irving and other managers extended invitations for officers and men to visit their theatres, and other public places offered free entertainments. The names of Admiral Erben, Capt. Mahan, and the Chicago were familiar everywhere as "household words," and the American uniform became better known in the busy London thoroughfares than it is in many seaboard cities of the United States.

Altogether, in the realization of much profitable work, imparting useful information concerning naval strength and progress in various countries, and affording a wiser comprehension of the national institutions of America, compared with relative standards in Europe, the cruise of the Chicago has furnished abundance of materials for study, combining those features of knowledge which conquer prejudices, and no length of time can steal away their worth and importance.

The officers of the Chicago are Capt. A. T Mahan, Lieut. Commander Richardson Clover, Lieut. A. P. Nazro, Lieut. H. M. Hodges, Lieut. J. H. Gibson, Ensign A. L. Norton, Ensign C. Bailey, Ensign W. A. Moffett, Surgeon B. S. Mackie, Passed Assistant Surgeon E. R. Stitt, Assistant Surgeon James F. Leys, Pay Inspector A. S. Kenny, Chief Engineer L. J. Allen, Passed Assistant Engineer A. B. Canaga, Assistant Engineer C. N. Offley, Chaplain F. F. Sherman, Captain of Marines W. F. Spicer, Gunner E. J. Lossing, Carpenter W. S. Barry, Pay Clerk G. W. Van Brunt, Naval Cadet W. S. Montgomery, Naval Cadet F. H. Clark, and Naval Cadet J. R. Morris. First Lieut. T. Fritsche of the Danish Navy is also attached to the ship.

The Chicago will probably go to the Navy Yard to-morrow. Her boilers are in a very bad condition, and it is expected that they will be removed and new ones substituted.



The United States Cruiser Chicago.
Arrived in port yesterday after long absence in European waters.

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