

WELLMAN PARTY LANDS

MELVIN VANIMAN, THE MASCOT KITTEN, AND WALTER WELLMAN.

Wellman and his men leaned on the rail of the main promenade. Their suits of khaki, leggings and "dirigible" caps made the air travellers conspicuous in the black snarl of passengers about them.

There were cheers on the Dalzelline and cheers on the Trent. Also there were greetings and arm waveings from Mr. Wellman's family and friends, but he replied only with a smile and a wave of his hat.

Vaniman, with his cat, renamed Trent, wrapped up in a newspaper, leaned over the rail and grinned.

"Mr. Wellman" shouted a voice from the Bouker, "will you kindly raise your cap and give us a chance to get a picture?"

Without even the suggestion of a smile or recognition the commander of the expedition pushed back his cap, thrust out his chin and posed in profile and full view.

"Will you please hold up the cat, Mr. Vaniman?" came a request from the tug. "Is that the cat you took with you?"

"Yes," shouted Mr. Wellman, in a high pitched voice. "You see the cat came back." Here Mr. Wellman shifted his position and brought to view his bandaged right hand, which was held to his breast by a string of gauze.

"I hurt it in catching a line as we were trying to board the Trent. Caught the wrong rope. It's only a slight wound and doesn't bother me much."

"Did you save anything?" "Yes, I have all our equipment. It was stowed in the lifeboat before we cut loose."

"Could you have kept on?" "No, not with the equilibrator. We had provisions for twenty-five days and gasoline enough, but we found after being blown to the south that he could not go across."

"Was the bag in bad condition or leaking?" "No. She had plenty of gas and was in good condition when we cut away from her."

"Are you going to try it again?" Mr. Wellman shrugged his shoulders and replied: "Je ne sais pas."

"Can a trip across the Atlantic by dirigible be accomplished?" "That is a problem that requires great consideration and careful decision."

More Photographers Accommodated. The Trent's accommodation ladder had not been lowered while Mr. Wellman talked, and the cry went up again from the Bouker asking that the "whole bunch from the America get out on the horizontal ladder and pose."

This was done promptly and after the battery of light camera artillery fired its salvo there was a demand for the victims to hold their places. Mr. Wellman stood on the extreme left.

"Now, then, Mr. Wellman, will you kindly call out the names of your men?" "On the end," began Mr. Wellman, "is Vaniman; next, Loud; Simon, Irwin, Aubert." The balloonist paused while the photographers wrote the names.

Then from the camera crowd came the word, "and—and—and—" "And, Wellman," said Mr. Wellman, completing the chronology.

"Last, but not least," came a voice from the Trent. "Three cheers for Walter Wellman!"

The cheers came as Mr. Wellman and his crew stepped back on deck. A bit of information from land that was news to him was shouted up to Mr. Wellman after he had posed. It was the information that President Taft had ordered three revenue cutters to search for the America.

"Is that so?" asked Mr. Wellman. "It was thoughtful." After the Health Officer had passed the Trent and the customs officials came aboard Mr. Wellman and his men started to descend to the Dalzelline, where his family awaited him.

As he was about to step off the deck a newspaperman approached the balloonist and told him that his venture had turned the tide of public opinion in his favor.

Experience Worth Life's Efforts. "Well, I am glad to know that," said Mr. Wellman. "I have tried hard and long in my efforts with the dirigible, but I became indifferent long ago to public opinion. But, really, it was an experience that I would not have missed for anything. It was an experience that was worth the efforts of a lifetime."

"I don't know whether I shall attempt it again. It remains to be seen whether some means can be devised to make possible the flight of a dirigible across the Atlantic. We knew before we started that it could not be done without the equilibrator. Our experiment has shown us now that it cannot be done with an equilibrator. We must now find something other than this trailer to make the trip possible."

Asked why he abandoned the balloon, Mr. Wellman said there was no alternative. "We found we could not make the trip, and it was only natural that we should take this means of saving our lives."

Mr. Wellman said that neither he nor his crew had suffered from weather or friction. "We were not inconvenienced at all," he said, "and we suffered no hardships. The only real trouble we had was when we tried to launch our boat on the water. It was a hard thing to do as the heavy equilibrator was al-

be a smaller, a lighter equilibrator, and the airship will be larger in proportion. Our equilibrator was too bulky, but, mind you, without one, we can never cross the Atlantic. The principle of the thing as a semi-rigger is all right. It must be perfected.

"If our other motor hadn't given out the first day we would have held up on our course against the northeast and probably could have reached the Bermudas. That would have meant a great deal to us, as you can see."

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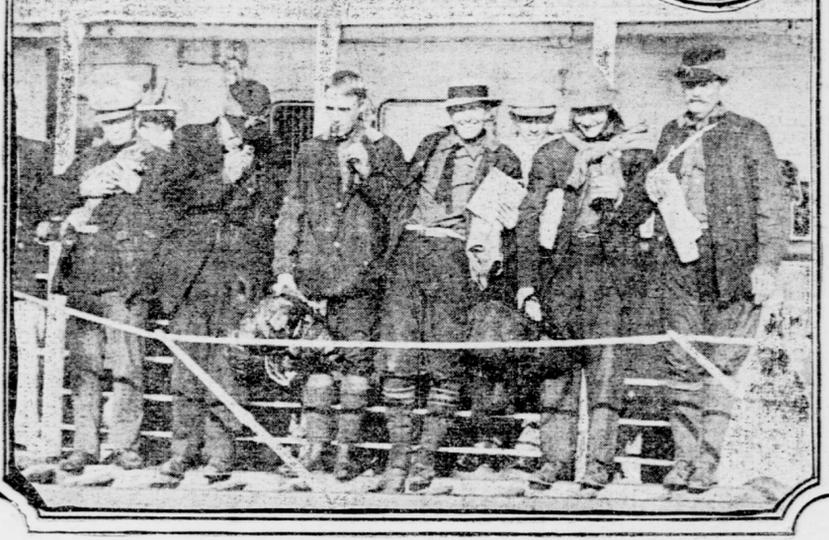
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CAPTAIN C. E. DOWNS, Of the Royal Mail Packet Trent.



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of a menace, and likely to smash us after our boat hit the water." The encounter with the Wellman airship was a windfall for many passengers on the Trent. Every person with a pair of pajamas and a camera was on deck making pictures. There was a dearth of films and within an hour after daylight camera owners were offering \$5 for a six film roll.

When the Trent came in yesterday passengers who had made snap shots were getting high prices for their uncertain wares from purchasers who were willing to take a chance that the undeveloped films would turn out good pictures.

In several instances passengers made enough money with their cameras to pay the expenses of the trip to Cuba and Bermuda. One passenger who had taken a dozen pictures of the rescue during its various stages asked \$1,000 for the twelve. His offer went begging until he cut the price down to \$20 a picture.

Trent's Skipper Tells of Rescue. Captain Downs of the Trent came down from the bridge of his vessel when her gangplank was made fast last night and told the story of his rescue of the Wellman party.

"I was aroused at 4:45 a. m. by Mr. Lainson, my chief officer," he said, "and asked to come out on the bridge. He told me there was a big dirigible balloon ahead and he could not account for its presence. It was still dark, but the full moon shone brightly and lit up the sky and sea. These light conditions made the dirigible seen enormous. We watched her for a while, but up to this time she had displayed no signals."

"I got out my Morse lamp and signalled asking the balloon for its name and destination. Finally we got an answer by Morse lamp saying it was the Wellman airship America. I was asked by signal to stand by and keep close to her, as she was in distress and needed assistance. She also signalled that she would try to launch her lifeboat at daybreak."

"The Morse lamp is a slow system, so I sent for my wireless operator and told him to wait until I could signal by lamp and ask if the dirigible had wireless. The airship signalled 'yes,' and then we got into more rapid communication."

"I knew nothing of the existence of the America, and its presence was indeed a surprise. The airship asked us to keep close, as it was then impossible for her to drop her lifeboat. For ninety minutes I manoeuvred the Trent in an effort to catch his lines, but we could not. Lainson grasped one line while he was on the forecastle head, but it slipped through his hands and hurt them."

Dirigible Within Speaking Distance. Finally Wellman was within speaking distance, Captain Downs went on, and the airship once came within ten or twelve feet of the Trent's foremast, running before the wind at from eight to twelve knots.

"I was running full speed astern at one minute and a little later I was going full speed ahead," continued the captain. "We backed and turned and shifted all the time to keep after the dirigible."

"Finally, after we had two lifeboats ready to drop into the water, and men stationed along the rail with lifebuoys to throw, we dropped about forty yards astern of the airship and she opened her valve. Instantly she began to descend. She was moving at about twelve knots when she got to about six feet of the surface and detached her lifeboat."

"She did not capsize, but the trailer, which, I should say, weighed about thirty hundredweight, came along and hit her, making a dent on one side and punching a hole in the other. We finally got the men aboard, Mr. Vaniman being the last man to step on the deck

accomplish the same purpose we are not yet ready to disclose or discuss. "The public has been kind enough to look upon our voyage as a somewhat daring one. If that be correct all the credit for the courage and resoluteness with which the venture was carried on should be given to my comrades—to Melvin Vaniman, who shared equally with me the responsibility and did the lion's share of the work; to Louis Loud, who had been tried out in a voyage over the polar seas and who is one of the bravest men I ever knew; to Murray Simon, the navigator, who, though without previous experience in the air, carried himself after the manner of a good British sailor; to Jack Irwin, the wireless operator, who won a remarkable technical success in being the first man to send wireless messages to shore from a ship sailing through the air over an ocean, and to the youngest member of the party 'Fred' Aubert, who proved cool and resourceful amid the most trying experiences."

It is the experience the crew went through in transferring themselves from the balloon to the Trent that will live the longest in Mr. Loud's memory. "It's no cinch to pass from air to water navigation without a ducking," he said. "When we tried it no one had ever done such a thing before, so there weren't any precedents to go by. So near and yet so far seemed the perfectly good deck of the stout ship Trent as we gazed down on her. "We had the devil's own time getting the balloon down near the water in the first place, and then, when we had got her down, there was the greater problem of getting clear of her without capsizing the lifeboat, without having the balloon fall on top of us and without being raked into the water by the equilibrator."

"We were all six in the lifeboat as the airship dipped toward the waves. Fortunately they weren't very big waves, and the big bag was drifting only seven miles an hour. But she was drifting broadside on and the boat had to strike the water broadside on."

"Vaniman stood facing the stern with one of the ropes attached to the hooks supporting the lifeboat in his hands, and I stood facing the bow holding the other rope. As we swung to within four feet of the water the equilibrator would make a lunge for us. 'Here she comes,' the others would shout, and twice she just missed annihilating us. Then, as she swung off, Vaniman yelled 'Now!' and we both pulled simultaneously on the ropes. The boat dropped on an even keel and then heeled 'way over to port with the momentum of the airship."

"As the boat dropped the airship shot right over us amidships. But it only made the boat keel 'way over again and the ropes caught Irwin and me a tap or two in the face."

At the Waldorf last night Mr. Vaniman denied reports that there had been friction between Mr. Wellman and his crew. He said that the relations of the members of the party had been amicable from start to finish. Speaking of the trip, Mr. Vaniman continued:

"Why, any one else would have to spend thousands of dollars to learn what we learned in those two days between sky and sea. We failed to reach Europe. That was most unfortunate, but we have made a valuable contribution to science none the less."

"Are you still confident that you can cross the Atlantic in a dirigible?" "I don't know whether we can or not. It is a big problem, and if I had the money I would begin on a bigger, stronger and better airship to-morrow. Yes, our next ship will have an equilibrator, but it will

Believes Crew Will Stick Together. "No definite plans," he replied. "We haven't discussed the subject among ourselves even." Mr. Wellman used "we" instead of "I" throughout his conversation, plainly considering the crew of six, including himself, as a unit not to be broken up, although he was unable to say what they would do next together, if anything.

"Mr. Vaniman and I are partners," he continued, "not only in the present attempt, but in any future venture of the sort. He was with me in my attempts to reach the North Pole, and shares all my plans. We always considered this venture in the light of an experiment, never anything else, and we are well content with some of its phases and wholly dissatisfied with others."

"On the whole we are rather glad to have participated in such an enjoyable adventure, and we believe we have learned some lessons in the art of aerial navigation which are likely to prove of great value in the future. Whether or not we shall personally try to utilize these lessons in another effort to cross the Atlantic will not be determined for some months. We do believe that as a result of the three days and nights of our voyage we know how to build an improved and enlarged airship which could make the trip to Europe."

The question which naturally suggested itself at this point was whether the navigator, if he built another airship for ocean travel, would fasten it to an equilibrator. He said he wouldn't use the same type of equilibrator which the America had, but he went on:

"An equilibrator or something serving the same function is a necessity in any attempt to cross the ocean. The method by which we would substitute something better and

Some idea of the expense of maintaining the efficiency of a Railroad may be formed from the single item of Track TIES alone. In round figures there are 8,600,000 ties in the tracks of the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Giving these ties an average life of ten years, it requires 860,000 ties annually for renewals, which means the deforesting of 3000 acres of timber lands every year. But these are details of which the passenger on the Black Diamond Express, All Parlor Cars, is unconscious, as he journeys by day through the most enchanting scenery this side of the Rockies.

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