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THE "MAYFLOWER."

BY J. W. HORROCKS.

THE *Mayflower* tercentenary, the celebration of which was only recently brought to an end in America, has occasioned a good deal of enquiry into the history of the ship in which the Pilgrims crossed the Atlantic, and it may be of interest to give a connected account of the state of *Mayflower* knowledge in the light of recent researches, and also to notice some probabilities and possibilities which call for further investigation.

The classic authority for the Pilgrim voyage is Bradford's "History of the Plymouth Plantation," which he commenced to write about ten years after the time of the expedition. But Bradford's story contains very few definite particulars of the Pilgrim ship. We get from it neither her name nor the names of her owners or master. The only indications of size that we obtain from it are the negative one—that she was not so big a vessel as they would have liked to procure, and the positive one—that she was the larger of the two ships that set sail from Southampton. The size of the smaller ship—the *Speedwell*—is, however, not mentioned. Her name, likewise, is not given. Moreover, Bradford sets down no descriptive details that would enable us to decide with assurance that the vessel was of this type or that.

The name of the ship, however, occurs in the official records of the Colony in 1623, and other chroniclers put her burthen down as eight or nine score, and refer to her master as Mr. Jones. Until comparatively recent years it was usual to identify him with one Thomas Jones, who from his known record might well be guilty of the treachery, which according to Morton's *Memorial*, he displayed in bringing the Pilgrims to Cape Cod, instead of to the mouth of the Hudson. Professor Arber, indeed, argued that the master could not be *Thomas Jones*, but Dr. Azel Ames, in *The Mayflower and Her Log*, clung to the old identification. Mr. R. G. Marsden, however, in an article contributed to the *English Historical Review*, in 1904 (XIX., pp. 669 sq.) cited Admiralty Court and other records which pointed clearly to the conclusion not only that *Thomas Jones* could not have been the captain, but that the master was one *Christopher Jones*, and Mr. Marsden was thus able to give, what had never previously been given upon documentary evidence, information concerning

the history of the ship both before and after the Pilgrim voyage. Dr. Ames, in the second edition of his book, again set forth the old identification and dismissed Mr. Marsden's case as of no force to shake it. But Dr. Ames, was not able to offer any serious arguments against Mr. Marsden's identification, and particulars which since then have been drawn from the Port Books have combined with Mr. Marsden's citations from the Admiralty Court records to place the mastership of Christopher Jones beyond reasonable doubt. Certainly, if we discard this identification, we are left with no guide as to the identity of the ship, amidst the numerous *Mayflowers* that bloomed, as it were, on the seventeenth century seas, and with no information whatever about her beyond that supplied in the chronicles of the expedition. Moreover, the case presented by Dr. Rendel Harris, for the identification of the Jordan's barn with the Pilgrim *Mayflower* depends largely upon the assumption that Christopher Jones was the master, so that when one of our leading journals published illustrations of the Jordan's "find," with letterpress which seemed to accept the genuineness of the "find," and also referred to the master of the ship as Thomas Jones, the grounds on which it accepted the genuineness of the find were not very obvious.

As to the type to which the *Mayflower* belonged, Dr. Ames has brought together in his book all that can reasonably be drawn and conjectured from a combination of the scanty material furnished by the chronicles with what we learn from other sources concerning vessels of the 16th-17th centuries. He inclines to the opinion that the vessel was a three-master. If Dr. Harris is justified in his identification of the barn with the Pilgrim ship, the evidence of the actual timbers is available to supplement and correct what we might infer from the literary sources. Mr. Joseph Hyams, a marine surveyor, in reporting upon the timbers for Dr. Harris, described them as remains of a schooner. It has already been pointed out in these columns, and I have argued at length elsewhere, that if that description is correct, Dr. Harris is pretty certainly mistaken in believing that he has found the *Mayflower*. In THE MARINER'S MIRROR it is unnecessary to enlarge on that point. In answer to my criticism Dr. Harris writes :—"Let the rig of the ship be what it may, the folk memory says she had two masts, and that they are still extant in a certain town on the banks of the Thames" (*Times Literary Supplement*, May 5th. 1921). Dr. Harris is apparently prepared to throw overboard the "schooner"

designation, though if the Jordans vessel was a two-master and of later period than that of the Pilgrim ship, she may have been a schooner. Even, however, if we were to decide that she was of the Pilgrim years and was a two-master, but not a schooner, the decision, in the absence of definite reconciling evidence, would bear rather against than in favour of the probability of the *Mayflower* indentification. Two-masters certainly existed in those days, but they were not very common. They figured mainly as coasters, and I have come across no indication that the Pilgrim ship was ever employed in coasting traffic. All the undoubted entries relating to her are in connection with foreign voyages. If she was a two-master, it is curious that in none of the records, so far as I know, is there anything to distinguish her from the ordinary "ship." Our attitude towards the folk memory concerning the masts and their present location must mainly depend upon our view of such evidence, apart from folk memory, as may be available for the identification of the timbers of the barn with those of the Pilgrim ship. But even if this identification should be established, it might leave the question open as to whether the masts referred to were those of the *Mayflower*, and the only masts she had. In the meanwhile, Mr. Forestier, in the picture—reproduced in *The Times*, of May 4th, 1921, which he has painted for the Pilgrims of Great Britain, showing the sailing of the *Mayflower* from Southampton, has represented the Pilgrim ship as an ordinary three-master.

It seems likely that the Pilgrim *Mayflower* was an old ship, but how old she was, and with what owners, master, or port she was originally associated, it has not been discovered. All that can be said in this regard must be in the way of more or less reasonable possibility or probability. It has been suggested that the vessel dates back to the time of the Spanish Armada, and there is nothing in the known facts to make that impossible. Two *Mayflowers* are mentioned in the list of ships included in the anti-Armada fleet, of Lynn and of London, respectively. The former presents nothing but her tonnage to raise any possibility of identification, but the *Mayflower* of London, which, with Edward Bancks as captain, figured prominently in the fighting, provides much more likely matter for conjecture. One of her owners was John Vassal, who himself was in command of another vessel, the *Samuel and Solomon*, and she was doubtless identical with the *Mayflower* which, about three years later, with five other vessels, was required to be furnished for service by the city of London, and with the ship of that name on account

of which a privy seal was issued a little later, granting to John Vassal and two other men an allowance of five shillings for every ton, as the Queen's "special rewards towards their costs, charges and expenses," to be taken out of such customs and duties as should fall due on such wares and merchandise as should be brought into or carried out of the port of London in the ship (16th June, 1591, S. P. Domestic, ccxxxix. 36 ; 2nd November, 1591, *ib.*, ccxlvii., 106). The burthen is given in the anti-Armada list as 200 tons. In the privy seal, the tonnage on which the grant is made is 250. The nine-score estimate is usually accepted for the Pilgrim ship, but the difference between 180 and 250 tons is well within the range of possible variation in calculations of the burthen of one and the same vessel. At this time John Vassal, who seems to have been a recognised expert in matters of navigation, was living at Ratcliffe, in the parish of Stepney, but in 1602 he removed to Eastwood, in Essex, not far from Lee, which was an active maritime centre. One of the leading seamen of Lee was Robert Bonner. Now, in February-March, 1606, we find the *Mayflower*, of Lee, loading in the port of London a large cargo of cloth for Middleburg, and in January-February, 1607, the *Mayflower* of London, with the same master, was unloading a freight of Gascon wine. It is fairly certain that we have here to do with one and the same vessel. The variation in port-reference need cause us no trouble. It was not until a much later period that there was any compulsion upon owners to have a definite port register for a ship and stick to it, and it frequently happens at this time, in the case of vessels coming and going in the Thames, that what is obviously one and the same ship is styled in one entry "of London" and in another of a neighbouring, or even the same, date, as of the port to which her master—who was often owner or part-owner—belonged. It is quite conceivable that the Lee-London *Mayflower*, of which Robert Bonner was master, was identical with the London *Mayflower*, of which John Vassal was part-owner. The fact that Vassal and Bonner were now living within a few miles of each other may have led to an association, or negotiation in regard to the vessel or the mastership. About this time, 1606-7, Christopher Jones, the future master of the Pilgrim ship, was master of the *Josan*, but in October, 1608, we find the *Josan*, under Bonner, loading a cargo for Leghorn. In August, 1609, Jones appears for the first time as a *Mayflower* master. This ship, the Pilgrim ship, is then described as of Harwich, to which place he belonged, but even within the short remaining period

of his residence in Harwich she is also stated of London. The cross-over of names in the *Josan-Mayflower* records of 1606-9 suggests the possibility that just as Bonner became master of the *Josan*, which had been under Jones, so Jones became master of the *Mayflower*, of which Bonner had been in charge, and which was perhaps identical with the vessel, partly belonging to John Vassal, which fought against the Armada. The slight indications in which this conjecture rests may have no relevant significance whatever, but even if so there is no reason to conclude that the Pilgrim ship was a new vessel, with Harwich as her original port, in 1609.

After January, 1611, the ship is never described as of Harwich, but always of London. This fact is doubtless to be explained by the removal of Christopher Jones to Rotherhithe in that year. By the kindness of Canon Durell I have been able to search the registers of St. Mary's, and I find that the name of Christopher Jones first appears there in December 15th, 1611, when his son, Roger, was baptised. Christopher, Thomas, and Grace, children of Christopher, were baptised on March 13th, 1614; May 4th, 1617; and February 28th, 1619, respectively. The record of these facts, together with the assignment of the ship to London during the whole of this period, seems to speak to the continuous residence of the *Mayflower* master at Rotherhithe. There is an entry which tells us that a Christopher Jones was buried there on February 24th, 1614, and this raises the possibility of other interpretations for the records of December, 1611, and March, 1614. But it is more likely, I think, that he was not the father mentioned in either of those entries, but an older son, perhaps the first-born, of the *Mayflower* master, who seems to have been married more than once, and that, after a common custom, the same Christian name was given to one born shortly after his death, in order that it might be preserved in the family.

The owners of the ship in 1609 were Christopher Nicholls. Robert Child, Thomas Shorte, and Jones himself. I give summarised particulars of all her voyages from that time down to the year of the New England expedition, so far as they can be discovered from the London Port books, the Customs accounts, and the Admiralty Court records :—

1609 : August. To Drontheim, Norway. Cargo : Hats, hemp, Spanish salt, hops, vinegar, and Gascon wine. From Drontheim. Cargo : Tar, deals, and herring.

1610 : April.—From the Charente. Cargo : Cognac wines. September ? To Bordeaux. Cargo : Tufftaffeta.

1611: January.—From Bordeaux. Cargo: Gascon wines.
November. From Bordeaux. Cargo: Gascon wines.

1612: May.—To Rochelle. Cargo: Cloth of various kinds, stockings, iron stubs, pewter, virginals.

1613: April.—From Bordeaux. Cargo: Gascon wines.
July?—To Rochelle. Cargo: Cloth, stockings. November?—
To Rochelle. Cargo: Cloth, coney skins.

1614: March.—From Hamburg. Cargo: Taffeta, satins, sarsenets and lawns.

June.—To Hamburg. Cargo: English cloths.

1615: January?—From Rochelle. Cargo: Gascon and Cognac wines.

March: To Rochelle. Cargo: Cloth.

May.—From Rochelle. Cargo: Wines.

August.—To Rochelle and Malaga. Cargo: Cloth, stockings, coney skins, fitch skins, lead, and leaf tobacco.

October.—To Bordeaux. Cargo: Cloth.

1616? From Rochelle or Bordeaux. Cargo: Wines.

1617: May.—To Rochelle. Cargo: Cloth.

July? From Rochelle. Cargo: Vinegar.

1618: September.—To Rochelle. Cargo: Cloth.

1619: October.—To Bordeaux. Cargo: Cloth.

1620: January?—From Bordeaux or Rochelle. Cargo: French wines.

May?—From Rochelle. Cargo: Cognac and other French wines. The unloading of this freight, which is the last recorded before the date of the voyage to New Enland, was completed on May 22nd.

It will be seen from the above notes that during the ten years previous to the New England expedition, the Pilgrim ship was regularly engaged in the traffic between England and France, taking out, in the main, cargoes of cloth, and always fetching back wines—save on the one occasion when she brought a consignment of vinegar from Rochelle. The exported cloth included cottons, perpetuanas, bays, says, buffins, and fustians. The imported wines are described as Gascon or Cognac, or simply as French, and range in quantity from 90 to over 200 tons. Jones himself seems to have traded occasionally in a modest way, as when we find one or two tuns of wine unloaded in his name from Charente and Bordeaux, and a small quantity of Devonshire cloth entered in his account for shipment to Rochelle. The only traceable exception to the French voyages are the sailings to and from Norway and Hamburg in 1609 and 1614 respectively.

Both the outward and the inward freights on the former occasion were of a miscellaneous character, but the Hamburg voyage furnishes an interesting illustration of the exchange of cloth manufactured in various English counties, especially Wiltshire, and Gloucestershire, for the silks, satins, and fine linen produced in other countries. There were many other *Mayflowers* at sea in this decade, some of them occupied in similar traffic to that in which the Pilgrim ship figures prominently. Thus, one entry records that the *Mayflower*, of London, Christopher Jones, master, and the *Mayflower*, of Kingsferry, John Allen, master, were unloading wines from Bordeaux, in the port of London on one and the same day. *Speedwells* also appear, occasionally in close juxtaposition to the Pilgrim *Mayflower*, but the details given are in no case sufficient to suggest identity with the vessel which set out with the *Mayflower* from Southampton, in August, 1620.

The entries I have cited, of course, do not form a complete list of the voyages of the Pilgrim ship during the years within which they fall. The port books never provided a list of that kind, and, besides, they have come down to us in an imperfect condition. Moreover, there are entries concerning *Mayflowers* in which neither the port nor the master is mentioned. I have paid no regard to these in my summary, because I do not think that any of them relate to the Jones ship, but allowance must be made for possible error in this respect. The particulars of which there is no question, however, afford conclusive evidence of the sort of traffic in which the ship and her master were employed for the greater part of the year.

It is natural to infer, from a well-known passage in Mourt's *Relation*, that the *Mayflower* master had had experience in Greenland whaling, and Dr. Rendel Harris contends that the Biscayan trade, in which, as we know, the *Mayflower* engaged, is just such a supplement of whaling ventures to Greenland as we might expect. He points out that when the short summer season for Greenland fishing was over, a good deal of the year would be still available for trade elsewhere. The Biscayans were expert harpooners, and traffic to the Biscayan region would enable Christopher Jones to procure them for his whaling expeditions and return them to their homes when the season was over. Dr. Harris, in short, regards it as clear that the *Mayflower* was a whaling ship, and the entries in the port books certainly leave sufficient intervals to allow of the possibility, though no definite record in support has yet been turned up. Dr. Harris also, in

The Last of the Mayflower, argued at length for the identity of the Pilgrim ship with the whaler *Mayflower*, belonging to Thomas Horth, of Yarmouth, which was engaged in the Greenland fishery almost continuously from 1626-1640. But since then Dr. Harris, on good grounds, has abandoned this and some other identifications. I therefore need not discuss it.

(*To be continued.*)

DISTINCTION MARKS IN FRENCH COMMAND FLAGS.

BY CECIL KING.

WHILE searching recently in some *Ordonnances*, etc., I came across a few references to this subject, which I had not seen in the best known published works on French flags. They may be unfamiliar to some readers of *THE MARINER'S MIRROR*.

1647.

"Les Chefs d'Escadre porteront chacun une cornette au mast d'artimon, avec les Armes chacun de sa province lorsque les Pavillons de Vice Admiral & Contre Admiral seront portez par les deux anciens Chefs d'Escadre, & que les six seront tous dans l'Armée. . . ."—*Ordonnance of 1647*. (By this *Ordonnance* the "escadres" of Guyenne, Normandie, Bretagne and Provence were augmented by those of Catalogne and Dunkerque to form a fleet of six squadrons.)

1670.

"Les Chefs d'Escadre porteront une Cornette blanche avec l'Écusson de leur département au Mast d'artimon, lors qu'ils seront en Corps d'Armée : & au Grand Maft, lors qu'ils seront separez, & commanderont. . . ."—*Ordonnance of July 12th, 1670*. (de Bouillé, in his "*Drapeaux Français*," quotes a note of this date by Monsieur de Saint-Tropez : according to him, the cornettes blanches of the Chefs d'escadre are to bear "les armes de la province de laquelle ils sont, ou le nom d'icelle en chiffres d'or.")

1689.

Aubin, in the *Nautical Dictionaries of 1702 and 1736*, states that the "écusson" as worn in the cornette was decreed by the *Ordonnance of 1689* as well as that of 1670, but the former