

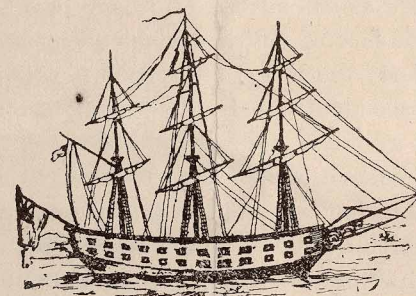
a half dozen rods away, and many less pretentious crafts scattered their wreckage at the foot of the apparently natural mound. Nothing but tradition marked the spot until by some freak of the recent gales the sea like a great plough cut away the land and laid bare the ribs of the old ship whose guns had stormed the heights of Bunker Hill and terrorized the commerce of the colonies.

In this quaint and cosy village of Provincetown, which nestles on the inner shore by the sheltering forefinger of the Cape, there is much local excitement about the ancient wreck. Everybody in town has visited the "backside" to see the exhumed frigate and secure some relic.

Wrecks are common enough affairs in these parts, but the Somerset is a wreck of peculiar and exceptional interest. The discovery is the topic of the town. If two old sea captains are holding conference at the end of one of the long wharves, there can be no doubt as to the subject of discussion. If several citizens encounter one another at the street corner, they straightway expound their views as to the matter. But it is in the loafing rooms of the ship-chandlers' stores, about great stoves, hospitably provided for the gentlemen of leisure, that the subject receives its most thorough treatment. Here of a chilly evening a dozen veterans, who have sailed every sea and seen every land on the globe, light their pipes and devote themselves to an adequate investigation of the absorbing topic. They are mostly men of intelligence and wide experience. They know a ship from truck to keelson. If they cannot tell exactly how the Somerset was wrecked, they can at least inform you how she should have been wrecked according to all nautical precedents. They are posted moreover, on the ancient traditions of the town; and some of them are gifted with prolific imaginations, so that all missing links are readily supplied.

It has been irrevocably established in these councils that the Somerset was one of the oldest English war ships, and

that she was constructed of the stoutest live oak in the early part of the eighteenth century. She is supposed to have carried some two or threescore guns—32, 24 and 12-pounders—and to have had a complement of 480 men. After many years' good service in foreign seas she came to the colonies under the command of Capt. Aurey and joined the British squadron at the siege of Boston.



BRITISH FRIGATE SOMERSET.

Longfellow refers to the Somerset as lying at her moorings in Boston Bay on the night of Paul Revere's memorable ride. At the battle of Bunker Hill she stormed the fortifications in the early morning, and afterwards covered the landing of the red-coats. During the two following years she remained for the greater portion of the time about Cape Cod and the adjacent shores, capturing and burning much of the American commerce, and being generally a terror to the unprotected coast. Cape Cod mothers were wont to frighten their children by saying that the black-whiskered pirate Capt. Aurey was coming after them in his big ship. In those days Provincetown was neutral ground, and the Somerset, with other vessels of the squadron, often cast anchor in her harbor. The frigate's boats frequently landed, and the officers and tars helped themselves to water, provisions and anything else that they wanted. In return for the unwilling assistance thus