

late. A cloud seems to pass over the sun, and the wind freshens in the west. The sea rolls restlessly as at the change of tide. A few drops of rain patter on the weather-stained bulwarks of the Nimble. The relic-hunters gather up their tools and trophies and disappear over the bluff. Now they are gone, the shattered broadside of the Somerset stands out more prominently against the sky, and I can see through the grim portholes the white dash of the breakers on the outer bar. The sun sinks behind the heavy clouds in the west, and as darkness falls, the gathering storm sweeps down the beach and whirls in its path blinding eddies of sand. I lean back under the shelter of the schooner's bow, and wonder what strange mirage lifts the frowning bulwarks of the Somerset above the beach. Certainly in the indistinct light her hull seems something more than a mass of wreckage. The outlines of the bow and the shear of the taffrail to the high, old-fashioned stern can be clearly traced. Overhead there is a dim and shadowy semblance of masts and spars and running gear. As the new moon peeps for a moment through a rift in the clouds there appears to come a flash of polished steel through the open ports. By this time great seas are rolling up the beach and surging about the wooden walls of the Somerset. The night grows weird and wild. Was that a light upon the port bow of the old frigate, or but the phosphorescence of the sea? Was that the booming of a gun or but the thunder of the surf? There comes a ringing of bells, a boatswain's pipe to quarters. Who are these strange men who come shuffling over the bluff from Dead Men's Hollow? A hurried tramp of feet upon the decks, a peopling of the shrouds with ghostly seamen, the loosening and sheeting home of the sails, the bracing of the yards, the creaking of the cordage, the flaunting of a red flag with St. George's cross upon it, the wild hurrah of four hundred throats, the flashing of cannon, the boom of broadsides, the fumes of gunpowder.

At this critical juncture I awoke. My friend stood near me, taking some smoking shells from his breech-loader, with

which he had been practicing on the sea-gulls. He said it was time we were starting for home. There had been no storm; the sun was sinking in splendor and the peaked hills were casting gaunt shadows on the beach. I glanced involuntarily at the ancient wreck. All that the relic-hunters had spared remained half imbedded in the sand. Then we trudged slowly over the sandy wastes into the town.

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Received from the Secretary of the Admiralty, Whitehall, London.

The following letter was received from the Secretary of the Admiralty by one of our interested citizens, giving reliable data regarding the Somerset:

*ADMIRALTY, S. W. }
28th May, 1886. }*

Sir: In reply to your letter of the 12th instant, asking for information respecting the British Man-of-War "Somerset," which was wrecked off Cape Cod in 1778, I am commanded by my Lord's Commissioners of the Admiralty to inform you as follows, viz:

The "Somerset"—3d rate—6½ guns, was laid down to build in H. M. Dockyard at Chatham on 5th May, 1746, launched on 18 July, 1748, and fitted as a Guard Ship. She appears to have been employed as a Guard Ship and on Home Service until 1774, except during the time she was under repairs at Chatham, apparently between 1768 and 1770.

She left England in October, 1774 for the North American Station. She returned to England in 1776 and appears to have been fitted again as a Guard Ship. She left England in March, 1777 and was lost on Cape Cod on the 2d or 3d November, 1778.

I am Sir,

Your obedient servant,
EVAN MACGREGOR.