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The Story of HMS Pelican Hull Of the Pelican, rotting at the Government Wharf, Sydney; and drawing of her under sail (by F. W. Wallace) A speech by Sydney E. Muggah (former Mayor of Sydney) Rather late on a Saturday afternoon of a typical November day in 1923, one walking along the waterfront of Sydney Harbor would see away to the north, amongst the grey shadows of the gathering twilight, two ships coming in from sea and making their way slowly up the harbor towards the docks. And as they drew nearer it could be seen that the approaching vessels were an ocean-going tug, with a barge in tow. The latter had the old-fashioned man-of-war bow and her fore, main, and mizzen lowermasts were standing. The topmasts were gone. The tug proved to be the Ocean Eagle and the other vessel was the barge Pelican, all that was left of what had formerly been HMS Pelican, one of the most interesting remaining relics on this side of the Atlantic Ocean of the "Wooden Walls of England." It would recognize in this old barge, which the newspapers had reported as being whirled about on the stormy Atlantic, abandoned and derelict, with no human hand to guide her, M loaded with hundreds of tons of bent and twisted scrap iron, Her Majesty's Ship Pelican, well known in Sydney Harbor in the 'nineties as a frequent and welcome visitor, when doing police duty on the French Shore of Newfoundland. In those days the HMS Pelican French fishermen out from France had certain rights on the Treaty Shore of the Ancient Colony, and the British Government found it convenient to have a ship or two on hand, as there was considerable friction between the French fishermen and the Newfoundland fishermen. But what a change now. The smart Navy uniforms, the gilt and gold were gone, and this once official representative of Britain's might had become a nameless thing, covered with rust and dirt, as she now lay at the wharf within a few hundred yards of where she had so often gaily come to anchor to the sound of the boatswain's whistle and the rattling of anchor chains through her hawse-pipes. In her man-o'-war days the Pelican was barque rigged, and fully fitted with sails which those on shore had often seen let down to dry after a summer rain, and she was also fitted with heavy (for the time) Bow and Stern guns, as well as with several swivel guns on her main deck; and the gun-ports both fore and aft could yet be seen on her as in the brave old days when her fancy figurehead representing "Brittania" looked down on her coppered cut-water as it clove the waters of Sydney Harbor. From the shores of Sydney Harbor let us now look back to Her Majesty's Dockyard in Devonport in the month of April 1877, when the subject of our yarn was launched. In November of that same year she was ready for the Admiralty record: "Commissioned at Devonport the 29th of November, 1877, under Commander Henry H. Boys, for the service on the Pacific station." The Pelican was listed in Navy records as follows: "Composite screw sloop. Barque rigged. Length 170 Ft. Beam 36 Ft. Draught 15 Ft. 9 inches. Displacement 1130 Tons. I. H. P. 800 Speed 10.6 to 12 Knots. Coal Capacity, 130 to 150 tons, good for 1120 to 1480 miles at 10 Knots. Armament, two 6-inch, and six 5-inch guns, 1 Boat or field gun, 4 Machine guns. Complement 140 men." (The Pelican served on the



Pacific Station, the North America and West Indies Station, and finally sold in Jan. 1901 to the Hudson's Bay Company.) It is the period between 1889 and 1898 and under Com? manders Riddel, Cochran, Horsely and Lyon which gives the Pelican her happy association with Sydney. "THE STORY OF HMS PELICAN" CONTINUES ON PAGE 48