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It should have been a peaceful passage, after all it was

Summer—North Atlantic

By Captain Fred K. Klebingat

"All hands lay aft," said Gau, the chief mate of the four-masted bark *Anna*, formerly the *Otterburn*. "The port captain wants to speak to you."

The *Anna* had recently returned from Australia with a full cargo of wheat and was lying now in the port of Dunkirk, in France. The wheat had been discharged, a broken fore upper topsail yard had been repaired and a half cargo of chalk taken aboard. It came from a quarry in the form of chalk rock. Two thirds was stowed in the lower hold in a mass that reached from the floor of the hold to under the 'tween deck beams. The other third was in the 'tween deck, also a mass, in the middle of the ship, that reached to the beams of the deck above. On either side of this partial cargo of chalk there was an empty hold and an empty 'tween deck.

In the after hatch, the French longshoremen had dumped about a hundred tons of quarried granite; some of the lumps may have weighed 100 or 150 pounds. We distributed this in the bilges abaft the mizzenmast and the bilge pump suctions.

The cargo was well stowed, and that was to play its part in this voyage.

Some of the sails were bent, stores were on board, and we would have been ready for sea except that we were short of crew. A boardinghouse master in Antwerp had supplied the men and we were full-handed a few days ago. But some of these had deserted a day or so later. We were short six men.

We assembled aft, the older AB's in front and the ordinary seamen, of which I was one, somewhere behind and half out of sight. Capt. Kuhlmann, the port captain, a man about six feet tall, bewhiskered and stout, was there to receive us. Beside him was Capt. Koester, the ship's commander, of the same build and whiskery face. In back of them was Mr. Gau, the *steuermann*, as we called him, a man about five-foot-six with a straggling moustache but of husky build.

It was a motley crew that stood before them. There were a few Germans but most of them were men of all nations. Some of them had come on board with just what they stood up in; overalls, a shirt, a coat; one wore carpet slippers.

"Are these *all* your men?" said Kuhlmann to our captain, pointing a finger from man to man as if to count them. Capt. Koester answered in the affirmative.

Looking forward from the Anna's *poop deck. The cro'jik (crossjack) yard, from which the author fell to the deck, is in use as a cargo boom.* ▶

"Men," said the port captain, collecting himself, "you know why I have asked you to lay aft." His gaze went from man to man as if mentally to assess each man's worth and capabilities. (Could this little group handle this big ship?) "Men," he said finally, "your Capt. Koester just has told me that you are the finest crew he ever shipped on board here. I agree with him. No one has to tell me that each of you knows his stuff." The crew straightened a little and looked proud.

"Men," said Capt. Kuhlmann, resuming, "you know why I wanted to speak to you. It is on account of those men that we are short." He hesitated, and then said, "Capt. Koester here has tried his best to replace those men, but without result."

There was a pause. Some of the men now nudged George, a German, who was in front of the crowd and was the most talkative man in the fo'c's'le. They whispered and urged him to make a reply.

"I hope you get those men," said George to Capt. Kuhlmann finally. "This is a heavy ship.* Those men that deserted thought so, too...."

"There is no time to get more men," said Capt. Kuhlmann, "but Capt. Koester says he would not mind to go to sea short-handed with men like you. He is sure that you can handle the vessel. I may point out too that it is summer on the North Atlantic."

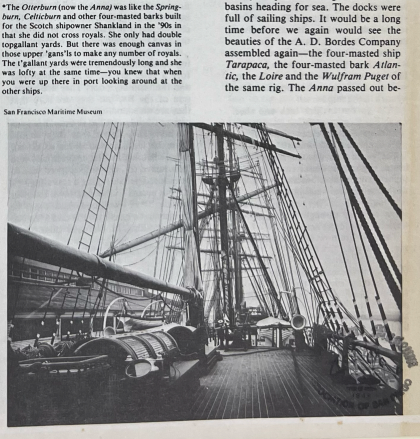
"We appreciate your worth," Kuhlmann brought his harangue to a climax. "When the *Anna* comes to New York, Captain Koester will divide the wages of those men we're short among you."

That did the trick.

"Three cheers for Capt. Kuhlmann," said George. "Hip-hip-hooray"..."

"And by the way," said Kuhlmann to Capt. Koester, "please tell your steward to give these men a couple of bottles of rum to celebrate this occasion."

The bottles duly came forth and the crew trooped forward. We finished bending sails that day, took in the last of the stores, and topped off the fresh water tanks. Next morning the French tug *Atlas* took a line from our fo'c's'lehead, and a smaller tug made fast on the quarter. We let go our lines and, as they were dry, stowed these hawsers below. Slowly we passed through the different basins heading for sea. The docks were full of sailing ships. It would be a long time before we again would see the beauties of the A. D. Bordes Company assembled again—the four-masted ship *Tarapaca*, the four-masted bark *Atlantic*, the *Loire* and the *Wulfram Puget* of the same rig. The *Anna* passed out be-

*The *Otterburn* (now the *Anna*) was like the *Springburn*, *Celtichurn* and other four-masted barks built for the Scotch shipowner Shankland in the '90s in that she did not cross royals. She only had double topgallant yards. But there was enough canvas in those upper 'gans'ls to make any number of royals. The t'gallant yards were tremendously long and she was lofty at the same time—you knew that when you were up there in port looking around at the other ships.

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