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SOME HERESIES WITH REGARD TO DECKS.

BY R. C. ANDERSON.

MR. H. G. WELLS once wrote a short paper on "The Discovery of the Future." Towards its close he mentioned the apparently inevitable end of the human race : the gradual stoppage of the earth's rotation and finally the cooling of the sun to such a point that life of any kind must become impossible. Mathematically, he said, the thing is obvious ; " and yet, I do not believe it."

That is somewhat my position with regard to Mr. Gregory Robinson's article on " The Development of the Capital Ship " (" M.M." IV., 14-19). As a straightforward piece of reasoning I can find no fault in it ; and yet, I do not believe it. I do not believe that the ' half deck ' of the *Sovereign of the Seas* (Fig. 6 in Mr. Robinson's article) extended only through the third quarter of the ship and vanished in the fourth. I do not believe that the " quarter deck " of the *Prince Royal*, or of ships just previous to her (Fig. 5 *ibid*), ran in one plane with the " half deck." Neither do I believe that to get from end to end of an Elizabethan ship (Figs. 3 and 4) it would be necessary to go up or down ladders for three or four feet twice or thrice on the way. Perhaps it was so ; and yet, I do not believe it.

Scepticism is an easy attitude to adopt, though productive of little positive result. It would be easy enough for anyone to say that he did not believe that the fall of an apple was due to gravity, but unless he could give some other satisfactory reason for the phenomenon he could hardly expect many disciples in his unbelief.

This simile of the apple is, perhaps, unfortunate. Its fall does indeed require some explanation, and the man who denies the one generally accepted must needs produce a substitute. In this matter of decks it seems to me that Mr. Robinson and Mr. Moore (" M.M." I., 178-182) have rather raised ghosts for the pleasure of laying them. According to the former, it is impossible to give a clear account of the development of the ship on the basis

of three sub-divisions, forecastle, waist and aftercastle. "To do it you have to fudge the ship's account, fake her family tree." I must say I do not see why. At any rate, I propose to attempt the task with every intention of carrying it out honestly. If anyone can detect the "faking" he is welcome to expose it.

Mr. Robinson's article, like his previous note ("M.M." III., 25) is, on his own showing, largely an attempt to vindicate the literal accuracy of Captain Nathaniel Boteler. Now according to Boteler the "half deck" reached from the *stem* to the main mast and the "spar deck" (or "orlop") from the main mast to the mizzen. One has only to make a diagram of this to see how utterly impossible it is—or rather how utterly unlike the resulting ship is to anything that we know of big ships in the early part of the XVII. century. Even "Aitcho's" quotation ("M.M." III., 149), though it confirms the calling of the "spar deck" the "orlop," does nothing to support Boteler in placing it *abaft* the mainmast. It tells us that "the great chamber being part of the 'upper deck' abaft the mainmast, contained a long table. . . . The same deck *before* the mainmast had a table for the ladies. From whence, up a pair of stairs there was a passage into the 'Orelope,' where was a fair tent set up." I would not say that this disproves the possibility of a "spar deck" or "orlop" *abaft* the main mast, but it certainly does nothing to prove it.

Mr. Moore says that "orlops" were decks going the whole length of the ship ("M.M." I., 180); Mr. Robinson, on the other hand, makes them "platforms serving as bridges between the two castles." This is after all the same as Mr. Moore's second definition, "that by which a man may run over the whole length of the ship"; but is quite distinct from his first, "that which runs over the whole length of the ship." To run from stem to stern, a man would make use of an "orlop," but he would not be on it all the way; the decks of the "castles" would serve him for the greater part of his journey.

Now I cannot see why we should suppose that shipbuilders wanting to make a bridge from one castle of so many "stories" to another would deliberately put that bridge at a level half way between two stories so that it would be impossible to get on to it at either end without going either up or down a flight of steps. Surely naval architects, even in the middle ages, must have been men of considerable common sense, and they are not likely to have gone out of their way to make ships harder to build and worse to live in than they need be.

Boteler says that the two lower decks of a three decker were "sometymes (but perhappes improperlie) tearmed orlopes." The impropriety, according to Mr. Robinson, lay in the fact that until a very few years before Boteler's time the portions of these decks or orlopes between the main mast and the mizzen had been called exclusively "decks," and had incidentally been some three feet higher than the true "orlopes." If this were the objection it would have been just as improper to call them 'decks,' since they were formed by the coalescing of the "decks" and the "orlopes." They ought to have been called "dorlecks" or something of that sort. No; the point was that a real "orlop" meant to Nathaniel Boteler a comparatively short link, not a full-length chain.

Having dealt with the "orlop" question—to my own satisfaction, at any rate—I come to the "half deck" and 'quarter deck' difficulty. The puzzle seems to be why the after deck on a level with the top of the forecastle was first the "half deck," and later the "quarter deck." Mr. Moore says ("M.M." I., 182) that the term "half deck" "seems to have gone out of use when the spar deck was laid aside, probably soon after 1650." This is true enough, though we find it used in official documents of 1691 and 1693 with reference to the 80-gun two-deckers of William and Mary ("M.M." IV., 204-5.) My suggestion is that as long as the lowest of the incomplete decks aft reached practically to the main mast it was called a "half deck," and that when the general reduction of top-hamper led to the suppression of one of the superposed decks towards the stern, the lowest—though longer than the original 'quarter deck'—was so clearly not a true "half deck" that it seemed fitter to call it the "quarter deck." The 80-gun two-deckers with their 16 guns on this deck required there a length so nearly equal to the old "half deck" that some people—perhaps elderly men—thought it only right to revive the term. When these ships had been lost, broken up or rebuilt as three-deckers, these "half decks" vanished again and the expression went with them. The only record of their existence lay in the names "under the half deck," "under the *aft* deck" or even "half deck" ("M.M." I., 76) for the section of deck that had once been immediately beneath their foremost portion.

Was the "quarter deck" ever in or almost in the same plane as the "half deck," as we see in Mr. Robinson's Fig. 5 ("M.M." IV., 18) or Mr. Moore's Fig. 6 ("M.M." I., 181)? I doubt it very much. In either case there is the same difficulty as with Mr. Robinson's diagram of the *Sovereign of the Seas*, the "half deck" extending

only through the third quarter of the ship. Personally I should say that the "half deck" always *was* a "half deck" and that the "quarter deck" was always a clear six feet or so above it or, a little later, above the "upper deck." Mr. Moore seems to have tried to work his "quarter deck" into line with his "half deck" mainly in order to "explain why we have at the end of the century the quarter deck and forecastle on a level." I have tried to give an alternative explanation of this, so I am not bound to accept Mr. Moore's without some proof.

This proof is just the difficulty. Where is it? Where, too, is Mr. Robinson's proof of the "up and down" method of ship-building shown in his first four figures? I can find no trace of them in the ordinary sixteenth and seventeenth century ship-pictures. I do not deny the existence of such proofs; I merely ask to be allowed to see them before accepting theories that seem to me inherently improbable.

The *James* of 1623 or rather Monson's criticism of her has given a lot of trouble. According to Mr. Robinson: "It would seem that the *James* of 1633 was a two-flush-decked ship, but Monson is not quite clear about it." Of course, Mr. Robinson means that the *James* probably was one of the first ships to have decks running continuously through all four quarters of the ship. His theory is that in the mediæval ship there were four quarters separated by changes of level, in the *Warspit*. (1595) the second and third quarters came on a level with one another. in the *Prince Royal* (1610), the first quarter joined them and in the *James* (1633) or *Sovereign* (1637) the fourth quarter followed suit. Personally I do not think that Monson meant anything of the sort. To quote Mr. Moore ("M.M." I., 22): "A ship with flush decks is not necessarily a flush-decked ship." He is speaking of ships some two centuries later than Monson's time, but the statement would have been just as true then. In Monson's words: "There are two manner of built ships; the one with a flush deck, fore and aft, snug and low by water; the other lofty and high charged with a half deck, forecastle and cobridge heads." (N.R.S. edn., iv., 91). Now surely all that Monson means is that a flush-decked ship had no forecastle or half-deck rising above her upper deck, and perhaps no quarter deck.

To go on with the *James*:—Monson explaining her disadvantages says that even much smaller ships usually had four guns bearing aft—two in the gun-room and two in the upper gun-room which served also as a store-room. "Above these two gun-rooms, aforesaid, was placed the captain's cabin, with

the open galleries astern and on the sides. . . . In these two gun-rooms, aforesaid, where the four pieces are usually placed, the *James* carries only two, and that is in the lower gun-room. For the upper gun-room is converted into the captain's cabin, and a rafter * and two sided galleries are made close. . . . " Sir R. Massie Blomfield quoted the greater part of this in his article on "The Internal Economy of Men-of-War. ("M.M." I., 161-4.) In the same article he said, speaking of the normal two-decked ship of the early XVII. century: "There were two gun-rooms, one on the lower gun deck, and the other on what we used to call in the 'fifties' the main deck." I think he is wrong in this, and that it was the upper gun-room that was on the *lower* deck, while the true gun-room was below it. It was this position of the gun-room coupled with the great sheer aft that caused the dropped-port-aft appearance so often seen in pictures. In support of my view let me quote from the "Particulars of the *Couronne* " of 1638 " ("M.M." IV., 206-8 and 312-3.) We find there that right aft there was a magazine with a bread-room over it; above the bread-room came the first gun-room and above that "on the first deck of the said ship, is the second gun-room." Then came the "great cabin" the "lieutenant's cabin" and finally the "round house." Further we are told that the "great cabin" was on the "upper deck," and that the two ports in the first gun-room were "on the water line" (*à fleur d'eau*).

As far as I can see the peculiarity of the *James* was that she had no forecastle or half deck and that the captain's cabin which would normally have been between the half deck and the upper deck was put, in consequence, between the upper deck and the lower deck where the upper gun-room would normally have been. I do not feel sure whether she had a quarter deck as well as a poop, but I fancy she did not. She must have been more or less a two-decked equivalent of the 80-gun three-deckers of the century. They were produced by joining up the forecastle and half deck of a two-decker; the *James* might be looked upon as a single-decker treated in the same way.

I have written enough; probably more than enough for the patience of my readers. I hope I have not seemed to be going out of my way to pick holes in the work of others. No one knows better than I what a debt the Society for Nautical Research owes to the writers whose ideas I have ventured to criticise.

* Mr. Oppenheim's note reads: 'Qy. rafted.' Surely what is meant is either 'an after' or "her after" (gallery).

On the other hand I know how easy it is to let one's theory get ahead of one's facts. What I have written is meant solely as an attempt to get at the truth and as such I trust it will be accepted.

SOME XV. CENTURY SHIP PICTURES.

BY A. H. MOORE.

THE MS. from which the accompanying plates have been taken was described in Part I. of Vol. LVII. of *Archæologia*, where the pictures were reproduced. Our Society is much indebted to Lord Hastings for permitting the editor to get fresh photographs.

The article states that the "manuscript, which is written on vellum, consists of fifteenth century copies, with some illuminations of various treatises dealing with chivalry, state, &c. These have been bound in one thick volume, which from external evidence we may suppose to have at one time belonged to that distinguished Prince, Henry, son of James I." The book thus described is said to contain twenty treatises of which the pictures whence the accompanying plates are taken belong to No. 9. This is a Pilot's Guide chiefly for the coasts of England and Wales. The article continues:—"9. Folio 130*b* is filled with the representation of shipping shown (on Plate I.), which is followed by directions on the course to be followed in sailing round from Berwick-on-Tweed to Holyhead. These begin on fol. 131, 'Berwik lieth southe and northe of golde stones,' and end on fol. 137*b*, 'The redbanke in Chester water northe and southe.' Also by sailing directions for the Bay of Biscay. These