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SURRENDER OF THE FLEET ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN.

# HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY



BY  
C. J. PETERSON.



A

# HISTORY

OF THE

# UNITED STATES NAVY,

AND

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

OF

# AMERICAN NAVAL HEROES

FROM THE FORMATION OF THE NAVY TO THE CLOSE OF THE  
MEXICAN WAR.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON,

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION"—"THE MILITARY  
HEROES OF THE WAR OF 1812"—"THE MILITARY HEROES  
OF THE WAR WITH MEXICO," ETC. ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH OVER ONE HUNDRED FINE ENGRAVINGS.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY W. A. LEARY & CO.

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1852.

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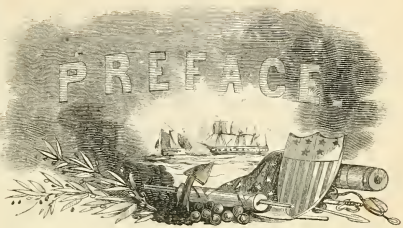
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THE biographies of naval captains, who have made themselves renowned in the service of America, have been collected already by more than one author. The history of the Navy, in which they earned their laurels, has likewise furnished a fruitful theme for the pen. But the present is the first attempt, we believe, to combine a narrative of the rise and progress of this arm of the service, with the memories of the heroes who, in so many battles, asserted the honour of their flag and achieved their own immortality.

The design of the work, however, does not stop here. The volume is intended to commemorate the exploits of the Navy, not only through the medium of a written narrative, but pictorially also. The wish to know how the hero who won the day looked, is the first desire of the reader who peruses the story of a great battle. To gratify this inclination, by procuring faithful portraits, has been a main object of this

work. A kindred curiosity seeks to recall the scene of the strife, as it actually appeared to the spectator. No efforts have been spared, accordingly, to obtain representations, as accurate as possible, of the more celebrated naval victories described in these pages.

The present work, therefore, differs from any yet published. It is intended to combine the advantages of all, so far as this is possible, within the compass of a single volume. It gives in a compact mass, what is elsewhere to be found only in detached portions. The plan, it is believed, is entirely original. And the conviction that it will be found acceptable, also, has induced the publishers to expend large sums, in order that the volume may be issued in a style worthy of the subject, and worthy likewise of general patronage.

Of necessity, such a work can be little better than a mere compilation. It was not designed, indeed, to be more. It is offered to the public, not as containing much that is new, but as containing, in a new form, all that is old. Those who are thoroughly conversant with American naval history, or with the biographies of American naval heroes, will find little or nothing in this volume to reward perusal. It is not for such persons that it has been prepared. The work is intended for popular reading, not for students; for the many, not for the few. There are millions of individuals in the United States to whom the triumphs of the national marine are but vaguely known; and it is for these that the present compilation has been undertaken.

No labour has been spared, however, to render the work accurate. It has also been endeavoured to make it equally comprehensive and full. Whether the effort has been successful, or not, a generous public must determine. Though the materials are generally those of others, the opinions are usually the author's own; and when this is not the case, as occasionally happens, the authority is invariably given. In some instances, as in the narrative of the battle on Lake Erie, it has been considered desirable to quote from another, and a more authoritative pen, rather than enter the lists of controversy, or risk impairing the interest of the story.

The author, after perusing every thing which has been published on the subject of his work, is more than ever convinced of the value of the late Mr. Cooper's History of the American Navy. Had that gentleman fulfilled his favourite scheme of writing a series of naval biographies—a project undertaken, and in part completed, but finally abandoned—the present compilation would never have seen the light. Where that thorough writer had preceded, no one else could have followed, unless, perhaps, merely to abridge. The biographies actually published by Mr. Cooper have been found of the greatest service, and the author takes this occasion to acknowledge his indebtedness to that eminent and faithful writer.

The other sources from which the materials of this work have been drawn may be dismissed in few words. They have generally been old magazines, newspapers of a past

generation, or unacknowledged reprints in modern volumes from both. In a few instances, biographies of a higher character have afforded better means for delineating character, or deciding doubtful issues. In many cases, the author of the present work has been forced to arrive at conclusions, both as respects the importance of a victory and as regards the ability of a commander, different from those entertained by his authorities. Excessive eulogy, indeed, is the fault of biographers. It is possible that, after all, the author has not escaped the common epidemic: but he has, at least, made the attempt; and the reader, he trusts, will be charitable in consequence.

It was the intention, when this work was first projected, to have narrated the triumphs of the more famous American privateers; but the difficulty of obtaining accurate and complete information on this subject compelled the abandonment of the design. Public opinion, within the last generation, has been tending to the proscription of private armed ships; and the author frankly avows that he coincides in the popular sentiment. He hopes, in the event of a war, to see none but national vessels authorized to capture and make prizes: but he does not expect it. He would, therefore, be presumptuous indeed, to censure a past generation for what even this is scarcely prepared to cast aside. He recollects, moreover, that but for our privateers, the cause of independence would have been almost lost, since to them Washington was indebted for supplies of powder at Cambridge, which, in the

absence of a regular navy, he would otherwise have failed to obtain. In the war of 1812, also, privateers were of great service. It is, in truth, generally believed that a privateer, at Fayal, by her desperate and protracted defence, detained a portion of the British fleet destined to operate against New Orleans, and thus, perhaps, saved that important city from capture. The author has no doubt, from a few narratives in his possession, that if the history of the American privateers could be obtained, it would afford a chronicle of unparalleled heroism. Not unfrequently, too, it would furnish examples of patriotism not surpassed in the annals of the world.

Though no American naval commander has, in one sense, rivalled the great admirals of England; in another, several have surpassed the fame of the most renowned British captains. Our Decatur, Stewarts, and Hulls have not, indeed, conquered in such battles as St. Vincent or the Nile; for no American fleet has ever yet been engaged on the ocean with an equal force of the enemy. But they have, in single ships, met and overthrown the men who assisted at these greatest of British naval triumphs; and it is a fair presumption that, if the encounter had been on a larger scale, the result would not have been dissimilar. That which gave Americans the victory in one case, would have won it for them equally in the other. Nelson might have been the vanquished, instead of the victor, if the United States, instead of France, had fought at Trafalgar.

It is not extravagant, therefore, to claim for several of the

American commanders, as has been done in this work, the very highest rank as naval captains. They wanted only a wider field, to do deeds as dazzling as those of Blake, Rodney, Jarvis, or Exmouth. And with this last prefatory remark, the author leaves his volume to the reader.





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# HISTORY

OF THE

## NAVY OF THE UNITED STATES.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### PRELIMINARY.

THE people of the United States are proverbially proud of their navy. Though comparatively of late origin, it has already made itself a name in history. Its numbers, when contrasted with that of others, are and have been inconsiderable; yet it has achieved victories that rival, in some respects, the proudest triumphs of England, Holland, and Venice.

For it is not by the magnitude of numbers, but by the magnitude of results that victories are to be tested. Waterloo was a greater battle than Austerlitz, though fewer were engaged in it. The capture of the *Guerriere* was, to America, almost as important as was the battle of Trafalgar to England. The defeat of the British squadron, on Lake Champlain, saved the State of New York. The triumph of Barclay, on Lake Erie, would have laid the West open to foreign invasion. Americans have cause, therefore, for pride in their navy. On every occasion, heretofore, it has proved equal to the crisis. Its operations, indeed, have been on an inconsiderable scale, but it will, we may confidently predict, prove as triumphant in a larger sphere, when the necessity shall demand

it. The elements of a great navy exist in our people: all that is wanted to develop them is imminent peril.

The empire of the sea, indeed, can belong only to a maritime nation. Monarchs may build ships, and republics construct dock-yards, but unless seamen can be found, there will be no navy. For centuries it has been the ambition of France to obtain ascendancy on the ocean. The most lavish sums have been expended on this favourite project, but success has never yet permanently crowned her efforts. This failure has not been because she is inferior to other nations in naval architecture, nor because her people are less brave, nor because gunnery is neglected in her ships of war; but because France has comparatively few seamen. She can build ships, but she cannot man them. From the fatal battle of La Hogue, in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, down to the terrible disaster of Trafalgar, she has sustained an almost unbroken series of defeats at sea. Frigate after frigate, fleet after fleet have been torn from her by the prowess of England. Occasionally, a few French ships, manned by efficient crews, have achieved victory; but these instances have been rare indeed. France can never become a great naval power, until her mercantile marine becomes more extensive.

That it is only great maritime powers which can obtain the empire of the sea is proved by all history. It was when Venice monopolized the traffic of the Mediterranean, that her galleys were the terror of the Saracen and the defence of Europe. It was when Spain and Portugal contended for the commerce of the Indies, that the flags of other nations sank before them on the deep. It was when the ships of Holland filled every sea, that the Dutch cannon were heard at London, that the navies of France and England fled to their harbours, that Von Tromp proudly scoured the Channel with a broom at his mast-head. The decay of Venice, Spain, and Holland was followed immediately by the decline of



their naval supremacy. When England succeeded to the traffic of the world, she succeeded also to the supremacy of the ocean. From the hour when Drake, the first of her native navigators, penetrated the Pacific Ocean, she began to obtain that naval superiority, which, for nearly two centuries, she has enjoyed. Her hardy seamen, accustomed to battling with the deep, are always at hand to man her ships when war breaks out; and it is in vain that other European powers attempt to rival her, for though they can build a fleet, they cannot man it properly, and, sooner or later, their vessels become hers.

The necessity of veteran sailors in men-of-war can be made evident by contrasting soldiers with seamen in battle. The former are on firm land, and, if courageous and disciplined, have only to fear being overmatched. The latter are at the mercy of winds and waves, and may be called upon, perhaps in the very crisis of the conflict, to manœuvre the ship, to reduce sail, or to cut away a mast. In such cases, the most expert crew can soonest return to the conflict, and, all things else being equal, is certain to win the victory. On land, the combatant has but to contend with his enemy: at sea, he has to battle with the elements as well as with his foe. It is evident, therefore, that seamanship is absolutely necessary to an efficient navy. A nation which is not maritime, and therefore without the material to man its ships, cannot become ascendant at sea. The brave men whom it forces on board its vessels by conscriptions are but so many victims to a mistaken policy, so many sacrifices to false ambition. It will be in vain for Germany to dream of a navy, for she must ever be agricultural, instead of maritime. Even Russia, after a century and a half of effort, has a navy but in name; for her mercantile marine is comparatively inconsiderable, and the crews of her armed ships are soldiers rather than seamen.

The United States possesses, perhaps, a greater capacity

for naval ascendancy than any power on the globe. Great Britain, in truth, is the only nation that can approach her in this respect. The causes in each case are the same. Both the United States and Great Britain have large mercantile marines, which form a nursery for seamen, and from which, in case of war, crews to man the national vessels can be readily transplanted. At the rate at which the tonnage of the United States is increasing, it will not be long before her mercantile marine will surpass that of her great rival; and when that event occurs, she will have it in her power, at any moment, to become the arbiter of the seas. It will only be necessary to build the ships, when the contest will be decided at a blow. The war of 1812 proved, especially on the lakes, what a maritime people can do in an emergency. The fate of the two several campaigns depended on having the command of Erie and Champlain: the ships were constructed as if by magic; and the seamen being ready made, as it were, the ascendancy was gained, and the campaign decided in our favour. If a time should ever come when a great fleet will be necessary, it can be built and manned almost as rapidly, if the dock-yards are but filled.

The United States has, from its earliest infancy, had a mercantile marine; and hence the rapidity with which, in every war, a navy has been formed. In the primitive days of New England, a large traffic was carried on with Madeira, and subsequently with the West Indies; and this maritime spirit continued down to the war of Independence, notwithstanding the mother country made continual efforts to check it, by oppressive navigation laws. The result was that New England, and, to a certain extent, others of the colonies, possessed a body of skilful, bold, and energetic seamen, who, when war was proclaimed, changed their peaceful voyages for warlike ones, and were ready, at a day's notice, to sail on a cruise against the enemy. In every age, consequently, since the settlement of the country, the colonies, and subse-

quently the United States, have been distinguished for naval efficiency. In the wars preceding the Revolution, more than one American seaman won his way, in the British navy, to the rank of admiral. When the war of independence was declared, American privateers swarmed immediately on the ocean, attacking the English commerce, and paralyzing the efforts of the foe; and to privateers soon succeeded national armed ships, which continued the career of profit and glory.

With the growth of the United States, the extension of its seaboard has been so great that, at the present time, it surpasses that of any other nation situated within the temperate zones. From the eastern cape of Maine, the curious navigator may follow one unbroken line of coast, for thousands of miles, to the mouth of the Rio Grande; and then, crossing to the Pacific, he may sail along seaboard shores from the lower boundary of California to the upper extremity of Oregon. The wants of such a vast seaboard will nourish a continually increasing coasting-trade, which, in turn, will be an ever extending nursery for seamen. Nor is this all. In consequence of the Isthmus of Panama interposing between the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean, the bulk of the heavier traffic between California and the Atlantic cities must always make the circuit of Cape Horn; and thus a school for skilful seamen will continue, as a necessity of the republic, so long as the republic itself exists. It used to be said, the best sailors of the United States came out of the Delaware, because the difficulties in navigating that river compelled those who sailed in it to become perfect in their art; and this being true, the route around Cape Horn to our Pacific settlements will be the means of improving, in no small degree, the standard of American seamanship, high even as it is.

England is in the decline of advancing age; the United States in the first flush of youth. With a mercantile marine already approaching that of our mother country, though

our vast resources are as yet only beginning to be developed, what will be our position, as a naval power, when we shall have attained to manhood, and when our ships will be counted by hundreds where they are now computed by tens! If the wants of twenty millions of people can support a mercantile marine such as we now possess, what will not the wants of a hundred millions sustain? Before the close of the present century, the number of seamen employed in American vessels will almost exceed belief: and the majority of these, in the event of a war, will be available for national armed vessels, since employment in a more peaceful character will be, to a great extent, impossible to obtain.

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## CHAPTER II.

### RISE OF THE MERCANTILE MARINE.

THE colonization of the United States had scarcely commenced, before commercial adventures began to be undertaken by the inhabitants. The Dutch, at that time the best navigators in the world, were the first to build a decked vessel within the limits of the present republic, which they did at their settlement, New Amsterdam, now New York, in 1614. The Plymouth colonists soon imitated this example. In 1633, a small ship was constructed at Boston, supposed to be the first built within the boundaries of New England. Meantime, a spirited trade grew up between the colonies and mother country. The fishing on the Banks of Newfoundland also assisted to develop the nautical enterprise of the inhabitants. Already, in 1615, the English had one hundred and seventy vessels engaged in this business, while France, Portugal, and Spain had, altogether, three hun-

dred: and the Massachusetts colonists, as soon as the first difficulties of the settlement were over, began to enter into competition for this lucrative pursuit. As early as 1639, we find laws passed to encourage the fisheries.

Within twenty years after the landing of the pilgrims, quite a number of ships trading to Europe belonged to the settlers, while there was a still larger fleet of sloops owned by the colonists and employed in the coasting trade. As every vessel of any size carried a few light guns, to defend it from the Indians or to repel pirates, the navigation had most of the characteristics of an armed trade. In 1636, John Gallop, in his sloop, recaptured a pinnace belonging to Mr. Oldham, which had been taken by the Narragansett Indians; and this was, it is believed, the first naval combat ever fought by an American vessel. On more than one occasion, however, armaments were fitted out against the French, who then occupied Acadie, or Nova Scotia, as it is now called.

Meantime, a thriving commerce had grown up in New England with the southern colonies, with Madeira, and with the West Indies. The maritime character of the people increased daily; and with it, occasions for nautical prowess. In 1645, a ship, armed with fourteen guns, was built at Cambridge, Massachusetts, and being despatched to the Canary islands, fell in with a Barbary rover, when an action ensued that lasted all day, till the rudder of the corsair being injured, the New-England vessel escaped. In 1650, the Dutch having made some encroachments in Long Island Sound, the colony of Connecticut employed a cruizer, mounting ten guns and carrying forty men, to defend the coasts and keep open the communication between the mainland and the opposite shore. In 1665, Connecticut maintained a small vessel off Watch Hill, to prevent the Narragansetts from crossing to attack the Montauks. These were the first advances towards a regular navy. All this

while, the colonies were increasing with astonishing rapidity in numbers, wealth, and enterprise.

In 1664, by the capture of New Amsterdam, the entire coast from Nova Scotia to Florida became open to their traffic; and navigation as well as ship-building received accordingly a fresh impetus. At this time, it is computed there were one hundred thousand inhabitants of European extraction in the various settlements. The New-England colonies still continued to monopolize most of the commerce. Up to this period, Boston alone had constructed more than seven hundred vessels, of which thirty were over one hundred tons. Even at that early day, the master shipwrights of Massachusetts were thirty in number. The French, meantime, were occupying the lakes. In 1678, De la Salle launched a vessel of ten tons on Ontario, and in the year following, one of sixty tons on Erie.

The whale fishery, another element of maritime power, was established at Nantucket about 1690. It was, at first, carried on in open boats, in the vicinity of that island; subsequently, decked vessels, which pursued the fish into higher latitudes, came into use; and finally, ships of the largest size were employed, the voyages extending to Brazil on the one side, and Greenland on the other. A hardy race of seamen was thus nourished, which, at a later day, won from Burke one of the most eloquent eulogiums in the language.

In 1690, the Massachusetts authorities, annoyed by the French privateers from Acadie, despatched a force of seven hundred men, in eight small vessels, to extirpate the nuisance. The expedition was commanded by Sir William Phipps, and was entirely successful. Stimulated by victory, the same authorities fitted out, in the autumn of the same year, a squadron against Quebec, consisting of about forty vessels, carrying two thousand men. Sir William Phipps was again intrusted with the command. The expedition, however,

failed. In this same year, the *Falkland*, a fourth-rate, was launched in the *Piscataqua*, and is believed to have been the first vessel of her size constructed in America. During the war with France, which raged at this time, numerous small cruisers had been built in the colonies; but no action of importance appears to have occurred at sea.

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### CHAPTER III.

TO THE YEAR 1750.

AT the beginning of the eighteenth century, the American settlements had attained a population of two hundred and sixty-two thousand; and the mercantile enterprise of the people kept pace fully with their increasing numbers. In 1701, the Newfoundland fisheries alone employed one hundred and twenty-one vessels, two thousand seven hundred men, and nearly eight thousand tons. The shipping generally had so much increased, that the mother country was supplied largely with transports, while no small part of the traffic between America and England was carried on in colonial vessels. Meantime, the coasting-trade was monopolized by American craft. The navigation laws, passed in 1651, forbade this, indeed; but these laws had always been practically a dead letter in America.

The war with France, which had been closed by the treaty of Ryswick, having broken out afresh, the colonies became again involved in hostilities. In 1706, Spain, being in alliance with France, made an attack on Charleston, which was repulsed by the citizens, who, with Lieutenant Colonel Rhett at their head, armed the ships in port, for that purpose. In 1707, an expedition was fitted out by the New England

colonists against Port Royal; but it proved unsuccessful. Another, on a larger scale, but equally unfortunate, was planned in 1709: in this instance, a want of co-operation on the part of the English caused the failure. A third, and successful one, was undertaken in 1710, when the crown and provinces conjointly acting, a fleet of thirty-six sail and six regiments were despatched, on which the place submitted. Another enterprise, in the following year, was projected against the French settlements on the St. Lawrence; but though fifteen men-of-war, forty transports, and six store-vessels were engaged in it, besides seven thousand troops, the affair proved abortivé.

The peace of Utrecht, in 1713, put an end to the war. From this period, the maritime power of the colonies increased with accelerated rapidity. The naval power of France and England, during the contest, had been so nearly balanced, that the risk of foreign voyages had been great, and comparatively few enterprises of this character had been undertaken; but now the adventurous spirit of New England found ample exercise in ventures of this description. Meantime, the privateers, which had been employed extensively throughout the conflict, were abandoned. A few small armed vessels were, however, retained for the protection of the coasts, and for the suppression of piracies, which, about this period, became quite frequent in the American waters, and were not finally exterminated till the middle of the century.

In 1731, Massachusetts owned thirty-eight thousand tons of shipping, of which one-half were employed in the European trade. The next State, in maritime wealth, was Pennsylvania, which owned six thousand tons. The cities of New York and Philadelphia, even at that day, had become rivals for the commerce of the country. In 1737, the entrances into the former port were two hundred and eleven, the clearances two hundred and twenty; while the entrances



into the latter were two hundred and eleven, the clearances two hundred and fifteen. Newport, now comparatively without commerce, had, at that period, a hundred sail of shipping, and was the fourth seaport, in point of importance, in the colonies—Boston being the first. It was about this time that American vessels first became engaged in the slave-trade, in which, for a long period, Bristol and other Rhode Island towns largely participated.

In 1739, England declared war against Spain. It being the policy of the mother country to attack the colonies of her enemy, America became the seat of many of her preparations and levies. The expedition against Carthagena was largely supplied with men and means from this country. So also was the enterprise against Cuba, in 1741. Three years later, when hostilities broke out with France, the colonies became even more extensively engaged in assisting Great Britain. In 1745, an expedition was fitted out by the New England States against Louisburg, a port that commanded the entrance to the St. Lawrence, and on the fortification of which the French had spent vast sums. The fleet consisted of twelve armed vessels, hired and equipped by the colonies, besides transports. The land force numbered about four thousand men. The first was commanded by Captain Tyng, of Massachusetts, the last by Colonel Pepperel, of Maine. The expedition was joined at Causeau by Commodore Warren, of the royal navy, who brought with him part of the West India squadron. On the 30th of April, Louisburg was invested by land, it having been blockaded for some time previously by the combined British and American fleets. The siege lasted forty-seven days, when the place submitted.

In this war, about four hundred privateers and letters-of-marque were engaged on the part of the colonies. Already the maritime power of the American settlements had become imposing.

## CHAPTER IV.

## TO THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, two years after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the population of the American colonies, excluding Indians, had risen to a million. The mercantile marine continued to advance proportionably. Communications between the colonies were principally carried on by water, the result of the population being chiefly on the seaboard; for, even so late as the war of Independence, but few settlers had crossed the Alleghanies. It is computed that, in 1750, the tonnage of the colonies equalled that of England, considered in reference to the population. The clearances at the different American ports were, in that year, over a thousand, and the entrances not much less. Massachusetts alone owned one vessel, of one description or another, for every hundred inhabitants.

It was in 1750 that the live-oak, the most valuable ship-timber furnished by America, was first brought into use. Hitherto the white-oak had been principally employed in the construction of vessels. About this period, also, it became the custom with many American parents to enter their sons as midshipmen in the royal navy. Several of these young officers subsequently rose to the highest rank in the service. It is generally credited that his mother's affection alone prevented Washington from entering the British navy. It would be curious to speculate on what would have been the result of the Revolution, if that great man had been lost to his country in the struggle for independence.

In 1756, England declared war once more against France.

The conflict that ensued was waged principally on land, and gave but little opportunity for the colonial seamen to earn renown. The navy of France had, by this time, however, sunk into comparative weakness, so that the commercial ventures of the Americans continued to be prosecuted with little risk. The only enterprise at sea, of any importance, was an attack, in 1757, on Louisburg, that place having returned into the possession of the French at the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. About eleven thousand troops, royal and provincial, besides a large fleet of transports and a respectable armed squadron, were engaged in this expedition. It failed, however, in consequence of the superiority of the French in men-of-war.

Numerous brilliant exploits on the part of colonial privateers are recorded of this war. One of the most remarkable was the action between the *Thurloe* fourteen, Captain Mantle, and the *Les Deux Amis* ten, Captain Felix. The *Thurloe* had a crew of eighty-four men; the *Les Deux Amis* a crew of ninety-four. The French privateer, at first, endeavoured to fly, but discovering this to be impossible, he ran his enemy athwart hawse, intending to board him. The American vessel, conscious of a superiority of metal, and suspecting the crew of the foe to outnumber his own, resisted this attempt. The struggle continued for two hours, and was of the most heroic character. At last, however, the *Deux Amis* struck, but not until eighty of her men were either killed or wounded. The *Thurloe's* loss, in all, was thirty-seven. The combat was one of the most bloody recorded of that or any other war, as having occurred at sea.

From the peace of 1763 to the commencement of hostilities between the colonies and mother country, there is nothing of importance to record, connected with the maritime progress of America. The colonies, notwithstanding the increasing difficulties with England, continued to grow in population; and with the growth of numbers, the mercan-

tile marine necessarily kept pace. This is not the place to discuss the origin or trace the course of that great controversy, which, after raging for nearly twenty years, finally placed America and Great Britain in a hostile attitude to each other, and ended in the separation of the colonies from the mother country. It is sufficient to say that the attempts to enforce the navigation laws, the stamp act, the duty on tea, and other measures repugnant to that proud spirit of freedom which characterized the colonists, assisted, in turn, to produce the alienation.

The first overt act of resistance was the burning of the royal tender *Gaspee*, by a party of Americans, in Providence Bay. A packet, plying between New York and Providence, had been chased by the *Gaspee*, for refusing to heave to and be examined; and, during the chase, the packet had led the tender on a shoal, where the latter grounded. In the following night, a party of patriots, in eight launches, left Providence, carried the tender by assault, and burned her to the water's edge. The British government offered a reward of a thousand pounds for the leader in this enterprise, but in vain. The first blood shed in the struggle between the colonies and mother country was poured out, not at Lexington, but on the decks of the *Gaspee*.

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## CHAPTER V.

### ORGANIZATION OF A REGULAR NAVY.

WHEN the war of independence began, in 1775, there existed no naval force whatever in any of the colonies. The Continental Congress, moreover, was so busily engaged in providing for an army, that the equipment of a navy,

at first, received no attention. The maritime habits of the people, however, especially in the New-England States, turned individual enterprise towards the ocean; and if proper commissions could have been procured, the sea would soon have swarmed with privateers. But the orders to capture were confined, in the beginning, to vessels bringing stores and supplies to the royal forces in America. In November of this year, however, Massachusetts, in her capacity as a sovereign commonwealth, established courts of admiralty, and enacted laws to encourage nautical enterprise. Washington, as commander-in-chief of the American army, had already granted commissions to vessels to cruise in the vicinity of Boston and intercept British store-ships; and, under this authorization, numerous prizes had been made. On several occasions, however, captured vessels had been discharged, as not coming within the class allowed to be taken.

It was not until October, 1775, or six months after the battle of Lexington, that Congress took steps for the organization of a navy. On the 13th of this month, a law was passed, ordering two small cruisers to be equipped, for the purpose of intercepting supplies for the British army. On the 29th of the same month, a resolution was adopted, denying to private ships of war and merchant-vessels the right to wear pennants in presence of the continental ships. On the 30th, two more cruisers, and of a larger class, were authorized. Up to this period, Congress looked only for a redress of grievances, and did not contemplate a separation from the crown of Great Britain: hence the strictly defensive policy on which it acted. The burning of the town of Falmouth, by order of Admiral Graves, was necessary to produce a more decided line of conduct. This outrage, which led to the law of Massachusetts to which we have already alluded, caused the passage of a general prize-law by Congress. Under this act, the capture of British vessels in any way con-

nected with the pending struggle was authorized. This law was followed, on the 13th of December, by another, providing for the construction of thirteen additional cruisers.

By the close of the year 1775, therefore, Congress had authorized the equipment of seventeen men-of-war, varying in force from ten to thirty guns. These ships, however, were much inferior to what vessels of the same rate would be now. Their armaments were light sixes, nines, or twelves, carronades not having yet been introduced.

A serious difficulty was found in procuring suitable officers. Competent seamen there were enough, but officers accustomed to the discipline of a navy were rare: indeed, except a few who had left the royal service before the war, none were to be had. A large number of Americans, it is true, were in the British navy, where they occupied all ranks, from that of a midshipman up to post-captain; but there is only a single authenticated instance of such a person having thrown up his commission. Congress was accordingly compelled to select its officers principally from such masters and mates of merchant-vessels as were most conspicuous for seamanship, presumed courage, habits of enterprise, and the capacity for command.

Esek Hopkins, an officer highly recommended, was appointed commander-in-chief of the new navy, a rank intended to correspond at sea with that of Washington on land. A sufficient number of captains and lieutenants was commissioned at the same time. Among the latter was John Paul Jones—among the former, Nicholas Biddle—names soon destined to become especially conspicuous. The first ensign displayed by a regular American man-of-war was hoisted by Paul Jones, in December, 1775, on board the *Alfred*, of which he was first lieutenant, that ship then lying in the Delaware. It is believed, on traditional authority, that the device of this flag represented a pine-tree, with a rattlesnake at its root, about to strike, and the motto, "Don't tread on

me." The present national ensign did not come into use until 1777, and is generally supposed to have originated, in part, from the arms of the Washington family, the commander-in-chief having employed a private flag, not dissimilar, to distinguish his head-quarters. Until the adoption of the stars and stripes, the privateers, and even regular cruisers, carried different devices, the former usually the arms of the State whose commission they bore.

The squadron, under Commodore Hopkins, sailed for the Delaware on the 17th of February, 1776, on a cruise against the British naval force then ravaging the coasts of Virginia. The little fleet consisted of eight vessels, of which the Alfred twenty-four was the largest. Not meeting with the expected enemy, the commodore sailed for the Bahamas, where he had been ordered to rendezvous. Here he determined to make a descent on New Providence, a large amount of military stores being known to be collected there. The forts were easily captured, but the British, having received intimation of the attack, had removed the principal part of the stores. The squadron now proceeded northward, capturing various small vessels on the way. On the 6th of April, Hopkins fell in with the British ship Glasgow twenty; but, after an action of five hours, the royal vessel escaped. The failure of his squadron to capture the ship brought the commodore justly into disgrace. He was allowed, indeed, to remain in command for a short period longer; but he did not go to sea again. In January, 1777, Congress finally dismissed him from the service. No naval commander-in-chief was subsequently appointed, though a committee of Congress recommended the measure in 1781.

The disgrace brought on the infant navy by the action with the Glasgow was wiped away in part by the brilliant exploits of Paul Jones. This officer, promoted to the chief command of the Providence twelve, captured, in a single cruise, sixteen prizes, some of considerable value. He also

escaped from English frigates, on two different occasions, by his superior tact and seamanship. Captain Biddle, in the *Andrew Doria* fourteen, also greatly distinguished himself, in a cruise to the eastward.

Independence, meantime, had been declared, when Congress proceeded vigorously to increase the navy. In October, 1776, it authorized another frigate and two cutters to be built; and in November, three seventy-fours, five additional frigates, a sloop-of-war, and a packet. In January, 1777, another frigate and another sloop-of-war were ordered to be constructed. Eight of the prizes were also directed to be equipped as national vessels.

At the same time, Congress regulated the rank of the different officers. Twenty-four captains were appointed, to take precedence as their names stood on the list, James Nicholson being the first. The rank of inferior officers was left to the marine committee.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### EXPLOITS IN EUROPEAN SEAS.

WHILE the national vessels were busily employed at sea, the colony cruisers and privateers were no less active on the coast. After the evacuation of Boston, British merchantmen ignorant of the fact continued to steer for that port, and thus thirty sail fell into the hands of the Americans during the summer of 1776. Among these prizes were several transports, in which were captured five hundred men belonging to the British army, and with them Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, the commander of the regiment. This officer was of particular value to the Americans at this time, as the



possession of his person enabled them, by threats of retaliation, to prevent prisoners in the hands of the British being treated as rebels.

Soon after independence had been declared, Congress despatched the *Reprisal* sixteen, Captain Wickes, to France. She carried out Dr. Franklin, appointed agent at the court of Versailles. In the autumn of 1776, the *Reprisal* reached her destination, accompanied by several prizes. As this was the first regular American cruiser which appeared in the waters of the Old World, so these prizes were the first captured vessels taken into a French port since the commencement of the war. The English ambassador loudly complained of this infraction of the treaty between his country and France; but the court of Versailles was already secretly favourable to America, and means accordingly were found to sell the prizes without detection. The *Reprisal*, having refitted, cruised in the Bay of Biscay, where she made several additional captures, which she carried into Nantes. The disposition of these prizes was winked at also by the French government; and the proceeds are said to have proved of great benefit to the American commissioners in Paris.

In April, 1777, the *Lexington* fourteen, Captain Johnston, arrived in France. The American commissioners now planned a bold exploit, which was brilliantly carried out. The *Reprisal*, the *Lexington*, and a cutter called the *Dolphin*, were placed under the command of Captain Wickes, with orders to cruise around Ireland. This little squadron sailed in June, and, in the execution of its orders, captured or destroyed a large number of the enemy's vessels. On its return to port, the British government, indignant at being bearded on its very coasts, made such angry representations to the French court, that the latter, not having yet decided to declare war, was compelled to withdraw its countenance apparently from the Americans. The prizes, accordingly,

were ordered to quit France, while the squadron was seized and held. In the end, the former were sold, off the port, to French merchants; while the latter were allowed to sail, on giving security to leave the European seas. The *Lexington* left Morlaix in September, but was captured on the ensuing day. The *Reprisal* sailed about the same time, but foundered on the Banks of Newfoundland, when all on board perished, except the cook.

While the American commissioners in Paris were planning the cruise around Ireland, they had fitted out an English cutter, and intrusted her command to Captain Conyngham. The commission employed on this occasion was one of several blanks placed at the disposal of the commissioners by the president of Congress. On the 7th of May, Captain Conyngham captured, off the coast of Holland, the *Harwich* packet, carrying the English mail for the north of Europe. As the cutter had been equipped in a French port, the court of Versailles was held answerable for its capture by the British ambassador; and on Captain Conyngham's return, he and his crew were imprisoned, and his prizes liberated. The English government hastened, on this, to send two sloops-of-war to Dunkirk, to conduct the captain and his men to England, there to be tried as pirates; but, before the arrival of these vessels, the prisoners, by the connivance of France, escaped. A second vessel, the *Revenge*, was now procured for Captain Conyngham, in which he captured a large number of prizes, and once actually refitted, disguised, in an English port.

These bold cruises raised to a great height the reputation of the American navy. The terror among British merchants was unprecedented, surpassing even that created by the celebrated *Thurot*, in the preceding war. Marine insurance rose to an enormous price in London. English bottoms were almost deserted, and, in a few weeks, forty sail of French ships were loading in the Thames—a circumstance never

before known. Throughout Europe, the gallantry of the American navy was the theme of universal applause. The arrogance of England had brought her into general disfavour; and these assaults on her maritime power were consequently viewed with enthusiastic, though often secret, approbation.

From the departure of the Raleigh, in September, 1777, to the alliance with France, in the beginning of 1778, American cruisers were almost banished from the European waters. Early in the latter year, however, Paul Jones was despatched to France in the *Ranger* eighteen. After refitting in Brest, Captain Jones sailed, on the 10th of April, on a cruise in the Irish Channel. He made several prizes, attacked Whitehaven, and captured a British sloop-of-war, the *Drake*. On the 8th of May, Captain Jones entered Brest, and, soon after, the *Ranger* sailed for America,—Jones remaining in France, allured by the promise of a more important command. After many vexatious disappointments, he succeeded, in June, 1779, in obtaining a small squadron, of which the *Bon Homme Richard*, an old Indiaman, armed with forty-two light guns, was assigned to him as a flag-ship. The consorts of this vessel were six in number, but inconsiderable in size, with the exception of the *Alliance*, a fine frigate of thirty-two guns, lately built in the United States, and commanded by Captain Landais, a French officer. With this fleet, Jones put to sea, but soon returned from stress of weather, and did not sail again until the 14th of August. The cruise that followed was one of the most remarkable in history. After capturing several prizes, threatening a descent on Leith, and carrying terror along the entire eastern coast of Great Britain, Jones, in the *Bon Homme Richard*, attacked the frigate *Serapis*, forty-four, and the *Countess of Scarborough* twenty-two, and, after a most desperate action, succeeded, almost unassisted, in compelling them to strike. The victory, however, was purchased by the loss of the *Richard*, which was so much injured as to sink not long

after the contest closed. Jones, in anticipation of this, had transferred himself to the *Serapis*, in which vessel he reached the *Texel*, with the remains of his squadron, on the 6th of October, thirteen days after the battle.

This exploit was the most brilliant ever performed in the European seas, by any American vessel, in the war of independence. The *Alliance* subsequently cruised, under various commanders, in those seas, and made several valuable captures; but in no case was she matched against an enemy equal to herself in force.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### CLOSE OF THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

WHILE the American flag was thus signalizing itself in the old hemisphere, its successes in the new were scarcely less distinguished. Not only were the continental ships doing good service, but most of the States had cruisers of their own afloat, while privateers innumerable swarmed the ocean. Even the lakes became the scene of brilliant exploits. In October, 1776, a flotilla, under General Arnold, maintained a gallant defence for two days against a superior British force on Lake Champlain. On the ocean, no less than three hundred and forty-two vessels were captured from the British, during the first year of the war.

To record all the naval exploits of the different commanders would require volumes. One of the boldest of the year 1777 was performed by Captain Thompson, in the *Raleigh*, a small frigate just launched. Meeting with the West India fleet, he stood resolutely through it, and, with the true spirit of a hero, attacked one of the convoying men-of-war, which

he so cut up, before her consorts arrived to her assistance, that she was compelled to return to Europe. The Raleigh, on the approach of this overwhelming force, ran to leeward. But though she remained near the fleet for several days subsequently, the British men-of-war refused to come out and re-engage her. During this second year of the war, the English lost four hundred and sixty-seven merchantmen, captured by American cruisers and privateers.

The capture of New York and Philadelphia having caused the destruction of several new frigates and prevented others from getting to sea, Congress had directed the construction of additional ones; and, by the spring of 1778, these were in readiness to sail. The year opened with a disastrous event to the American navy, in the loss of Captain Nicholas Biddle, who was blown up in the Randolph thirty-two, on the 7th of March, in a night action with the British ship Yarmouth, sixty-four. The appearance of a French fleet at Newport, in July, the consequence of the treaty of alliance between the American Congress and the Court of Versailles, gave, for a time, a decided preponderance to the allies in the waters of the New World. In this year, besides the exploits of Jones and others abroad, Captain Barry gained great credit by his gallant resistance, in the Raleigh, against a couple of British men-of-war.

In January, 1779, a mutiny broke out on board the Alliance, during the voyage of the latter to France. The mutiny was soon quelled, and it is only noticed here because it was the only serious one that has ever transpired in the American navy. In April, a squadron, composed of the Warren, Queen of France, and Ranger, captured, off Cape Henry, three armed vessels, in addition to four merchantmen, besides twenty-four officers of the royal army. Captain Manly, who had already distinguished himself, earned new laurels this year, by taking two privateers, each nearly equal in force to his own vessel. Captain Williams, in the

Massachusetts cruiser Hazard, fourteen, compelled the Active eighteen, to surrender, after a sharp action of half-an-hour. A disastrous expedition against the Penobscot, undertaken by Massachusetts, closed the principal naval events of 1779 in the American waters.

The ravages of the American privateers continued so great that, in 1780, the British government determined to exchange no more prisoners captured in vessels of that description. This line of policy struck a severe blow at the American marine, in which officers and men were more scarce already than ships. The fall of Charleston, in this year, led to the loss of four principal vessels of war, besides several smaller ones. In June of this year occurred an action between the American ship Trumbull, twenty, Captain Nicholson, and a British letter-of-marque considerably superior in force. The combat is generally considered the severest, as a regular cannonade, that took place during the entire war.

The three closing years of the contest furnished no exploits necessary to be recorded here. But a small number of privateers were left, while the continental navy had greatly diminished. The contest at sea was principally confined, indeed, to the fleets of Great Britain and France, which, on several occasions, met and disputed the palm of victory, generally to the discomfiture of the latter.

On the 11th of April, 1783, peace was proclaimed; and thus terminated the war of Independence. In this contest British shipping had suffered to a more enormous extent than in any war in which England had ever been engaged.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PRESENT NAVY.

THE poverty of the Confederation induced the sale, at the peace, of what few public cruisers remained; and from that time to the formation of the new government, no armed vessels were kept, except a few revenue-cutters which different commonwealths maintained.

Meantime, however, the Barbary Powers began to prey on American commerce. Accordingly, Washington, when chosen to the presidency, recommended the establishment of a navy, in order to prevent similar outrages for the future. In pursuance of this advice, a law was passed, on the 27th of March, 1794, authorizing the construction of six frigates; and the keels of these vessels being immediately laid, the first of them, the *United States*, was launched in July, 1797. Among the frigates built at this time was the *Constitution*, since immortalized by an unbroken career of victory. Six post-captains were appointed contemporaneously, and the organization of a navy completed.

In 1798, when a war with France appeared inevitable, twenty smaller vessels, no one to exceed twenty-two guns, were authorized, on the recommendation of the secretary of war. Three days afterwards, a regular navy department was formally created, Benjamin Stoddart being the first secretary placed at its head. On the 4th of May, an appropriation was made for building galleys; and on the 28th, the capture and detention of French vessels was declared legal. Laws soon passed for the condemnation of such prizes. In June followed an act for the purchase and equipment of

twelve additional vessels of war. On the 7th of July, the different treaties existing with France were abrogated by Congress, as they had been repeatedly disregarded by the French authorities. A marine corps was authorized, on the 11th of July, in this year.

The war with France was not of long duration, and was confined entirely to the ocean. By different laws, enacted at successive periods, the American government was authorized, when hostilities began, to keep afloat a force of thirty cruisers, of which twelve were to be frigates. This squadron, however, did not as yet fully exist, and not one of the frigates was ready for sea. The population of the country had, meantime, risen to five millions, and the shipping increased to eight hundred thousand tons. The resources of the nation were consequently nearly twice what they had been when the war of Independence began.

The *Ganges* twenty-four, which had formerly been an Indiaman, was the first American man-of-war that left port in this contest. The *Constellation* thirty-eight and the *Delaware* twenty followed. The latter, commanded by Captain Decatur, made the first capture of the war, *Le Croyable*, a privateer of fourteen guns and seventy men. The equipment of national cruisers was pushed forward with such alacrity that, before the close of 1798, twenty-three sail were at sea, of which fourteen had been built expressly for the public service. The spirit of the people was so great meantime, that two frigates and five large sloops were building by subscription, in different ports. In the navy, both officers and men burned with a desire to distinguish themselves; so that, though discipline was new, and many difficulties yet to be overcome, the nation felt that its honour could safely be intrusted to its vessels of war.

The year 1799 had scarcely opened when this confidence in success was realized by the capture of the French frigate *L'Insurgente*, by Commodore Truxtun, in the *Constellation*



thirty-eight. As this was the first occasion, since the establishment of the federal navy, in which a national vessel had subdued one of equal force, the result filled the people with unbounded exultation. A beneficial result of this victory was to render the navy exceedingly popular, so that applications for midshipmen's warrants poured in on the department. Many officers, subsequently highly distinguished, were first rated at this time. A large number of merchantmen and several privateers were taken before the close of this year.

By the beginning of 1800, the American government had thirty-four men-of-war at sea. On the 1st of February, of this year, was fought the action between the *Constellation* thirty-eight, *Commodore Truxtun*, and the *La Vengeance* fifty-two, in which the latter drew off, apparently worsted, while the former, from her many injuries, was unable to give pursuit. In this year, *Lieutenant Hull* distinguished himself by cutting out the *Sandwich*, a British packet, lying in *Port au Platte*. *Lieutenant Shaw* also won much credit by several captures, one of his prizes being materially superior in force. *Lieutenant Charles Stewart* first rose into notice in this year, by his gallant exploits while cruising in the *West Indies*.

On the 3d of February, 1801, peace was concluded with France. Simultaneously, laws were passed, under an idea of mistaken economy, to reduce the navy; and, in this way, many vessels were discharged from the service, as well as numerous efficient officers.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE WAR WITH TRIPOLI.

AFTER the reduction of the navy, but fourteen vessels remained, of which three were forty-fours, four were thirty-eights, one was a thirty-six, one a thirty-two, four were twenty-eights, and one was a schooner carrying twelve guns. In some quarters, it was urged that the navy should be entirely abolished. This period may, therefore, be considered the crisis of its fate. Since 1801, instead of being further reduced, it has steadily increased.

The war with France had scarcely closed before hostilities became necessary with Tripoli. To prevent the piracies of Algiers, the American government, imitating the example of European ones, had consented to pay tribute. The Bashaw of Tripoli, learning the derogatory concessions made to his neighbours, set up similar claims, when it became necessary either to submit to fresh insults or to chastise this arrogance. The American government determined on the latter, and for this purpose a squadron was despatched to the Mediterranean; but, at first, its orders were confined to watch the Bashaw, and govern itself by circumstances. An attack on the schooner *Enterprise*, by a Tripolitan corsair, was the first overt act of the war. The corsair was captured, but afterwards released, nor were hostilities formally declared for some time subsequently. Commodore Dale, however, proceeded to blockade Tripoli, and captured several neutrals attempting to enter the harbour. Towards the close of the year, Dale returned to America.

Early in 1802, Congress authorized the capture and con-

demnation of Tripolitan vessels; and now the war may be said to have fairly begun. A second squadron, under the command of Commodore Morris, was despatched to the Mediterranean. The blockade of Tripoli continued to be maintained, and occasional encounters with the enemy's gun-boats occurred; but no decisive events took place. An attack made, on the 28th May, on the town and castle, failed; and an attempt, immediately after, to negotiate a peace, proved equally abortive. In November, 1813, Commodore Morris reached America, where his conduct of the war received general censure: he was ordered to a court-martial, which finding him guilty of the want of due diligence in annoying the enemy, he was dismissed the navy by the President. This penalty is generally considered to have been improperly severe.

The successor of Morris was Commodore Preble, and, under his conduct, the war speedily assumed a new aspect. Experience had taught the American government, that for the successful prosecution of hostilities, light vessels of the size of the *Enterprise* would be necessary; and accordingly, four of this description, two brigs and two schooners, accompanied Preble out. The loss of the frigate *Philadelphia*, which had run upon a rock off Tripoli, in the preceding October, and been captured, coupled with the slavery to which her officers and crew were known to be consigned, had exasperated the Americans to a high degree. Accordingly the utmost enthusiasm to meet the enemy was displayed on board Preble's squadron. In February, 1804, Lieutenant-commandant Decatur, having obtained permission of Preble, entered the harbour of Tripoli, set fire to the *Philadelphia*, and returned unharmed to the fleet: an enterprise that awakened the general applause of Europe.

A reinforcement having been despatched to the Mediterranean, Preble prepared for vigorous hostilities. The blockade of Tripoli had been continued unrelaxed, and several im-

portant captures had been made, yet the bashaw exhibited no signs of relenting. Preble, in consequence, determined to assault the town, and accordingly appeared before Tripoli, on the 25th of July, with one frigate, six brigs and schooners, two bomb-vessels, and six gun-boats. In the period of time between this and the 7th of September, the squadron made five different attacks upon the town, all conducted with the greatest intrepidity on the part of the assailants, and, though not resulting in the capture of the place, producing a wholesome terror of the American flag. The series of assaults was concluded on the night of the day last named, when the *Intrepid*, a fire-ship sent into the harbour, blew up with all on board. By this time the bashaw began to be disposed for peace. Hostilities were not, however, concluded until the 3d of June, 1805. In the interval, a combined land and naval attack on Tripoli had partially been executed, the latter under Captain John Rogers, the former under General Eaton, assisted by Hamet Caramilli, brother of the bashaw, and the rightful heir of the throne. It is believed that the timely interposition of peace alone prevented the success of this expedition and the dethronement of the usurper.

The war with Tripoli was the true cradle of the American navy. In it arose that *esprit de corps* which has ever since characterized the service of the United States, and which, it is to be hoped, will survive as long as the flag of freedom waves on the ocean.

## CHAPTER X.

## TO THE WAR OF 1812.

THE difficulty with Tripoli had scarcely been arranged, when it became necessary to send a squadron to Tunis, another of the Barbary powers, and guilty, like Tripoli, of depredations on American commerce. This fleet was the largest ever yet despatched to the Mediterranean, and was under the command of Commodore Rodgers. The Dey of Tunis, though at first refusing to conclude a peace, finally yielded, alarmed by this imposing force; and thus the difficulties with the Barbary powers were brought to a conclusion. The squadron in the Mediterranean was now reduced, though a few cruisers were still maintained in that sea.

In 1806, Congress passed an act authorizing the President to employ as many of the public vessels as he might consider necessary, but limiting the number of officers and seamen. By this act, the list of captains was increased to thirteen, that of the commanders to eight, and that of lieutenants to seventy-two. Meantime, however, there were no additions made to the number of vessels, except in the class of gun-boats, which were small craft, with a single gun, fit only for the navigation of harbours, bays, and sounds. The material which, in 1801, had been collected for building ships of the line, was now generally dispersed. The dock-yards were in a most inefficient condition; and all this in the face of a war in Europe, which involved the interests of commerce, and continually threatened to draw America into its vortex.

The preference exhibited by the administration for gun-boats, which, though first authorized in 1803, did not come

into general use until 1807, when fifty were afloat, gradually weakened the service. One of the worst consequences of this was, that officers, and especially seamen, became unaccustomed to large vessels, so that the frigates, when required for duty, were either delayed in getting to sea or sailed unprepared. An incident of this kind came near plunging the country into hostilities, in the summer of 1807. We allude to the attack on the Chesapeake by the British ship *Leopard*, and the surrender of the former, in consequence of being unfit for action.

The Chesapeake was lying at Washington, in May, 1807, preparing for a cruise, when the English minister informed the American government that three deserters from a British man-of-war had enlisted among the crew of the frigate. The American government, while repudiating the right to have deserters demanded of it, expressed its willingness to surrender the deserters as an act of courtesy to a friendly power; and accordingly ordered an investigation. The men, on inquiry, admitted the fact of being deserters, but claimed to have been originally impressed Americans, and a report was made to that effect. Here the matter dropped for the time. The Chesapeake, however, had scarcely sailed, and was still within sight of land, when a boat was sent from the British ship *Leopard*, which had been hovering in the offing, demanding the deserters. Commodore James Barron, whose flag-ship the Chesapeake was, promptly refused this demand. But no sooner had the boat returned to the *Leopard* than the latter proceeded to enforce her demand, opening a fire on the Chesapeake for that purpose.

The American frigate was in no condition to resist this attack. She was not only a weaker ship than the *Leopard*, but had sailed in so lumbered a condition, that when Barron, perceiving the hostile intentions of his adversary, ordered her to be cleared for action, it was found impossible to be effected; and the only gun fired from her deck was dis-

charged by a coal hastily brought from the galley, and applied by the fingers of Lieutenant Allen. Surrender, under such circumstances, was inevitable. The *Leopard*, after taking the three men in dispute, and another also claimed as a deserter, made sail; and the *Chesapeake*, by the unanimous advice of the officers, returned to Hampton Roads the same evening.

The storm of indignation raised by this outrage fell principally on Commodore Barron. He was tried by a court-martial, found guilty of neglect of duty, and suspended for five years, without pay or emoluments. The specific charge on which he was condemned was that, on being boarded by the *Leopard's* boat, he did not know that force was intended to be employed, and prepare for action immediately. But the demeanour of the boarding-officer, it appears, did not necessarily imply this; and the verdict is now generally considered to have been hasty and unjust. The real cause of this disgrace to our flag was the inefficient condition in which the *Chesapeake* put to sea; and this was not attributable, fairly, to Commodore Barron.

The American government, however, while it sacrificed Barron, did not forget to vindicate its character with England. Its remonstrances were so sharp that Admiral Berkeley, who had ordered the attack, was recalled, and the whole affair disavowed by the British cabinet. The captain of the *Leopard* was never again employed, it being considered that he had exceeded his instructions. In addition, the captured deserters, or such of them as survived, were delivered up.

The attack on the *Chesapeake* induced the President to call a special session of Congress. The popular feeling ran high against England, and, to a large portion of the people, a declaration of war would have been highly acceptable. The administration, however, chose a different policy. Believing the republic unable to resist the demand of England that American ships should be searched for deserters, and

unwilling to risk a war in order to produce the revocation of the British orders in council, by which neutral vessels were forbidden to carry the products of France, the President recommended that an embargo be laid against foreign commerce, in every port of the Union; and accordingly an act was passed to that effect. A more suicidal policy, perhaps, could not have been adopted. Nearly one hundred thousand seamen were thrown out of employment; the shipping interest generally was ruined; and the revenue, hitherto principally derived from imposts, fatally reduced. But the worst consequence of the measure was that its acknowledgment of weakness increased the presumption of Great Britain. Had the navy, instead of being neglected from 1804 to 1807, been steadily increased, the nation would have been in a condition to resent the late insult, and the embargo have become unnecessary.

The affair of the Chesapeake, however, by directing public attention to the weakness of the navy, created a popular sentiment that, reacting upon Congress, led to a correction of this evil in part. In 1809, an act was passed, directing the President to equip certain additional vessels, and to increase the number of officers and men. The result of this law was to raise the effective force of the navy to seven thousand persons; to withdraw the officers from the gun-boats, and to restore the ancient discipline of the service; in a word, to save the navy from entire disorganization. About the same period, the government turned its attention to the great lakes. Under the discretionary powers conferred on the President by the gun-boat act, orders were given for the construction of three vessels, one on Lake Ontario, and two on Lake Champlain.

Meantime, a season of comparative serenity succeeded the tempest of popular feeling which the affair of the Chesapeake had called forth. Great Britain, sorely pressed by Napoleon, then in the zenith of his power, exhibited little



disposition to come to an open rupture with the United States; nor was the latter country less disposed to avoid a war. The embargo act having been repealed, a non-intercourse system was adopted; but this, in turn, was abolished, and every restriction removed from commerce. Thus passed the years 1808, 1809, and 1810. During all this period, our national vessels were chiefly employed in cruising off the American coast. In the spring of 1811 occurred the unfortunate collision between the *President* and *Little Belt*, in which the latter, an English man-of-war, was seriously injured by a broadside from the former, discharged in the night, under a mistaken idea. The affair, after mutual explanations, was dropped by the respective governments; but it continued to rankle in the minds of the people, both in England and the United States.

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The hope, which had been indulged for some time, that Great Britain would repeal her orders in council which were so onerous to American commerce, became, in the spring of 1812, apparently tenable no longer. Added to this, a plot was discovered, on the part of English agents, to sever the New England States, if possible, from the Union. The result was, that Congress, on the 18th of June of this year, determined to put an end to the vacillating policy which had characterized the American government for so long a period, and accordingly declared war formally against Great Britain. The measure was one severely censured at the time, and certainly not defensible on the grounds usually taken. There was, in truth, no reason for declaring war in 1812 which had not existed for several years; but the people had, by this time, become irritated beyond endurance, and their voice expressing itself through Congress, hostilities were brought about in consequence, almost in direct opposition to the wish of government.

The conflict, thus invoked by the popular voice, found the navy of the United States, exclusive of gun-boats, consisting

of only seventeen efficient vessels, of which but eight were frigates. The President was so impressed with the impossibility of resisting, with this scanty force, the vast fleets of the enemy, that he seriously entertained the design of laying up the vessels in ordinary; and was only prevented from carrying it into execution by the energetic remonstrances of several eminent naval officers. The comparative weakness of the American national marine, at this period, may be estimated from a statement made by Mr. Cooper, who says that, when the war broke out, there were as many impressed Americans serving in the British navy as there were seamen in all the armed vessels of the United States.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE WAR OF 1812.

HOSTILITIES had scarcely begun when the country was electrified by news of a great victory at sea. On the 19th of August, the *Constitution*, commanded by Captain Hull, fell in with the *Guerriere*, an English frigate of slightly inferior force, and, after a conflict of only half an hour, compelled her to strike her flag. The long career of successes against the French, which had attended the British navy for nearly twenty years, had created a general belief in the invincibility of English men-of-war, a belief in which even Americans largely shared. The decisive character of the defeat which the *Guerriere* suffered created a reaction of opinion in this respect; and while it greatly raised the spirits of the American people, threw a lustre of glory around the American navy everywhere. The victory of the *Constitution* was followed by others of scarcely less importance. On

the 8th of October, the British sloop *Frolic*, of twenty-two guns, was captured by the American sloop *Wasp*, Captain Jones, of eighteen guns. On the 15th of the same month, the British frigate *Macedonian* was taken by Captain Decatur, in the American frigate the *United States*. Both these victories were chiefly won by the superior gunnery of the captors.

Meanwhile, the ocean swarmed with private cruisers, which had been fitted out immediately on the declaration of war. The destruction to British shipping was immense. Before Congress met, in November, no less than two hundred and fifty English vessels had been taken. These successes, on the part of the Americans, had been attended by comparatively few reverses. It is true that many merchant-vessels fell a prey to the British cruisers; but the number was far less than might have been expected. Only three national ships were lost up to the close of the year; and all these had been captured by vastly superior forces. Another brilliant triumph over the British flag, meantime, relieved these slight disasters. On the 25th of December, the *Constitution*, which had sailed on a second cruise, and was now commanded by Captain Bainbridge, fell in with the English frigate *Java*, and, after a well-contested battle, forced her to surrender.

The year 1813 opened with a naval victory scarcely less brilliant. On the 24th of February, the *Hornet* eighteen, commanded by Captain Lawrence, captured the British sloop-of-war *Peacock* eighteen, after a sharp but short action. The enemy's vessel was so much injured that she sank almost immediately, carrying down with her nine of her crew and three of that of the *Hornet*. The victorious ship had originally formed part of a squadron commanded by Commodore Bainbridge, and had remained on the coast of South America when the latter, after having captured the *Java*, had returned to the United States. The other vessel of the squadron, the *Essex* thirty-two, Captain Porter, was destined

to a career even more fortunate. Having missed his consorts at the appointed rendezvous, her commander boldly determined to enter the Pacific and cruise against the British whaling and other ships, of which a large and valuable fleet was known to be in that ocean. The success of Captain Porter even exceeded his expectations. He remained in the Pacific for more than a twelvemonth, during which he totally destroyed the commerce of the enemy in that quarter of the world, replenishing his ship, meantime, with stores taken from his prizes. At last, in March, 1814, he was captured in the harbour of Valparaiso, in defiance of neutral rights, by the *Phœbe* thirty-six and *Cherub* twenty-two, British men-of-war, which had been despatched into the Pacific for the sole purpose of reducing the *Essex*.

The successes of the *Constitution*, United States, and other vessels had inspired Congress, as well as the people, with confidence in the navy; and accordingly, early in 1813, measures were adopted increasing the number of ships in commission. In January, a law was passed to build four ships of the line and six frigates; and in March an additional force of six sloops-of-war was authorized. The keels of the former were immediately laid, but none were finished in time to be of service in the war; the first of the frigates not being launched until June, 1814, nor the first seventy-four until July of the same year. Most of the sloops, however, were completed before the close of 1813.

Hostilities had scarcely begun before the attention of the government was directed to the great lakes, which, it was always foreseen, would become the theatre of desperate conflicts between England and the United States. Vessels were accordingly purchased, and others built, on Champlain, Ontario, and Erie; while several brave and skilful young officers were appointed to commands in those waters. Several slight actions occurred before the close of 1812, in this quarter; but it was not until the following year that any decisive

conflict occurred. In August, 1813, Lieutenant Oliver Perry, commanding the American squadron on Lake Erie, gained a complete victory over the British fleet, commanded by Captain Barclay. The fruits of this triumph were not confined to the capture of the enemy's vessels, for, by this victory, Canada was laid open to invasion, and the battle of the Thames, won almost immediately after by Harrison, placed a large portion of that province at the mercy of the Americans.

The first serious check to this tide of success was received in June, 1813. On the first day of that month, the British frigate Shannon, thirty-eight, Captain Broke, appeared off Boston harbour, where the Chesapeake thirty-eight, commanded by Captain Lawrence, the hero of the Hornet, was then lying. The Chesapeake, though unfit to engage in battle, as events subsequently proved, immediately made sail. A furious conflict between the two ships, in sight of land, was the result. A mortal wound received by Captain Lawrence, the fall of most of his officers, and the mutinous character of a portion of his crew, caused the surrender of the American frigate. The result was heard with unbounded joy by the British nation. The victory on Lake Erie, however, which occurred soon after, relieved the depression which the loss of the Chesapeake had produced in the United States. The capture of the British brig Boxer, fourteen, by Lieutenant-Commandant Burrows, in the Enterprise fourteen, also assisted to restore the public confidence. Meantime, however, the enemy were hovering, in great force, about the waters of the Chesapeake, seeking to do what damage they could, but unable to effect little beyond predatory landings at various points. An attack on Craney Island, which was intended as something serious, was promptly repulsed. While the Southern waters were thus vexed, another fleet entered Long Island Sound, where, however, they did no damage, except blockading the United

States, Macedonian, and Hornet, in the harbour of New London.

The year 1814 was distinguished by naval successes not less solid and brilliant than those of preceding seasons. In April, the Peacock eighteen, Captain Washington, took the Epervier, of equal force. In June, the Wasp eighteen, Captain Blakely, captured the Reindeer eighteen, Captain Manners. On the 1st of September, the Wasp made prize of another British cruiser, the Avon eighteen, Captain Arbuthnot. The crowning victory of the year, however, was that of Lieutenant-Commandant McDonough, who, at the head of the American squadron on Lake Champlain, completely overthrew the British fleet, though of superior force, on the 11th of September. By this decisive victory, the invasion of the State of New York, which the enemy had not only projected, but partially carried into execution, was frustrated; and that wealthy and populous commonwealth delivered from the presence of an unlicensed foe. No naval success during the whole war created more enthusiasm than this fruitful triumph. Almost simultaneous with this victory was the repulse of the British fleet at Fort McHenry, below Baltimore, by which that city, the fourth in the Union, was saved from conquest and contribution.

The close of the year beheld the attack on New Orleans. In the preliminary defence of that city, the naval force took a conspicuous part, and, by retarding the approaches of the enemy, allowed General Jackson time to organize his army, complete his fortifications, and arouse the spirit of the neighbouring country. The gun-boats, at this crisis, proved of eminent service, under the skilful direction of Master-Commandant Patterson.

Though peace was declared early in 1815, the intelligence was some time in reaching the American men-of-war, scattered, as they were, over the entire globe. In consequence of this, more than one important capture occurred after the

treaty had been signed. The most decisive of these was the reduction of the *Cyane* twenty-four and *Levant* eighteen by the *Constitution*, now commanded by Captain Stewart. Soon after, this fortunate American frigate was beset at Port Praya, by an entire squadron of the enemy; but, through the skill of her commander, managed to escape them all. In March, the *Hornet*, now commanded by Captain Biddle, captured the *Penguin* eighteen. This was the last regular action of the war.

In January of this year, the American flag had suffered a serious reverse in the capture of the *President* forty-four, Captain Decatur. But as the victory had been achieved by an entire British squadron, after a hot chase, in which Captain Decatur long struggled against great odds, the disaster was regarded as more honourable than disgraceful to the navy.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### TO THE WAR WITH MEXICO.

THE reputation of the American navy was greatly increased by the war of 1812. The brilliant manner in which our ships had been handled during the hostilities with France, and the dashing exploits of Decatur, Somers, and Stewart, in the disputes with Tripoli, had early attracted the attention of Europe. But when the British flag, hitherto uniformly victorious at sea, was compelled to strike to our own, the effect on public opinion abroad proved unprecedented. The American navy became immediately the theme of general applause. The bravery and skill of the American seamen were everywhere extolled.

Something of this rapture, indeed, was attributable to the

envy, with which the maritime ascendancy of Great Britain was generally regarded. But, even after making great allowances, much remained which might be legitimately extolled. In every action, the American ships had been manœuvred in a superior style; in every action, the gunnery of the American seamen had been more skilful than that of their competitors. The frigate conflicts had, with barely one exception, resulted in favour of the Americans; and that exception had been determined in part by accident, in part by treachery. The only occasions on which squadrons had been engaged had been on Lakes Erie and Champlain; and in both engagements the British had been compelled to strike to an inferior force. Our triumphs, too, as a general rule, had been decisive. The *Guerriere* had been literally cut to pieces; so, also, had the *Peacock*; while both the *Java* and *Macedonian*, though less seriously injured, had been made wrecks for the time.

The British journalists attempted to explain the defeats their flag had suffered, by asserting that the American ships had been manned by picked crews; and more than one British historian has subsequently endorsed this libel. Only one vessel, however, is known to have enjoyed this advantage. That vessel was the *Constitution*. But even this frigate was manned, in her first and most celebrated battle, not by a picked, but by a very ordinary crew. Others of the most hardly-contested actions of the war were won by ships' companies that were even worse than common. This was particularly the case at Lake Champlain. Neither had the officers, in general, enjoyed much experience. The success of our navy is to be attributed, therefore, to the moral qualities of the American people: to their aptitude for the sea, to their confidence in a just cause, and to the high spirit of a republican nation.

The close of the war found the navy in a state of great efficiency. It was popular with the people, a favourite with



Congress, the pride and boast of its officers and seamen. The ships, instead of being neglected, as had happened after the French and Tripolitan wars, were maintained in all their efficiency; while, at different periods, additions were made to their number. Most of the two-deckers at present in the navy were constructed during the generation immediately following the war of 1812. Large accumulations of timber and other materials were made, and dry-docks built at the most important stations. The gun-boat system was silently abolished, and the federal funds confined to the erection of sloops-of-war, frigates, and line-of-battle ships.

Peace had no sooner been concluded with England than the American government turned its attention to Algiers, one of the Barbary powers, which had taken advantage of the war just closed to oppress our commerce in the Mediterranean. A fleet of ten sail, under the command of Decatur, was despatched to chastise the offender. The commodore arrived at Algiers on the 28th of June, 1815, and, before two days elapsed, had extorted a treaty, at the cannon's mouth, from the piratical dey. The squadron then proceeded to Tunis and Tripoli in turn, with reclamations on those powers for injuries inflicted on our marine during the late contest; and, at both places, redress was promptly obtained. Decatur now returned to the United States, and was succeeded by Commodore Bainbridge, at the head of a fleet of nineteen sail,—the largest which had, up to that time, ever appeared in the Mediterranean bearing the American flag.

The republic being now at peace with the whole world, the navy was divided into four squadrons, destined respectively for the Mediterranean, Pacific, Brazil, and West Indies. In 1841, a home-squadron was created, to cruise on the coast of the United States. By this method, the dignity of the nation is maintained in all parts of the world, and American commerce everywhere protected. The various squadrons are absent from two to three years. That which is destined for

the Pacific, frequently, however, remains longer in service, having, as part of its duty, to circumnavigate the globe. The vessels are changed, periodically, from one station to another, and the officers are distributed in like manner; and thus as much efficiency as can be obtained by a nation at peace is secured for the service.

Stimulated by the examples of Great Britain and France, Congress was induced to fit out an exploring expedition, to make a voyage around the globe. The scheme, as projected at first, was of the most comprehensive character. But motives of economy led to serious curtailments before the plan was carried into execution, and the squadron which was at last despatched was scarcely worthy of so great a nation. The success of the expedition, notwithstanding this parsimony, was decided. Many important discoveries in geography were made, and, among others, that of a vast antarctic continent. The scientific corps who attended the squadron added materially to the general stock of knowledge respecting natural history in all its departments. On the return of the little fleet, Lieutenant Wilkes, the chief in command, wrote an elaborate narrative, which was published by the government, in several volumes, filled with plates. Copies of the work were then presented to the various powers with which the United States was in terms of amity. This scientific expedition was scarcely less valuable, as a means of elevating the character of the American navy, than the victories of the war of 1812 had been. The latter established its prowess in battle; the former proved its adventurous spirit of discovery.

With the application of steam to ocean navigation, attention began to be directed to war-steamers, and several vessels of this character were constructed by government as experiments. For many years prior to the war with Mexico the chief additions to the navy were of this kind. Subsequently, numerous steamers were built by private capital,

under contracts for carrying the mails to foreign ports, with the stipulation that, in the event of war, they should be placed at the disposal of the United States.

It having been thought that naval architecture was declining in America, several specimen sloop-of-war were directed to be constructed, in order that the most successful one should be used subsequently as a model. In these various ways the efficiency of the navy has been endeavoured to be maintained.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE WAR WITH MEXICO.

THE war with Mexico, which broke out in 1846, had been preceded by such a state of feeling between that power and the United States, that the latter had considered it advisable to keep a much larger fleet than usual in the Gulf. Accordingly, a heavy squadron had been concentrated there, under command of Commodore Conner. When hostilities actually began, a strict blockade of Vera Cruz, the chief seaport of the enemy, was instituted, and maintained throughout the autumn of 1846 and the winter of 1847. Tampico, Alvarado, and Tuspan, Mexican towns lying on the coast, were captured during this period, by the fleet.

The Pacific squadron, meantime, was not idle. Intelligence of the war had no sooner reached Commodore Sloat, in command of this fleet, than he resolved to make a descent on the more important ports of the enemy, scattered along the Californian coast. Accordingly, he seized Monterey. Soon after, however, he was relieved by Commodore Stockton. But the latter continued to prosecute the bold designs of his

predecessor, and, in August, 1846, in conjunction with some land forces under Colonel Fremont, captured Los Angeles, the capital of California, and reduced the entire province to subjection. One of the first acts of the administration, when the war broke out, had been to plan an expedition against California; but Sloat, Stockton, and Fremont, with the energy characteristic of American officers, anticipated the scheme, as we have seen.

The fleet soon after departing, in order to guard the interests of American commerce elsewhere, the province rose in insurrection. Fortunately, Stockton was still within recall. Returning to the vicinity of Los Angeles, the commodore debarked a portion of his men, and soon gained decisive advantages over the enemy. In December, he was joined by General Kearny, at the head of a detachment of American soldiers, who had left the Mississippi soon after the declaration of hostilities, and made a forced march across the continent. In two well-contested battles, fought on the 8th and 9th of January, 1847, the Californians were finally reduced to subjection, by the combined land and naval forces, under Kearny and Stockton.

Simultaneous with the expedition by Kearny, a regiment of volunteers, commanded by Colonel Stevenson, had been despatched to California, by way of Cape Horn. These soldiers had been enlisted with great care, so as to secure a body of robust and industrious men; for it was arranged that, after having conquered California, they should remain and settle there. The regiment reached its destination at an opportune moment, and was of signal benefit in overawing the province, which made no further attempts, after the arrival of Colonel Stevenson, to repudiate the rule of the United States.

While the navy had been winning these laurels on the Pacific coast, it had not been idle in the Gulf of Mexico. Towards the close of 1846, the administration having resolved on the capture of Vera Cruz, an army of twelve thou-

sand men was collected, under the command of Major-general Scott, at the mouth of the Rio Grande. Early in March, the troops embarked in transports from the island of Lobos, and arrived at Antonio Lizardo. The two following days were spent in reconnoitring the coast, in order to select a suitable spot for a landing. In this service Commodore Conner, who had concentrated his fleet to assist in the siege, lent his valuable counsels to General Scott. On the 9th, the debarkation took place, at a point below the town. While the troops were being transferred from the transports, the gunboats and steamers of the squadron stood close in, to cover them in case the enemy should show himself on the sand-hills. The landing, however, was effected without resistance.

In the siege that followed, the navy distinguished itself especially. The squadron kept up an almost incessant bombardment on the castle of San Juan de Ulloa. Parties of seamen, also, were landed, with heavy breaching-cannon from the ships, and, taking up positions in the trenches, did infinite damage to the foe. The navy and army, indeed, ran a race of generous rivalry, each striving to surpass the other in deeds of courage and heroism. About this time, Commodore Conner was superseded by Commodore Perry; so that the glory that was won should be divided between the two: the first having deserved renown for arranging the preliminaries, while the latter obtained it by sharing in the actual triumph.

This was the last occasion in which the navy enjoyed the opportunity of distinguishing itself during the war. The Mexicans having neither national ships nor a mercantile marine, there was no room for a repetition of the brilliant feats at sea which had dazzled the world in 1812. A few insignificant captures of vessels bearing the enemy's flag were made; but no action, worthy of the name, occurred. It had been expected, when hostilities began, that the Mexican government would commission privateers, in order to prey upon our extended commerce; but, though it made

numerous offers, none were taken up, and the war was thus practically restricted to a struggle on land.

While Upper California, as we have said, remained in quiet subjection, Lower California was less contented with its new masters. The entire force of the Americans, in this province, did not reach a thousand, while the Mexicans, rallying, brought five thousand into the field. Under these circumstances the war was carried on principally at sea. The chief ports were blockaded. Detachments were landed at favourable points, as occasion demanded, and in the skirmishes thereby ensuing, the American seamen were usually victorious. Wherever garrisons had been left, at the time of the rising, they maintained themselves against the insurgents, regardless of odds. At San Jose, Lieutenant Haywood, with seventy sailors and marines, held out against a force of five thousand guerillas for twenty-one days,—a feat worthy to be recorded in the annals of the Paladins.

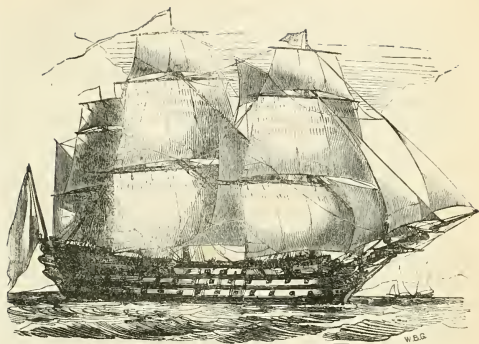
In 1850, Mr. Grinnell, a merchant of New York, offered, if government would man the ships, to purchase and fit out two vessels, in order to search for Sir John Franklin, an English navigator, who, in 1845, had sailed on a voyage of arctic discovery, but had not returned. The generous tender was accepted. The officers of the navy rivalled each other in volunteering for the expedition; and their example was imitated by the men. In the spring of 1850, the vessels left New York, commanded by Lieutenant De Haven, on their perilous enterprise. They remained absent until the autumn of 1851. Though failing to reach the lost navigator, they made many valuable discoveries; so that the time consumed was not uselessly wasted. The perils that were surmounted almost surpass belief. During their absence, the ships encountered an English expedition despatched on a similar errand, when the superior daring of the Americans, amid the dangers that surrounded both, extorted a public confession from their generous rivals.





CAPTAIN NICHOLAS BIDGLEY.





LINE-OF BATTLE SHIP.

## NICHOLAS BIDDLE.

SOME men become famous by a career of brilliant deeds, and some by an early and melancholy martyrdom. Nicholas Biddle is an example of one combining both these claims to the remembrance of his countrymen. After a dazzling succession of exploits, he was blown up in the Randolph frigate, while heroically engaged with a vessel nearly double his own in size; and by this untimely fate, his name has been rendered as immortal as the cause for which he died.

Nicholas Biddle was born at Philadelphia, on the 10th of September, 1750. His paternal grandfather, William Biddle, was one of the most influential and wealthy of the early settlers of New Jersey. On the maternal side, the subject of this memoir was a grandson of Nicholas Scull, for many years surveyor-general of the colony of Pennsylvania. Young Biddle received the rudiments of an ordinary educa-

tion, but was prevented by his passion for the sea from completing a very extended course of study. Before he had attained his fourteenth year, he embarked in that profession to which he devoted, without intermission, the remainder of his years.

His first voyage was made to Quebec. In the following year, 1765, he sailed from Philadelphia to Jamaica and the bay of Honduras. This voyage was an important one to the young sailor, for it first developed those qualities for which he afterwards became famous. His vessel left the bay of Honduras towards the close of December, 1765, bound to Antigua. Scarcely had it reached the open sea, however, before one of those terrific hurricanes which ravage that coast arose. The wind blew with an appalling violence, such as the young seaman had never imagined, much less witnessed; while the lightning blazed incessantly, and heaven and sea rocked under the roar of thunderbolts. In similar gales many a gallant ship has gone down, of which no intelligence has ever been received. The vessel in which Biddle was embarked was more fortunate; but she struck a shoal, and for a while her crew thought her irretrievably lost. The ship, however, hung together, and on examination it was found she had been cast away on what are called the Northern Triangles. For two days and nights the men remained upon the wreck, but, at last, fearing she would go to pieces, they took to their yawl, the long-boat being lost, and made for the nearest land, a small, uninhabited island, about three miles distant from the reef where they had struck. The ocean was still violently convulsed. The slight craft in which they had embarked now rose almost perpendicularly on the billows, now plunged headlong into the trough of the sea; but they manfully struggled on, keeping her head to the surges, and bailing out the water she shipped. Frequently one or another of the men was ready to give out, but the rest urged him to persevere, until finally they gained

solid ground. Among the most resolute and energetic in this emergency was young Biddle, then only in his sixteenth year.

But the trials of the crew were not yet ended. Now began one of those scenes which so frequently occur to those who "go down to the sea in ships," but which have no parallel, or but rare ones, on land. Some provisions having been procured from the wreck after the swell from the late storm had subsided, the crew remained for several days on the island, refitting their boat and arranging their plans. The yawl being too small to carry off all, it became necessary to leave a portion behind, but they were loath to do this, and hoped that succour might appear. At last the provisions being nearly exhausted, it became necessary to come to a decision. Accordingly it was resolved that lots should be cast to determine who should remain, and this being done, it fell to Biddle and three others to be left. With heavy hearts the four mariners saw their comrades put off, and, standing together on the shore, watched the boat as it grew less and less in the distance, until finally it faded away on the blue horizon. Then, after silently regarding each other, they turned to look upon their island. It was bare, rocky, almost verdureless, a hopeless and uninviting desert. For two months, Biddle and his companions remained on this deserted spot, exposed to every inclemency of the weather, and frequently suffering for water and provisions. During this interval, various efforts were made by their late comrades, who had safely reached port, to send to their relief, but every attempt for a while proved abortive, until hope began to die within the bosoms of Biddle and his companions. At last the glad spectacle of a sail was seen on the distant sea-board; it grew larger and larger: it was evidently approaching the island. Signals were hoisted immediately by the sufferers, who very soon had the inexpressible pleasure of beholding the vessel make towards them, and send a boat

ashore. In a few minutes they stood on her deck, and discovered she had been despatched to their rescue. In the trying emergencies of the shipwreck, and in the depressing scenes that succeeded, young Biddle had behaved with a coolness, courage, and endurance far beyond his years. Already his older shipmates deferred to him as one born to command; already they prophesied the future greatness of the hero.

Biddle now made several voyages to Europe, by which he added to his knowledge of his profession. The mercantile marine, however, did not entirely satisfy his wishes: he had read of Blake, Vernon, and the other great admirals of English history; and he longed for an opportunity to rival the deeds of those immortal seamen. Accordingly, in 1770, when war was threatened between Great Britain and Spain, in consequence of the dispute about the Falkland Islands, he embarked for London, intending, if possible, to enter the English navy. He carried with him a letter of introduction from Thomas Willing, at that time an influential merchant in Philadelphia, to his brother-in-law, Captain Sterling, the commander of a national ship. Through this epistle he succeeded in obtaining the appointment of midshipman; and in that capacity served for some time under Captain Sterling. The dispute with Spain being accommodated, he desired a more active sphere, and therefore in 1773 threw up his commission, in order to embark, as a sailor before the mast, in the expedition then fitting out under Captain Phipps, to search for the North-west passage. He had first endeavoured to obtain the permission of Captain Sterling to join the expedition, but that officer, being unwilling to part with him, refused to yield assent, on which young Biddle laid aside his uniform, and entered on board the *Carcass*, one of the two ships fitting out for the enterprise. It is related of our hero, that when he first appeared on his new ship, a seaman who had known him before, and who supposed he had

been disgraced, came to offer his sympathies; but what was his astonishment when he learned the truth, and heard that the young officer had voluntarily assumed this inferior position in order to share the renown of the expedition! It is a curious circumstance that Lord Nelson, then a youth of Biddle's age, embarked on this voyage under precisely similar circumstances. It is said that both were appointed coxswains, a striking proof that merit cannot be concealed.

The history of the expedition is one of privation, endurance, and heroism beyond what is ordinary for mortals. The search for a North-west passage had then just begun, and the seas visited by the navigators were almost unknown. With intrepid perseverance, however, the ships advanced, surmounting difficulties that would have appalled common explorers, until they reached the latitude of eighty-one degrees and thirty-nine minutes, or within nine degrees of the pole. In that high northern region, the sun in summer never sets, but, like a ball of fire, revolves just above the horizon. The cold was intense. Huge mountains of ice covered the chilled ocean far and near, grinding and crashing together, when they drifted into contact, with a sound like thunder. The sky was bleak and forbidding, even in clear weather; but, when snow squalls arose, wild and alarming. With sounds and sights like these, our young hero became familiar. At one time the vessels, for five days, were entirely surrounded by icebergs, and even the most sanguine began to doubt if they could escape. During this protracted period there was scarcely a minute in which the ships were not in imminent danger of being crushed to pieces; and no prospect could have been more terrible than to see two huge mountains of ice, hundreds of feet high, slowly approaching on either side of the apparently doomed vessels. Biddle, it is said, kept a journal of this voyage, but it was never published, and was subsequently lost with him in the *Randolph*.

When the expedition of Phipps returned to England, affairs

between the colonies and mother country had grown so alarming that a collision was daily expected. In this emergency, Biddle hastened to his native soil, eager to offer his sword to the cause of American freedom. He reached Philadelphia in 1775. His reputation had preceded him, and he was almost immediately appointed to the command of the *Camden*, a galley which had been fitted out to defend the Delaware river. This service did not, however, please him, being too inactive for his ardent and adventurous soul. Up to this period there had been no national marine, but numerous captures had been made by vessels commissioned by Massachusetts and by General Washington. The first movement of Congress, in favour of a continental navy, was made on the 13th of October, 1775, by the passage of an act authorizing the fitting out of two swift-sailing vessels, one of ten, and the other of fourteen guns. A brig and sloop were in consequence purchased, and ordered to cruise to the eastward to intercept supplies intended for the British army in Boston; but it does not appear that they went to sea at this time. On the 30th of the same month, a ship of thirty-six guns, and another of twenty, were directed to be provided. Hitherto Congress had only legalized the seizure of ships with royal supplies: but the depredations of the enemy now produced a general prize law, authorizing the capture of all British vessels in any manner connected with the pending struggle. This was followed, on the 13th of December ensuing, by an act authorizing a fleet of thirteen sail, among which were to be five of thirty-two guns, five of twenty-eight, and three of twenty-four. This may be considered the germ of the American navy. The command of the little squadron was bestowed on Ezekiel Hopkins, with the official title of Commander-in-chief. Two brigs had been purchased in the mean time, by the marine committee of Congress, under the general powers confided to them, and these were now added to the force under Hopkins. To the command of one

of these brigs, the *Andrew Doria*, Biddle was appointed at his own solicitation; and, in the latter part of February, accompanied the squadron to sea, on an expedition against New Providence, where valuable stores invited an invasion.

During the passage the small-pox broke out in the fleet, which was manned principally by seamen from New England. The crew of Biddle, being from Philadelphia, had been inoculated for the disease, and were therefore free from danger; accordingly, Biddle took on board, from the other vessels, great numbers of the sick, whom he and his men tended with assiduous care. Every part of his vessel was crowded with the sufferers; even the long-boat was prepared for their accommodation; and Biddle, surrendering his own cot to a sick midshipman, slept on the lockers. In this condition the squadron arrived at New Providence. Fortunately for the invaders, no suitable preparations had been made for resistance, and in consequence the place fell an easy prey, though the governor, having been warned in time of the purpose of the expedition, had managed to remove most of the powder the night preceding the surrender. Nearly a hundred cannon, however, besides considerable stores, were captured by the Americans. The squadron continued at New Providence until the 17th of March. During this interval the crew of the *Andrew Doria*, from their crowded situation, became sick, and soon there were not men enough capable of doing duty to man the boats. When the fleet sailed for New London, there were still so many of Biddle's crew ill, that he could not properly fight his batteries. Nevertheless, when, on the 6th of April, the squadron fell in with the *Glasgow*, a British ship of superior force to any one of the American vessels, the *Andrew Doria* took her share in the action, until the enemy managed to escape by his swiftness, after seriously injuring the *Alfred* and *Cabot*, the two nearest ships of Commodore Hopkins.

Having refitted at New London, Biddle received orders to

sail to the Banks of Newfoundland, that he might intercept the transports and storeships bound to Boston, at that time still occupied by the royal troops. The cruise that followed was one of the most brilliant of the whole war. The *Andrew Doria* carried but fourteen guns of small calibre, and was manned by less than a hundred persons, yet, before she reached the Banks, she had captured two transports, with four hundred Highland troops on board. Pursuing his voyage, Biddle took so many British merchantmen, that when, soon after, he returned to the Delaware, but five of his original crew remained with him, the rest having been distributed in prizes, and their places supplied by volunteers from the prisoners. The *Andrew Doria* was so crowded with the latter, that for several nights before Biddle entered the Capes, he never left the deck. His gallantry during this cruise made his name at once famous; and Congress rewarded him almost immediately with the command of the *Randolph*, a fine frigate of thirty-two guns.

With his usual activity he hastened to prepare his ship for sea, and in February, 1777, sailed from Philadelphia on a cruise. He had been out but a few days, when, in a heavy gale of wind, all the masts of the *Randolph* went overboard. Owing to the scarcity of American seamen, Biddle had been forced to complete his crew with some British prisoners, who had expressed a desire to serve; and these now resolved to seize the ship, which they thought would fall an easy prey in her present helpless condition. The plot was accordingly attempted to be put in execution. The mutineers, giving three cheers, rushed at the officers. But in this emergency, the decision and heroism of Biddle saved his ship. Rallying around him his officers and such of the crew as remained faithful, he rushed boldly in among the malcontents, seized the ringleaders, and crushed the mutiny. The *Randolph* now pursued her course to Charleston, whither she had borne away after her disaster. Having refitted at this port, as



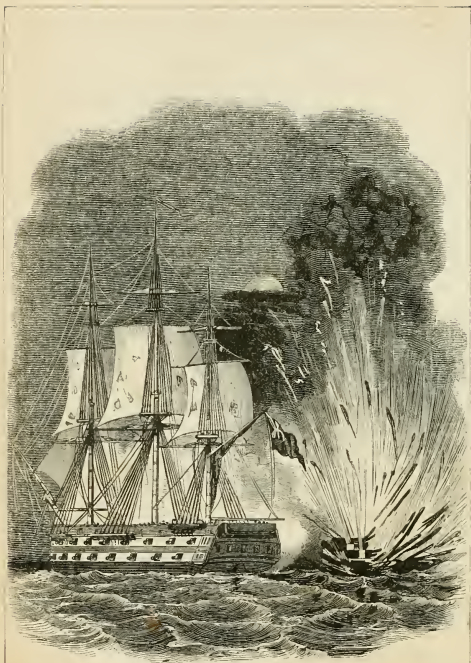
speedily as possible, she resumed her cruise, and three days after, encountered four sail, bound from Jamaica to London. One of these vessels, the *True Briton*, mounted twenty guns, and was commanded by a conceited officer, who had frequently expressed a wish to meet an American armed vessel, and had boasted of the ease with which he would capture the rebel. But now, on seeing the *Randolph*, he made all sail in flight. Biddle gave chase, and overhauled the fugitive, who, finding he could not escape, hove to and opened a cannonade. The *Randolph*, however, coolly continued her course, until close upon the enemy, when she prepared for a broadside. At this the British captain hauled down his colours. Biddle now went in pursuit of the other vessels, and by the superior swiftness of his frigate succeeded in capturing each of the three in turn. Having secured his prizes, all of which proved to be valuable, he returned to Charleston, having been absent but a week. He was received, on landing, with acclamations. His name was repeated, far and near, as that of a hero, men comparing him with the great naval captains of England. The legislature bestowed on him substantial marks of its favour. Volunteers, crowding to his quarters, solicited the privilege of following him in the path of victory. He was already, though not yet twenty-seven, at the pinnacle of human glory.

In the early part of February, 1778, Biddle put to sea again, accompanied by four smaller sail. His intention was to capture a squadron of four vessels, led by the *Carysfort* frigate, which had been cruising off the mouth of Charleston harbour, to the great detriment of its trade. Not finding the enemy in the expected position, Biddle stood to the eastward in hopes yet to meet him. On the second day out he retook a dismantled ship from New England; as she was without a cargo, he removed her crew, armament, and stores, and then set her on fire. Having convinced himself, after a few days' cruise, that the squadron he sought had left the coast, he

proceeded to the West Indies, where, in the vicinity of Barbadoes, he captured an English schooner bound from New York to Grenada. He also boarded a number of French and Dutch vessels, knowing they would give information of his presence to the enemy, for he sought, rather than avoided, an attack. "As to any thing that carries her guns upon one deck," he said to his officers, "I think myself a match for her." At last, on the 7th of March, when the Randolph had been out about a month, a sail was seen to windward at three P. M., on which signals were made from the commodore for the squadron to haul upon a wind, in order to speak the stranger. At four she was made out to be a large ship. At seven, the Randolph being to windward, hove to, which example the Moultrie, the second ship in the little fleet, imitated, she being at the time about one hundred and fifty yards astern, and to leeward. At eight the strange sail had approached near enough to throw a shot ahead of the Moultrie and hail her. Immediately afterwards she hauled her wind, and hailed the Randolph. It was now seen, for the first time, that the stranger was a two-decker, and wore British colours. Some of those on board the Randolph spoke of flight. "No," said the heroic Biddle, "we will fight. If we can run alongside and board her, victory may be ours in spite of her superior size."

The night had now closed in, and though the sky was full of clouds, the moon struggled occasionally into view, throwing a dim haze around. While this conversation was held, the enemy had been ranging up on the weather quarter of the Randolph. Biddle now directed the American flag to be hoisted, and at the same instant poured a broadside into the foe. It was returned by the enemy, when the action became general. For a while the consorts of the Randolph could render her no assistance, for she lay so close to her gigantic adversary, that a shot fired at one was almost sure to endanger the other. The battle, therefore, was almost entirely





EXPLOSION OF THE RANDOLPH.

between the frigate and the line-of-battle ship. At last the stern of the enemy being clear of the Randolph, the Moultrie opened her fire; but soon after, the foe shot ahead, bringing the Randolph between them, on which a broadside from the Moultrie went through her consort. Biddle was wounded in the thigh by this discharge, and for a moment great confusion prevailed on board. But ordering a chair to be brought on the quarter-deck, the heroic leader kept his post, and soon restored confidence to his men.

The battle now became fiercer than ever. The crew of the Randolph, aware of the desperate nature of the contest, fought with the fury of lions at bay, firing three broadsides to the enemy's one. Notwithstanding this rapidity, however, the aim of the Americans was generally true, as was soon betokened by spar after spar crashing on the side of the foe. Animated by the crippled condition of the British ship, the crew of the Randolph rent the air with cheers. Meantime the consorts of the American frigate, unable to participate in the struggle, watched its progress with intense anxiety. A thick bank of smoke had by this time partially concealed the combatants from sight, though the position of the Randolph was known by the girdle of flame in which she moved. Suddenly a stream of fire of the most intense brightness shot upwards from her deck: spars and masts were hurled towards the sky; and a stunning explosion followed, as if a thousand broadsides had been let off simultaneously. The vessels of the squadron reeled from truck to keelson, while the very firmament appeared to tremble. The Randolph had blown up. Soon a dark cloud of smoke settled over the spot lately occupied by the devoted frigate, while, through the gloom, a pattering was heard as of bodies falling on the water. When the first moments of awe and horror had passed, and the murky vapour had cleared off from above the wreck, a hundred anxious eyes were turned in that direction, to see if any signs of the heroic Biddle or his

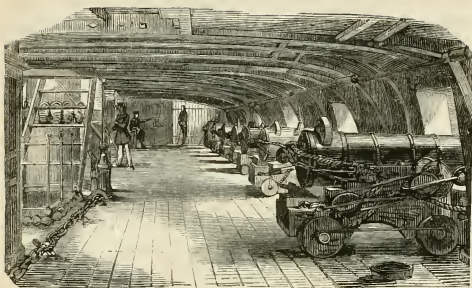
crew could be detected. The moon, wading sadly through the clouds, threw a ghastly light upon the scene, but not a single living being was visible on the dark expanse of waters.

The cause of this disaster was never discovered. At the time, none of the crew of the Randolph were picked up, though search was made for some hours, in the vicinity of the explosion. The Moultrie, and other ships of the squadron, finding they could be of no service, hastened from the scene; and the enemy, who proved to be the Yarmouth sixty-four, was too much crippled to give chase. Four days subsequently, this vessel, cruising in the vicinity of the disaster, rescued four men from a piece of wreck; they were the only survivors of a crew of three hundred and fifteen. Even they could give no clue to the mystery of the explosion. It is said that Biddle, just before he sailed, cautioned all the ships of the squadron, "in case of coming to action in the night, to be careful of the magazines," and this has been supposed to intimate his knowledge of some defect in that important part of a man-of-war; but we can see no force in this suggestion, especially as his remark applied to all the ships as well as to the Randolph. It is useless, indeed, to speculate on what produced the disaster. A chance shot, a spark dropped in the magazine, or any other of a dozen causes may have led to the explosion.

Biddle, at the period of his untimely death, was engaged to a young lady of Charleston, and the marriage was to have taken place on his return from this cruise. His melancholy fate threw a gloom over a large circle of personal friends. His amiable disposition, his mild manners, his strong sense of religious and moral duty, his habitually cheerful conversation, and many other inviting and estimable qualities, had made him loved wherever he was known, so that he was deplored not only as a hero, but as a man. In the navy he stood, at that time, without a rival. Brave to excess, a master of his profession, tempering the rigour of discipline by his

affability, he attained a popularity with his men never excelled, unless perhaps by Decatur. In his early death the nation mourned the loss of one of her most promising heroes. Like the young eagle which has just begun to breast the storm, and which falls transfixed by a thunder-bolt, he was struck down at the very outset of his career, as if Fame feared he would mount above herself!

In person Biddle was about five feet nine inches high, remarkably handsome, strong, and active.



INTERIOR VIEW OF THE GUN-DECK OF A VESSEL-OF-WAR.

## JOHN PAUL JONES.

If ever there was a man in modern times in whom there dwelt the soul of a sea-king, that man was the celebrated John Paul Jones. Descended from a family long settled on the eastern coast of Scotland, where, centuries ago, colonies of Norwegians established themselves, it is not improbable that there flowed in his veins some of the blood of those ancient bucanears. His character certainly favours the idea. He possessed all the instincts of that terrible race. He had the thirst for adventure, the reckless activity, and the indomitable and unapproachable bravery which distinguished the bold rover, who, in the ninth and tenth centuries, ravaged the shores of England and France. He has been usually represented as an American in heart; but this was not so, for he belonged to no land, no flag, no people. The sea only was his country. Wherever glory was to be won, or the excitement of battle to be braved, there he had his home, the





JOHN PAUL JONES.



master-spirit of the hour, riding and controlling the tempest of death.

And yet, in one sense, his fame is the property of the United States. He hoisted the first American flag on board an American man-of-war. He won the most brilliant naval victory in the contest for independence. He contributed more than any other individual to establish the reputation of the American marine in Europe. Moreover, during the period he was in the employment of Congress, he devoted his entire energies to the cause in which he was embarked; and if America had been engaged in other wars in which to win renown, and he had been flattered with a high commission, he would never have left her flag. But he could ill brook the inactivity that followed the peace of 1783, and, when the Empress of Russia offered to make him an admiral, the tempting bait could not be resisted; he left the service of the United States, and entered that of Catharine. From that hour he ceased to belong wholly to American history. He fell from the lofty position of a patriot, fighting for the cause of liberty and his adopted country, and sank into that of a mere adventurer of the seas, whose sword was open to every mercenary bidder. His character cannot, therefore, be contemplated with that reverence, mingled with admiration, with which we regard that of Decatur, and patriots of similar exalted stamp. To them it would have been an insult to propose shedding blood for money. They drew their blades for country, not merely for glory or for pay. Paul Jones fades away before them into a lower and less glorious orbit, where he shines with a lustre that pales before that of his more majestic rivals.

This extraordinary man was the son of a gardener of Arbigland, in the parish of Kirkbean, and was born, it is believed, some time in the month of July, 1747. His paternal name was Paul, and his ancestors, until within the preceding generation, had lived on the shores of the Frith of Forth, on

the eastern coast of Scotland. He received the rudiments of an education at the parochial school. His residence being in the vicinity of the Solway Frith, a natural inclination for the sea was fostered into a passion. His biographers are fond of dwelling on his building mimic ships, and on his acquisition of nautical knowledge, as prophetic of his career; but as similar traits have been displayed by nearly every lad brought up in sight of the sea, we attach no significance to them. The stubborn resolution he exhibited as a boy, and his nervous irritability under restraint, were far more legitimate evidences of the future naval hero. His partiality for a sailor's life was so evident, however, that at twelve years of age, his friends bound him apprentice to a respectable merchant of Whitehaven, engaged in the American trade. His first voyage was to the Rappahannoc, where he met an elder brother, who, having married in Virginia, had settled there. In the house of this relative, the youth remained during the stay of his ship in port; and here, as he afterwards declared, he imbibed his first prepossessions in favour of America. During the time he was with his employer, a period of some years, his intelligence and good conduct won him the esteem of that individual; and it is even said that, but for the embarrassed condition into which the merchant's affairs fell, Paul Jones, while yet a minor, would have attained the command of a vessel.

His apprenticeship being completed, he entered into the African trade, and made several voyages in slavers to and from the coast of Guinea. At that period, the voice of the civilized world had not yet been raised in reprobation of this detestable traffic; but no man of refined sensibilities could long continue in it without disgust; and Paul Jones, though not especially fastidious, appears soon to have become dissatisfied with the pursuit. He now confined himself to a more legitimate commerce. This part of his life is comparatively obscure. For several years we almost lose sight of

him, until, in 1773, we find him visiting Virginia, to arrange the affairs of his brother, who had died there without leaving any family. It is to this period that his assumption of the patronymic Jones is assigned. He was so charmed with the climate of Virginia, that he resolved to abandon the ocean, settle as a planter in the colony, and devote his leisure to retirement and study. But he did not understand his own nature. His restless soul would soon have spurned the monotony of an agricultural life, even if circumstances had not arisen to enlist his sympathies in a new direction. The American Revolution, then about to break forth, alike fascinated him with the grandeur of its sentiments and opened before him a path to speedy and dazzling renown; and, without hesitation, he promptly joined the insurgents. His conduct in this has been censured by English writers, and during the war he was stigmatized as a pirate; but he was certainly not more blamable than Lee, who came to America expressly to enlist in the patriot army. He was only taking part in a civil war, and hence had a right to select his side.

The battle of Lexington convinced the people generally that a reconciliation between the colonies and mother country was impossible; and accordingly preparations were made for carrying on the war actively on the part of the patriots. Hostilities had scarcely begun, when several captures of British vessels were made, chiefly by privateers commissioned in the different States. But towards the close of 1775, Congress determined to fit out a national force, to act directly under its orders. Instructions were accordingly given for the purchase of suitable vessels, and two ships, two brigantines, and a sloop obtained. Thirteen frigates were also directed to be built. A list of competent officers was likewise prepared. In this catalogue, Paul Jones was placed as senior lieutenant, and appointed to the *Alfred*, of twenty-four guns, his commission bearing date the 7th of December, 1775. He immediately repaired on board his charge, then lying in the



HOISTING THE AMERICAN FLAG.

Delaware, and, as his captain had not yet arrived, had the honour of hoisting the first flag ever shown on board a national armed vessel of the United States. The ensign used on this occasion was not the stars and stripes, but one displaying a rattlesnake, with the motto, "Don't tread on me." From this hour, up to the close of the war, the name of Paul Jones was foremost among our naval heroes.

His first service was in an expedition against New Providence, one of the Bahama islands, an enterprise undertaken by Commodore Hopkins, at the head of a considerable fleet, but which only partially succeeded. The forts indeed were captured, but the garrison, having received notice of the invasion, had sent away the powder during the preceding night. On the 17th of March, the squadron left New Providence, carrying off all the cannon found there. On the 9th of April, when off Block island, it fell in with the Glasgow, an English frigate. By this time, several of the smaller vessels had left the fleet, and a light wind prevented others

from participating in the action, which was confined principally to the Cabot, of fourteen guns, and to the Alfred. The Cabot, whose metal was light, was soon obliged to sheer off. After the contest had raged an hour, the block and wheel rope of the Alfred were shot away, by which the enemy was enabled to rake the American ship at pleasure. Satisfied that victory was impossible, the English captain, after delivering a broadside, availed himself of this accident to escape from the squadron. In this action, the Alfred was held at bay by a ship of not superior force; but no imputation rests on Jones, who was only second in command. The result of this whole expedition was ruinous to the reputation of Commodore Hopkins. On the 6th of October ensuing, Congress passed a vote of censure on him for not performing the duties on which he had been despatched to the southward; and in the following January formally dismissed him from the service.

Paul Jones, however, did not share in this obloquy. His efficient conduct during the expedition was generally admitted, and, in reward for it, Hopkins appointed him on the 10th of May, 1776, to the command of the sloop Providence, of twelve guns. With this vessel, Jones cruised between Boston and the Delaware, and even ran as far south as Bermuda. On the 1st of September, while on the latter service, he discovered five sail, one of which he mistook for a large merchantman; but on approaching the stranger, she proved to be an English frigate, the Solebay. After a chase of four hours, in a cross sea, the foe had so far gained on the Providence as to be within musket-shot, on her lee quarter. The frigate had long before opened her fire, which Jones now replied to, showing his colours. He kept edging away, however, until he had gained a position on the lee-bow of the enemy, when he suddenly went off dead before a wind, setting every thing that would draw. Before the Englishman could get out his light sails, the Providence was nearly out of reach of grape,

and the latter, sailing the best before the wind, within an hour had drawn quite out of reach of shot. Jones now went to the eastward, where he took several prizes. Here he was chased by the *Milford*, of thirty-two guns, when discovering he could easily outsail her, he kept just out of range for several hours, the enemy, who measured his distance badly, firing most of the time. Jones now went upon the coast off Canseau, where he damaged the enemy's fishermen considerably, capturing no less than twelve sail. Having now made sixteen prizes during his cruise, some of them valuable, he determined to return to harbour, and accordingly put into Newport, on the 7th of October, 1776. He was received here with the greatest applause. His success was on every tongue; his bravery and skill were the theme of common conversation; and his affair with the *Solebay*, as if not sufficiently wonderful already, was exaggerated into a running fight of several hours' duration.

As early as the 8th of August, ten days before he sailed on the last cruise, Jones had received the commission of captain from the President of Congress. He was now practically advanced a step higher in rank; for a project was formed to despatch a small squadron under his orders to Nova Scotia, with the double view of distressing the British trade and liberating about one hundred Americans said to be confined in the coal-pits of that region. Accordingly Jones sailed on the 2d of November, with the *Alfred* and *Providence*. A few days out, he had the good fortune to capture the armed ship *Mellish*, loaded with supplies for the army of Burgoyne, then assembling in Canada. On board this vessel, in addition to other articles of value, were ten thousand suits of uniform: a supply which reached Washington at a moment of the greatest need. Jones captured several other prizes, but, arriving off the coal-mines, found the harbour frozen up. The inclement weather now obliged him to seek a port, and on the 15th of December, 1776, he



arrived at Boston, having provisions and water for only two days remaining. By this successful cruise, Jones flattered himself he had earned a right to a superior command; but what was his chagrin to find himself, about a month afterwards, superseded by Captain Hinman, an officer entirely unknown, and heretofore below him on the list.

This injustice drew from Jones a letter of remonstrance to the marine committee of Congress. "When I entered the service," he writes, "I was not actuated by motives of self-interest. I stepped forth as a free citizen of the world, in defence of the violated rights of mankind, and not in search of riches, whereof, I thank God, I inherit a sufficiency; but I should prove my degeneracy were I not in the highest degree tenacious of my rank and seniority. As a gentleman, I can yield this point up only to persons of superior abilities and superior merit; and under such persons it would be my highest ambition to learn. As this is the first time of my having expressed the least anxiety on my own account, I must entreat your patience until I account to you for the reason which hath given me this freedom of sentiment. It seems that Captain Hinman's commission is No. 1, and that, in consequence, he who was at first my junior officer by eight, hath *expressed himself as my senior officer* in a manner which doth himself no honour, and which doth me signal injury. There are also in the navy persons who have not shown me fair play after the service I have rendered them. I have even been blamed for the civilities which I have shown to my prisoners; at the request of one of whom I herein enclose an appeal, which I must beg leave to lay before Congress. Could you see the appellant's accomplished lady, and the innocents their children, arguments in their behalf would be unnecessary. As the base-minded only are capable of inconsistencies, you will not blame my free soul, which can never stoop where I cannot also esteem. Could I, which I never can, bear to be superseded, I should indeed deserve

your contempt and total neglect. I am, therefore, to entreat you to employ me in the most enterprising and active service,—accountable to your honourable board only for my conduct, and connected as much as possible with gentlemen and men of good sense.”

This appeal did not go unanswered. Sensible of his exalted merits, Congress resolved to employ him in an expedition against Pensacola and other places, with the *Alfred*, *Columbus*, *Cabot*, *Hampden*, and *Providence*; but the enterprise was subsequently abandoned, chiefly in consequence of the jealousy of Hopkins, and his refusal to co-operate with Jones. On this, Jones visited Philadelphia to remonstrate with Congress. He here discovered that his degradation had not been intentional. A new regulation had been made, and, partly to quiet local jealousies, partly from other inevitable causes, thirteen officers had been placed over the head of Jones. The commander-in-chief had, by this time, been deposed, so that one cause of complaint was removed. The marine committee now offered to purchase three ships in the eastern department, and to give Jones the choice of them to command. This conciliated him, and he returned to Boston. But before the plan could be carried into execution, Congress, on the 9th of May, 1777, directed him to proceed to France, in the *Ranger*, of eighteen guns, with an order to the commissioners in Paris to procure him a frigate, as a reward for his services. Accordingly, in November, he left America, carrying out despatches of the victory at Saratoga.

We are now about to enter on a period of his career, which, however brilliant his deeds had been before, was destined far to outshine them. This is the proper occasion to pause and review his character as already developed. His almost invariable success, frequently against the greatest odds, had shown not less his courage than the vast resources of his mind. He had exhibited indeed a genius for naval warfare such as few men of his age had displayed, a genius which recalled

the days of Ibberville, of Blake, and of the immortal Trump. But with this wonderful ability was united an equal vanity. It cannot be said that he claimed more than his due, but he never claimed less; and his manner of urging his demands frequently wore the appearance of excessive self-conceit. His future career exhibited his characteristic foible in even a stronger light. He continually employed expressions, in reference to himself, which nothing but his dauntless courage and extraordinary skill could have excused. It is said that true merit is modest, but Jones was an exception. In this particular he resembled Nelson. These two great men were both equally boastful, and both in violation of a rule generally conceded. But the same sentiment which led Jones to dwell upon his achievements, also impelled him, we must remember, to undertake others.

It had been intended to bestow on him the command of the *Indian*, a frigate building in Holland for the United States; but, from motives of policy, this superb vessel was presented to the king of France. Jones accordingly continued in command of the *Ranger*. His first task was to convoy some merchant ships to Quiberon Bay, where he received from the French commander a salute, the first ever given to the flag of America. He next undertook an expedition against the coasts of Great Britain. In popular history, Jones is regarded as the first to harass the English government in this way; but Captains Conyngham and Wickes, in the *Revenge* and *Reprisal*, had both preceded him. Of the cruise of Wickes, undertaken in 1777, Silas Deane observes in one of his letters to Robert Morris, that it "effectually alarmed England, prevented the great fair at Chester, occasioned insurance to rise, and even deterred the English merchants from shipping goods in English bottoms, at any rate, so that, in a few weeks, forty sail of French ships were loading in the Thames on freight, an instance never before known." Of Conyngham, he wrote in similar terms, "In a

word, by his first and second bold expeditions, he is become the terror of all the eastern coast of England and Scotland, and is more dreaded than Thurot was in the late war." Insurance, in consequence, rose as high as twenty-five per cent. on long voyages, and there was a short period during which ten per cent. was asked between Dover and Calais, a distance of only seven leagues. But this season of alarm had died away with the departure of Wickes and Conyngham. It was reserved for Jones to rekindle this terror anew, and to carry it to a height it had never before attained.

As France and Great Britain still continued nominally at peace, it was necessary for Jones to use as much secrecy as possible in fitting out. On the 10th of April, 1778, he sailed from Brest, and, entering the Irish channel, took several prizes. Finding himself opposite Whitehaven, he conceived the bold design of burning the colliers in that port, and would have succeeded if a strong adverse tide had not prevented his reaching the harbour before daylight. He now ran up the coast of Scotland, as high as Glentive Bay, where he chased a revenue cutter without success. Crossing to the Irish shore, he learned from some fishermen that Captain Burden, with the sloop-of-war Drake, a vessel about the size of the Ranger, was anchored in the roads of Carrickfergus. He immediately adopted the resolution to run in and capture her. He accordingly entered the port that night, but, through some mistake, the anchor was not let go in season, and the Ranger, instead of taking up her expected position, drifted on the quarter of the Drake, half a cable's length distant. Perceiving that his object was defeated, Jones cut his cable, and drifted astern, then made sail, and hauled by the wind as soon as possible. The breeze, which had been fresh all the afternoon, now increased to a gale, and it was with some difficulty that the Ranger could weather the land and regain the channel.

Jones now stood over to the English coast, and renewed

his attempt on Whitehaven. Landing in the night, with his crew divided into two parties, he surprised the fort, spiked the guns, and set fire to the shipping. Before, however, the conflagration had spread far, the alarm was given in the town, and the inhabitants rallying in overwhelming numbers, it was with much difficulty that Jones escaped. He drew off his men in safety nevertheless. The flames were extinguished before much damage had been done. He now made an attempt to seize the Earl of Selkirk, and hold him as a hostage, believing that thus better treatment might be secured to American prisoners in England. The earl having a seat at St. Mary's isle, near where the Dee flows into the Irish channel, rendered the scheme practicable. A party landed, and the mansion was seized. But the earl being absent, the expedition returned without success. During the day, however, the men had carried off some of the earl's plate. This act of plunder annoyed Jones excessively, as it appeared to countenance the popular rumour in Great Britain which regarded him as a pirate. Purchasing the plate from his crew, he restored it to Lady Selkirk, an act of consideration which drew from her husband a grateful testimony to the character of Jones.

On the following day, Jones encountered the Drake, which he had left in Carrickfergus harbour, and, after a running fight of an hour, captured her. The English ship was heavier than the Ranger, and carried more men: this, added to her being taken within sight of her native coast, caused the victory to be considered peculiarly brilliant. In the action, the Drake lost forty men, besides her captain and lieutenant, who were mortally wounded, while the Ranger had but two killed and six wounded; a difference so vast as to imply great superiority in the fire of the Americans. Jones now went round the north of Ireland, and, though frequently chased, arrived safely at Brest, after an absence of only twenty-eight days. But in this short interval he had

made his name a terror to the coasts of England, alarmed the merchants, raised again the price of insurance, and induced the government to send out numerous ships to capture him. On his arrival in France, he was hailed with general applause. The dashing gallantry he had exhibited was particularly calculated to make him popular with that high-spirited people. The court, now on the eve of declaring war with Great Britain, was delighted; the American commissioners showered compliments upon him; and, for once, the exacting nature of Jones was surfeited with renown.

But vexations soon came to alloy his pleasure. His bills on the commissioners were protested for want of funds, and he was distressed for means to support his crew and prisoners. In the first flush of their exultation, the French court had conceived the idea of employing him in a vessel of their own, and had even held out to him hopes of a squadron; but when war came to be declared, the necessity of providing for their own officers frustrated these views. Jones chafed under his disappointments, and, with little of the tact of a courtier, wearied the minister by reminding him of his promise. His anger and impatience eventually rose beyond control: "M. de Sartine," he wrote, "may think as he pleases, but Congress will not thank him for having thus treated an officer who has always been honoured with their friendship and favour." At last, after ten months of vexatious delay, after ten months of precious time wasted by the indolence of the French government, a ship was procured for Jones, the *Duc de Duras*. This vessel was clumsily constructed, having been built many years before, and had one of those high, old-fashioned poops still seen in naval pictures of the earlier half of the century. She was now manned with an armament of forty-two guns, most of them light, so that she could not fairly be rated at more than a thirty-six. In compliment to Franklin, Jones called her the *Bon Homme Richard*. With a motley crew of all nations, for it was im-

possible to procure sufficient Americans, Jones on the 19th of June, 1779, sailed on his memorable cruise in this vessel, accompanied by a squadron, consisting of the Alliance frigate, the Pallas, the Vengeance brig, and the Cerf, a fine cutter. It had been originally intended that the expedition should make a descent on Liverpool, and for that purpose Jones was to have been accompanied by Lafayette at the head of a body of troops; but the French court finally abandoned the scheme in favour of the illusive one of a grand invasion, which never occurred, and hence Jones was left to proceed alone.

This cruise, destined to make the name of the commander immortal, began inauspiciously. The Alliance, the second ship in the squadron, was commanded by Captain Landais, who shared in the jealousy entertained of Jones by the inferior officers of the French navy; and, while lying to, off the coast, by palpable mismanagement, or as others supposed intentionally, he ran into the Bon Homme Richard, injuring both ships to such a degree that they were compelled to return to port to refit. While in harbour, a cartel arrived from England, bringing more than a hundred exchanged American seamen, most of whom enlisted on board the Richard. On the 14th of August, the squadron sailed a second time. The different vessels soon became separated however, so that, by the 27th, the Vengeance was the only one in company with the commodore. On the 31st, off Cape North, Jones captured a letter-of-marque, bound from London to Quebec; a proof of the terror he had inspired, as this vessel had gone north about to avoid the usual track. The Alliance now rejoined the squadron. But the presence of Captain Landais proved of little service to Jones. That officer, from this period, exhibited a mutinous spirit, contending that, as his ship was the only really American one in the squadron, he was superior to the orders of the commodore, and could act as he pleased. In consequence, the control of

Jones over this, the most efficient ship of the fleet, almost entirely ceased.

Meantime, the squadron continued its course around Scotland, the vessels separating and joining constantly. At last, when off Leith, Jones, understanding that a twenty-gun ship, with two or three cutters, was in that harbour, planned a descent upon them; but the absence of the *Alliance*, *Pallas*, and *Vengeance* forced him to delay until those ships could join; and when that occurred, a squall arose just at the crisis of landing, and by driving the squadron to sea for safety, lost the golden opportunity. Another scheme, even more daring, was now projected; but it was afterwards laid aside as beyond their means to execute. Proceeding southwardly, capturing numerous prizes, the squadron reached the mouth of the Humber. Here, Jones learned from some pilots, that the whole coast was in a state of alarm. Persons were burying their plate; troops were being collected to resist a descent; and even expresses with intelligence of the fleet had been despatched to London. The numbers of the squadron were exaggerated, and their intentions declared to be piratical. Never since the era of the Danes had any fleet struck such fear to the hearts of the people. Standing out towards Flamborough Head, on the 23d of September, Jones, in the *Richard*, joined the *Alliance* and *Pallas*; and soon after, about forty sail, convoyed by the *Serapis* forty-four, and the *Countess of Scarborough* twenty-two, were seen stretching out on a bowline from behind the promontory. The commodore immediately gave the signal for a chase, and crossed royal yards on board his ship. At these signs of hostility, the nearest English merchantmen hurriedly backed, fired alarm guns, let fly their top-gallant sheets, and sought the shelter of the land; while the men-of-war hauled boldly out to sea, until far enough to windward, when, changing their course, they stood in shore, to cover the convoy. The battle, thus significantly invited, Jones did not decline.



Accordingly he kept the signal to form the line aboard, intending to advance with the *Pallas* in the front, the *Richard* second, and the *Alliance* in the rear. The latter ship, however, stood on, disregarding this order, and being the swiftest in the squadron, soon ran down near enough to discern the enemy's force; but, discovering the size of the *Serapis*, treacherously hauled up and abandoned the *Richard* to her fate. Perceiving the flight of *Landais*, the *Pallas*, mistaking it for a general retreat, also drew off; the approaching darkness assisting the mistake. The action was accordingly left to be maintained by Jones alone. His indomitable spirit, instead of sinking, rose with the emergency. He beat to quarters promptly, and his crew, inspired by his bearing, rushed with loud cheers to the guns. Darkness had now fallen. It was only by a night-glass that the course of the enemy could be followed. At length, about half past seven, the *Richard* came up with the *Serapis*, the *Scarborough* being a short distance to leeward. The American frigate was to windward. As the two ships approached each other, an anxious silence prevailed on the decks, and each crew eagerly watched the motions of the other by the red glare of the battle-lanterns. The captain of the *Serapis* was the first to hail. The answer was equivocal, and given by Jones; when simultaneously the broadsides of both vessels were discharged. Unfortunately for the Americans, two of the six eighteens that were in the gun-room of the *Richard* exploded, blowing up the deck above, and killing and maiming many who were below. For an instant terror seized all on board. But the stern voice of the commodore, and the exertions of his first lieutenant Dale, soon dissipated the panic, and the men resumed the battle, calling on each other with loud cries to avenge their fallen comrades.

By this accident, the batteries of the *Richard* were reduced to twelve pounders. The *Serapis* carried eighteens on her whole lower deck, which rendered her for the rest of the

combat nearly double the strength of the *Richard*. Nevertheless the combat was maintained by the latter without a moment's pause, her crew making up for their deficiency in guns by their rapid and unerring aim. The two frigates continued to manœuvre, passing and re-passing each other, the *Serapis*, on the whole, having the advantage of position, as she sailed the best. At last, when the fight had raged about an hour, they ran afoul. For an instant after the crash, there was a cessation of the firing. Captain Pearson of the *Serapis*, misled by his enemy's silence, demanded if the *Richard* had struck. "I have not begun to fight yet," was the memorable reply of Jones. The ships now separated, and the *Serapis*, wearing short around, endeavoured to luff up athwart the bow of the *Richard*, in order to rake her; but Jones, convinced that in a regular combat his adversary's metal was too heavy for him, determined to lay the Englishman athwart hawse. In consequence of the smoke, however, he miscalculated his distance, and the two vessels came foul again, the bowsprit of the *Serapis* passing over the bow of the *Richard*. With his own hands, the commodore now lashed the head-gear of the enemy to his mizzen-mast; and the frigates fell close alongside of each other, head and stern. Captain Pearson, anxious to be free, at this dropped his anchor, hoping that the *Richard* would drift clear; but the yards were already interlocked, and lashings were speedily added by the Americans fore and aft. He next made an attempt to board, but was repulsed with loss. Meantime, the lower ports of the *Serapis*, which had been closed to prevent boarding, were now blown off, that the guns might be run out; and a murderous fire opened from the eighteens. So fearful was the proximity of the two ships, that it was frequently necessary to thrust the rammer into the port of the opposite vessel, in order to enter it in the gun. The lower deck of the *Richard* was soon cleared by this tremendous fire; and the sides were beaten in, so that the balls



BON HOMME RICHARD AND SERAPIS.



frequently passed through the gaps without touching. Unable to maintain the fight below, the Americans, retreating to the upper deck, gathered under the shelter of the fore-castle, and continued the combat by throwing grenades and firing muskets.

The moon had now risen. The neighbouring shore was crowded with spectators, gazing anxiously on the scene. The Pallas, having returned to the combat, had gallantly attacked the Scarborough, and kept her from interfering. In the distance the Alliance hovered, like some ominous bird of prey, waiting to pounce on the weakest. Meantime the grenades and musketry of the Americans had nearly cleared the upper decks of the Serapis; while, by great efforts, the commodore had dragged a gun over from the larboard side, increasing his battery on the quarter-deck to three pieces. But he could not, with all his exertions, muster sufficient force to shift a second cannon. Some of the Richard's crew now lay out on her main-yard, and one, boldly taking his station on the extreme end of the spar, dropped a grenade down the enemy's main-hatchway. The missile ignited some loose powder; this communicated to a line of cartridges, laid along the main-deck from gun to gun, and an awful explosion, extending the whole length of the ship aft, ensued. For some moments, the roar of battle was drowned by screams of agony. More than twenty men were killed, and thirty-eight wounded; while five or six of the aftermost guns were disabled. A frightful scene of panic ensued. The main-deck was filled with smoke, so that no one knew for some time the real extent of the damage; while the shrieks of the wounded and the cries of the crew added to the general terror. This consternation was increased by the Americans, who poured grape and canister on the enemy's decks, and prevented his ascending from the scene of horror. In the fury of the strife, both ships caught fire, and soon the roar of conflagration smote the ears of the combatants. But this

did not stop the fight. While one portion of each crew devoted themselves to checking the flames, the other portion maintained the conflict with unabated rage.

Meanwhile Landais, who had been stretching off and on, watching the struggle, and occasionally firing, as much to the damage of the *Richard* as of the *Serapis*, now perceiving that the *Scarborough* had been captured by the *Pallas*, sullenly approached the scene. Captain Cottineau, of the *Pallas*, hailed the Frenchman, earnestly entreating him to take possession of the prize, so that the *Pallas* might assist the *Richard*; but Landais, after some hesitation, concluded to take this duty on himself, and making two long stretches under his topsails, slowly approached his consort. Whether from accident or intention, however, his fire proved as injurious to the *Richard* as to the *Serapis*, killing several of the former's men, and dismounting two of the guns. In vain the crew of the *Richard* hailed the *Alliance*, in vain the signal for a night action was shown; Captain Landais continued to fire, edging nearer and nearer, until he was abeam. The commodore now indignantly ordered him to lay the enemy aboard; and a question being put whether the command was understood, a reply was received in the affirmative. The *Alliance* on this hauled off, but soon after came down again, and crossing the bows of the *Richard* and stern of the *Serapis*, delivered grape as she passed, firing for part of the time, it is affirmed, in such a way that the shot could only reach the Englishman through his antagonist. After this infamous proceeding, Landais ran to leeward, where, for the remainder of the contest, he contented himself with standing off and on.

The *Alliance* had scarcely delivered her last broadside, when a cry arose that the *Richard* was sinking. The carpenter, whose duty it was to sound the pump-wells, confirmed the alarming intelligence. The frigate had received so many shot-holes, that the water was now pouring into her

sides; and, as she settled, other shot-holes were exposed to the sea, increasing the peril. Consternation immediately spread through the ship. In the panic, the master-at-arms liberated the English prisoners, of whom there were about one hundred on board; and one of these, passing through a port of the Richard into one of the Serapis, informed Captain Pearson that the Americans must either surrender soon, or sink. Meantime, the gunner of the Richard, rushing on deck, ran up the poop in-order to haul down the colours; but finding the flag-staff shot away, and the ensign hanging in the water, he could only make known his wishes by calling out for quarter. All would have been lost in another moment, if the commodore had not made his appearance. Crying out that the day was still with the Richard, he sprang to the gunwale, attended by a few faithful followers, there to repel the boarders of the Serapis, who, at this favourable turn of affairs, were crowding with loud shouts to secure their reported victory. At the presence of their leader, new vigour infused itself into the Americans. Replying with cheers to the shouts of the boarders, they repelled the latter from the decks of the Richard, and, following up their success, drove them again with grenades and musketry below. Meanwhile Dale, who had no longer a single gun that could be fought, mustered the prisoners at the pumps, vociferating that their own lives, as well as those of the crew, depended on their activity: and the terrified Englishmen, expecting every instant to be engulfed, were glad to obey the commands of any one who held out a prospect of safety.

Scarcely, however, had this danger been met, when a cry of fire again arose on board the Richard. It was replied to by an alarm of the same character from the Serapis; while smoke issued in dense columns up the hatchways of both vessels. At this appalling sight, the two crews, simultaneously abandoning their guns, addressed themselves to the task of quenching the flames. The fire on board the Richard

was still but partially subdued, when the commodore brought two nine-pounders to bear on the *Serapis*, and renewed the fight with desperate resolution, double-shotting his guns, and aiming altogether at the mainmast of the foe. By this time, the whole side of the *Richard* abaft was beaten in, and the poop and upper deck was in momentary peril of falling into the gun-room. Several of the officers now entreated Jones to surrender. Still resolute to conquer, yet conscious from this that every thing depended on himself, Jones passed among his men, encouraging them to persevere. Nor was it in vain. With loud shouts they continued the fray. The fire of the *Serapis*, which had been partially renewed, soon began to slacken; her mainmast was tottering; and her crew were driven below to a man. The cheers of the Americans now rose louder and bolder; while those of the British grew fainter, and finally sank away entirely. At last, through the smoke which almost shrouded her from sight, the form of a man was seen rushing up the gangway of the *Serapis*, and immediately afterwards the colours of the enemy, which up to this moment had floated from her poop, sank to the decks. At this spectacle, repeated huzzas broke from every part of the American frigate. Dale immediately took possession of the captured ship, passing her officers on board the *Richard*.

Thus terminated what is perhaps the most bloody and protracted battle between single frigates on record. During the progress of it, the *Serapis* had been on fire no less than twelve times; while the *Richard*, for the last hour of the struggle, had been burning continually. The flames, still raging, had now spread within the ceiling, and menaced the magazine; and in order to prevent an explosion, it was necessary to bring the powder on deck. The ship was sinking all this while. With every effort at the pumps, the water could not be kept at the same level, until fresh hands were obtained from the other vessels of the squadron. In



the mean time, however, the cable of the *Serapis* had been cut, and the *Richard* and her prize drew slowly away from the vicinity of the land; but as soon as the lashings were separated, which had united the two frigates, the mainmast of the *Englishman* fell, bringing with it the mizzen-top-mast. The night was spent in anxiety on board the *Richard*. With the earliest dawn, an examination was made into her condition, when she was found to be so much shattered as to render it perilous to attempt carrying her into port. Accordingly, but with a heavy heart, for it was painful to part with the ship in which he had gained his victory, the commodore gave orders to transfer the wounded from her. This had scarcely been effected, when about nine o'clock, the officer in charge, finding the water had reached her lower decks, reluctantly withdrew his men from the pumps, and abandoned her to her fate. About ten she lurched heavily, gave a roll, and settled slowly into the sea, bows foremost. The agitation of the surface where she had disappeared now subsided; the waves rolled quietly on, and not a vestige was left to mark where the gallant ship had sunk.

In this terrible action, the *Serapis* lost about one hundred and fifty men, and the *Richard* probably an equal number; for the amount of the dead and wounded on either ship was never accurately known. The loss would have been even greater, if the men of the *Serapis* had not early been driven below, and those of the *Richard* forced under cover. The *English* frigate suffered less than her adversary, the guns of the latter being light, as we have seen, and soon silenced. After the action, jury-masts were rigged on the *Serapis*, and she drove about nearly helpless in the North Sea, until the 6th of October, when the remains of the squadron, with the two prizes, made the *Texel*. The arrival of Paul Jones here created an intense excitement. The populace regarded him as a hero. But the British ambassador demanded that his prisoners should be released, and that he should be treated

as a pirate; and the Dutch government, though secretly in favour of the Americans, not being prepared for war, compromised the matter. They advised that the *Serapis* and *Scarborough* should be transferred to France, and ordered Jones, who had succeeded to the command of the *Alliance*, Landais having been suspended for his behaviour in the battle, to quit the country. The commodore put to sea accordingly on the 27th of December, and having run the gauntlet of the channel fleet, boldly looking into the Downs as he passed, and made a short cruise in the Bay of Biscay, arrived at Groix on the 10th of February, 1780.

Jones now visited Paris, where he was received by both court and people, with the enthusiasm characteristic of the French. He was caressed and feasted everywhere; and for a time became the lion of Versailles. The king presented him with a sword, in a golden scabbard richly chased, with the honourable inscription, "*Vindicati maris Ludovicus XVI. remunerator strenuo vindici.*" At the same time leave was requested of Congress to invest him with the military Order of Merit, an honour never before conferred on any one who had not borne arms under a French commission. Jones was of a nature to be extravagantly pleased with these testimonials, and they became the boast of his future life. He endeavoured to take advantage of his favour to obtain the command of the *Serapis*, on which his ambition had been fixed ever since her capture; but he did not succeed. The *Alliance* meantime had been restored to Landais, partly through a cabal, and partly through a mutiny of her crew, and had sailed for America. At last Jones received the *Ariel* frigate, and departed for America, where he arrived on the 18th of February, 1781. During the voyage he fell in with a British ship of twenty guns, which he captured after a sharp action of ten minutes; but the enemy, finding himself on the weather-bow of the *Ariel*, suddenly set all sail, and escaped by his superior swiftness.

He found, on his arrival in Philadelphia, that Landais had been tried, and dismissed the service for ever. He was himself subjected to an inquiry, in reference, as well to his difficulty with that officer, as to the detention of some army stores which came in the *Ariel*, but the verdict not only excused him, but was highly flattering. Congress returned him thanks for his bravery in the action with the *Serapis*, and bestowed on him the command of the *America*, a fine vessel still on the stocks. But, before she was completed, a French seventy-four being lost in Boston harbour, Congress gave the *America* to her ally. Thus fate, which had cheated him of the *Indian* in a somewhat similar case, again perversely interfered. He bore his disappointment, however, with prudence, if not with patriotism; a conduct which elicited the compliments of the American minister of marine. Impatient of inactivity, he solicited and obtained from Congress leave to serve on board the French fleet, then cruising in the American waters. During this period he was in the constant receipt of letters complimenting his career; and among his correspondents of this character were Lafayette and John Adams. Peace, however, soon destroyed his further prospects of distinction. He now visited Europe as agent for prize-money, led partly by interest, for large arrearages were still due to him there. In Paris, where he spent most of his time, he devoted his leisure to projecting vast enterprises, which it was impossible to have carried into execution, and in exchanging flatteries with distinguished personages, a pursuit of which he never tired. After a residence of three years in Europe, chiefly spent among the fashionable society of Paris, he returned to America in the summer of 1787. Shortly after his arrival, he received a new proof of the estimation with which he was regarded by the American Congress, in the presentation of a gold medal to him, commemorative of his action with the *Serapis*. He was also furnished with a letter from Congress to the French monarch, and

with this testimonial, he embarked again for Europe, never to return.

On his arrival in Paris, Jones learned that the American minister, Jefferson, in a conversation with the Russian ambassador, had proposed him for the command of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea, and that the suggestion had been favourably received. Dazzled by the hope of so great an advancement, he immediately started for Copenhagen, ostensibly to forward some pending negotiations there respecting prize-money, but in reality to draw nearer to St. Petersburg. In order to facilitate his negotiations with the Russian court, he suggested to Jefferson that Congress should confer on him the rank of rear-admiral. Impatient of delay, however, he suddenly left Copenhagen, and arriving at Greshelham in Sweden, set sail from thence in an open boat, though the Baltic was full of ice. After almost incredible peril, in four days he landed at Revel in Livonia. On his arrival at St. Petersburg, he was graciously received by the empress; all difficulties vanished; and he was immediately raised to the post of rear-admiral. The great nobles of the court and the most distinguished foreign residents vied with each other in their attentions to him; and, for a fortnight, he lived in a bewildering dream of flattery. To a nature like his, it is not wonderful that America was almost forgotten under these circumstances, or that, dazzled by the distinction of the court, he could see nothing but the glory of the empress. Accordingly he wrote to Lafayette, "What are you about, my dear general? are you so absorbed in politics as to be insensible to glory? That is impossible. Quit then your divine Calypso, come here and pay your court to Bellona, who, I am sure, will receive you as her favourite. You would be charmed with Prince Potemkin. He is a most amiable man, and none can be more noble-minded. For the empress, fame has never yet done her justice. I am sure that no stranger who has not known that illustrious charac-



BURNING OF THE CAPITAN PACHA'S GALLEY.

ter, ever conceived how much her majesty is made to reign over a great empire, to make people happy, and to attach grateful and susceptible minds."

This delusive dream did not, however, continue long. Jones began his journey to the Black Sea on the 7th of May, 1788. Here he found Prince-marshal Potemkin in command of the troops destined to act against Ocjakow, and the Prince of Nassau, with whom Jones was not on favourable terms, at the head of the flotilla. Potemkin at first received him graciously, but Jones, even before hoisting his flag as rear-admiral, discovered that most of the inferior officers, jealous of his expected glory, had entered into a cabal against him. The intrigues of these envious spirits continued through the whole campaign. Jones was not the person to conciliate such enemies, and the result was that he became their victim. He distinguished himself with his usual bravery in the campaign, particularly in the capture, off Ocjakow, of the capitan pacha's galley. But it would be

foreign to our purpose to dwell at length upon his achievements in the Black Sea, our plan confining us to such actions as were performed in the service of America. Before the close of the campaign, however, the machinations of his enemies had so alienated from him the countenance of Potemkin, that the prince-marshal himself procured from St. Petersburg an order for his recall, on the 18th of October. He accordingly started for the capital, indignant at his treatment, but still not without hopes of being reinstated, or at least employed in some other quarter.

He was received at first with considerable distinction, and the order of St. Anne was conferred on him by the empress. But suddenly, while still importuning for employment, a horrible charge was made against him, which, for a time, banished him from the court, and excluded him from society itself. He was accused of the violation of a young girl, the witnesses being the victim and her mother. At this crisis, the Count Segur, then in St. Petersburg, came to his assistance, and, by his aid, the charge was proved to be a base conspiracy, though by whom instigated was never known. Jones always maintained that it was a plot of the British government, which had never ceased to stigmatize him as a pirate, and which now sought to procure his dismissal from the Russian service; and recent English writers have admitted that the influence of the British ambassador was exerted perseveringly to obtain his banishment; but it is probable that the plot was either the work of some of the Russian officers, or a mere scheme of the girl and her mother to extort money. The exculpation of Jones was rendered so clear that the empress could not refuse to admit his innocence; but he was not restored to favour, and only admitted to an audience, on his departure from Russia on a leave of absence for two years. His friend Count Segur says that he retired of his own accord, in disgust at his treatment; but the evidence favours the belief that he was secretly

directed to remove elsewhere, at least for a while. In leaving Russia, he indulged in his journal, after an exculpation of his pretended crime, in the following extravagant, but, under the circumstances, almost excusable self-eulogium: "In short, my conduct has obtained for me the returns most grateful to my heart. I have had the happiness to give universal satisfaction to two great and enlightened nations which I have served. Of this I have received singular proofs. I am the only man in the world that possesses a sword given by the King of France. It is to me a glorious distinction to wear it; and above all, to have received it as a proof of the particular esteem of a monarch so august,—a monarch who has declared himself the protector of the rights of the human race, and who adds to this glorious title that of citizen! I have indelible proofs of the high consideration of the United States; but what completes my happiness is the esteem and friendship of the most virtuous of men, whose fame will be immortal; and that a Washington, a Franklin, a D'Estaing, a La Fayette, think the bust of Paul Jones worthy of being placed side by side with their own."

On his route to Paris he stopped at Warsaw, where he met Kosciusko. In consequence of this acquaintance, a correspondence subsequently ensued between the Polish patriot and Paul Jones, it being the desire of the former to engage the latter in the schemes then on foot, and soon after attempted to be carried into execution, for the entire redemption of Poland. But Jones, still cherishing the hope of being recalled to Russia, refused to listen to these overtures. His eyes, however, ought soon to have been opened to the fact that he had been virtually dismissed; for, though he wrote for arrearages of pay, he never obtained any. He appears, at this time, to have suffered from poverty, and occasionally spoke of recruiting his fortunes by marrying a rich wife. The hope of being reinstated in the Russian service still haunted him, however, though the illness which led to his death was al-

ready upon him; and he spent his time in writing vain letters to Potemkin and the empress. It is melancholy to contemplate a spirit, in many respects so noble, thus abjectly demeaning itself for the sake of honours, if not emoluments. Three years passed, spent mostly in Holland or in Paris, his expectations gradually fading, until at last they perished completely. Chagrin finally undermined his health, and on the 18th of July, 1792, he died in the French capital, of dropsy. His last days were not entirely unsoothed, however, for though no near connections watched beside his pillow, the hand of friendship wiped his clammy brow and reverently closed his eyes. The National Assembly honoured his funeral obsequies by sending a deputation from their body to attend them.

The character of Paul Jones presents a singular compound. The acuteness of his intellect and the impetuosity of his temper were continually coming into collision, giving to his conduct an appearance of vacillation, and sometimes, as in the case of Potemkin, leading him to atone, by the meanest subserviency, for his hasty behaviour. He was avaricious of money. In his profession he was a strict disciplinarian. He loved glory, but he loved its trappings more. He called himself, in the cant of the day, a citizen of the world. He wrote well, at least on naval subjects; but his letters, especially those of gallantry, were too inflated. He never married. He is said to have formed an attachment for an American lady about the commencement of the war, which, terminating unfortunately, induced him to make a vow to remain single; but he appears, some years afterwards, to have entertained more than one passion, and, at a later day, to have contemplated matrimony as a relief from pecuniary embarrassments. He did not die impoverished, however, but left about six thousand dollars, besides some lands in America, to his two sisters and their children. His conduct to these sisters, throughout his whole career, developed one of the



best traits of his character. He frequently corresponded with them, and always in terms of sincere affection.

In manners, Paul Jones was a little stiff, somewhat conceited, and fond of imitating the airs of a gallant. He was scrupulously neat in dress. In person he was about the middle size, and slightly made. In his younger days, he was remarkably agile, and capable of enduring great fatigue; but his fiery spirit gradually chafed away the tenement which enshrined it, until, in his later years, he was almost constantly ill. His complexion was dark, as were his hair and eyes. Promptitude and decision were imprinted on every line of his countenance.



MENDING SAILS.

## ALEXANDER MURRAY.

It was the peculiar merit of Commodore Murray, and one which few divided with him, that he united the highest firmness and resolution to a remarkable mildness and suavity of temper. He was a man who was universally beloved. Affable to his equals, and kind to his inferiors, he was popular on the quarter-deck as well as with the crew. His life presents a long series of meritorious services, which, if less brilliant than those performed by others, were notwithstanding of solid benefit to his country.

Alexander Murray was born in Maryland, a state which has been fertile of naval captains. At the time of his birth, his parents, who were honest and respectable, though not influential people, resided at Chestertown, where he first saw the light on the 12th of July, 1755. His earliest inclinations were towards the sea. At that period, a thorough education was difficult to be obtained in the colonies, and few, except the sons of wealthy families, were taught more than a plain English course. Murray learned even less than the



ALEXANDER MURRAY.



ordinary studies, his attention having been early directed to the ocean. In this chosen profession he rose rapidly. At eighteen he was already in command of a vessel in the European trade, with the prospect of a speedy competency, when the war of independence broke out, and, by changing his master's quadrant for the captain's sword, altered the whole course of his life.

Murray immediately threw up his ship, resolving to devote himself to the cause of his country; and was rewarded by the appointment of lieutenant in the navy. As this marine existed as yet only on paper, however, he was compelled for the present to serve on land. Accordingly he accepted the commission of lieutenant in the first Maryland regiment, subsequently, under its heroic commander, Col. Smallwood, the most distinguished in the war. In the various actions in which this fine regiment won its reputation, Murray was present, and shared in its glory. At Long Island, at White Plains, and at Flatbush, he led his men with invincible courage; nor did he come out of the campaign unscathed. While the army was firing at the British fleet during its passage up the Hudson river, several pieces of cannon exploded, which impaired his sense of hearing for life. He also suffered severely from exposure. At the end of the season, afflicted by chronic diseases, he was compelled to retire; but not before his bravery had been rewarded by a promotion to a captaincy in the second Maryland regiment. What perils of battle, as well as of sickness, he and the other members of Smallwood's regiment were called on to endure, may be learned from the fact, that of nearly one thousand men who originally composed this band, but sixty were left at the glorious field of Trenton, at the close of the campaign.

Having recovered his health, he sought employment again on the ocean; and accepted the command of a letter-of-marque, with eighteen six-pounders and fifty men, bound for Holland. With this vessel he sailed from Baltimore, convoy-

ing to sea a large fleet of merchantmen. An enemy's force much superior appearing in sight, however, he returned with his squadron, consisting of forty vessels, and sought refuge in the river Patuxent. Soon after, his command having increased to fifty sail, some of them armed, he put to sea once more. A fleet of privateers now made its appearance. Murray instantly made a signal for the unarmed vessels to retire, and for the remainder to rally around him and give battle. One brig and a single schooner alone obeyed his call; but with this small force he instantly commenced the action, though the enemy's squadron consisted of a ship of eighteen guns, a brig of sixteen, and three schooners. A desperate action ensued. Murray soon found himself between the ship and brig, but firing from both broadsides, he maintained for more than an hour the unequal combat, and, at the end of that period, the foe hauled off in a crippled condition. Murray's two consorts meantime had occupied the rest of the British fleet, and succeeded likewise in defeating their antagonists. In this action, Murray received a slight wound. Eager, however, to prosecute his voyage, he delayed no longer than was absolutely necessary to refit, and then sailed again for Europe. But, off the banks of Newfoundland, he had the misfortune to be surrounded by a fleet of the enemy, and was captured.

Being carried a prisoner to Philadelphia, he was in due time exchanged. He did not remain long inactive. The continental frigate *Trumbull*, Captain Nicholson, being about to sail on a seaward cruise, Murray volunteered as one of her lieutenants. The *Trumbull*, almost immediately after getting to sea, lost her fore-topmast in a violent gale, and had the misfortune, when the storm abated, to find herself close aboard a British frigate. A sharp action ensued. The fire of the *Trumbull* was so incessant and so well aimed that the enemy flinched from her guns, and victory would have crowned the Americans, notwithstanding their crippled con-

dition, if a second British frigate had not come up at this crisis, and, laying herself across the stern of the Trumbull, poured in such raking broadsides, that a surrender became inevitable. In this action Murray received a severe wound. One third of the Trumbull's crew were either killed or disabled, a sanguinary proof of the fury with which the battle had been contested. The American frigate was the next day towed into New York, without a mast standing, and with several of her gun-ports beat into one. Such was already the heroism of our infant navy!

Having been again exchanged, Murray, now recovered from his wounds, repaired to Baltimore, where his high reputation soon obtained for him the command of another brig, a letter-of-marque. In this vessel he sailed for St. Croix, with a cargo of tobacco, his armament consisting of only five six-pounders, and his crew numbering but twenty-five men. During the voyage he was assailed by a privateer carrying fourteen guns and one hundred men. Murray, instead of striking at once to this greatly superior force, resolved to try the success of a combat; and bringing his five guns to bear, ultimately compelled the foe to draw off. The British, however, stung at being repulsed by an inferior enemy, soon returned to the combat. But success had now inspired the Americans, and, with Murray at their head, they renewed the battle with cheers. Every man on board the brig felt himself a hero. The five guns, as occasion demanded, were shifted from side to side, so that the foe, on whichever quarter he approached, found his match. The privateer, giving up all hope of succeeding otherwise, now ranged up alongside and essayed to board; but the attempt was repulsed, and the British again resorted to a cannonade. The brig, by this time, had not a spar standing, except the main-mast and the stump of the bowsprit. Convinced that the Americans must be an easy prey under these disheartening circumstances, the enemy again approached the brig, and

made a second endeavour to board. In this crisis, Murray saw that every thing depended on his own resolute spirit. The conflict had lasted two hours, and had been waged against such disproportionate numbers, that his men were completely wearied out; but calling on them to make one last effort at resistance, he leaped to the front, and, as the first boarder touched the side, hurled him back into the sea. A desperate struggle now ensued. But victory finally declared for the heroic Murray, and the privateer resumed her course, having lost nearly a third of her men. A few days subsequently the conquerors arrived in safety at St. Thomas.

At this place Murray refitted, and soon after captured a British packet by stratagem in the Gulf of Florida. Having carried her into Havana, he found an expedition fitting out there against the Bahama Islands, and immediately joined it with his ship. The armament set sail, with a large fleet of Spanish transports, carrying five thousand men, under the American flag. Arriving off New Providence, a gale sprang up, leaving no alternative but to be driven on shore, or at once to boldly enter the harbour, though it was defended by a fort mounted with heavy ordnance. Murray chose the latter, and, steering confidently in, summoned the fort to surrender. This was complied with instantly, so panic-struck was the garrison. The terms of capitulation were arranged by the governor and his aid, both of whom sailed on board of Murray's vessel, and would have been unconditional if the advice of Murray had been followed. The aid was the celebrated Miranda, then a captain of Spanish grenadiers, and to his jealousy of the Americans, Murray always attributed the disgraceful terms. A controversy grew out of the affair, and Murray challenged Miranda, but the latter declined the combat.

Murray now returned to the United States, and entered on board the Alliance frigate as first lieutenant under Commodore Barry. Peace, however, was soon declared; when the



navy was disbanded. Murray, it is believed, was the last officer who held a commission in the service after the ratification. Few had run so patriotic a career. He had been in thirteen battles on land and sea; had been frequently wounded; and was twice made a prisoner. On nearly every occasion in which he met the enemy, he had contended against a superior force, generally with victory, and always with honour. No considerations of mere rank had prevented his serving his country. At one time we find him at the head of a flotilla, then acting as a subordinate officer; again in command of a ship; and finally as a lieutenant under the immortal Barry. When no armed vessels of any kind were to be had, he was willing to serve in the army; when Congress had not sufficient men-of-war, but private armed ships were to be obtained, he accepted a letter-of-marque. Battered by tempests and wounds, his sword was ever at the call of his country, and was never sheathed, even for a moment, unless when he was a prisoner. If ever a man was a patriot, Alexander Murray was one.

When the navy was re-organized, in the prospect of a war with France, under the administration of John Adams, Murray's name was one of the first on the list of officers appointed. He took command of the United States ship *Montezuma*, carrying twenty-four guns, and in a cruise of eight months, chiefly along the West Indies, convoyed more than one hundred vessels into port, without the loss of a single sail. For his success he received the thanks of the executive, and was promoted to the command of the *Insurgent*. He now sailed on a roving commission which lasted nine months, most of the time being spent in an unavailing effort to find an enemy worthy of him. At Point Petre he blockaded a French frigate of forty-four guns, until, all his provisions being consumed, he was forced to repair to St. Christopher's to recruit. On returning to renew the blockade, he met the *Constellation*, then just out of her glorious combat with the very ship

he had been watching, and which he now learned was the Vengeance. The two American frigates repaired in company to Jamaica, in order that the Constellation, which was much crippled, might refit. At this place Murray was met by orders to return to the United States. He reached Baltimore, after a series of heavy gales, with his ship almost reduced to a wreck, the bolts and nails having started from her sides in almost every tempest.

Murray was now transferred to the Constellation, Truxtun having been promoted to the President. He sailed in his new ship for the Leeward Islands, where such was his activity that not a single American merchantman was captured by the enemy. He next proceeded in search of the Vengeance, which had formerly escaped both him and Truxtun; but she had already met her fate, having been captured by the British. Being relieved by the frigate Congress, Captain Seveir, he shaped his course to return to the Delaware. On his passage he stopped at Havana, where he found the Viceroy of Mexico and his lady, by whom he was particularly distinguished, as much from regard to his personal fame as out of respect to the flag under which he served. Leaving Cuba he encountered a terrible hurricane, in which the Constellation was nearly lost. In a dark night he fell in with the British frigate Magnanimie, from which a gun being fired without the usual preliminary of showing a signal, Murray promptly beat to quarters, and replied with a broadside. This led to an explanation, which precluded further hostility. The following day he captured a French lugger, and learned that preliminaries of peace had been signed. He subsequently stopped at Point Petre, where the French garrison received him with every demonstration of respect, and where the two commanders united in mutual rejoicings, by means of feux de joie and salutes, to celebrate the return of amicable relations between France and the United States

When, in consequence of peace, the act of Congress was

passed reducing the navy, Murray was one of the captains retained on the list. The spoliations of the Barbary powers on our commerce having become unbearable, it was resolved, in the beginning of 1802, to despatch a squadron to the Mediterranean; and the command of this fleet was at first destined for Truxtun, but that officer getting into a controversy with government, Captain Morris was substituted for him, in the Chesapeake. As this frigate, however, was not yet ready for sea, Murray was despatched in the *Constellation*, and, arriving first in the Mediterranean, became the superior officer there. His services in this expedition were arduous, but no occasion offered for brilliant deeds. His courtesy, however, to foreign powers was of essential benefit in creating favourable impressions of our young republic. At Naples he was entertained with much display. At Malaga, having assisted in the reception of the Duke of Kent, he was accorded the second post of honour, and publicly thanked by his highness for the compliment thus paid to the British nation in his person. Murray first visited Tunis, where he left presents for the bey, after which he proceeded to Tripoli, which he blockaded. He remained before this place four months, for several weeks of the time without a consort; and it was during this interval that the first action between our flag and that of Tripoli occurred.

The *Constellation* was one day lying about three or four leagues from the town, when the look-out aloft reported several small vessels to the westward, stealing along the shore. In the popular accounts heretofore published of this action, it is said that the American frigate was becalmed, but such, according to Mr. Cooper, in his *Naval History*, was not the case. His narrative, whose accuracy can be relied on, is as follows. "The wind was quite light. Sail was got on the *Constellation*, and towards noon the strangers were made out to be seventeen Tripolitan gun-boats, which, as it was afterwards ascertained, had gone out at night, with the intention of con-

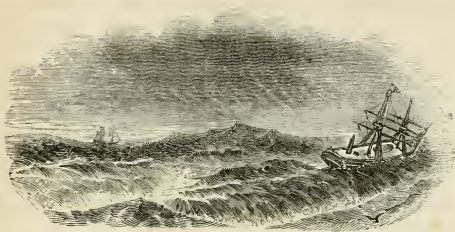
voying into port an American prize that was expected from Tunis, but which had failed to appear. Fortunately the wind freshened as the *Constellation* drew in with the land, and about one o'clock hopes were entertained of cutting off all, or a portion of the enemy. The latter were divided into two divisions, however, and that which led, by pulling directly to windward, effected its escape. The division in the rear, consisting of ten boats, was less fortunate, the *Constellation* being enabled to get it, for a short time, under her fire. The wind blew nearly from the direction of the town, and the Tripolitans still endeavoured to cross the bows of the ship, as she was standing in; but Captain Murray, having run into ten fathoms, opened upon the enemy, time enough to cut off all but one boat of the rear division. This boat, notwithstanding a hot discharge of grape, succeeded in getting to windward, and was abandoned to attend to the remainder. The enemy now opened a fire in return, but the *Constellation*, having by this time got the nearest boats fairly under her broadside, soon compelled the whole nine to bear up, and to pull towards the shore. Here they got into nooks behind the rocks, or in the best places of refuge that offered, while a large body of cavalry appeared on the sand-hills above them, to prevent a landing. Deeming it imprudent to send in the boats of a single frigate against so formidable a force, Captain Murray wore and stood off shore."

The want of small vessels in the squadron soon convinced Murray that a complete blockade was impracticable, and, finding himself short of water, he made sail for Palermo. Here he heard of the arrival of his superior, Captain Morris, in the Mediterranean. At Leghorn he fell in with that officer, and having arranged their future operations, Murray proceeded down the Straits with a convoy. A gale compelling him to put into Malaga, in order to repair a mast, he there met Captain Rodgers, in the *John Adams*, who placed in his hands an open letter from the Secretary of the Navy, directed

to Captain Morris, enjoining him to despatch homeward the Constellation and some other vessels of war. Murray resolved to return to America without waiting to hear from Morris, for that officer was thirteen hundred miles distant, and considerable delay would have been the consequence of refusing this responsibility. Accordingly, he wrote to inform Morris of his resolution, and then spread his sails for the Atlantic, followed by a convoy of one hundred merchantmen. He reached Washington in the autumn of 1802. His ship was now dismantled, when he retired, for a period, to domestic repose.

With his cruise in the Mediterranean closes the active period of Commodore Murray's life. He did not, it is true, constantly remain on shore after this; but his subsequent services were barren of events. He commanded the John Adams during a tempestuous season off the Carolinas, when he was on the watch for French privateers, then infesting the American coasts; and, with his usual perseverance, remained at his post, in spite of the inclement weather, until his vessel was almost a wreck. This was the last time, it is believed, that he hoisted his flag afloat.

For a long period he was in command of the Navy Yard at Philadelphia. He closed his career at his seat near that place, on the 6th of October, 1820, in the sixty-sixth year of his age. His remains were interred with suitable honours in one of the city burial grounds; but at the opening of the Laurel Hill Cemetery were transferred to that spot, where they sleep, surrounded by others of the mighty dead, Hull, Mercer, and Stewart, names indissolubly connected with American glory.



## JOHN BARRY.

FEW commanders in our infant navy were employed in a greater variety of services than John Barry, or met the enemy under more disadvantages; and none acquitted themselves with higher credit. He possessed, indeed, all the qualities of a successful leader. He was brave without temerity; prompt without rashness; sound in his judgment, and skilful in executing his plans. Though a rigid disciplinarian, he knew how to win the esteem of his sailors. His devotion to his adopted country was of the purest and sincerest character; he resisted every allurements to abandon her in the hour of her need; and he died at last in her service.

Barry was born at Wexford, Ireland, in the year 1745, of a family which had been respectable farmers for a long period of time. Early manifesting an inclination for the sea, he was placed on board a merchantman while yet a boy. Ambitious of knowledge, he omitted no opportunity to increase his store of information, and, in the intervals of his voyages, applied himself sedulously to learning, until he had obtained what was not common at that time to all in his rank of life, a good parochial education. At the age of fifteen he emi-



JOHN BARRY.





grated to America, where he made Philadelphia, then the wealthiest of our commercial cities, his home. His nautical skill, the steadiness of his habits, and the integrity of his character, advanced him rapidly in his profession, so that he had scarcely reached the age of manhood, before he was in command of a ship. After several years of voyages to Great Britain, he became, about the period of the Revolution, the master of a valuable ship in the London trade, called the *Black Prince*, which was subsequently purchased by Congress as a vessel of war. When the war broke out, however, he enthusiastically adopted the cause of America. His rare union of valour and discretion, experience and skill, recommended him immediately to Congress, by which body he was honoured with one of the first naval commissions.

His earliest command was the brig *Lexington*, of sixteen guns, in which vessel he left the capes of Delaware on a cruise in February, 1776. This was the first continental armed ship, it is believed, that went to sea, an honour long claimed for the squadron under Commodore Hopkins, but in violation of the truth. On the 17th of April, Barry fell in with the *Edward*, an armed tender, and, after a sharp action of an hour, cut her nearly to pieces and captured her. He won so much credit by his cruise, that, in the latter part of the same year, he was made the seventh captain on the list, and transferred to the *Effingham*, one of three large frigates building at Philadelphia. In the winter of that year, one ever to be remembered in American history, the navigation of the Delaware being so impeded by ice that all naval employment was suspended, his bold and restless spirit sought employment in the army, and, as an aid of General John Cadwalader, he rendered efficient services in the eventful operations in the vicinity of Trenton. When, towards the close of 1777, the British obtained possession of Philadelphia, it was deemed prudent to send the vessels of war up the Delaware; and accordingly they were removed to Whitehall.

While lying at this place, Barry conceived a project, which has justly been pronounced by one of his biographers, as unequalled, during the war, for boldness of design and dexterity of execution. He planned an expedition down the river, in the hope to strike a blow at some of the enemy's vessels anchored off or below the city. Manning four boats accordingly, he pulled down with the tide. Some alarm was given when opposite Philadelphia, but, dashing ahead, he passed the town without injury. Off Port Penn, near the mouth of the river, lay a British schooner of ten guns, and four transports, with freight for the British army. Barry boarded and carried the schooner without loss, and the transports also fell into his hands. He had scarcely achieved his conquest, however, when two of the enemy's cruisers appeared in sight, on which he destroyed his prizes and escaped to land, without the loss of a man. This act of daring gallantry attracted the attention of Sir William Howe, at that period the British commander-in-chief, who, to detach him from the Americans, offered him twenty thousand guineas and the command of a frigate in the English navy. But the bribe was indignantly spurned. "Not the value and command of the whole British fleet," replied Barry, "can seduce me from the cause of my country."

The *Effingham*, as well as the other ships at Whitehall, having been destroyed by the enemy, Barry was appointed to the command of the *Raleigh*, of thirty-two guns. On the 25th of September, 1778, at six A. M., he sailed from Boston in his new ship. At noon, two strange sail were seen to leeward, distant fifteen or sixteen miles. They immediately gave chase, but at night Barry lost sight of them. In the morning it proved hazy, and the enemy were not visible; but about noon it cleared, when the two ships were recognised in the southern board, to windward. They made sail immediately in pursuit, but the mist falling again, they were once more lost sight of, nor was any thing more seen of them on

the following morning at daybreak. With a view to conceal his position, Barry now took in his sails, and permitted the ship to drift under bare poles. But about half-past nine, A. M., the two ships were again discovered astern, and in chase. The Raleigh now hauled upon a wind, the enemy imitating her change of position, and all three vessels carrying sail under a staggering breeze. At first the American outsailed her pursuers, but, the wind moderating, they rapidly overhauled her. About five, P. M., the leading vessel having nearly closed, the Raleigh edged away and crossed her fore-foot, delivering her broadside as she passed. The stranger, who showed fourteen guns of a side, now came up under the lee-quarter of the American vessel, and the action became general and steady. In spite of the loss of his fore-topmast and mizzen-top-gallantmast by the second fire of the other ships, which were rapidly approaching, Barry stuck by his antagonist, his ship being, for most of the time, a continuous sheet of flame. At last, the enemy, finding the fire of the Raleigh too hot for him, shot ahead; and, while the latter was clearing her wreck, engaged to windward and at a distance.

The British vessel, however, edging away and attempting to rake the Raleigh, Barry bore up, and endeavoured to board; but the Englishman, from his superiority in a light breeze, easily avoided this peril. The other ships of the squadron were now so close that flight became necessary. Escape by sea was impossible, and accordingly it was determined to run the Raleigh ashore, some low islands being visible a few miles distant. When Barry wore for this purpose, his antagonist boldly followed, both ships maintaining a running fire. About midnight, however, the enemy hauled off. Barry now entertained hopes of escaping among the islands, but the re-appearance of his pursuers prevented this, and he ran the Raleigh on shore, on what was subsequently discovered to be Fox's Island in Penobscot Bay. It was the

intention of the American commander to burn his ship and defend the island, and a portion of the crew was already landed, when the plan was frustrated through the treachery of a petty officer, who surrendered the vessel. Those on shore, however, escaped; but the Raleigh was preserved, and subsequently placed in the British navy. The vessel that engaged Barry was the Unicorn, of twenty-eight guns, and her consort was the Experiment, of fifty. The Unicorn was much cut up, and lost her masts after the action. The perseverance with which Barry manœuvred to avoid his enemy, and the spirit with which he contended against such odds, raised his reputation to a high rank among our naval heroes.

There being a scarcity of national armed ships, Barry was not able immediately to obtain a vessel in place of the Raleigh; but, unwilling to remain in inactivity, he made several voyages in letters-of-marque to the West Indies. During one of these voyages he had the charge of a large squadron of armed merchantmen. Congress now appointed him to the command of a seventy-four, then building in New Hampshire. Soon after, however, it was concluded to present her to the King of France, on which Barry was transferred to the Alliance, of thirty-six guns, the finest frigate in the service. In February, 1781, he sailed with her for L'Orient, having on board Colonel Laurens and suite, on an important embassy to the court of Versailles. After leaving his passengers at L'Orient, he departed on a cruise, in which he took several valuable prizes. He was still at sea, when, on the 28th of May, two sail were discovered on the weather-bow, standing for him. At daybreak on the 29th, it was quite calm, but the strangers were now close to the Alliance. They were a ship and a brig, showing English colours. Barry had already displayed the American flag, and beat to quarters. The enemy, by means of sweeps, was able to approach the Alliance, and choose their position, while the

latter lay motionless on the water. Barry now hailed. He learned that the strangers were the *Atlanta*, of sixteen guns, and the *Trepassy*, of fourteen; and immediately ordered them to surrender. This the two British cruisers declined to do, and immediately the action began.

It was now noon, but still there was not a breath of air. The *Alliance* lay totally unmanageable. The enemy, by means of sweeps, stealing up to her quarters, where only a few of her aftermost guns could be used, while the whole weight of their broadsides could be delivered against her, soon had the conflict almost entirely to themselves. The combat had raged for more than an hour, and the Americans, fighting at such disadvantage, were rapidly becoming disheartened, when a grape-shot shattered the left shoulder of the commodore. Though suffering the acutest agony, Barry persisted in remaining on deck, until, having nearly fainted from loss of blood, he was compelled to be carried to the cock-pit. His last words, however, before descending, were an injunction never to give up the ship. The hopelessness of the contest, in its present shape, had almost reduced the men to despair, when, as if to crown their despondency, a shot carried away the ensign of the *Alliance*. At this ominous sight, the crew paused in their efforts, while the enemy, concluding the Americans had struck, manned their shrouds and huzzaed. The sound reached the ear of Barry in the cock-pit, and he anxiously inquired what it meant. But, before the answer could be framed, a breeze was seen rippling the distant sea; it came nearer and nearer; it struck the *Alliance*; and, in an instant, she had gathered headway. This interposition of the elements was regarded as almost miraculous, and at once changed the whole feelings of the crew. They manned their guns with loud cheers, and delivered a broadside as the *Alliance* came round. The contest was soon at an end. The two light cruisers could do nothing against a heavy frigate, now that she was manage-

able, and, at three, P. M., they struck. Barry, out of compliment to the heroism of his antagonists, refused to receive the sword of Captain Edward, the senior officer of the enemy. The Alliance was severely damaged. Her loss was eleven killed and twenty-one wounded: that of the British forty-one killed and wounded. This action was regarded as the most brilliant of the year.

The Alliance, having returned to Boston, received orders, towards the close of 1781, to carry the Marquis de la Fayette and the Count de Noailles to France on public business. Accordingly, on the 25th of December, she sailed from Boston with them on board. Having executed her mission, she left L'Orient in February, 1782, on a cruise. Her success was great, and she continued at sea until March of the following year, only making port occasionally. Having been despatched to Havana for specie, she sailed from that port in company with the Luzerne, a ship loaded with supplies. Soon after leaving harbour, three frigates were discerned ahead, two leagues distant; the American vessels were hove about; the enemy gave chase. The Luzerne falling rapidly behind, Barry signalled her to throw her guns overboard. A strange sail was now discovered on the weather-bow bearing down on them. The Alliance immediately showed a signal, which was answered; the stranger proving to be a French man-of-war of fifty guns. Barry now determined to make a dash at the headmost of the enemy's frigates, and, after a brief address to his men, wore round and poured in his broadside. The other vessels meantime manœuvred in a way to engage the attention of the French ship; but she kept her wind, fearing that the Alliance had been already captured, and that the engagement was only a decoy. After an action of fifty minutes, Barry's antagonist hoisted a signal of distress, on which her consorts joined her, and the Alliance hauled off. Barry now stood for the French ship, and, speaking her, it was determined to bring the enemy to action in

company. But the fifty proved so dull a sailer that the idea was abandoned. The loss of the *Alliance* in this engagement was three killed and eleven wounded; that of the enemy is reported to have been thirty-seven killed and fifty wounded. The commander of the frigate opposed to Barry was Captain James Vaughan, subsequently vice-admiral of the red; and, alluding to this battle some years after, he said he had never seen a ship so ably fought as the *Alliance*.

This was the last occasion on which the commodore was engaged with the British. Peace soon after was declared, and he remained for many years on shore, though retained in the service. When, under the administration of John Adams, it was determined to increase the navy, Barry was appointed to superintend the building of the *United States*, at Philadelphia, a forty-four gun frigate destined for his command. The model he sanctioned was used in her construction, and subsequently employed in other of our national vessels, which have proved so superior. She was launched on the 10th of July, 1797, being the first vessel afloat under the present organization of the navy. In little more than a year, the French war broke out, when Barry was ordered to sea in her, carrying out with him, as inferior officers, many who have since risen to high rank and distinction in the service. He first went to the eastward, but was directed soon after to go to the West Indies, with the *Delaware*, of twenty guns, and the *Herald*, of eighteen; and accordingly he hoisted, for the first time, his broad pennant as a commodore. During the course of the autumn, two considerable privateers were captured by the *United States* and her consort the *Delaware*; but no enemy of equal size presented himself to Barry. He continued, however, actively employed in defending our commerce, being most of the time at sea, until the autumn of the following year, when he sailed for France, having on board envoys to the Directory, pledges having been given to our government that its ministers would be properly respected,

and that the French were willing to treat for a peace. Hostilities nevertheless continued for more than two years longer, not being terminated until the 3d of February, 1801. Even after the difficulties with France were terminated, however, Barry retained the command of the United States; but soon after the accession of Jefferson to the presidential chair, the ship being laid up in ordinary, the commodore retired finally from active service.

He did not long survive. The short interval that remained to him of life was spent among his family, in the exercise of a generous hospitality. Frank and affable in his deportment, with a native humour that charmed all, it was considered not less a pleasure than an honour to share the conversation of the veteran hero. For many years he had been subject to an asthmatic affection, to which he fell a victim, at Philadelphia, on the 13th of September, 1803. He died as he had lived, in the faith of a Christian.

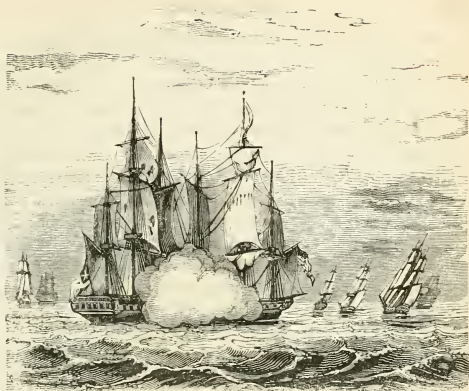
In person Commodore Barry was above the ordinary size. His countenance was marked with that resolution which was his characteristic, the expression softened somewhat by the genial kindness of his heart. In deportment he was dignified, without being ostentatious.







JOSHUA BARNEY.



ACTION BETWEEN THE HYDER ALI AND THE GENERAL MONK.

## JOSHUA BARNEY.

THE name of Barney recalls a career of dashing courage, incorruptible fidelity, and extraordinary vicissitudes. The claims of this distinguished naval hero to the remembrance of his countrymen are many and various; but he is particularly celebrated for the capture of the *General Monk* in the waters of the Delaware, on the 8th of April, 1782.

Joshua Barney was born at Baltimore, on the 6th of July, 1759, of reputable parents of English descent. His education was indifferent. Having acquired only the principles of reading, writing, and arithmetic, he left school at the age of ten. He had already displayed an inclination for the sea; but his parents, averse to this profession, endeavoured to interest him in other employments. Their endeavours were in vain, however, and he was finally placed with a brother-

in-law, Captain Drysdale, the master of a small brig trading to Liverpool.

With this relative he continued four years. In December, 1774, Captain Drysdale sailed for Nice, but died in a week after leaving port. The first mate having left the ship in consequence of a quarrel, the command of the vessel devolved on Barney, now only in his sixteenth year. The ship sprang a leak, so that it was necessary to keep the pumps at work night and day; and, on entering the Mediterranean, she was overtaken by a storm, which almost reduced her to a wreck. Barney put into Gibraltar, where the vessel was repaired, an operation that required three months; after which he prosecuted his voyage to Nice without further disaster. Arrived at this port, the consignees refused to pay the expenses incurred at Gibraltar, and the authorities sustaining them, Barney was cast into prison. To prevent his vessel being seized, he hoisted the union jack, so that any trespass on her would be an insult to the British flag. His firmness prevailed. He was released from prison, the repairs were liquidated, and his vessel allowed to proceed homewards. Touching at Alicant, however, where an expedition was being fitted out against Algiers, his ship was detained and employed on that unfortunate and disgraceful enterprise.

When, after these adventures, Barney reached America, he found that the war of independence had broke out, and that his native country, which he had left a colony of Great Britain, had practically declared her independence. He was not yet sixteen, but patriotism knows no age, and he determined to cast his sword in the scale of America. Two vessels were, at that time, being equipped at Baltimore under the authority of Congress, and in one of these, the sloop-of-war *Hornet*, he entered as master's mate. He served in this vessel on the expedition against New Providence. Subsequently he volunteered on board the *Wasp*, Captain Charles Alexander, and was with that vessel when she was chased

up the Delaware, and blockaded in Wilmington creek. Some galleys from Philadelphia being sent to the assistance of the *Wasp*, she stood out, and with their aid escaped the three frigates which had pursued her, and reached the capital in safety. In this engagement, Barney distinguished himself to such a degree that he was rewarded with the commission of a lieutenant, and appointed to the *Sachem*, a sloop of ten guns, Captain Robinson, in which he went to sea on the 6th of July, 1776, being just seventeen years of age.

The *Sachem*, before she had been many days at sea, captured a letter-of-marque brig, and carried her into Philadelphia. For the bravery Captain Robinson and Lieutenant Barney had displayed in this action, they were transferred to the *Andrew Doria*, of fourteen guns, then about to sail for St. Eustatia, to procure ammunition. The voyage out was prosecuted in safety; but on the return, the *Andrew Doria* fell in with the *Race Horse*, a British armed vessel of twelve guns. A battle ensued, and raged for two hours, when victory declared for the Americans. Soon after having captured an English scow, Barney was placed in her as prize-master. But here the good fortune which had hitherto been his suddenly deserted him, and, falling in with the British ship *Perseus*, of twenty guns, he was taken prisoner and carried to Charleston. Being released on parole, he returned to Philadelphia, but it was some months before he was exchanged. When this was effected, he rejoined the *Andrew Doria*.

The year 1777 was now drawing to a close, and the nation stood absorbed in watching the struggle going on for the possession of Philadelphia. For the water defence of the city, a flotilla of about forty ships and boats had been prepared, the command of which was bestowed on Commodore Hazlewood. To this flotilla the *Andrew Doria* belonged. The city, indeed, had already fallen into the hands of the British; but, unless they could obtain the command of the river also,

their prize would prove of little value, and might even have to be abandoned. The struggle for the control of the Delaware was expected to take place at the mouth of the Schuylkill, where Fort Mifflin and Red Bank, both in possession of the Americans, frowned defiance on the royal fleets. Thither the flotilla was now despatched to assist in the contest. The series of heroic combats that ensued, and which were protracted for nearly a month, will never be forgotten while the history of America survives; forts and flotilla alike contributed their deeds of valour, and, though the overwhelming numbers of the British finally prevailed, the victors reaped less glory than the conquered. In the flotilla action, Barney was conspicuous. The American ships, after their defeat, retired up the river to Bordentown.

In December he was ordered to Baltimore, to enter as a lieutenant on board the frigate *Virginia*. While endeavouring to get to sea, in March, 1778, the ship ran aground, and in this situation was attacked by three of the British fleet. The captain took to his barge and went ashore, leaving Barney in command. The young hero would have fought the frigate to the last extremity, but was prevented by the other officers, who declared resistance impossible. The ship was accordingly surrendered, and Barney found himself a prisoner a second time. At first he was treated with humanity; but being carried to New York, and thrown into one of the prison-ships, he realized the full horrors of captivity. In a few weeks, however, Admiral Byrne arrived from England to supersede Lord Howe in command of the British fleet, and, having visited the prison-ships, ordered Barney to be removed to his own vessel, where he was allowed considerable liberties. After a captivity of five months, he was exchanged. He now took command of a private armed schooner, and sailed for St. Eustatia; was captured by a privateer in the bay, and set on shore; and meeting at Baltimore his old friend Captain Robinson, accepted the post of

second officer in a private ship which that gentleman commanded.

They sailed in February, 1779, for Bordeaux, with a cargo of tobacco, and an armament of twelve guns; but had scarcely left the capes, when they were chased by the *Rosebud*, an English ship of sixteen guns. The British vessel finally overhauled the American, and was making preparations to board, when Barney, who commanded the stern-chaser, loaded the gun with grape-shot and a crow-bar, cutting up the enemy's rigging and nearly severing his foremast. At this warm reception the enemy hauled off, having lost, it is said, forty-seven men in killed and wounded. The remainder of the voyage out was completed without further incident. But, on the return, the ship encountered an English letter-of-marque, of equal force and weight of metal. The contest was long and gallantly maintained by the British, yet they were finally compelled to surrender. In charge of the prize Barney went into Philadelphia. Finding no vacancy on board any of the continental men-of-war, he determined to remain on shore a while, rather than re-embark in the merchant service. It was during the leisure thus obtained, that he made the acquaintance of Miss Bedford, daughter of Cumming Bedford, Esq., to whom he was married on the 10th of March, 1780.

He next sailed in the *Saratoga*, of sixteen guns, Captain Frejus. This ship had been at sea but a few days when she captured a British vessel of twelve guns. The next day an enemy's ship and two brigs hove in sight. Chase was immediately given, and the squadron overtaken, when a desperate conflict ensued. The ship alone mounted thirty-two guns, a disparity of force which rendered victory almost impossible, until Barney, at the head of fifty men, carried her by boarding. Her consorts, seeing her fall, immediately surrendered. Barney now took command of the captured ship, and steered for the Delaware; but, on the following day, was taken

by the *Intrepid* seventy-four. A prisoner now for the third time, he was treated with even more brutality than on the second occasion. Being first carried to New York, he was afterwards sent to England, there to be tried for treason. During the voyage the prisoners, sixty in number, were confined in loathsome apartments, without light or pure air, and with a scanty supply of provisions. At Plymouth they were flung into a prison-ship. Afterwards they were transferred to Mill Prison. From this place Barney succeeded in effecting his escape in disguise, and, with two other Americans in a similar situation, obtained a small fishing vessel, in which, habited as fishermen, they set sail for France. They had run the gauntlet of the channel fleet successfully, and were congratulating themselves on their approaching arrival among friends, when a privateer overhauled their little craft, made them prisoners, and carried them into Plymouth. Here, however, Barney again made his escape, reached London, and, after six weeks of suspense, obtained a passage secretly to Holland. Such extraordinary adventures realize a dream of romance.

He reached Philadelphia on the 21st of March, 1782, after an absence of nearly two years, the last twelvemonth of which had been consumed in his attempts to escape and in his voyage home. He was not long allowed to enjoy the repose which his trials and sufferings merited. The Delaware Bay was, at this period, infested with small cruisers of the enemy, which not only captured the river craft, but molested the neighbouring shores. To repress these marauders, the state of Pennsylvania determined to fit out a vessel or two at its own expense; and, with this view, a small merchant ship, called the *Hyder Ali*, then lying outward bound with a cargo of flour, was purchased. It took but a few days to discharge her freight, to pierce her for sixteen guns, and to provide her with an armament. Volunteers flocked to offer themselves for her crew. The command was given to Barney, and, at the head of a convoy of outward-bound mer-



chantmen, he stood down the bay, and anchored, on the 8th of April, in the roads off Cape May, where he awaited a proper wind for the traders to go to sea. Suddenly, two ships and a brig, one of the former a frigate, were seen rounding the cape, obviously with the intention of attacking him; on which he signalled the convoy to stand up the bay, the wind being at the southward, himself covering their rear, and the enemy in hot pursuit.

In order to head off the fugitives, the frigate took one channel and her consorts the other; the ship and brig choosing that which the Hyder Ali had selected. The brig, being a very fast vessel, soon overhauled Barney; but, contenting herself with giving him a broadside as she passed, pressed on in pursuit of the convoy. The Hyder Ali declined to return this fire, holding herself in reserve for the ship, a sloop-of-war mounting twenty guns, which was now seen rapidly approaching. When the Englishman drew near, Barney suddenly luffed, threw in his broadside, and immediately righting his helm, kept away again. This staggered the enemy, who, being so much the superior, and having a frigate within sustaining distance, had expected the Hyder Ali to surrender. The two vessels were now within pistol-shot of each other, and the forward guns of the British were just beginning to bear, when Barney, in a loud voice, ordered his quarter-master "to port his helm." The command was distinctly heard on board the enemy, as indeed Barney had intended it should be; and the Englishman immediately prepared to manœuvre his ship accordingly. But the quarter-master of the Hyder Ali had, prior to this, received his instructions, and, instead of obeying Barney's pretended order, whirled his wheel in the contrary direction, luffing the American ship athwart the hawse of her antagonist. The jib-boom of the enemy, in consequence of this, caught in the fore-rigging of the Hyder Ali, giving the latter the raking position which Barney had desired.

Not a cheer rose from the decks of the American vessel, even at this welcome spectacle; for the men knew that victory against such odds was still uncertain, and they thought as yet only of securing it. Nor did the British, at a sight so dispiriting to them, yield in despair. On the contrary, both crews rushed to their guns, and, for half an hour, the combat was waged on either side with desperate fury. The two vessels were soon enveloped in smoke. The explosions of the artillery were like continuous claps of thunder. In twenty-six minutes not less than twenty broadsides were discharged. Nor was the struggle confined to the batteries. Riflemen, posted in the tops of the *Hyder Ali*, picked off, one by one, the crew of the enemy, until his decks ran slippery with blood, and fifty-six out of his crew of one hundred and forty had fallen. All this while Barney stood on the quarter-deck of his ship, a mark for the enemy's sharpshooters, until they were driven from their stations by the superior aim of the Americans. At length, finding further resistance hopeless, the Englishman struck his colours. Huzza on huzza now rose from the deck of the victor. Barney, on taking possession, discovered that the vessel he had captured was the *General Monk*, and that her weight of metal was nearly twice his own. Notwithstanding the presence of the frigate, the young hero succeeded in bringing off his prize in safety; and, in a few hours, had moored her by the *Hyder Ali's* side opposite Philadelphia, with the dead of both ships still on their decks. In this action, Barney lost but four killed and eleven wounded. For the victory, conceded to be the most brilliant of the latter years of the war, Barney was rewarded by the state of Pennsylvania with a gold-hilted sword. In consequence of the capture of the *General Monk*, the Delaware ceased to be infested with the enemy.

The prize was now purchased by the United States, refitted under the name of the *General Washington*, and sent to sea with Barney in command. Off Cape May he escaped, in the

night, from three frigates of the enemy, and proceeding to the West Indies, whither he had been secretly ordered with despatches, executed his mission, and regained Philadelphia in safety. He was next despatched to France to bring home a considerable sum of money, which the court of Versailles had loaned to America. On his return, near the Delaware, he was chased by three British frigates, but made good his escape by anchoring in three fathoms water, and seizing the first opportunity to get off again. The arrival of peace, soon after this, deprived him of his command, the Washington being disposed of by government subsequent to that event. Thus terminated the career of Barney in the war of independence. It had exhibited unexampled vicissitudes, coupled with most extraordinary adventures; and is, in many respects, without a parallel. Three times a prisoner, but more frequently a conqueror, he passed, with equal equanimity, from good to bad fortune. In victory humane, and in misfortune patient, he was always master of himself. Maryland produced no greater naval hero in that generation.

The history of Barney's life, between this period and that of the war of 1812, belongs to his family rather than to his country. We shall pass over it in a few words. After having served in several civil offices, and entertained for a while the idea of emigrating to Kentucky, he went to sea for the improvement of his health. Engaging in the West India trade, he amassed considerable sums in a short period, though at considerable peril, owing to the disregard of the rights of neutrals exhibited by the British. In 1794, Congress determined to equip six frigates, of one of which he was offered the command. His name was fourth on the list, and, being after one who was a military officer, he resolved not to accept the commission. He now sailed for France, where, having been offered the rank of chef de division, equivalent to that of a commodore, he entered the French navy. He served with distinction for several years; but, finding his

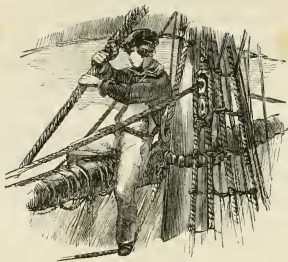
claims unrequited, and the fortune he already possessed slipping away, he retired disgusted in 1802, having lost in claims for services and money advanced, two hundred thousand dollars. The justice of his demands was in part acknowledged by a pension of fifteen hundred dollars; but of this he never drew a cent.

When the war of 1812 broke out, Barney took command of the privateer *Rossie*, and in ninety days captured eighteen ships, valued at two millions and a half of dollars. In 1813 he accepted the command of the flotilla fitting out to defend Chesapeake Bay; but it was not until April of the succeeding year that his force was in a condition to act. He was now for some time blockaded; but, having received reinforcements, he attacked the enemy's squadron, and would probably have succeeded if the battery on shore had sustained him. In the affair of Bladensburg, he commanded the marines, the only portion of the American army which behaved with spirit. Barney and his little band kept the enemy in check, until the commodore and most of his officers were wounded, the former so severely as to be unable to accompany the retreat which he was compelled finally to order. The British, respecting his heroism, gave him his parole, and he was carried by the enemy's sailors to Bladensburg, the gallant tars refusing to accept the liberal sum which he offered in compensation for their trouble. From Bladensburg, he was conveyed to his farm at Elkridge, where he remained for a considerable period, slowly recovering. The surgeon, fearing the risk of extracting the ball, allowed it to remain in the wound, which gave Barney much inconvenience, and was thought to have led ultimately to his death. For his gallantry in this action, the corporation of Washington presented him with an elegant sword.

On the restoration of his health, having been exchanged, he resumed the command of the flotilla; but peace was soon after declared. He now went to Europe with despatches,

and on his return retired to his farm, where he continued to suffer from his wounded limb. He was subsequently appointed naval officer of Baltimore, which office he held for the remainder of his days. His death occurred at Pittsburgh, on the 1st of December, 1818, while he was on a journey to the West.

In person Barney was noble and commanding. His face expressed that cordiality and kindness of heart which every act of his life displayed.



## RICHARD DALE.

As the lieutenant of Paul Jones in the action with the *Serapis*, and as the person to whom, after the commander, the victory is principally to be attributed, Richard Dale deserves a prominent place in this series.

Dale was born in Virginia, not far from the town of Norfolk, on the 6th of November, 1756. His parents were respectable, though not rich. His father died while Dale was yet a lad, when his mother, finding herself left with several children, married again. The presence of a step-father in the house, added to a natural inclination for the sea, induced Dale to make a voyage to Liverpool, at the tender age of twelve, in a vessel commanded by one of his uncles. On his return he remained a twelvemonth on shore, and was then apprenticed to a merchant and ship-owner of Norfolk, in whose employment he made several voyages to the West India Islands. His integrity, his quickness of parts, and his attention to his duties, rapidly elevated him in his profession; and in 1775, when he was scarcely nineteen, we find him



RICHARD DALE.





chief mate on board of one of his employer's vessels. But when the struggle for independence had resolved itself into a war, the mercantile marine became unsafe, and was generally abandoned; and Dale, in consequence, lost his situation as well as became relieved from his articles of apprenticeship.

Virginia, in common with most of the wealthier colonies, now established a navy of her own, consisting chiefly of bay craft, to be employed in her extensive rivers and estuaries. In one of the small vessels of this marine, Dale entered as a lieutenant. While serving in this capacity, he was sent a short distance, in a river craft, for some guns; but, falling in with the tender of a British frigate, was captured and carried into Norfolk. Here he was thrown among several old intimates, who had embraced the royal side, and who, by their arguments, shook his faith for a while in the justice of the colonial cause. Under the impressions derived from this change of opinion, he accompanied his friends in a cruise against some American pilot-boats. An engagement ensued, which was warmly contested, and in which Dale received a severe wound, which, confining him to his room at Norfolk, left him ample opportunity to reflect on his late conduct. The result was, that he renounced his new principles, determining, to use his own words, "never again to put himself in the way of the bullets of his own country." In this momentary vacillation, Dale does not stand alone. Many sincere and courageous men hesitated, in a similar manner, on which side their duty lay; for the question was a new one, and, to not a few minds, was involved in difficulties. Dale, in after-life, always confessed his error, with a candour and sincerity which bespoke the honesty of his heart.

Dale now embarked on a trading voyage to Jamaica, resolving to seek the first opportunity to join his native colours. This was not long delayed. On the return passage, the vessel was captured by the American brig *Lexington*, Capt. Barry, when Dale, offering himself as a volunteer, was imme-

diately rated as a midshipman. Barry having left the brig on her arrival in Philadelphia, Dale remained with her, and was promoted to be master's mate. In the autumn of the year 1776, when returning from Cape Francois, she was taken by the Pearl frigate; but Dale's captivity, this time, was of short duration; for the brig having been recaptured by the crew rising on the British officer in command, Dale and several others were set on shore at Cape Henlopen in exchange for the prisoners. The Lexington soon after sailed for Europe. Here, as part of a squadron under Captain Lambert Wickes, she made the circuit of Ireland, spreading alarm among the English merchants. She subsequently remained some months in a French port; but in September, 1777, was ordered to put to sea, on pain of sequestration, the British government having assumed an attitude which forbade the longer connivance of the court of Versailles with the fitting out of American vessels in French harbours.

In consequence of this warning, the Lexington went to sea indifferently provided with military stores. The day after leaving port, she fell in with an armed British cutter, the Alert, and immediately an action ensued. The English fought with the greatest spirit; the Americans at considerable disadvantage, in consequence of the scarcity of ammunition. After a struggle of two hours, the captain of the Lexington, believing his adversary to be too crippled to follow, and aware of his own inability to bring the contest to a successful termination, made all sail to escape; but the Alert, bending new canvas, and being the swifter vessel, in the course of three or four hours overhauled the fugitive. Finding surrender or a further struggle inevitable, the Americans chose the latter, and desperately renewed the action. But their courage was of no avail. The cannonading was soon all on one side. After having thrown his last shot, after having broken up and used all the old iron that could be employed for the purpose, the captain of the Lexington,

finding that further resistance would only uselessly sacrifice his men, struck his colours. By this untoward event, Dale became a prisoner for the third time. He wanted yet fifty days of being twenty-one years old.

Being taken into Plymouth, the officers, after an examination to ascertain their birth-place, were thrown into Mill Prison on a charge of high-treason. Here the common men were already confined. The treatment which the Americans received in this place will always be a stain on the British ministry of that time. So severe became the privations of the prisoners, that, at last, from excess of hunger, they caught a dog, skinned, cooked, and ate him to satisfy their cravings for food. This incident becoming known, some charitable individuals laid their sufferings before the British public; the appeal was responded to; and in a short time sixteen thousand pounds were collected for the captives. Relieved from the pressure of actual want, and seeing no hope of an exchange, the prisoners now began to turn their thoughts on escape. Accordingly, the digging a hole under the wall of their common cell was begun. The earth was removed, little by little, in the pockets of the captives, care being taken to conceal the result of their labours, until a hole, large enough to admit the body of a man, was made. The process required both secrecy and time, for the prisoners could only work when left to themselves, and had no means of ridding themselves of the earth dug up, except by emptying their pockets, while exercising on the walls for a short period of each day. At last, in February, 1778, the hole being completed, all the captives admitted into the secret escaped. For more than a week, the party wandered about in company and by night, suffering the greatest privations. Finally, however, it was resolved to separate.

Dale, with a single companion, reached London hotly pursued. On one occasion the two lay concealed under some straw in an out-house, while the premises were searched by

those seeking them. From London, Dale sought to escape on board a vessel bound to Dunkirk, but, being discovered by a press-gang, his true character was suspected. Once arrested, he was soon recognised, and remanded to his old prison. Now began a confinement even more tedious than before. As a punishment for their escape, the prisoners were confined for forty days in the black hole; and, even after their release from this foul duress, were deprived of many privileges they had formerly enjoyed. Dale revenged himself by singing rebel songs, for which he was again immured in the black hole. For a whole year this condition of things continued, when Dale succeeded singly in effecting his escape, through the agency, it is supposed, of some officer connected with the garrison. The exact means are not known, as Dale, to the day of his death, refused to reveal them; but as he procured the uniform of an English officer, and in this disguise walked past the sentry, our explanation of the mystery is no doubt the correct one. Dale had now money, probably, as well as clothes; for he went to London, and procured a passport. Landing in France, he hastened to L'Orient, where he found Paul Jones about to fit out a squadron, and joining that distinguished commander in his old capacity of master's mate, soon made himself so valuable, that Jones procured for him the commission of lieutenant, and appointed him second in command on board the *Bon Homme Richard*.

The eventful cruise which followed we have already narrated at length in our article on Paul Jones. We shall not, therefore, describe it a second time, but quote, instead, Mr. Cooper's account of the services of Dale: that writer's information being chiefly derived from the commodore himself. "Dale," says Cooper, "does not appear in any prominent situation, though always discharging the duties of his responsible station with skill and credit, until the squadron appeared off Leith, with the intention of seizing that town—the port of Edinburgh—and of laying it under contribution. On this

occasion, our lieutenant was selected to command the boats that were to land, a high compliment to so young a man, as coming from one of the character of Paul Jones. Every thing was ready, Dale had received his final orders, and was in the very act of proceeding to the ship's side to enter his boat, when a heavy squall struck the vessels, and induced an order for the men to come on deck, and assist in shortening sail. The vessels were compelled to bear up before it, to save their spars; this carried them out of the frith; and, a gale succeeding, the enterprize was necessarily abandoned. This gale proved so heavy, that one of the prizes actually foundered.

“This attempt of Jones's, while it is admitted to have greatly alarmed the coast, has often been pronounced rash and inconsiderate. Such was not the opinion of Dale. A man of singular moderation in his modes of thinking, and totally without bravado, it was his conviction that the effort would have been crowned with success. He assured the writer, years after the occurrence, that he was about to embark in the expedition with feelings of high confidence, and that he believed nothing but the inopportune intervention of the squall stood between Jones and a triumphant *coup de main*. A few days later, Jones made a secret proposal to his officers, which some affirm was to burn the shipping at North Shields, but which the commanders of two of his vessels strenuously opposed, in consequence of which the project was abandoned. The commodore himself, in speaking of the manner in which this and other similar propositions were received by his subordinates, extolled the ardour invariably manifested by the young men, among whom Dale was one of the foremost. Had it rested with them, the attempts at least would all have been made.”

The celebrated battle between the *Serapis* and *Bon Homme Richard* occurred on the 19th of September, 1779. Mr. Cooper continues his narrative of Dale's share in it, evidently

drawn from private conversations with the commodore, as follows: "The Bon Homme Richard had finally sailed on this cruise with only two proper sea-lieutenants on board her. There was a third officer of the name of Lunt, who has been indifferently called a lieutenant and the sailing-master, but who properly filled the latter station. This gentleman had separated from the ship in a fog, on the coast of Ireland, while in the pursuit of some deserters, and never rejoined the squadron. Another person of the same name, and a distant relative of the master, was the second lieutenant. He was sent in a pilot-boat, accompanied by a midshipman and several men, to capture a vessel in sight, before Jones made the Baltic fleet coming round Flamborough Head. This party was not able to return to the Bon Homme Richard until after the battle had terminated. In consequence of these two circumstances, each so novel in itself, the American frigate fought this bloody and arduous combat with only one officer on board her, of the rank of a sea-lieutenant, who was Dale. This is the reason why the latter is so often mentioned as *the* lieutenant of the Bon Homme Richard, during that memorable fight. The fact rendered his duties more arduous and diversified, and entitles him to the greater credit for their proper performance. Both the Lunts, however, appear to have been seamen of merit, and subsequently did good service. They were natives of New England.

"Dale was stationed on the gun-deck, where of course he commanded in chief, though it appears that his proper personal division was the forward guns. Until the ships got foul of each other, this brought him particularly into the hottest of the work; the Serapis keeping much on the bows, or ahead of the Bon Homme Richard. It is known that Jones was much pleased with his department, which, in truth, was every way worthy of his own. When the alarm was given that the ship was sinking, Dale went below himself to ascertain the real state of the water, and his confident and fearless

report cheered the men to renewed exertions. Shortly after, the supply of powder was stopped, when our lieutenant again quitted his quarters to inquire into the cause. On reaching the magazine passage he was told by the sentinels that they had closed the ingress, on account of a great number of strange and foreign faces that they saw around them. On further inquiry, Dale discovered that the master-at-arms, of his own head, had let loose all the prisoners—more than a hundred in number—under the belief that the ship was sinking. Dale soon saw the danger which might ensue, but finding the English much alarmed at the supposed condition of the ship, he succeeded in mustering them, and setting them at work at the pumps, where, by their exertions, they probably prevented the apprehended calamity. For some time, at the close of the action, all his guns being rendered useless, Dale was employed principally in this important service. There is no question that without some such succour, the Richard would have gone down much earlier than she did. It is a singular feature of this everyway extraordinary battle, that here were Englishmen, zealously employed in aiding the efforts of their enemies, under the cool control of a collected and observant officer.

“At length the cheerful intelligence was received that the enemy had struck. Dale went on deck, and immediately demanded Jones’s permission to take possession of the prize. It was granted, and had he never manifested any other act of personal intrepidity, his promptitude on this occasion, and the manner in which he went to work, to attain his purpose, would have shown him to be a man above personal considerations, when duty or honour pointed out his course. The main-yard of the Serapis was hanging a-cock-bill, over the side of the American ship. The brace was shot away, and the pendant hung within reach. Seizing the latter, Dale literally swung himself off, and alighted alone on the quarter-deck of the Serapis. Here he found no one but the brave

Pearson, who had struck his own flag; but the men below were still ignorant of the act. We may form an opinion of the risk that the young man ran, in thus boarding his enemy at night, and in the confusion of such a combat, for the English were still firing below, by the fact that Mr. Mayrant, a young man of South Carolina, and a midshipman of the *Bon Homme Richard*, who led a party after the lieutenant, was actually run through the thigh by a boarding pike, and by the hands of a man in the waist below.

“The first act of Dale, on getting on the quarter-deck of the *Serapis*, was to direct her captain to go on board the American ship. While thus employed, the English first lieutenant came up from below, and, finding that the Americans had ceased their fire, he demanded if they had struck. ‘No, sir,’ answered Dale, ‘it is this ship that has struck, and you are my prisoner.’ An appeal to Captain Pearson confirming this, the English lieutenant offered to go below and silence the remaining guns of the *Serapis*. To this Dale objected, and had both the officers passed on board the *Bon Homme Richard*. In a short time, the English below were sent from their guns, and full possession was obtained of the prize.

“As more men were soon sent from the *Bon Homme Richard*, the two ships were now separated, the *Richard* making sail, and Jones ordering Dale to follow with the prize. A sense of fatigue had come over the latter, in consequence of the reaction of so much excitement and so great exertions, and he took a seat on the binnacle. Here he issued an order to brace the head yards aback, and to put the helm down. Wondering that the ship did not pay off, he directed that the wheel-ropes should be examined. It was reported that they were not injured, and that the helm was hard down. Astonished to find the ship immovable under such circumstances, there being a light breeze, Dale sprang upon his feet, and then discovered, for the first time, that he had been severely wounded, by a splinter, in the foot and ankle. The



hurt, now that he was no longer sustained by the excitement of battle, deprived him of the use of his leg, and he fell. Just at this moment, Mr. Lunt, the officer who had been absent in the pilot-boat, reached the Richard, and Dale was forced to give up to him the command of the prize. The cause of the Serapis's not minding her helm was the fact that Captain Pearson had dropped an anchor under foot when the two ships got foul; a circumstance of which the Americans were ignorant until this moment."

The wound of Dale laid him up for a considerable period, but he remained with Jones as first lieutenant, and in this capacity accompanied that officer, in the Alliance, from the Texel to L'Orient. In the controversy between the commodore and Landais, Dale took part with the former, and offered to lead a party to recover the Alliance by force. In October, 1780, Dale sailed with Jones for America, in the Ariel, a twenty gun ship, loaned by the King of France to the United States. Losing her masts in a gale, the Ariel returned to port to refit. About the beginning of 1781, she sailed a second time, and arrived at Philadelphia on the 18th of February. Dale had now been absent four years from his native country, more than a twelvemonth of which period had been spent in captivity; and he was yet only twenty-four years and two months old. In reward for his services he was placed upon the list of lieutenants, his former commission having emanated from the agents of Congress in Europe. He now parted from Paul Jones, with whom he had served nearly two years. The commodore desired to retain Dale with him, offering him the place of lieutenant on board the America, a seventy-four, destined for Jones; but Dale declined, giving as his reason that a long time would elapse before the ship could be made ready for sea. Circumstances in the end proved the opinion of Dale to be correct, for the America was presented to the French king, and Jones never went to sea in her at all.

In the following June, Dale joined the *Trumbull* twenty-eight, Captain Nicholson, in the capacity of first lieutenant. This ship left the capes of Delaware on the 8th of August, 1781, and, being immediately detected by a blockading squadron, was chased off the land. The night set in dark and squally. Suddenly the *Trumbull* found herself close to a heavy ship, which soon proved to be a frigate, the largest ship of the hostile force. The American vessel, notwithstanding the loss of her fore-topmast and fore-topgallant-mast in the chase, joined battle, and the conflict was maintained an hour, when the *Trumbull* struck to the *Iris* thirty-two and the *Monk* eighteen. This was the fourth time that Dale became a prisoner. As he was also wounded in this battle, it was the third time that he had received a hurt. He did not suffer, on the present occasion, the indignities of his late captivity; for being carried into New York, he was paroled on Long Island, and in November exchanged.

On his return to Philadelphia, Dale, finding that the marine had, by this time, lost most of its ships, and that there was slight chance of his obtaining a command, entered on board the *Queen of France*, a letter-of-marque carrying twelve guns, first as chief officer, and subsequently as captain. In the latter capacity he sailed, in the spring of 1782, for *L'Orient*, in company with a large squadron of privateers. During the voyage, many valuable prizes were made. Having separated from the rest of the fleet, Dale fell in with a British private armed brig, mounting fourteen guns, and a severe conflict ensued, in which both vessels sustained considerable damage. The struggle was terminated by the Englishman hauling off, nor was Dale in a condition to pursue him. It was not until February, 1783, that Dale returned to Philadelphia, and by that time peace had been declared. The war having ceased, he, in common with most of the officers of the navy, was disbanded.

Dale was now in the twenty-seventh year of his age, with

a perfect knowledge of his profession, active, in good health, and full of ambition. There being no opening for him in regular service, he resolved to embark in the mercantile marine; and accordingly became part-owner and commander of a large ship, in which he sailed for London in December, 1783. After this, he engaged in the East India trade, commanding several of the finest ships that left our ports. In this pursuit he continued until 1794, when the government, on the prospect of difficulties with Algiers, appointed him one of the six captains authorized under the law of that year. An arrangement having been made, however, with the Barbary power, the captains were furloughed, and Dale returned again to the China trade, in which he continued until 1798. The last vessel he commanded in this trade was the *Ganges*. This ship was so fast, that when the war broke out with France, the government, requiring a hasty armament, bought her, fitted her out as a man-of-war, and gave the command of her to Dale, with orders to cruise on the coast. In consequence of this arrangement, Dale was the first officer who went to sea under the pennon of the present navy.

His service in his new field was of short duration, in consequence of some disputes relating to rank. The captains of 1794 claimed their seniority, and it being uncertain how the question would be decided, Dale declined serving until the difficulty was settled. Accordingly, in May, 1797, he sailed for Canton again, under a furlough, in command of a strong letter-of-marque. On his return from this voyage, finding his rank regulated according to his desires, he reported himself for service. All the national vessels were, however, occupied, and no opening presented itself until the war with France was concluded. But in 1801, when the government, aroused by the conduct of the Barbary powers, had resolved to send a squadron of observation to the Mediterranean, Dale was selected to command the force; and accordingly, in the

spring of that year, he hoisted his broad pennant on board the *President* forty-four.

The squadron, consisting of three frigates and one brig, sailed from the United States on the 1st of June, 1801, and reached Gibraltar on the 1st of July. "The *Philadelphia* thirty-eight," says the author to whose biography of Dale we are again indebted, "blockaded the Tripolitan admiral, with two cruisers, in Gibraltar, while the other vessels went aloft. A sharp action occurred between the *Enterprise* and a Tripolitan of equal force, in which the latter was compelled to submit, but was allowed to go into her own port again, for want of legal authority to detain her. Dale appeared off Tripoli, endeavoured to negotiate about an exchange of prisoners, and did blockade the port; but his orders fettered him in a way to prevent any serious enterprises. In a word, no circumstances occurred to allow the commodore to show his true character, except as it was manifested in his humanity, prudence, and dignity. As a superior, he obtained the profound respect of all under his orders, and to this day his name is mentioned with regard by those who then served under him. It is thought that this squadron did much toward establishing the high discipline of the marine. In one instance only had Dale an opportunity of manifesting his high personal and professional qualities. The *President* struck a rock in quitting Port Mahon, and for some hours she was thought to be in imminent danger of foundering. Dale assumed the command, and one of his lieutenants, himself subsequently a flag officer of rare seamanship and merit, has often recounted to the writer his admiration of the commodore's coolness, judgment, and nerve, on so trying an occasion. The ship was carried to Toulon, blowing a gale, and, on examination, it was found that she was only saved from destruction by the skilful manner in which the wood ends had been secured.

“The vigilance of Dale was so great, however, and his dispositions so skilful, that the Tripolitans made no captures while he commanded in those seas. In March, 1802, he sailed for home, under his orders, reaching Hampton Roads in April, after a cruise of about ten months. The succeeding autumn, Commodore Dale received an order to hold himself in readiness to resume the command from which he had just returned. Ever ready to serve his country, when it could be done with honour, he would cheerfully have made his preparations accordingly, but, by the order itself, he ascertained that he was to be sent out without a captain in his own ship. This, agreeably to the notions he entertained, was a descent in the scale of rank, and he declined serving on such terms. There being no alternative between obedience and resignation, he chose the latter, and quitted the navy. At this time, he was the third captain on the list, and it is no more than justice to say, that he stood second to no other in the public estimation.”

The remainder of his life, Dale spent on shore, in the enjoyment of an ample fortune, and surrounded by his family and friends. In 1791 he had married a ward of Commodore Barry's, and with this lady he now lived in the enjoyment of that domestic happiness for which his warm heart and well balanced character so admirably qualified him. He did not, however, in resigning his commission, lose his love for the navy, but, as his sons attained the proper age, sought for and secured their admission to the service. For many years previous to his death he was in full communion with the Protestant Episcopal Church, and sustained the character of a sincere and consistent Christian. He established, in Philadelphia, a Mariner's Church, which he attended every Sunday afternoon for a number of years. In seamen he took a lively interest, and was particularly active in all philanthropic measures undertaken for their benefit. Much of his time, it is said, as well as of his purse, was devoted to charity. He

survived until the 26th of February, 1826, when he died, at the green old age of seventy.

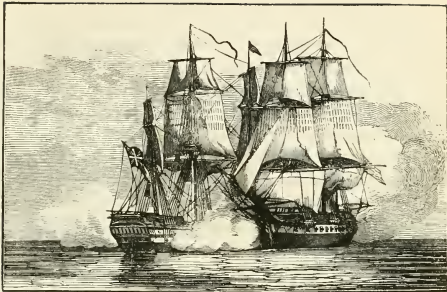
The character of Dale is marked by a total want of exaggeration. He was truth itself. No man could be bolder in the hour of action; none was less boastful after the victory was won. He was cool in battle, prompt in emergencies, never led into excesses by the heat of the struggle. Modesty and ability with him went hand in hand. If the navy has shown men more brilliant, it has exhibited none more deserving. Never, it has been well said, has a whisper of complaint been heard against the public or private career of Richard Dale.





THOMAS TRUXTUN.





CAPTURE OF L'INSURGENTE.

## THOMAS TRUXTUN.

THE hero of the war with France was Thomas Truxtun. By a combination of fortuitous circumstances, he was not only the first officer to gain a victory after the establishment of our infant navy, but the sole one to capture a frigate in the contest to which we have alluded. His conquest of *L'Insurgente*, a ship of somewhat superior force to his own vessel, was his earliest achievement; but the fame of this was soon after eclipsed by his victory over the *Vengeance*, a fifty-four.

Truxtun was born on Long Island, the 17th of February, 1755. His father, an eminent lawyer of the colony of New York, died while the future commodore was yet a lad; and in consequence, young Truxtun became the ward of John Troup, Esq., of Jamaica, Long Island. He did not, however, remain long under the guardianship of this gentleman. Like most of the naval heroes of this country, he early displayed a predilection for the sea; and, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his friends, embarked on board a ship bound to

Bristol, England, when he was scarcely twelve years old. The following year he was apprenticed, at his own request, to a celebrated commander in the London trade. No incident occurred during this period of his life worthy of mention, except his impressment on board the *Prudent*, a sixty-four, at the period of the threatened war with Spain, in consequence of the difficulty about the Falkland Islands. He was soon released, however, on the application, it is said, of a person in authority. The captain of the *Prudent*, pleased with his activity and intelligence, endeavoured to persuade him to continue in the service, promising that interest should be made for his promotion; but Truxtun, though flattered by the offer, and tempted by the career thus opened to him, did not consider it compatible with honour to abandon his old master, and therefore returned to the merchant service. This decision showed a nobility of soul, which foreshadowed the greatness of his future life.

As early as 1775, when but twenty years of age, Truxtun had risen to the command of a vessel. The war of independence had now begun, and the young seaman, arraying himself on the side of his country, signalized himself by bringing home a supply of powder on one of his voyages. Towards the close of the year, when bound to *St. Eustatius*, he was captured by a British frigate, and his vessel, of which he owned a half, condemned. He was not, however, confined as a prisoner, and, in consequence, he returned to the colonies, landing at Philadelphia. He now entered as lieutenant on board the *Congress*, a private armed ship, which, in the winter of 1776, captured several valuable Jamaica merchantmen in the Gulf of Florida. Of one of these vessels Truxtun took command as prize officer, and carried her into Bedford, Massachusetts. In 1777, he fitted out a privateer, called the *Independence*, at New York, and proceeded off the Azores, where he fell in with a part of the Windward Island convoy, of which he took three large and valuable ships, one of

which was superior to the Independence in both men and guns.

Returning from this cruise, he fitted out another vessel, the Mars, mounting twenty guns, and in her sailed for the British Channel, where he made great ravages among the enemy's merchantmen. Some of his prizes having been sent into Quiberon, Lord Stormont remonstrated with the court of Versailles against the admission into the harbours of France of our armed vessels and prizes. After a very successful cruise, Truxtun returned to the United States, and settled in Philadelphia, then the capital of the nation. He did not, however, remain long on land, but, during the remainder of the war, was actively employed at sea, commanding and in part owning several of the most important armed vessels built in Philadelphia. He brought in from the West Indies, in this period, large cargoes of the articles, which, in that eventful time, were of the first necessity for the army. On one occasion, while making a voyage to France in the St. James, a twenty gun ship, he engaged a British privateer of thirty-two guns, which he obliged to sheer off, and which was subsequently towed into New York in a dismantled condition by a royal man-of-war. He returned from this voyage with one of the most valuable cargoes landed in the United States during the war. Not content with his services on the ocean, he distinguished himself on two remarkable occasions on land. Though never holding a commission in the regular marine, he established a high reputation for ability as well as bravery, and, when the war closed, he could make the proud boast that he had never engaged the foe without coming off victorious.

Like others of the most gallant naval commanders of the struggle for independence, he turned his attention to commerce after the peace of 1783, and was, for some years, employed in an extensive traffic with Europe, China, and the British possessions in India. In 1794, however, when the

first germs of the present navy were formed, Truxtun was appointed one of the six captains nominated at that time, and directed to superintend the building of the *Constellation*, a frigate of thirty-six guns, which he was destined to command. When the difficulties with France occurred in 1798, Truxtun was despatched to the West Indies, to protect the commerce of the United States in that quarter. In company with the *Baltimore* twenty, he went to Havana, and convoyed safely home a fleet of sixty sail, several French cruisers lying in the Spanish port, ready to follow the merchantmen but for this force. Returning again to the West Indies, he continued cruising in that quarter, until the 9th of February, 1799, when, the island of Nevis bearing west-south-west, distant five leagues, a large sail was detected on the southern sea-board. The *Constellation* having the weather-gage, Truxtun ran down towards the stranger, who immediately showed American colours. The commodore now displayed his private signals. On this the other vessel hauled down the stars and stripes, ran up the French ensign, and, firing a gun to windward, kept on under easy sail, inviting a contest. The challenge thus boldly given was chivalrously accepted; and the *Constellation* bore down on the foe, who confidently awaited the combat.

The American frigate was soon close to the enemy, and, having hailed him, opened her fire, which the stranger returned with equal spirit. For fifteen minutes the contest raged with fury on both sides. At last a shot struck the fore-topmast of the *Constellation*, near the lower cap, and the spar threatening to yield to the pressure of the immense sail, Midshipman David Porter, who commanded in the top, assumed the responsibility of cutting the stoppers and lowering the yard. This bold conduct alone saved the topmast and all its hamper from falling; and probably exercised a decisive influence on the result of the battle. The *Constellation* now drew ahead, still maintaining a tremendous cannonade.

While the enemy aimed chiefly at her rigging, she directed her fire principally to his hull, and with such effect, that before the fight had raged an hour, the spirit of the foe began to flag. The Americans, stimulated by this spectacle, now threw in two or three raking broadsides, and then, shooting ahead out of the smoke, wore round, and, hauling athwart the enemy's stern, prepared again to rake her. Before the manœuvre could be executed, however, the foe lowered her colours. At this welcome sight the crew of the *Constellation* unanimously cheered, and, as the sounds died off, renewed and yet again renewed the buzza, until the ship rocked beneath the concussion.

The prize proved to be *L'Insurgente*, one of the fastest vessels in the French navy. In this conflict the force of the two frigates may be considered as nearly equal. The *Constellation* mounted but thirty-eight guns, and had a crew of only three hundred and nine men; while *L'Insurgente* carried forty guns and four hundred and nine men. The guns of the French ship were but twelves, however, while a portion of the *Constellation's*, those in the main-deck battery, were twenty-fours. The weight of metal in a broadside was, therefore, as much in favour of the American frigate as the superior size of *L'Insurgente's* crew was to the advantage of the latter. In this action, the foe had twenty-nine men killed and forty-one wounded; the Americans had only three wounded. The victory of the *Constellation* rendered the navy even more popular than it had been previous, and placed Truxtun, in the estimation of the nation, on a par with the brightest naval heroes of the war of independence. A prize crew was put into the captured vessel immediately after the action; but a gale coming up, the two ships parted before all the prisoners could be removed to the *Constellation*. Darkness soon followed, and Lieutenant Rodgers, who was in command, found himself alone, and with no one but Midshipman Porter and eleven men, to manage one hundred

and seventy-two of the foe. The wreck of the spars and hamper, which had fallen in the fight, still dragged beside the hull, while the decks were covered with the wounded and the dead. The prisoners, perceiving what a small number was opposed to them, began to show symptoms of rising. In this crisis Lieutenant Rodgers acted with that promptitude and energy which distinguished him when he rose to bear a commodore's broad pennant. The prisoners were hurried into the lower hold, and a sentry stationed at each hatchway, with orders to shoot any one who should attempt to come on deck without orders. For three days and nights, the two young officers, with their slender crew, were compelled to manage a frigate, and keep watch over their prisoners, nor during the whole of that period did either Rodgers or Porter lie down to sleep. At the end of that time, *L'Insurgente* arrived at St. Kitts, where the *Constellation* was already at anchor. The captured frigate was soon after taken into the service as a thirty-six, and, being placed under the command of Captain Murray, was sent to cruise with a roving commission.

During the year 1799, Truxtun was in command of one of the two principal squadrons into which Congress had divided our force in the West Indies. The St. Domingo station was awarded to Commodore Talbot, whose broad pennant was hoisted on board the *Constitution* forty-four; while the Guadaloupe station was given to Truxtun, who continued in the *Constellation*, having, for most of the time, thirteen sail under his command. The facilities for concealment offered among the islands, as well as the great value of the American trade, caused the seas in that quarter to swarm with French privateers. The summer and autumn of the year were, therefore, spent by Truxtun almost constantly at sea. It was while engaged in cruising off Guadaloupe, having parted company with all his squadron, that the commodore, on the 1st of February, 1800, saw a large ship to the south-

east, steering westward. At first he supposed the strange sail to be an English merchantman, and, not wishing to be drawn to leeward of his cruising ground, he hoisted British colours, in order to induce her to approach and speak him. But the invitation being slighted, sail was made in pursuit. The Constellation gained rapidly on the stranger, and soon discovered him to be a Frenchman, on which the English flag was hauled down, the men beat to quarters, and the American ensign given to the winds. The enemy was now made out to be a fifty-two; but, nothing daunted by the disparity of force, Truxtun stood boldly on, carrying every inch of canvas that would draw; while the Frenchman, instead of coming up to meet him, as *L'Insurgente* had done, made every exertion to escape. The only excuse for this was, that the foe was deeply laden with valuable articles, it being the practice, at that time, to send such things to France in ships of war. About noon the wind fell, when the enemy began to gain. All through the afternoon, the breeze continued variable, the Constellation now sailing the fastest, and now the foe. Night fell, with the French ship rather more distant than at noon. When morning dawned, the enemy was still discovered to leeward, and the chase was continued with renewed determination on the part of the Americans. At meridian, on the 2d, the wind freshened, when the Constellation again drew ahead. During the afternoon, the breeze continued to increase, and now the enemy rose fast to view. Truxtun pressed his ship to the utmost, his eagerness increasing with the delay, and, at last, about eight P. M., he was within speaking distance of the stranger.

The Frenchman, finding escape impossible, now came up to the wind a little, and, as the Constellation doubled on his quarter, opened a fire from his stern and quarter guns. Truxtun, restraining the impatience of his men, waited until he had drawn still more on the weather quarter of the chase, when he poured in a broadside. The action now began in

earnest. Both ships were determined on victory, and for several hours the fight was maintained within pistol-shot, the combatants running side by side, and the firing being rapid and tremendous. About midnight the resistance of the enemy began to slacken, and the hopes of the Americans gaining a brilliant victory rose fast, the more when, an hour after, the stranger hauled up and drew out of the combat. Just at this crisis, however, word was brought to Truxtun that the mainmast was tottering, every shroud having been shot away. As victory depended on the preservation of this important spar, he was compelled to order the men from the guns in order to repair it, intending, when the mast was rendered safe, to renew the chase, nor leave the enemy until he had struck. But all the brilliant anticipations of the commodore and his crew were cut short, in a few minutes, by the mast going by the board. What added to the misfortune was that all the topmen, including Mr. Jarvis, the midshipman in command aloft, went over the side with the spar, and that gallant young officer, who had refused to abandon his post, was lost, with all but one man. The Constellation was now in no condition to prosecute the combat. The enemy, however, was in even a worse plight, except that he still retained sufficient spars to enable him to escape. In a few days, the Frenchman arrived at Curaçoa, dismasted and in a sinking condition, having lost, in the battle, fifty killed and one hundred and ten wounded. The Constellation suffered less severely, her loss being fourteen killed and twenty-five wounded, but eleven of the latter died at Jamaica, whither Truxtun bore up after the action. The enemy was subsequently discovered to have been *La Vengeance*, with a crew of between four and five hundred souls, and mounting twenty-eight eighteens for her main-deck battery, sixteen twelves, and eight forty-two pound carronades. The Constellation's armament having been changed since her action with *L'Insurgente*, she now carried twenty-





THE TRUXTUN MEDAL.

eight eighTEENS, and ten twenty-four pound carronades. In computing the weight of the respective broadsides, it must be remembered that, in the French mode of weighing, one pound is added to every twelve; hence the disparity of force was very considerably in favour of *La Vengeance*. Yet, if the *Constellation* could have kept alongside of her gigantic opponent half an hour longer, the tri-colour would have been hauled down to the stars and stripes. It is even said that the French ship surrendered three times; but this not being perceived in the obscurity of night, the American fire was continued, whereupon the enemy resumed the fight.

The splendour of this achievement almost eclipsed the capture of *L'Insurgente*. Congress, on hearing of the action, immediately voted Truxtun a gold medal; while the heroic conduct of Mr. Jarvis, in preferring death to an abandonment of his post, was honoured by a solemn resolution. The gratitude of the republic was further exhibited by giving to Truxtun the command of the President forty-four, then just fitting for sea. In this ship, the commodore made another cruise on the Guadaloupe station, where he rendered valuable ser-

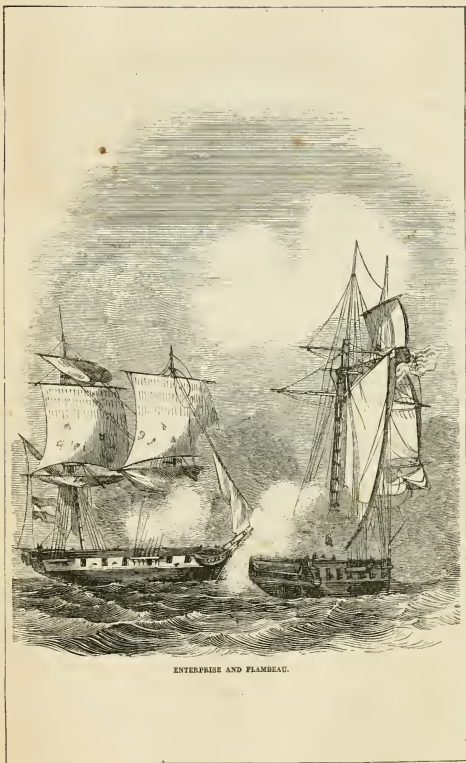
vice at the head of his squadron, until the termination of the war.

In 1802, when the difficulties with Tripoli induced government to send a fleet to the Mediterranean, Truxtun was ordered to take command of the squadron. Learning, however, that he was to be deprived of the customary captain in his flag-ship, he tendered his resignation of the appointment. The Navy Department chose to consider this step as a resignation of his commission; and thus, through a false step on the part of government, the service lost the greatest hero it then possessed. Eventually, the President had to rescind the unpopular order, and Truxtun's successors, when hoisting their broad pennants, always were allowed a captain.

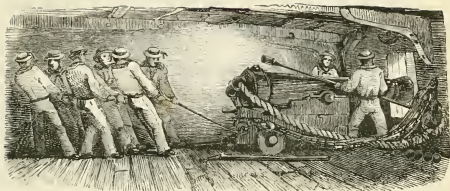
The career of Truxtun, after his retirement to private life, was barren of events. He filled several important civil offices, the gift of his fellow-citizens, and won esteem from all for his private virtues, as before he had gained admiration for his brilliant exploits. He resided in Philadelphia, where he died, in 1822, at the age of sixty-seven.

Truxtun's personal appearance was in keeping with his dashing courage. His features were bold, his eye keen, and his bearing that of a hero. His portrait, as given on the medal struck in his honour, fully realizes the indomitable bravery which his entire career exhibited.





ENTERPRISE AND FLAMBEAU.



## JOHN SHAW.

THIS officer is principally celebrated for his services in the French war, in which he took two large privateers that had done much damage to American commerce. One of these vessels, *Le Flambeau*, was of greatly superior force to Shaw's own ship, and her capture has always been considered a deed only less brilliant than the victory of Truxtun over *L'Insurgente*.

John Shaw was born at Mount Mellick, Queen's county, Ireland, in the year 1773. His family was of English origin, which had settled in Ireland during the reign of William the Third: his grandfather, the original immigrant, as well as his father, served in the army on the Irish establishment. At the age of seventeen, young Shaw, in company with an older brother, came to the United States to push his fortunes. At Philadelphia, to which place he had brought letters of introduction, Shaw was tendered a situation on board a Canton ship, and, having imbibed a taste for the ocean during his passage from Ireland, he accepted the offer. In the next six years he made four voyages to the East Indies, gradually perfecting himself in his profession, and rising slowly in rank. On his second voyage, he saw service for the first time, the

ship in which he sailed being attacked by Malays; and notwithstanding the fire of six four-pounders, the enemy were so numerous that the result would have been doubtful, but for a breeze which sprang up and carried the American vessel away from the pirates. During the action, Shaw distinguished himself by that fiery courage which afterwards peculiarly characterized him.

About the close of 1797, Shaw sailed for the West Indies as the master of a brig, this being his first command. On his return from this voyage, he applied for a commission in the navy, and, being sustained by the influence of General Samuel Smith of Baltimore, obtained a lieutenancy. He was now in his twenty-fifth year. Soon after receiving his appointment, he was ordered to join the *Montezuma* twenty, commanded by Captain Alexander Murray. Under this experienced seaman, Shaw soon became one of the best officers in the service. He became a favourite with Murray, who, on the expiration of the voyage, used his influence, which was great, to procure for Shaw a separate command, and succeeded. The vessel to which the young seaman now received an appointment was a schooner, the *Enterprise*, pierced for twelve long sixes, a species of gun that preceded the use of the carronade. This vessel was destined to become one of the most fortunate that ever sailed under the American flag, fighting nine or ten actions, in all of which she was victorious, besides furnishing, from her officers and crew, the gallant band which carried the *Philadelphia* in the harbour of Tripoli. She was wrecked, at last, under Captain Galligher, in the West Indies.

Shaw went to sea with his new command, with a crew of seventy-six men, in December, 1799. In February, 1800, he met the *Constellation*, a few hours after her engagement with *La Vengeance*, and was despatched to the United States by Commodore Truxtun with intelligence of the battle. In March, Shaw sailed again for the West Indies. While off

the Mona passage, working up towards her station, the *Enterprise* saw a large brig, wearing American colours, to which she gave chase. The stranger, on the approach of Shaw, showed the Spanish flag and opened a fire. Determined to resent what he considered an insult, though now perceiving that the Spaniard was superior to himself in force, Shaw still advanced, until, having gained a position on the brig's quarter, he poured in a broadside. An action immediately ensued, and lasted for twenty minutes, when the combatants separated by tacit consent, each satisfied of the national character of the other. This was the first action of the *Enterprise*, and the spirit with which it was fought foreshadowed her future career. Both vessels were considerably injured; and the *Enterprise* put into St. Thomas to refit.

At this port, Shaw received a challenge from a large French lugger, then lying in the harbour; but, though he accepted the defiance, and went into the offing to wait for the enemy, the lugger did not come out. In the course of two weeks, during the cruise that followed, Shaw captured two large French privateers, both after a desperate resistance. These vessels were, however, each inferior to the *Enterprise*. Shortly after, Shaw heard that two American seamen, at Guadaloupe, were sentenced to death for having killed two Frenchmen in an attempt to recapture their vessel. He immediately opened a negotiation for the release of the unfortunate prisoners, but failed. Fortune, however, which had always hitherto attended him, did not abandon him in this crisis; for a few days subsequently, he fell in with, and captured the lugger which had challenged him at St. Thomas, and on board of which he now found several officers of the French army, one of them being of the high rank of major-general. The American commander promptly placed this general and a captain in confinement, and caused an intimation to be sent to Guadaloupe, that their lives should pay for those of the seamen. This spirited conduct was approved by

Commodore Truxtun, who soon after arrived on the station; and the affair now growing serious, the French general applied for his parole, guarantying to arrange the difficulty if allowed to proceed to Guadaloupe. The request was granted, and, within a month, he returned with the two Americans, now liberated. The spirit shown by Shaw in this affair added to the applause his victories had already obtained.

While the negotiations for the release of the two condemned Americans were in progress, Shaw was not idle, but actively engaged on his cruising ground. In June, he captured *L'Aigle*, a French privateer, carrying ten guns and seventy-eight men. As this vessel was a match for the *Enterprise*, and had hitherto been very successful, she made no attempt to avoid the combat; but, after only two broadsides, Shaw carried her by boarding. This speedy victory, however, is to be attributed to the fact that the captain and both of his lieutenants were disabled by the first fire, when a panic seized the crew; otherwise, it is to be presumed, the resistance would have been more worthy of *L'Aigle's* former fame. In July, the *Enterprise* fell in with *Le Flambeau*, a privateer of even greater reputation than the last. This vessel mounted the same number of guns as Shaw's schooner, but she threw much the heavier broadside, and her crew moreover exceeded considerably the crew of the *Enterprise*. *Le Flambeau* was also celebrated for swiftness, and had for her commander an experienced seaman. She was first discovered about nightfall, and her character being immediately suspected, Shaw made every effort to get alongside of an enemy so worthy of his prowess. But the approach of darkness forbidding success, he was compelled to restrain his impatience until morning. The night passed in restless anxiety.

When day broke, however, the Frenchman was seen sweeping toward the *Enterprise* in a calm; and, at the welcome sight, congratulations passed from one to the other of the Americans. With the first puff of the sea breeze, the



Enterprise set all her sails, and crowded in chase of Le Flambeau. At this unexpected spectacle, the Frenchman, who had not supposed his neighbour to be a man-of-war, spread his canvas, and, for some time, both vessels went off free, with studding-sails set, Le Flambeau warily desiring to observe, before allowing the Enterprise to approach nearer. Each vessel was now going at the top of its speed, the Frenchman with studding-sails on both sides. Suddenly the latter hauled close upon the wind, boarding his starboard tack; and, as he came gallantly up, he seemed like some high-trained courser answering to bit and spur. The Enterprise instantly followed, hauling up nearly in his wake. The chase now continued with more spirit than ever; but it soon became apparent that the American schooner was gaining. At this gratifying fact, the exhilaration of her crew increased, and the men, ready at their quarters, waited impatiently the moment when they should be slipped upon the foe. Shaw himself anxiously watched his antagonist, nor could he conceal his satisfaction as he saw the distance lessening between him and the enemy.

As soon as the vessels were within range of musketry, Le Flambeau opened a heavy fire with that species of arms; which the Enterprise promptly returned. Meantime the two vessels continued to approach each other. When close aboard of his antagonist, Shaw edged off, and shortened sail, like a boxer stripping for the fight. The enemy showed no want of spirit, but accepted the tacit challenge by pouring in a broadside. The Enterprise replied in the same manner, and the battle began in earnest. For twenty minutes the fight raged, broadside following broadside from either side, until both vessels were completely enveloped in smoke. The Frenchmen fought with the noisy vociferations of their race; the Americans in the stern silence which they always exhibit on such occasions. At last the enemy, finding that it was impossible to be the victor, hauled all his sheets aft,

luffed and tacked, in hopes to escape. In endeavouring to imitate this manœuvre, the *Enterprise* unfortunately missed stays. Shaw saw that not a moment was to be lost, if the victory was to be prevented from slipping through his grasp; accordingly he trimmed every thing that would draw, got around, and dashed in pursuit again. At the same time, he opened his fire, which had been intermitted, and, as the gallant little *Enterprise* careened to the breeze, her cannon boomed across the air, like martial music heralding to battle.

In a short time men were seen aloft on board the Frenchman, endeavouring to secure the fore-topmast, which was apparently badly wounded. This stimulated the Americans anew. Suddenly, as a flaw struck the fugitive, her spar snapped off, carrying six persons overboard. Abandoning the men to their fate, *Le Flambeau* swept away. But not even the stirring excitement of the chase could drown the voice of humanity in Shaw's bosom; and, as he passed the struggling victims, he lowered a boat and picked them up. A few moments were thus lost, but they were soon regained, for the *Enterprise*, having her spars all sound, now gained rapidly on the Frenchman. The crew of the schooner at this could scarcely restrain their cheers. In twenty minutes from the time when *Le Flambeau* abandoned the contest and sought safety in flight, Shaw was again alongside of his antagonist; and, ranging close up, was about to open his broadsides, when the foe struck. In this spirited action, *Le Flambeau* had forty men killed and wounded, and the *Enterprise* eight or ten. The prize was carried to St. Kitts, and, in the end, all the proceeds were adjudged to the officers and people of the *Enterprise*, as having captured a vessel of superior force.

In August, Shaw took another privateer, *La Pauline*; and in September, a letter-of-marque, *Le Guadaloupéme*. Both these vessels, however, were inferior in force to the *Enterprise*. On board the letter-of-marque was found the general

officer who had been captured in the lugger in May, and who now became a prisoner, the second time in one season, to Shaw. Nearly a year had now elapsed since Shaw had been in the West Indies, and during that interval he had done more to cut up the privateers of the enemy than any officer in the service. His health, meantime, had broken down in the arduous labours which his ambitious spirit imposed upon himself; he was afflicted by a continual diarrhoea, which threatened to become chronic. Under these circumstances, following the advice of his medical attendants, he was induced to apply for leave of absence as the only means left to preserve his life. The request was granted, and, delivering the *Enterprise* to Lieutenant Sterret, he sailed for home, as a passenger, in the *Patapsco* sloop-of-war. He reached the United States in November, 1800. At Washington, he received the thanks both of the President and the Secretary of the Navy; and soon after, as a more tangible reward for his services, was appointed to a corvette, a post-captain's command. The peace that followed, however, prevented his going to sea.

A large reduction was now made in the navy list, and nearly three-fourths of the officers discharged. But Shaw, though a foreigner, and of scarcely three years' standing in the service, had performed too many brilliant exploits in his late cruise to be discarded; and accordingly he was retained as fourth on the roll of lieutenants, Stewart, Hull, and Sterret being above him. In 1801, Shaw was honoured with the command of the *George Washington* twenty-eight, which was despatched, as was then customary, with stores to propitiate Algiers. On this voyage, Shaw was absent about a year. On his return, finding his half-pay insufficient to support him, for he had lately married, he applied for a furlough, and took command of a vessel bound to Canton. He reached the United States, in 1804, after an absence of eighteen months. Here he found that, by a law of May 22d, 1804,

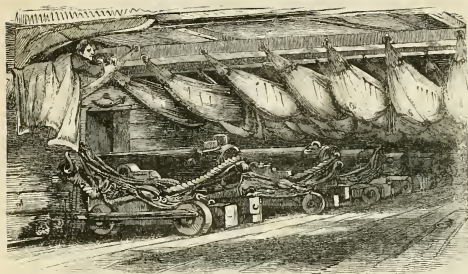
the rank of master-commandant had been restored to the navy, and himself, with seven of the oldest lieutenants, promoted to it. The war with Tripoli was now raging, with Preble at the head of a fleet; and gun-boats being very desirable to that officer, but difficult to get in the Mediterranean, Shaw, early in 1805, addressed a letter to the Secretary, offering to carry a flotilla of these craft to the assistance of the commodore. The return of Preble, who seconded Shaw's views, induced government to construct the boats; but Shaw himself was advanced to the *John Adams* twenty-eight, in which ship he sailed for the Mediterranean in May, having three of the gun-boats in company. On his arrival abroad, however, peace had been declared, and accordingly, he soon after returned to the United States.

In January, 1806, Shaw was ordered to New Orleans, with directions to construct a flotilla of gun-boats, for the defence of the Mississippi. In this command he displayed great energy, especially at the period of Burr's supposed conspiracy. On the 27th of August, 1807, he was promoted to the rank of post-captain; and, in that capacity, towards the close of the year, sat on the court-martial which tried Barron for the affair of the Chesapeake. In May, 1808, he was placed in command of the navy-yard at Norfolk, where he remained until August, 1810, when he was transferred to New Orleans, with orders to prepare for defending that city in case of a war with Great Britain. He remained at this port until towards the close of the war that broke out with that power in 1812; and, in 1813, when General Wilkinson seized Mobile, commanded the maritime part of the expedition. In the spring of 1814, he was transferred to the command of the squadron lying in the Thames, between New London and Norwich. This little fleet being blockaded, however, by a superior force, Shaw never got to sea, and hence reaped no additional laurels. Fortune, which had favoured him so much in the French war, now proved ad-

verse; but he could well afford to be without new distinctions, having already obtained so many.

In September, 1815, several months after peace had been declared, Shaw was ordered to the Mediterranean in the United States forty-four. The return of Bainbridge home left Shaw in command of the squadron in that sea, and he now accordingly hoisted his broad pennant as a commodore. The succeeding year, he was relieved by Commodore Chauncey; but Shaw did not sail for the United States until November, 1817, when he exchanged into the *Constellation*, that ship being about to return to America for repairs. This was the last time that Shaw went to sea. He was placed in command of the Boston navy-yard, and subsequently in that of Charleston. He did not survive long, however; for during a visit to Philadelphia, he was taken ill, and died in that city, on the 17th of September, 1823.

In character, Commodore Shaw was equally distinguished for probity and sincerity. His manner was warm and popular, nor did his heart belie his demeanour. As a seaman, he was brave, active, ready, decided. His personal appearance was extremely prepossessing.



## EDWARD PREBLE.

THE hero of the war with Tripoli was Edward Preble. Under him, the American squadron, so often baffled by the Barbary powers, became victorious; and the stain of paying tribute to a foreign flag was wiped from our escutcheon. It is doubtful whether the naval service of the United States has ever shown a rival to Preble in those great qualities required for a commander of fleets. Comprehensive in intellect, patient in preparation, resolute, far-seeing, prudent, and brave, he obtained success, not as some others have done, through the intervention of a benignant fate, but by fairly wresting victory from fortune.

Preble was born on the 15th of August, 1761, on that part of Falmouth Neck, in the then province of Maine, on which the present town of Portland has been built. His family was one of the oldest in the colonies, having settled in Scituate, Massachusetts, in 1636, whence it removed to Maine in 1645. His father was a man of influence in the colony, having been captain in a colonial regiment at the



EDWARD PREBLE.





taking of Quebec, and subsequently a brigadier-general. The sire survived until 1783. The old soldier adopted the patriotic side in the war of independence, and, after the peace, served both as State senator and judge under the new State constitution. He died at the venerable age of seventy-seven, full of years and honours.

From his earliest childhood, young Preble displayed that resolute courage and that inflexibility of purpose which characterized him as a man. Numerous anecdotes to this effect are told by his biographers. We shall quote but one. Preble, in an encounter with a playmate, had given a blow, which covered his face with blood. On the boy presenting himself at school, and accusing Preble as the cause of his misfortune, the preceptor, a man of quick passions, angrily seized the fire-shovel and rushed at the offender. Preble, though he knew the master's passionate disposition, never moved, but looked him steadily in the eye, on which the teacher, directing the blow a little to one side, missed him and struck the desk. Again the missile was raised, again it threatened the boy, and again he regarded his preceptor without quailing. The master, at this, dropped his weapon, and turned away, saying, "The fellow will make a general some of these days."

This inflexibility of character was displayed, however, as well for the wrong as for the right. Preble appears indeed to have been, in his boyhood, almost uncontrollable, though his education is in part to blame for this. On one occasion, his father was about to sail on an excursion to some neighbouring islands, with a party of gentlemen; and the lad desiring to accompany them, when there was scarcely room, the old general despatched him to perform a task, promising to take him if he completed it in time. To the astonishment of the parent, Preble made his appearance just as the boat was pushing off, having finished his task. The general now sought to evade his promise, giving the true reason, which

he should have told at first; but the boy, indignant at the deception, flew into a passion and began to shower stones on the party. At this, the father laughingly put back, and took the lad in. The usual conduct of the general to his son appears, indeed, to have been a mixture of injustice and indulgence; the very worst treatment possible, for a disposition like that of Preble.

The lad, however, enjoyed the advantage of a better education than was usual; for his father, intending him for a learned profession, sent him to a respectable academy, where, among other acquisitions, he made considerable proficiency in the Latin tongue. The approach of war, however, induced him to abandon his studies. His native place, Falmouth, having been sacked by some British cruisers, the old general, with others of the whig inhabitants, withdrew to the interior. Here, on a farm owned by the elder Preble, the lad was occupied for a while in agricultural pursuits. But this mode of life soon became irksome to him, and one day, when about sixteen, with his usual wilfulness, he left the field where his brothers were labouring, declaring that he would work no longer. He had long desired to become a sailor, but this wish his father had always opposed; and now, taking the matter into his own hands, he repaired to Falmouth, and shipped on board a letter-of-marque bound for England. The first information the family had of him after his flight, was that he was on the point of sailing. The old general, believing that a single voyage would cure the runaway, refused to interfere; and thus Preble became a sailor.

It was, indeed, the vocation for which nature intended him, as his friends soon confessed. The letter-of-marque was absent some time, and, on its return, experienced very tempestuous weather, in which young Preble rendered himself of great service. The general, finding his son more fascinated with the sea than ever, yielded to the predilection of the lad, and procured him the appointment of a midshipman

in the marine of Massachusetts. This was early in the year 1779, when young Preble was verging towards eighteen. His first ship, in this new capacity, was the *Protector*, of twenty-six guns, commanded by Captain Williams. In June of that year, the *Protector* engaged the *Admiral Duff*, a British letter-of-marque of slightly superior force; and the conflict had raged for an hour, with the greatest fury on both sides, when the Englishman caught fire and blew up. About fifty-five of the enemy's crew, who had jumped overboard before the explosion, were picked up by the boats of the *Protector*, but the rest perished. On a second cruise, in the same vessel, young Preble was captured, and sent into New York, where he lay for a while in one of the prison-ships; but the influence of his father, who was remembered by many of the older officers of the royal army, soon procured his release from this species of confinement, though a long period elapsed before he was exchanged. It was chiefly through Colonel William Tyng, a friend of his father, that he obtained his liberty at last.

Preble now joined the *Winthrop*, Captain Little, another state cruiser. As first lieutenant of his ship, he performed an action which gave him that reputation for daring and presence of mind which he never after lost. The *Winthrop* had captured a sloop off Penobscot, from the crew of which Captain Little learned the position of an armed brig, which, having previously taken the sloop, had sent her out manned to cruise for coasters. It was resolved, on this information, to attempt carrying the brig by surprise. Accordingly the *Winthrop* bore down on the enemy in the night, having prepared forty men to jump into her, dressed in white frocks, to enable them to distinguish friend from foe. Coming close upon her, he was hailed by the enemy, who supposed the *Winthrop* must be her tender, and who cried out, "You will run aboard!" Captain Little answered, "I am coming aboard," and immediately Preble, with fourteen men, sprang

into the brig. The motion of the vessel was so rapid that the rest missed their opportunity. Little called to his lieutenant, "Will you not have more men?" "No," answered Preble, with great presence of mind and a loud voice, "we have more than we want; we stand in each other's way." Most of the enemy's crew who were on deck leaped over the side, and others below from the cabin window, and swam to the shore, which was within pistol-shot. Preble, instantly entering the cabin, found the officers in bed, or just rising; he assured them they were his prisoners, and that resistance was vain. Believing they were mastered by superior numbers, they forbore any attempt to rescue the vessel, and submitted. The troops of the enemy marched down to the shore, and began a brisk firing with muskets, and the battery opened a cannonade. But the captors beat their prize safely out of the harbour, and took her in triumph to Boston.

The boldness of this stratagem, and the presence of mind with which it was carried out, brought the name of Preble immediately into notice, and is considered to have been the cause of his promotion in the subsequent navy of the republic. It is remarkable that, at a future day, one of his own lieutenants, the gallant Trippe, carried a vessel nearly in the same manner. Even so late as the beginning of the present century this deed of Preble was remembered by veteran seamen, and referred to in terms of high eulogium. No second opportunity, however, of especial distinction occurred to Preble during the war of independence. His services, for the rest of the contest, though not brilliant, were, however, useful. He remained in the Winthrop, in the capacity of first lieutenant, actively employed on coast duty, capturing continually the small privateers with which the British systematically harassed the shores of the eastern colonies. During this period, he was perfecting himself in his profession, and, at the close of the contest, came out one of the best seamen for his age in the country.

The naval armaments of the different States as well as of the nation being suppressed at the peace of 1783, Preble turned his attention to the mercantile marine, where his reputation for skill and knowledge of seamanship soon procured him a ship. We shall not follow his career in detail through the fifteen years of quiet that ensued. During one portion of that period, Preble appears to have been in the employment of a gentleman in North Carolina; but the greater part of his time was spent on the sea, in command of different merchant vessels. In the course of this interval, Preble visited nearly every quarter of the globe. It was necessity, not choice, however, which led him to continue in the mercantile marine; his tastes were all in another direction; and, on the first prospect of a navy, he turned his eyes in that quarter. Fortunately the exploit, for which he had become famous on board the *Winthrop*, was still remembered as among the most brilliant deeds of its kind, and this smoothed the way to his obtaining a prominent rank, when any exploit less dazzling might have failed.

The prospect of a war with France induced Congress, as we have remarked in our sketch of Commodore Barry, to pass a law for the construction of several frigates, and for the organization of a permanent navy. Among the officers appointed was Preble. He received one of the first five commissions issued to lieutenants, a flattering mark of his country's approbation, when we consider his comparative youth and his many distinguished competitors. He first served as acting captain of the *Pickering*, a brig of fourteen guns, which was attached to the squadron of Barry in the West Indies, during the years 1798 and 1799. Nothing, however, occurred to Preble in this capacity worthy of note. Towards the close of 1799, he was promoted to the rank of captain, and appointed to the *Essex* of thirty-two guns, then about to depart on her first cruise. This was elevating him over the heads of others who were his seniors, but the order of pro-

motion was then not settled, and Preble's reputation stood unusually high. He sailed for Batavia, in company with the Congress frigate, in order to convoy home the India and China fleet: but his consort being dismantled, it returned to port, and he continued the voyage alone. At the close of the year, he succeeded in bringing this convoy, valued at several millions, safely into New York. Soon after peace was declared with France.

Congress now proceeded to reduce the navy. It shows the high estimation in which Preble was held, that, though many of his seniors were dismissed, he was retained on the list. Before the reduction there were twenty-eight captains and seven commanders. The last were all discharged, and but twelve of the former retained, yet, though Preble stood the twenty-first on the old list, he was made the ninth on the new. Three years after, in 1804, he rose to be the fifth, in consequence of the resignation, death, and dismissal of four of his seniors. During most of this interval he remained on shore; partly in consequence of his marriage, which occurred in 1801, to Miss May Deering, a lady of family and fortune in his native place. For a time also, at this period, he was the victim of dyspepsia in its severest form. At last, in 1803, he resolved to resume the active duties of his profession, and accordingly reported himself fit for service. His application for employment happened at a fortunate conjuncture for himself, as the government, which hitherto had carried on the war with Tripoli languidly, had now resolved to conduct it with proper vigour; and, in consequence, Preble was ordered to repair to Boston, and take command of the squadron destined for the Mediterranean, hoisting his broad pennant on board the *Constitution*.

The nature and origin of the war with Tripoli have already been alluded to in the sketch of Dale, and will be explained at more length in that of Decatur. This latter officer, rather than Preble, is, in popular estimation, the hero of that strug-

gle. But, without impairing the claims of the junior, who well won, by a series of dazzling exploits, his proud title of the "Champion of Christendom," we must, in fairness, accord to the senior the merit of having planned, or made himself responsible, for all the principal actions of the war. The squadron consisted of the *Constitution* forty-four, Commodore Preble; the *Philadelphia* thirty-eight, Capt. Bainbridge; the *Argus* sixteen, Lt. Com. Decatur; the *Siren* sixteen, Lt. Com. Stewart; the *Enterprise* twelve, Lt. Com. Hull; the *Nautilus* twelve, Lt. Com. Somers; and the *Vixen* twelve, Lt. Com. Smith. Never, perhaps, did a force of equal size put to sea, with the same array of gallant young officers in command. Each vessel, as was then the custom, sailed as soon as it was ready. The *Constitution* was the third to get to sea. She left Boston on the 13th of August, 1803, and reached Gibraltar on the 12th of the ensuing month. Here an incident occurred, which, by the spirit it displayed in the commodore, and by the confidence it imparted to the crew, exercised the happiest influence on the subsequent events of the cruise.

One dark night, when the *Constitution* was near the Straits, a strange man-of-war was discerned close at hand. Preble instantly went to quarters, and hailed the other vessel. The stranger made no reply, however, but hailed in turn. On this, Preble ordered the name of his ship to be given, and that of the other to be demanded under penalty of a shot. The stranger answered that he would return a broadside in such an event. Losing patience at this, Preble sprang into the mizzen-rigging himself, and called out, through his trumpet:—"This is the United States ship *Constitution* forty-four, Edward Preble. I am about to hail you for the last time; if you do not answer, I shall give you a broadside. What ship is that? Blow your matches, boys." The man-of-war now answered:—"This is his Britannic majesty's ship *Donnegal*, a razee of sixty guns." Preble declared he did not

believe it, and announced his determination to the stranger to remain by him till morning. In a short time, however, a boat came from the man-of-war to explain. The stranger was the British frigate *Maidstone*, and the *Constitution* had come so unexpectedly upon her, that the delay in answering had been made, and the false name given, in order to gain time to clear the ship for action.

Having renewed a treaty with the emperor of Morocco, and thus removed an important enemy in his rear, Preble held a consultation with his officers prior to proceeding in the direction of Tripoli. It is understood that, at this interview, the young commanders, prejudiced against the commodore in consequence of his quick temper, and also because he was little known in the service, having been in the East Indies or on shore since the re-organization of the navy, exhibited their want of sympathy with him by their silence, leaving him to suggest as well as to command every thing. This behaviour hurt the feelings of Preble, and he regretted, it is said, having accepted his post. Nevertheless he did not neglect his duty. He proclaimed the blockade of Tripoli, though he had scarcely done so, when he heard at Malta that *Bainbridge* had been captured in the *Philadelphia*. The cruise opened thus under the most unfavourable circumstances, yet he resolved to leave nothing undone on his part to render it successful. He first hastened to Syracuse, where he established a point of rendezvous, and then sailed to Tripoli to reconnoitre the port. It was while lying off this place that the first idea of burning the *Philadelphia* was conceived. The tempestuous character of the weather forcing the squadron to return to Syracuse, Preble despatched *Decatur* and *Stewart* on that eventful enterprise, whose brilliant success will be narrated in its proper place. The *Philadelphia* being destroyed, Preble began to make preparations for a grand attack on Tripoli. With but a single frigate at his disposal, this was a difficult undertaking; and in nothing is his ability



shown so much as in the forethought he now displayed. "He ascertained his wants," says the most discriminating of his biographers, "supplied the deficiencies in the best manner he could, and when the moment arrived, applied his means with an intelligence and activity that showed he possessed the qualities of a great commander." When we recollect that he succeeded with a force of but one frigate and five smaller vessels, when his predecessor achieved nothing with five frigates and one other vessel, we begin to comprehend the merits of Preble.

Never, perhaps, was a ship more actively employed than the *Constitution* during these preliminary arrangements. Almost constantly at sea, but continually touching at different ports, she was, for the time, the counterpart of the energy, decision, and unwearied activity of the commodore. Though he looked into the harbour of Tripoli twice, he made no attempt on the town, reserving himself, like a wise man, for a time when he should be fully prepared. At length, having completed his arrangements, he appeared before the hostile port, on the 25th of July, 1804, with a fleet of sixteen sail, all, however, being small, except the *Constitution*. With this force he was able to bring only twenty-eight long heavy guns to bear on the enemy, and twenty long light guns. On the other hand, the Tripolitans had one hundred and eighteen heavy guns in battery, besides nineteen gun-boats that alone threw a weight of metal equal to the frigate's broadside. The disparity between the men engaged on the two sides was even greater; the squadron mustered but one thousand and sixty souls all told, while the bashaw had thirty thousand, either actively engaged, or within sustaining distance. Scarcely, however, had the fleet appeared off the town, when a furious tempest arose, compelling Preble to put to sea; nor was it until the 3d of August that he was able to collect his scattered forces and once more face the foe.

To comprehend fully the series of combats that followed,

it is necessary to pay some attention to the topography of the approaches to Tripoli. "The harbour lies in a shallow indentation of the coast," says a careful writer, "being tolerably protected against easterly and westerly gales by the formation of the land, while a reef of rocks, which stretches for a mile and a half in a northeasterly course, commencing at the town itself, breaks the seas that roll in from the northward. This reef extends near half a mile from the walls, entirely above water, and is of sufficient height and width to receive water batteries, containing the lazaretto and one or two forts. It is this commencement of the reef which constitutes what is usually termed the mole, and behind it lies the harbour proper. At its termination is a narrow opening in the reef which is called the western entrance, through which it is possible for a ship to pass, though the channel is not more than two hundred feet in width. Beyond this passage the rocks reappear, with intervals between them, though lying on shoals with from one half to five and a half feet of water on them. The line of rocks and shoals extends more than a mile outside of the western entrance. Beyond its termination is the principal entrance to Tripoli, which is of sufficient width, though not altogether free from shoals. The distance across the bay, from the north-eastern extremity of the rocks to what is called the English fort, on the main land, is about two thousand yards, or quite within the effective range of heavy guns. In the bottom of the bay, or at the south-eastern angle of the town, stands the bashaw's castle, a work of some size and force. It lies rather more than half a mile from the western entrance, and somewhat more than a mile from the outer extremity of the reef. Thus any thing within the rocks is commanded by all the water defences of the place, while shot from the castle, and more especially from the natural mole, would reach a considerable distance into the offing. Some artificial works aided in rendering the north-western corner of the harbour still more secure, and

this place is usually called the galley mole. Near this is the ordinary landing, and it is the spot that may properly be termed the port."

The Tripolitans had anchored nine of their largest gun-boats just outside of what are called the Harbour Rocks, or the north-eastern extremity of the reef. This was done, evidently with a view of flanking the expected attack on the town. Accustomed to cannonading at the distance of a mile, these gun-boats expected no warmer service, especially as a nearer approach would bring their assailants within reach of the castle and batteries. In addition to the nine boats to the eastward, there were five others which also lay along the line of rocks nearer to the western entrance, and within pistol-shot of the batteries in that part of the defences. Within the reef were five more gun-boats and several heavy galleys, ready to protect the outer line of gun-boats at need, constituting a reserve.

Preble had borrowed six gun-boats from the King of Naples, but they were of inferior size. With these, however, he determined to attack the nine gun-boats outside the Harbour Rocks, hoping, in addition to the moral effect the assault would produce in the town, to capture them, and thus obtain boats better suited for his purpose. He accordingly signalled the squadron to come within speaking distance, when he communicated to the several commanders his intention to attack the shipping and batteries simultaneously. The gun-boats were immediately manned, as were also the mortar boats. The gun-boats were in two divisions of three each. The first division was led by Lieut. Com. Somers, supported by Lieutenants James Decatur and Blake. The second division was under Lieut. Com. Decatur, sustained by Lieutenants Bainbridge and Trippe. The two bombards were commanded by Lieut. Com. Dent, and by Lieutenant Robinson. At half-past one, P. M., on the 3d of August, 1804, the squadron stood for the batteries: at two the gun-

boats were cast off: at half-past two, the signal was made for the bombs and boats to advance and attack: and at half-past three, the signal was given for general action. Instantly the bombards began to throw shells into the town. The enemy's batteries replied with the roar of two hundred guns; and this being answered by the squadron, now within musket-shot, the battle commenced.

Preble had directed Somers and Decatur, each with his division, to concentrate their attack on the nine gun-boats at the outside of the Harbour Rocks; because here the enemy was furthest from the support of his batteries, though still under cover. Decatur's division, being to windward in the American line, easily reached the desired point; so did also one of the boats of Somers; but Somers himself, in consequence of his vessel being a dull sailer, and far to leeward, could not do this. Decatur, however, dashed into the midst of the foe with his division, throwing in a terrible discharge of grape and musketry, under cover of which he reached the Tripolitan gun-boats and gave the command to board. Having carried one boat, he took her in tow and bore down on a second. Here the memorable conflict occurred in which he nearly lost his life, and which will be described at length in our sketch of that hero.

Meantime, Lieutenant Trippe, emulating the example of his gallant leader, boarded another of the enemy's boats, accompanied by a single midshipman, Mr. Jonathan Hanley, and nine men. His boat falling off before more of its crew could follow, he was left to conquer or die, with the fearful odds of thirty-six against his little band of eleven. After a terrible struggle, however, he prevailed, but not until he had received eleven sabre cuts. Fourteen of the enemy lost their lives in this sanguinary melee. Lieutenant Bainbridge did not get fully into action, his boat grounding; but he did much damage with his musketry, and finally escaped safely. Somers, as we have said, could not reach far enough

to windward to assist Decatur, but, turning on the leeward division of the enemy's gun-boats, he engaged single-handed the whole five vessels, and finally, after a most heroic struggle, drove them within the rocks for shelter. Lieutenant Decatur succeeded in reaching his brother, when he attacked and carried one of the Tripolitan boats; but was shot by the captain of the prize after the surrender, a baseness which the elder brother fearfully avenged.

Meanwhile the enemy's vessels inside the rocks had not been idle. Joined by the boats driven in, they twice attempted to sally out; but were as often forced back by the fire of the squadron. The Constitution, during all this period, was moving actively to and fro, the presiding genius of the struggle, Preble in person overlooking the whole. Several times she was comparatively close to the batteries, every one of which she silenced in passing; but, as soon as she changed her position, they opened again. The roar of artillery was almost incessant. Bombs hissed through the air, bounded from the stone walls of the batteries, or exploded in the water. The impetuous manner in which the Americans fought, and the dexterity with which they handled their guns, appalled the Tripolitans. From the showers of grape-shot they soon sought refuge behind their walls, and in consequence, most of the Turkish shot passed over the assailants, those who pointed the guns being afraid to expose their heads above the parapets. At last, after two hours of incessant combat, the commodore, perceiving that the enemy's boats had retired generally behind shelter, and that further persistence in the attack was useless at present, gave the signal for recall. The gun-boats accordingly drew out of the action with their prizes, and, being taken in tow by the schooners and brigs of the squadron, were speedily safe beyond range of the Tripolitan shot. The manœuvre was handsomely covered by the fire of the Constitution.

This daring attack, with a force comparatively so small,

produced a powerful impression on the bashaw. At first, when the squadron was seen standing in, he affected to despise the efforts of the Americans, and said contemptuously, "These fellows will mark their distance, and tack before they come within range; they are a sort of Jews, and have no idea of fighting." Meantime the palace and the terraces of the houses were crowded with spectators, all expecting to behold the discomfiture of the Americans, if they approached too near. But this feeling of triumph was of short duration. When the Constitution, standing gallantly in, delivered her tempest of iron hail, and the bomb vessels made the whole firmament roar with their shells, consternation seized the lookers on, and they fled in every direction. Soon not a living soul was seen on shore, except in the batteries; while the bashaw himself, it is said, fled to a bomb-proof room. The captives of the Philadelphia beheld the gallant demeanour of their countrymen with beating hearts, and could scarcely refrain from huzzas as the broadsides of the commodore's ship echoed in thunders along the hill. "Are these men outside Americans," asked an intelligent Turk of one of the prisoners, "or are they devils in Christian shape?"

Having hauled off beyond range of shot, Preble awaited his commanders on board the flag-ship, in order to hear their reports and deliver them directions for the future. It was now that a scene occurred, so characteristic of the commodore's good, as well as bad qualities, that its narration cannot be omitted. His whole plan of attack, as we have said, had been based on the desire of possessing himself of the nine gun-boats outside Harbour Rocks, and when he found the scheme had failed in part, his disappointment increased the natural acerbity of his temper to such a degree as, for a moment, to deprive him of the control of himself. When therefore, Decatur sprang on deck, and said, "Well, commodore, I have brought you out three of the gun-boats," Preble seized the speaker by the collar in a fit of rage, and shaking

it, said, "Ay, sir, why did you not bring me out more?" Decatur's hand instinctively sought a dirk he wore in his bosom, but the commodore had already disappeared in his cabin. With extreme difficulty could those present restrain the insulted officer from leaving the ship; and he was still in suspense, when the cabin steward appeared and announced to Decatur that Preble wished to see him. After the hesitation of a moment, Decatur complied with this implied command. Soon after, an officer who could presume on his rank, and who felt uneasy at leaving the commodore and his lieutenant together, descended also to the cabin. He found the two seated amicably together, within a few feet of each other, both silent, and both in tears. Preble had apologized for the rudeness into which disease and chagrin had combined to hurry him; and Decatur, at this unexpected magnanimity, had been completely subdued. From that moment, all was forgotten.

After the attack of the 3d of August, the Tripolitan gun-boats ventured no more outside the reef. Preble, meantime, was altering the rig of the captured vessels, in order to employ them in a second assault, which he contemplated. Having perfected his arrangements, he advanced on the 7th to the combat. Another fierce action between the American and Tripolitan gun-boats ensued, in the course of which Lieutenant Caldwell, in one of the boats, was blown up. But this disaster was not allowed to stop the battle, and for two hours longer, the conflict raged unabated. After the struggle had continued from half-past two until half-past five, the commodore made the signal for recall. The action had been very severe for the American gun-boats; but it was believed that the enemy had suffered even more. The character of Preble, in one respect, is illustrated by an incident of this action. Lt. Com. Stewart, in the *Siren*, having manifested a disposition to close with the enemy's galleys without a signal, he was sternly rebuked for it after the combat by the

commodore. To use the words of another, Preble "was disposed to hold his whole command in hand, like a skilful coachman managing his team." In short, as commander-in-chief, he enforced the strictest discipline, so that it was almost as unsafe to fight without orders as to run away.

In consequence of these two attacks, the bashaw became more disposed to treat, and consented to waive his claim to tribute for the future, provided a ransom of five hundred dollars apiece was paid for the crew of the *Philadelphia*. Preble, however, refused to accede to these offers, for he hoped soon to receive an accession of ships from home, in which case he expected to dictate his own terms. The *John Adams* twenty-eight, just come out as a store-ship, announced the intention of the government to despatch such a force; and the commodore resolved to delay further proceedings until its arrival. But having waited in vain for the expected squadron, he determined to make a third assault on the 16th. A tempest, however, blew him off the harbour, so that it was the 28th before the assault occurred. On this occasion he left his bomb-vessels outside, and went to work with solid shot. The gun-boats ran in under cover of the night, and opened a heavy fire on the enemy's shipping. The *Constitution*, at daybreak, joined the battle, when Preble, finding the enemy's gun-boats in overpowering force, and wishing to save his ammunition, ordered his own to withdraw. He did not, however, retire with the smaller craft, but stood on until within musket-shot of the mole, when he backed his topsail and lay for nearly an hour, maintaining a constant cannonade, until his gun-boats were all safely out of reach of the batteries. This was the hottest affair that had yet occurred.

On the 3d of September, Preble made another attack. In the interval the enemy had recruited their gun-boats, and had altered their plans for the defence of the town. Formerly the gun-boats had remained in front of the city to await the



assault, by which means every shot that missed them passed into Tripoli; but, on this occasion, they got under way as soon as they saw the Americans in motion, and worked up to the weather-side of the harbour, where they were covered behind by some forts, and defended in front by shoals. Preble, perceiving this alteration, despatched Decatur with the light vessels of the squadron against this flotilla, while he himself stood in with the Constitution, to cover the bomb-vessels, which attacked on the western side of the harbour. Heaving to at a point where he could bring his guns to bear on all the principal works, he opened the hottest fire which the blockade had yet witnessed. For more than an hour the bay rocked with incessant explosions. The bomb-vessels had never approached the enemy so closely before, nor did equal damage; but neither were they ever in such peril themselves. One of them was nearly sunk, and the other was much injured. All the small vessels suffered. The Constitution, while in action, threw more than three hundred round shot at the Tripolitans, besides grape and canister; while each of the eight cannon on board the gun-boats was discharged fifty times. The commodore's ship was cut up considerably in the rigging, but received no serious injuries otherwise, though encircled by the batteries of the foe.

Two days after this last attack, Preble, ever seeking to annoy the enemy, sent in the Intrepid as a fire-ship to destroy the enemy's vessels. The Intrepid was the ketch made memorable by its agency in the burning of the Philadelphia. The command of it was now bestowed on Lt. Com. Somers, who, with a picked crew, set forth, on the night of the 5th, on his hazardous enterprise. The full details of this melancholy expedition are reserved for our sketch of the ill-fated Somers. It is sufficient here to say, that the ketch gained the western entrance of the harbour, and was within five hundred yards of her destination, when she suddenly exploded, with the loss of every life on board. It was sur-

mised by Preble at the time, that Somers blew himself up, to prevent falling into the hands of the enemy; but facts since discovered lead to the belief that a shot from one of the batteries, striking a nail on board the ketch, produced a spark, which ignited the loose powder on board the *Intrepid*. This was the last attempt made by Preble on Tripoli. He projected indeed another assault, but the weather compelled him to desist, and on the 7th, he withdrew most of his smaller craft from the place, remaining, in the *Constitution*, with the *Argus* and *Vixen*, to continue the blockade. On the 10th, the long-expected squadron from home appeared, under the command of Barron; and there being now a senior officer present in the Mediterranean, Preble withdrew to Malta, where he soon after gave up his ship to Decatur, and proceeded to America.

It was always a source of regret to Preble that he was supplanted at this juncture. There can be no question but that, with this additional force, he would have brought affairs to a crisis with the Tripolitans. With a single frigate, he had already done more to annoy the enemy than any predecessor; and, if he had been assisted by one or two competent consorts, would before this have dictated peace at the cannon's mouth. At the time the reinforcements were sent out, the authorities at home were not aware of Preble's exploits, or they would not have interfered with so brilliant a career; but, ignorant of this, they naturally yielded to the wish of others to serve, and despatched two seniors, which was in effect to relieve him. Thus ended a campaign, in which the flag of the United States was first raised to eminence in the old world, and which gave a tone to the infant navy which it has ever since retained. During the entire month in which Preble was before Tripoli, he had but thirty men killed, and twenty-four wounded. As he was about to sail, he received a letter from the officers who had served under him, expressing their high sense of his character and services. When

we consider his unpopularity at the beginning of the blockade, and the general impetuosity of his temper, we must pronounce this a signal proof of his skill as a commander and his worth as a man. But if Preble had been passionate, he had also been just, and the merits of every man had been appreciated and rewarded.

Preble, on arriving in the United States, proceeded at once to Washington, which he reached on the 4th of March, 1805. Congress voted him, and all who had served under him, the thanks of the nation; and bestowed on him, in addition, a gold medal, and swords on various of his officers. The President, though differing in politics from him, soon after honoured him with the offer of the Secretaryship of War; but the state of his health, which began to give way rapidly under the derangement of his digestive organs, compelled him to decline. He superintended the construction of some heavy gun-boats, however, which had been ordered to be built for the Tripolitan war; and purchased two suitable bomb-vessels, under the orders of government. Everywhere he was received with distinction, especially by those abler minds, who were capable of appreciating the fact, that he had displayed, by his combinations, some of the very highest qualities of his profession. The nation at large did not, it is true, follow his footsteps with those noisy demonstrations which have since attended the return of other successful heroes; but it must be remembered that the most dazzling exploits of the war had seemed to be the work of others, though perhaps first proposed, and certainly finally directed by the commodore. Posterity has been more just, however, and the fame of Preble, even in the popular estimation, stands deservedly high.

The most discriminating estimate of his naval abilities yet published, is from the pen of J. Fenimore Cooper. Alluding to the fact that the commodore, while before Tripoli, performed no acts of personal daring, such as carry away

men's imaginations, he says, "Still it may be questioned if any other name in American naval annals has as high a place in the estimation of the better class of judges, as that of Preble. Decatur performed many more brilliant personal exploits; the victory of McDonough, besides standing first on the score of odds and magnitude, possesses the advantage of bringing in its train far more important immediate consequences than any other naval achievement of the country; yet it may be doubted if the intelligent do not give to Preble a place in the scale of renown still higher than that occupied by either of these heroes. Hull broke the charm of a long-established and imposing invincibility, yet no man competent to judge of merit of this nature would think of comparing Hull to Preble, though the latter virtually never took a ship. The names of neither Lawrence, Bainbridge, nor Perry will ever be placed by the discriminating at the side of that of Preble, though tenfold more has been written to exalt the renown of either than has been written in behalf of Preble. They, themselves, would have deferred to the superiority of the old Mediterranean commodore, and neither would probably dream of placing his own name on a level with that of Preble's. Chauncey, out of all question, occupied the most arduous and responsible station ever yet filled by an American naval commander, and Preble never performed more gallant personal deeds than Chauncey, or showed higher resolution in face of his enemy; yet Chauncey always spoke of Preble as men name their admitted superiors."

The place he filled in the order of time, as connected with the formation of the present marine, in Cooper's estimation accounts only in part for Preble's reputation, and in this opinion we fully agree. The true solution of his increasing fame, continues his biographer, is to be found in an analysis of his operations in the Mediterranean. "The small vessels," says Mr. Cooper, "placed under his orders, though admirably adapted to blockading Tripoli, were of very little service in

making attacks on the place. Had Decatur never quitted his six-pounder schooner, the *Enterprise*, we probably should not have heard of her name in connection with this war. The same is true of *Somers* and the *Nautilus*. In a word, the use that could alone be made of five of the six vessels Preble possessed in the moment of action, was to blockade the port, to cover his flotilla, a power created solely by himself, and to employ their officers and people in such service as he could create for them in emergencies. Useful as these little cruisers might be, and were, in certain portions of the duty, they were of very little account as part of the assailing force.

“Insufficient as were his means originally, Preble was met, even before he had reached the scene of action, by the unpleasant tidings that these means were diminished quite one-third, through the accidental loss of one of his frigates. Not only did this loss subtract from his own force, but it added almost in an equal degree to that of the enemy. The *Philadelphia* was a stout eighteen-pounder frigate, and used as a floating battery only, and equally well fought, she would have proved almost a counterpoise to the only battering ship Preble now had. This he saw, and he took his measures early to destroy her. The instructions given to Decatur on that occasion prove how fully Preble’s mind was impressed with all the contingencies of such an enterprise; how clearly he foresaw success, and how far he wished to improve it. The possibility of converting the *Intrepid* into a fire-ship was calculated, and orders given accordingly. The sudden shifting of the wind rendered it impossible to profit by this hint; but the order itself shows how fully and comprehensively Preble understood the matters he had in hand. Decatur was ordered to take fixed ammunition for the *Philadelphia*’s guns, and to use them against the town, should it be in his power. He found these guns loaded, and the flames drove him out of the ship; but they did a part of the duty

of gunners for him. On the destruction of this ship depended the success of the approaching season, in a word, and Preble laid his plan and chose his agent accordingly. The success was as much his, as success ever belongs to the head that conceives and combines, when the hand is not employed to execute.

“This accomplished, Preble commenced that scene of active preparation of which we have already endeavoured to give the reader some idea. Nearly all the available force that could be employed against Tripoli was to be created four thousand miles from home, with one hand, while the dissatisfied Barbary States were to be held in check with the other. This scene of preparatory activity ended, the new one began, of attacking stone walls and a strong flotilla, with a single frigate; a twenty-four pounder ship, it is true, but supported only by six very badly constructed gun-boats. The batteries had many heavy pieces, and the three boats captured on the 3d August mounted nominal twenty-sixes, which threw shot that weighed twenty-nine pounds. At this time all the heavy American shot fell two or three pounds short of their nominal weight. Against these odds, then, Preble had to contend. Nevertheless he had his advantages. His enemy possessed no accurate gunners, and were otherwise deficient in the resources of an advanced civilization. Under these circumstances, Preble risked just as much as was prudent. So nicely balanced were his movements between extreme audacity and the most wary and seaman-like caution, that we never find a vessel of any sort exposed without a sufficient object, or, an accident excepted, exposed in vain. His operations commenced, nothing checked their vigour but the most discreet forbearance. When Barron was hourly expected, he paused with a magnanimity that in itself denoted a high and loyal character; but when the dire calamity occurred to Somers, and when Caldwell was blown up, he went to work the next hour, as it might

be, to push his operations, just as if nothing unusual had occurred. Under the most disadvantageous circumstances, and with cruelly insufficient means, he lowered the pretensions of his enemy one half in ten days, and had brought them down to next to nothing by the end of a month. We say cruelly insufficient means, for, in effect, the Constitution alone, with her thirty guns in broadside, had frequently to contend with more than a hundred guns in batteries.

“But no better circumstance can be cited in favour of Preble’s professional character and conduct, than the hold he obtained on the minds of his officers. Personally, they had much to induce them to dislike him; yet, we cannot recall an instance in which we have ever heard one of them find any fault with the least of his movements. All seem to think that every thing that was done was done for the best. We hear no complaints of injudicious or unreasonable operations; and, what is still more unusual in combined movements, of commanders who did not do their whole duty. Inequality of conduct and of services is one of the commonest occurrences in all extended operations, by sea or land. We hear tales and anecdotes of this sort, as connected with McDonough’s and Perry’s victories, as connected with Chauncey’s various manœuvres and battles, but none in relation to Preble and his command. Every man in his squadron knew and felt that he was governed; though it is not improbable that Preble was, in a degree, aided in the exercise of his authority, by the fact that an entire grade existed between his own rank and that of all of his commanders. A stronger practical argument in favour of the creation of admirals cannot be cited, than the manner in which Preble held all his vessels in hand during his operations against Tripoli. Still his own character had the most connection with the result; and even to this hour, old men, who have since commanded squadrons themselves, speak of his discipline with a shake of the head, as if they still felt its influence.

“One cannot but regret that Preble did not survive, with all his powers, until after the occurrence of the last English war. Nothing was more apparent than the want of combination and intelligent wielding of force on the Atlantic, that was exhibited throughout the whole of those important years; and we cannot but think, had Preble’s capacity and energy been brought to bear on the service, he would have shown something more than brilliant isolated combats, as the result of even the small means that could have been placed at his control. He would then have been second in rank in the navy, as to all practical purposes, and must have been intrusted with one of the largest squadrons. His last moments were said to have been imbittered by regrets for the affair between the *Leopard* and *Chesapeake*, and he always retained a sort of revolutionary predilection for meeting the English.

“Preble’s influence on the discipline of the service was of a valuable and lasting nature. Until his time, the men of the present navy were little accustomed to act in concert, and some of the previous attempts had not been attended with very flattering results. Officers would obey at every hazard, it is true, as Stewart did when he went to sea in the *Experiment*, towing out his main-mast after him, in consequence of a petulant order from Truxtun; but they had not been taught to repress their own ardour, to yield their own opinions to those of their superiors, in face of an enemy, in order to present a combined and available front, until Preble gave them the severe but salutary lesson.

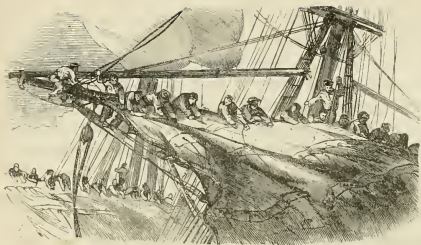
“It is probable that the marine of this country, long ere the close of this century, will become one of the most powerful the world has yet seen. With a rate of increase that will probably carry the population of the nation up to sixty millions within the next fifty years, a commerce and tonnage that will be fully in proportion to these numbers, no narrow policy or spurious economy can well prevent such a result.



In that day, when the opinions of men shall have risen in some measure to the level of the stupendous facts by which they will be surrounded, the world will see the fleets of the republic, feel their influence on its policy, and hear of the renown of admirals who are yet unborn; for the infatuated notion that wars are over is a chimera of speculative moralists, who receive their own wishes as the inductions of reason. In that day, all the earlier facts of the national career will be collected with care and preserved with veneration. Among the brightest of those which will be exhibited connected with the deeds of that infant navy out of which will have grown the colossal power that then must wield the trident of the seas, will stand prominent the forty days of the Tripolitan war, crowded with events that are inseparable from the name and the renown of Edward Preble."

Soon after the commodore's return to the United States, his malady assumed the character of a wasting consumption. He tried various remedies, but in vain, and even made a short voyage, at the suggestion of his physician. This remedy, however, as well as all others failing, he returned to his native place, Portland, in the summer of 1807, to die. His family and friends watched about his bedside, and sought every method to alleviate his sufferings. At last, on the 25th of August, he breathed his last. The closing words of the hero were addressed to his favourite brother:—"Give me your hand, Enoch," he said, "I'm going, give me your hand."

In person Preble was of a dignified, imposing presence. He was about six feet in height, and of an active, rather than a large frame. Notwithstanding his quick temper, he had a good heart; and in his domestic relations especially was kind and affectionate.



## RICHARD SOMERS.

THE name of Richard Somers will always be dear to Americans, for it recalls the fate of a gallant officer, who, at the very dawn of what promised to be an unusually brilliant career, fell a martyr to duty, being blown up, on the night of the 4th of September, 1804, in an attempt to carry a fire-ship into the harbour of Tripoli.

The grandfather of Richard Somers emigrated from England to America in the early part of the last century, and established himself at Great Egg Harbour, in what is now Atlantic county, New Jersey. Here he became possessed of considerable landed property, and gave his name to a place on the north side of the harbour, still called Somers's Point. The son of the emigrant, Colonel Richard Somers, was a man of considerable note in his day, a judge of the county court, and a member of the Provincial Congress of 1775. He was a prominent patriot during the war of independence, and became so obnoxious to the British, that it was thought advisable for him to remove to Philadelphia, lest a descent should be made on Somers's Point for the purpose of making



EXPLOSION OF THE INTREPID.



him prisoner. This worthy sire of a worthy son died in 1794, at the age of fifty-four.

Richard, the subject of our sketch, was the youngest of three children; and was born in 1779, at the family estate, a short period before his father's removal to Philadelphia. He first attended school in the city, and subsequently at Burlington, New Jersey, at which place there was, at that day, an academy of considerable reputation.

Though Somers inherited from his father a respectable property, consisting of a portion of the original family estate, as well as of some lands in the interior of Pennsylvania, his love of adventure induced him at the early age of fifteen, shortly after the death of Colonel Somers, to embark on board a coaster, probably owned by some relative, first as a common seaman, and subsequently as mate. The lad had already displayed a firmness of character, united to a chivalrous sense of honour, that filled his family with a profound respect for him, and led them to desire for him a loftier vocation. Accordingly, in 1798, a midshipman's warrant was procured for Somers; and, in July of that year, he went to sea in the *United States* forty-four, then making her first voyage under the broad pennant of Commodore Barry. His knowledge of the ocean was already sufficiently extensive to obtain for him the post of master's mate of the hold, a situation always given, in that day, to the most experienced and trustworthy of the midshipmen. Among his messmates in the steerage was Stephen Decatur. Between these two chivalrous young men there soon arose a strong personal friendship, which not even professional rivalry could weaken, and which endured unabated until Somers's untimely death.

Promotion was rapid, in the infancy of the navy. Before a year had elapsed, Somers was third lieutenant of the *United States*, and, when the war closed in 1800, her second lieutenant. He had earned a high reputation moreover, not only as a seaman, but as a bold and skilful officer. Accordingly,

at the formation of the peace establishment, in 1801, he was retained as twelfth lieutenant, in a list that numbered but thirty-six officers of that rank. He was now appointed first lieutenant to the *Boston* twenty-eight, which vessel was about to sail for France, in order to carry out Chancellor Livingston, the new minister to that nation. After landing the ambassador, the *Boston* proceeded to the Mediterranean, where she cruised until towards the close of 1802. Though Commodore Dale was then before Tripoli, and subsequently Commodore Morris, the commander of the *Boston*, either by accident or design, never joined the American squadron. When Somers returned to the United States, he found that Congress, convinced of the necessity of employing small vessels as well as large in the war with Tripoli, had ordered the construction of four schooners of not more than sixteen guns. These vessels were the *Siren* sixteen; the *Argus* sixteen; the *Nautilus* twelve; and the *Vixen* twelve. The *Nautilus* was given to Somers, who now, in consequence of resignations, stood seventh on the list. He was only twenty-four years of age, when he assumed his first, and alas! his last command.

Of all the Mediterranean squadron, which subsequently became so celebrated under Preble, the *Nautilus* was the first to sail. Somers left the United States early in the summer of 1803, and reached Gibraltar on the 27th of July. When Preble arrived out, the *Nautilus* formed part of the force with which the commodore made his successful demonstration against the emperor of Morocco. During the following winter and spring, Somers, in his little schooner, was engaged in convoying, or in carrying orders necessary to the preparations making for the coming season. At last, towards the close of July, 1804, Preble, having collected all his forces, sailed for Tripoli. Never, perhaps, did a squadron, comparatively so small, boast so many heroic young men among its officers. There were Hull, and Stewart, and Decatur,

names that afterwards stood high on the roll of fame. There, too, was Somers, destined to enjoy only a glimpse of glory, before the grim skeleton death hurried him off the stage for ever. Each heart was buoyant with hope. Life, so far, had been prosperous to all, and when ambition waved her glittering lure, they entered on the race full of sanguine anticipations. Nor was the mutual rivalry, inseparable from their relations, suffered to affect their intimacy; each was generous to the other, while striving to excel; for none sought to succeed by little arts, but by the achievement of deeds worthy of such a band of heroes.

In the first attack on Tripoli, Somers commanded one of the two divisions of gun-boats, and shared in the glory of the day, second only to Decatur. Owing to his position, Somers could not fetch into his appointed division of the enemy, but, with lion-like intrepidity, he turned to leeward, and singly engaged the whole division in that direction. In this daring attack he was unsupported by the other two gun-boats under his command, circumstances having separated them from him. The wind blowing directly towards the foe, Somers was compelled either to anchor, or employ sweeps to keep backing his vessel astern; he chose the latter, and thus remained, with his single boat, within pistol-shot of five Tripolitan ones, while his long gun swept their decks incessantly, delivering bags of a thousand musket balls at each discharge. Under this awful fire, the enemy, though at first stubbornly resisting, was finally compelled to retire. The struggle continued for two hours, during all which time Somers received no support, except from the covering fire of the vessels outside. When the fight had raged for this period, the *Constitution* stood in, and made a signal of recall, on which Somers, assisted by her batteries, brought out his boat in triumph.

In the second attack, made on the 7th of August, Somers added fresh laurels to his brow. On this occasion, he again

led the first division of gun-boats, and had a narrow escape from death. In going into action, he stood leaning against the flag-staff, when suddenly he saw a shot flying towards him. Involuntarily he bowed his head, and, strange to say, the ball cut the flag-staff immediately above him, and so close to his head that, if he had not moved, he would have been killed. On this day, the gun-boats were three hours in action; and one of them, the *Siren*, Lieutenant Caldwell, blew up. Towards the close of the battle, a strange sail hove in sight, which proved to be the *John Adams* twenty-eight, with news of the promotion of Decatur to be a post-captain, as a reward for the burning of the *Philadelphia*. The same vessel brought out intelligence of the restoration of the rank of commander to the navy, and the appointment of Somers as seventh on the list of this new grade. In consequence of these changes, Decatur, who had been the junior of Somers, now outranked him; and though this awoke no improper envy in the latter's bosom, it doubtless stimulated him in secret to achieve something which should advance him to an equal grade.

Two attacks followed on Tripoli, one on the 28th of August, and the other on the 3d of September; and in both Somers participated, displaying his usual gallantry. But the season was drawing to a close. Anxious to finish it with some brilliant exploit, which should, if possible, rival that of Decatur in burning the *Philadelphia*, Somers proposed to the commodore a plan for destroying the enemy's flotilla, as it lay anchored in the inner harbour. His scheme was to take the *Intrepid*, the same ketch which Decatur had employed, and fitting her up in the double capacity of fire-ship and infernal, send her into the port of Tripoli, by the western passage, there to explode in the very centre of the Turkish vessels. Her deck was to be strewed with missiles, and a large quantity of powder was to be used, in the belief that the damage would not be confined to the shipping, but extend



to the town and castle. The panic created by this terrific explosion, in the dead of night, would, Somers urged, lead probably to an immediate peace, and to the liberation of the crew of the *Philadelphia*. This dangerous but daring scheme met the approval of Preble, and preparations were immediately made for carrying it into effect.

A small apartment was constructed in the hold of the ketch, into which was emptied a hundred barrels of gunpowder, and from this a train was led aft to one of the cabin-windows, where a port-fire was fixed, graduated to burn a certain number of minutes. A body of light, splintered wood was also arranged in a space back of the magazine, for the double purpose of insuring an explosion and keeping the foe aloof from fear of the flames. Nearly two hundred shells of different sizes, with fuses prepared, were piled on the deck. In all, about fifteen thousand pounds of powder were distributed through the ketch. Two boats were to accompany her, a provision necessary in case a shot should disable one, and just sufficient men detailed for the service to sail the ketch and tow the boats after abandoning her. Ten seamen were to be chosen for this purpose, of whom four were to come from the *Nautilus*, and six from the *Constitution*. When Somers called for volunteers, every man on board his little schooner offered himself, notwithstanding the desperate nature of the service, so that a selection had to be made. Lieutenant Henry Wadsworth, of the *Constitution*, accompanied Somers as second officer.

Some time was required to perfect the arrangements, and when all was ready, one or two attempts made to go in failed, in consequence of the lightness of the wind. At last, Somers resolved to make a final attempt on the night of the 4th of September. The whole squadron watched the preparations with anxiety, mingled occasionally with melancholy forebodings. The commodore himself had personally attended to the details, thus betraying the interest he took in the

hazardous attempt. An anecdote, respecting what had passed between him and Somers, was afloat in the fleet, and added to the solicitude of all. It was said that Preble had burnt a port-fire in the presence of the young commander, in order to ascertain its time, and that, when it was consumed, he had asked Somers if the boats could get out of reach of the shells within the few minutes it was burning. "I think we can, sir," answered the commodore's companion. Preble looked intently at the young officer a moment, and then asked if the port-fire should be shortened. "I ask for no port-fire at all, sir," was the quiet, but firm reply. In addition to this anecdote, it was told that the commodore had urged the necessity of not permitting the ketch, by any accident, to fall into the hands of the enemy, and that Somers had declared he would never allow himself to be taken. As the critical hour approached, a gloom, in consequence, settled on the hearts of those who were to be left behind; and those who shook hands with Somers, as he departed, experienced an unaccountable awe and sadness, as if the shadow of death already fell around them.

Not so the heroes who had embarked in the enterprise. With them, the prospect of glory, the consciousness of performing a high and noble duty, drowned all feelings of sadness. Previous to quitting the *Nautilus*, Somers addressed his boat's crew, telling them that he wished no man to accompany him who would not prefer being blown up to being captured. He was answered with three cheers, and each man separately desired to be allowed to apply the match. Yet no unmanly levity was mingled with these enthusiastic feelings. The seamen bound on the expedition made their wills, as if about to die; and then all repaired on board the ketch. Here an addition was found to the crew, in the person of Mr. Israel, a lieutenant of the *Constitution*, who had smuggled himself on board the *Intrepid*, determined to partake in the glory or disaster of the night. Before the ketch

left her anchorage, Stewart and Decatur came on board to bid Somers farewell. The parting was more serious between these young men than that between the crew and their shipmates. Somers was tranquil as usual, though graver than his practice. At the close of the interview he took a ring from his finger, broke it into three pieces, and giving one to each of his friends, retained the other himself. The *Intrepid* got under way about eight o'clock in the evening, the *Argus*, *Vixen*, and *Nautilus* accompanying her as far as the rocks outside the harbour. The last person who left the ketch was Lieutenant Washington Reed, the first lieutenant of the *Nautilus*. When he went over the side of the *Intrepid*, all communication ceased for ever with her and her gallant crew.

The night was hazy, though not dark. A few stars were visible, faintly glimmering through the mist, and serving only to increase, with their uncertain light, the indistinctness of objects. The rocks, however, at the entrance of the harbour were plainly visible; while the fog, it was thought, would conceal the ketch from the shore. A light wind from the eastward gently ruffled the waters and propelled the *Intrepid* slowly along her course. When the *Nautilus* parted company with her, Lieutenant Reed directed Midshipman Ridgeley to follow her with a night-glass, and that officer continued watching her accordingly for nearly an hour, as she faded fainter and fainter in the distance. Meantime the *Siren* had been ordered by Preble to stand in, to be ready to afford assistance in case of an emergency. In obeying this direction, Stewart kept more in the offing than the vessels which preceded him. Soon the enemy began to open his fire on the ketch, which, by this time, was rapidly approaching the batteries; but the *Intrepid* kept resolutely on. Every eye on board the brig was now fixed on the shadowy canvas of the fire-ship, until it gradually mingled with the surrounding obscurity, and the spectators could see nothing more. They still, however, remained gazing in the direction where

they supposed the ketch to be. A profound silence meantime hung over the waters, broken only by the occasional boom of a gun from the batteries. Suddenly, through the haze, a light was seen moving rapidly in a horizontal line, and wavering, as if from a lantern hurriedly carried along a vessel's deck. Lieutenant Carrol, who stood by Stewart's side, in the gangway of the Siren, had scarcely time to call the attention of his commander to this light, when it disappeared, and night again shut in the prospect.

A few seconds of breathless anxiety ensued. All at once a dazzling glare filled the firmament; a jet of fire, like a fountain, shot to the sky; a deafening roar followed; and vessels, batteries, sea and land reeled alike under the tremendous concussion. For an instant the mast of the ketch, with its sails blazing, was seen in the air, as were also numerous bombs whose fuses were burning. Then a sudden darkness enveloped the scene, as if the wand of an enchanter had been waved over it. The gloom was so intense that, for a moment, no man could see his neighbour, though almost within touch of him. This impenetrable obscurity was accompanied by a silence nearly as profound. The guns of the castle were hushed instantaneously, as if horror had transformed the gunners to stone. The otherwise unbroken stillness was disturbed only by a few sounds, yet these were more awful than the hush itself; the falling of bombs on the rocks, the plashing of heavier bodies in the water, and, in fancy, a low cry from the town as of the suppressed shriek of thousands. As these noises penetrated the gloom and silence, the hearts of the listeners stopped beating for an instant, and a simultaneous shudder ran through every frame. No man spoke, but each knew that the *Intrepid* had blown up.

When the first stunning emotions of the Americans had subsided, they reflected that perhaps Somers had left the ketch before the explosion, and every ear was immediately occupied in listening for the sounds of approaching oars.

But none were heard. Seconds glided into minutes, and minutes lengthened into hours, yet without any signs of the absent heroes. The night passed wearily, and morning began to dawn in the east; but still nothing was seen or heard of the absent crew. "Men got over the sides of the vessels, holding lights, and placing their ears to the water," says one who wrote from the narratives of those who were present; "and often was it fancied that the gallant adventurers were near. They never re-appeared. Hour after hour went by, until hope itself became exhausted. Occasionally, a rocket gleamed in the darkness, or a sullen gun was heard from the frigate, as signals to the boats; but the eyes that should have seen the first were sightless, and the last tolled on the ears of the dead."

The three vessels hovered around the mouth of the harbour all night, hoping that when the sun rose, they would be able to find some traces of the *Intrepid*. Her shattered mast was visible on the rocks near the western entrance, and a few fragments of the hull were not far off. But this was all. One of the Tripolitan gun-boats was missing, and two others, apparently injured, were being hauled upon the shore. The three which had lain across the entrance of the harbour had disappeared. It was subsequently learned that the explosion took place in the western entrance to the harbour, a quarter of a mile from the spot that it was intended the ketch should reach. In the wreck, which lay on the north side of the rocks, near the battery at the end of the mole, were found two mangled bodies, and four more were picked up, two days after, floating in the harbour, or lodged on the shore. These bodies were in a shocking state, and, though Captain Bainbridge and one or two of his companions were taken to see them, it was found impossible to distinguish even the officers from the men. It is understood that six more bodies were found, the day after the explosion, on the shore to the southward of the town, and that a six-oared boat, with a

single body in it, obviously that of the keeper, had drifted on the beach.

The three vessels returned, with melancholy feelings, to the squadron, where the opinion was at first general, that Somers had blown himself up to prevent being taken. In this belief Preble remained to the day of his death. The facts already enumerated, on the authority of Bainbridge, were not, however, known to either the commodore or his officers at the time they formed their conclusion; and these facts decide the affair otherwise, as far at least as a matter involved in such obscurity can ever be determined. At the time of the explosion none of the enemy were near enough to the *Intrepid* to render her situation perilous, and Somers, proverbially cool, was not the man to blow himself up except in the last extremity. In case, too, of the proximity of a foe, the splinter-room was to have been lighted, one of its chief purposes being to deter approach; yet this was not done. Accident therefore, and not design, is the solution of the explosion. A hot shot, fired from the batteries, would have led to the disaster, or a cold shot, striking fire by coming in contact with a bolt, would have produced the same result. That so little damage was done to the Turks; that the corpse of the boat-keeper was the only one found in the boat; and that the *Intrepid*, as is testified by those who watched her to the last, was yet a considerable distance from the inner harbour, proves, as conclusively as circumstantial evidence can, the fact that the ketch exploded by accident. The light seen by Lieutenant Carrol renders it possible that the *Intrepid* blew up from a spark dropped from a lantern, carried from aft in order to set fire to the splinter-room, a step it was nearly, if not quite time to take. Yet this supposition would imply a carelessness which was foreign to Somers and his crew.

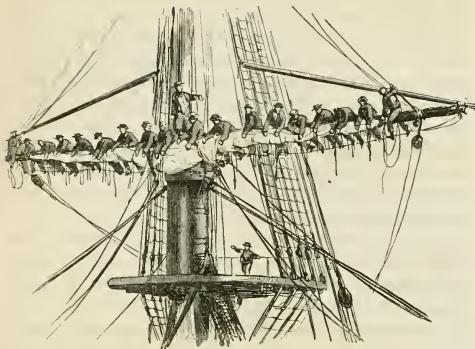
Thus perished one of the bravest men who ever held a commission in our navy. He died, with his gallant associ-

ates, in the execution of the holiest duty of an officer, the attempt to release fellow beings from slavery; for if the enterprise had succeeded, there is little doubt but that peace would have been the result, attended with the liberation of Bainbridge and his crew. A melancholy interest hangs around the name of Somers, and will continue so long as the annals of our country are read. The story of his heroic undertaking and the mystery that attended his death will be the theme of the historian for centuries to come, impelling fair eyes to shed tears over the recital, long after the hand that pens the tale shall have mouldered into dust.

In disposition, Somers was mild and affectionate. But, under a quiet demeanour, he concealed the heart of a lion. His sentiments of duty and honour were chivalric to the last degree. As an instance of this, though perhaps an exaggerated one, a familiar anecdote is told of his having fought three duels in one day, the last seated wounded on the ground, sustained by his friend Decatur; and, what is noblest of all, these duels were fought because his opponents had imputed to him a want of spirit for not resenting some idle expressions of Decatur, the last man, as Somers well knew, intentionally to insult him.

In person Somers was of middle height, stout in frame, and unusually active and muscular. His nose inclined to the aquiline, and his eyes and hair were dark; indeed, his whole face is said to have borne marks of the cross of French blood which ran in his veins.

Congress passed a resolution of condolence with the friends of the officers who perished in the *Intrepid*. As a further proof of the reverence in which his services are held, several vessels-of-war have been named after him.



FURLING SAILS.

## JOHN RODGERS.

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS was distinguished, not only in the wars with France and Tripoli, but subsequently in that with Great Britain in 1812; and in all merited the reputation of a brave officer, a skilful seaman, and thorough disciplinarian. His most celebrated action was the capture of the largest cruiser of the Tripolitans, although she was moored near the shore, and defended by a large force on the beach, in addition to her own crew.

Rodgers was born in what is now Harford county, Maryland, on the 11th of July, 1771. His father was a Scottish gentleman, who, having emigrated to America many years before the war of independence, proved his devotion to his adopted country by taking up arms in her cause during that contest, as colonel of militia. The son, born just before the





JOHN RODGERS.



struggle began, imbibed in his earliest childhood those lessons of gallantry and patriotism which he subsequently enforced at the head of the fleet and under the victorious flag of the republic.

At the early age of thirteen, Rodgers made his first voyage, much against the wishes of his friends; but he had imbibed too strong a passion for the sea to be restrained. His success in the profession he had chosen was rapid and decisive, so that at nineteen he was already in command of a vessel, the ship *Jane*, trading from Baltimore to the north of Europe. He remained in the merchant service until he had reached his twenty-sixth year, at which period the navy being about to be augmented in consequence of the war with France, he solicited a commission in the service, and was appointed first lieutenant of the *Constellation*, Commodore Truxtun, then about to sail for the West Indies.

Rodgers shared in the action with *L'Insurgente*, and after her capture was appointed to carry her into port. Before the wounded and prisoners could be removed from the French frigate, a sudden gale separated her from the *Constellation*. The captured crew on this showed symptoms of rising, but though Rodgers had only one midshipman and eleven men, he kept the prisoners in check and safely brought *L'Insurgente* into harbour. This brilliant feat we have already related in detail in the biography of Truxtun. Returning to the United States, Rodgers obtained a furlough, and made a voyage to the West Indies in a vessel he had purchased. He was at St. Domingo during the insurrection of the slaves, and distinguished himself by saving many lives of the white inhabitants at the hazard of his own safety. In attempting to put off from the wharf, his boat being crowded with fugitive women and children, he fell, and was captured by the infuriated negroes; but, succeeding in making his escape, he received the thanks of Le Clerc, the French general, and was induced to return to the United States and bring out in his

brig a cargo of supplies. On his re-appearance, however, with the articles, the sentiments of the authorities had changed, and his valuable cargo was confiscated; while for twelve days he was kept prisoner, and only released on his promise to leave the island.

In March, 1799, Rodgers was advanced to the rank of post-captain, and directed to cruise in the sloop-of-war *Maryland*, on the Surinam station. He returned from this duty in September, 1800. In March, 1801, he was ordered to France with despatches. The war with Tripoli was now raging, and in the autumn of 1802, he was sent to the Mediterranean, in the *John Adams* twenty-eight, to join the squadron cruising there under Commodore Morris. While lying before Tripoli, on the 20th of July, 1803, being at that time the senior officer present, Rodgers was led to believe that preparations were making in the city either to get a cruiser to sea, or to cover the return of one to port. Accordingly he despatched the *Enterprise* and *Adams*, the only two vessels in company, the one to the eastward, the other in the opposite direction, while he remained in the offing in his own ship. The next morning the *Enterprise* was seen to the southward and eastward with the signal for an enemy flying. The *John Adams* was a few leagues at sea, and it was more than an hour in consequence before she could speak the schooner. On coming up, Rodgers found that a large corsair, making for Tripoli, had been headed off by the *Enterprise*, and had taken refuge in a deep bay, about seven leagues eastward of the town, where she lay at anchor with springs on her cables, prepared for defence. The alarm had spread, and already nine gun-boats were seen sweeping along the shore, to assist in the contest. A large body of cavalry was also perceived hovering about the coast to resist any attack by means of boats. The corsair was recognised as a vessel of twenty-two guns, the largest and finest belonging to the bashaw.

Rodgers promptly stood in, the *Enterprise* bearing him company, until he was within point-blank shot of the enemy, when he opened his fire, which the corsair returned. For forty-five minutes the cannonade raged on both sides, when the Turks abandoned their guns, numbers leaping overboard and swimming to the shore. The *John Adams*, finding herself in shallow water, wore with her head off shore. The boats were now ordered out, with the intention of boarding the corsair, while the *Enterprise* kept up a heavy fire on the beach to prevent succours. But a boat returning to the Tripolitan cruiser, the *John Adams* tacked and renewed her fire. A few minutes only had passed, however, when the colours of the corsair were struck, and immediately afterwards all her guns were discharged, those which pointed towards the land as well as those directed against the Americans. The victors were yet wondering at this proceeding, when a dull, heavy column of smoke puffed upwards from her decks; the hull parted into fragments; a stream of fire shot to the sky; and the two after-masts, with all the yards, rigging, and hamper attached, rose perpendicularly to the height of two hundred feet, and then fell with a sullen splash into the water. The corsair had accidentally blown up, carrying a part of her crew with her. When the awe which followed this catastrophe had partially subsided, Rodgers turned his attention to the gun-boats, which he endeavoured to cut off, but the shallowness of the water and their knowledge of the shoals permitted them to escape.

At the close of this year, Rodgers returned, in the *John Adams*, to the United States. He did not long remain idle, however, but in July, 1805, sailed again for the Mediterranean, this time in command of the Congress thirty-eight. After serving, for some time, as second in command in the squadron before Tripoli, the return of Commodore Barron home in consequence of ill health, made him the senior officer; and, in this capacity, he continued to direct the opera-

tions of the war, during the short period that remained to the conclusion of peace, which occurred on the 3d of June, 1805. The treaty which put a final end to this contest was signed on board the Constitution, to which frigate Rodgers had succeeded. Subsequently, Rodgers imposed conditions on the Bey of Tunis, after which he returned to the United States. He was now appointed to command the gun-boats in New York harbour, in which capacity he remained until February, 1809. In this month, he was transferred to the Constitution, with directions to cruise on the Atlantic coast, in order to protect our commerce from the depredations or insults of British men-of-war. He subsequently hoisted his broad pennant on board of the President, in the execution of the same duty. It was while in command of this ship that the collision occurred between her and the English sloop-of-war Little Belt, in which the latter was almost reduced to a wreck by a few broadsides from the former; a collision which increased the hostile feelings already existing between this country and Great Britain, and assisted materially to produce the war of 1812. The facts of this affair are these:—

Rodgers had been lying in the Potomac, when, hearing that an American sailor had been impressed from a brig off Sandy Hook, by a British frigate, he sailed to inquire into the facts. About noon, on the 16th of May, 1811, when the President was approaching New York, a sail was discerned, apparently a man-of-war, in chase of which Rodgers proceeded, setting his broad pennant and ensign. The President gained fast upon the stranger until the wind fell, when her progress was slower; but, at nightfall, the vessels were so close that the chase hauled up his courses, and, coming by the wind on his starboard tack, set his ensign. It was too dark, however, for the Americans to discover his nation, but his broadside indicated that of a small frigate. For nearly an hour and a half the two vessels continued manœuvring, each wishing to get to windward of the other; but finally

the President succeeding, Rodgers brought-to on the weather-bow of the stranger and hailed. No answer was given, except a hail in return. The commodore now put the question again. At this instant, a gun was fired from the chase, the shot cutting away a breast back-stay and entering the mast. Whether this discharge was the result of accident or design has never been explained, but it was probably the latter; for, at that time, the British navy, in consequence of its numerous victories over French men-of-war, had come to regard itself as invincible; and combats were not unfrequently invited against as great odds as those which now presented themselves.

Rodgers was about to direct the return of the fire, when an officer of the second division discharged his gun, under a standing order to that effect in similar emergencies. The stranger immediately fired three guns in rapid succession, and, after a pause, the rest of his broadside, with all his musketry. On this the President poured in a broadside. This had scarcely been done, when, through the uncertain twilight, Rodgers discovered that his antagonist was only a sloop-of-war, though she wore, at first sight, the appearance of a frigate, in consequence of having a light spar deck, on which, however, no guns were mounted. Finding his adversary so weak, Rodgers desisted firing. But, to the astonishment of the Americans, scarcely had this been done, when the stranger, supposing perhaps that his enemy was intimidated, renewed his broadsides. Indignant at this, Rodgers ordered the guns to be again opened on the enemy. In a few minutes the stranger lay almost a wreck on the water. The President now desisted a second time, and hailing the enemy, was answered that her antagonist was a British man-of-war.

Perceiving the crippled condition of his adversary, Rodgers was unwilling to abandon him to his fate, and accordingly, wearing round, he ran a short distance to leeward, and then hauled by the wind again, in order to remain near the

stranger. When morning broke, the enemy was discovered to leeward, having drifted considerably during the night. The President, however, soon ran down to her, when Rodgers sent a boat on board, with an offer of services. The stranger now proved to be the *Little Belt* of eighteen guns. She had suffered severely by the President's broadsides, and thirty-one of her crew had been killed and wounded. The English captain coldly declined assistance, on which the two vessels parted, each bearing up on her course. This collision produced much angry discussion between Great Britain and the United States, and led to official investigations in both countries. In America, Rodgers, having been tried by a court-martial, was acquitted, the facts elicited in testimony being such as we have based our narrative upon. In England, it is believed no proper court of inquiry was held, though affidavits were published from most of the officers of the *Little Belt*. In these it was asserted that the President began the action, and began it, not by the discharge of a single gun, but by a whole broadside; while it was also intimated that, in the end, she sheered off. The latter part of this story is so directly contradicted by the great injury done to the British vessel, while the American frigate suffered but little, that it gave an air of falsehood and absurdity to the whole tale, and prevented belief in all parts of it among impartial men of either nation.

When war with Great Britain was finally declared, on the 18th of June, 1812, Rodgers was lying in the harbour of New York, having his broad pennant still flying on board the President. On the 21st, the United States, Commodore Decatur; the Congress, Capt. Smith; and the *Argus*, Lt. Com. Sinclair, arrived from the southward; and, on the same day, Rodgers received official notice of the declaration of hostilities. As the whole squadron was ready for sea, he immediately determined to go out, hoping to intercept the homeward-bound fleet of British West Indiamen, which, about



this season, was sweeping along the outer edge of the Gulf Stream. Accordingly, within an hour after the letter of the Secretary of the Navy reached him, he went to sea, accompanied by the *United States*, the *Congress*, the *Wasp*, and the *Argus*. On the 23d, about six, A. M., a sail was seen, subsequently discovered to be the British frigate *Belvidere*, to which chase was given. The pursuit was continued until four, P. M., by which time the *President*, an unusually fast vessel off the wind, had outsailed the rest of the squadron and was within gun-shot of the enemy. The wind now falling, and the American ships all being very deep in consequence of having just left port, the *Belvidere* began to gain; and Rodgers saw that nothing was left but to endeavour to cripple the fugitive. Accordingly he opened on the British frigate with his chase-guns, pointing the fore-castle gun himself. Commodore Rodgers was thus the first person to fire a hostile cannon in the war of 1812. The piece was discharged subsequently several times, but at last it burst, blowing up the fore-castle deck, and throwing the commodore into the air, breaking his leg in the fall. By cutting away her anchors, throwing overboard her boats, and starting fourteen tuns of water, the *Belvidere* succeeded in effecting her escape, and, hastening to Halifax, spread there the news of the declaration of war. Meanwhile the American squadron continued its cruise, but the ill-fortune which attended the opening followed to the close; and though the *Jamaica* fleet was frequently heard of, it was not overtaken, Rodgers following it vainly almost to the chops of the British Channel. After an absence of seventy days, the squadron returned to the United States, going into Boston. Seven captured merchantmen and one American vessel re-captured were its entire trophies.

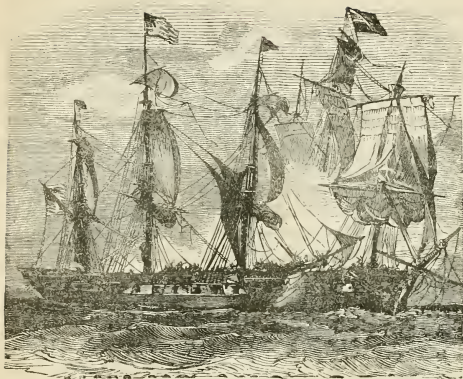
On the 8th of October, the commodore again went to sea, and, after parting in a few days from all his squadron except the *Congress*, captured the British packet *Shallow*, having

on board two hundred thousand dollars in specie. The two frigates subsequently continued their cruise, being absent eighty days, and sailing a distance of eight thousand miles, without meeting any of the enemy's ships of war. On the 3d of April, 1813, Rodgers again left port, having the Congress in company. He directed his course first for the Azores, and afterwards for the North Sea, making numerous captures of British merchantmen. At one time he was pursued by a line-of-battle ship and a frigate; and finding the latter in advance of its companion, he offered battle, trusting to gain a victory before the larger ship could close; but the challenge was declined. He returned to the United States shortly after, entering New York harbour on the 26th of September. On the 5th of December of the same year, he sailed on a fourth cruise, and was absent until the 18th of February, 1814, seeking for an opportunity to engage a frigate of the enemy, and encountering continual risks of capture by a superior force. But fortune, which had favoured him in the French and Tripolitan wars, was now adverse, and he returned to port without having met an adversary. He now gave up his frigate. In August, he conducted the naval operations on the Potomac against the enemy, after the retreat of the latter's forces from Washington; and, in September, participated in the glorious and successful defence of Baltimore. With this duty his active services in the war of 1812 ceased.

When peace was declared, Rodgers was tendered the office of Secretary of the Navy, but this he declined. He was then made President of the Board of Naval Commissioners; and, in the discharge of the responsibilities of this honourable office, he continued, with but a single intermission, for a period of twenty-one years. The intermission occurred between 1825 and 1827, when he commanded the American squadron in the Mediterranean, his flag-ship being the *North Carolina* seventy-four. During the presidency of Monroe he was again urged to accept the Naval Department, but he

refused for the second time. In the summer of 1832, when the Asiatic cholera visited the United States, he had an attack of that epidemic; and though he recovered, it was with a shattered constitution. In the hope of restoring his health, he visited England in 1836, but the voyage failed to benefit him. His physical system, impaired by his long and arduous services, had been completely undermined by the attack of cholera, and he continued to sink, until the 1st of August, 1838, when he expired at Philadelphia.

Rodgers was a man of great firmness, and, if possible, greater energy. He was a strict disciplinarian, was proud of the honour of his flag, and, under all circumstances, showed himself alike skilful and courageous.



HULL'S VICTORY.

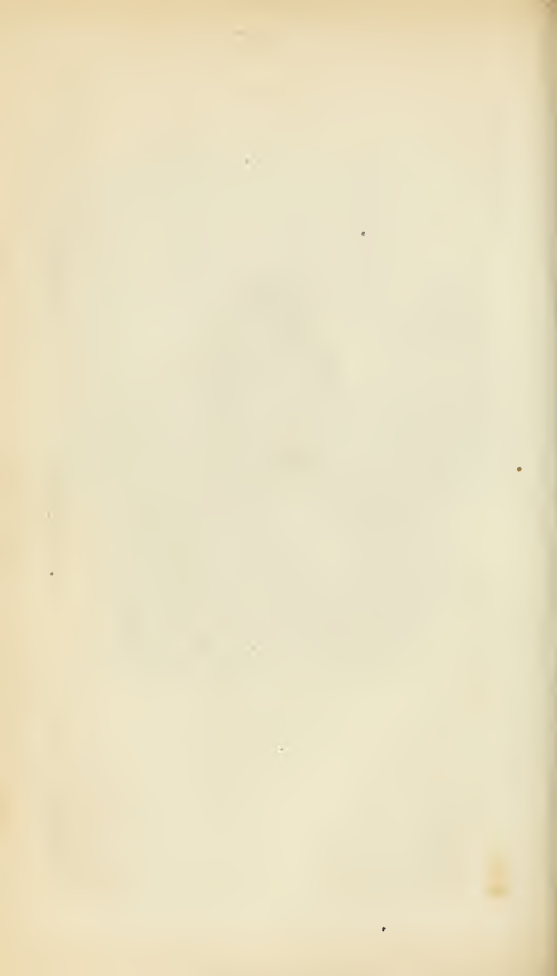
## ISAAC HULL.

THE war of 1812 had scarcely begun, when the public mind was plunged into despondency by news of the capitulation of Detroit. Suddenly, when every one was in despair, intelligence came of a victory so unexpected, so brilliant, so far beyond human foresight, that the whole nation was flung into transports of joy. We allude to the capture of the British frigate *Guerriere*, by Captain Isaac Hull, in the *Constitution* forty-four.

Hull was born at Derby, in the vicinity of New Haven, Connecticut, on the 9th of March, 1775. His father, an officer in the American army, served during the whole of the revolutionary struggle, leaving, for that purpose, his wife and



ISAAC HULL.



her infant son, when the latter was but a few weeks old. The lad early displayed a taste for the sea, which his living within sight, as it were, of Long Island Sound, did not tend to destroy. With the hope of diverting his attention to some other pursuit, he was despatched, after the war, to his uncle, General William Hull, then residing at Boston. In that city he went to school. It was soon discovered, however, that his passion for the sea was unappeasable, and his friends consented, though reluctantly, to his making a voyage. The vessel in which he embarked was wrecked on the coast of Ireland; but this disaster did not discourage him. His natural bias for the sea finally triumphed over every obstacle which his family could offer. He now devoted himself assiduously to his profession. In the course of eleven years he made eighteen voyages to Europe and the West Indies in various capacities, gradually rising in station, however, until at nineteen he commanded a vessel in the London trade. We shall not follow him through this portion of his career, though it abounds with adventures of a varied, and even romantic character. It is sufficient to say, that on the prospect of a war with France in 1798, and after the passage of a bill increasing the navy, he conceived the ambition of entering the regular service, and, applying for a lieutenant's commission, had his wish gratified on the 9th of March of that year, the day on which he was twenty-three years old.

His first appointment was to the *Constitution*, then fitting out at Boston, under Commodore Talbot, for the windward station in the West Indies. While under the command of this officer, he achieved his first feat in arms. It having been ascertained that a French letter-of-marque, the *Sandwich*, was lying in Port Platte, St. Domingo, the commodore despatched Hull, in one of the frigate's cutters, to reconnoitre. Hull pronounced it practicable to cut the vessel out, and, as the *Sandwich* was dangerous on account of her speed, Talbot determined on the enterprise. Accordingly, finding an

American sloop, the *Sally*, employed on the coast, he threw a party of seamen and marines into her under the command of Hull. The sloop reached her destination on the following day about noon. As soon as the harbour began to open to the sight, the *Sandwich* was perceived lying with her broadside to the entrance, while a battery at no great distance, frowning down on the water, afforded her additional protection. Hull now sent most of his people below, and getting an anchor ready over the stern, to bring the sloop up with, stood directly for the enemy's bows. No suspicion whatever was excited; the *Sally* ran the *Sandwich* aboard; and the *Constitution's* people, pouring into her, carried her without the loss of a man. At the same moment, Captain Carmick landed with the marines, entered the battery, and spiked the guns. Notwithstanding a great commotion which now ensued on shore, the Americans went to work to secure their prize. The *Sandwich* was stripped to a girtline, and every thing was below. Before sunset she had her royal yards across, her guns scaled, and her American crew quartered, and soon after she weighed, beat out of the harbour, and joined the frigate. Hull always regarded this as one of his most creditable achievements; and it is so considered by the best judges of nautical exploits. The capture of the *Sandwich* in a neutral port was illegal, however, as the courts subsequently declared; hence, in the end, she was not only restored to her owners, but all the prize-money of the cruise awarded to pay damages.

When the *Constitution* returned to Boston, Hull was directed to superintend her repairs; but before this duty was finished, he was ordered to join the *Adams* as first lieutenant, and sail with that vessel to the Mediterranean. Arrived in that sea, he received the command of the *Enterprise*, a schooner already made celebrated by the victories of Shaw. In this gallant little craft he rendered effectual aid to Captain Rodgers, of the *John Adams*, in capturing a Tripolitan cor-



sair, mounting twenty-two guns. Hull had detected this vessel, about daylight, making for Tripoli, and with a spirit that few under the circumstances would have shown, interposed between the enemy and safety, at the risk of losing his own vessel. The corsair, intimidated by Hull's audacity, instead of boldly standing on in his course and running down his puny adversary, sought refuge in a deep bay, where he was subsequently captured by the *John Adams*, Hull participating in the action with the *Enterprise*. During the operations under Preble, in 1804, Hull served with increasing reputation. He was one of that gallant band, of whom Decatur stood foremost, who, at that period, gave our infant navy the position it has ever since maintained before the world.

In this year Hull was advanced to the *Argus* sixteen, and also promoted to the rank of commander. During his stay in the *Argus*, he was constantly employed in the most active duty. For a while he cruised off the coast of Morocco, watching the corsairs in the ports of that power. Subsequently he rejoined Preble's squadron before Tripoli, when he was ordered to Naples, and charged with the protection of American property, in the event of the city being taken by the French. His next duty was the conveyance of General Eaton to Egypt, prior to that officer's march across the desert to Derne, a town on the frontiers of the dominions of Tripoli. He also furnished most of the supplies for the campaign. In the attack on Derne, Hull participated, battering the fortifications from the sea, while Eaton assailed them on the land. At the conclusion of peace, which followed shortly after this victory, Hull returned to the United States, having been absent four years and three months. During this period, he had made himself a prominent reputation, and was excelled in popular estimation only by Decatur, Somers, and perhaps Stewart. He was still a young man, scarcely thirty years of age, when, in 1806, soon after his return, he was promoted to the rank of post-captain.

His first service, subsequent to his arrival, was the superintending the construction of some gun-boats, built in pursuance of a system which was the favourite scheme of President Jefferson. He was next appointed to the command of the navy yard at Norfolk. He then received an appointment to the Chesapeake, and afterwards to the Constitution. In this latter frigate, he carried out Mr. Barlow, the American minister to the court of Napoleon. When war with Great Britain was declared, on the 18th of June, 1812, he was lying at Annapolis in the Constitution, having just arrived from Europe; and he immediately received an order from the Secretary of the Navy to ship a new crew, and sail for New York. Every exertion was put forth to obtain a complement of men as speedily as possible, and, with such success, that, by the 12th of July, the Constitution was ready for sea. On that day, she left her anchorage and stood out of the bay, destined, before Hull laid down her command, not only to make herself and her commander immortal, but to give such an impetus to naval victory, that our ships of war, instead of being laid up in ordinary as was at first contemplated, were kept at sea, where their astonishing successes held the American people in breathless delight, and filled Europe with equal amazement and respect.

We have said that it was at first contemplated to lay up our ships of war in ordinary; and, strange as this resolution may seem, it was yet actually conceived. The navy of Great Britain, in 1812, numbered about eight hundred efficient vessels, while that of the United States did not exceed twenty, exclusive of gun-boats. This comparatively insignificant force was composed of three forty-fours; eight frigates of a smaller size; and nine sloops-of-war, brigs, and schooners. Intimidated by the vast disparity between the navy of the two countries, the administration resolved in July, after a cabinet discussion, to forbid such vessels as had not already gone to sea from leaving port. Though it was the opinion

of a majority of Mr. Madison's advisers, that the enormous naval power of the enemy would sweep every American cruiser from the ocean, fortunately the executive did not entirely coincide with them, and, still more fortunately, Captain Stewart and Bainbridge, as well as Hull, happened to be in Washington at this crisis. The two former of these officers visited the Secretary of the Navy, and represented to him that, though the British had for a century been victorious over the French at sea, they had not been equally successful against the Americans in the war of independence.

The secretary was influenced by these remarks, and procured for the two captains an audience of the president, who was so much struck with their arguments, that he called his cabinet together in order to reconsider its decision. The cabinet, however, sharing the popular notion, which regarded the British navy as invincible, adhered to its advice. On being notified of this, Stewart and Bainbridge, in despair, addressed a letter to the president, in which they recapitulated their arguments in favour of the navy's probabilities of success; asserting, from their personal knowledge of the character of the ships and the material of the officers, that, in a fair fight, frigate to frigate, the Americans would have the best chance of victory. This letter was deemed so cogent, that Mr. Madison assumed the responsibility of neglecting the advice of the majority of his cabinet. In the mean time, it is understood that Hull, aware of what was in contemplation, hurried his departure from the Chesapeake, lest his sailing should be countermanded; and it was fortunate he did so, for when, a few days after, the news of his narrow escape from a pursuing British squadron reached Washington, the secretary, under the influence of the prevailing alarm, hastened to despatch a letter to Boston, directing him to remain in that port until further orders. Before the epistle reached Hull, however, that officer had sailed on the memorable cruise in which he captured the *Guerriere*. When he

reached Boston the second time, with the flag of a captured British frigate, there was no longer any need of argument to prove the high character of our navy; for all felt, from the President down to the lowest of the people, that the charm of English invincibility was broken, and that Britannia no longer "ruled the seas."

The Constitution, we have said, left Annapolis on the 12th of July, 1812. By the 17th, she was out of sight of land, though at no great distance from the coast, when a fleet of four sail was discerned, in shore, apparently composed of ships of war. A fifth sail was made out towards evening. Night fell, however, while the vessels were still at some distance. When morning dawned, three of the strangers were visible just out of gun-shot, and soon after a fourth, fifth, and sixth. These vessels belonged to the squadron of Captain Broke, of the British navy, and had been intentionally closing with the Constitution during the hours of darkness. The American captain soon detected that the strangers were enemies, and, as a combat with such a superior force would have been madness, nothing was left but to endeavour to escape. To this task Hull accordingly addressed himself with a resolution and skill which were ultimately crowned with success, and which, even without his subsequent capture of the *Guerriere*, would have given him a prominent place among the naval heroes of the republic. The struggle lasted for three days and as many nights, during part of which time a running fight was maintained with one of the English frigates. At the end of this period, Hull succeeded in effecting his escape from the squadron. In this protracted pursuit, the commodore received material assistance from the suggestions of his first lieutenant, Mr. Morris, to whose seamanship, perhaps, the Constitution was finally indebted for her escape. The success of the American frigate in evading her pursuers probably changed the whole character of the war at sea. If the Constitution had fallen a prey to the



ESCAPE OF THE CONSTITUTION.



enemy, the *Guerriere* might never have been captured; but the prestige of a first success would have attached to the British instead of to the American side, and the whole career of naval victory consequently been different.

The particulars of this remarkable chase, one of the most extraordinary in the naval annals of this or any other country, have been frequently given; but no account is at once so authentic, yet so full of the spirit of the event, as that of an eye-witness and chief actor, Hull himself. We accordingly insert his official despatch.

At sea, July 21st, 1812.

SIR:—In pursuance of your orders of the 3d instant, I left Annapolis on the 5th instant, and the capes on the 12th, of which I advised you by the pilot who brought the ship to sea. For several days after we got out, the wind was light and ahead, which, with a strong southerly current, prevented our making much way to the northward. On the 17th, at two, P. M., being in twenty-two fathoms water off Egg Harbour, four sail of ships were discovered from the masthead, to the northward and in shore of us, apparently ships of war. The wind being very light, all sail was made in chase of them, to ascertain whether they were the enemy's ships, or our squadron, having got out of New York, waiting the arrival of the *Constitution*, the latter of which I had reason to believe was the case.

At four in the afternoon, a ship was seen from the masthead, bearing about N. E., standing for us under all sail, which she continued to do until sundown, at which time she was too far off to distinguish signals, and the ships in shore only to be seen from the tops; they were standing off to the southward and eastward. As we could not ascertain before dark what the ship in the offing was, I determined to stand for her, and get near enough to make the night signal. At ten in the evening, being within six or eight miles of the

strange sail, the private signal was made, and kept up nearly one hour; but finding she could not answer it, I concluded she and the ships in shore were enemies. I immediately hauled off to the southward and eastward, and made all sail, having determined to lie off till daylight to see what they were. The ship that we had been chasing hauled off after us, showing a light, and occasionally making signals, supposed to be for the ships in shore.

On the 18th, at daylight, or a little before it was quite light, saw two sail under our lee, which proved to be frigates of the enemy's. One frigate astern, within about five or six miles, and a line-of-battle ship, a frigate, a brig, and schooner, about ten or twelve miles directly astern, all in chase of us, with a fine breeze, and coming up fast, it being nearly calm where we were. Soon after sunrise, the wind entirely left us and the ship would not steer, but fell round off with her head towards the two ships under our lee. The boats were instantly hoisted out, and sent ahead to tow the ship's head round, and to endeavour to get her farther from the enemy, being then within five miles of three heavy frigates. The boats of the enemy were got out and sent ahead to tow, by which, with the light air that remained with them, they came up very fast. Finding the enemy gaining on us, and but little chance of escaping from them, I ordered two of the guns on the gun-deck to be ran out at the cabin windows for stern guns on the gun-deck, and hoisted one of the twenty-four pounders off the gun-deck, and run that, with the fore-castle gun, an eighteen pounder, out at the ports on the quarter-deck, and cleared the ship for action, being determined they should not get her without resistance on our part, notwithstanding their force and the situation we were placed in. At about seven in the morning, the ship nearest us approaching within gun-shot, and directly astern, I ordered one of the stern guns fired, to see if we could reach her, to endeavour to disable her masts; found the shot fell a little short, would



not fire any more. At eight, four of the enemy's ships nearly within gun-shot, some of them having six or eight boats ahead towing, with all their oars and sweeps out, to row them up with us, which they were fast doing. It now appeared that we must be taken, and that our escape was impossible—four heavy ships nearly within gun-shot, and coming up fast, and not the least hope of a breeze to give us a chance of getting off by outsailing them.

In this situation, finding ourselves in only twenty-four fathoms water, by the suggestion of that valuable officer, Lieutenant Morris, I determined to try and warp the ship ahead, by carrying out anchors and warping her up to them; three or four hundred fathoms of rope were instantly got up, and two anchors got ready and sent ahead, by which means we began to gain on the enemy; they, however, soon saw our boats carrying out the anchors, and adopted the same plan, under very advantageous circumstances, as all the boats from the ships furthest off were sent to tow and warp up those nearest to us, by which means they again came up, so that at nine, the ship nearest us began to fire her bow guns, which we instantly returned by our stern guns in the cabin and on the quarter-deck. All the shot from the enemy fell short; but we have reason to believe that some of ours went on board her, as we could not see them strike the water. Soon after nine, a second frigate passed under our lee, and opened her broadside, but, finding her shot fall short, discontinued her fire; but continued, as did all the rest of them, to make every possible exertion to get up with us. From nine to twelve, all hands were employed in warping the ship ahead, and in starting some of the water in the main hold to lighten her, when, with the help of a light air, we rather gained on the enemy, or, at least, held our own. About two in the afternoon, all the boats from the line-of-battle ship and some of the frigates were sent to the frigate nearest to us, to endeavour to tow her up, but a light breeze sprung up, which

enabled us to hold way with her, notwithstanding they had eight or ten boats ahead, and all her sails furled to tow her to windward. The wind continued light until eleven at night, and the boats were kept ahead towing and warping to keep out of the reach of the enemy, three of the frigates being very near us; at eleven, we got a light breeze from the southward, the boats came alongside and were hoisted up, the ship having too much way to keep them ahead, the enemy still in chase and very near.

On the 19th, at daylight passed within gun-shot of one of the frigates, but she did not fire on us, perhaps for fear of becalming her, as the wind was light; soon after passing us she tacked, and stood after us—at this time six sail were in sight, under all sail after us. At nine in the morning, saw a strange sail on our weather beam, supposed to be an American merchant ship; the instant the frigate nearest us saw her, she hoisted American colours, as did all the squadron, in hopes to decoy her down; I immediately hoisted the English colours, that she might not be deceived; she soon hauled her wind, and, it is to be hoped, made her escape. All this day the wind increased gradually, and we gained on the enemy, in the course of the day, six or eight miles; they, however, continued chasing us all night under a press of sail.

On the 20th, at daylight in the morning, only three of them could be seen from the masthead, the nearest of which was about twelve miles off, directly astern. All hands were set at work wetting the sails, from the royals down, with the engine and fire buckets, and we soon found that we left the enemy very fast. At a quarter past eight, the enemy, finding that they were fast dropping astern, gave over chase, and hauled their wind to the northward, probably for the station off New York. At half-past eight, saw a sail ahead, gave chase after her under all sail. At nine, saw another strange sail under our lee bow. We soon spoke the first sail discovered, and found her to be an American brig from St. Domingo,

bound to Portland; I directed the captain how to steer to avoid the enemy, and made sail for the vessel to leeward; on coming up with her, she proved to be an American brig from St. Bartholomew's, bound to Philadelphia; but, on being informed of war, he bore up for Charleston, S. C. Finding the ship so far to the southward and eastward, and the enemy's squadron stationed off New York, which would make it impossible for the ship to get in there, I determined to make for Boston, to receive your farther orders, and I hope my having done so will meet your approbation. My wish to explain to you as clearly as possible why your orders have not been executed, and the length of time the enemy were in chase of us, with various other circumstances, have caused me to make this communication much longer than I could have wished; yet I cannot, in justice to the brave officers and crew under my command, close it without expressing to you the confidence I have in them, and assuring you that their conduct while under the guns of the enemy was such as might have been expected from American officers and seamen. I have the honour to be, with very great respect, sir, your obedient humble servant,

ISAAC HULL.

The Hon. PAUL HAMILTON,  
*Secretary of the Navy, Washington.*

In pursuance of the resolution expressed in this despatch, Hull proceeded to Boston, where he arrived towards the close of July. It was fortunate for both him and the country that he took this step, for an order had been despatched to New York in the interval, directing him to give up the command of his vessel to Bainbridge. The letter, in consequence of his change of destination, was not received; nor was a second one, forwarded to Boston by the Secretary of the Navy, directing him to remain in that port; for, after only a few days' delay, Hull had sailed again. On the 2d of August, he put to sea, on this second cruise, his crew being in the highest spirits. Hull first ran to the eastward, proceeding as

far as the mouth of the St. Lawrence, where he took two prizes, and recaptured an American brig. Finding few vessels in this quarter, he stood to the southward. On the 19th, at two, P. M., in latitude  $40^{\circ} 41'$ , longitude  $55^{\circ} 48'$ , a ship was discerned from the masthead of the Constitution, bearing E. S. E., and to leeward. All sail was immediately made in chase, and by half-past three the stranger was discovered to be an enemy's frigate. She was on the starboard tack, under easy canvas, and close-hauled. The announcement that the ship in sight was a British man-of-war, and probably of about the same force as the Constitution, was received with breathless emotion by the crew of the latter. The American frigate kept running free until within about three miles of the enemy; and, during this interval, the men conversed in anxious whispers, or watched the stranger with intense interest. The Constitution now began to shorten sail. Perceiving this, the Englishman laid his maintopsail aback, by way of challenge to battle. Hull, thus made aware that his enemy sought, rather than declined a combat, proceeded to make his preparations with all that coolness and care peculiar to his character; he furled his top-gallant sails, stowed his light stay-sails and flying jib, took a second reef soon after in his topsails, then hauled up his courses, sent down his royal yards, and cleared for action. The two ships were now fast approaching, each, like gladiators, stripped for the fight. As his last preliminary, Hull beat to quarters. The men took their stations with alacrity, and, standing eagerly by the guns, regarded the enemy as he slowly came within range, impatient to open their fire.

It was now about five o'clock, and the summer sun, though declining to the west, was still two hours high. A heavy sea was going. On the apparently illimitable expanse of waters, no third vessel was to be discerned; the two frigates were alone, with no one to interfere between them. Every man on board of either ship knew that the approaching con-

flict would decide the invincibility or not of the British flag ; and at the prospect of this duel, as it were, between the two nations, each felt his blood quicken, and his sinews stiffen as if iron. On the side of the enemy there was a confident belief in victory. The English sailors recognised, in their antagonist, the American ship which they had chased in company with the squadron a few weeks before, and they secretly exulted that she was now to fall their prey, when no rivals were present to divide the spoils. On the part of the Americans there was a resolute determination to prove to their countrymen on shore that the British men-of-war were not invincible ; and to effect this glorious end, each native-born seaman silently vowed to conquer or die. As they looked out, from their port-holes, on the foe, the Americans suddenly beheld the sides of the English frigate sheeted with flame, and then, as the white smoke curled backwards over her decks, a dozen of cannon balls were seen skipping along the waves towards the Constitution. The shot fell short. But, in their eagerness to finish the victory, the English wore, and delivered another broadside. Unable to restrain themselves, though aware that the foe was out of range, a few of the Americans fired their guns. On this, Hull, who had already formed the plan of battle which subsequently gave him the victory, sternly sent orders that not a piece should be discharged again, until he directed. Mean time he kept wearing the Constitution, as the movements of the enemy required ; for the British frigate was obviously bent on securing a raking position.

For nearly an hour the two ships manœuvred in this manner, until, about ten minutes before six, P. M., the Englishman, finding that he could not gain his point, bore up and ran off under his three topsails and jib, with the wind on his quarter. This bold defiance to a yard-arm and yard-arm fight was promptly accepted by Hull, who, setting his maintopgallant-sail and foresail, turned upon the foe. Every eye

on board the Constitution was now directed to the enemy. The vast decks were as silent as death, scarcely a sound being heard except the deep breathing of the men. In a few minutes the American frigate began to double on the quarter of the Englishman. The excitement now grew almost uncontrollable. The enemy was within half pistol-shot, and the Americans were continually falling at their quarters; but not a broadside had yet been allowed to be fired from the Constitution. Only the high state of discipline in which Hull kept his crew could have secured obedience in this crisis. At last the Constitution began to double on the Englishman, and as her forward guns bore, the order, so long delayed, and so eagerly awaited, came. Never did such a command find men more passionately eager to obey it. Every gun was double-shotted, and aimed with such unerring precision, that, at the first discharge, the spars of the enemy were heard crashing through the smoke. At this welcome sound cheers broke from some of the divisions. These, however, were soon drowned in the increasing roar of the strife; for, as the Constitution drew slowly ahead, and more of her guns bore, the firing on both sides became terrific. Soon nothing was heard except the stunning report of the artillery, the hissing of round shot, or the hundred commingled noises of battle.

About ten minutes after six the two frigates were fairly side by side, and now the mizzen-mast of the enemy went thundering over his quarter. A deafening huzza rose from the decks of the Constitution at this spectacle, while that ship, wrapped in a shroud of flame and smoke, continued advancing, the shrieks of the British and the crashing of timbers attesting the accuracy and closeness of her awful fire. Finding herself passing ahead of the enemy, Hull luffed short round his bows; but in this manœuvre, the frigate shot into the wind, and getting sternway, fell foul of the Englishman. The guns of the latter now almost touched the quarter of the

Constitution, and, in a few seconds, set fire to her cabin. At this spectacle, the British regarded the victory as their own; while the sight of the smoke rolling over the ship and the alarm of fire carried dismay, for an instant, through the American frigate. But this terror was only momentary. The conflagration was promptly subdued, and the most dangerous gun of the enemy disabled; and now the spirits of the Constitution's crew rose with a rebound. With words of mutual encouragement the men stimulated each other, while the wounded, as they were carried from their posts, looked beseechingly at their comrades, as if to invoke revenge. The din grew awful. As the ships touched, the firing became deadlier, that of the Americans being the most rapid, and, from their raking position, the most effective. As the conflict deepened, all sounds were lost in the undistinguishable tumult of the strife, except when, at intervals, the sharp shriek of some wounded enemy pierced the uproar, or the dying huzza of an American tar rung through the decks of the Constitution.

In the midst of this tremendous struggle, the British captain, finding that the metal of his antagonist was tearing him to pieces, called all hands from below, and mustered them on his forecastle, intending to board his adversary. Simultaneously Mr. Morris, the first lieutenant of the Constitution, endeavoured to lash the ships together; while Mr. Aluyn, the master, and Mr. Bush, of the marines, were on the taffrail, waiting to spring. The closeness of the two frigates had given full employment to the sharpshooters of either side, and incessant volleys of musketry now rattled in the tumult. Morris fell, shot through the body, though fortunately not mortally. Aluyn received a bullet in the shoulder. Bush, just as he was about to leap, was pierced by a ball in the head, and tumbled headlong. On board the enemy the men were falling even faster, disappearing under the raking fire of the Americans, like summer grass before the mower's

scythe. Soon the decks of the British frigate became slippery with blood, and the scuppers ran with human gore. The incessant discharges of musketry from both sides, combined with the heavy sea, which now pitched the frigates together, and now rolled them asunder, rendered it impossible to board; and the attempt was abandoned on both sides. Hull, at this, filled away his sails. As the Constitution shot ahead, the foremast of the English frigate fell, carrying down with it the mainmast, so that the enemy lay wallowing in the trough, without a stick standing, a hopeless wreck. At this spectacle, which assured them of victory, the American crew, by an impulse they could not control, simultaneously gave three cheers, which rising again, and yet again, over the dying reverberations of the fight, made the Constitution quiver from her truck to her keel.

Hull, with a proud exultation, beheld his antagonist, so vaunting but fifteen minutes before, now at his mercy; but his prudence did not permit him to risk the loss of a single life, by attempting to secure his prey prematurely. He accordingly hauled aboard his tacks, ran off a short distance, secured his masts, and rove new rigging. At the end of half an hour, he was in as favourable a condition for battle as when he first went into action; and, now wearing round, he took a position for raking. But, before he opened his fire, the enemy, who had doggedly kept a jack flying on the stump of his mainmast, lowered this, his last flag, and thus the victory was secured, without the renewal of the fight. The contest, in all, had lasted only thirty minutes; sixteen from the time the battle began until the enemy lost his mizzen, and fourteen from that period to the falling of his two other masts. Never had so decisive a triumph been gained over a British frigate, by a vessel of equal rate, in so short an interval. Never, in any battle where the ships of England were engaged, had the red-cross suffered so unexpected, so complete a humiliation. From that hour the charm of her as-





SURRENDER OF CAPTAIN DACRES.

sumed invincibility was broken, and she no longer remained sole mistress of the seas.

The news of the *Guerriere's* capture was received in London, at first with incredulity, and afterwards with profound astonishment. A few weeks before, on the declaration of war, a leading English journal had alluded contemptuously to the smallness of the American navy, and asked what Great Britain had to fear from "a few fir-built frigates, manned by a handful of dastards and outlaws?" But now the tone was changed. Some indeed endeavoured to conceal the true nature of the defeat. But others were more candid. "We have been accused," said an influential newspaper, "of sentiments unworthy of Englishmen, because we described what we saw and felt on the occasion of the capture of the *Guerriere*. We witnessed the gloom which that event cast over high and honourable minds; we participated in the

vexation and regret; and it is the first time that we have ever heard that the striking of the flag on the high seas to any thing like an equal force, should be regarded by Englishmen with complacency or satisfaction. If it be a fault to cherish among our countrymen 'that chastity of honour which feels a stain like a wound;' if it be an error to consider the reputation of our navy as tenderly and delicately alive to reproach—that fault, that error we are likely often to commit; and we cannot but consider the sophistry which would render us insensible to the dishonour of our flag as peculiarly noxious at the present conjuncture. It is not merely that an English frigate has been taken, after what we are free to confess may be called a brave resistance, but that it has been taken by a new enemy, an enemy unaccustomed to such triumphs, and likely to be rendered insolent and confident by them. He must be a weak politician who does not see how important the first triumph is in giving a tone and character to the war. Never before, in the history of the world, did an English frigate strike to an American; and though we cannot say that Captain Dacres, under all circumstances, is punishable for this act, yet we do say, there are commanders in the English navy, who would a thousand times rather have gone down with their colours flying, than have set their fellow-sailors so fatal an example."

In the United States, the intelligence of Hull's victory was received with equal astonishment by the people. This soon gave place, however, to the most unbounded enthusiasm. With naval men the result was less unexpected, though even they had looked forward to the struggle with a feeling of manly resolution rather than of entire confidence. But now, on coolly reviewing the battle, they saw, after making every allowance for the heavier metal of the Constitution, assurances of future success. The style in which the American frigate had been handled; the rapidity of her fire; and the readiness with which, after dismantling the *Guerriere*,

she repaired damages, to be ready in case another enemy came up, all betokened a self-reliance, coolness, and skill in the American marine which foretold new victories to come. Hull did not carry the *Guerriere* into port; she was too shattered for this; accordingly, on the day following the battle, she was set on fire, and blown up. The *Constitution* reached Boston on the 30th of August, crowded with prisoners. At the unusual spectacle of an American frigate entering port, bearing in triumph the flag of a captured British man-of-war, the exultation was general, and the intelligence spreading rapidly through the city, and into the neighbouring towns, the people in wondering and enthusiastic throngs pressed to the wharves to behold the victorious ship. Citizens and public bodies vied with each other in showering marks of approbation on Hull and his crew; and, for a while, it seemed as if the public would go delirious with joy.

The *Constitution* now passed into the hands of Bainbridge, who had been ordered to take command of her, it will be recollected, prior to her last cruise. Hull, in requital, received the command of the navy yard at Charleston. In the following year, however, he was transferred to that of Portsmouth, in New Hampshire, where he remained until he was chosen to be a Navy Commissioner, on the formation of the Board. He held this office for a few months only, when he returned to the Charleston station. After remaining at this post for eight years, he made a cruise in the Pacific, hoisting his broad pennant on board the frigate *United States*. Returning home in three or four years, he was appointed to the command of the navy yard at Washington. At this place he continued for seven years, after which he visited Europe, with his family, on leave of absence. Subsequently, he cruised for nearly three years in the Mediterranean squadron, his flag-ship being the *Ohio* line-of-battle ship. This was the last occasion on which he ever went to sea.

His health now began to be impaired, in consequence of

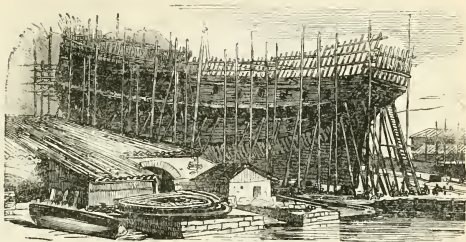
his long and arduous services, and besides age was stealing upon him. He felt accordingly the necessity of relaxation, and, applying for an unconditional leave of absence, established himself at Philadelphia, in the autumn of 1842. Here he found his strength declining, and, in the increasing prospect of dissolution, he began, in the beautiful language of Scripture, "to set his house in order." He died on the 13th of February, 1843. His last request was that he might be buried in his uniform. His interment took place at Laurel Hill, where a costly and appropriate monument, erected by his widow, points out the spot where moulders all that was mortal of the hero.

Hull was intrepid and self-possessed in danger; but had little enthusiasm. In this respect he differed widely from Decatur, whose hot Celtic blood blazed up at what scarcely affected the colder temperament of Hull. An able writer, who knew both men well, says that Decatur envied Hull the credit of the first victory of the war; but that Hull never could have envied Decatur under similar circumstances. Hull was exemplary in the performance of his duties, private as well as public. He was modest, amiable, and courteous. In a word, though few heroes have been less showy, few have possessed such solid merit.





JACOB JONES.



SHIP-BUILDING.

## JACOB JONES.

IN the capture of the *Guerriere*, the American public found but one drawback to their joy; it was the reflection that the *Constitution* had been slightly superior in weight of metal to her foe. In consequence, when the first burst of enthusiasm was over, there were not wanting croakers to argue, that between vessels of equal force, the old British supremacy would be vindicated by a signal victory. Yet scarcely had these prognostications been uttered, when they were set at rest for ever, by intelligence of the capture of the English brig *Frolic* by the American ship *Wasp*, the latter bearing the same relative inferiority to the former in weight of metal which the *Guerriere* had to the *Constitution*. The hero of this triumph was Jacob Jones.

Jones was born in 1770, not far from the village of Smyrna, in the state of Delaware. He lost his mother while he was still an infant, and his father when he was only four years old; but his step-mother, for his father had married again, treated him in all respects as if her own child, and provided for him a liberal education. At the age of eighteen,

having obtained a thorough knowledge of the Latin and Greek tongues, besides the other studies then usually followed in academies of the best repute, he began the study of physic and surgery, under Doctor Sykes, an eminent practitioner of that day, residing at Dover, in his native state. He subsequently attended the medical lectures of the University of Pennsylvania, and, having graduated at that time-honoured institution, returned to Dover, to practise his profession.

Discouraged, however, by the small prospect of success, for there were already a number of eminent physicians in the town, established in business, he determined to seek a livelihood by other pursuits; and accordingly solicited and obtained the office of clerk of the Supreme Court of Delaware, for the county of Kent. Partly, however, from ill-health resulting from his sedentary duties, partly from a longing for a more active and ambitious avocation, he decided, after he had held this post for some time, to abandon its comparative ease and emoluments for the untried life of a sailor, and accordingly, at the age of twenty-nine, entered the navy of the United States as a midshipman. This was in 1799 at the period of the French war. His friends remonstrated against his determination, pointing out to him the disadvantages of embracing the profession at so late an age; but their exhortations were in vain. He felt that he had at last hit upon the pursuit for which nature had intended him, and he resolutely maintained his purpose.

His first cruise was made on board the *United States*, Commodore Barry, to whom he was indebted, as were so many other gallant officers, for those rudiments of nautical knowledge which laid the foundation of his subsequent skill as a seaman. He next served on board the *Ganges* twenty-four. When the war with Tripoli broke out, he was ordered to the *Philadelphia*, Captain Bainbridge, and was one of the unfortunate number who, on the capture of that frigate, be-



came slaves to the Tripolitans. For twenty months, he and his comrades languished in captivity. At length restored to liberty by the successes of our arms, he returned to the United States, and was soon after elevated to the rank of a lieutenant. He was now ordered to New Orleans, on which station he remained until promoted to the command of the brig *Argus*, with directions to cruise on the southern maritime frontier. In 1811, he was advanced to the *Wasp*, a sloop-of-war mounting eighteen twenty-four pound carronades, a beautiful ship, and a fast cruiser. In this vessel he was sent out, in the spring of 1812, with despatches to our ministers at the courts of Great Britain and France. Before his return, war had been declared with the former power. He accordingly lost no time, on arriving in the *Delaware*, in refitting his ship; and soon sailed on a cruise. He ran off Boston, made one capture, and, after an absence of three weeks, returned to the *Delaware*. On the 13th of October, he put to sea again, this time destined, before he returned, to achieve a signal victory over a superior force.

He had been out four days, when, about an hour before midnight, in latitude  $37^{\circ}$  N., and longitude  $65^{\circ}$  W., several sail were made. Keeping close to the strangers, Jones waited for the dawn, when he discovered them to be a convoy of six English ships, under charge of a heavy brig-of-war. Four of the convoy appeared to be armed, but the brig showed no disposition to avail herself of their assistance, shortening sail, and allowing them to pass ahead, while she prepared for battle. As a heavy sea was going, Jones sent down his top-gallant yards, close reefed his topsails, and otherwise brought the *Wasp* under short fighting canvas. The enemy was also under little sail, and had his main-yard on deck, where it had been lowered for repairs. Both vessels showing such readiness to engage, they were soon alongside, when the action began. The fire of the English brig was at first the most rapid, and, being directed principally at the spars of the

Wasp, soon told with terrible effect. Within five minutes after the first gun was discharged, the main-topmast of the American ship was shot away; and in eight minutes the gaff and mizzen top-gallantmast also fell. The British, considering the day won, cheered at this spectacle; and already began to boast to each other of their prize-money.

But if the fire of the enemy was the most rapid, that of the Americans was the most deadly; and the English, even in the midst of their huzzas, began to shrink from their guns. The side of the Wasp now rubbed against the bows of her antagonist, and, in another minute, the ships came foul, the bowsprit of the foe overlapping the quarter-deck of the American, forcing her bows up into the wind, and enabling the latter to throw in a close raking fire. The vessels were now so near that in loading the Wasp's guns, the rammers frequently struck the bows of her opponent. Mean time, the Americans, burning to revenge the injury to their spars, maintained a terrific fire, which soon drove the enemy from his forward guns, a sight which the crew of the Wasp hailed in turn with huzzas. One or two of the carronades were now discharged, raking the decks of the foe for their whole length, and when the smoke cleared off, the British sailors were seen wildly flying below. At this spectacle, the enthusiasm of the Americans burst all discipline. Leaving their guns, they leaped into the rigging, and from thence sprang upon the bowsprit of the enemy, preparatory to swarming over his deck. Finding that the men were not to be restrained, Lieutenant Biddle placed himself at their head, and boarded the foe. On the forecastle of the brig he passed all his own people; but there was no enemy to oppose him. Two or three wounded officers were standing aft; and the decks were strewed with the dead and dying; but not a solitary seaman was at his post, except the man at the wheel.

As Mr. Biddle passed aft, the British officers threw down their swords in token of submission. Springing into the

main rigging, he hauled down the English flag. Meantime the Americans took possession of every part of the prize, and with that clemency which ought always to distinguish victors, forbore from injuring, or even insulting, their unfortunate prisoners. The firing now ceased, at fifteen minutes past meridian, the combat having lasted about three quarters of an hour. The prize proved to be the *Frolic*, Captain Whinyates, homeward bound, with the vessels in the Honduras trade under convoy. She was of the size and construction of the *Wasp*, except that she was finished as a brig; but she carried four guns more than the American ship. The *Wasp* was much cut up, and had five of her crew killed, and five wounded. The *Frolic*, when taken possession of by the victors, was almost a wreck; her hull was perforated in every direction, and her spars and rigging, especially the former, had suffered great damage. Scarcely had the two vessels been separated, after the action, when both her masts fell. Her loss in killed and wounded, though terribly severe, was never accurately known. Mr. Biddle estimated it at seventy or eighty; but Captain Whinyates, in his official report, says that not twenty of his men escaped unhurt, which would raise the casualties to one hundred.

Scarcely was the action over, when a strange sail, evidently a ship of force, was discerned approaching. Mr. Biddle was placed in charge of the prize, with orders to direct his course to Charleston; and the *Wasp*, throwing out her canvas, undertook to escape in a different direction. But crippled as she was, this proved to be impossible. The stranger came up rapidly, proving to be a line-of-battle ship, and, throwing a shot over the *Frolic*, ranged up close to the *Wasp*. It was with inexpressible chagrin that Jones beheld his prize thus ravished from him, and saw himself, so late a victor, obliged to assume the place of prisoner; but resistance would have been madness; and accordingly both the ship and brig surrendered. The line-of-battle proved to be the *Poictiers*, Cap-

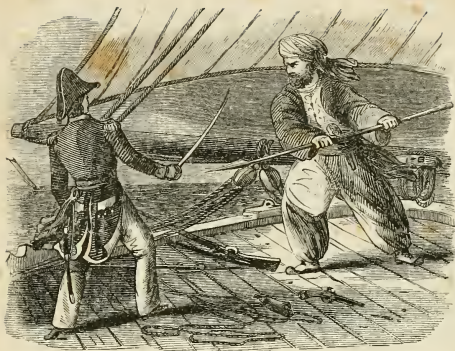
tain Beresford. The Americans were carried to Bermuda, where Jones and his officers were treated with especial courtesy, dinners, balls, and other entertainments being given for their amusement. In a few weeks, a cartel was prepared, by which the officers and crew of the *Wasp* were carried to New York. On his arrival in the United States, Jones was received with an almost wild enthusiasm. His brilliant victory was the general theme of conversation. Himself and his officers were welcomed with applause wherever they went. The different Atlantic cities vied with each other in the splendour of the entertainments with which they greeted him during his journey to Washington. His native state voted him a piece of plate. Congress shared in the popular acclamations, and appropriated twenty-five thousand dollars to Jones and his crew, for the loss they had sustained by the recapture of the *Frolic*. A gold medal was bestowed on Jones, a silver medal on each of the commissioned officers. In a word, the nation went wild with joy.

Jones was now appointed to the *Macedonian*, and attached to Decatur's squadron, which, at this time, was preparing to get to sea from New York, by way of Long Island Sound. But the vessels, having been chased into New London by a superior force of British ships, were compelled to lie in that port during the remainder of the war. Jones, on this, was detached from the *Macedonian*, and ordered, with his officers and crew, to join Chauncey on Lake Ontario. Here he was placed in command of the frigate *Mohawk*. But no further opportunity was presented for distinguishing himself, as the British and American fleets on this lake did not come to any action. At the conclusion of peace, Jones was again summoned to the Atlantic seaboard, with his officers and crew, and directed to assume his old post on board the *Macedonian*, it being the intention of the government to despatch a squadron, of which she was to form a part, to chastise the Algerines for having taken occasion of our war with England, to depre-

date on our commerce in the Mediterranean. The command of this fleet was given to Decatur, who executed his task with rigour and success, as we shall have occasion to narrate in his biography.

In 1821, Jones visited the Mediterranean again, this time with the broad pennant of a commodore flying. On his return he was offered and accepted a seat as one of the Board of Navy Commissioners. In 1826 he resigned this post, to accept the Pacific squadron. He subsequently commanded at the Baltimore station, then at New York, and afterwards at Philadelphia, where he died, August the third 1850.

Jones was fond of social life. Cheerful in his habits, amiable in temper, and intelligent in conversation, he was always popular, though a certain dignity prevented too much familiarity. As an officer he was strict, brave, and impartial.



DECATUR'S FIGHT WITH THE TRIPOLITAN CAPTAIN.

## STEPHEN DECATUR.

If we had faith in the doctrine of transmigration, we should believe that the soul of Du Guesclin or Ibberville had re-appeared after an absence of centuries, in Stephen Decatur. His headlong daring, his chivalrous exploits, the blaze of splendour he always drew after him, dazzle and excite the mind as when we peruse the deeds of some knight of old romance. There is, perhaps, no other name in American naval history which can make the pulses thrill like that of Decatur.

He was a man, indeed, who, in a remoter age, would have passed for a demi-god. What Achilles was to Greece, what Hector to Troy, what King Arthur to ancient Armorica, that Decatur was and will be to the United States. Paul Jones, who is sometimes compared to him, does not belong, as Deca-



STEPHEN DECATUR.





tur did, entirely to America. He was less of a patriot and more of an adventurer. Decatur, on the other hand, is wholly ours—ours by birth, education, and sepulture. Under no other flag than that of America did he ever sail. His first pulsation as well as his last was for his native land; his victories were all for her. His desire for glory, indeed, like that of Paul Jones, was a devouring passion, an insatiate thirst. The knowledge that a rival had surpassed him, would have broken his proud heart. But this eagerness, unlike that of his great rival, was not entirely selfish; for Decatur sought renown equally for America and for himself.

Decatur was born in 1779, on the eastern shore of Maryland, whither his family had fled from Philadelphia, during the occupation of the latter by the British. His ancestors, for two generations, had been seamen. His grandfather was a Frenchman, who, making a voyage to Newport, had fallen in love with and married a daughter of that town. His father was one of the most accomplished men of his profession, who had passed from the mercantile to the public marine during the war of independence, and had established a reputation so high, that when the merchants of Philadelphia built the frigate of that name and presented her to the United States, they requested that the elder Decatur might be appointed to command her. Descended from such progenitors, the subject of our memoir early imbibed a fondness for the sea. His mother indeed strove to persuade him from his purpose, for she indulged the hope of seeing her son some day an eminent divine; but it is fortunate that she was finally induced to yield to his inclination. Men of Decatur's temperament make great soldiers, but in other pursuits are indifferent. The unquenchable desire for glory which rages within them, impels them to war as the only legitimate vent to their volcanic natures; and the attempt to repress or turn aside their energies frequently plunges them into the most terrible excesses. No sedentary profession, be it the

bar, the forum, or the pulpit, will satisfy organizations like that of Decatur. Give the eagle the free air for scope, and he soars to the sun; but chain him to earth, and he tears himself to pieces.

At the age of nineteen a midshipman's warrant was procured for Decatur by his father's friend, Commodore Barry, under whom he made his first cruise in the frigate *United States*. This was during the French war of 1798. No signal opportunity for distinction presented itself to him, but he performed his duty zealously, and so favourably impressed his commander, that, after the probation of a year, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. Already he had become celebrated for his chivalrous courage. An instance, in proof of this, is narrated as happening during this early period. He was idly sauntering on the quarter-deck one morning, when the cry, "A man overboard!" rang through the ship. Immediately the utmost consternation ensued, during which the loud, quick voice of the officer of the deck was heard shouting, "Second cutters away! third cutters away!" Suddenly a tall form rushed to the mizzen chains, and, the next moment, plunged headlong into the water. The officers hurried to the stern. There, amid the boiling wake, was Decatur, supporting the drowning man with one arm, and vigorously buffeting the waves with another. A tumultuous cheer broke from the crew, and the rescuer and rescued were soon taken up by the boats. From that hour dates Decatur's influence with seamen.

In 1801, when the dubious conduct of Tripoli led to the prospect of a war with that marauding power, Decatur sailed for the Mediterranean, in Commodore Dale's squadron, as first lieutenant of the *Essex*. His selection for this post, when he had been only three years in the navy, is a conclusive proof of his high professional ability. Nothing was done by Dale's squadron beyond taking precautionary measures, if we except an engagement between the schooner

Enterprise and a Tripolitan ship of fourteen guns, in which the latter was beaten. In June, 1802, the *Essex* returned to the United States. Decatur remained but a few weeks on shore, however, for in September he sailed again for the Mediterranean, as first lieutenant of the frigate *New York*. Active hostilities had now been authorized by Congress against Tripoli. No chance for winning renown was afforded to the fleet, however, the war languishing for more than a year. In 1803, in consequence of a duel in which he had been engaged as second, and in which the secretary of Sir Alexander Ball, governor of Malta, had been killed, it was thought advisable to send Decatur home, in order to evade a request for his surrender, which it was neither just to grant nor politic to refuse. Towards the close of the year, however, he returned to the Mediterranean, where he now commanded the schooner *Enterprise*. He had scarcely arrived at the scene of war, when he learned the capture of the frigate *Philadelphia*, Captain Bainbridge, which, having struck on a rock off Tripoli, had fallen a prey, with all her crew, to the inhuman foe. The idea immediately occurred to Decatur of recapturing, or at least destroying the *Philadelphia*. He suggested his plan to Preble, then in command of the squadron, who, after sufficient hesitation to enable him maturely to examine the subject, consented that Decatur should make the attempt. The commodore, however, knowing the difficulty, if not impossibility, of bringing off the *Philadelphia*, made it imperative on Decatur that he should burn the frigate, and not risk any lives by an attempt that must prove vain. The enterprise was successfully consummated by Decatur, as we shall presently narrate, and laid the foundation for the title, which in after years he obtained from Europe, of the "Champion of Christendom."

To appreciate fully the gallantry of this exploit, we must reflect on the character of the Tripolitans, and the fate which would have been Decatur's, in case of failure. For three

centuries the Barbary powers had been the terror of the Mediterranean. Their corsairs had plundered the commerce of every nation which did not pay them tribute, and accordingly, partly from fear, partly from meaner motives, the proudest as well as the weakest European powers subsidized them. The fear of the Barbary pirates was particularly strong among the inhabitants of the contiguous shores of Spain, France, and Italy. Watch-towers were established along these coasts to give warning of the appearance of corsairs in the offing; and at sight of the beacons lighted on their summits, a scene of terror and confusion indescribable ensued. The bells tolled from village to village, carrying the alarm far inland; the women clasped their children, and, gathering a few movables, began a speedy flight; the men drove off the cattle; the priests deserted the churches; and the sick, almost mute with fear at beholding this universal desertion, implored for death as mercy when compared to Algerine slavery. Thousands of Christians captives, notwithstanding these precautions, were annually ravished into Moslem bondage. Those thus carried off were like the melancholy beings whom Dante saw passing through that awful gate, over whose portals gleamed the terrible warning, "Who enters here, bids farewell to hope." Few of the captives, indeed, ever returned. The youth passed gradually to manhood, and then on to decrepit old age, vainly revolving plans of escape; the virgin, in all her purity and bloom, submitted to the fate she loathed, or sought relief in self-inflicted death; the husband abandoned for ever the thought of beholding his adored wife; and the weeping parent breathed an eternal adieu to his children. The victims of that horrible slavery were as if dead to their European connections; and yet they lived on, and on, and on, in immitigable despair. Stripes, fetters, and frequently impalement was their lot. Sometimes a few would join in an attempt to escape, but, being nearly always discovered, this only led to deeper

misery. Occasionally, by the will of a humane Christian, or the funds of an ecclesiastical charity, the freedom of a few of these captives would be purchased at an extravagant price; and if men had risen from the dead, they would not have awakened more wonder, than did these miserable creatures on returning to their native land on such occasions. The event indeed was so rare that, when it happened, it was welcomed with the thunder of cannon, the ringing of bells, and every other demonstration of rejoicing. For hundreds of years, as we have said, this horrible piracy was allowed to disgrace the Mediterranean. The United States was the first power to strike a blow at it, and Decatur was the man, above all others, who destroyed it. When his victories over the red-cross of England shall be forgotten, and the distinction of Briton and American lost in the twilight of history, his exploits in the Mediterranean will be remembered, and his name in connection with them decorate, perhaps, some mythic legend.

Decatur sailed from Syracuse on the 3d of February, 1804, in the ketch *Intrepid*, accompanied by Lieutenant Stewart in the schooner *Siren*; and arrived off Tripoli on the 7th of the same month. The crew of the ketch consisted of seventy-five picked men, and she mounted four small guns. With this force Decatur, however, undertook to enter a harbour defended by one hundred and fifteen guns of heavy calibre, with a garrison proportionately strong. At seven o'clock in the evening, the *Intrepid* reached the mouth of the port. The attack was to have been made jointly by the *Intrepid* and the boats of the *Siren* at ten o'clock, but the wind threatening to be uncertain, and the *Siren* being yet far in the offing, Decatur resolved to prosecute the enterprise alone. The night was already obscure, though not wholly dark. The young moon hung over the blue Mediterranean, her light playing tremulously on the waters and diffusing a soft radiance around. A mild air was creeping gently in towards

the shore, and as the ketch approached the land, the shapeless outlines of the fortifications began to assume form. Here and there a lateen sail could be seen skimming into the harbour, where it quietly dropped anchor and folded its wings. As the ketch slowly advanced, objects on shore became more distinguishable. The different batteries could now be made out, the bashaw's palace, and the score of minarets on the hill-side. The restless murmur of the day had already subsided, and no sound broke the stillness of the evening, except the rustle made by the ketch as she rippled through the water, or the faint sound of a voice from some distant barque. Decatur stood, with folded arms, watching the object of his enterprise, as she lay dismantled close under the walls of the bashaw's palace.

More than an hour had elapsed since the ketch had entered the outer harbour. Her crew, meantime, had been artfully concealed, so that she might be thought to be merely a coaster. But now the little craft had approached so near her destination that Decatur feared every moment the Turks would detect her real character; especially as she had been forced to leave the usual track of trading vessels, in order to draw sufficiently near to the frigate. Her progress was now extremely slow, and for the last ten minutes, the heart of Decatur beat with anxious suspense. When the *Intrepid* had nearly reached her destination, the Turks, who had been idly watching her, began, for the first time, to show suspicions, and ordered her to keep off. Meantime a boat had been got out, in order to carry a line aboard the frigate, Decatur pretending that he had lost his anchors and wished to warp in. Suddenly one of the enemy cried out, "Americanos! Americanos!" Now that he was discovered, our heroic young officer saw not an instant was to be lost, but immediately laid his craft aboard. Summoning the boarders, who leaped from their hiding-places, he rushed at the frigate's sides, followed by all his men, except a few who

were detailed to guard the ketch. In a minute they were on the enemy's deck. The appearance of the assailants was so sudden, their onset so fierce, and the whole scene so startling, that the Turks made but a feeble resistance, and soon fled in dismay. The fight did not last five minutes. About twenty of the enemy fell, and the remainder leaped overboard. When Decatur thus found himself in possession of the vessel, which had been built for his father, and which his own gallantry had almost miraculously recovered, he felt a momentary pang that his orders forbade his carrying her off. But reflection soon convinced him that the attempt would be vain, for the frigate was surrounded by hostile cannon, and was moreover wholly dismantled. He, therefore, proceeded to set her on fire. As every thing had been arranged beforehand, and each man knew his task, this duty was speedily performed. The flames were lighted in three different spots at once, and soon had taken such hold of the ship as to render her destruction certain. When Decatur saw this, he called all hands, and, retreating to the ketch, pushed off, for it was necessary to get clear of the frigate before she blew up, and this, he knew, would happen in a few minutes, since the ship had been fired in two places not far from the magazine.

By this time the neighbouring shipping and the town had become alarmed. The harbour was like a hive of bees suddenly disturbed by some bold intruder. Boats were pulling to and fro; sailors were calling in alarm from ketch to ketch; and lights were flashing in the corsairs, along the shore, and through the embrasures of the batteries. For a time it had seemed as if the enemy had been stupified by the boldness of the attack; but now all this had passed away, and an angry murmur, deepening every minute, rose up from harbour and city. Suddenly a heavy piece of ordnance from the bashaw's palace boomed across the night; it was echoed by a cannon on the opposite side of the port; the corsairs trailed

their guns; and soon the whole circle of batteries, which girdled the harbour, was thundering incessantly, until the water, the ships, and the hills around trembled with the explosions. Fortunately the breeze sprang up at this crisis, and began to blow steadily out of the harbour. The Intrepid was accordingly put before the wind, the men aiding her with their long sweeps. As they turned to depart, the sailors, by a common impulse, gave three hearty cheers, and then, stooping to their oars, drove their gallant craft vigorously through the water. At this, the batteries played fiercer and more frequent. Shot after shot whistled close over the heads of the Americans, or, plunging into the bay near them, threw showers of spray around. It was a strange spectacle to see the little bark holding her charmed path in the centre of that concentric fire, her prow pointed unwaveringly towards the opening ahead, where the harbour swelled out into the boundless expanse of the Mediterranean.

The scene behind now approached sublimity. The town, by this time, was everywhere in an uproar. Lights were glancing from house to house along the water edge, and all up and around the hilly amphitheatre on which the city stood. The black walls of the batteries were illuminated incessantly by the flashes of their guns. But the most striking object of all was the burning frigate in the foreground. The flames had now completely mastered her; they leaped from the port-holes, ran licking up the shrouds, or whirled from spar to spar in mad contortions. Soon the whole vessel was wrapped in fire, columns of which streaming up, intense and dazzling, towards the sky, were there reflected back from an inky canopy of smoke, that, like the wing of the destroying angel, hung ominously over the scene. Far and wide the glitter of the flames danced on the waters, shone along the houses on the hill, played luridly on the ships in port, or flung a ghastly and spectral aspect over objects visible in the distance. To heighten the sublimity of the scene, the guns





BURNING OF THE FRIGATE PHILADELPHIA.

of the frigate began to get heated and go off. The explosion of the fated vessel was now momentarily expected; and a profound silence ensued, more terrible than the late uproar. The batteries ceased firing, the shouts from the shipping died away, the thousand cries of the town and harbour were stilled. It was as if the pulse of Nature had been suddenly stopped. And on this breathless scene, the burning ship, the awe-hushed town, the shrouded sky, the young moon looked down at intervals, her calm, unruffled face appearing and disappearing as the smoke drifted in huge masses down the firmament.

Meanwhile the boats of the Siren had been rowing to and fro outside the harbour, their crews trembling for the success of Decatur's hazardous enterprise. For more than an hour they watched the slow progress of the ketch with intense anxiety. At any moment they knew her character might be discovered, when her destruction was regarded as inevitable, even by the most sanguine. Nearer and nearer they

saw her approach to the frigate, until, at last, they lost sight of her altogether. The suspense now grew intolerable. It was far greater than that of the crew of the *Intrepid*, for they were stimulated by the near approach of action, while their comrades in the boats outside could only idly look on. Eagerly they listened for some sound of strife, but none came. They watched for a rocket which Decatur had promised to send up in case of success, but the moments passed and it did not appear. Stewart, who had remained on board the *Siren*, about six miles in the offing, was harassed by equal doubts. Hour after hour he looked out into the gloom towards Tripoli, to see if he could discover any token of the progress of events. The evening had not arrived when he parted from Decatur, and now nine o'clock had come, yet still there was no signal from the adventurers. Suddenly a rocket shot up into the sky. Stewart knew now that Decatur had reached the frigate; but would he escape? The events that followed passed like those of a dream. Flames were seen circling from the harbour, and soon the blaze illuminated the shore far and near, and flashed back from sails in the Mediterranean miles away. Then the roar of artillery rose upon the silence. After a while this passed, and all was again hushed. Stewart's anxiety for his friend now became intense. At last, a vivid stream of light shot into the sky, followed by an explosion that made the *Siren* tremble to her keel. Was it the frigate, or the *Intrepid*, that had blown up? The suspense continued for some time longer, when suddenly the rollicking of oars was heard, and immediately a boat dashed out of the shadows ahead. As soon as it touched the schooner's side, Decatur leaped on board, the first man to announce his own success.

This exploit at once placed Decatur at the head of our naval heroes in the popular estimation. On the reception of the news by Congress, he was raised to the rank of post-captain, almost by acclamation. Nothing was now regarded as

beyond his capacity. Nor did cooler heads entirely resist the influence of the hour. Preble eulogized him in the highest terms. The officers whom he overleaped by his promotion were the first to express congratulations at his rise. Nelson emphatically declared the burning of the Philadelphia the most brilliant deed of the age. All men united to extol the youth of twenty-four, who, by a single dazzling exploit, had eclipsed the reputation of the oldest captains. Henceforth the name of Decatur became a rallying point, around which, as around the white plume of Henry of Navarre, the boldest always gathered. He had already so entirely attached to himself several petty officers and a portion of his crew, that, in all his subsequent changes of command, they followed him from ship to ship. Indeed, in winning the devotion of inferiors he has never had his equal in our navy. His faculty, in this respect, amounted to genius. In penetrating the characters of those he met, he also possessed nearly unrivalled skill. Of books he knew little, but of men much. He could tell exactly the kind of person he required for any particular purpose, and was never mistaken in the selection. No individual with this keen insight into others' hearts could be merely a courageous animal, as Decatur is represented by some of his more ignorant biographers. The bravery of his own soul, on the contrary, had that electric power of communicating its resolution to the masses, which is the highest attribute of mind. Decatur rose above all his contemporaries, the type of heroic courage, of chivalrous enterprise, of romantic glory. He was one of those men, who appear at long intervals, destined to give impulse, not only to their age, but to all future times.

Early in the summer succeeding the destruction of the Philadelphia, Preble at the head of his squadron proceeded to Tripoli. He arrived off that port on the 13th of June, and began to treat for the ransom of prisoners; but receiving intelligence of a threatened rupture with Tunis, he soon after

sailed for the latter place. Having confirmed the wavering friendship of the Bey, and recruited his force, he appeared before Tripoli again on the 25th of July. He was making preparations to bombard the town, when a gale arose, which compelled him to put to sea. At last the tempest abated, and on the 3d of August, Preble began his long-contemplated attack. His plan was to bombard the batteries, while at the same time he attacked, with his gun-boats, the galleys of the enemy. The gun-boats were arranged in two divisions of three each, the first of which was led by Lieutenant Somers, the second by Decatur. At three, P. M., the action began by throwing shells into the town. Instantly the gun-boats of the Turks stood out to meet those of the assailants, relying on their superior numbers for a victory. Decatur, being to windward of Somers, was able to reach the foe first. The division which opposed him consisted of nine gun-boats, but nevertheless he steadily advanced, pouring in a shower of grape and musket-balls. While bearing down on the enemy, his brother, who commanded one of the boats of Somers, shot ahead of the rest of that officer's division, and, finding Decatur about to engage such an overwhelming force, steered to his assistance. Meantime one of Decatur's boats had been crippled and dropped astern. With the other three, however, he dashed into the midst of the Tripolitan fleet, and each boat running on board of one of the enemy's, a terrible struggle ensued, hand to hand, between the crews. Decatur was soon victorious over his opponent, and, taking his prize in tow, was proceeding out of the harbour, when the boat which his brother had led dropped under his stern, and informed him that Lieutenant James Decatur, after having captured one of the enemy's craft, had been treacherously shot through the head when about taking possession.

The sight of his dying brother and the reflection of the baseness of the act inflamed Decatur to a pitch little short of madness, and immediately laying the head of his boat in

the direction of that in which the murderer had sought refuge, he bore down anew upon the fleet. He soon reached the vessel he sought, and leaped on board, though but ten followers were left him. Now ensued one of those awful personal encounters between man and man, which carry back the imagination to the days of Bayard, if not of Richard the Lion-hearted. The crack of pistols, the flash of cutlasses, the push of the pike, the crash of the battle-axe mingled together in that terrible melee; while shouts from either side rose continually above the noise of arms, and the boats rocked under the contending parties. For twenty minutes the contest raged with the utmost fury, at the end of which period one-fourth of Decatur's force was totally disabled. Had it not been for their heroic leader, the Americans would long since have succumbed to the overwhelming numbers. But, in that hour, Decatur fought with the fury of ten ordinary men. The countenance of his dying brother was continually before him, and revenge added double power to each blow. At last he descried the wretch who had dealt the perfidious shot, and, in an instant, scattering the intervening combatants right and left, he stood before the assassin. The man was of gigantic size, with a face which looked ferocity itself. Decatur was armed with a cutlass, the Turk with a heavily ironed boarding-pike. At the first pass, Decatur's weapon broke at the hilt. But his lion-like nature was now fully aroused, and, regardless of his unarmed condition, he sprang in on his foe. The Tripolitan met him with a thrust, and the sharp weapon entered Decatur's breast; but tearing it from the wound, he closed with the wretch, and they fell together on the deck, the American being uppermost. At this spectacle the Turks rushed to the rescue of their leader, and one of them aimed a blow from behind at Decatur's head, which would have proved mortal, if a seaman, named Reuben James, who had lost the use of both arms by wounds, had not flung himself between the descending cimeter and its

prey, heroically receiving on his own head the stroke aimed at his commander. But this self-sacrifice had nearly proved unavailing; for suddenly the Turk, wrenching himself around, threw Decatur under, and, drawing a yataghan, instantaneously thrust at his foe. The spectators held their breath. It was too late to interfere; the flash descended; every one expected to behold Decatur fall dead. But suddenly he was seen to clutch the blade, draw a pistol with his other hand, and fire. The Turk relaxed his hold and fell back, while Decatur sprang victorious to his feet. His little band, transported beyond themselves, burst into a cheer, and, in less than another minute, the day was won. It is pleasing to record that the gallant seaman who saved Decatur's life survived, and subsequently became his favourite coxswain.

Throughout the whole of the ensuing operations before Tripoli, during which four other attacks were made on the place, Decatur played a prominent part. On every suitable occasion he displayed the same dashing courage as in his action with the gun-boats. Indeed, after that of Preble, there is no name so inseparably linked with the glories of the Tripolitan war as that of Decatur, and in the popular estimation it even stands first. The contest with this Barbary power was the school of our infant navy. It was during these hostilities that Stewart, Macdonough, and many other heroic souls, learned the art of war. But Decatur was not so much a pupil as an instructor. He was ever foremost in the most perilous enterprises, and celebrated not less for his sagacity than for his indomitable bravery. The eyes of his countrymen followed him during his splendid career on the coast of Africa, as we follow the track of some meteor that suddenly fills the firmament with brilliancy. It was while before Tripoli that Decatur received his commission as post-captain, and this immediately gave him that precedence in rank which he had long enjoyed in reputation. About the middle of September, the squadron sailed for Syracuse, Preble

having been superseded by Commodore Samuel Barron. In consequence of this change, Decatur obtained command of the *Constitution*. At this period he was only twenty-five years old. Few naval heroes, at so early an age, have been thus honoured!

Decatur now received, from the most distinguished sources, compliments on his late dazzling exploits. Sir Alexander Ball, the British governor of Malta, spoke in the highest terms of his conduct. The pope declared, principally in allusion to Decatur, that "the United States, though in their infancy, had done more to humble the Barbary powers than all the European states for a long period of time." At Naples Decatur was hailed as the "Terror of the foe." Peace having been concluded with Tripoli in June, 1805, without any further demonstrations except maintaining a rigid blockade, Decatur returned to the United States, and here the enthusiasm, arising out of his gallant behaviour in the Mediterranean, even exceeded that displayed abroad. He was received with festive balls, with the acclamations of the crowd, with the congratulations of the veterans of his profession, with public dinners, and with every other demonstration of the esteem of his countrymen. Congress had already voted him a sword. He could scarcely believe in the reality of all this popularity. It seemed to him like a dream. He had gone abroad unknown; he had come back famous. He seemed at the highest pinnacle of glory: and yet greater renown was before him.

The interval between his return from Tripoli and the breaking out of the war with England, in 1812, was spent by Decatur chiefly on shore. During this interval he married. When Barron, in consequence of the affair with the *Leopard*, was removed from the Chesapeake, Decatur was appointed to succeed him, and directed, with a fleet of accompanying gun-boats, to guard the southern coast. He now, for the first time, hoisted his broad pennant as commodore. His age

was but twenty-eight when he received this title. He subsequently formed one of the court-martial, though much against his wishes, which tried Barron; and the unfavourable opinion he had already formed against that officer was here strengthened. Frank and decided, Decatur did not, at any time afterwards, conceal his sentiments on this subject; and hence arose those difficulties between him and Barron which, at a later day, led to his death at the hands of the latter. But of this in its proper place.

The declaration of war, on the 18th of June, 1812, found Decatur in command of the frigate *United States*, as flag-ship of the Chesapeake squadron. In anticipation of hostilities, however, he had been ordered to join Rodgers at New York, where he accordingly arrived on the 21st of June, simultaneously with the announcement, at that place, of the war. That very evening, the commodore put to sea, accompanied by Decatur, in hopes to overtake the homeward-bound Jamaica fleet; but, after a month's cruise, during which the prey was frequently missed only by a few hours, he returned unsuccessful to port. On the 8th of October Rodgers again sailed, with a fleet composed of the *President*, *United States*, *Congress*, and *Argus*. When a few days out, the *United States* became separated from the rest of the squadron, and, standing away to the southward and eastward, had the good fortune, on the 25th of October, near the island of Madeira, to discover an English frigate. Decatur had been dissatisfied with his star from the moment that he had heard of the capture of the *Guerriere*, for he had wished to be the first to take a frigate from the enemy; but now he ceased to lament fate, and, with joyful exultation, prepared for action. The *Macedonian*, being the swiftest ship, and having the advantage of the wind, might have escaped if she desired; but her commander, Captain Carden, knowing his ship to be one of the best in the British navy, and holding the Americans in comparative contempt, for he had not yet heard of Hull's







UNITED STATES AND MACEDONIAN.

victory in the Constitution, was only too eager to close. By a strange coincidence, Decatur and Carden had often met before the war, and a playful bet existed between them, as to who would conquer, if ever they met at sea, in case of hostilities between their respective countries. Neither, however, as yet knew his antagonist. The two ships gradually approached each other, when, at nine, A. M., the battle was begun.

In consequence of the heavy swell, the firing proved nearly inoperative until the frigates approached nearer to each other. The gunnery of the United States was much superior to that of her enemy, and at the end of half an hour, the Macedonian's mizzen-topmast and gaff were shot away. The British ship now bore up for closer action. But the nearer she approached the United States, the more destructive became the fire of the latter. Decatur had exercised his crew incessantly at the guns, and the results of this were now made manifest in the accuracy and rapidity of the fire. The American frigate soon became so enveloped in smoke and flame, that the sailors of the Macedonian, believing her to be on fire, gave three cheers. They were answered by the crew of the United States, who dealt destruction and death on every hand. The scene now became terrific. The roar of guns, the crashing of spars, the whistling of shot, the shrieks of the wounded, and the shouts of the officers rose in awful discord. Decatur passed from gun to gun, directing and stimulating the men. "Take good aim at the mainmast," he said to one. "Hull her now, her rigging is sufficiently cut up," he exclaimed to another. The mizzen-mast of the Macedonian soon went by the board, and was followed by the fore and main topmasts. Her bowsprit was much injured; the stump of her fore and mainmasts tottering. Eager to complete their conquest, the Americans did not intermit a moment. One poor fellow sank mortally wounded at a gun: "If I live till she strikes," he cried, "I shall care for

nothing." With wild huzzas the sailors cheered each other, as they saw spar after spar of the enemy give way. At last, with a desperate effort, the Macedonian endeavoured to run afoul of her antagonist, in hopes to retrieve the day by boarding, but, being foiled, she sullenly hauled down her flag.

On taking possession of the prize, a melancholy scene presented itself. Besides the injury to her rigging and spars, the Macedonian had received nearly one hundred shots in her hull, while every thing about her, from her boats down, was literally cut to pieces. Of her crew of three hundred, one hundred and four were killed or wounded. On board the United States the killed and wounded were but twelve. Of the killed on board the Macedonian, it is melancholy to reflect that two were Americans, who had been compelled to fight against their country. Five other Americans had been, in like manner, forced to serve at the guns of the Macedonian, but escaped without injury. The decks of the captured frigate were slippery with blood; while fragments of limbs lay about in every direction. The cries of the wounded, meantime, were agonizing beyond description. Every thing betokened the fatal aim of the crew of the United States; as well as the difference between men fighting from compulsion and those combating for country. The British seaman, frequently oppressed and always brutalized, was naturally destitute of the high-wrought enthusiasm of the American, who knew he was struggling against the tyrant of the ocean. This feeling, far more than the difference in the size of the two ships, caused the immense disparity between the loss on board the United States and that on board the Macedonian.

The boat which had boarded the British frigate, on her return conveyed Captain Carden to the United States. As Decatur advanced to receive him, they mutually recognised each other, and Carden, remembering their last interview, was covered with confusion. This would have been the

time for a meaner spirit to triumph over the fallen ; but, in Decatur's chivalrous soul, pity took the place of exultation. As Carden extended his sword, the American captain waived its acceptance, saying courteously : " Sir, I cannot receive the blade of a man who has so bravely defended his ship." The tears almost sprang to the eyes of the British officer at these words. Ignorant of the capture of the *Guerriere*, Carden believed himself to be the first victim ; but such delicate consideration on the part of his conqueror materially alleviated his mortification. Nor did Decatur's tact stop here. He took the earliest occasion, in an indirect manner, to inform Carden of the fall of the *Guerriere*, so as to alleviate the self-reproach under which the British commander evidently suffered. He also ordered that the private property of the captured officers should not be interfered with. He himself paid Captain Carden eight hundred dollars for the latter's stores, and for the musical instruments of a fine band belonging to the Macedonian. That this commiseration for the fallen was heartfelt, is evident from a letter written, at this time, by Decatur to his wife. " One half of the satisfaction," he said, " arising from this victory is destroyed in seeing the mortification of poor Carden." Nor was the vanquished insensible to the kindness of the victor. On being exchanged, Carden addressed a letter to Decatur, in the name of his officers and himself, thanking the American commander for his kindness, and promising, if ever the fortune of war should render them conquerors, to repay the debt. How grateful the task to record these chivalric courtesies.

In half an hour after the action had terminated, the United States had been repaired, and was ready for another combat. It was a considerable time, however, before the Macedonian was fit for use. Decatur resolved to return immediately to the United States with his prize. He reached New London, on the 4th of December, in the United States, and was soon after joined by the Macedonian. The news of the victory

was received by the Americans with every emotion of delight. At New London an entertainment was given to Decatur and his officers. At Washington, when the messenger arrived with the despatches, the Secretary of the Navy was at a ball, whither the young officer followed him. No sooner was the intelligence known than the room shook with acclamations. At New York, to which Decatur soon removed his prize, a grand festival was offered to him in conjunction with Captains Hull and Jones. The crew of the United States were subsequently welcomed with a fete at the City Hall. Congress hastened to bestow on Decatur a gold medal. The legislatures of New York and Massachusetts voted him their thanks. Virginia, Pennsylvania, and lastly his native city, Philadelphia, each presented him with a sword. The corporation of New York gave him the freedom of the city in a gold box, and solicited him to sit for his portrait to adorn the City Hall. Honours flowed in on him from every quarter.

The Macedonian and Hornet were now placed also under Decatur's command, and with his little squadron he made an attempt to get to sea by way of Sandy Hook. A strong blockading force, however, frustrated this design. He accordingly retraced his steps, and, on the 24th of May, 1813, proceeded along Long Island Sound, hoping to get to sea by the broader opening in that direction. But here also a superior British fleet stopped all egress. Decatur now put into New London, where he lay watching an opportunity to slip by the blockading fleet. On the 1st of June only a single line-of-battle ship being in sight, the American commander stood out with his little squadron to engage her; but, before he arrived within gun-shot, three frigates hove in sight, and he returned disappointed to his anchorage. Subsequently he withdrew his vessels five miles higher up the river, and erected batteries on neighbouring heights, the better to defend them; for the British had threatened that they would recapture the Macedonian, "even if they had," to use their own

words, "to follow her into a corn-field." Decatur remained inactive at this place for more than a year, during the whole of which period he was blockaded by an overwhelming force. In the interval he challenged an equal force of the British fleet to fight one or all the ships of his squadron; but the enemy was not disposed to yield any advantage. At last, in April; 1814, all hope of his squadron getting to sea was abandoned; the *United States* and *Macedonian* were dismantled; and, soon after, Decatur was appointed to the command of the *President*, then lying at New York. As she was both a larger and finer frigate than the *United States*, he hastened to join her.

During the autumn of 1814 the citizens of New York were alarmed by the rumour of an intended descent of the enemy on the town. Every preparation was made to meet the foe. The command of the naval defences of every kind within the harbour was assigned to Decatur, who soon was at the head of a force numbering more than five thousand men. He trained the crew of the *President* to charge at full speed, in an unbroken line; and this novel method of attack would probably have been highly effective in case of an invasion. But the British, after Macomb's victory at Plattsburgh, abandoned all thoughts of the expedition against New York, even if they had ever entertained such. Decatur was now ordered to take the *Peacock* and *Hornet*, with two store-ships, and endeavour to get to sea, with orders, in case of success, to make for the East Indies, where it was believed he might be of as much injury to the British commerce as Porter had been in the Pacific. Accordingly, on the night of the 14th of January, 1815, he took advantage of a gale which had blown the enemy's squadron off the harbour, to sail from New York; and, to increase the chances of success, he carried with him only the *President* and one of the store-ships, leaving directions for the remainder of the squadron to rendezvous at the island of *Tristan da Cunha*.

In crossing the bar, however, in the dark, the President struck, by which she was much strained, and two valuable hours lost. It would have been advisable, after this accident, to have returned to port, but the wind, which blew strongly, rendered this impossible. Accordingly, Decatur pursued his voyage, keeping close into the Long Island shore to escape notice, and making his way eastward as fast as possible. He had calculated that the British would hasten to return to their stations, and that, by morning, he should have run a sufficient distance to be out of sight. But the enemy, fortunately for them, had been less alert than he expected, and when day broke were visible in close vicinity to the President. The British look-outs immediately detected the character of Decatur's frigate, and gave chase. Now began a most animated struggle. The immense disparity of force precluded all idea of a combat. Nothing remained for the President, therefore, but to endeavour to outsail her pursuers. Decatur immediately put the helm to starboard, and hauled by the wind on the larboard tack, which brought her head to the northward, towards the east end of Long Island. He had now an enemy on each quarter, and two astern. Every stitch of canvas that would draw was set. But it was soon found that the injury received by the President had materially impaired her speed; and the noble frigate, which hitherto had never met her equal, was gradually overhauled by the foe. Foremost among the pursuers was the *Endymion*, a frigate of equal force with Decatur's ship. She was already coming up, hand over hand, when, towards noon, the wind became light and baffling. This held out new hopes for the Americans. The sails of the President were now wet, from the royals down; the water was started into the hold, and pumped out to lighten her; anchors and boats were cut away; the cables were cast overboard; and finally even the spars and provisions were flung away. For three hours longer the struggle continued without any decided ad-





PRESIDENT AND ENDYMIAN.



vantage to either side. But at the end of this period, a brisk breeze struck the *Endymion*, and she came down before it, the *President* being still nearly becalmed. By five o'clock the *Endymion* was close upon the starboard quarter of the American frigate, where she hung like a gnat. With incessant discharges from her larboard bow and bridle ports she cut up the sails of the *President*, while the latter could not bring a gun to bear. The distance of the *Endymion* was less than a quarter of a mile, at which fearful proximity she kept up a well-aimed fire at the rigging, her intention obviously being to cripple her antagonist.

In this emergency Decatur suddenly conceived a plan which, for boldness and romantic enterprise, has scarcely an equal in history. He resolved, when the *Endymion* should close upon his starboard quarter, to sheer suddenly on board of her, and leaping on her decks, at the head of his crew, carry her by assault. With the fastest ship in the British squadron for a prize, he could well afford, he calculated, to abandon the *President*. He called his men aft, and announced his intention. The proposal was received with cheers. Every thing was made ready for this chivalrous enterprise, and Decatur only awaited the *Endymion's* approach. But, as if divining the bold resolution of his antagonist, the English captain pertinaciously refused to close. With a wariness that would have led to his being dismissed from the service three years before, he maintained a safe distance on the *President's* quarter, every shot telling on the rigging of the latter. It was evidently his determination not to give battle on equal terms, but to cripple the *President*, and wait for aid before going in. At last, Decatur, irritated beyond all bounds, turned on his enemy like a lion baited in the ring. The Englishman fled. The American followed. The change in his course made Decatur head towards the south, and thus he had to abandon all hopes of getting into the Sound, around the eastern end of Long Island; but, to counterbalance this,

he trusted to be able to beat the *Endymion* out of action before the other pursuing ships should come up, and, in the approaching darkness, to make good his escape.

Every person on board, down to the smallest powder-boy, shared Decatur's exasperation when he turned upon the Englishman; and consequently, in the combat that succeeded, the Americans fought with the utmost fierceness and desperation. Ranging up alongside of her foe, the *President* delivered broadside after broadside, in unintermitting succession. As the night closed in, the scene became terrible. The space between the two ships was covered with smoke, that, lit incessantly by the flashes of the guns, wore an unearthly aspect. Cheer upon cheer rose from the decks of the *President*, as sail after sail was cut away from the yards of the *Endymion*, and she began to drop perceptibly astern. Decatur was everywhere stimulating the men by his words and by his presence. Though wounded severely in the chest by a splinter, he still kept his post, insensible, for the time, to pain, or to the weariness which was the result of the unceasing watchfulness of the last thirty-six hours. His officers behaved with equal heroism. Lieutenant Twiggs, who, in after years, fell heroically at Chapultepec, commanded the marines on this eventful night, and, with his men, discharged no less than five thousand cartridges. Distinguished among the younger men was Lieutenant Hamilton, the son of the Secretary of the Navy, remarkable for beauty of person, hilarity of temper, and unflinching courage. "Carry on, boys, carry on!" he shouted continually. Suddenly, while uttering this exclamation, a grape-shot struck his heart, and he fell a corpse on the deck. Lieutenant Howell, in like manner cheering his division at the close of the action, had just cried, "We have whipped that ship, at any rate," when a shot, the last the *Endymion* fired, crashed in his brain, and he too died instantaneously.

Before nine o'clock the British frigate was almost a wreck.

Decatur now changed his course again, heading east by north, under a press of canvas from royal studding sails down. The President, however, was considerably crippled in her rigging, so that her speed was much less than it had been during the chase. But, as the sky began to cloud over, the Americans cherished high hopes of escape. The British fleet was still in sight, however, and, having noticed the change in the President's course, immediately renewed the pursuit. For nearly two hours Decatur flattered himself, nevertheless, that he should drop his enemies in the darkness; but towards eleven o'clock the clouds blew over, leaving a bright starlight, by which the foremost of the British squadron was detected close at hand. The evil star of Decatur was, for once, in the ascendant! He still, however, heroically held out. But the Pomone frigate, ranging up, delivered her broadside, while the Tenedos, Majestic, and Despatch were rapidly approaching. At last he struck his flag, unwilling to sacrifice life in what was now an utterly hopeless endeavour. Perhaps, in modern naval history, there is no second instance of a combat so unequal, maintained so gallantly and so long. The victories of others have frequently been less glorious than this defeat of Decatur's. He sustained the desperate struggle for twenty-four hours, nor did he yield at last while a single chance remained. Even his enemies acknowledged this: "he was completely mobbed," said the British admiral commanding on the station. When Decatur repaired on board the Majestic to deliver his sword to Captain Hayes, the senior officer of the squadron, that gentleman imitated the courtesy of his prisoner on a former occasion, and restored the blade immediately, saying that "he felt proud in returning the sword of an officer who had defended his ship so nobly." Decatur was carried to Bermuda, where every attention was paid him, and the earliest opportunity was taken to forward him to New London on his parole. His arrival in the United States was marked by as much enthusiasm as

if he had returned from a victory. The public sentiment was universally that he had gained honour, though he had lost his ship. When he landed, the crowd took the horses from his carriage, and dragged him, cheering, to his hotel. These unexpected demonstrations drew tears from Decatur's eyes. But the most delicate compliment he received was from the ship-carpenters of New York, who volunteered sixteen hundred days' work, towards constructing him a frigate to take the place of the *President*.

Before Decatur returned from Bermuda, peace had been proclaimed; but the government soon found occasion for his services. Though the regulations of the service required that every captain who lost a ship should be made the subject of a court of inquiry, and though this court had not yet been held on Decatur, the department tendered him, with the highest expressions of esteem, the command of a squadron destined to proceed to the Mediterranean, for the purpose of punishing the Dey of Algiers, who, during the war with England, had begun hostilities against the United States. Before he was ready to sail, the court of inquiry met. The verdict of this body, as had been expected, not only exonerated Decatur from censure, but bore testimony to his ability and courage, as well as to the gallantry of the crew. The squadron destined for the Mediterranean sailed from New York on the 20th of May, 1815, and consisted of the frigates *Guerriere*, *Macedonian*, and *Constellation*, the sloop *Ontario*, four brigs, and two schooners, the *Guerriere* being the flagship. As a second squadron, to be commanded by Bainbridge, was expected to follow, Decatur, with a natural emulation, was anxious to force the Algerines into a peace before its arrival, and fortune, as if to make amends for his late disaster, seconded his wish. On the 15th of June he arrived at Gibraltar. Two days after he fell in with an Algerine frigate, commanded by the Admiral Rais Hammida, who, after an heroic resistance, in which he received a mortal wound,

surrendered. On the 19th, he captured a brig mounting twenty-two guns. On the 28th he anchored at Algiers. He immediately informed the dey of the death of the admiral, and added that, unless a treaty such as he should dictate was signed, he would attack the batteries and burn the ships. The dey, at first, hesitated to treat at all. He then demanded certain concessions, and, among others, that Decatur should come ashore to treat. But the American commander was inexorable. He allowed the dey only a short interval to decide, and informed him that if, in the mean time, any Algerine ships appeared off the harbour, he should capture them. One actually made its appearance while the dey still hesitated, and endeavoured to crowd past the squadron and run ashore, on which Decatur, attiring himself in full uniform, called his crew aft, and announced his intention of boarding her even under the batteries themselves. At this critical moment, the boat of the Algerine commissioner was seen making from the shore, with the white flag displayed, the signal that the treaty had been signed. By this document the dey renounced all claim on the United States for tribute, and restored to liberty his American captives. Thus, within forty-one days from the time he left port, Decatur successfully achieved the object of his expedition. He was the first man to win for any civilized nation exemption from tribute to the Barbary powers, an example which Lord Exmouth speedily followed, and subsequently others, until this abominable slavery was destroyed.

After concluding the treaty with Algiers, Decatur sailed for Tunis, and then for Tripoli, from both which powers he demanded and received indemnities, for insults perpetrated on the flag of the United States during the war with England. These aggressions, in every case, were traced to the instigation of Great Britain, which had assured the Barbary powers that the American ships would be entirely swept from the ocean. When, therefore, Decatur made his appearance,

with a squadron containing no less than two frigates captured from the English, a general dismay seized the Turks. The recollection of his exploits, ten years before, was also called to mind. The Dey of Tunis, when he heard Decatur's name, yielded, exclaiming, "I know that admiral!" The Bashaw of Tripoli, equally alarmed at his visitor's character, submitted almost without a demur to what was demanded of him. In short, by the 9th of August, Decatur had completed all his arrangements with the Barbary powers, and departed for Syracuse, carrying with him several Sicilian captives whom he had rescued, by a chivalrous impulse, from bondage. He subsequently visited Messina and Naples, where the fame of his late exploits having preceded him, he was received by the king with much ostentation, and everywhere attended by the plaudits of the people. Soon after, hearing of the arrival of Bainbridge in the Mediterranean, he joined that officer at Gibraltar. On the 7th of October, having resigned the remainder of his squadron into the hands of his superior, he sailed for America in the *Guerriere*, accompanied by the brig *Enterprise*; and on the 12th of November anchored at New York, having been absent from that port less than six months. Yet, in that short period, how brilliant the career he had run!

This was Decatur's last command at sea. A vacancy occurring in the Board of Navy Commissioners about the period of his return from Algiers, the Secretary of the Navy offered him the post, which he accepted. Early in January, 1816, he arrived at Washington, his progress thither, through the various cities, having witnessed a succession of triumphal processions. At Norfolk, in the succeeding April, at a public entertainment, he gave his memorable toast:—"Our country, may she always be right; but our country, right or wrong." In September, 1817, he received a substantial testimonial of the esteem of his countrymen, by the presentation, on the part of the citizens of Baltimore, of a complete dinner



service of silver. In February, 1818, a similar gift was tendered him from his native town, Philadelphia. The receipt of such testimonials, and of others equally gratifying though less costly, rendered the life of Decatur, for the five years succeeding his return from Algiers, one of the most enviable in history. Adored by his countrymen, honoured by the administration, popular with nearly every member of his profession, he seemed in the possession of every thing which could make life happy, or render long years desirable. A vigorous constitution promised a hale old age. But, alas! how vain are human calculations! how fleeting the most promising appearances! While in the enjoyment of all this applause, at the very summit of human felicity as it were, the arrow of death, already fitted to the string, was soon to quiver in his bosom. The circumstances which led to his premature decease are of the most melancholy character, and such as to cloud in a measure, we speak it with regret, an otherwise noble character. He fell in a duel with a brother officer, which, if not exactly invited by himself, might easily have been avoided by the exercise of prudence, not to say forbearance, on his part. The unpopularity of his adversary, combined with the adoration in which Decatur was held, produced, at the time, a general expression of censure against his antagonist; but now that the prejudices of the day are over, and the combatants both lie in their graves, it would be unpardonable, if not criminal, in the annalist to disguise the truth.

The commander of the Chesapeake, at the time she was fired into by the Leopard in 1808, was Commodore James Barron, who, for his conduct on that occasion, had been suspended from the navy for five years. Unable to support his family suitably while thus deprived of his emoluments, he went abroad and entered the merchant service. The period of his suspension expired during the war, but, instead of returning to the United States and seeking employ-

ment in order to wipe off the stain on his name, he contented himself with writing a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, in which he tendered his services to his country. This epistle was not answered, and Barron remained abroad. At last, his friends urging on him the propriety of his return, he began seriously to make preparations for the purpose. The want of funds, however, prevented his executing his design, until the war had been terminated. He then appeared in the United States, and sought to be reinstated in his old rank. Decatur, who had viewed his conduct in the affair of the Chesapeake with particular dissatisfaction, now freely expressed his opinion that it would be unjust to Barron's juniors to reinstate him in the navy. There can be no doubt that Decatur, who sincerely entertained these opinions, had a right to express them; but it would have been more generous to have maintained silence, especially when the sentiments of the speaker carried such weight. This error on Decatur's side, if it was one, arose from his high and daring nature, which could not brook even the semblance of cowardice. It would have been more prudent and equally honourable for Decatur to have asked for a court of inquiry on Barron, and thus decided this unpleasant question. Many things, which popular opinion asserted of Barron, would then have been found to be untrue; and Decatur, in that event, would have been the first to acknowledge his mistake. Such a court was held after Decatur's death, and Barron's conduct found not to be as censurable as supposed, although still so much so as to induce a verdict unfavourable to his claims.

Wearied by long years of suffering, which he considered more than an expiation for his fault, Barron had hoped that his application would meet with no objections, at least on the part of his brother officers. Finding Decatur so prominent in opposing his reinstatement, he naturally concluded that the difficulties arose from that officer. Pretended friends were not wanting to repeat to Barron exaggerated statements

of Decatur's remarks. In the end, a bitter enmity awoke in Barron's bosom towards his more fortunate contemporary; and he determined to seek redress in the method prescribed by the laws of honour. On the 12th of June, 1819, he wrote to Decatur, saying: "I have been informed you have said, you could insult me with impunity," and expressing a desire to have an avowal or contradiction of the offensive expression. Decatur immediately replied, declaring he had never used the phrase attributed to him, but intimating plainly that he had canvassed his correspondent's character with great freedom. Two other letters were exchanged, and then the affair was dropped. But Decatur, during the summer, having sent the letters which had passed between him and Barron to Norfolk, the latter, imagining this was done to blacken his character, wrote to Decatur on the 23d of October following. In this somewhat singular epistle, Barron contended that Decatur, by giving their correspondence publicity, had invited him to the arbitrament of the pistol,—a most unwarrantable assumption, but one which Decatur, with his scornful courage, was not likely to deny. He accordingly, in his answer, after stating at length his reasons for opposing Barron's application for employment, implied that he would, if formally called on, meet his correspondent. Several letters followed on both sides. Those of Barron were of a character to irritate, to the last degree, a man of Decatur's temperament; while those of the latter were haughty and contemptuous. Had this correspondence been in the hands of judicious friends, the melancholy result might have been avoided; for, notwithstanding their increasing acerbity, neither, to the last, desired a duel. A challenge, or what Decatur considered so, was received by the latter on the 24th of January, 1820; and the preliminaries were finally arranged for a meeting, to take place on the 22d of March ensuing.

Decatur, though the challenged party, waived every ad-

vantage; and, as Barron was short-sighted, the distance was fixed at eight paces. Commodore Bainbridge officiated as Decatur's second, while Commodore Elliot appeared in behalf of Barron. When the parties had taken their places, and just before the word was given, Barron remarked to his antagonist, "I hope, on meeting in another world, we will be better friends." Decatur merely replied, "I have never been your enemy, sir!" There must have been something in the tone in which these words were exchanged, at variance with their amicable character, else those present were unpardonable in not taking advantage of them to adjust the difficulty. But perhaps it was thought necessary, since the quarrel had proceeded so far, that shots should be exchanged. Fatal mistake! Bainbridge accordingly proceeded to give the word, which, though generally afflicted with stuttering, he did clearly and distinctly under the excitement. The combatants were to fire between the words "one" and "three." At the word "two," both pistols went off simultaneously. The ball of Decatur penetrated his adversary's thigh, where, before the meeting, he had signified his determination to hit Barron. The ball of the latter struck Decatur in the abdomen. Both antagonists fell nearly at the same instant. Decatur's first words were, "I am mortally wounded, at least I believe so, and wish I had fallen in defence of my country." Barron thought himself dying also, and remarked that he "forgave his enemy from the bottom of his heart." This impression proved a mistaken one; he survived his wound for many years; but his antagonist, less fortunate, died the same evening, in excruciating agony.

The death of Decatur filled the nation with mourning. In consequence of the manner in which he had fallen, Congress could not officially attend his obsequies, but both Houses evaded this, and adjourned, in order that the members might follow him to his grave. A vast concourse of strangers, and

all the seamen and officers in the neighbourhood, together with the president, his cabinet, the foreign ministers, and judges of the Supreme Court, joined the melancholy procession. Minute guns, during the ceremony, were fired from the navy yard. The remains were interred in a beautiful grove on the summit of an eminence near Washington, where Joel Barlow had constructed a retreat, and where Colonel Bomford, the owner of the grounds, had prepared a vault. In this secluded and lovely retreat, they continued for twenty-five years, when, in compliance with Decatur's wish, that, in death, he should prefer to sleep by the side of his parents, in St. Peter's church-yard, Philadelphia, the venerated relics were disinterred, and now repose close by those of the authors of his being.

Decatur was not merely a brave man, he was also a sagacious one. His most daring acts, reckless as they frequently appeared, were frequently based on the shrewdest calculations. Of books he knew little, but of men much. No man could teach him any thing in regard to his profession. His insight into character was almost miraculous. He possessed, in its highest perfection, that attribute of great commanders, which enables them to secure the personal devotion of their followers. His civil talents were respectable at all times; and in some instances even superior. His temper was naturally violent, but he had learned to discipline it. He had little love for display. His manner was calm, high-toned, and dignified, altogether free from that extravagance so frequently accompanying chivalric natures. In his ordinary moments he was prudent and sagacious; it was only when excited by action that he became impetuous. His bravery has never been excelled, and but rarely equalled. If ever there was a hero, he was one.

The personal appearance of Decatur was distinguished. His figure was above the middle height, and generally well

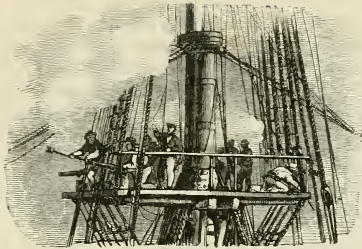


THE CORPSE OF DECATUR BORNE THROUGH PHILADELPHIA.

knit. His face, without being strikingly handsome, was full of character, and remarkable for an eye so dark and keen, that, in moments of excitement, it seemed actually to blaze. The erectness of his figure and the towering appearance of his head gave him a spirited and noble air, and, combined with his easy movements, rendered him alike stately and graceful. His hair and beard were black and curling; his nose slightly aquiline; and his mouth small. The general aspect of his countenance was mild and pleasing; but in the heat of action, terrible.

In 1846 the remains of Decatur, in compliance with his own wish, and at the additional request of the vestry of St. Peter's church, were disinterred, and conveyed to Philadelphia. They landed at the navy yard, where they were received by detachments of the military, and subsequently conveyed in solemn procession to their final resting-place. The muffled sound of bells, the melancholy boom of minute-

guns, and the wail of the dead-march, conspiring with the sight of the coffin, the pall borne by his old companions in rank, agitated the spectators with emotions of mingled regret and pride. Close after the remains followed a small body of sailors, veterans who had served under Decatur, bearing his old national flag, while tears rolled down their bronzed cheeks. Those who remember that scene can never forget it. It was Decatur's last welcome to his native city!



## JOHN TEMPLAR SHUBRICK.

BORN of a family honourably distinguished in the revolutionary annals of South Carolina, and the elder of four brothers, all of whom served their country with distinction in the navy, John Templar Shubrick deserves to be remembered, as well in consequence of his name as on account of his valuable services and untimely death.

Shubrick was the son of Colonel Thomas Shubrick, who served with Greene in the South, and was present, in the capacity of aid to the American commander, at the battle of Eutaw. The future hero was born on Bull's Island, South Carolina, on the 12th of September, 1788. It was the intention of his parents, to educate him for the bar; and, to that end, in his sixteenth year, he was placed in the office of his kinsman, Colonel Drayton, of Charleston. His inclinations, however, were in favour of the naval service, and, after having studied law for two years, he prevailed on his father to gratify his wishes. Accordingly Colonel Shubrick applied to the department for a midshipman's warrant in





JOHN T. SHUBRICK.



favour of his son, which was granted, under date of June 20th, 1806.

The first ship in which the young officer sailed was the Chesapeake thirty-six, bearing the broad pennant of Commodore James Barron, destined for the Mediterranean. This frigate had scarcely left the American waters, when the British ship Leopard, in pursuit of some deserters said to be on board the Chesapeake, attacked the latter, fired into her, and compelled her to haul down her flag. This disgraceful affair was the introduction of the young midshipman to his profession. With the rest of the officers, Shubrick keenly felt the humiliation of the incident, although no blame could attach to any person except the commodore, and even he was the victim of circumstances, rather than of treachery or cowardice. The only gun fired on the occasion was discharged from the division to which Shubrick belonged.

When the Chesapeake, after this unfortunate occurrence, was transferred to Decatur, Shubrick remained in her. Towards the close of 1808, however, he was removed to the Argus, a brig of sixteen guns. In this vessel he remained until 1810, cruising with her on the coast. He was now ordered to join the United States forty-four, just fitted out to carry Decatur's broad pennant. In a few months, however, he was compelled to leave this fine ship, and deprive himself of the valuable supervision of Decatur, in consequence of a misunderstanding with a fellow-officer, which led Shubrick to send a challenge. Decatur, hearing of the quarrel, sent for both gentlemen, and demanded a pledge from each not to fight. This, Shubrick, as the challenger, declined to give, on which Decatur, to maintain his discipline, felt compelled to order the offender to quit the ship. That he might soften the punishment, however, as much as possible,—for the commodore, of all men, was tolerant on points of honour,—he gave Shubrick an acting appointment as lieutenant on board the

Viper, a small vessel attached to the squadron. He continued in her until 1811, when he was transferred to the Siren sixteen; and in this brig he soon rose to be acting first lieutenant.

Early in 1812, Shubrick received a commission from the department as lieutenant, and was immediately ordered to join the Constitution, Captain Hull, then lying in the Potomac. War was declared soon after. The Constitution sailed on her memorable cruise on the 12th of July, Shubrick being her fifth lieutenant. In her endeavours to escape from the English squadron, he bore his full share of the labour, and when relieved, he threw himself on the deck, without undressing, to catch a short repose before renewing his exertions. In the action with the Guerriere, Shubrick commanded the quarter-deck guns, and was in the midst of the active scene that occurred in that portion of that ship, when the American frigate got a sternboard and came foul of her antagonist. He escaped without a wound, though so much exposed.

When Hull gave up the Constitution, and Bainbridge assumed her command, Shubrick remained in the ship, and thus had the good fortune to participate also in the capture of the Java. In this action he was stationed on the gun-deck, and again escaped without a wound. He had now been engaged in every principal naval event which was then known to have occurred since the war with Tripoli. He had been in the Chesapeake when the Leopard captured her; in the celebrated chase of the Constitution; and in the two victories of the latter over British frigates. His good fortune began to be proverbial. It was said that his luck would give any ship, on board of which he might happen to serve, a chance of a fight. Accordingly, when Lieutenant Ballard of the Hornet expressed a wish to exchange into the Constitution, in the hope that she might meet a third British frigate, Captain Lawrence of the former ship used all his

influence to induce Shubrick to take his place, hoping that the young officer would bring his good fortune with him. The exchange was effected, and the result seemed to verify the superstition; for soon after, the *Hornet* met and captured the *Peacock*, in a contest that scarcely lasted fifteen minutes. In this engagement Shubrick acted as the *Hornet's* first lieutenant.

Shubrick remained in the *Hornet* until she was chased into New London, when, finding there was little chance of her getting to sea, he sought to be transferred to the *United States*, and succeeded. In this vessel he remained until he followed her commander, *Decatur*, into the *President* forty-four. He served on board this frigate as second lieutenant, until the fall of her first, during her chase and capture by the British fleet blockading New York, January the 15th, 1815. In this engagement Shubrick, as usual, escaped unhurt, though three of his brother lieutenants were killed, and the commodore himself wounded. Peace soon released the prisoners, who had been carried to Bermuda. Shubrick was now appointed first lieutenant of the *Guerriere* forty-four, about to sail, under *Decatur*, to Algiers. The events of that memorable cruise have already been detailed in their proper place. Another instance of Shubrick's good fortune happened during the engagement with the Algerine admiral, for a gun bursting on board the *Guerriere*, he escaped unhurt, though a fragment of the breech passed through his hat.

But alas! this continued success was now to be darkened, and for ever. Some changes having occurred in the squadron, by which the *Epervier* eighteen became without a commander, *Decatur* appointed his favourite lieutenant to her, and ordered him to sail immediately for the *United States*, with a copy of the treaty just completed with Algiers. On board this vessel, as passengers, were Captain Lewis, late of the *Guerriere*, and Lieutenant Benedict J. Neale, both of whom, having married just before the squadron sailed, were

now returning on leave to their young brides. Lieutenant Yarnall, who had been Perry's first, in the bloody conflict of Lake Erie, was also one of the company. Shubrick himself was going home to a young wife, whom he had married towards the close of the war with Great Britain. The last that was ever known of these gallant spirits was when they passed Gibraltar on the 10th of July, 1815. The *Epervier* was never seen after that day, foundering in a hurricane, it is supposed, which swept the Atlantic soon after.

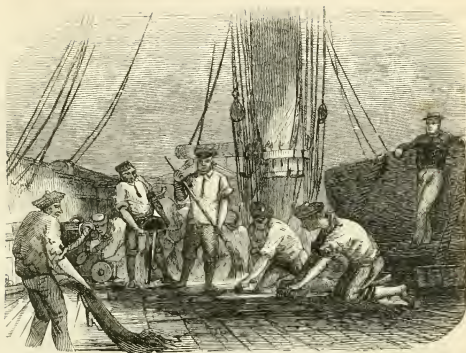
Thus perished, full of glory, John Templar Shubrick.



WILLIAM O. BAINBRIDGE.







WASHING THE DECK.

## WILLIAM O. BAINBRIDGE.

THE subject of our present sketch was an instance of the triumph of true merit over all the adversities of life. No officer in the navy, perhaps, was as unfortunate as Bainbridge, yet few stood, from first to last, higher in public estimation. For the first twenty years he served his country, disasters continually gathered around him; yet the confidence of both government and people in his skill and courage remained unimpaired; and when finally fortune smiled upon him, and he captured the British frigate *Java*, his fellow-citizens, sympathizing with his former disappointments, hailed his success as if they had themselves a direct personal interest in it.

William O. Bainbridge was the fourth son of Doctor Bainbridge, a gentleman of good family and excellent social

standing, who, at the period of the future commodore's birth, May the 7th, 1774, resided in the town of Princeton, New Jersey. Soon after this event, the father removed to the city of New York, where the education of the child was intrusted to its maternal grandfather, a Mr. Taylor, a person of large estate, residing in Monmouth county, New Jersey. Young Bainbridge, as he grew up, displayed a taste for the sea, like most others subsequently distinguished in the American navy. Of a bold and adventurous disposition, he could not content himself on land, and showed the most invincible repugnance for the professional pursuits for which it was at first intended to educate him. His athletic and manly frame peculiarly fitted him for the avocation of a sailor; and, in the end, his importunities prevailed over the well-meant but mistaken wishes of his friends. It is unfortunately a too common error of parents to force a son into a pursuit displeasing to him. Rarely, in such cases, does the youth fulfil his destiny, but toils on, an unwilling slave, to the close of his days. For every man Nature has provided some peculiar walk, in which he will labour with pleasure, if not with distinction; and if the inclinations of the young were more generally consulted, their appropriate avocations would more universally fall to their lot.

Bainbridge was but fifteen when he obtained the consent of his friends to choose the sea as his profession. After two preliminary voyages, in which he learned the rudiments of his pursuit, the influence of his friends, combined with his own merits, obtained for him the rank of a chief mate. He was now eighteen. The ship sailed for Holland, and during the voyage, Bainbridge, by his own personal intrepidity, recovered her from the hands of mutineers. In reward for his conduct on this occasion, the owners, on her next voyage, gave him the command of their vessel. He now rose rapidly. He soon found himself master of the *Hope*, a fine ship, carrying four nines, most merchantmen of that day being armed.

During a voyage in this vessel to the West Indies, Bainbridge was attacked by a British privateer, mounting eight guns, and having three men to his one. In vain he hoisted American colours; the privateer, choosing to disbelieve his character, poured in a broadside. Bainbridge, regardless of the disparity of force, returned the fire immediately. Broadside after broadside was now exchanged, until, in the end, the superior rapidity and accuracy of the American fire compelled the English vessel to strike. The privateer was much injured, and had several men killed; while the *Hope* received but little damage. As no war existed at that time between the United States and Great Britain, it would have been illegal for Bainbridge to keep his prize; so, hailing the privateer, he told her commander to return to his employers, and inform them, that, if they wished to capture the *Hope*, they must send a stronger force after her.

On a succeeding voyage, the ship of Bainbridge was boarded by an officer from the British frigate *Indefatigable*, Captain Sir Edward Pellew, who endeavoured to impress the mate, a Mr. McKinsey, alleging that, as the name was Scotch, the man could not have been born in America. McKinsey, who had been born in Philadelphia, armed himself, on a hint from Bainbridge, and refused to obey. Some altercation ensued, when the British officer, seizing a foremast hand, carried him off, notwithstanding the expostulations of Bainbridge, and the production of evidence to prove the man an American. As a last resort, Bainbridge threatened, in case the sailor was impressed, to take a British seaman out of the first British vessel of equal force that he should meet. The officer, regarding this as an idle threat, laughed contemptuously, and pulled back to his frigate, carrying the man with him. But Bainbridge was as good as his word. In less than a week he fell in with an English merchantman, which he boarded, and impressed from her decks a foremast hand, to supply the place of the one he had lost. This spirited act, when it

became known, met the applause of the entire country. Had there been more such men in our mercantile marine at that period, the aggressions of England would have been stopped, or a war brought on between her and the United States; in either which case, the degrading system of impressing American-born seamen into her men-of-war would have been checked fifteen years sooner than it was.

When hostilities began with France in 1798, and Congress determined to found a national marine, it became necessary to seek for the officers in the merchant service, there being then no other source from which to draw them; for even those who had served in the war of independence had since been compelled to earn their livelihood as masters of trading vessels. The courage which Bainbridge had shown in the two affairs we have narrated had won for him such a reputation, that, when he applied for a commission, his request was almost immediately granted. A French privateer, mounting fourteen guns, having been just captured by the elder Decatur, was now equipped for a cruiser, under the significant name of the *Retaliation*; and to this vessel Bainbridge was appointed, with the rank of lieutenant-commandant, a grade long since abolished. But the career of the young officer in this ship was short. On his very first voyage in her he was captured, the first American officer to suffer this indignity, as the *Retaliation* was the first national vessel to strike her colours to a foe. The circumstances, however, were such as to exonerate Bainbridge from all censure.

The *Retaliation* had sailed for the West Indies in September, 1798. In the following November, while cruising off Guadaloupe, in company with the *Montezuma* sloop-of-war, Captain Murray, and the brig *Norfolk*, three sail were made in the eastern seaboard, and immediately after two more in the western. The *Montezuma* and her consort gave chase to the latter, Captain Murray ordering Bainbridge to pursue the former. The American vessels promptly parted, on opposite

tacks. Bainbridge, on approaching the three sail, discovered two of them to be French men-of-war, and was captured, after a smart chase, by one of these, *L'Insurgente*, the fastest ship that then floated. The French frigates immediately gave chase to the *Montezuma* and her consort, *L'Insurgente* leading the way. Fortunately Bainbridge had been carried on board the other frigate, which proved to be commanded by the senior officer of the squadron. This gentleman, finding that he could not keep up with *L'Insurgente*, began to fear that the two American ships would prove too strong for her single-handed; and, to reassure himself, asked Bainbridge their force. Eager to preserve his friends from capture, Bainbridge gravely replied that the ship was a twenty-eight, and the brig a twenty. At this information, which doubled the real force of the Americans, the French captain hoisted a signal of recall to *L'Insurgente*. On discovering the trick, the enemy were, at first, much exasperated; but, after a little reflection, they admitted that Bainbridge had only employed an artifice allowable in war. Thus, his misfortune was not without its compensations, for, though he lost his own ship, he saved two others.

Bainbridge, after a captivity of some weeks, was allowed to return home in the *Retaliation*, which was sent to the United States as a cartel. So far from falling in the estimation of the government by the loss of his vessel, his address had raised him higher than ever in favour; and he was now made a master-commandant, and appointed to the *Norfolk eighteen*, the brig which he had preserved from *L'Insurgente*. He now returned to the West Indies, where he joined the squadron of Commodore Truxtun. Having been despatched from St. Kitts, to convoy a fleet of merchantmen home, he executed his task without the loss of a single vessel, though he had no less than one hundred and nineteen under his charge. During the voyage, the fleet fell in with an enemy's frigate, when Bainbridge, hoisting the signal to disperse, led

the French man-of-war away in a fruitless chase of himself, until night, when he gave his pursuer the slip. The next day the brig overtook and collected her convoy, which she conducted to port without further interruption. It was August, 1799, when the Norfolk, having executed this duty, cast anchor in the port of New York.

On his return to the West Indies, Bainbridge was placed under the orders of Captain Christopher R. Perry, the father of the hero of Lake Erie. He continued cruising in the tropics for several months, though with but little success. Towards the close of the year he received an order from the Navy Department to go off the neutral port of Havana, in order to protect our own trade, and annoy that of the French. Here he found himself the senior officer of a little squadron, composed of his own ship, and the Warren eighteen, and the Pinckney eighteen. In March, 1800, his cruise being up, he returned to Philadelphia, anchoring there early in April. The next month he was raised to the rank of captain, chiefly, it is said, in requital for his services off Havana. Thus, before he had quite reached the age of twenty-six, and when he had scarcely been two years in the navy, he attained its highest grade; and, with it, had won the reputation of being one of the most skilful, energetic, and patriotic officers belonging to the infant service.

The United States had not, at this period, repudiated the disgraceful practice of paying tribute to the Barbary powers; and the George Washington, twenty-eight, was now fitting out for Algiers, laden with stores for the dey of that town, presented to him by our government. To this ship Bainbridge was appointed. It was September, 1800, before he reached the port of his destination, having been the first officer in the service to display our national flag in the Mediterranean. For the purpose of landing his cargo with facility, Bainbridge ran into the mole. Scarcely, however, had he removed the stores from his vessel, when the dey, who had occasion to

send tribute in turn to Constantinople, expressed his intention of employing the *George Washington* for that purpose. At first Bainbridge, whose high spirit revolted at the task, refused, but the dey reminding the American that the vessel lay under the guns of his batteries, Bainbridge was forced to comply. Much unmerited censure has been cast on Bainbridge for his conduct on this occasion. But, situated as he was, he had to choose between the loss of his vessel and a compliance with the wishes of the dey; and, in support of his decision, he could plead the example of national ships of other powers, which had accepted similar tasks. The dey, with homely but forcible logic told him, moreover, that America paid him tribute, which was an admission of its inferiority, as well as of the duty of its officers to obey him. The fault lay really at the door of our government, which consented to pay tribute. On the eve of departure, the barbarian prince insisted that the *George Washington* should sail with the Algerine flag at the main, while that of the United States should be hoisted at the fore, as a mark of inferiority. Bainbridge, eager to be out of reach of the dey's batteries, consented; but the instant the ship was at sea, hauled down the Algerine flag, and replaced it with the stars and stripes.

The tribute with which the dey had loaded the *George Washington* was valued at half a million of dollars. In addition, Bainbridge carried several wild beasts in cages, as presents from the Algerine to the Porte; and with these, as well as with two hundred passengers, the decks were littered. This voyage was always a subject of mortification to Bainbridge, but he occasionally referred to it as full of amusing incidents. Among other anecdotes, he was accustomed to say that his passengers were puzzled, during prayer, to keep their faces to Mecca, in consequence of the tacking of the ship. When the vessel entered the Egean sea, towards the close of the voyage, this difficulty became so great, the result of her going about so frequently, that a man was stationed

at the compass, to give the Musselmen notice when the frigate was about to change her course. After much boisterous weather, Bainbridge finally reached the narrow passage, called the Dardanelles, guarded by two grim castles which frowned over that beautiful scene. Apprehensive that if her flag was known, the George Washington would not be allowed to pass, in consequence of the known repugnance of the Sultan to admit strange colours in his waters, the American captain determined on a stratagem. As he approached the castles, accordingly, Bainbridge began to clew up his light sails, as if about to anchor, at the same time firing a salute. The salute was returned, gun for gun; but under cover of the smoke, Bainbridge rapidly made sail, shooting out of range of the castle guns before the deception was discovered. On the 9th of November, the frigate anchored under the walls of Constantinople, showing, for the first time, the flag of our country under the walls of that capital. It was a moment full of reflection to the American captain. There had flaunted the labarum of Christian Rome; there had waved the pennons of the Crusaders; there the horse-tails of the Ottoman had flaunted in the wind; and now, a solitary vessel, from a continent but lately discovered, bore to this storied town the flag of a nation born but yesterday, yet destined in time to be greater than Turk, or Frank, or even Roman.

A new difficulty now arose. The Turkish authorities had never heard of the new republic across the Atlantic, and when Bainbridge reported his vessel, an answer was returned that the Porte knew no such power as the United States of America. By a happy thought, Bainbridge explained that his ship came from the New World discovered by Columbus. This statement proved satisfactory. The American officers were allowed to land, were well received, and, in a little while, became great favourites. The capudan pasha, especially, took a strong fancy to Bainbridge. This high officer had married a sister of the reigning sultan, and his friendship



for the American soon enabled the latter to save the life of the governor of the Dardanelles, who had been condemned to death for allowing the *George Washington* to pass without a firman. So close was the intercourse between the capudan pasha and the American captain, that it had nearly paved the way for a treaty, which Bainbridge urged upon our government as both desirable and practicable. Before departing from Constantinople, an entertainment was given on board the *George Washington*, at which viands were served up from the four quarters of the earth. There were water, bread, meats, and fruit from Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, as well as guests from the same places. On his sailing, Bainbridge received from the capudan pasha, as a mark of especial favour, a letter of protection.

The frigate returned to Algiers, in January, 1801, in order to discharge some cannon which she had carried out as ballast, and which belonged to the dey; but she anchored out of the range of the batteries, until assured by the authorities that no further tasks should be imposed upon her. An interview followed between the dey and Bainbridge, at which the former indulged in angry threats, that might have led to serious consequences, if the latter had not produced the letter of the capudan pasha. Algiers being a dependency of the Porte, the dey dared not disobey his superior. The letter of the capudan pasha also enabled Bainbridge to do an action, the generosity of which met its reward when he least expected it. The sultan, being at war with France, had intimated to the dey that he must join in the hostilities. The next morning, the flag-staff of the French consulate was cut down, an intimation that war was declared; and all the French then in Algiers, fifty-six in number, consisting of men, women, and children, were seized and ordered to be sold as slaves. On hearing this fatal command, Bainbridge interceded for mercy; and the dey, to conciliate one so high in favour at Constantinople, granted his petition. The wily

barbarian, however, annexed a condition, which he believed would render the concession nugatory; he ordered the French to leave within forty-eight hours. In this emergency, no other resource being at hand, Bainbridge discharged his ballast, took in other, and sailed, carrying off the unfortunates within the required time. The humanity of this act was the more remarkable, because, at that period, the United States and France were at war. Napoleon, who had just before been chosen first consul, returned his personal thanks to Bainbridge, and, at a later day, when the American officer was a captive, used his powerful intercession in behalf of the prisoner. The French were landed at Alicant, a neutral country, after which the *George Washington* spread her canvas for home.

The conduct of Bainbridge was approved, in every respect, by his government. During his absence a law had passed for the reduction of the navy, the number of captains being cut down from twenty-eight to eleven; but though Bainbridge had been the twenty-seventh on the old list, he found himself retained on the new. This testimony to the estimation in which he was held by the department, was the more flattering from the mortifications he had just undergone. A further compliment was now paid him, in an order to take command of the *Essex* thirty-two, and join the squadron destined for the Mediterranean, under Commodore Dale. On this duty, Bainbridge was absent about a year. During his cruise, the *Essex* was deemed a model-ship as to efficiency and discipline, and extorted praise wherever she appeared. Wanting material repairs, she returned to the United States in the summer of 1802, and was laid up at Norfolk. From this time until July, 1803, Bainbridge was occupied, under the orders of government, in superintending the construction of the *Siren* and *Vixen*, two armed schooners, which subsequently distinguished themselves in the Tripolitan war. At the end of that period, however, he was directed to take com-

mand of the Philadelphia thirty-eight, then fitting out for the Mediterranean, where she was to form part of the fleet of Preble.

The different vessels of the squadron were to sail as soon as made ready, and the Philadelphia was one of the first to leave for her destination. Bainbridge arrived at Gibraltar on the 24th of August, 1803, after a tedious and unpleasant voyage; and two days after, fell in with a ship and brig, of suspicious appearance. Hailing the former, Bainbridge learned that she was the Meshboha, a cruiser belonging to the emperor of Morocco. He was also informed that the brig was an American, which the Meshboha had boarded, but not detained. The manner of these replies, coupled with the movements of the brig, increased the suspicions of Bainbridge, who, boarding the latter vessel, found her in command of a prize crew from the Moorish cruiser, her own officers and crew being prisoners under hatches. The ship was immediately captured, and carried, with the brig, into Gibraltar. On examining the papers of the Meshboha, it was found that she had permission, from the governor of Mogadore, to capture American vessels, and this, though Morocco was nominally at peace with the United States. This capture, united to the firm attitude assumed by Preble, who, in the following October, visited the emperor of Morocco in person, and procured the renewal of the treaty of 1786, checked further aggressions from this quarter on our commerce.

Meantime, Bainbridge, leaving his prize at Gibraltar, sailed for Tripoli, in obedience to his orders. He found but one American vessel, the Vixen, off this port, blockading. Having received intelligence of a corsair which had just sailed on a cruise, Bainbridge despatched the schooner in pursuit, and was thus left alone, most unfortunately, as events soon proved. On the 31st of October, when in chase of a suspicious sail, supposed to be the corsair after which the

Vixen had sailed, the frigate was led in among some sunken reefs, not described properly in the charts, where she struck. Every effort by the captain, officers, and crew to force the Philadelphia off, persisted in many hours, failed. Night began finally to fall. The Tripolitan gun-boats, perceiving from the situation of the frigate, that she could not use her armament if they approached her cautiously, made sail, and running down to within a convenient distance, hovered there, maintaining a deadly and incessant fire on the devoted ship. At last, after having exhausted every resource, the Americans surrendered, with tears of shame and despair. In this disgraceful hour the presence of the Vixen might have saved the frigate and her crew. Thus, for the second time, did Bainbridge become a prisoner. The Philadelphia, moreover, was the first American frigate captured by an enemy, as the Retaliation had been the first national vessel of any rate taken by a foe. It seemed, indeed, as if ill fortune had marked Bainbridge for its own.

The most accurate account of this shipwreck, ever published, is from the pen of Mr. Cooper, to whose research and fidelity we have so often been under obligations, in compiling these sketches. His narrative of the event fully exonerates Bainbridge from blame. He says: "There is an extensive reef to the eastward of Tripoli, called Kaliusa, that was not laid down in the charts of the ship, and which runs nearly parallel to the coast for some miles. There is abundance of water inside of it, as was doubtless known to those on board the chase, and there is a wide opening through it, by which six and seven fathoms can be carried out to sea; but all these facts were then profound mysteries to the officers of the Philadelphia. Agreeably to the chart of Captain Smyth, of the British navy, the latest and best in existence, the eastern division of this reef lies about a mile and a half from the coast, and its western about a mile. According to the same chart, one of authority, and made from accurate surveys, the

latter portion of the reef is distant from the town of Tripoli about two and a half miles, and the former something like a mile and a half more. There is an interval of quite half a mile in length between these two main divisions of the reef, through which it is possible to carry six and seven fathoms, provided three or four detached fragments of reef, of no great extent, be avoided. The channels among these rocks afforded great facilities to the Turks in getting in and out of their port during the blockade, since a vessel of moderate draught, that knew the land-marks, might run through them with great confidence by daylight. It is probable the chase, in this instance, led in among these reefs as much to induce the frigate to follow as to cover her own escape, either of which motives showed a knowledge of the coast, and a familiarity with his duties in her commander.

“In coming down from the eastward, and bringing with her plenty of water, the Philadelphia must have passed two or three hundred yards to the southward of the north-eastern extremity of the most easterly of the two great divisions of the reef in question. This position agrees with the soundings found at the time, and with those laid down in the chart. She had the chase some distance inshore of her; so much so, indeed, as to have been firing into her from the two forward divisions of the larboard guns, in the hope of cutting something away. Coming from the eastward, the ship brought into this pass, between the reef and the shore, from fourteen to ten fathoms of water, which gradually shoaled to eight, when Captain Bainbridge, seeing no prospect of overhauling the chase, then beginning to open the harbour of Tripoli, from which the frigate herself was distant but some three or four miles, ordered the helm a-port, and the yards braced forward, in the natural expectation of hauling directly off the land into deep water. The leads were going at the time, and, to the surprise of all on board, the water shoaled, as the frigate run off, instead of deepening. The yards were imme-

diately ordered to be braced sharp up, and the ship brought close on a wind, in the hope of beating out of this seeming *cul de sac*, by the way in which she had entered. The command was hardly given, however, before the ship struck forward, and, having eight knots way on her, she shot up on the rocks until she had only fourteen and a half feet of water under her fore-chains. Under the bowsprit there were but twelve. Aft she floated, having, it is said, come directly out of six or seven fathoms of water into twelve and fifteen feet; all of which strictly corresponds with the soundings of the modern charts.

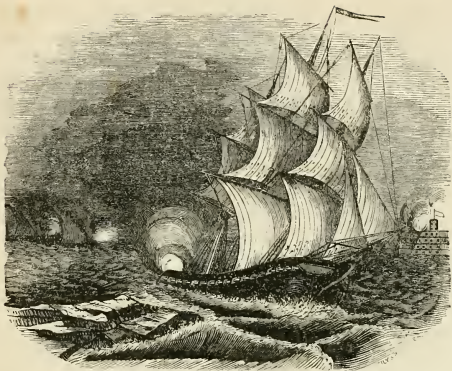
“There was much of the hard fortune which attended a good deal of Bainbridge’s professional career, in the circumstances of this accident. Had the prospects of the chase induced him to continue it, the frigate might have passed ahead, and the chances were that she would have hauled off, directly before the mouth of the harbour of Tripoli, and gone clear; carrying through nowhere less than five fathoms of water. Had she stood directly on, after first hauling up, she might have passed through the opening between the two portions of the reef, carrying with her six, seven, nine, and ten fathoms, out to sea. But, in pursuing the very course which prudence and a sound discretion dictated to one who was ignorant of the existence of this reef, he ran his ship upon the very danger he was endeavouring to avoid. It is by making provision for war in a time of peace, and, in expending its money freely, to further the objects of general science, in the way of surveys and other similar precautions, that a great maritime state, in particular, economizes, by means of a present expenditure, for the moments of necessity and danger that may await it, an age ahead.”

That the manner of her loss may be more completely understood, we here insert a chart of the harbour of Tripoli, with the reefs laid down, and the course of the Philadelphia, both before and after tacking, marked. The town, (A), the



place where the frigate struck, (B), and the mouth of the harbour, (C), will show the relative bearing of the three most important points. The figures indicate the depth of water at the spots where they are placed.

We now resume Mr. Cooper's narrative:—"Bainbridge's first recourse was the natural expedient of attempting to force the ship over the obstacle, in the expectation that the deep water lay to seaward. As soon, however, as the boats were lowered, and soundings taken, the true nature of the disaster was comprehended, and every effort was made to back the Philadelphia off, by the stern. A ship of the size



THE PHILADELPHIA ON THE ROCKS.

of a frigate, that goes seven or eight knots, unavoidably piles a mass of water under her bows, and this, aided by the shelving of the reef, and possibly by a ground swell, had carried the ship up too far to be got off by any ordinary efforts. The desperate nature of her situation was soon seen by the circumstance of her falling over so much as to render it impossible to use any of her starboard guns.

“The firing of the chase had set several gun-boats in motion in the harbour, and a division of nine was turning to windward, in order to assist the xebec the Philadelphia had been pursuing, even before the last struck. Of course the nature of the accident was understood, and these enemies soon began to come within reach of shot, though at a respectful distance on the larboard quarter. Their fire did some injury aloft, but neither the hull nor any of the crew of the frigate were hit.

“Every expedient which could be resorted to, in order to



get the Philadelphia off, was put in practice. The anchors were cut from the bows; water was pumped out, and other heavy articles were thrown overboard, including all the guns, but those aft. Finally the foremast was cut away. It would seem that the frigate had no boat strong enough to carry out an anchor, a serious oversight in the equipment of a vessel of any sort. After exerting himself, with great coolness and discretion, until sunset, Bainbridge consulted his officers, and the hard necessity of hauling down the colours was admitted. By this time, the gun-boats had ventured to cross the frigate's stern, and had got upon her weather-quarter, where, as she had fallen over several feet to leeward, it was utterly impossible to do them any harm. Other boats, too, were coming out of the harbour to the assistance of the division which had first appeared.

“The Tripolitans got on board the Philadelphia, just as night was setting in, on the last day of October. They came tumbling in at the ports, in a crowd, and then followed a scene of indiscriminate plunder and confusion. Swords, epaulettes, watches, jewels, money, and no small portion of the clothing of the officers even, disappeared, the person of Bainbridge himself being respected little more than those of the common men. He submitted to be robbed, until they undertook to force from him a miniature of his young and beautiful wife, when he successfully resisted. The manly determination he showed in withstanding this last violence, had the effect to check the aggression, so far as he was concerned, and about ten at night, the prisoners reached the shore, near the castle of the bashaw.

“Jussuf Caramelli received his prisoners, late as was the hour, in full divan; feeling a curiosity, no doubt, to ascertain what sort of beings the chances of war had thrown into his power. There was a barbarous courtesy in his deportment, nor was the reception one of which the Americans had any right to complain. After a short interview, he dismissed the

officers to an excellent supper which had been prepared for them in the castle itself; and to this hour, the gentlemen who sat down to that feast with the appetites of midshipmen, speak of its merits with an affection which proves that it was got up in the spirit of true hospitality. When all had supped, they were carried back to the divan, where the pasha and his ministers had patiently awaited their return; when the former put them in charge of Sidi Mohammed D'Gheis, one of the highest functionaries of the regency, who conducted the officers, with the necessary attendants, to the building that had lately been the American consular residence."

Oppressed with mortification by this untoward accident, Bainbridge was much gratified, when, on the following day, he received a letter, signed by all his officers, expressing their belief that the charts and soundings had warranted his near approach to the shore. Such testimonies, however flattering, are not at all times proper; but this was a case in which no just exception could be taken to approbation and condolence from inferiors. Those who now shared captivity with Bainbridge consisted of a crew of about three hundred souls, and twenty-one officers, exclusive of the captain. In remembrance of the sufferings which they endured, we here insert the names of the officers; the list of the entire crew, though equally as worthy of publication, would occupy more space than our pages allow.

*Captain.* William O. Bainbridge, of New Jersey.—*Lieutenants.* David Porter, Massachusetts; Jacob Jones, Delaware; Theodore Hunt, New Jersey; Benjamin Smith, Rhode Island.—*Lieutenant of Marines.* William S. Osborne.—*Surgeon.* John Ridgely, Maryland.—*Purser.* Richard Spence, New Hampshire.—*Sailing-Master.* William Knight, Pennsylvania.—*Surgeon's Mates.* Jonathan Cowdery, New York; Nicholas Harwood, Virginia.—*Midshipmen.* Bernard Henry, Pa.; James Gibbon, Va.; James Biddle, Pa.; Rich-

ard B. Jones, Pa.; D. T. Patterson, N. Y.; William Cutbush, Pa.; B. F. Reed, Pa.; Wallace Wormley, Va.; Robert Gamble, Va.; Simon Smith, Pa.; James Renshaw, Pa.

The captivity that now ensued ceased only with the termination of the war. The officers were subjected to few rigours except the restraint of confinement, and even this was occasionally alleviated, chiefly through the intercessions of Mr. Nissen, the Danish consul, who, in addition to this act of kindness, procured books for the prisoners, and devised means to open a correspondence between Bainbridge and Preble. The studies of the midshipmen were not intermitted. The members of the crew, however, were compelled to work on the fortifications, or, if they knew a trade, to labour at that. For extra work they were allowed wages. When not occupied at their tasks, they were permitted to walk through the streets, two or three at a time, and, on such occasions, frequently came into collision with the Tripolitans, mostly on their own seeking, for which they were rewarded with the bastinado, generally administered with little severity. The condition of none of the prisoners, therefore, was as bad as that of the other captives of the bashaw. At the fast of Ramadan, which lasted thirty days, and during which hospitality is particularly enjoined on Mohammedans, both crew and officers were treated with unusual kindness. At the Bairam festival, which immediately followed, Bainbridge, and his first lieutenant, afterwards Commodore Porter, were invited to the palace, where the bashaw received them with coffee and sherbet. The minister of state, Sidi Mohammed D'Gheis, was, after the Danish consul, the warmest friend the prisoners had, and to him the officers were indebted for occasional leave to ride out into the neighbouring country, a pleasure only to be fully appreciated by those who have exchanged the close, pent air of a prison for the perfume of orange groves and the bracing breeze from the sea. Even with every alleviation, however, captivity is

irksome, and it was now rendered peculiarly so, by the uncertainty that attended the war. The temper of the bashaw had to be considered also, for at any moment, in a fit of rage, produced by defeat or other causes, he might order his prisoners to death. Hence, the unfortunate Americans felt continually that the sword of Damocles hung suspended over them.

Meantime, the Tripolitans, favoured by the mild weather, addressed all their energies to preserving the frigate. They surrounded her with gun-boats, and carried out anchors, and by these means finally hove her off the reef into deep water. The guns, anchors, and other portions of her equipments, which Bainbridge had cast overboard to lighten her, were easily recovered, having fallen into the shallow water covering the rocks. In the course of a few days the frigate was conducted triumphantly into the harbour, amid the barbarian music of her captors, and the salutes of the batteries. She was anchored, for protection, close under the guns of the fortifications; her injuries were partially repaired; and a force, it was thought, competent to guard her, placed on board. Whenever Bainbridge, or any of his companions looked seaward, their eyes were greeted with her dark and shapely hull, no longer, however, displaying the American ensign, but disgraced by the Tripolitan flag. Often, it is said, in the solitude of his cell, her late commander brooded over the possibility of her being destroyed, by a bold incursion from the fleet of Preble; and there is some authority for supposing that he suggested to the commodore the feasibility of the plan. At last, on the 15th of February, 1804, nearly four months after her capture, the prisoners were awoke, about midnight, by loud reverberations of cannon, which shook the walls and echoed sullenly among the surrounding hills. Soon a bright light danced athwart the windows, loud cries were heard, and the firing of cannon increased. The glad news now spread that the commo-

tion was occasioned by the burning of the frigate; and no words can tell the rapture of the captives at the announcement.

Their joy, however, was somewhat mitigated by what followed. The bashaw, enraged at this destruction of his prize under his very batteries, vented his anger on the officers of the *Philadelphia*. On the 1st of March ensuing, he caused them to be removed into close confinement at the castle, where, during the remainder of their imprisonment, they were kept under rigid guard, all attempts at escape, and they were many, being frustrated by the watchfulness of their sentinels. Week passed after week, month glided into month, yet the hopeless captives neither saw nor heard any thing of *Preble*. At last, almost when they began to despair, the joyful intelligence spread, that his fleet was in the offing. Two days later a heavy firing was heard. The high windows of their prison prevented the officers from seeing out, but as the roar of contending batteries grew louder, the impatience of the Americans could not be restrained; they clambered up to the casements, and looking forth, beheld, with a thrill indescribable, a fleet of gun-boats under the United States flag bearing down on the Tripolitan cruisers, while in the back-ground the *Constitution* appeared, coming down into the fray, the men on her topgallant yards gathering in her canvas, as coolly as if she was entering a friendly port to anchor. Soon the gun-boats to windward came into close action, when the prisoners beheld the gallant assault of *Decatur*. But they had scarcely obtained a glimpse of the fight, when it swept out of range of their windows. The roar of guns to leeward long continued, the captives listening to the sounds with all the breathless excitement natural to their situation. This was the memorable attack of the 3d of August, 1804. For five weeks the warfare continued, when, on the night of September the 4th, the melancholy explosion of the *Intrepid* led to the cessation of the American

assaults. And now, for many weary months, the prisoners were left apparently deserted.

At last, when autumn had faded into winter, and winter given way to spring, more than eighteen months after the loss of the *Philadelphia*, the consul-general for Barbary appeared off the coast to negotiate on the part of America for the release of the captives. The Spanish consul, as agent for the bashaw, was directed to confer with him on board the *Constitution*. The negotiation threatening to end in nothing, Sidi Mohammed D'Gheis, to facilitate affairs, proposed that Bainbridge should be allowed to visit the frigate, when, by his personal endeavours, a suitable peace might perhaps be arranged. The bashaw at first rejected the proposal, insisting that the prisoner, once free, would never return. But the minister of state, who knew the influence of honour among Christian nations, offering his own son as a hostage for Bainbridge, Jussuf Caramelli finally consented. On the 1st of June, 1805, Bainbridge went out to the *Constitution*, but, after spending the entire day on board the frigate, returned at nightfall dispirited and with little hope of a treaty. The next day, however, the Danish consul, in conjunction with the American agent, agreed upon the basis of a treaty.

On the third day, a council was assembled by the bashaw, and the terms of this pacification laid before it. Bainbridge was invited to be present, an honour never before conferred on a prisoner in similar circumstances. The proceedings were conducted in French. Jussuf Caramelli, after proposing to his divan the question of peace or war, found his advisers equally divided. "How shall I act?" said the bashaw, "four of you are for peace." Sidi Mohammed rose and addressed him: "You are our prince and master," he said, "you have not called us here to dictate to you, but to hear our opinions. It remains now for you to act as you please; but let me entreat you, for your own interest, and

the happiness of your people, to make peace. The bashaw hesitated, then drew his signet from his bosom, affixed it deliberately to the treaty, and pronounced the words—“*It is peace.*” The treaty was conveyed back to the frigate; the salutes of peace followed; and the war was terminated.

A court of inquiry, as is usual on the loss of a national vessel, was held upon Bainbridge as captain of the Philadelphia. The court met at Syracuse in June, and the result was an honourable acquittal. In the following autumn, the officers and crew of the unfortunate frigate reached the United States, where they were welcomed with the warmest sympathy. Bainbridge now hastened to see a loved family, which, at one time, he had almost despaired of beholding again. In a few months he was appointed to the command of the navy yard at New York. But he did not long remain here. He had married when young, and he now found himself embarrassed in his pecuniary affairs, with an increasing family. The half-pay of his rank was, at that time, but five hundred dollars a year, and as there were but few ships, and many seniors to command them, he saw but little prospect of employment. In this emergency, he applied for a furlough, and entered the mercantile marine, hoping thus to advance his fortunes.

He continued in this employment until 1808, without any incident occurring worthy of mention here, except the almost miraculous preservation of his life from drowning. One day, near the Bahama bank, while stepping from his boat to his ship, a wave struck the former, and he was pitched headlong into the water. He rose at the stern of the vessel, but, as he could not swim, soon sank again. The mate, in endeavouring to jump after him with a rope, became entangled in it, and did not reach the water. Meantime Bainbridge rose and sank a second and third time, whirling around and around in the ship's wake. Fortunately, when he had disappeared, as all thought for ever, he perceived the deep sea-

line near him, and, by great exertions, drew himself to the surface with its aid, when he was picked up by the boat, much exhausted. His mulatto servant, Will, had cast overboard the deep sea-line, and was thus the means of saving a life to which our flag subsequently owed one of its most brilliant victories.

The hostile attitude of England, in 1808, rendering a war probable, Bainbridge left the merchant service, and applied for employment from the government. He was ordered to Portland, where he remained about nine months. In December, 1808, he was transferred to the *President* forty-four, then considered the finest ship in the navy. On board of her he now hoisted his first broad pennant, having the command of the southern division of our coast; Commodore Rodgers commanding at the north. Meantime the prospect of a war blew over. Bainbridge, however, continued in the *President*, employed on coast duty, until May, 1810, when, his term of service being up, he again sought employment in the mercantile marine. On this occasion he went into the Baltic. A Danish cruiser here captured him, and sent him to Copenhagen. Again he had recourse to his old friend, Mr. Nissen, now residing in the capital of Denmark. Through the exertions of this officer, Bainbridge procured the release of his ship. It was a singular coincidence that, at the very moment Mr. Nissen heard of Bainbridge's arrival, he was engaged in unpacking a silver urn, which had been presented to him by the officers of the *Philadelphia*, in return for his kindness at Tripoli.

While at St. Petersburg, in the subsequent year, Bainbridge heard of the rencontre between the *President* and *Little Belt*, when he immediately left his ship in command of the mate, and undertook a land journey to the nearest Atlantic seaport, intending to sail thence to America. Driven over a precipice thirty feet deep, by the carelessness of his coachman, and much bruised, he nevertheless prosecuted his way



without halting, reaching Gotheburg on the 20th of December, 1811. War not having yet been declared between the United States and England, he repaired to London to take passage across the Atlantic. He arrived in Boston early in February, 1812, and immediately hastened to Washington, where he reported himself ready for service. The cabinet, however, had decided, in the event of a war, not to risk our few national ships in what it considered a hopeless naval contest with Great Britain. Chagrined personally at this determination, and feeling acutely for the national honour thus sacrificed, Bainbridge, in conjunction with Stewart, warmly expostulated against the decision, and finally induced the government partially to rescind its resolution. Meantime, having been appointed to the Charlestown navy yard, he repaired to that post, and was there when, on the 18th of June, 1812, Congress declared war. Bainbridge immediately applied for a command afloat. As he now stood only the fourth captain on the list, and as one of his seniors was too infirm for service, and an other was abroad, his request was immediately complied with. The three best frigates, however, were all absent, so that he had to content himself with the *Constellation* thirty-eight. But before she could be prepared for sea, *Hull* came in with the *Constitution*, and generously consenting to give her up, in order that others might have a chance, Bainbridge was appointed to her.

Fortune, so long adverse, now smiled at last on Bainbridge. The *Essex* thirty-two, Captain Porter, and *Hornet* eighteen, Captain Lawrence, were also placed under his orders, and the squadron directed to cruise for the English East India trade, in the south Atlantic. Bainbridge hoisted his broad pennant on the 15th of September, 1812. The *Constitution* and *Hornet* sailed in company from Boston, on the 20th of October; but the *Essex*, being in the Delaware, was ordered to meet her consorts at the Cape de Verdes, or on the coast of South America. The *Essex*, however, from various cir-

cumstances, was prevented joining the squadron. The other vessels reached St. Salvador on the 13th of December. The *Hornet* finding the *Bonne Citoyenne*, a British cruiser of equal force, in the harbour, challenged her; but she declined, alleging the presence of the *Constitution*. Bainbridge, on this, stood out to sea, and was absent four days; but, on his return, finding that the *Bonne Citoyenne* had refused a combat, he left the *Hornet* to blockade her, and continued his cruise alone. His crew was essentially the same as that which took the *Guerriere*. The men shared in their commander's anxious wish to meet the enemy; and, at last, on the 26th of December, 1812, fortune granted their wish. On that day, in latitude  $13^{\circ} 6' S.$ , and longitude  $31^{\circ} W.$ , two strange sail were seen, one of which, boldly steering for the *Constitution*, Bainbridge felt confident that he had an enemy's frigate before him.

The *Constitution* now stood to the southward to draw the enemy off the land. At a quarter-past twelve, the stranger showed English colours, which, however, she withdrew directly after. The American frigate now hauled up her mainsail, took in her royals, and tacked toward the foe. About two, P. M., the Englishman being half a mile to windward of the *Constitution*, and having nothing flying but his jack, Bainbridge ordered a shot to be fired at him, to induce him to set his ensign. The order was misunderstood by the divisions, and a broadside was given. The enemy immediately hoisted English colours again, returned the fire, and manœuvred so as to rake the *Constitution*. The British ship, being very strongly manned, was actively handled, and, sailing better than the American frigate, would have succeeded in her design of raking, if the latter had not been managed with unusual seamanship. The action was, in fact, a series of evolutions, and terminated several miles to leeward of the spot where it began. To add to the disadvantages under which the *Constitution* laboured, her wheel was

shot away, about twenty minutes after the battle commenced, so that it became necessary to steer her between decks, where she could not be watched by the helm as closely as was desirable. In addition, Bainbridge was twice severely wounded early in the fight, the first time by a musket-ball in the hip, the second time by a bolt from the wheel which was driven into his thigh. Notwithstanding these injuries, however, he maintained his post on deck until the close of the conflict, an heroic behaviour which had nearly cost him his life, for the long standing so inflamed his leg as subsequently to threaten lock-jaw.

In consequence of these various disadvantages, the battle would have been a drawn one, but for the superior accuracy of the Constitution's fire, which soon began to tell with terrible effect on the enemy. Spar after spar crashed over her sides, picked off by the unerring aim of the Americans, who handled their guns almost as accurately as if the huge cannon had been rifles. The main-topmast, the mizzenmast, and the bowsprit of the foe had already gone, when Bainbridge, anxious to finish the conflict, determined to close. Accordingly, he set his courses, and luffed up to the wind. The British frigate, finding the fire of the Constitution too heavy, endeavoured to run her aboard; but a double-headed shot carrying away the foremast, and his bowsprit being already lost, the ships passed clear of each other. The action raged for some little while longer, when Bainbridge, discovering that his enemy's guns were silenced, crossed the Englishman's bows, and took up a position ahead and to windward, where he began to repair the few damages he had sustained. Not a spar, however, was lost, but his ship came out of action, as it went in, with royal yards across. While the Constitution was thus engaged in refitting, the mainmast of the enemy fell; and, being now a complete wreck, he lowered his jack, the only flag left flying, as soon as the American frigate approached to renew the strife.

The prize proved to be the *Java*, Captain Lambert. She was an old French frigate, rated as a thirty-eight, but carrying forty-nine guns. Still the weight of metal was in favour of the *Constitution*. The British frigate, however, as we have seen, was the fastest ship, and had an unusual complement of men, mustering not less than four hundred at quarters, just one-third more than ordinarily found in frigates of her size. Her loss is variously stated. The English represent it at twenty-two killed and one hundred and two wounded. Bainbridge computed it at sixty killed and one hundred and two wounded. Among the prisoners was Lieutenant-general Hislop and staff, the former of whom was going to Bombay as governor. Captain Lambert received a mortal wound, of which he died a few days after. The loss of the *Constitution* was nine men killed and twenty-five wounded. Her rigging was much cut up, and some of her spars were injured, but none of her damages were of a very serious character. Bainbridge, thinking it useless to attempt carrying his prize to the United States in her battered condition, destroyed her; and then made for St. Salvador, where he landed his prisoners. Here an interesting interview took place on the quarter-deck of the *Constitution*, between Bainbridge and Lambert, in order that the former might restore the dying man his sword. The British captain was in his cot, and Bainbridge approached, supported by two of his officers. Lambert died two days after. Indeed, the entire demeanor of the Americans to their captives was marked by the utmost generosity. Bainbridge even refused to appropriate property which, though claimed as private, was usually considered forfeited to the victors, an example which the British, on subsequent occasions, when the fortune of war went in their favour, declined to imitate.

The *Constitution* reached Boston on the 27th of February, 1813, having, within eight months, captured two frigates from the enemy. Bainbridge was received with acclama-

tions. His countrymen, feeling that fortune had buffeted him unjustly heretofore, took a pleasure now in displaying their joy at his success. His skill and courage were eulogized by all, and his name was toasted everywhere with applause. He now gave up the Constitution, and resumed the command of the Charlestown navy yard. The Independence seventy-four was then building at that place, and Bainbridge superintended her construction, intending to sail in her as soon as finished. When the British, in the year 1814, threatened an attack on the navy yard, and the city and state authorities, partially disaffected, refused to lend their militia to its defence, Bainbridge, acting with becoming spirit, appealed to the people, convincing them that, if Charlestown fell, Boston also would be attacked, and thus finally enlisted public opinion in favour of the defence of the two places. The war closed in February, 1815, before the Independence was equipped, so that Bainbridge obtained no second opportunity to meet the enemy.

Early in that year, however, a squadron was ordered out to Algiers, of which Bainbridge, in the Independence, was to be the superior officer. But having to wait for his ship, Decatur, the second in command, who had sailed with the fleet at once, brought the war to a close before he arrived in the Mediterranean. Bainbridge now had under his orders the largest naval force that had then ever been assembled under our flag; from eighteen to twenty sail acknowledging his broad pennant. He continued abroad until November, when he returned to Newport. Bainbridge was thus not only the first captain to carry the American flag into the Mediterranean, which, it will be recollected, he did in 1800, in the George Washington, but the first commodore to appear in those classic waters with a two-decker belonging to the United States. During his cruise he arranged several difficulties with the Barbary powers.

From this period until 1819, Bainbridge remained at

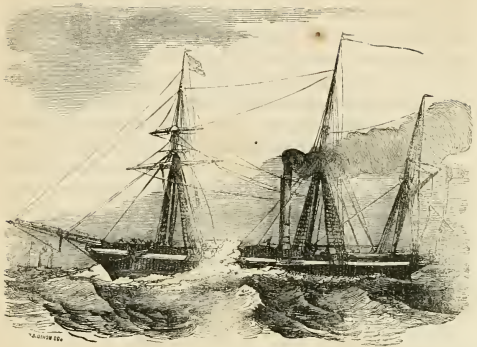
Boston, his pennant flying on board the Independence, now converted into a guard-ship. In the latter year he was ordered to sail again for the Mediterranean, at the head of a squadron. He hoisted his pennant on board the Columbus, a new ship, of eighty guns; but did not sail until April, 1820. He continued abroad about a year, visiting different ports, the object of the cruise being principally to exhibit the squadron, in order to impress on the different powers of that important sea a proper idea of the efficiency of our marine. Bainbridge was very desirous to proceed to Constantinople, where he had been twenty years before on a less pleasant duty, but a firman could not be obtained to pass the castles with so large a ship as the Columbus. In 1821, the commodore was relieved, and came home, never to return to active service afloat again.

For some time Bainbridge was in command at Charlestown, a favourite station with him. He subsequently acted as the head of the Board of Navy Commissioners; and afterwards received the appointment to the navy yard at Philadelphia, in which city his family now took up their residence. An unpleasant collision, in 1831, with the Secretary of the Navy, forced him from his command; but, in the following year, he was tendered, and accepted the post at Charlestown. He did not, however, long remain at that place. Disease had, for some years, made him its victim, and, every remedy failing, he now gave up the struggle, and returned to his home in Philadelphia, to die.

His disorder was pneumonia, connected with great irritation of the bowels and a wasting diarrhoea. His sufferings were extreme, and had, for some time, driven him to the use of narcotics, which deranged his nerves, and appeared to have changed entirely his character. In his better moments, however, he was the same warm-hearted, chivalrous gentleman he had ever been. He resigned himself to his fate, and awaited the hour of his release. At last, on the

28th of July, 1833, he breathed his last, in his sixtieth year, being, at the time of his decease, the third officer of rank in the American navy. An hour or two before he died, his mind began to wander, and just before the immortal spirit left the clay, he started up in bed, demanded his arms, and ordered all hands to be called to board the foe.

In person Bainbridge was tall and of commanding presence. His face had been handsome in youth, and his eye retained its animation even in age. His temper was quick, but placable. He was brave with that high bravery which is always cool in moments of danger. His discipline was severe, though considerate, and the wants of his crew were never disregarded. His manner was cordial. He was hospitable, chivalrous, magnanimous, a firm friend, sincere, just, and patriotic.



STEAM-SHIP OF WAR.

## ISAAC CHAUNCEY.

CIRCUMSTANCES did not allow Chauncey to play so prominent a part in our naval history as others more favoured by fortune; but he possessed most of the elements of success, and if opportunity had been afforded him, would have brilliantly distinguished himself. As acting captain of the *Constitution*, during the time she was employed, under Preble, before Tripoli, and as commander of the squadron on Lake Ontario, during the war of 1812, he will be remembered with gratitude by his countrymen.

Chauncey was born at Black Rock, Fairfield county, Connecticut, of parents who had descended from some of the earliest settlers of New England. His father was a farmer, and of comparative wealth. Young Chauncey, however, had little taste for the quiet, though ennobling pursuits of agri-





ISAAC CHAUNCEY.



culture, but longed for the more adventurous and exciting pursuits of the sea. Accordingly, at an early age, he prevailed on his parents to place him in charge of one of the principal shipmasters of New York. His energy and skill in his profession soon vindicated the justice of his selection. At nineteen, so rapid was his rise, he commanded a vessel. He afterwards became concerned in the East India trade, making several highly successful voyages, during which his reputation as a man of character and as a skilful seaman continually increased.

His ambition, however, directed him towards the naval service, as soon as Congress determined to establish a national marine. In consequence, early in 1798, he applied for a commission in the infant navy. His first rank was that of a lieutenant, in which he sailed under Truxtun, the hero of the war with France. He subsequently accompanied Commodore Preble to the Mediterranean, and virtually commanded the *Constitution*, during the eventful cruise before Tripoli. In all the stirring events of that year he fully participated. He took part in the various assaults on the town, handling his frigate in the most masterly manner, and contributing not a little, by his hearty and efficient co-operation with Preble, to the success of the cruise. His skill and gallantry, in these transactions, won for him a sword, which Congress unanimously voted.

When the war of 1812 broke out, Chauncey, then at the navy yard of New York, was appointed commander of the United States squadron on Lake Ontario. At that time the shores of the lake were almost a wilderness. The duty of the new commodore embraced, not only the commanding, but the forming of a fleet. Chauncey proceeded with a vigour and skill that soon overcame every obstacle. Hurrying to Sackett's Harbour, he had armed and equipped a squadron of merchant vessels before the autumn was much advanced, and, on the 7th of November, sailed from that

port, his little fleet carrying forty guns, and four hundred and forty men. On the 8th, he fell in with the Royal George of twenty-six guns, which vessel he chased into the port of Kingston. He now obtained the entire command of the lake. Sir James Yeo, obeying the instructions of the British ministry, perseveringly declined a combat; the English government arguing that, if Yeo triumphed, the only benefit of the victory would be the destruction of Chauncey's fleet, while, if Chauncey was the conqueror, Canada would be laid open, defenceless, to invasion. The American commander, in addition, exerted himself to increase his force on the lake, and soon completed a sloop-of-war and a frigate, the first in twenty-eight, the last in forty-four days.

During the war, Chauncey was of the greatest service to the army, in conducting its operations against Canada. Though frequently rendered incapable of active exertion by sickness, his eagerness to engage the enemy suffered no diminution, and he lost no opportunity to endeavour either to entrap or to force Sir James Yeo into a battle. How little success attended these efforts, and what were the causes of his failure, will be best seen from his official correspondence. Writing on board the General Pike, off Duck Island, on the 13th of September, 1813, he says:—"On the 7th, at daylight, the enemy's fleet was discovered close in with Niagara river, wind from the southward. Made the signal, and weighed with the fleet (prepared for action) and stood out of the river after him; he immediately made all sail to the northward. We made sail in chase with our heavy schooners in tow, and have continued the chase all round the lake, night and day, until yesterday morning, when she succeeded in getting into Amherst Bay, which is so little known to our pilots, and said to be full of shoals, that they are not willing to take me in there. I shall, however, (unless driven from my station by a gale of wind,) endeavour to watch him so close as to prevent his getting out upon the lake.

“During our long chase we frequently got within from one to two miles of the enemy, but our heavy-sailing schooners prevented our closing with him until the 11th, off Genessee river; we carried a breeze with us while he lay becalmed to within about three-quarters of a mile of him, when he took the breeze and we had a running fight of three and a half hours, but by his superior sailing he escaped me and ran into Amherst Bay yesterday morning. In the course of our chase on the 11th, I got several broadsides from this ship upon the enemy, which must have done him considerable injury, as many of the shot were seen to strike him, and people were observed over the sides plugging shot-holes. A few shot struck our hull, and a little rigging was cut, but nothing of importance—not a man was hurt. I was much disappointed that Sir James refused to fight me, as he was so much superior in point of force both in guns and men—having upwards of twenty guns more than we have, and having a greater weight of shot. This ship, the Madison, and the Sylph, have each a schooner constantly in tow, yet the others cannot sail as fast as the enemy’s squadron, which gave him decidedly the advantage, and puts it in his power to engage me when and how he chooses.”

On the 27th of the same month, Chauncey, having learned that the English squadron was in York Bay, made another unsuccessful attempt to engage Sir James Yeo. Sailing immediately, he soon came in sight of the British. His official letter says:—“On the 28th, at ten minutes past meridian, the enemy, finding that we were closing fast with him, and that he must either risk an action or suffer his two rear vessels to be cut off, tacked in succession, beginning at the van, hoisted his colours and commenced a well-directed fire at this ship, for the purpose of covering his rear, and attacking our rear as he passed to the leeward. Perceiving his intention, I was determined to disappoint him; therefore as soon as the Wolfe (the leading ship) passed the centre of his line,

and abeam of us, I bore up in succession (preserving our line) for the enemy's centre. This manœuvre not only covered our rear, but hove him into confusion; he immediately bore away; we had, however, closed so near as to bring our guns to bear with effect, and in twenty minutes the main and mizzen-top-mast and main-yard of the Wolfe were shot away. He immediately put before the wind, and set all sail upon his fore-mast. I made the signal for the fleet to make all sail; the enemy, however, keeping dead before the wind, was able to outsail most of our squadron. I continued the chase until near three o'clock, during which time I was enabled in this ship (the General Pike) with the Asp in tow, to keep within point-blank shot of the enemy, and sustained the whole of his fire during the chase.

“At fifteen minutes before three o'clock, A. M., I very reluctantly relinquished the pursuit of a beaten enemy. The reasons that led to this determination were such as I flatter myself you will approve. The loss sustained by this ship was considerable, owing to her being so long exposed to the fire of the whole of the enemy's fleet; but our most serious loss was occasioned by the bursting of one of our guns, which killed and wounded twenty-two men, and tore up the top-gallant fore-castle, which rendered the gun upon that deck useless. We had four other guns cracked in the muzzle, which rendered their use extremely doubtful. Our main-top-gallant mast was shot away in the early part of the action, and the bowsprit, fore and main-mast wounded, rigging and sails much cut up, and a number of shot in our hull, several of which were between wind and water, and twenty-seven men killed and wounded, including those by the bursting of the gun. We have repaired nearly all our damages, and are ready to meet the enemy. During our chase, one, if not two, of the enemy's small vessels were completely in our power, if I could have been satisfied with so partial a victory, but I

was so sure of the whole, that I passed them unnoticed, by which means they finally escaped."

A few days subsequently, a gleam of success visited the squadron, on which Chauncey thus writes:—"I have the pleasure to inform you, that I arrived here this morning with five of the enemy's vessels, which I fell in with and captured last evening, off the Ducks. They were part of a fleet of seven sail, which left York on Sunday with two hundred and thirty-four troops on board, bound to Kingston. Of this fleet five were captured, one burnt, and one escaped; the prisoners amounting to nearly three hundred, besides having upwards of three hundred of our troops on board from Niagara, induced me to run into port for the purpose of landing both. I have the additional pleasure of informing you, that among the captured vessels are the *Hamilton* and *Confiance*, late United States schooners *Julia* and *Growler*; the others are gun-vessels."

It was unfortunate for the popular reputation of Chauncey that his services on Lake Ontario, though solid, were not more brilliant, especially after the dazzling victory on Lake Erie had led many, who knew nothing of the difference of circumstances, to expect a similar result on the lower lake. Chauncey, however, was an efficient and laborious, if not a fortunate officer. Though unable to bring the enemy to action, and consequently deprived of the glory of a great victory, he managed to maintain the command of the lake, until just before the close of the war, when the British, by the construction of a gigantic vessel, recovered the supremacy they had so long lost.

In 1816, Chauncey was appointed to succeed Bainbridge in the Mediterranean. The treaty which Decatur had made with Algiers, the preceding year, having been violated by that power, it became necessary to negotiate another; and this task, Chauncey, in conjunction with William Shaler, Esq., the American consul-general in Algiers, successfully

and honourably fulfilled. It is worthy of record that the treaty, then entered into, continued, without infringement, until the conquest of Algiers by the French in 1830. Having executed this duty, the commodore carried his squadron into the various ports of the Mediterranean. His fleet consisted of one seventy-four, three frigates, three sloops-of-war, and two smaller vessels, an imposing force for our flag at that period; and the number of his ships, the high state of his discipline, and his own personal qualities produced the most favourable impression, wherever he went. He returned to the United States in 1818.

In 1820, Chauncey was appointed a Navy Commissioner. He held this office until 1824, when he was offered his old station, the New York navy yard. In 1833 he returned to the Board of Navy Commissioners, and remained a member of that body until his death, which occurred on the 27th of January, 1840. At the period of his decease he was President of the Board.

Chauncey was laborious and skilful in public business; exemplary, dignified, and conciliatory in private life. At the time he received his appointment on Lake Ontario in 1812, it was generally admitted that a better selection could not have been made; and the fact that he was retained in his post until the close of the war, though the commanders in the land service were frequently changed, is a proof of the high estimation in which his services were held.







JAMES LAWRENCE.



CHESAPEAKE AND SHANNON.

## JAMES LAWRENCE.

THE brilliant career of Lawrence, and the melancholy of its close, have rendered his name peculiarly dear to the American people. His dying words, "Don't give up the ship!" will live in the national memory as long as the flag he loved shall wave, or the country he served exist.

Lawrence was born in the city of Burlington, New Jersey, on the 1st of October, 1781. His father was a respectable lawyer, who, desiring the son to adopt the legal profession, put the lad to school at an early age, to prepare for his future pursuit. When, however, Lawrence had attained his twelfth year, he declared a partiality for the sea; but his

father still cherishing the desire of seeing him a lawyer, he continued his studies. He passed through the academy of his native place with credit, and subsequently read law two years with an elder brother. The death of his father, at this period, changed his whole life. The brother, perceiving the strong inclination of young Lawrence for the sea, applied to the Navy Department for a commission; and, on the 14th of September, 1798, the future hero was appointed a midshipman in the then infant service of the United States.

His first voyage was to the West Indies, in the *Ganges* twenty-four. After having sailed, in different vessels, for upwards of two years, he received, in 1800, an appointment as acting lieutenant on board the *Adams* twenty-eight; but, the following year the navy being reduced, his appointment was not confirmed. When the war with Tripoli, however, began, he was restored to his old rank; and, in 1803, sailed to the Mediterranean, in the *Enterprise*, as her first lieutenant. While thus abroad, he partook in most of the glories of that celebrated struggle. He was one of the little band which, under Decatur's orders, assisted to burn the Philadelphia. He commanded the *Enterprise* during the memorable bombardment of the town, covering the attacking gun-boats in a manner that won the thanks of Preble. He afterwards served as first lieutenant in the *John Adams* twenty-eight, returning to the United States with the commodore in 1805.

He was not suffered, however, to remain long at home. The government had just finished a number of gun-boats, which they were anxious to send out to the Mediterranean, and to one of these Lawrence was now appointed, with orders to sail immediately. Originally intended for harbour service, or at most to serve on the Atlantic coast, these slightly built craft, overloaded each with an enormous gun, were but illy calculated to brave the perils of a long, and perhaps tempestuous voyage; and it was the general opinion among

naval men, in which Lawrence himself shared, that the passage to Gibraltar could not be effected. His sense of duty, however, as well as of professional honour, prevented his making any objection to the service on which he was ordered. Fortunately he reached his destination in safety. But, on the coast of Europe, meeting an English frigate, her captain would not believe, at first, that Lawrence had crossed the Atlantic in his fragile craft. On this occasion, though he remained abroad nearly sixteen months, no opportunity occurred for especially distinguishing himself.

After the peace with Tripoli, and his return to the United States, Lawrence was appointed first lieutenant of the *Constitution*. He subsequently commanded the schooner *Vixen*. From this vessel he was transferred to the sloop-of-war *Wasp*. He also sailed in the brig *Argus*, and afterwards in the *Hornet*, so that, for several years, he was almost constantly at sea. On two different occasions he carried out, in his vessel, despatches to our ministers in Europe. Passing through the intermediate grades of master, he had reached the rank of commander when the war of 1812 broke out. Immediately a new impulse was given to the navy, and fresh visions of fame rose before the eyes of ambition. Just before hostilities were declared, Lawrence was in Europe with despatches; and already the inimical feeling between English and American vessels was so great, that the young officer never met a British ship but he made his own ready for action.

Lawrence had scarcely reached New York, on his return, when war was declared. At this time he commanded the *Hornet* eighteen. The frigates *President* and *Congress*, and the brig *Argus* were also lying at the same port, the whole being under the command of Commodore Rodgers, whose broad pennant was flying on board the *President*. Anxious to make a bold dash at the opening of the contest, Rodgers immediately put to sea, hoping to intercept the homeward-

bound Jamaica fleet; but though the squadron completely swept the track of the convoy, following it even to the chops of the British Channel, no traces of the fleet were seen. After a comparatively unsuccessful cruise, Rodgers arrived in Boston, on the 31st of August. Here the chagrin of himself and officers was increased, by hearing that, the day before, the Constitution had arrived with the Guerriere. Personal feelings, however, soon yielded to patriotic ones, and Rodgers and his squadron joined in the general exultation.

A circumstance at this time occurred, which exercised much influence on the standing of Lawrence in the eyes of his countrymen. The meritorious services of Mr. Morris, first lieutenant of the Constitution, induced Congress to elevate him to the rank of post-captain, passing the two intermediate grades. In consequence of this proceeding, Lawrence found himself out-ranked by one who had been his junior; and knowing that fortune only, not superior merit, had won for Morris the elevation, he addressed a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, remonstrating against the proceeding, and intimating that, as a result of it, he would be compelled to leave the navy. His language was mild and respectful, but firm, yet it displeased the Department; and a contemptuous reply was returned, hinting that if he chose to retire, there could still be found heroes and patriots to support the honour of the flag. The first resolution of Lawrence was to resign. But, on mature reflection, he determined to remain, especially as he was about sailing on another cruise. He therefore wrote to the Secretary, stating his surprise at the tone of the letter he had received, and regretting that his former epistle had been considered indecorous; and, in conclusion, he mentioned that, having prepared a memorial to the Senate, he should be governed by the decision of that body. This manly and discreet conduct, so little to be expected from one of so impetuous a character, met with its just reward; for, even before he had returned

from his successful cruise, the Senate, in consequence of his memorial, had raised him to the rank of captain, making him the senior of Morris.

The *Hornet* left Boston, in company with the *Constitution*, Captain Bainbridge; and soon after, arriving at San Salvador, found there the *Bonne Citoyenne*, a British vessel of war, slightly superior in guns and men to the vessel of Lawrence. As the *Bonne Citoyenne* lay in a neutral harbour, it was impossible to attack her; and she refused to come out. Actuated by the chivalry of his nature, Lawrence sent a challenge to her commander, through the American consul at San Salvador. "I request you to state to him," wrote Lawrence, "that I will meet him wherever he may be pleased to come out, and pledge my honour, that neither the *Constitution* nor any other American vessel shall interfere." Commodore Bainbridge, anxious to have the challenge accepted, declared, "if Captain Greene wishes to try an equal force, I pledge my honour to give him an opportunity by being out of the way, or not interfering." Whatever might have been the motive of Captain Greene, he evaded this offer. His answer was, "that although nothing would give him more satisfaction than to meet Captain Lawrence under different circumstances, and although he was convinced that the result of such an encounter could not remain long undecided in his own favour, yet he was equally convinced that Commodore Bainbridge knew too well the paramount duty he owed to his country, to remain an inactive spectator, while a ship of his own squadron fell into the hands of the enemy, and that he could not expose the *Bonne Citoyenne* to a risk so manifestly disadvantageous."

On the receipt of this reply, Commodore Bainbridge left San Salvador for four days, while Captain Lawrence lay before the port in defiance. Still the *Bonne Citoyenne* did not come out. Commodore Bainbridge then went into San Salvador, and remained three days. The English officer

might now have applied to the governor to detain the Constitution for twenty-four hours, and thus ensure a fair engagement with Captain Lawrence; but he did not, and continued inflexibly to refuse the challenge. Despairing at last of tempting him out, Commodore Bainbridge sailed from St. Salvador, leaving Lawrence to continue the blockade. This the latter did, until the 24th of January, 1813, when the appearance of an English line-of-battle ship, off the port, compelled the adventurous American to leave. At the time, the whole nation applauded this challenge of Lawrence, and though there have been writers who have since questioned its propriety, we think that, on the whole, it had a beneficial effect. The refusal of a British captain to meet an equal force was regarded as a tacit admission of inferiority. It was truly said that public opinion in England would not have allowed any English officer to decline a similar challenge from a French man-of-war. Coupled with the captures of the *Guerriere*, *Macedonian*, and *Java*, it gave at once a moral influence to the navy, which, except in the single instance of the *Chesapeake*, where it led to excessive and unwise confidence, produced the most salutary results.

Having been driven from before San Salvador, Lawrence sailed in the direction of Pernambuco, and, on the 10th of February, captured an English armed brig, laden with twenty-five thousand dollars in specie. Cruising in the neighbourhood of Maranham and Surinam, until the 23d, he shaped his course, on that day, for Demerara. On the ensuing morning, when near the mouth of the Demerara river, he gave chase to a brig, but as she ran into shallow water, and he was without a pilot, he finally abandoned the pursuit and hauled off. Just at this crisis another brig was seen, outside of the bar; and as she wore the appearance of an armed vessel, and had the British ensign set, it was resolved to attack her. While beating around the Corobono bank, which lay between the *Hornet* and this enemy, another



sail was seen on the weather quarter, edging down. As she approached, she was made out to be a heavy man-of-war brig; and soon after she ran up English colours. Lawrence now beat to quarters, full of confident enthusiasm in the result of the offered battle.

For more than half an hour, the *Hornet* kept close to the wind, in order to gain the weather-gage, the enemy running free. At last Lawrence, satisfied that he could weather the brig, set the American ensign, tacked, and passing the British vessel when half pistol-shot, exchanged broadsides, both vessels using their larboard guns. It was now twenty-five minutes past five, P. M. The enemy now put his helm hard up, intending to wear short round, and thus place the *Hornet* under a raking fire; but Lawrence, perceiving the design, imitated the manœuvre, and bore down on his quarter in a perfect blaze of flame. The Englishman, firing his starboard guns, righted his helm. The *Hornet* now closed. Clinging thus, to the starboard quarter of the foe, Lawrence plied his batteries with the deadliest rapidity. For nearly fifteen minutes the battle hung in suspense. The British, on beginning the action, had cheered vociferously; but, as the strife deepened, and the work of death grew more earnest, the huzzas became fainter and fainter, and finally ceased entirely. On the part of the Americans no shouts were heard, from first to last; for each man, resolute to conquer or sink, fought with that stern, silent courage which has no time for noisy bravado.

The superior quickness of the *Hornet's* fire, united to her advantageous position, speedily began to incline the scales of battle in her favour. The lighter spars of the enemy, one by one, came down crashing from their lofty elevations, and the ripping and tearing of her sides, under the American shot, was heard distinctly after each explosion. Yet, whenever the smoke of battle eddied off, the British flag was seen waving in defiance from the brig. The fire of the *Hornet's*

crew now concentrated on the hull and decks of the enemy, and soon the English officers stood aghast at the frightful execution. On their side, the Americans knew, by the sharp, wild shrieks rising continually from the brig, that their guns were making terrible havoc among the crew of the foe. Yet still the British, with that sullen courage for which, above most nations, they are remarkable, maintained the desperate conflict. The struggle now deepened in fury and horror. Soon the enemy fought no longer for victory, but for life; for the wide wounds in his hull already let in torrents of water. Meantime the broadsides of the *Hornet* were like successive claps of thunder. At last, when the struggle had continued scarcely fifteen minutes, the enemy struck his colours, and, at the same moment, hoisted a signal of distress.

In an instant every sentiment of enmity was forgotten by the Americans. The British, so lately regarded as foes, were now looked upon only as suffering fellow-creatures. Lieutenant J. T. Shubrick, hastening to board the prize, which proved to be the English brig *Peacock* of eighteen guns, Captain Peake, found her with six feet of water in the hold, and in a sinking condition. Her commander, after receiving two wounds, was dead, and thirty-seven seamen were killed or wounded. Her mainmast had fallen immediately after she struck. No time was to be lost, if her remaining crew were to be saved. The two ships were accordingly anchored, and the boats of the *Hornet* sent to the *Peacock's* succour. Notwithstanding all, however, the brig settled with fearful rapidity. Her guns were now thrown overboard, and the shot-holes which could be reached plugged; but every effort was in vain; and, perceiving that she was going down, the Americans collected most of her people in the launch, which still kept its position on her decks. Unfortunately, however, several of the English sailors remained below, seeking for spoil, until the brig gave her last plunge. With difficulty

those in the launch saved themselves, in the vortex which followed the disappearance of the Peacock. Three of the Hornet's crew were drowned, and nine of the enemy. Four Englishmen, who had been carried down in the brig, saved themselves by climbing up her rigging into the fore-top, which remained above water, the Peacock having sunk in five and half fathoms.

Thus fell, after one of the shortest actions on record, a vessel which had no superior, for her size, in the British navy. The Peacock was somewhat inferior to the Hornet in her armament, which consisted chiefly of twenty-four pound carronades, instead of thirty-two pound carronades, with which the American ship was principally armed. But the victory of the Hornet was owing rather to the greater skill with which she was handled, as well as to the more rapid fire of her batteries, than to the superior weight of her metal. The Americans aimed chiefly at the hull of the enemy, and hence the number of her wounded, and her sinking condition. The British directed their shots chiefly at the rigging of the foe; and, in consequence, the Hornet suffered most aloft. She had lost only one man, and had but two wounded; but her sails and running gear were much injured. The brig for which Lawrence had been first standing being still visible, about six miles distant, he supposed he would be attacked; and his earliest leisure was accordingly directed to repairing damages. The enemy, however, considered it prudent not to seek the Hornet, although he carried fifteen thirty-two pound carronades, and was, therefore, a fair match for the American ship, injured as the latter was by her late action. But the appalling rapidity with which the Peacock had been sunk smote her consort with panic, and she avoided a contest which, under other circumstances, perhaps she would have eagerly sought.

Being encumbered with the number of his prisoners, and having already a scanty supply of stores, Lawrence deter-

mined to return to the United States, and not prosecute his cruise for the present. Accordingly he steered for New York, where she arrived the following month. During the voyage the captured officers and crew received the kindest attentions from the Americans. The officers of the Peacock were so affected by this treatment, that, on their landing in the United States, they published a letter of thanks to Captain Lawrence. In a rougher way, the crew of the Hornet emulated the example set by their superiors, presenting each of the British seamen, who had lost all, with two shirts, a jacket, and a pair of trousers. The appearance of the conquerors in their native waters was hailed with wild enthusiasm. So many naval victories had now been gained over the British, that the people began to regard our flag as invincible; and the most extravagant expectations were formed of the prowess of American ships. Alas! even now, defeat was at hand. As if to add poignancy to the disgrace, this repulse was to occur within sight of the third city of the Union. And, to cap the climax of disaster, the gallant and chivalrous hero of the hour was to be at once the cause and victim of the dishonour.

Lawrence, on his arrival in New York, found himself promoted to be a post-captain. Soon after he was appointed to the Constitution, with the temporary direction of affairs at the Brooklyn navy yard. This post was peculiarly agreeable to him, since, in consequence of his family, he desired to remain a while on shore. What was his chagrin, therefore, when, on the very next day, he received an order from the Department, directing him to proceed to Boston, and sail in the frigate Chesapeake, then ready for sea. This vessel was not only one of the worst in the navy, but was considered unlucky; and a crew is always more or less affected by these considerations. She had been, it was remembered, fired into by the Leopard without resistance, and disgrace had clung to her name ever since. Thus, in conjunction

with personal, there were professional reasons why Lawrence was averse to taking command of the Chesapeake. All his efforts, however, and they were many, to exchange into another ship, were fruitless. He is said to have solicited Stewart, who desired to sail speedily, to take his place; but duty detained the latter officer at Norfolk, and he reluctantly declined. Lawrence then endeavoured to get the *Hornet*, but here he was equally unsuccessful. At last, and with a heavy heart, as if a presentiment of evil was upon him, he took leave of his friends, and, hastening to Boston, assumed command of the devoted ship.

The eagerness that reigned in the public mind to hurry our vessels of war to sea, where, it was believed, certain triumph awaited them, had already produced the usual fruits of such unseemly excitement, an undue confidence in our flag, without regard to the relative strength and efficiency of the combatants. The Chesapeake was an instance in point. She was declared competent to meet any British frigate, even though of superior force. Yet her crew was dissatisfied on account of the distribution of the prize-money of the last cruise; her officers were generally unknown to each other; and the number of landsmen in her was unusual, and even perilous, as events soon showed. The Chesapeake was ready for sea by the 1st of June, 1813. Meantime, a British frigate had appeared off Boston harbour, as if to challenge the American frigate to combat. Lawrence, aware of the disadvantages under which he laboured at present, saw this manifest challenge with regret; but, as he would have sailed if no enemy had come in sight, he scorned to stay on that account. Besides his challenge of the *Bonne Citoyenne* rendered it incumbent on him, he considered, to accept the present defiance. In vain, therefore, his friends urged him to remain; he believed his honour was involved; and accordingly stood out to meet the foe.

The frigate in the offing was the *Shannon*, Captain Broke,

one of the finest ships in the royal navy. Her commander was not unlike Lawrence in disposition; generous, ambitious, chivalrous, and brave, he longed to match himself with some enemy worthy of his prowess. Aware that most of the English ships which had been captured owed their defeat to the bad gunnery of their crews, Captain Broke had drilled his men, for several weeks, in this important art, and had brought them to a state of high perfection in it. In every respect, therefore, the Shannon was more than a match for the Chesapeake. She was the larger ship; had the most numerous force; was well-officered; possessed a picked crew; and had been preparing for weeks, solely with an eye to this battle. The Chesapeake, on the contrary, was a smaller vessel; had officers who scarcely knew each other, much less the men; and, at the very moment of sailing, she witnessed almost a mutiny on the part of her crew.

Nevertheless, Broke did not desire to avail himself of any unfair advantages. On this very morning, he had written a letter to Lawrence, which, unfortunately, the latter never received; for, if it had come to hand in time, it would have enabled him to meet the enemy under more equal circumstances. "As the Chesapeake," wrote Broke, "appears now ready for sea, I request you will do me the favour to meet the Shannon with her, ship to ship, to try the fortune of our respective flags. To an officer of your character, it requires some apology for proceeding to further particulars. Be assured, sir, that it is not from any doubt I entertain of your wishing to close with my proposal, but merely to provide an answer to any objection that might be made—and very reasonably—upon the chance of our receiving unfair support." Broke then stated very minutely the force of the Shannon, and offered to send all British ships out of reach, so that the combat might be a fair one. He even offered to sail, in company with the Chesapeake, to any given spot on the New England coast, and there join battle. "I entreat

you, sir," he concludes, "not to imagine that I am urged by mere personal vanity to the wish of meeting the Chesapeake, or that I depend only upon your personal ambition for your acceding to this invitation. We have both nobler motives. You will feel it as a compliment, if I say that the result of our meeting may be the most grateful service I can render to my country; and I doubt not that you, equally confident of success, will feel convinced that it is only by repeated triumphs in even combats, that your little navy can now hope to console your country for the loss of that trade it can no longer protect."

When the Chesapeake was perceived coming out, the Shannon, under easy sail, led the way to sea, thus courteously leaving to Lawrence to choose the moment to engage. Accordingly, about four, P. M., the American frigate fired a gun, to intimate that she was ready, on which the British ship hove to, with her head to the southward and eastward. As the Chesapeake approached, the wind began to freshen, so that both vessels were compelled to take in sail. By five, P. M., the frigates were well out to sea, the light bearing about thirty miles distant. On board both ships an intense suspense reigned, but of a somewhat different character. A profound silence hung over the decks of the Shannon, and her crew breathed short and anxiously as they watched to see on which side the Chesapeake would approach. In the American ship, during the run out, there had been murmurs of dissatisfaction, chiefly in reference to the distribution of the prize-money of the last cruise; and though these had been quieted by an address from the captain, the sullen air of too many of the men remained, and threw an ominous aspect over the vessel. Lawrence had been uneasy at these signs, but as the two frigates approached, he forgot every thing except that his enemy was before him, and, regardless of the advantages of the foe, with the spirit of a knight of

chivalry steered boldly on, determining to lay the Chesapeake yard-arm and yard-arm with the Shannon.

The excitement of the scene now became intense. As the hostile frigates manœuvred, each instant approaching nearer, their crews became so absorbed that they seemed to have lost entirely the sense of hearing; though the rushing of the water under the bows, the noise of the wind in the rigging, and the mournful sound of the timbers as the frigates groaned, like living things, in anticipation of the combat, went on unceasingly. At last the foremast of the Chesapeake, as she ranged up alongside, came in a line with the Shannon's mizzen-mast. The British, unused to this deliberation, could restrain themselves no longer; but discharged gun after gun, in succession, from the cabin forward, carrying death everywhere into the Chesapeake. The American frigate, however, restrained her fire until all her guns bore, when she poured in her broadside with terrible effect. The enemy replied, as quickly as he could; and, for several minutes, both ships were wrapped in sheets of fire. It was indeed an awful spectacle! Rarely do vessels of war engage in such close proximity; still more rarely under circumstances rendering victory so desirable. Lawrence especially felt as if death itself would be preferable to defeat. Thus, in one continued roar of broadsides, the battle went on.

But man directs, and God overrules. The victory, on that day, was not to be with the heroic American; and, to add to his anguish, death was to come imbittered by defeat. Almost at the first discharge he was wounded, but the hurt not being mortal, he remained on deck. His officers, however, fell around him, like forest leaves beneath a storm of hail. The master was killed; the marine officer, the boatswain, and the fourth lieutenant mortally wounded; and the first lieutenant seriously injured. The battle had now raged about eight minutes. No less than three men had fallen at the helm in succession. The fire of the Chesapeake, how-



ever, was very destructive, the Shannon receiving more damage than her antagonist, up to this time. Suddenly, however, some of the head sails of the American frigate being cut away, she was thrown up into the wind, taken aback, and, thus getting sternway, fell aboard the Shannon, with her mizzen rigging foul of the latter's chains. By this accident, the British frigate obtained a raking position, of which she availed herself to sweep the decks of her enemy with grape. Meantime, Lawrence, seeing the ships coming together, ordered the boarders to be called; but the bugleman, having hid himself from fear, it became necessary to summon the men from below with the voice. The time thus lost was invaluable. Before the boarders reached the deck, a ball entered the body of Lawrence, and he fell, mortally wounded. But, even in the pangs of death, his heroic spirit shone triumphant, and, as they bore him below, his last feeble words were, "Don't give up the ship."

The British, perceiving the confusion on the American decks, now came pouring in over her sides. Twenty resolute men, at this crisis, might have hurled back the enemy, but the decks were, as yet, comparatively empty. When, a moment after, the boarders appeared from below, they found the foe swarming in constantly increasing numbers from the Shannon, armed to the teeth, while their own offensive weapons were still stacked in their customary places, around the masts and on the quarter-deck. The dense masses of the British, and their own comparatively defenceless condition, made the men of the Chesapeake hesitate for an instant. It was a crisis when one bold arm would have turned the scales. Had Lawrence then been there, to spring to the front, perhaps his lion-like nature might have saved the day. But the hero was now lying in the ward-room, racked by excruciating pains, and with the dews of death fast gathering upon his brow. He heard, however, the cessation of the firing, and fearing the fatal truth, endeavoured to raise him-

self, while he told the surgeon to hasten on deck and order the officers to fight to the last. "Never let the flag be struck," he said; "it shall wave while I live."

But, alas! the day was already lost. In the critical moment we have described, not a lieutenant could be found to rally the men, the only one left unwounded having followed his dying commander below. In this emergency the base spirit of mutiny decided the contest. Foremost among the disaffected had been the boatswain's mate, a Portuguese; and this wretch now removed the gratings of the berth-deck, ran below, and called on the rest of the crew to follow. "So much for cheating men of their prize-money," cried the miscreant, and most of his comrades imitating his example, the few officers on deck, all inferior ones, were left almost alone. Some brave spirits gallantly remained, and faced the enemy, but they were speedily cut down. The British now held undisputed possession of the decks, and proceeded to strike the colours of the ill-fated Chesapeake. But the slaughter of the bloody day was not yet over; for a cry that the Americans were rising being made, the conquerors fired down the hatchways, on the crowded masses below. The havoc was terrible. The shrieks of the wounded, the last faint cry of the dying, and the curses of the living who expected to be massacred in turn, rose up, but not a shot was returned: a fit, though awful close of the fell tragedy.

As our great naval historian has remarked, few battles at sea have been more sanguinary than this. "It lasted altogether," he says, "not more than fifteen minutes, and yet both ships were charnel-houses. The Chesapeake had forty-eight men killed, and ninety-eight wounded, a large portion of whom fell by the raking fire of the Shannon, after the Chesapeake was taken aback, and by the fire of the boarders. The Shannon had twenty-three killed and fifty-six wounded, principally by the Chesapeake's broadsides. It was impossible for ships of that size to approach so near, in tolerably

smooth water, and to fire with so much steadiness, without committing great havoc. On board the Chesapeake fell, or died of their wounds shortly after the combat, Captain Lawrence, Lieutenants Ludlow, Ballard, and Broom, (of the marines,) Mr. White the master, Mr. Adams the boatswain, and three midshipmen. All but the midshipmen fell before the enemy boarded. Mr. Budd second, and Mr. Cox third lieutenant, were wounded after the enemy had got on the Chesapeake's decks. Several midshipmen were also wounded. The Shannon lost her first lieutenant and one or two inferior officers, and Captain Broke was badly wounded; the boatswain lost an arm, and one midshipman was wounded, mostly after the boarding. As soon as the ships were clear of each other, they both made sail for Halifax, where they soon after arrived."

He continues: "Perhaps the capture of no single ship ever produced so much exultation on the side of the victors, or so much depression on that of the beaten party, as that of the Chesapeake. The American nation had fallen into the error of their enemy, and had begun to imagine themselves invincible on the ocean, and this without any better reason than having been successful in a few detached combats, and its mortification was in proportion to the magnitude of its delusion; while England hailed the success of the Shannon as a proof that its ancient renown was about to be regained. In America reflection soon caused the mortification in a great measure to subside, as it was seen that the capture of the Chesapeake was owing to a concurrence of circumstances that was not likely again to happen. It was soon understood that the closeness and short duration of this combat were actually owing to their own officer, who brought his ship so near that the battle was necessarily soon decided, while its succeeding incidents were altogether the results of the chances of war. At the moment when the English boarded, the total loss of the Shannon in men is believed to have been at

least equal to that of the Chesapeake; yet the former vessel was deprived of the services of no important officer but the boatswain, while the Chesapeake had lost those of her captain, two of her lieutenants, master, marine officer, and boatswain, including every one in any authority on the upper deck. These fortuitous events are as unconnected with any particular merit on the one side as with any particular demerit on the other; and the feeling of the Americans gradually settled down into a sentiment of sincere respect for the high-spirited Lawrence, and of deep regret for his loss. When told of their defeat, and called on to acknowledge that their enemy was victorious in one of the most extraordinary combats of the age, they have generally given all the credit to the conquerors that they deserved; and while they frankly admit that the victory was remarkable, they may be excused for believing it quite as much so for standing alone in such a war, as for any other distinguishing characteristic."

From the hour of the surrender, Lawrence was not known to speak, except to ask for the wants made necessary by his condition. He lingered for four days in the ward-room, his own cabin being too shattered for use, and his acute physical anguish preventing his removal to the Shannon. Perhaps the bodily agony he endured drowned his mental sufferings; and if so, it was a blessing. At last, on the 6th of June, he turned his face away from his attendants, and, in that pathetic attitude, breathed his last. As soon as the soul had left the earthly frame, the body was removed from the ward-room, and laid, wrapped in the American colours, on the quarter-deck of the Chesapeake.

When the frigate arrived in Halifax, the enemy, mindful of the kindness of Lawrence to the crew of the Peacock, buried the corpse with unusual honours, the pall being supported by the oldest captains of the royal navy then in port. A writer, at the time, eloquently remarked: "The naval officers crowded to yield the last sad honours to a man who

was late their foe, but now their foe no longer. There is a sympathy between gallant souls that knows no distinction of clime or nation. They honour in each other what they feel proud of in themselves. The group that gathered round the grave of Lawrence presented a scene worthy of the heroic days of chivalry. It was a complete triumph of the nobler feelings over the savage passions of war. We know not where most to bestow our admiration—on the living, who showed such generous sensibility to departed virtue, or on the dead, in being worthy of such obsequies from such spirits. It is by deeds like these that we really feel ourselves subdued. The conflict of arms is ferocious, and triumph does but engender more deadly hostility; but the contest of magnanimity calls forth the better feelings, and the conquest is over the affections.”

The bones of the hero were not destined, however, to rest in a foreign soil. A few weeks after the interment, Mr. Crowningshield of Salem, and ten other masters of vessels, sailed, under a flag of truce, to Halifax, where they received the bodies of Captain Lawrence and Lieutenant Ludlow, and with their melancholy burden returned home. Having landed at Salem, a procession was formed, and, amid imposing ceremonies, the bodies were re-interred, in the presence of a vast multitude. Subsequently the remains of Lawrence were removed to the city of New York, and buried in the graveyard of Trinity church, where a handsome monument still records his dazzling career and his early doom.

There was a pathos about the death of Lawrence which endears his name to us peculiarly. He who falls a martyr in the cause of his country, wins our sympathies far more than the conqueror who survives. The last words of this hero will ever recur at the mention of his name. We see him fall dying on the deck, and hear him, as he is borne off, exclaim, “Don’t give up the ship.” We behold him drawing his last breath, far from his family, and under a hostile flag;

and we think sadly of his vain exclamation, "Don't give up the ship." We gaze on the sacred remains, lying alone by night on the quarter-deck, wrapped in the colours for which he died, and involuntarily the pathetic appeal rises to our memory, "Don't give up the ship." Other naval heroes have our acclamations, Lawrence has our tears.

Lawrence was generally a favourite with his men, though as a disciplinarian he was severe, his high and generous qualities winning their affection, while his strict sense of justice commanded their respect. He was cool in battle, and unassuming in victory. In private life few men were so amiable, of such firm principles, or so winning in deportment. His sense of honour was unusually keen; and it led, as we have seen, to his untimely death. As an officer he strictly and faithfully performed his duty, for, during the sixteen years he was in the service, he never had a furlough, except on one occasion, and then only for six weeks.

Lawrence left a wife and two children, and a third was born after his death. Thus, every thing connected with his fate was of a melancholy character. His name, in consequence, has a talismanic power over the bosoms of Americans.



WILLIAM H. ALLEN.







## WILLIAM H. ALLEN.

It was the fortune of William Henry Allen to be present in several of the most brilliant naval actions of the United States, and to distinguish himself in all. It was his fate, like the lamented Lawrence, to seal the cause for which he fought with his blood.

Allen was the son of Brigadier-general William Allen, of Rhode Island, an officer who served with credit through the entire war of Independence. The subject of our sketch was born at the city of Providence, shortly after the close of the contest, on the 21st day of October, 1784. The wish of his parents being to place him in one of the learned professions, he undertook the usual preparatory studies; but the lad had imbibed a passion for the sea, and before he had completed his sixteenth year, his entreaties prevailed with his father to procure him a commission in the navy. Accordingly, in May, 1800, he entered the service as a midshipman.

His first appointment was to the *George Washington* twenty-four, Captain Bainbridge, fitting out to carry tribute

to the Dey of Algiers. In the biography of Bainbridge we have detailed the events of this cruise at length. As a midshipman, Allen was distinguished for strict attention to his duties, a rapid proficiency, and a keen sense of honour. The ship returned to the United States in April, 1801; but those not being days when the younger officers were allowed to be idle, Allen was, within eight days, ordered to the Philadelphia thirty-eight, Captain Barron, about to sail for Tripoli. After an absence of a year, this frigate returned home; but, four months subsequently, Allen was again ordered to sea, this time in the John Adams twenty-eight, Captain Rodgers. He remained abroad, on this cruise, until December, 1803. When he left his ship, on his return, he had been only three years and seven months in the navy; yet, during that time, he had been three times to the Mediterranean, and had spent the entire period, with the exception of about six months, on active duty.

Early in 1804, Allen was appointed sailing master of the Congress thirty-eight, Captain Rodgers; and, in July, sailed in her on a fourth voyage to the Mediterranean. During the passage out he fell overboard, and narrowly escaped drowning. While the squadron was lying before Tripoli, the senior officer, Barron, fell ill, and Rodgers, in contemplation of the possibility of the command devolving on himself, resolved to reconnoitre the harbour, intending to follow it up with an attack. Accordingly, taking Allen with him in the Nautilus, he approached the port. Just outside the entrance, the daring navigators embarked in a boat, and, with muffled oars, pulled towards the town. After completing their soundings, they passed so close to some Tripolitan gun-boats, that they heard their crews conversing; they also distinguished the talk of the sentinels on the battery. A storm came up as they were leaving the harbour, so that it was with difficulty they reached the Nautilus, which, having waited for them as long as was prudent, was about leaving her position

when they appeared through the gloom. In October, 1805, Allen was promoted to a lieutenantcy. He returned to the United States with the fleet, in 1806.

Hitherto the career of Allen had presented little to record. He was now to take part in one of the most exciting events of his day. In February, 1808, he received orders to join the Chesapeake thirty-eight, Captain Barron, then preparing at Washington for the Mediterranean. In this vessel he sailed as third lieutenant. The Chesapeake had scarcely left the coast, when the Leopard, a fifty gun ship, belonging to the British navy, overhauled her, and, on pretence of her having deserters from the royal flag on board, claimed to search her. Allen's rank gave him command of the midship division of the gun-deck. The whole ship was much lumbered up, and this part of her particularly so; but when the attack began, Allen made the utmost exertions to clear it, and soon partially succeeded. There were, however, no powder-horns ready with which to prime the guns, Commodore Barron having gone to sea entirely unprepared for a fight,—a culpable negligence, but one palliated by the reflection that this country was then at peace with all the world.

With some difficulty, after the fire of the Leopard had continued nearly fifteen minutes, priming powder was brought up from the magazine. No matches, however, were to be had. In this contingency, Allen ran to the galley, procured a coal, and with it discharged one of the guns. Simultaneously, Barron ordered the colours to be hauled down, so that no other guns were fired, though two more only waited the match. Thus, in this unhappy affair, Allen had the credit of discharging the solitary cannon that was fired. The broadsides of the Leopard killed and wounded between twenty and thirty of the Chesapeake's crew, most of these being in Allen's division, that being the most exposed. Though his share in this transaction was so honourable in every way, the young lieutenant keenly felt the insult which

his country had suffered, and dwelt upon it, for a long time, in his letters to his friends.

The next service on which Allen was employed was in cruising off Block island during the embargo, to capture vessels violating that law. The Chesapeake, to which he continued attached, had been ordered on this duty in 1808; and he remained engaged in it until February of the following year. He was now directed to join the United States forty-four, Commodore Decatur, as first lieutenant. This vessel was employed, from that period until the declaration of war, in cruising off the coast. Immediately after hostilities began, however, Decatur sailed in hopes of finding a foe, and, on the 25th of October, 1812, met and captured the Macedonian, a British frigate of slightly inferior force. When the enemy was first seen, Allen went aloft, and having satisfied himself that she carried the English pennant, descended, and jocosely announced her to his fellow officers as lawful prize. After she struck, he was the first person to board her. The gratifying task of conducting her into port was now intrusted to him. This duty he safely performed, carrying her first to Newport, and then to New York, at both which places he was received with enthusiastic applause. Decatur, in his despatches, particularly recommended Allen to the notice of government. Rhode Island and Virginia each bestowed on him a sword.

His name now stood prominently before the country, and, in reward for his bravery, he was made master-commandant. In the following year, the command of the Argus sixteen was intrusted to him, under circumstances the most flattering. Mr. Barlow, our minister at the court of France, having died, and Mr. Crawford been appointed his successor, Allen was selected to conduct the new functionary to his destination,—a duty which the young officer safely executed, notwithstanding the vigilance of the English blockading squadron. Having landed Mr. Crawford at L'Orient, Allen

proceeded to execute certain secret instructions which he had received from the Department, and which were to cruise in the Irish Channel, and there do every possible injury to the enemy's commerce. This duty was, in some respects, peculiarly congenial to his bold and adventurous mind; it was fraught with peril, and it promised the most beneficial results to the country. Yet it was one, in some respects, invidious, since his opponents would be generally defenceless merchantmen. He resolved, therefore, that, while he carried terror far and near in that narrow sea, he would exhibit the utmost forbearance and even generosity to his prisoners; and to this resolution, so worthy of a high and honourable mind, he rigidly adhered.

Never, since the days of Paul Jones, had the commerce of Britain suffered so much, at her own door, as it did now. Cruising almost constantly within sight of shore, Allen soon captured English merchantmen, valued, with their cargoes, at two millions. The alarm became general. The insurers in London raised the rate of premiums extravagantly. The British admiralty despatched vessel after vessel in pursuit of this daring foe. Yet still Allen proceeded in his task of burning and sinking the enemy's traders under the very shadows of the English hills, thus, as it were, taking vengeance for the insult offered to the Chesapeake in the vicinity of our own waters. His conduct throughout, however, to his prisoners, was marked with unusual kindness. If he captured a prize, and she carried passengers, their property was sacred from plunder; and, on one occasion, when a sailor belonging to the *Argus* was detected in pilfering from a passenger, he was summarily punished. The British journals, little accustomed as they were to praise Americans, could not refuse doing justice to this conduct, and were unanimous, according to a contemporary writer, in testimonials of respect to Allen's forbearance.

Meantime the *Pelican*, a British man-of-war brig, carrying

sixteen thirty-two pound carronades, four long sixes, and one twelve-pound carronade, was approaching the scene of Allen's triumphs; and, as she was about a fourth larger than the *Argus*, her commander, Captain Maples, felt little doubt of being able to capture the latter vessel, if he could fall in with her. Chance soon gave him the opportunity for which he sought. On the night of the 13th of August, the *Argus* captured a merchant brig, loaded with wine from Oporto, and having removed her crew, set fire to her, as usual with such prizes. The burning ship, illuminating the horizon for miles, met the eyes of the look-outs on board the *Pelican*. Captain Maples, certain that he had his enemy before him, immediately made sail in the direction of the conflagration. The British crew were all fresh, and aware of their superiority; and they awaited the conflict, therefore, with eager impetuosity. The Americans were fatigued with their incessant labours, and worn out for the want of rest; yet, when the *Pelican* was made out shortly after daybreak, but one sentiment prevailed on board, and that was to meet the foe. Allen himself had frequently declared that he would never refuse a challenge from any two-masted vessel; and he now prepared, notwithstanding the evident disparity in size, courageously to fight his antagonist.

It has often been regretted that the *Argus* did not endeavour to decline the combat. It is said that her crew were more or less intoxicated, from wine secretly obtained on board the late prize. But, if this was true, Allen knew nothing of it. He believed his men were as fit to go into battle as they would be at any time while on the coast, and hence he acted right in accepting the challenge. The service on which he was employed would have degenerated into virtual freebooting, if he had ran from the first armed brig of the enemy he met. The moral effect of such a flight would have proved a serious injury to our reputation for honour, if not for bravery. The instinct of that lofty courage

which at once prompted him to meet the foe, was, therefore, founded in policy as well as justice. Nor can the capture of the *Argus*, which ensued, be considered as the inevitable result of a contest between vessels of such disparity in size. It is probable that, if Allen had not fallen wounded early in the fight, or if the batteries had been served with the usual accuracy of aim in our service, the *Pelican*, instead of the *Argus*, would have had to strike her flag. But the loss of their commander disheartened the American crew; it was an omen of evil at the very threshold of the fight. Moreover, in no naval conflict during the war, did any American vessel injure her antagonist so little, a fact which is partially explained by the weariness of Allen's crew, but more completely accounted for by a tradition in the service, that the American carronades, being double-shotted, could not drive their balls into the enemy's sides.

Allen, at first, endeavoured to gain the wind of his antagonist, but finding this impossible, he shortened sail to allow the enemy to close. About six o'clock, the vessels came within range, when the American wore and fired her larboard broadside. The English brig promptly returned the fire. And now as the combatants drew nearer, the battle deepened. Soon Allen fell, mortally wounded, a round shot having torn off his leg. He refused to be carried below, but, fainting from loss of blood, was borne off the deck within eight minutes after the action had begun. In a short time, the first lieutenant, Mr. Watson, being stunned by a wound in the head from a grape-shot, was also carried below. Still, however, the action went gallantly on. The enemy, by keeping away, endeavoured to cross the stern of the *Argus*; but the latter, promptly luffing into the wind, the manœuvre was frustrated; at the same time a terrible broadside was poured into the *Pelican*, which, for a moment, almost turned the scales of battle. But, in filling again, the American brig broke round off, all her after-braces having been shot away.

The enemy now succeeded in crossing the stern of the *Argus* and raking her; and the wheel ropes and most of the running gear being thus shot, the American vessel soon became unmanageable. Mr. Watson, having recovered his senses, now returned on deck, when he found the *Pelican* lying under the stern of the *Argus*, pouring in unresisted broadsides. The action had now lasted half an hour, and Mr. Watson saw, that, unless something was done speedily to turn the tide of fortune, a surrender would be inevitable. Accordingly, he made an effort to carry the *Argus* alongside her antagonist, in order to board; but it was impossible to move the American brig. At last, at forty-seven minutes past six, after having protracted the contest until hope was madness, Mr. Watson directed the colours to be struck. At the same instant, the *Pelican* falling aboard, the British crew came pouring in over the bow.

The loss of the Americans was seven killed, and seventeen wounded; that of the British seven killed and wounded. The *Pelican* suffered but little in hull or rigging, while the *Argus*, as we have seen, was rendered unmanageable. Captain Allen's wound was, from the first, considered mortal. While yet at sea, it was found necessary to amputate the limb, but the surgeons could hold out but little hope, in consequence of the shattered condition of the thigh. On reaching Plymouth, whither the *Pelican* carried her prize, he was removed to the hospital on shore, where a separate apartment was procured for him, and a female nurse procured; indeed, no effort was spared by his generous captors to save his life, or alleviate his sufferings. But he entertained no hope of surviving. His last words to his crew, on being removed from the brig, were, "God bless you, lads, we shall never meet again." He continued sensible, conversing cheerfully, until within about ten minutes of his dissolution, when he sank exhausted, and expired without a struggle. His death occurred towards midnight of the 18th of August, four



days and a half after the battle. He was buried, on the 21st, with military honours, eight captains of the royal navy bearing his pall, and a lieutenant-colonel's guard of marines attending the corpse. The flag of his ship, wrapped around the coffin, was buried with him.

A contemporary, whose judgment of men was only surpassed by the polish of his pen, thus sums up the character of Allen: "By the company and conversation of the elegant and polite, the hard and severe duties of the sailor acquired a sort of polish, and his character presented that combination of gallantry, grace, and intrepidity, that so irresistibly attracts. In the hour of danger, he was calm, intrepid, and persevering; in private intercourse guarded, affable, and delicate. Entering into the navy with large and expanded ideas of honour, the perils he encountered, and the hard service he endured, consolidated his romantic and floating visions into rules and principles of action. By never lowering his lofty standard amidst the jostle of so many contending difficulties, he at length arrived at the eminence which he sought, and new trials served only to call into exercise new and unexplored resources of fortitude. He had so long forsaken every other consideration for glory, that he finally measured his life by this standard, and felt a repulsive antipathy to whatever fell short of that measure."

The personal appearance of Allen was manly, and even handsome. The energy of his character, displayed in his countenance, gave him, at all times, an eminently commanding appearance.



## EDWARD R. McCALL.

THE gallant action between the *Enterprise* and *Boxer*, which resulted in the capture of the British vessel, shed a halo of renown around two young officers, hitherto comparatively unknown. One of these, the generous Burrows, perished in the arms of victory; but the other, Edward R. McCall, survived to receive the gratitude of his countrymen and of the nation.

McCall was a native of South Carolina, a state which has given many heroic officers to the navy. He was born in Charleston, on the 5th of August, 1790. At an early age he lost his father. But this event, usually so great a misfortune to the education of a lad, was alleviated in a measure to McCall. His guardian proved to be a friend as sincere as he was judicious, and under his culture the youth early gave promise of high and noble qualities. McCall, from a boy, evinced a taste for the sea. Accordingly, his guardian not only expressed a willingness to gratify the lad's darling wish,

but directed the studies of the youth in the way most useful for his intended profession. At the age of fifteen, a midshipman's warrant was procured for McCall, when he embarked, with all the ardour of his years, in his chosen career.

McCall first served on board the *Hornet* eighteen, Captain J. H. Dent. He so rapidly perfected himself, during the ensuing five years, in his profession, that, in 1811, he was attached to the *Enterprise* twelve, Captain Blakely, as acting lieutenant. He remained in this vessel, under this gallant commander, until the latter left her, and Burrows succeeded; and was still serving as her second officer, when the action with the *Boxer* occurred. The decisive character of this victory has been attributed, not merely to the boldness and skill of Burrows, but to the admirable condition in which Blakely had left, and McCall had retained the *Enterprise*. The courage, activity, and resources of McCall were also conspicuous in the combat. In forty minutes the *Boxer*, though of superior force to the American schooner, struck her flag, having been reduced almost to a wreck.

On the fall of Burrows, McCall took command of the *Enterprise*, and carried her, with her prize, safely into Portland. Here, one of his first acts was to pen the following official account of the victory to Commodore Hull, commanding naval officer on the eastern station. "In consequence of the death of Lieutenant-commandant William Burrows, late commander of this vessel, it devolves on me," he modestly wrote, "to acquaint you with the result of our cruise. After sailing from Portsmouth on the 1st instant, we steered to the eastward; and on the morning of the 3d, off Wood Island, discovered a schooner, which we chased into this harbour, where we anchored. On the morning of the 4th, weighed anchor and swept out, and continued our course to the eastward. Having received information of several privateers being off Manhagan, we stood for that place; and on the following morning, in the bay near Penguin Point, dis-

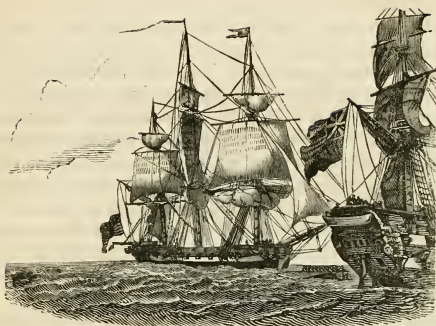
covered a brig getting under way, which appeared to be a vessel of war, and to which we immediately gave chase. She fired several guns and stood for us, having four ensigns hoisted. After reconnoitring and discovering her force, and the nation to which she belonged, we hauled upon a wind to stand out of the bay, and at three o'clock shortened sail, tacked to run down with an intention to bring her to close action. At twenty minutes after three, P. M., when within half pistol-shot, the firing commenced from both, and after being warmly kept up, and with some manœuvring, the enemy hailed and said they had surrendered, about four, P. M.; their colours, being nailed to the masts, could not be hauled down. She proved to be his Britannic majesty's brig Boxer, of fourteen guns, Samuel Blythe, Esq., commander, who fell in the early part of the engagement, having received a cannon-shot through the body. And I am sorry to add that Lieutenant Burrows, who had gallantly led us into action, fell also about the same time by a musket-ball, which terminated his existence in eight hours.

“The Enterprise suffered much in spars and rigging, and the Boxer in spars, rigging, and hull, having many shots between wind and water. It would be doing injustice to the merit of Mr. Tillinghast, second lieutenant, were I not to mention the able assistance I received from him during the remainder of the engagement, by his strict attention to his own division and other departments. And of the officers and crew generally, I am happy to add, their cool and determined conduct have my warmest approbation and applause. As no muster roll that can be fully relied on has come into my possession, I cannot exactly state the number killed and wounded on board the Boxer; but from information received from the officers of that vessel, it appears there were between twenty and twenty-five killed and fourteen wounded.”

The tone of this despatch won almost as much praise for McCall as his conduct in the victory. It was said that here

was a young officer, only twenty-three years old, and having never witnessed a naval combat before, who exhibited a modesty in detailing the victory that rivalled his skill and courage in assisting to win it. The citizens of Portland, as a token of their admiration, entertained him at a public dinner shortly after his landing. He had been raised to the full rank of a lieutenant a few months before, so that his country could not testify its gratitude by advancing him to this grade; but Congress, at the next session of that body, paid him a compliment even more flattering than promotion, by voting him a gold medal for the victory. Thus, at an age when most young men are just beginning life, McCall had won honours which many officers die, gray-headed, without attaining.

The subsequent career of McCall, in consequence of the speedy peace, was barren of striking events. After the capture of the Boxer he was transferred to the Ontario, a sloop-of-war then lately launched. Subsequently he served under Perry, in the Java, during the cruise of the latter in the Mediterranean. On his return from this voyage, he remained unemployed, until ordered to the Peacock sloop-of-war, about to sail for the European seas. In 1831 he obtained leave of absence, and remained on shore constantly afterwards. He had already indeed obtained an enviable reputation, and could afford to rest on his laurels.



## WILLIAM BURROWS.

LIKE Lawrence and Allen, Burrows perished in battle. Almost at the commencement of his career, and just as he stretched out his hand to grasp the phantom glory, death cut short his anticipations. But, unlike the others, he fell with the shout of victory ringing in his ears; he could thus welcome the grim enemy in the words of Halleck:

“ But to the hero, when his sword  
Has won the battle for the free,  
Thy name sounds like the prophet's word,  
And in its hallowed tones are heard  
The thanks of millions yet to be !”

William Burrows was born in 1785, at Kinderton, near Philadelphia, the seat of his father, William Ward Burrows, originally from South Carolina. The future hero was educated with the greatest care, under the eye of his parent, a gentleman of polished mind and engaging manners. Before



ENTERPRISE AND BOXER.





he had reached his fourteenth year, he displayed so decided a predilection for the sea, that a midshipman's warrant was procured for him, and, in January, 1800, he joined his first ship, the Portsmouth twenty-four, Captain McNeale. In this sloop-of-war he sailed for France. During the cruise, he was distinguished for the modesty of his behaviour, no less than for his eagerness to attain proficiency in his new pursuit. He carried his humility so far, indeed, that he was disinclined to wear the uniform until he should do something worthy of it. In this, perhaps, there was also a little eccentricity, a trait that clung to him through life.

On his arrival home from this cruise, he obtained a furlough, in order that he might study navigation and French more thoroughly than they could be learned, at that period, in active service. Returning to duty, he served on board various ships until 1803, when he was appointed to the Constitution, then about to sail for the Mediterranean. Commodore Preble, whose quick eye soon discerned the merit of the young officer, gave him a commission as acting lieutenant. During the war with Tripoli, Burrows distinguished himself on several occasions; particularly in one instance, when, rushing into the midst of a mutinous crew, he seized the ringleader. He remained abroad for several years, and subsequently served in different vessels. While on board the Hornet as first lieutenant, he saved the ship in a violent gale, solely by his presence of mind and consummate seamanship. Notwithstanding his merits, he was passed over in several promotions, though perhaps without any intentional neglect on the part of government; and when at last he was commissioned regularly as a lieutenant, he found himself the junior of several officers whom he had commanded in the Mediterranean.

This apparent injustice preyed deeply on the mind of Burrows. Naturally proud and sensitive, he shrank from society, and, in silence and secrecy, brooded over his wrongs. His

dissatisfaction was increased, when, having stated his claims to the department, he received no redress. Unwilling to remain in a service where he fancied himself degraded, he tendered his resignation; but the government refused to receive it. At this he grew more moody and unsocial than ever. The service disgusted him. He had entered the navy thirsting for distinction, and now, seeing others rising to eminence, while he was apparently pushed intentionally aside, the only hope that made life sweet to him departed, and he seemed to lose all care for existence. A contemporary, who knew him well, says:—"Men of gayer spirits and more mercurial temperament may readily shake off vexation, or bustle it away amid the amusements and occupations of the world; but Burrows was scanty in his pleasures; limited in his resources, single in his ambition. Naval distinction was the object of all his hopes and pride; it was the only light that led him on and cheered his way; and whatever intervened left him in darkness and dreariness of heart." He applied for a furlough in this access of despondency, and, entering on board a merchantman as first officer, sailed for Canton. War meantime broke out between the United States and England, and on his return passage, Burrows was captured and carried into Barbadoes. Although allowed to come home on parole immediately, he was not exchanged until June, 1813; and consequently, during the most brilliant period of our naval victories, was unable to get to sea.

But a new era in his life was now opening before him; an era short in duration, but dazzling with glory; an era that has fixed his name for ever in the memory of his countrymen. Soon after having been exchanged, he was appointed to the command of the *Enterprise*, a brig of sixteen guns, which, from her first cruise in the war of 1798 up to that hour, had been uniformly successful. From the hour when this post was assigned to him the whole demeanour of Burrows was changed. It was as if light had suddenly been let

into a dark valley. The face, that had never been known to smile, became clothed with sunny radiance. He threw off partially his reserve; he grew urbane and engaging; and those who had lately regarded him as a misanthrope, now wondered at the manly sincerity of his manners. The *Enterprise* had been engaged, before Burrows assumed her command, in watching the enemy's privateers between Cape Ann and the Bay of Fundy; and in this duty she was still directed to continue. Accordingly, on the 1st of September, 1813, Burrows left Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in his gallant little brig, and steered to the eastward. He had but one wish, which was to meet a foe. And fortune, so long adverse, gratified this desire almost immediately.

Three days after he sailed, Burrows chased a schooner into Portland. On the following morning, he stood out to sea, pursuing his original course. While opening the bay, near Penguin Point, a brig was discerned in shore, getting under way. It soon became evident that she was a British man-of-war, and desirous of a trial of strength with the *Enterprise*, for she hoisted three ensigns, fired a gun as a challenge, and stood out. Burrows, promptly accepting the defiance, hauled up in order to clear the land, and led the way seaward. A calm for a while delayed the progress of both vessels, but a breeze from the south succeeded, and this giving the *Enterprise* the weather-gage, she manœuvred for a while to try her relative capabilities with those of the enemy, and then shortened sail, fired a gun, hoisted the stars and stripes, tacked, and ran down with the intention to bring the foe to close quarters. The British vessel seemed as eager for the combat as her antagonist. The two vessels approached on opposite tacks; and, on both decks, there was the silence of death. It was about twenty minutes past three, P. M., when the brigs, nearing each other, kept away together, for a moment running side by side, their rows of gaping cannon frowning within pistol-shot. All on board the *Enterprise*

continued hushed, but suddenly a storm of cheers burst from the British sailors, and simultaneously both vessels poured in their broadsides.

Amid a dense cloud of smoke, and reeling from the continued discharges, the *Enterprise* drew ahead, until she found herself well forward of the enemy's bow. Here Burrows, dashing across his antagonist in front, poured in a destructive fire from a heavy gun, which, before the action commenced, he had brought from forward and run out of one of the cabin windows. The enemy was now allowed to come up again on the quarter of the *Enterprise*, when the two brigs renewed the battle more fiercely than ever, with their opposite guns, the American keeping well on her antagonist's bow. Before this, however, Burrows had received a musket-ball through his body, and fell; but, though he knew the wound to be mortal, he refused to be carried below. Raising his feeble head, as he lay upon the deck, he cried, "Never strike the flag." The directing of the battle now devolved upon Lieutenant McCall. Soon after, the main-top-mast of the enemy went overboard; and, at this welcome sight, the eye of the dying hero, which had begun to glaze, lighted up. "Stand fast, my lads," he feebly cried, as the life-blood ebbed away, "stand fast, and the day will soon be ours." The *Enterprise* now steered athwart the forefoot of the enemy again, raked her once or twice more with the long gun aft, and then resumed her station on the starboard bow of the foe, where she maintained a destructive fire.

All this time, the wounded man, lying on the deck where he fell, watched eagerly the progress of the fight, cheering his crew with a voice that grew weaker and weaker as the sands of existence ran lower. At last, about four, P. M., some person hailed from the British to say they had struck. A smile irradiated the features of Burrows at the words. The enemy was told to haul down his flag, when the American fire would cease; but he replied that the colours were

nailed to the mast, and could not be removed until the *Enterprise* stopped firing. Possession was immediately taken of the captured brig, which proved to be the *Boxer*, of fourteen guns, and a crew of about seventy men, commanded by Captain Blythe, an officer of distinction in the royal navy. This unfortunate gentleman had been killed, however, early in the action, by an eighteen-pound shot, which cut him nearly in two. The *Boxer's* loss was never known. Sixty-four prisoners were taken, of whom seventeen were wounded; and four dead bodies had been thrown overboard. The *Enterprise* had one man killed and thirteen wounded, of whom three subsequently died. Both vessels were more or less injured; but the *Boxer* much the most considerably.

The dying captain of the *Enterprise* still continued on deck, even after the enemy struck, and until the sword of the British captain was brought to him, when he clasped his hands, and exclaiming, "I am satisfied, I die contented," suffered himself to be carried below. As he had expected, every effort to save his life proved impracticable. His wound was beyond the power of surgery. But, notwithstanding the agony which his injury might have been supposed to occasion, he seemed unconscious of pain; the recollection of his victory evidently drowned all physical sensation; and, with a smile upon his lips, he sank gradually and almost imperceptibly away. A few hours after the battle, and while the vessels were still at sea, he breathed his last.

The *Enterprise* made sail for Portland, where she arrived with her prize, on the 9th. The body of each commander was brought in his own ship, and landed in the town, where the striking spectacle gathered awe-inspired crowds to behold the remains. A little while before, Captain Blythe had officiated at Halifax as pall-bearer to the lamented Lawrence; now, the same duty was to be performed for him, under like melancholy circumstances. Burrows lay so calm in death, that those who remembered him while living felt

that the finger of victory only could have smoothed those placid lines. Both commanders were buried with military honours, and in one grave. They who had been foes while living, now mingle their dust in the same tomb.

Though usually reserved, and even repellent in demeanour, Burrows had an amiable and susceptible heart. His intellect was quick; his character full of energy. An extreme sensitiveness, a morbid pride were his chief faults. He was distinguished for a keen perception of the ludicrous, and, though rarely seen to laugh, possessed, in an eminent degree, a certain dry humour which is described as "setting tables in a roar." He sought but few friends, yet these loved him enthusiastically. He was kind and compassionate to the humble and dependent; and many acts of unostentatious charity are told of him. With the common sailors he was a favourite.

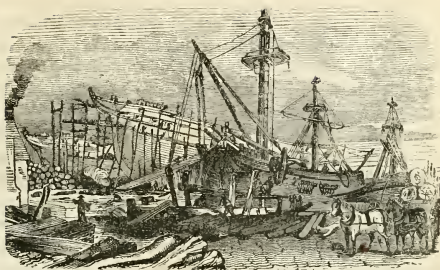
Thus lived and died William Burrows. His last hours, spent lying on the deck of his little vessel, form as impressive a scene as American history affords.





OLIVER H. PERRY.





BUILDING THE LAKE FLEET.

## OLIVER H. PERRY.

It was reserved for Oliver Hazzard Perry to capture the first British squadron which ever struck to the American flag. This feat at once raised him, from comparative obscurity, to the highest pinnacle of popular renown.

There has, however, been much controversy among naval writers respecting the exact amount of merit due to Perry for the victory of Lake Erie. During more than thirty years, the ears of the public have been vexed with contradictory narratives, with partisan arguments, with intemperate diatribes upon this subject. But nothing has been able to shake the popularity of Perry. The gallant manner in which he fought his own ship until she was perfectly unmanageable, and then carried his flag in an open boat through the thickest of the battle, hoisting it on board the second vessel of his squadron and gaining the victory at last, exhibited a courage and determination which won over the public mind at once, and will ever keep it true to its first love. Without the dogged heroism which Perry displayed,

the battle of Lake Erie, in spite of every thing, would have been lost. To him, therefore, should belong the chief credit of the action. Those who, in seeking to remove undeserved obloquy from Elliott's name, assail that of his great commander, commit an injustice even more flagrant than the one of which they complain.

Oliver Hazzard Perry was descended from a reputable family, originally of the Society of Friends. His ancestors settled in Massachusetts, about the middle of the sixteenth century, but, being compelled by religious persecution to fly from that colony, removed to Rhode Island, where they established themselves at South Kingston. His immediate progenitor was Christopher Raymond Perry, a gentleman who served, first in the mercantile marine, and subsequently in our infant navy. Oliver Hazzard was born on the 20th of August, 1785. The early years of the lad were marked by few peculiar occurrences. He neither displayed more courage nor more ability than his schoolmates; but, if he differed from them in any particulars, it was in being more generally engaging and loved. He was active, obliging, and of singularly prepossessing appearance, qualities which attended him, the last especially, to his grave. He was prudent also, it is said, above his years. He continued at school until his fourteenth year, when his father being appointed to the General Greene twenty-four, he resolved also to adopt the sea as his profession; and accordingly entered the navy as a midshipman, his warrant being dated April the 7th, 1799.

His first cruise was on board his father's vessel, which sailed to the West Indies, to protect our trade in that quarter. In two voyages, in this quarter, young Perry saw much service, though he had not the good fortune to participate in any action. His father was an officer of spirit as well as skill, so that Perry was educated in a good school. During the second cruise of the General Greene, she had taken in convoy an American brig bound to Havana. Off the latter

harbour, an English two-decker fired a shot at the brig to bring her to; but the elder Perry, directing his convoy to disregard this threat, the British ship sent a boat in chase of the brig. The General Greene, at this, fired a shot ahead of the boat, as an intimation to go no closer. This induced the boat to board the sloop-of-war, while the two-decker, closing, demanded how the General Greene dared to fire as she had done. The elder Perry answered with becoming spirit that he had discharged the shot to prevent a vessel under his convoy from being boarded. As Perry's proceeding was in strict conformity with maritime usage, the British captain knew that he had gone too far already, and accordingly desisted. The conduct of the elder Perry was the more bold, because few, at that time, ventured to dispute, in any way, the mandates of British armed ships.

At the reduction of the navy, consequent on the peace with France, the elder Perry was not retained in the service. The son, however, remained. In the spring of 1802, the latter was ordered to the Adams twenty-eight, then about to sail, under Captain Campbell, to the Mediterranean. This vessel, on arriving at Gibraltar, was ordered to blockade a Tripolitan lying in that port, a duty in which she continued engaged, from July, 1802, to March, 1803. This service was of the greatest importance in advancing the skill and seamanship of Perry, as few things are so instructive as participating in the handling of a ship in narrow waters. Captain Campbell was early attracted by the fine personal appearance and pleasant manners of Perry, and finding him, in addition, studious, attentive, and considerate above his years, resolved to give him an acting appointment as lieutenant. To enhance the compliment, the orders were made out on the 20th of August, 1802, the seventeenth birth-day of Perry. It is believed that but two other instances of such early promotion have been known in the navy. In November, 1803, the Adams returned to the United States. During this

cruise of eighteen months, Perry had not only established his reputation as a seaman, but had stored his mind with much elegant and useful information, gleaned from the classic realm of the Mediterranean. Unfortunately, he was ordered home just as Preble was going out, and hence lost the chance in participating in those glorious deeds which first made Decatur and Stewart famous, and in which Perry himself was so peculiarly fitted to shine.

After having been on shore for nearly a year, Perry, in the summer of 1804, was ordered to join the *Constellation* thirty-six, under his old commander, Captain Campbell. This frigate sailed for the Mediterranean in July, reaching Tripoli in September, six days after the explosion of the *Intrepid*, an event which, in effect, terminated the operations before the town. Subsequently the *Constellation* was employed near Derne, in seconding the attack of General Eaton, but her size prevented her being of much service. Perry was now transferred to the *Nautilus* fourteen, in the capacity of first lieutenant. He had never yet enjoyed an opportunity to show his high qualities in battle, but he had won the reputation of an efficient deck-officer, and, in the autumn of 1805, he was complimented, in consequence, by receiving from Commodore Rodgers an order to join the *Constitution*, as one of her lieutenants. In this capacity Perry remained for about a year, when he followed the commodore to the *Essex*, as second lieutenant, and accompanied him home. The preference shown by Rodgers to Perry was the more honourable as the commodore was not only rigid in his exactions of duty, but unusually fastidious in the choice of his subordinates. Indeed, Perry, though not as yet renowned, like his more fortunate rivals of the Tripolitan war, was regarded as one of the most promising young officers in the navy, and believed, by all who knew him, to want only opportunity to become pre-eminently distinguished. The result verified these predictions.

On his return to America, Perry was ordered to superintend the building and equipment of certain gun-boats. After their completion, he remained attached to them for several years, with the command of a division. In 1808 he was employed to oversee the construction of a second flotilla. In 1809, to his relief, he was removed from this disagreeable species of service, and appointed to command the *Revenge*, a schooner which had been lately brought into the service, and whose armament consisted of fourteen short and light guns. In this vessel he passed the summer of 1809, and the ensuing winter, cruising on the northern and eastern coast. In May, 1810, the *Revenge* sailed for the southern coast, after having put into Washington for repairs. During this latter cruise, he enjoyed his first opportunity for exhibiting that daring spirit which subsequently made him famous. An American vessel had been run away with by her captain, an Englishman by birth; who, hoisting English colours on her as if English built, carried her into the Spanish waters, off Amelia island. With the consent of the Spanish authorities, Perry resolved to seize her. Accordingly, sustained by three gun-boats, he brought the vessel safely off. Two English cruisers were lying in the vicinity, but neither interfered. It is probable that they knew the justice of the seizure, and hence declined to interfere, but Perry, when he made the attack, fully expected to have a combat with them.

Returning to the northern coast in August, 1810, the *Revenge* continued cruising until the 8th of January, 1811, when she was wrecked on Watch Hill Reef in Long Island Sound. This accident was owing to no fault of Perry, but to the tides and thick weather, combined with the carelessness of the pilot; and the court-martial, which assembled as usual in all such cases, not only entirely exonerated Perry from blame, but extolled his coolness and judgment. Before the close of this year, Perry was promoted to the rank of master and commander. There being no other vessel to

bestow upon him, he was compelled to return to the gun-boat service. He continued to command a division of these vessels on the Newport station until the declaration of war in June, 1812. At this event, so welcome to an enterprising young officer, he sought to be released from his monotonous duty, and obtain a command which would place him within reach of the glory and honours which he foresaw awaited his contemporaries in the navy. He accordingly endeavoured to obtain a sloop-of-war, but failed, in consequence of so many of his senior officers applying for commands. He saw with regret the opportunities for distinction gliding away. He heard continually of victories in which he had no part, but which he felt capable of rivalling, if the chance were offered to him. At last the thought struck him to apply for a post on the Lakes, where, about this time, preparations were being made to construct a squadron; and his offer having been accepted, in February, 1811, he started to join Commodore Chauncey at Sackett's Harbour.

The duty on which Perry was now detailed was to superintend the building of a fleet on Lake Erie. The task was one of the most arduous character. At that period the shores of both Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, instead of being dotted with thriving towns, were covered with the original forests, except where here and there the smoke from a rude frontier village went curling to the sky; while the lakes themselves, so far from being covered with steamers, only exhibited an occasional sail, or the birch canoe of an Indian. The few roads which joined this wilderness with the older settlements were little more than avenues cut through the forest. The streams, which it was indispensable to navigate, were obstructed by rapids or choked up with driftwood. Not only the shipwrights to build the fleet, but the very supplies requisite for them had to be transported for hundreds of miles, from the Atlantic cities, through difficulties that would appear incredible now, when in the course of a few

hours, the sustenance of an entire army and the materials for a dozen squadrons can be carried over the same distance by the aid of steam and railroads. So great was the expense of transportation, that Harrison, early in the year, declared that half the money it took to feed his army would build and equip a fleet that would give him the entire command of Lake Erie. From these facts we can learn how great were the difficulties which Perry had to contend with in his new career; and what credit was due to him for having, before the spring was past, launched all his vessels.

It still remained, however, to collect the necessary stores and armaments, as well as to enlist crews, for all which it was necessary to go to the Atlantic sea-board. While thus employed, Perry learned that the squadron and army below were about to make a descent on Fort George; and as Commodore Chauncey had engaged to give him the command of the seamen that were to land, he immediately started in an open boat to join the expedition. The commodore received him warmly, and the next morning, when he reconnoitred the enemy's batteries, carried Perry with him. In the debarkation that followed, Perry displayed equal coolness and courage. At one time, when the British were seen from his mast-head advancing in force, Perry, fearing that Colonel Scott, who led the advance, would be surprised by them, sprang into his boat and pulled down the entire line to apprise Scott of the resistance that awaited him. In the despatches announcing the victory of the day, Commodore Chauncey mentioned the services of his young lieutenant in the most honourable terms.

The result of these operations was to give the Americans the command of the Niagara river, by which they were enabled to carry several vessels, lying at Black Rock, past the position of the enemy and up the current into Lake Erie. This difficult task was successfully executed by Perry. Finally, about the middle of June, Perry sailed from Buf-

falo for Erie, at which latter place he now collected his whole force. His squadron was not yet, however, in a condition to leave port; but by almost incredible exertions it was rendered so by the first week in August. He now only waited a chance to put out into the lake. The British, who for years had maintained more or less of a fleet on Lake Erie, and had greatly increased it since the war broke out, lay off the port watching for Perry; but as there was a bar across the mouth of the harbour, difficult to cross, the American officer hesitated to run the hazard in the presence of an enemy. At last, however, the British squadron disappeared suddenly from the offing, when Perry promptly made sail. It is said that Captain Barclay, the British commander, knowing that Perry's fleet was not entirely manned, believed that the Americans would not put to sea until their expected reinforcements had arrived, and accordingly accepted an invitation from the inhabitants of Dover, a small Canadian town, to dine with them. The misapprehension was fortunate for Perry, since otherwise he might never have been able to leave Erie. With great difficulty, and only by the use of camels, was he able to carry his larger vessels over the bar; had a watchful enemy been at hand, the entire American fleet must have fallen a sacrifice. But fortune, not less than bravery, favours the hero.

The crossing had scarcely been effected, when the enemy reappeared, and some distant firing took place between portions of the two squadrons. Perry, aware that Barclay was without his largest ship, the *Detroit*, which lay at Malden, endeavoured to bring on an action immediately; but the British commander was able to elude this purpose, and, hastening up the lake, added the new ship to his squadron. Foiled in his design, Perry sought an anchorage off Erie, to await the arrival of a reinforcement of seamen despatched from the lower waters. In a day or two the reinforcement appeared, commanded by Captain Elliott, an enterprising



young officer, who had already signalized himself on the lakes, and who had just been promoted to the rank of master and commander. Perry now sailed again in pursuit of the enemy, who still lay at Malden. The British, however, declined to come out; on which the Americans anchored in Put In Bay, a haven among some islands favourably placed for watching Malden. Here Perry was seized with the disease incident to the lakes at this season of the year; and, to render the situation of the fleet more perilous, all three of the medical officers, as well as a majority of the crew, were taken ill also. Fortunately, at this crisis, a reinforcement of one hundred volunteers was received from the army. Early in September, also, Perry recovered sufficiently to leave his cabin; and immediately resolved to bring on an action, even if it became necessary to attack the enemy at anchor. The British, however, being short of provisions, and anxious to open their communications with their posts below, had determined, in the mean time, to engage Perry; and, accordingly, on the morning of the 10th of September, the very day succeeding that in which the Americans had resolved on an attack, the British squadron was seen in full sail down the lake. At once preparations were made for battle.

The force of the two squadrons was very nearly similar. The British had the largest number of guns, and their ships were generally provided with bulwarks; but, on the other hand, the Americans, though inferior in guns and mostly without bulwarks, had many of their guns mounted on pivots, so that they could be used on either broadside. The American guns, too, were generally of heavier metal than those of the British. The British squadron consisted of the *Detroit*, Capt. Barclay, nineteen guns; the *Queen Charlotte*, Capt. Finnis, seventeen guns; the *Lady Prevost*, Lt. Buchan, thirteen guns; the *Hunter*, Lt. Bignall, ten guns; the *Little Belt*, three guns; and the *Chippewa*, one gun: in all sixty-

three guns. The American squadron consisted of the Lawrence, Capt. Perry, twenty guns; the Niagara, Capt. Elliott, twenty guns; the Caledonia, Lt. Turner, three guns; the Ariel, Lt. Packett, four guns; the Somers, Mr. Almy, two guns; the Porcupine, Mr. Scnatt, one gun; the Scorpion, Mr. Champlin, two guns; the Tigress, Lt. Conklin, one gun; the Trippe, Lt. Holdup, one gun: in all fifty-four guns. Of these vessels, the Lawrence, Niagara, and Caledonia were brigs; the Trippe was a sloop; and the rest were schooners. In some respects one, in some the other, squadron was superior; but, on the whole, they were so equally matched, that victory could be relied on certainly by neither. It was only heroism and good conduct that could win the day.

We have already said that a great diversity of opinion exists in regard to the true merit of Perry in the action that ensued. Of all writers on the subject, Mr. Cooper is here, as in other instances, the most impartial. The character of the battle, too, was so complicated, that few persons have been able to give a clear, yet spirited, narrative of it. For these reasons, we shall confine ourselves almost entirely to Mr. Cooper's account. "The wind at first," he says, in his biography of Perry, "was unfavourable, but so determined was Perry to engage, that he decided to give the enemy the weather-gauge, a very important advantage with the armament he possessed, should it become necessary. A shift of wind, however, brought him out into the lake to windward, and left him every prospect of engaging in a manner more desirable to himself.

"The enemy had hove-to, on the larboard tack, in a compact line ahead, with the wind at south-east. This brought his vessels' heads nearly, or quite, as high as S. S. West. He had placed the Chippewa in his van, with the Detroit, Barclay's own vessel, next to her. Then followed the Hunter, Queen Charlotte, Lady Prevost, and Little Belt, in the manner named. Perry had issued his order of battle some time

previously, but, finding that the enemy did not form his line as he had anticipated, he determined to make a corresponding change in his own plan. Originally, it had been intended that the Niagara should lead the American line, in the expectation that the Queen Charlotte would lead that of the English; but finding the Detroit ahead of the latter vessel, it became necessary to place the Lawrence ahead of the Niagara, in order to bring the two commanding vessels fairly along side of each other. As there was an essential difference of force between the two English ships, the Detroit being a vessel at least a fourth larger and every way heavier than the Queen Charlotte, this prompt decision to stick to his own chosen adversary is strongly indicative of the chivalry of Perry's character, for many an officer would not have thought this accidental change on the part of his enemy a sufficient reason for changing his own order of battle on the eve of engaging. Calling the leading vessels near him, however, and learning from Captain Brevoort, of the army, and late of the brig Adams, who was then serving on board the Niagara as a marine officer, the names of the different British vessels, Captain Perry communicated his orders for the Lawrence and Niagara to change places in the contemplated line, a departure from his former plan which would bring him more fairly abreast of the Detroit. At this moment, the Lawrence, Niagara, Caledonia, Ariel, and Scorpion were all up, and near each other, but the Trippe, Tigress, Somers, and Porcupine were still a considerable distance astern. All of the last named craft but the Porcupine had been merchant vessels, purchased into the service and strengthened; alterations that were necessary to enable them to bear their metal, but which were not likely to improve whatever sailing qualities they might possess. It was now past ten, and the leading vessels manœuvred to get into their stations, in obedience to the orders just received. This brought the Scorpion a short distance ahead, and to wind-

ward of the Lawrence, and the Ariel a little more on that brig's weather bow, but in advance. Then came the Lawrence herself, leading the main line, the two schooners just mentioned being directed to keep to windward of her; the Caledonia, the Niagara, the Tigress, the Somers, the Porcupine, and the Trippe. The prescribed distance that was to be maintained between the different vessels was half a cable's length. The Americans were now astern and to windward of their enemies, the latter still lying gallantly with their topsails aback, in waiting for them to come down. Perry brought the wind abeam, in the Lawrence, and edged away for a position abreast of the *Détroit*, the Caledonia and Niagara following in their stations. The two schooners ahead were also well placed, though the Ariel appears to have soon got more on the Lawrence's beam than the order of battle had directed. All these vessels, however, were in as good order as circumstances allowed, and Perry determined to close, without waiting for the four gun-vessels astern to come up.

“The wind had been light and variable throughout the early part of the morning, and it still continued light, though sufficiently steady. It is stated to have been about a two-knot breeze when the American van bore up to engage. As they must have been fully two miles from the enemy at this time, it, of course, would have required an hour to have brought them up fairly along side of the British vessels, most of the way under fire. The Lawrence was yet a long distance from the English when the *Detroit* threw a twenty-four pound shot at her. When this gun was fired, the weight of the direct testimony that has appeared in the case, and the attendant circumstances, would show that the interval between the heads of the two lines was nearer two than one mile. Perry now showed his signal to engage, as the vessels came up, each against her designated opponent, in the prescribed order of battle. The object of this signal was to

direct the different commanders to engage as soon as they could do so with effect; to preserve their stations in the line; and to direct their fire at such particular vessels of the British as had been pointed out to them severally in previous orders. Soon after an order was passed astern, by trumpet, for the different vessels to close up to the prescribed distance of half a cable's length from each other. This was the last order that Perry issued that day from the *Lawrence* to any vessel of the fleet, his own brig excepted. It was intended, principally, for the schooners in the rear, most of which were still a considerable distance astern. The *Caledonia* and *Niagara* were accurately in their stations, and at long gun-shot from the enemy. A deliberate fire now opened on the part of the enemy, which was returned from the long gun of the *Scorpion*, and soon after from the long guns of the other leading American vessels, though not with much apparent effect on either side. The first gun is stated to have been fired at a quarter before twelve. About noon, finding that the *Lawrence* was beginning to suffer, Perry ordered her carronades to be tried, but it was found that the brig was still too distant for the shot to tell. He now set his top-gallant-sail and edged away more for the enemy, suffering considerably from the fire of the long guns of the *Detroit* in particular.

“The *Caledonia*, the *Lawrence*'s second astern, was a prize brig, that had been built for burden, rather than for sailing, having originally been in the employment of the North-west Company. Although her gallant commander, Lieutenant Turner, pressed down with her as fast as he could, the *Lawrence* reached ahead of her some distance, and consequently became the principal object of the British fire, which she was, as yet, unable to return with more than her two long twelves; the larboard bow gun having been shifted over for that purpose. The *Scorpion*, *Ariel*, *Caledonia*, and *Niagara*, however, were now firing with their

long guns, also : carronades being still next to useless. The latter brig, though under short canvas, was kept in her station astern of the *Caledonia*, only by watching her sails, occasionally bracing her main-topsail sharp aback, in order to prevent running into her second ahead. As the incidents of this battle have led to a painful and protracted controversy, which no biographical notice of Perry can altogether overlook, it may be well to add, here, that the facts just stated are proved by testimony that has never been questioned, and that they appear to us to relate to the only circumstance in the management of the *Niagara*, on the 10th of September, that is at all worthy of the consideration of an intelligent critic. At the proper moment, this circumstance shall receive our comments.

“It will be remembered that each of the American vessels had received an order to direct her fire at a particular adversary in the British line. This was done to prevent confusion, and was the more necessary, as the Americans had nine vessels to the enemy’s six. On the other hand, the English, waiting the attack, had to take such opponents as offered. In consequence of these orders, the *Niagara*, which brig had also shifted over a long twelve, directed the fire of her two chase-guns at the *Queen Charlotte*, and the *Caledonia* engaged the *Hunter*, the vessel pointed out to her for that purpose ; leaving the *Lawrence*, supported by the *Ariel* and *Scorpion*, to sustain the cannonading of the *Detroit*, supported by the *Chippewa*, as well as to bear the available fire of all the vessels in the stern of the English line, as, in leading down, she passed ahead to her station abreast of her proper adversary. Making a comparison of the aggregate batteries of the five vessels thus engaged at long shot, or before carronades were fully available, we get on the part of the Americans, one twenty-four and six twelves, or seven guns in all, to oppose to one twenty-four, one eighteen, three twelves, and five nine pounders, all long guns. This is esti-

mating all the known available long guns of the Ariel, Scorpion, and Lawrence, and the batteries of the Chippewa and the Detroit, as given by Captain Barclay, in his published official letter, which, as respects these vessels, is probably minutely accurate; though it is proper to add, that an American officer, who subsequently had good opportunities for knowing the fact, thinks that the Chippewa's gun was a twelve pounder. Although the disparity between seven and ten guns is material, as is the difference between ninety-six and one hundred and twenty-three pounds of metal, they do not seem sufficient to account for the great disparity of the injury that was sustained by the Lawrence, more especially in the commencement of the action. We are left, then, to look for the explanation in some additional causes.

“It is known that one of the Ariel's twelves burst early in the day. This would at once bring the comparison of the guns and metal, as between the five leading vessels, down to six to ten of the first, and eighty-four to one hundred and twenty-three of the last. But we have seen that both the Lawrence and Niagara shifted each a larboard bow-gun over to the starboard side, a course that almost any commander would be likely to adopt under the circumstances of the action. It is not probable that the Detroit, commencing her fire at so great a distance, with the certainty that it must be some time before her enemy could get within reach of her short guns, neglected to bring her most available pieces into battery also. Admitting this to have been done, there would be a very different result in the figures. The Detroit fought ten guns in broadside, and she had an armament that would permit her to bring to bear on the Lawrence, at one time, two twenty-fours, one eighteen, six twelves, and one nine pounder. This would leave the comparison between the guns as six are to eleven, and between the metal as eighty-four are to one hundred and forty-seven. Nor is this all. The Hunter lay close to the Detroit, and as the vessel which

assailed her was still at long shot, it is probable that she also brought the heaviest of her guns into broadside, and used them against the nearest vessel; more particularly as her guns were light, and would be much the most useful in such a mode of firing.

“But other circumstances conspired to sacrifice the *Lawrence*. Finding that he was suffering heavily, and that he had got nearly abreast of the *Detroit*, Perry furled his top-gallant-sail, hauled up his fore-sail, and rounded to, opening with his carronades. The distance from the enemy at which this was done, as well as the length of time after the commencement of the fire, have given rise to contradictory statements. The distance, Perry himself, in his official letter, says, was ‘within canister-shot,’ a term too vague to give any accurate notion that can be used in a critical analysis of the facts of the engagement. A canister-shot, thrown from a heavy gun, would probably kill at a mile; though seamen are not apt to apply the term to so great a range. Still they use all such phrases as ‘yard-arm and yard-arm,’ ‘musket-shot,’ ‘canister-shot,’ and ‘pistol-shot,’ very vaguely; one applying a term to a distance twice as great as would be understood by another. The distance from the English line, at which the *Lawrence* backed her topsail, has been placed by some as far as half a mile, and by others as near as three hundred yards. It was probably between the two, nearer to the last than to the first; though the brig, as she became crippled aloft, and so long as there was any wind, must have been slowly drifting nearer to her enemies.

“On the supposition that there was a two-knot breeze the whole time, that the action commenced when the *Lawrence* was a mile and a half from the enemy, and that she went within a quarter of a mile of the British line, she could not have backed her topsail until after she had been under fire considerably more than a half an hour. This was a period quite sufficient to cause her to suffer heavily, under the pe-



culiar circumstances of the case. The effect of a cannonade is always to deaden, or even 'to kill,' as it is technically termed by seamen, a light wind. Counteracting forces neutralize each other, and the constant explosions from guns repel the currents of the atmosphere. This difficulty came to increase the critical nature of the Lawrence's situation, the wind falling to something very near, if not absolutely to a flat calm. This fact, which is material to a right understanding of the events of the day, is unanswerably shown in the following manner.

"The fact that the gun-boats had been kept astern by the lightness of the wind, is mentioned by Perry, himself, in his official account of the battle. He also says, 'at half past two, the wind springing up, Captain Elliott was enabled to bring his vessel, the Niagara, gallantly into close action,' leaving the unavoidable inference that a want of wind prevailed at an earlier period of the engagement. Several officers testify that it fell nearly calm, while no one denies it. One officer says it became 'perfectly calm,' and others go near to substantiate the statement. There is a physical fact, however, that disposes of this point more satisfactorily than can ever be done by the power of memories or the value of opinions. Both Perry and his sailing-master say that the Lawrence was perfectly unmanageable for a considerable time. This period, a rigid construction of Perry's language would make two hours; and by the most liberal that can be given to that of the master, must have been considerably more than one hour. It is physically impossible that an unmanageable vessel, with her sails loose, should not drift half a mile, in an hour, had there been only a two-knot breeze. The want of this drift, which would have carried the Lawrence directly down into the English line, had it existed, effectually shows, then, that there must have been a considerable period of the action in which there was little or

no wind, and corroborates the direct testimony that has been given on this point.

“Previously, however, to its falling calm, or nearly so, and about the time the Lawrence backed her topsail, a change occurred in the British line. The Queen Charlotte had an armament of three long guns, the heaviest of which is stated by Captain Barclay to have been a twelve pounder, on a pivot, and fourteen twenty-four pound carronades. The latter guns were shorter than common, and, of course, were useless when the ordinary American thirty-two pound guns of this class could not be served. For some reason, which has not been quite satisfactorily explained, this ship shifted her berth, after the engagement had lasted some time, filling her topsail, passing the Hunter, and closing with the Detroit, under her lee. Shortly after, however, she regained the line, directly astern of the commanding British vessel. The enemy’s line being in very compact order, and the distance but trifling, the Queen Charlotte was enabled to effect this in a few minutes, there still being a little wind. The Detroit probably drew ahead to enable her to regain a proper position. This evolution on the part of the Queen Charlotte has been differently accounted for. At the time it was made, the Niagara was engaging her sufficiently near to do execution with her long twelves, and, at the moment, it was the opinion on board that brig, that she had driven her opponent out of the line. As the Queen Charlotte opened on the Lawrence with her carronades, as soon as she got into her new position, a more plausible motive was that she had shifted her berth, in order to bring her short guns into efficient use. The letter of Captain Barclay, however, gives a more probable solution to this manœuvre than either of the foregoing conjectures. He says that Captain Finnis, of the Queen Charlotte, was killed soon after the commencement of the action, and that her first lieutenant was shortly after struck senseless by a splinter. These two casualties threw the command of the vessel on a

provincial officer of the name of Irvine. This part of Captain Barclay's letter is not English, and has doubtless been altered a little in printing. Enough remains, however, to show, that he attaches to the loss of the two officers mentioned, serious consequences; and in a connection that alludes to this change of position, since he speaks of the prospect of its leaving him the Niagara also to engage. From the fact that the Queen Charlotte first went under the lee of the Detroit, so close as to induce the Americans to think she was foul of the quarter of that ship, a position into which she never would have been carried had the motive been merely to get nearer to the Lawrence, or farther from the Niagara, we infer that the provincial officer, finding himself unexpectedly in his novel situation, went so near to the Detroit to report his casualties and to ask for orders, and that he regained the line in obedience to instructions from Captain Barclay in person.

“Whatever was the motive for changing the Queen Charlotte's position in the British line, the effect on the Lawrence was the same. Her fire was added to that of the Detroit, which ship appeared to direct all her guns at the leading American brig, alone. Indeed, there was a period in this part of the action, during which most, if not all of the guns of the Detroit, the Queen Charlotte, and Hunter, were aimed at this one vessel. Perry appears to have been of opinion that it was a premeditated plan, on the part of the enemy, to destroy the commanding American vessel. It is true, that the Ariel, Scorpion, Caledonia, and Niagara, from a few minutes after the commencement of the action, were firing at the English ships, but that the latter disregarded them, in the main, would appear from the little loss the three small American vessels sustained, in particular. The Caledonia and Niagara, moreover, were still too distant to render their assistance of much effect. About this time, however, the gun-boats astern got near enough to use their heavy guns,

though most of them were yet a long way off. The Somers would seem to have engaged a short time before the others. At length, Captain Elliott finding himself kept astern by the bad sailing of the Caledonia, and his own brig so near as again to be under the necessity of bracing her topsail aback, to prevent going into her, determined to assume the responsibility of changing the line of battle, and to pass the Caledonia. He accordingly hailed the latter, and directed that brig to put her helm up and let the Niagara pass ahead. As this order was obeyed, the Niagara filled and drew slowly ahead, continuing to approach the Lawrence as fast as the air would allow. This change did not take place, however, until the Lawrence had suffered so heavily as to render her substantially a beaten ship.

“The evidence that has been given on the details is so contradictory and confused, as to render it exceedingly difficult to say whether the comparative calm, of which we have spoken, occurred before or after this change in the relative positions of the Lawrence and Caledonia. Some wind there must have been, at this time, or the Niagara could not have passed. As the wind had been light and baffling most of the day, it is even probable that there may have been intervals in it, to reconcile in some measure these apparent contradictions, and which will explain the inconsistencies. After the Niagara had passed her second ahead, to do which she had made sail, she continued to approach the Lawrence in a greater or less degree of movement, as there may have been more or less wind, until she had got near enough to the heavier vessels of the enemy to open on them with her carronades; always keeping in the Lawrence’s wake. The Caledonia, having pivot guns, and being now nearly or quite abeam of the Hunter, the vessel she had been directed to engage, kept off more, and was slowly drawing nearer to the enemy’s line. The gun-vessels astern were closing, too, though not in any order, using their sweeps, and throwing

the shot of their long heavy guns, principally thirty-two pounders, quite to the head of the British line; beginning to tell effectually in the combat. As the wind was so light, and the movements of all the vessels had been so slow, much time was consumed in these several changes. The *Lawrence* had now been under fire more than two hours, and, being almost the sole aim of the headmost English ships, she was dismantled. Her decks were covered with killed and wounded, and every gun but one in her starboard battery was dismounted, either by shot or its own recoil. At this moment, or about half-past two, agreeably to Perry's official letter, the wind sprang up and produced a general change among the vessels. One of its first effects was to set the *Lawrence*, perfectly unmanageable as she was, astern, and to leeward, or to cause her to drop, as it has been described by Captain Barclay, while the enemy appear to have filled, and to commence drawing ahead. The *Lady Prevost*, which had been in the rear of the British line, passed to leeward and ahead, under the published plea of having had her rudder injured, but probably suffering from the heavy metal of the American gun-vessels as they came nearer. An intention existed on the part of Captain Barclay to get his vessels round, in order to bring fresh broadsides to bear. The larboard battery of the *Detroit*, by this time, was nearly useless, many of the guns having lost even their trucks, and, as usually happens in a long cannonade, the pieces that had been used were getting to be unserviceable, from one cause or another.

“At this moment the *Niagara* passed the *Lawrence* to windward, and then kept off toward the head of the enemy's line, which was slowly drawing more toward the Southward and Westward. In order to do this, she set topgallant-sails and brought the wind abaft the beam. The *Caledonia* also followed the enemy, passing inside the *Lawrence*, having got nearer to the enemy, at that moment, than any other Ameri-

can vessel. As soon as Perry perceived that his own brig was dropping, and that the battle was passing ahead of him, he got into a boat, taking with him a young brother, a midshipman of the Lawrence, and pulled after the Niagara, then a short distance ahead of him. When he reached the latter brig, he found her from three to five hundred yards to windward of the principal force of the enemy, and nearly abreast of the Detroit, that ship, the Queen Charlotte and the Lady Prevost being now quite near each other, and probably two cables' length to the Southward and Westward; or that distance nearly ahead of the Lawrence, and about as far from the enemy's line as the latter brig had been lying for the last hour.

“Perry now had a few words of explanation with Captain Elliott, when the latter officer volunteered to go in the boat, and bring down the gun-vessels, which were still astern, and a good deal scattered. As this was doing precisely what Perry wished, Captain Elliott proceeded on his duty immediately, leaving his own brig, to which he did not return until after the engagement had terminated. Perry now backed the main-topsail of the Niagara, being fairly abeam of his enemy, and showed the signal for close action. After waiting a few minutes for the different vessels to answer and to close, the latter of which they were now doing fast, as the wind continued to increase, he bore up, bringing the wind on the starboard quarter of the Niagara, and stood down upon the enemy, passing directly through his line. Captain Barclay, with a view of getting his fresh broadsides to bear, was in the act of attempting to wear, as the Niagara approached, but his vessel being much crippled aloft, and the Queen Charlotte being badly handled, the latter ship got foul of the Detroit, on her starboard quarter. At this critical instant, the Niagara had passed the commanding British vessel's bow, and coming to the wind on the starboard tack, lay raking the two ships of the enemy at close quarters, and

with fatal effect. By this time, the gun-vessels, under Captain Elliott, had closed to windward of the enemy, the Caledonia in company, and the raking cross-fire soon compelled the English to haul down their colours. The Detroit, Queen Charlotte, Lady Prevost, and Hunter struck under this fire, being in the *mélée* of vessels; but the Chippewa and Little Belt made sail and endeavoured to escape to leeward. They were followed by the Scorpion and Trippe, which vessels came up with them in about an hour, and firing a shot or two into them, they both submitted. The Lawrence had struck her flag also, soon after Perry quitted her. Such, in its outline, appears to have been the picture presented by a battle that has given rise to more controversy than all the other naval combats of the republic united. We are quite aware that, by rejecting all the testimony that has been given on one side of the disputed points, and by exaggerating and mutilating that which has been given on the other, a different representation might be made of some of the incidents; but, on comparing one portion of the evidence with another, selecting in all instances that which in the nature of things should be best, and bringing the whole within the laws of physics and probabilities, we believe that no other result, in the main, can be reached, than the one which has been given. To return more particularly to our subject.

“Perry had manifested the best spirit, and the most indomitable resolution not to be overcome, throughout the trying scenes of this eventful day. Just before the action commenced, he coolly prepared his public letters, to be thrown overboard in the event of misfortune, glanced his eyes over those which he had received from his wife, and then tore them. He appeared fully sensible of the magnitude of the stake which was at issue, remarking to one of his officers, who possessed his confidence, that this day was the most important of his life. In a word, it was not possible for a commander to go into action in a better frame of mind, and his

conduct in this particular might well serve for an example to all who find themselves similarly circumstanced. The possibility of defeat appears not to have been lost sight of, but it in no degree impaired the determination to contend for victory. The situation of the *Lawrence* was most critical, the slaughter on board her being terrible, and yet no man read discouragement in his countenance. The survivors all unite in saying that he did not manifest even the anxiety he must have felt at the ominous appearance of things. The *Lawrence* was effectually a beaten ship an hour before she struck; but Perry felt the vast importance of keeping the colours of the commanding vessel flying to the last moment; and the instant an opportunity presented itself to redeem the seemingly waning fortunes of the day, he seized it with promptitude, carrying off the victory, not only in triumph, but apparently against all the accidents and chances which, for a time, menaced him with defeat. Perry appears seriously to have satisfied himself that he captured a materially superior force in the battle of Lake Erie. If any reliance is to be placed on the published report of Captain Barclay, this is certainly an error; and we may add that the better opinion of those naval men who have had proper opportunities for ascertaining the fact, is also against it. In the men of the two squadrons, there was probably no essential disparity; although there are reasons for thinking that the English a little outnumbered the Americans. Neither side had many above or under five hundred souls engaged in this action. But the sick lists of the Americans amounted to more than a hundred. As Captain Barclay came out expressly to fight, expecting to meet his enemy the next day, and he had received aboard his vessels a strong party of troops, it is not probable he brought out any sick with him. It is in confirmation of this opinion, that, while the enemy dwell on their inferiority of force, and the other disadvantages under which they supposed themselves to labour, nothing is said of any



sick. This fact would make a material difference as respects the men, even allowing the opposing parties to have been equal, numerically.

“In vessels the Americans were to the English as nine are to six. This might have been a disadvantage, however, and in one sense it was, by distributing the force unequally at the commencement of the battle. Still, as the two largest American brigs were essentially heavier than the two heaviest British vessels, and the *Ariel* was a schooner of some size, this circumstance would have been more than balanced by their weight, could these three vessels have got into close action simultaneously, and soon; or before the enemy had an opportunity to cripple one of them in detail. The opinion of Perry, and, we may add, that of the country, concerning the superiority of the enemy in this battle, appear to have been founded principally on the circumstance that the English had the most guns. A mere numerical superiority in guns is altogether fallacious. A single long thirty-two pounder, for most of the purposes of nautical warfare, would be more efficient than thirty-two one pounders; the sizes of the guns being quite as important as the number. There can be little question that a vessel, always supposing her to be of a size suitable to bear the metal, which carried twenty thirty-two pounders, would be fully a match for two similar ships that carried each twenty twelve pounders; or, perhaps, for two that carried each twenty eighteen pounders; the guns being long or short alike. As the latter, however, was not the fact in the battle of Lake Erie, the *Detroit* carrying long guns, principally, while the two heaviest American brigs carried carronades, the comparative estimates of force become complicated in a way that does not altogether refer to weight of shot. The superiority of the long gun depends, first, on its greater range, and the greater momentum of the shot, pound for pound; second, from the circumstance that the long ship-gun will always almost bear two, and sometimes

three shot; whereas the carronade is in danger of dismounting itself by the recoil, if overcharged, and of so far lessening the momentum of its shot as to prevent them from penetrating a vessel's side; and, thirdly, because the long gun will sustain a protracted cannonade, while a short gun is seldom of much efficiency after an hour's service. There can be no question that the Lawrence and Niagara would have been an overmatch for the Detroit and Queen Charlotte in close action; and when we come to see the great disparity of the metal of the remaining vessels, it can leave no doubt that the Americans possessed the strongest force on this occasion, comparing the two squadrons in the aggregate. A very brief analysis will prove the justice of this position.

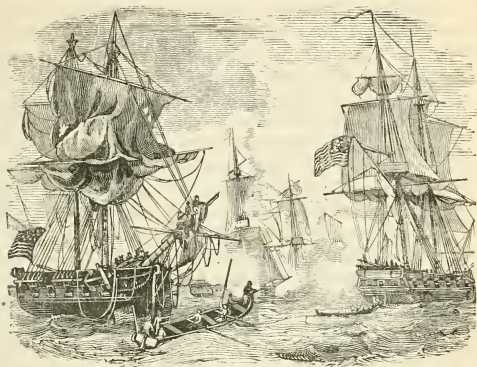
“The American vessels, in the battle of Lake Erie, carried fifty-four guns, while the English had sixty-three. This makes a numerical superiority of nine guns, and on this vague fallacy the victory has been assumed to have been one of an inferior over a superior force. In the combat between the *Constellation* and *L'Insurgente*, the latter vessel mounted forty guns, and the former only thirty-eight. There was also a difference of a hundred men, in favour of the French ship. But the *Constellation's* gun-deck metal was long twenty-fours, while that of *L'Insurgente* was French twelves; leaving the former an essential superiority of force that no intelligent seaman has ever denied. In the action we are examining, the *Hunter* mounted ten guns, and the *Caledonia* three. Thus, numerically speaking, the former vessel was of more than treble the force of the latter. But a critical analysis of the metal, and of the armaments, will give a very different result. In the first place, the *Caledonia's* guns were on pivots, which gave her three guns in broadside, whereas the *Hunter* could fight but five at any one time, and under any circumstances. This fact alone reduces the numerical superiority of the British vessel from more than treble to less than double. Then comes the consideration

of the metal. Agreeably to Captain Barclay's return of the force of his vessels, which is appended to his official account of the battle, the regular broadside metal of the Hunter was only thirty pounds, and this, too, distributed in shot, of which some were so small as two, four, and six pounds each; while the Caledonia threw eighty pounds of metal at a discharge, in twenty-four and thirty-two pound shot. On the other hand, however, the Hunter had quarters, or bulwarks, which make a protection against small missiles. There is another circumstance to prove the fallacy of placing the superiority of force on a naked numerical superiority in guns. Including the pivot guns, and the regular armament of the British on the 10th September, they fought thirty-four guns at a time, or what may be termed in broadside; while the Americans, owing to their having more traversing pieces mounted, fought precisely the same number, though of much heavier metal. This fact at once reduces the apparent comparative force of the two squadrons in guns, or from that of fifty-four to sixty-three, to a numerical equality; or, to that of thirty-four to thirty-four.

“But the fortunes of a battle are not to be estimated solely by the physical forces employed by the opposing parties. Circumstances constantly occur to neutralize these advantages, and to render the chances nearer equal. The assailant has frequently more to contend with than the assailed, and it is obvious that the force which cannot be used is, for the purposes of that particular occasion, as if it did not exist. While, therefore, there can be little doubt that the American squadron, in the battle on Lake Erie, was much superior to the British squadron as a whole, there were circumstances to aid the enemy which produced far more of a real than there was of an apparent equality. As respects Perry, himself, he certainly, in his own brig, contended against a vastly superior force, owing to the dispersed state of his vessels, in part, though quite as much, probably, to the determination of the

enemy to concentrate their fire on the American commanding vessel until they had destroyed her. The latter circumstance will account for many of the seeming anomalies of this day. Thus the *Ariel* and *Scorpion*, though engaged from the first, suffered comparatively but little; as did the *Caledonia*. All these vessels were under fire from an early period in the action, and it is in direct proof that a shot passed through the wales of both sides of the latter vessel, within a short time after the battle commenced.

“The slaughter on board the *Lawrence* was terrible. Mr. Yarnall, her first lieutenant, testified before a court of inquiry, in 1815, that the *Lawrence* had on board of her ‘one hundred and thirty-one men and boys of every description, of which one hundred and three were fit for duty.’ Of this number, twenty-two were killed, and sixty-three were wounded. The loss of the *Niagara*, also, would have been deemed heavy but for this carnage on board the *Lawrence*. By the report of Perry, himself, she had two killed and twenty-five wounded. Her own surgeon, however, says that this report was inaccurate, the slightly wounded having been omitted. He also says that there were five men killed. The discrepancy is to be accounted for by the circumstances that after the action, the men were much scattered in the prizes, the *Niagara* furnishing most of their crews, and that her own medical officer had no agency in drawing up the report. Thus, the number of the dangerously and severely wounded the latter states to have been accurately given, while those of the slain and slightly wounded were not. These are facts which it is difficult to authenticate, at this late day, though there are circumstances which go to render the accuracy of this correction of the official report probable, if not certain. In a squadron which now numbered fifteen sail, with broken crews, few officers to report, and some of those few wounded or ill, and with men dying of disease daily, mistakes of this nature might readily occur. The



BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE.

other vessels did not suffer heavily, and the British, as a whole, lost about as many men as the Americans.

“While the nation was disposed to overlook every thing connected with this battle, in the result, Perry did not escape criticism for the manner in which he engaged the enemy. It was said that he ought to have waited until his line had become compact, and covered the approach of his two principal brigs, by the fire of the heavy long guns of the smaller vessels. This is probably still the opinion of many distinguished seamen. It is certain that by placing the schooners of the American squadron in the advance, it would have been possible to open on the enemy with as many long guns as he possessed himself, and guns of much heavier metal; but grave questions of this nature are not to be so lightly determined as this admission may seem to infer. There was the experience of the warfare on Lake Ontario, to induce Perry to suppose that a similar policy might be resorted to

on Lake Erie. The English sailed better in squadron than the Americans, on both lakes, and having the same object in view, the commander on Lake Erie had every reason to suppose that they would retire before him, as soon as a general action became probable, and thus postpone, or altogether avoid the desired conflict for the command of those waters. The distances being so small, nothing was easier than to carry out this policy. Even allowing Perry to have sent his heavily armed schooners in advance, and to have approached himself under cover of their fire, there can scarcely be a doubt that Barclay would have wore round, and changed the order of formation, by bringing them, again, into the rear of the American line; an evolution that would have been easy of accomplishment, with his superiority of sailing. Had the wind stood, or even had not the enemy hit upon the plan of directing most of their fire against the *Lawrence*, the victory of Lake Erie, now so complete in its results, would have had no drawbacks. But, with the high ends he kept in view,—the importance of securing the command of the lake, and the moral certainty of success could he close with his enemy,—Perry would scarcely have been justified in delaying the attack, on the plea that the lightness of the wind endangered any particular vessel of his command. Now that the battle is over, it is doubtless easy to perceive in what manner it might have been better fought; but this is a remark that will probably apply to all human actions.”

The intelligence of Perry's victory was received with unbounded enthusiasm by the nation. The boldness with which he had transferred his flag to the *Niagara*, passing through the thickest of the battle in an open boat, dazzled and fascinated the popular fancy. The triumph was attributed universally to this novel exploit. The people loved to relate that he carried in his own hands the flag of the *Lawrence*, with the motto “Don't give up the ship,” and that he stood up gallantly in the stern-sheets of the boat, until the oarsmen

pulled him down. Even old men dilated on this act of daring, as they had been accustomed to speak only of the deeds of ancient heroes; and orators compared the courage it exhibited to the conduct of Leonidas in the pass of Thermopylæ. The name of Perry was on every tongue. For a while, even Decatur was almost forgotten. This enthusiasm received a new impetus when the letter in which Perry announced his victory to General Harrison was made public. "We have met the enemy," he wrote laconically, "and they are ours." The short and eloquent announcement was declared to be proof of a modesty as great as his merit. That a man so remarkable should have remained hitherto almost unknown, was the general remark. This unbounded popularity would have unsettled most men, but Perry maintained the greatness and equanimity of his soul. Even when, some time subsequently, he returned to the Atlantic coast, and when his progress from town to town partook more of a triumph than of a journey, he did not lose the even balance of his mind, but won additional favour by his undisguised modesty. Not only his fellow citizens, but Congress itself welcomed the young victor with rapture. A gold medal was ordered to be struck, commemorative of the battle of Lake Erie, and presented, in the name of the nation, to Perry. As there was properly no broad pennant on the lake, and as the hero was thence deprived of the prize-money that would legally have fallen to that rank, Congress voted to him a gratuity of five thousand dollars, in addition to the seven thousand five hundred which fell to him as captain of the *Lawrence*. Even now, after the lapse of nearly two generations, the victory of Lake Erie has not lost its spell, and the gratitude of the people to Perry is still evidenced by public places being called after him. Forty counties, towns, and villages in the United States bear the honoured name of Perry.

Perry continued on the lakes for some time after his vic-

tory. He assisted in regaining possession of Detroit, as also in transporting the army of Harrison across the lake; and subsequently shared in person in the brilliant victory of the Thames. His presence with the troops, flushed as he was with recent triumph, inspired the soldiers, and assisted to win the day. He afterwards joined Harrison in a proclamation to the Canadians, inviting them to place themselves under the protection of our government. When the campaign was brought to an end, he returned to Newport, where his family resided, and where he quietly resumed his old command. A hero of Perry's stamp, however, could not be allowed to remain on shore while war continued; nor indeed did his ardent and ambitious mind desire idle and protracted repose. Accordingly, in August, 1814, he was appointed to the *Java* forty-four, a new ship, fitting out at Baltimore. The large blockading squadron which the British kept off the Chesapeake from this time forward, prevented Perry, however, from getting to sea. His crew, as well as himself, were actively employed, when the enemy descended the Potomac from Alexandria, in annoying their retreat. When the attack on Baltimore was made, Perry remained on board to defend his ship. Soon after, it being in contemplation to equip two light squadrons to harass the trade of the British, Perry was transferred from the *Java* to the more honourable command of one of these squadrons. He immediately caused the keels of two brigs to be laid, intending subsequently to construct two more, and have the whole five ready for sea as soon as possible. Peace, however, soon followed, when the enterprise was abandoned.

In May, 1815, Perry was attached anew to the *Java*. In January, 1816, he sailed in this ship for the Mediterranean, where he joined the squadron of Commodore Shaw before Algiers. In January, 1817, the *Java* returned to the United States. Perry's life, for the next two years, was embittered by two unhappy controversies, which have not, we regret



to say, added to his fame. The first of these arose out of an unfortunate altercation with one of his officers in the Java. During the return voyage of that vessel, Perry, in his own cabin, struck his subordinate. A naturally quick temper, and the fact that the blow was given after dining on shore, are the only excuses that can be adduced for this conduct. Perry, when the heat of the moment was past, saw his error, and, with the frankness of his generous nature, offered what atonement was in his power. But the offended party refused all concessions. Aware that his subordinate intended to bring him before a court-martial, Perry, as a means of defence, filed charges against the officer. As the commodore would never have entered this accusation if a trial had not threatened himself, there is much force in the remark which has frequently been made, that Perry allowed his personal feelings sometimes to affect his official conduct. The behaviour of Perry in this instance was less generous than usual. In consequence of these mutual accusations, both parties were tried and sentenced to be reprimanded. The officer subsequently challenged Perry, on which occasion the latter acted with more chivalry, declining to return his adversary's fire.

The other controversy was of even a more unpleasant character. It arose out of the fact that, at the battle of Lake Erie, the Lawrence had to bear, for a long time, nearly the whole of the enemy's fire, and that the Niagara did not come into action until nearly the close of the combat. This led finally to imputations derogatory to the courage of Captain Elliott, the commander of the Niagara. At first, Perry took no part in the dispute. Indeed, in his despatches written just after the battle, he eulogized Elliott in strong terms. But officious friends, by representing that Elliott claimed the merit of the victory, and that he asserted Perry came on board the Niagara dispirited and ready to surrender, eventually exasperated the commodore against his old lieutenant, until he allowed himself to indulge publicly in expressions

injurious to the latter. When Perry returned from the Mediterranean, a correspondence ensued between Elliott and him in reference to these remarks; and as the former avowed the injurious imputations, the latter challenged him. Perry, however, declined the meeting, alleging that he was about to prefer charges against his subordinate. The charges were made, but no proceedings were ever ordered by the department. The reflections upon Elliott's courage clung to that unfortunate officer, however, to his death; and he went down to the grave, labouring under imputations which Perry, in his natural mood, would have been too honest to cast upon another. This is not the place to examine these charges in detail. It is enough to say, however, that the most important one blamed Elliott for not coming to the aid of the *Lawrence*, an act which would have been impossible for him, without disobeying the order of Perry when going into battle, for every vessel to keep her place in the line. It is true that such orders may be disregarded in an emergency, and that such an emergency arose in the battle of Lake Erie,—but though a subordinate exhibits higher qualities when he breaks, than when he obeys a command the reason for which he sees has ceased, it is unjust to impute cowardice to him for refusing to assume the responsibility of violating orders. On the other hand the attempt to strip Perry of the merit of the victory was as unjust as it proved to be idle.

In March, 1819, Perry was again summoned to active service. His new command was destined for the regions about the equator, where our trade was in a precarious position, and where an officer was required who could play the diplomatist as well as the mere commodore. The selection of Perry for this important post proved the high estimate which the nation had formed of his abilities: an opinion not incorrect, since, where his personal resentments did not blind him, his judgment was singularly impartial and wise. On the 7th of June, he left Annapolis in the *John Adams*

twenty-four, and reached Barbadoes early in July. His duties requiring him to visit Angostura, the capital of Venezuela, he proceeded to the mouth of the Orinoco, where, shifting his pennant to the Nonsuch schooner, which had sailed in company, he despatched the ship to Trinidad, and began to ascend the river. For twenty days he remained at Angostura, at the most fatal season of the year. The yellow-fever soon appeared on board the schooner, and now the commodore made every effort to depart. On the 15th of August, he left the town, and began to drop down the river. As yet, Perry had escaped the disease, but, on the 17th, while still in the Orinoco, he took his fowling-piece, and embarking in his gig, amused himself along the margin of the stream. That night the schooner reached the mouth of the river, and as she rode to the current in a stiff breeze, the seas occasionally washed over her quarter, and, penetrating to the little cabin where Perry slept, wetted him thoroughly. The being so long in an infected atmosphere, the hours spent the preceding day in an open boat, and this fatal exposure in his sleep, brought on an attack of the epidemic, and he woke, towards morning, in a cold chill.

The commodore was of a full habit of body, and therefore entertained little hope from the first. The loss of blood created nausea, and hence the usual remedy had to be abandoned; and this soon lessened the first favourable expectations of those around him. Yet his own fortitude never deserted him. At times he spoke of his family, for he was a man peculiarly alive to the domestic affections, and at times sunk into feverish slumbers, during which he muttered incoherently. For five days, he lingered, occasionally appearing to rally, but soon sinking again under the terrible power of the disease. By the 23d of August, the Nonsuch was close in with Trinidad, where the John Adams awaited her. Lying on the floor of his narrow cabin, with a burning sun pouring its vertical beams overhead, parched with fever,

and racked with hiccough, such was the closing scene of the hero's life. At noon of this day, the fatal black vomit appeared, sure precursor of speedy dissolution. The dying man, satisfied that his end drew near, now made a verbal will in favour of his wife, and then desired to be left alone. Soon after, a boat from the John Adams arrived. When the lieutenant entered his presence, Perry, who had sunk away, revived, and inquired with interest after the health of his crew. But in a few minutes, his mind wandered, and, murmuring incoherent words, he breathed his last, at half-past three. Thus perished, far from his home, and without a single comfort which his condition demanded, one of the brightest ornaments of the American navy.

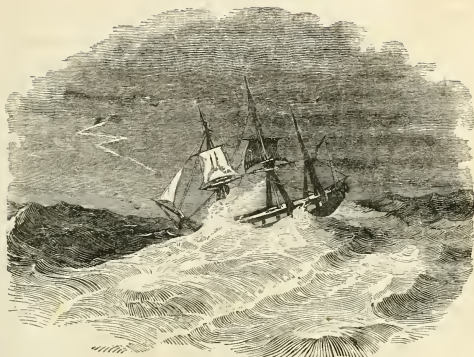
The character of Perry will appear from what we have written. He was of a frank and generous disposition, and had the foibles as well as virtues of men of that stamp. He was warm-hearted, impulsive, and affectionate, usually gentle in deportment, but quick in temper, and, when angered, capable of doing acts unworthy of his nature. He took strong prejudices, both of liking and disliking,—and was as warm a friend as he was a bitter enemy. His prepossessions were generally, however, in behalf of those he met, and this, added to his cheerful manner and elegant appearance, made him almost universally a favourite. In stature, he was slightly above the middle height. His frame was compact, muscular and well formed; his countenance one of unusual manly beauty, and his carriage at once graceful and dignified. He is said to have been gifted with a peculiarly clear and powerful voice, which rendered him, to use the words of a fellow-seaman, “a brilliant deck officer.” His courage was heroic, and his skill in his profession great. As a father and a husband, few men have been so much loved.

The remains of Perry were at first interred at Trinidad, but subsequently they were transferred, in a ship of war, to Rhode Island, where they now repose.





JESSE DUNCAN ELLIOTT.



SHIP IN A GALE.

## JESSE DUNCAN ELLIOTT.

THE controversy which raged for so many years between the friends of Elliott and those of Perry, in reference to the battle of Lake Erie, was not without injury to the former. It is always dangerous to assail a popular idol, nor is Elliott the first person who discovered this melancholy truth. Impartial history, however, must record, that though Elliott was not entitled to the chief merit of the victory on Lake Erie, he contributed his share towards it, by bringing up the gun-boats at a critical period of the action. For this, and other deeds of courage, he merits a place in this series.

Elliott was born in Maryland, the native State of so many commodores, in 1789. His original destination was the bar, but while prosecuting his studies preparatory to that profession, the war with Tripoli broke out, and his boyish emula-

tion being excited by the deeds of Decatur, Somers, and Stewart, he became inflamed with a passion for the navy. His friends accordingly obtained for him, in 1804, the warrant of a midshipman. His first cruise was made to the Mediterranean, in the *Essex* thirty-two, Captain James Barron. He remained abroad in this vessel for more than two years, returning to the United States in 1807. He was now transferred to the Chesapeake, whither he accompanied his old commander, and was present in that ship during her unfortunate combat with the *Leopard*. This was Elliott's first action, if action it can be called, and was ominous of a career never very fortunate, and frequently clouded by undeserved obloquy.

His next appearance before the public, however, was of a more favourable character. Before the war of 1812 began, he had risen to the rank of lieutenant, and, almost immediately after hostilities commenced, was ordered to the lakes, under Commodore Chauncey. That officer at once despatched Elliott to Lake Erie, where the young lieutenant soon signalized himself by a brilliant exploit. Two armed British brigs having come down the lake and anchored under Fort Erie, Elliott formed the bold design of cutting them out. Accordingly, two large boats, containing about fifty men each, accompanied by one or two smaller boats, all under the command of Elliott, pulled out of Buffalo Creek, on the evening of the 7th of October, 1812, advancing silently some distance up the lake, so as to gain a position above the enemy. It was past midnight when Elliott, after this circuit, approached the foe. He reserved for himself the *Detroit*, the larger of the two brigs, sending the other boat forward to attack the *Caledonia*, which lay in the advance. As the first boat crossed the bow of the *Detroit*, the British took the alarm, and consequently, when Elliott dashed up, he was received with volleys of musketry. Nothing daunted, however, both boats pulled rapidly ahead. The first soon reached



the Caledonia, but when the grapnels were thrown, one of them missed, and the boat falling astern, the result hung for a moment in doubt. The Caledonia, nevertheless, was captured finally, chiefly by the decision and boldness of Captain Tonson, of the army, who was in her. The boat which Elliott commanded met with no rebuff, but was laid promptly alongside the Detroit, when Elliott leaped on board, followed by Lieutenant Roach, of the army, and her crew. The British captain met the assailants with the greatest resolution, and aimed a blow at Elliott, which fortunately struck his hat, instead of his head. The latter, in return, nearly cleft the skull of his opponent. With the fall of the British leader resistance ceased, and the two prizes were immediately carried off. As this was the first success obtained by either nation on the lakes, it brought the name of Elliott prominently before the public; and Congress rewarded the youthful victor with a sword, engraved with suitable emblems and devices. He was also promoted, over a number of senior lieutenants, to the rank of a master commandant.

Elliott now returned to Lake Ontario, where he received the command of the Madison, the commodore's flag-ship. In the attack on York, on the 27th of April, 1813, he volunteered to go on board one of the schooners and lead them into action, his own vessel drawing too much water to approach the required position. His conduct on this occasion procured the favourable mention of Commodore Chauncey in the latter's despatches. "The schooners," says this document, "beat gallantly up to their stations, and there opened a heavy cannonade upon the enemy, which did great execution, and very much contributed to their future destruction." Elliott remained with Chauncey until the fleet which had been building on Lake Erie was completed, when he was ordered to repair thither, and take command of the Niagara, the second ship in the squadron of Perry. We have already given, at considerable length, in the biography of Perry, a narrative of that event-

ful day. In the order of battle, as finally arranged, the Lawrence led the attack, then followed some smaller vessels of the squadron, and then the Niagara,—and Perry's last signal, as he dashed forward, was for each vessel to maintain her place in the line. The British flag-ship was particularly efficient in long guns, while the Lawrence was armed with carronades, a fact of which the enemy promptly took advantage, to begin the battle before the American ship could approach sufficiently near for her pieces to bear. In consequence of this, and of the concentration of the fire of almost the entire British squadron on the Lawrence, that vessel had to sustain the whole fury of the battle unassisted for some time, and was reduced almost to a wreck. In this perilous crisis, Perry either forgot to signal the Niagara to leave the place assigned her and come to his assistance, or disdained to do it; and Elliott, for a while, seems to have hesitated between disobeying orders or hastening to the aid of his superior. At last, Elliott determined to push ahead at every hazard. But the wind, which had now become light, delayed his advance, and before he could approach the Lawrence, the latter was no longer seaworthy. It was now that Perry, abandoning the wreck, boarded the Niagara. On mounting the deck of the latter vessel, he pointed to the gun-boats, which were far behind, and declared that their failure to come into close action hazarded the success of the day; on which Elliott, volunteering to bring them up, embarked in an open boat, courageously pulled down the whole length of the enemy's line, and, by bringing the gun-boats into speedy use, assisted materially to decide the fortunes of the battle.

In his despatches, written immediately after the victory, Perry testifies to Elliott's bravery in the most unequivocal terms. "At half-past two," he says, "the wind springing up, Captain Elliott was enabled to bring his vessel, the Niagara, gallantly into close action. I immediately went on board of her, when he anticipated my wish, by volunteering to bring

the schooners, which had been kept astern by the lightness of the wind, into close action." And again: "The smaller vessels at this time having got within grape and canister distance, under the direction of Captain Elliott, and keeping up a well-directed fire, the two ships, a brig, and a schooner surrendered, a schooner and sloop making a vain attempt to escape." And in addition: "Of Captain Elliott, already so well known to the government, it would be almost superfluous to speak. In this action he evinced his characteristic bravery and judgment, and, since the close of the action, has given me the most able and essential assistance." These unequivocal terms prove that, at the period of the action, Perry not only acknowledged the merits of Elliott in the action, but was desirous to bring them prominently before the department. In a little while, however, all this good feeling was changed. The aspersions of others, at first vaguely whispered, then openly proclaimed, assailed the reputation of Elliott, traduced him to Perry, and finally alienated the latter from him for life. Within a month after the battle, the conduct of Elliott had been censured freely to the volunteers in Harrison's army, and a stab given to his good name from which it took years to recover. The delay of the Niagara in coming to the assistance of the Lawrence was the cause assigned for the charge of cowardice which was now urged against Elliott. But, not to speak of his courage, often exhibited before, and again displayed in pulling down the line to bring up the gun-boats, charity, if not mere justice, would account for the delay of the Niagara, first by the commodore's orders, and subsequently by the failure of the wind. That Elliott was not censurable for want of bravery, at least, is proved by the verdict of the court-martial which, in 1815, in consequence of the imputations on his courage, he demanded; and which, after a tedious examination of numerous witnesses, participants in the battle, pronounced the rumours false, and declared Elliott

“a brave and skilful officer.” It will also appear from the following examination of his case by Mr. Cooper, in that author’s life of Perry. The argument is based on the specifications of the latter, when he made his charges against Elliott, in 1818,—charges, it may be as well to state, which the department did not entertain.

Says Mr. Cooper: “The charges of ill conduct on the part of Captain Elliott, in the battle of Lake Erie, are three in number. The first is conceived in the following words, viz.:— ‘That the said Captain Elliott, on the 10th September, 1813, being then a master and commander in the navy of the United States, and commanding the U. S. brig Niagara, one of the American squadron on Lake Erie, did not use his utmost exertions to carry into execution the orders of his commanding officer to join in the battle of that day between the American and British fleets.’ There are two other charges, one accusing Captain Elliott of not doing his utmost to destroy the vessel he had been particularly ordered to engage, and the other, that he did not do his utmost to succour the Lawrence. All three of these charges substantially rest on the same specifications; there being but one elaborately prepared, which assumes to give an outline of the movements of the Niagara in the action.”

Mr. Cooper, after some discursive remarks, then continues: “In the specification of charge fourth, we get the following statement, as coming from Perry himself, touching his own order of battle, viz.: ‘1st. An order directing in what manner the line of battle should be formed: the several vessels to keep within half a cable’s length of each other, and *enjoining it upon the commanders to preserve their stations in the line*, and in all cases to keep as near to the commanding officer’s vessel (the Lawrence) as possible. 2d. An order of attack: in which order the Lawrence was designated to attack the enemy’s new ship, (afterward ascertained to be named the Detroit,) and the Niagara, commanded by the said Captain

Elliott, designated to attack the enemy's ship Queen Charlotte,' &c. &c. This, then, was the general order of battle, as respects the Niagara, with the addition that her station in the line was half a cable's length astern of the Caledonia. Perry also gave a repetition of Nelson's well-known order—'That if his officers laid their vessels close alongside of their enemies, they could not be out of the way.' Under these orders, not only Perry himself, in 1818, but several of his witnesses, appear to think it was the duty of a commander to close with the particular adversary he was ordered to engage, if in his power, without regard to any other consideration. This opinion is such an unmilitary construction of the orders, and might have led to consequences so injurious, as to be easily shown to be untenable.

"If the construction of the orders just mentioned can be sustained, the line, the distance from each other at which the vessels were to form, and every other provision for the battle, the one alluded to excepted, became worse than useless. The true course would have been, with such an intention before a commander, to have directed the several officers to their respective antagonists, and left them to find their way alongside in the best manner they could. If such were intended to be the primary order, in the orders for battle, it should have been so worded as to let the subordinates understand it, and not fetter them with other orders, of which the execution must materially interfere with the execution of this particular mandate. But it is impossible to understand the order of battle in this restricted sense; else would it reflect sorely on Perry's judgment as an officer, and do utter discredit to his powers of explanation. The order of battle clearly meant—first, to prescribe a *line of battle*, in which each ship had her assigned station, with an additional direction, '*enjoining it on her to keep her station in the line;*' second, to point out at what vessel of the enemy each American should direct his efforts, *from that station in*

*the line*; and, lastly, if circumstances deranged the original plan, to keep near the *Lawrence*, though you may place yourself alongside of your enemy as a last resort; *there* you cannot be much out of your way. Without this construction of them, the orders would be a contradictory mass of confusion. Now, it is in proof that the *Niagara* was in her station astern of the *Caledonia*, until Captain Elliott, after waiting for orders to shift his berth in vain, did it on his own responsibility, breaking that line of battle which he was enjoined to keep, and from the responsibility of doing which it was certainly the peculiar duty of Perry to relieve him, either by a signal, or by an order sent by a boat, did it appear to him to be necessary. It is also in proof, that, when Captain Elliott took on himself, in the immediate presence of his commander, without a signal, to break an order of battle he was enjoined to keep, he endeavoured to close with the *Lawrence*, and that, when the latter dropped, he passed ahead, and came abeam of the only heavy vessels the enemy possessed, engaging them within musket-shot. If these facts are not true, human testimony is worthless; for they are substantially shown even by the best of Captain Perry's own witnesses. This confusion in the reading of the orders prevails among most of the witnesses, who evidently mistake the accessory for the principal.

“Another of Perry's specifications accuses Captain Elliott of keeping his brig ‘nearly a mile's distance from the *Lawrence*,’ &c., at the period of the engagement before he passed the *Caledonia*. It is beyond dispute that the *Caledonia* was close to the *Niagara* all this time, and, let the distance be what it might, it is not easy to find the principle which censures one commander, under these circumstances, and does not censure the other; unless the explanation is to be found in the admitted superiority of the *Niagara* over the *Caledonia* in sailing. This we believe to be the solution of Perry's impression on this particular point, as well as of

those of the witnesses whose affidavits accompany his charges. In other words, they appear to have persuaded themselves that it was the duty of Captain Elliott to have disregarded the line of battle, and the injunction to keep it, and to have broken it immediately, or as soon as the *Lawrence* drew ahead of the *Caledonia*. This is what is meant by their statement that the wind which carried the *Lawrence* ahead would have done the same with the *Niagara*. No one can dispute the fact; but the question, who ought to take the responsibility of altering a line of battle before any material damage had been done on either side,—he who issued the order originally, and who had the power to change his own arrangements, or he whose duty it was to obey,—is a question which can admit of no dispute in the minds of the clear-thinking and impartial.

“Having adverted to this particular specification, it is proper to add that all the witnesses of the *Niagara*, who speak to the point, differ from the charges as to this alleged distance of their vessel when astern; and even the two lieutenants of the *Lawrence*, who were examined before the court of 1815, put it, the one at three-quarters of a mile from *the enemy*, and the other at from half to three-quarters of a mile; thus lessening the distance averred in the charges, by nearly if not quite one half.”

In the view which Mr. Cooper takes of the question, Elliott is entirely exonerated from censure. The court-martial which met in 1815 assumed the same ground. But, while we can see no force in the accusation which charges Elliott with cowardice, may he not have rendered himself liable, nevertheless, to criticism on other grounds? An officer who rigidly obeys orders can never be censured with justice, yet there are occasions when, by breaking orders, a subordinate may win high renown. Emergencies continually arise in battles, both on sea and land, when the original aspect of affairs becomes so changed, that commands issued

under the past state of things are no longer the wisest, and when a bold and able officer will not hesitate to assume the responsibility of disobeying his directions, and acting, perhaps, entirely different from what he has been ordered. The neglect to make the most of such critical moments determines the difference between the officer of mere talent and the officer of genius. In the battle of Lake Erie, such a crisis occurred. The concentration of the enemy's almost entire fire on the *Lawrence*, and that, too, before she was within range for her carronades, produced a condition of affairs which Perry had not anticipated, and should have correspondingly changed the whole tactic of battle. In such an emergency, an officer of genius would have dashed forward and shared the hottest of the fight with his commodore. The design of the British was evident. They aimed to destroy the flag-ship at every cost, imagining that the remainder of the squadron, after so great a disaster, would strike immediately. The effort of the Americans, therefore, should have been to frustrate this aim, by hastening to the support of the flag-ship, and compelling the enemy to divide his fire. Elliott did not do this as promptly as a Nelson, a Decatur, or a Perry would have done under similar circumstances; but held back until the *Lawrence* became so crippled, that there could be no longer any doubt of the absolute necessity of altering the order of battle. The error of Elliott, if error it can be called, was in this, and not in any want of courage. If he had possessed the instinct of a great captain, he would have anticipated the dilemma in which the *Lawrence* was placed, and, by speedy succour, prevented it. Talent waits till a disaster is at hand: genius beholds it afar off. The conduct of Elliott was that of a brave man, but one gifted with but ordinary abilities. The conduct of Perry, in retrieving the battle after it was lost, by the single but heroic act of transferring his flag to the *Niagara*, was that of genius, which always sees, as by a flash of lightning, not only



the best physical measures to be adopted for victory, but the most effective moral ones also.

When Perry retired from Lake Erie, after his great victory, Elliott succeeded him in command of the squadron, remaining until April, 1814, when he returned to Ontario. Here, in the brig *Sylph*, he attacked a British brig, that had been intercepted by the American fleet, compelling the enemy to blow her up in order to prevent her capture. For this act Elliott received the commendation of Chauncey. On the decline of hostilities on the lakes, he applied for a command at sea, and was appointed to the Ontario sloop-of-war, then fitting out at Baltimore; but peace being declared before this vessel could leave port, he obtained no further laurels. The Ontario sailed, however, to the Mediterranean, as one of the squadron to exact reparation from the Barbary Powers. On his return from this voyage Elliott remained unemployed until 1817, when he was appointed one of the commissioners to examine the coast, in order to select the situations best suited for permanent dock-yards and fortifications. In this office he continued until 1824. In the mean time, his controversy with Perry occurred. In this period, also, in 1818, he was promoted to the rank of captain. In 1825, he was appointed to the *Cyane*, and despatched to the coasts of Brazil and Buenos Ayres. He returned from this cruise in 1827, and remained on shore until 1829, when he was selected to command the West India squadron. He continued absent, on this station, until 1832, with the exception of a short interval, in 1831, when, happening to be at Norfolk, he was summoned to assist in quelling the slave insurrection. His spirited conduct on this occasion won the official approbation of the President, and obtained a complimentary resolution from the Legislature of Virginia.

In the autumn of 1832, when South Carolina threatened civil war, Elliott was ordered to lie off Charleston, with a competent naval force. In the spring of 1833, the peril in

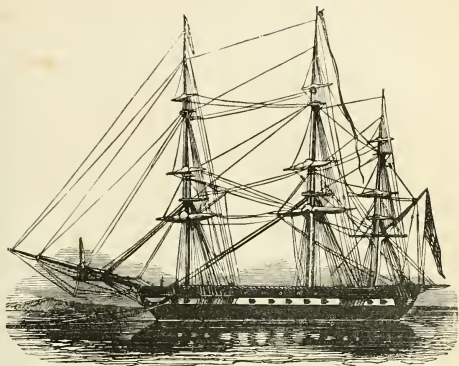
the South being over, he was relieved from his disagreeable post, and assigned to the command of the Charlestown navy-yard, in Massachusetts. In 1835, he was appointed to the Constitution, and despatched to France, to bring home Mr. Livingston, the American minister in Paris. Subsequently, Elliott sailed for the Mediterranean, in the same ship, to assume command of the squadron in that sea; and on this duty he was employed for several years. On his return from this voyage, he was arraigned before a court-martial, on several charges of severity and harshness in discipline, and on a charge of incumbering the Constitution, without authority, with animals intended to improve the breed of like animals in the United States. He was found guilty on one of the charges of severity, and on that relating to the animals, and sentenced to be suspended from the navy for four years, and to be deprived of his pay during two of these. The President, however, remitted the last part of the sentence, and subsequently, before the term of suspension had elapsed, restored him to the service. In December, 1844, the month following his restoration, Elliott was appointed to the Philadelphia navy-yard. He was now, however, broken in health, and on the 10th of December, 1845, he died.

In manner, Elliott was comparatively rough, and he enjoyed, besides, an unfortunate facility for making enemies, two circumstances which contributed to his unpopularity, and assisted to darken the close of his life. He was also a severe disciplinarian. He possessed, however, many warm friends, for whom he was always ready to make sacrifices. As a husband and father, he was much esteemed. In person, he was above the middle height, with a robust figure, and a carriage that was easy, though scarcely graceful. He was unquestionably brave, and not without ability; but has no claim to rank in the first order of naval captains.





DEFENCE OF SACKETT'S HARBOUR.



## MELANCTHON T. WOOLSEY.

AFTER Perry, Chauncey, Elliott, and Macdonough, no officer was so distinguished on the lakes, as Melancthon Taylor Woolsey. For nearly fifteen years, he was actively employed in that quarter of the Union, and always with honour to himself and credit to his country.

Woolsey was born in the year 1782, of respectable parentage, in the State of New York. His father had been an officer in the war of Independence, and subsequently resided at Plattsburgh, on Lake Champlain, where he held the office of collector under the federal government. The son was intended for the bar, and had actually begun his professional studies, when, in 1800, he received the offer of a midshipman's warrant in the American marine. The tastes of the young man being more naval than forensic, he gratefully accepted

the commission, and was immediately ordered to the Adams twenty-eight, then about to sail for the West Indies.

During this voyage, no less than five French privateers were captured, so that the cruise formed an excellent school for the young men serving in the Adams. Woolsey was conspicuous for his attention to duty, for his conciliatory deportment, and for the quickness with which he acquired the details of his new profession. On the return of the Adams, he joined the Boston twenty-eight, and sailed in her for the Mediterranean. He remained abroad, serving in different vessels, until 1803, when he was ordered back to the United States. He thus, unfortunately, missed the opportunity of serving under Preble, and partaking in the glory of the Tripolitan war; a fact the more to be regretted as his courage and adventurous spirit would have highly distinguished him, if a chance had presented itself. He was present, however, in one or two affairs of note, especially when Porter attacked the wheat-boats on shore, and when the abortive attempt was made to cannonade the town.

Woolsey next served in the Essex thirty-two. This ship sailed for the Mediterranean in the summer of 1804, arriving before Tripoli soon after the explosion of the Intrepid ketch. The Essex subsequently formed one of a fleet of thirteen American men-of-war, which appeared before Tunis and dictated the terms of an indemnity to the regency there. Woolsey now received an acting appointment as lieutenant. The following year, when the Essex returned to the United States, Woolsey, with most of her officers, removed to the Constitution, and remained in the Mediterranean. Woolsey continued in this favourite vessel, until 1807, when, being relieved, she came back to the United States. Her return was delayed for several months by the attack on the Chesapeake, which vessel had been appointed to take her place. This produced much dissatisfaction among the crew of the Constitution, whose terms of service had long since expired,

and finally induced them to break out into a mutiny, which was only quelled by the decided conduct of Woolsey and the other lieutenants. During this cruise, Woolsey, according to his biographer, greatly improved himself, not only in his profession, but in his mind generally.

When the Constitution was paid off, Woolsey repaired to Washington, where he was employed in preparing a system of signals. As the probability of a war with England occupied at that time much of the attention of the government, it was resolved, as a measure of precaution, to provide for the defence of Lakes Ontario and Champlain. Accordingly, a brig of sixteen guns was ordered to be constructed on the former lake, and two gun-boats on the latter. Woolsey, who had gained the confidence of the department during his residence at Washington, was appointed to superintend the construction of these vessels, and, subsequently, to command them. Delegating his duties on Champlain to Lieutenant Haswell, Woolsey himself repaired to Ontario, where, at the port of Oswego, in 1808, he laid the keel of the first armed vessel of the United States that ever floated on that inland sea. The shipwright who accompanied him was Henry Eckford, afterwards celebrated, both in the new and old worlds, for his skill in naval architecture. In the spring of 1809, the vessel was launched, and the name of the Oneida bestowed on her. Her construction led to the building of the Royal George, a vessel of superior size, by the British, and from these vessels began the squadrons which, a few years later, contended for the mastery of Lake Ontario.

In the summer of 1809, Woolsey made an excursion in his launch, and entered the Niagara river, being the first naval officer to display the American ensign in those waters. The war of 1812 found him still in command on the lakes, but with no force except the Oneida, while the enemy had a squadron of several sail, one of which, the Royal George, was capable of mastering two such vessels as the brig.

Meantime, the naval station had been removed from Oswego to Sackett's Harbour. Here, on the 19th of July, the British squadron, numbering five sail, made its appearance. Woolsey immediately made sail in the *Oneida*, hoping to escape into the open lake; but soon finding this impossible, he returned to harbour, and, landing all the guns on the off side of the brig, placed them in battery on the bank, with his vessel directly under. He also placed a long thirty-two on a point of land above the navy-yard, and, as soon as the enemy came within range, opened a spirited fire. The British now sent in a message for Woolsey to surrender, which he declined, and immediately a cannonading ensued that lasted two hours. In the end, the enemy, though so much superior in force, hauled off, leaving to the young lieutenant the victory. Soon after, Commodore Chauncey arrived on the lakes, with orders to build more vessels and assume the supreme command. In the attack on Kingston, in the ensuing November, Woolsey led his old vessel, the *Oneida*, and gallantly carried her through the day. During this entire season, he continued second in command on the lake; but, with the opening of spring, additional officers were sent to Ontario, many of them superior in rank to Woolsey, and accordingly he no longer could play so prominent a part in affairs.

He continued, however, actively employed. He was present in the attack on York, and also at the assault on the batteries of Fort George. Immediately after this last enterprise, he was promoted to the rank of commander. As older officers and post-captains were only sent to the lakes to assume charge of the new ships, Woolsey had remained through all in the *Oneida*; but now, with his new commission, he was transferred to a large and swift schooner, the *Sylph*, mounting four heavy pivot-guns amidships. He was in this vessel, on the 28th of September, when Chauncey brought the English squadron, for the first time, to close action. The battle was contested with spirit, and would probably have



resulted in a victory for the Americans, if the Oneida and Sylph had been able to come up in time, or if Sir James Yeo had not sought refuge under Burlington Heights. The vessel of Woolsey had a schooner in tow, which accounted for his not arriving sooner on the scene. The armament of the Sylph, on this occasion, proved so ineffective that, on her return to port, it was altered to broadside guns. A few days later, Woolsey compensated himself for the laurels missed in this action, by capturing two gun-vessels belonging to the enemy, with a number of troops on board. With this last affair the service of the year terminated.

Early in 1814, Woolsey was despatched to Oswego, with orders to transport a quantity of guns and cables to Sackett's Harbour by water, a duty of great delicacy, for the British, having increased their fleet, now held the command of the lake. He was engaged in this service when the enemy made a descent on Oswego. Woolsey caused a report to reach the British that the direction of the stores was to be changed: he sent as many guns and cables over the falls as he had boats to carry them in, and immediately descended the river. Availing himself of a dark night, he now went out with a brigade of nineteen heavy boats, and by morning found himself at the mouth of Big Salmon River. Proceeding onwards, he entered Big Sandy Creek. In the mean time, the British, discovering his retreat, pursued him with a strong party, accompanied by three gun-boats. The enemy entered the river confidently, throwing grape and canister into the bushes ahead of them, from their carronades. While Woolsey occupied himself with discharging his guns and cables, Major Appling, who, with a body of riflemen, had accompanied him as a guard, prepared an ambush, and as the English approached, met them with such a destructive fire, that, in the end, their entire number was captured. In consequence of this gallant exploit, the stores safely reached Sackett's Harbour, where, being used in fitting the new

ships for sea, the command of the lake once more reverted to the Americans. Woolsey was now appointed to the *Jones*, a large brig of twenty-two guns, in command of which he continued until the close of the war.

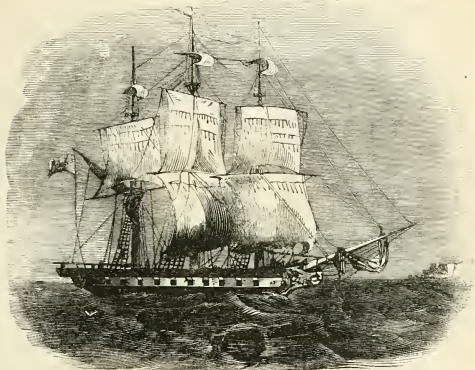
When peace was declared, most of the officers who had served on the lakes, as well as their crews, were transferred to the seaboard; but Woolsey was long retained in a species of service with which he had now grown familiar. Vessel after vessel was dismantled, yet still he remained on Ontario. The command, however, was an important one, for there was a large amount of property to be guarded. In 1817, Woolsey was promoted to the rank of captain. In time, the armed ships on the lakes were gradually broken up, until, at last, the station was no longer worthy of an officer of rank. Accordingly, in 1823, Woolsey was relieved from his command, and appointed to the *Constellation* thirty-eight, destined for the West Indies. On board this vessel, Commodore Warrington hoisted his broad pennant. When the cruise was up and the *Constellation* paid off, Woolsey received the command of the *Pensacola* navy-yard. Subsequently, he was selected to command the Brazil squadron. This, the first time on which he hoisted a commodore's flag, was the last occasion on which he served, afloat or ashore. His health had now begun to decline. In 1838, not long after his return, he died.

In personal appearance, Woolsey was prepossessing, though not perhaps handsome. He was of medium height, robust and athletic in frame. His countenance was pleasing. In manner he was frank without being rude, though almost too familiar sometimes for an officer. Among his equals, he was the life of social intercourse. As a seaman, he held a high rank.





DAVID PORTER.



THE ESSEX.

## DAVID PORTER.

If we were called on to select the name which, next after that of Decatur, represented, in our opinion, every high attribute of courage, we should unhesitatingly choose that of David Porter. His whole career, from first to last, was such a blaze of heroism, that it is difficult to award pre-eminence to any one portion of it. But, perhaps, that period of his life which he was accustomed, himself, to regard with the most pride, and which, above all others, certainly exhibited the most splendid results,—we mean the memorable cruise in the Pacific,—was the part of his career for which he will be generally celebrated in future times. In fact, in reading the narrative of this expedition, we almost, at times, imagine ourselves perusing a romance. The unparalleled success

that everywhere attended the adventurous commander; the creation of a fleet out of the captured vessels of the enemy, and the employment of that fleet, subsequently, against the foe; the discovery of virgin islands, hitherto unknown, in the midst of the boundless Pacific, with the pictures of uncontaminated savage life found there;—these and other incidents of that astonishing cruise, fascinate the reader, bringing back in imagination the times when Drake carried terror to the Spanish settlements on the western coasts of America, when Selkirk wandered over the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez, when the keel of Magellan first ploughed the waters of an unknown and apparently illimitable ocean.

David Porter was the oldest son of Captain David Porter, a naval officer of merit in the war of Independence, and was born at Boston, on the first of February, 1780. At the declaration of peace, in 1783, the family removed to Baltimore, where Captain Porter received the command of the revenue cutter, the *Active*. The lad, meantime, grew up delicate in body, but of an active and indomitable spirit. He would sit for hours listening to anecdotes of the war, narrated by his father, his breath coming quick and his eye kindling in sympathy with every deed of more than ordinary daring. The eagerness with which the boy hung upon his father's words, inspired the parent with a wish to educate the child for his own profession, a purpose which was finally carried into execution, notwithstanding the entreaties of the mother, who feared the effects which the rough usage of the sea might produce on her son's tender constitution. At the age of sixteen, accordingly, young David sailed with his father for the West Indies, in the schooner *Eliza*.

Almost from the very first, the lad was placed in circumstances requiring presence of mind equally with bravery, and, in every instance, he acquitted himself honourably. While at the port of Jérémie, St. Domingo, in his first voyage, a press-gang endeavoured to board the schooner in search of

men; but Captain Porter resisting the attempt, a bloody affray ensued, in which the lad shared a part. The assailants were finally beaten off, though not until young David had narrowly escaped death, a sailor having been shot down by his side. During his second voyage, in which he served as mate of his ship, he experienced even greater peril, combined with singular vicissitudes. Twice he was impressed by the British, and twice he effected his escape. At last, destitute of funds, and even wanting necessary clothing, he reached an American vessel, homeward bound, on which he shipped as a common sailor. The passage was made in the dead of winter, and exhibited an almost constant tempest. Every spray that broke over the ship was instantaneously changed into ice. The delicate frame of Porter, still a mere lad in years, might have been expected to sink under the fatigue and exposure; but destiny, reserving him for higher ends and loftier purposes, watched over the young hero, and conducted him in safety to his friends.

The establishment of a national marine now turned the young man's attention in that direction; and, in a few weeks after his return, he solicited and obtained a midshipman's warrant. The *Constellation*, Captain Truxtun, was then about to sail on her immortal cruise, and to her young Porter was appointed. In the action with *L'Insurgente*, our hero was stationed in the fore-top. Soon after the action began, the fore-topmast was badly wounded near the lower cap. Porter immediately hailed the deck, but the noise of the battle drowning his voice, he finally assumed the responsibilities of cutting the stoppers and lowering the yard. For thus saving the spar, he received the thanks of the commodore. When the *Constellation* was transferred to Barron, Porter, solely in consequence of his good conduct, was advanced to the rank of lieutenant. He was shortly after transferred to the schooner *Experiment*, Captain Manley, then about to sail for the West Indies. During this cruise, the

young officer participated in a long and obstinate engagement between the schooner and a number of brigand barges, in the Bight of Leogane; and here, as on all former occasions, he exhibited a hardihood and daring in striking contrast to his comparatively small stature and feeble frame. He was, in consequence of these qualities, already a noted man; and when a vessel was to be cut out, to Porter was generally confided the undertaking. Attracted by his gallantry, Commodore Talbot, then in command of the station, resolved to bestow on him a separate command, and, accordingly, manning the *Amphitrite*, a pilot-boat schooner, he placed her in the charge of Porter. With this little craft, which mounted but five small swivels, and had a crew of only fifteen men, the young hero made sail in pursuit of an enemy.

He had not been long in command, when he met a French privateer, mounting a long twelve-pounder and several swivels, and having a crew of forty men. The enemy, in addition, was accompanied by a prize ship, and a large barge, with thirty men, armed with swivels. Undaunted by the excessive disparity of force, Porter resolved to attack the privateer. Accordingly, he bore down on the foe, and laid his vessel alongside of her. A shot soon injured the rudder of his schooner, so that she became unmanageable, but, resolute to conquer in despite of obstacles, he maintained the fight. For a time, the result was doubtful. The enemy, confident in their numbers, resisted bravely, and even formed the expectation of reducing the Americans. But the discipline of the man-of-war, combined with the heroism which Porter infused into his crew, finally triumphed, and the French privateer, after a bloody and protracted resistance, struck. The loss of the foe, in this action, was seven killed, and fifteen wounded, a large proportion, considering the numbers engaged. On the side of the Americans, several were wounded, but none killed. The schooner, however,



suffered much damage. Not only the privateer herself, but her prize also were captured: the barge, however, succeeded in escaping. The courage exhibited by Porter, in attacking a foe so greatly his superior, gained him great applause. Already, in popular estimation, he was looked upon as one whom no odds could intimidate, no perils alarm.

On his return to the United States, Porter was transferred to the *Experiment*, Captain Charles Stewart. The West Indies was now again the scene of his exploits. The *Experiment*, during her cruise, rendered valuable protection to American commerce among the islands. On several occasions, French privateers were engaged, and always successfully. In short, Stewart and his lieutenant soon become the terror of these marauders. While on this cruise, the *Experiment*, when off Saona Island one morning, discovered a vessel on the reef; and on approaching her, a crowd of persons was seen on board. Porter, at the instigation of his superior, immediately started in the boats to the relief of the sufferers. With much difficulty, in consequence of the heavy surf breaking on the reef, the shipwrecked individuals, to the number of sixty-seven, principally women and children, were safely transferred to the *Experiment*. The rescued persons proved to be inhabitants of St. Domingo, flying from the siege of that city by the blacks; and they had been ten days on the rock, without any thing to eat or drink. The next day, the *Experiment* reached St. Domingo, when the sufferers were restored to their friends. Here the enthusiasm in favour of Stewart and his lieutenant was unbounded. The President of St. Domingo, Don Joaquin Garcia, as the best means of expressing the general gratitude, wrote a letter to the executive of the United States, President Jefferson, commending the conduct of the *Experiment*, her officers, and crew, in the warmest terms.

In 1801, when the depredations of Tripoli determined our government to send a squadron to the Mediterranean, Porter,

as first lieutenant of the *Enterprise*, sailed to that quarter of the globe. On the 1st of August, while running for Tripoli, the *Enterprise* captured a corsair of fourteen guns and eighty men. The action was desperately fought, the enemy losing, in killed and wounded, no less than fifty. As the instructions to Lieutenant Commandant Sterrett, the principal officer of the *Experiment*, forbade him carrying the prize in, Porter was directed to take possession of, and dismantle her. This was accordingly done. After a tedious voyage, the corsair reached Tripoli, when her commander, notwithstanding his wounds, was punished for his surrender by being placed on a jackass, paraded through the streets, and subsequently bastinadoed. The terror created by this severity, combining with the prowess of the Americans, disinclined the Tripolitan seamen to ship in the Bey's corsairs, and the consequence was, that though the war lasted three years, few armed vessels, after this, ventured to sea. Porter remained in the Mediterranean, actively engaged against the enemy, from this time until the summer of 1803. Towards the close of May, of the latter year, having been made first lieutenant of the flag-ship, he led an expedition to burn some feluccas in the Tripolitan harbour: an enterprise which he carried out successfully, and which is thus narrated by Cooper:

“About the close of the month, Commodore Morris hove in sight, in the *New York*, with the *Adams* and *Enterprise* in company. As the flag-ship neared the coast, several small vessels, convoyed by a number of gun-boats, were discovered close in with the land, making the best of their way towards the port. Chase was immediately given, and, finding themselves cut off from the harbour, the merchant vessels, eleven in all, took refuge in Old Tripoli, while the gun-boats, by means of their sweeps, were enabled to pull under the batteries of the town itself. No sooner did the vessels, small latine-rigged coasters, loaded with wheat, get into Old Tripoli, than preparations were made to defend them. A large stone

building stood on a bank, some twelve or fifteen feet from the shore, and it was occupied by a considerable body of soldiers. In the course of the night, breastworks were erected on each side of this building, by means of the sacks of wheat which composed the cargoes of the feluccas. The latter were hauled upon the beach, high and dry, immediately beneath the building, and a large force was brought from Tripoli, to man the breastworks.

“Mr. Porter, the first lieutenant of the flag-ship, volunteered to go in that night, with the boats of the squadron, and destroy the enemy’s craft; but, unwilling to expose his people under so much uncertainty, the commodore decided to wait for daylight, in order that the ships might co-operate, and in the hope of intimidating the Tripolitans by a show of all his force. Mr. Porter, however, went in alone, and reconnoitered in the dark, receiving a heavy fire from the musketry of the troops, when discovered. Next morning, the offer of Mr. Porter was accepted, and, sustained by Lieutenant James Lawrence of the *Enterprise*, and a strong party of officers and men from the other ships, he went boldly in, in open day. As the boats pulled up within reach of musketry, the enemy opened a heavy fire, which there was very little opportunity of returning. Notwithstanding the great superiority of the Turks in numbers, the party landed, set fire to the feluccas, and, regaining, their boats, opened to the right and left, to allow the shot of the ships to complete the work. The enemy now appeared desperately bent on preserving their vessels, and, regardless of the fire of the ships, they rushed on board the feluccas, succeeded in extinguishing the flames, and, in the end, preserved them.

“This attack was made in the most gallant manner, and reflected high credit on all engaged. The parties were so near each other, that the Turks actually threw stones at the Americans, and their fire was sharp, heavy, and close. The loss of the enemy could never be ascertained, but a good

many were seen to fall. Of the Americans, twelve or fifteen were killed and wounded; and among the latter, was Mr. Porter, who received a slight wound in the right, and a musket ball through the left thigh, while advancing to the attack, though he continued to command to the last. Mr. Lawrence was particularly distinguished, as was Mr. John Downes, one of the midshipmen of the *New York*."

The wound of Porter rendered him, for a time, unfit for service. On his recovery, in September, he was transferred from the *New York* to the *Philadelphia*, a larger ship, still continuing in the capacity of first lieutenant. When this change occurred, the *Philadelphia* was lying at Gibraltar, but immediately after, she sailed for Tripoli, under Captain Bainbridge, to participate in the blockade. The *Vixen*, of twelve guns, was the only vessel in company, and she was soon despatched in pursuit of a corsair said to have gone to sea lately. The *Philadelphia* thus found herself alone, when, on the 31st of October, a sail was descried, making for the harbour, with a pleasant easterly breeze. Chase was promptly given. After an ineffectual pursuit of several leagues, it was discovered that the frigate was approaching too near to the shore, and her captain had just given orders to haul off, when she struck. In our biography of Bainbridge, we have described at large this unfortunate event. The conduct of Porter, during the imprisonment that followed, was such as became him as an officer and a man. A memoir of him, in the *Analectic Magazine*, says: "He never suffered himself for a moment to sink into despondency; but supported the galling indignities and hardships of his situation with equanimity, and even cheerfulness. A seasonable supply of books served to beguile the hours of imprisonment, and enabled him even to turn them to advantage. He closely applied himself to the study of ancient and modern history, biography, the French language, and drawing; in which art, so useful to a seaman, he made himself a considerable pro-

ficient. He also sedulously cultivated the theory of his profession, and improved the junior officers by his frequent instructions; representing the manœuvres of fleets in battle by means of small boards ingeniously arranged. He was active in promoting any plan of labour or amusement that could ameliorate the situation or dispel the gloomy reflections of his companions. By these means, captivity was robbed of its heaviest evils, that dull monotony that wearies the spirits, and that mental inactivity that engenders melancholy and hypochondria. An incident, which occurred during his confinement, deserves to be mentioned, as being highly creditable to Lieutenant Porter. Under the rooms occupied by the officers, was a long dark passage, through which the American sailors, who were employed in public labour, frequently passed to different parts of the castle. Their conversation being repeatedly heard as they passed to and fro, some one made a small hole in the wall, to communicate with them. For some days, a constant intercourse was kept up, by sending down notes tied to a string. Some persons, however, indiscreetly entering into conversation with the seamen, were overheard, and information immediately carried to the Bashaw. In a few minutes, the bolts of the prison-door were heard to fly back with unwonted violence, and Sassi (chief officer of the castle) rushed furiously in. His features were distorted, and his voice almost inarticulate with passion. He demanded, in a vehement tone, by whom or whose authority the walls had been opened; when Porter advanced, with a firm step and composed countenance, and replied, 'I alone am responsible.' He was abruptly and rudely hurried from the prison, and the gate was again closed. His generous self-devotion, while it commanded the admiration of his companions, heightened their anxiety for his fate; apprehending some act of violence from the impetuous temper and absolute power of the Bashaw. Their fears, however, were appeased by the

return of Porter, after considerable detention; having been dismissed without any further severity, through the intercession of the minister, Mahomet Dghies, who had, on previous occasions, shown a friendly disposition towards the prisoners."

When, on the conclusion of peace, the prisoners were restored to freedom, Porter embarked with his companions for Syracuse, glad to breathe once more the sweet air of liberty. At Syracuse, a court of inquiry, according to custom, was held over the loss of the *Philadelphia*; and Porter, with the other officers, were tried by this tribunal. An honourable acquittal, as expected, was the consequence. The *Enterprise* being now in want of a commander, the post was tendered to Porter, who continued in this vessel, cruizing about the Mediterranean to protect our commerce, until the year 1806. Many anecdotes are told of his daring and hardihood during this interval. Once, while the *Enterprise* was anchored in the port of Malta, an English sailor came alongside, and insulted the officers and crew by abusive language. Captain Porter, overhearing his scurrilous epithets, ordered a boatswain's mate to give him a flogging at the gangway. This well-merited chastisement excited the indignation of the governor of Malta, who gave orders that the forts should not permit the *Enterprise* to depart. No sooner was Captain Porter informed of this direction, than he prepared his vessel for action, weighed anchor, and, with lighted matches, and every man at his station, sailed between the batteries and departed unmolested. On another occasion, not long after, in passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, he was attacked by twelve Spanish gun-boats, who either mistook or pretended to mistake his vessel for a British brig. As soon, however, as he was able to approach them, they were assailed with such rapid and well-directed volleys, that they were glad to sheer off. This affair took place in sight of Gibraltar, and in presence of several ships of the British

navy: it was, therefore, a matter of notoriety, and gained him great applause.

Having been absent five years, Porter, in 1806, returned to the United States. Soon after, he married, and repaired to New Orleans to reside, government having appointed him to the command of the flotilla in that quarter. In the discharge of his avocations at this post, he exhibited unabated faithfulness, activity, and personal courage. It was the period of the embargo and non-intercourse acts, and his principal duty consisted in enforcing these laws, so obnoxious to the commercial class especially; yet he performed his part with a prudence, but firmness, which gained him general applause. During this period he performed an important service in ferreting out and capturing a pirate, a native of France, who, in a small, but well-armed schooner, had perpetrated numerous outrages on our trade. It was also while in command at New Orleans that Porter lost his father; and what is remarkable, the parent was, at the time, an officer under the son. The veteran had lived to see his boy eminent in his own favourite profession. The climate of New Orleans disagreeing with the health of Captain Porter, as well as with that of his family, he solicited to be relieved, and, accordingly, was transferred to the *Essex*, one of the finest frigates in the navy. He was in the harbour of New York, refitting his vessel, when, in 1812, war was declared against Great Britain. With the energy that characterized him, he was immediately prepared for sea, and, on the 3d of July, sailed for Sandy Hook on his first cruise.

Porter shaped his course southward, and made numerous prizes. Having destroyed the vessels, he received the prisoners on board, and, in this way, continued for some time his depredations on the foe. The weather finally induced him to make for the north. He now encountered a fleet of merchantmen and transports, convoyed by the British frigate *Minerva*, and succeeded in cutting out of the squadron a ship

of some size, on board of which were one hundred and fifty soldiers. A few days subsequently, the *Essex* made a strange sail to windward. The frigate, at the moment, was disguised as a merchantman, having her gun-deck ports in, top-gallant-masts housed, and sails trimmed in a slovenly manner. Deceived by these appearances, the stranger came running down free, when the American ship hoisted her ensign and kept away, under short sail. This emboldened the stranger, who followed. Having obtained a position finally on the weather quarter of his chase, he began his fire, setting English colours. The *Essex* now knocked out her ports, and opened upon the enemy. Astonished at finding a frigate in their antagonist, the British crew, after receiving one or two discharges, deserted their quarters and ran below. In eight minutes after the *Essex* had begun to fire, the English ship struck. She proved to be his Britannic Majesty's ship *Alert*, Captain Laugharne, mounting twenty eighteen-pound carronades, and with a full crew.

The *Alert* was the first man-of-war taken from the English in this contest. Her resistance was feeble to the last degree, and can only be accounted for by her surprise. It was not to be expected, certainly, that a ship carrying eighteen-pound carronades could successfully resist a ship carrying thirty-two-pound carronades, and double her number of guns and men; but so exaggerated had become the opinion of the British prowess on the ocean, that impossibilities were sometimes expected. Mr. Cooper says that, as only a part of the *Essex's* guns bore on the *Alert*, the manner in which the latter was taken must be attributed to a sudden panic among her people, some of whom were censured after their exchange. One or two of the officers even, did not escape, the first lieutenant having been dismissed the service, by a court-martial. The *Alert* had but three men wounded, and the *Essex* sustained no injury at all. When boarded, the British man-of-war had seven feet of



water in her hold. She was, however, made tight, converted into a cartel, and, with the various prisoners taken by the *Essex*, sent into St. Johns.

Porter now continued his cruise, going to the south of the Grand Banks. On two occasions, he fell in with the enemy's frigates, and, at one time, was so hard pressed as to be reduced to the necessity of making every preparation to carry one by boarding in the night, since, another English vessel of war being in company, an engagement in the usual manner would have been indiscreet. "The arrangements made on board the *Essex*, on this occasion," says Mr. Cooper, in his *Naval History*, "are still spoken of with admiration by those who were in the ship; and there is great reason to think they would have succeeded, had the vessels met." By some accident, that has never been explained, the ships passed each other in the darkness, and, soon after, the *Essex* went into the Delaware to replenish her water and stores.

Having made ready for sea again, with all possible despatch, Porter, on the 27th of October, 1812, sailed for the coast of Brazil. Here he expected to meet Bainbridge, in the *Constitution*. But, having touched at the various places of rendezvous without meeting with his superior, he determined on making a cruise in the Pacific, where he knew the enemy had many valuable vessels, especially whalers. Prior to adopting this resolution, however, he had made several captures; among others, that of the British government-packet *Nocton*, out of which he took fifty-five thousand dollars in specie. He heard also of the capture of the *Java*, but still could not meet his consort. Once he pursued a convoy, but without success. In resolving to enter the Pacific, when thus deserted by his allies, Porter strikingly exhibited that judgment and decision which formed prominent characteristics of the man. His arrival in that great western ocean was opportune. The American whalers, all which had sailed before the war, lay entirely at the mercy

of the British letters-of-marque. Moreover, the Viceroy of Peru, having chosen to imagine that hostilities would soon break out between Spain and the United States, had armed several corsairs and despatched them to make prey of American vessels. But for Porter's fortunate decision, our marine in the Pacific would have fallen a prey, hopelessly, to the enemy; but the presence of the hero turned the tables, struck terror to the English, and led to the most astonishing cruise on record.

The first port he made, after passing the Horn, was Valparaiso, where he arrived on the 14th of March, 1813. He found here, that Chili had declared herself independent of Spain. The authorities, as well as inhabitants, received him, consequently, with unexpected cordiality. Having obtained a supply of provisions, he left Valparaiso, and coasted the shores of Chili and Peru. He had not been long at sea, when he met with a Peruvian corsair, that had captured two American ships on the coast of Chili, and had on board the crews of the two ships as prisoners. The commander of the corsair attempted to justify his conduct, by alleging himself to be an ally of Great Britain, and declaring that, in his belief, war already existed between Spain and the United States. Porter, finding the Peruvian captain determined to persist in his aggressions, lightened him of his armament by throwing it into the sea, released the prisoners, and then directing a polite letter to the viceroy, in which he gave his reasons for his conduct, he delivered it to the captain. On proceeding to the port of Lima, he recaptured one of the American vessels as she was entering the port.

Porter cruised for several months in the Pacific, making great havoc among the English traders. "He was," says the *Analectic Magazine*, "particularly destructive to those engaged in the spermaceti whale fishery. He took many, with valuable cargoes. One of the captured vessels he retained as a store-ship; he equipped her with twenty guns, and called

her the *Essex Junior*, appointing Lieutenant Downes as commander, while some of the others were given up to the prisoners, some sent to Valparaiso and laid up, and three sent to America. Captain Porter, now having a little squadron under his command, became the terror of those seas. He gained from his prizes a sufficient supply of provisions, medicines, naval-stores, clothing, and money; so that he was able to pay his officers and men without drawing on the government, and was able to remain at sea without sickness or inconvenience.

“From the extent of his depredations, he spread alarm and anxiety throughout all the ports of the Pacific, and created great disturbance in those of Great Britain. The merchants trembled with apprehension for the fate of their property, which was afloat on those waters, while the nation’s pride was humbled, when it beheld a single frigate bearing the sceptre over the whole waters of the Pacific; in defiance to their numerous fleets, destroying their commerce, and excluding their merchants from all western ports, and almost banishing the British flag from those climes where it had so long spread its folds to the breeze in proud predominance. The manner in which Captain Porter conducted his cruise baffled pursuit. Those who were sent in search of him were distracted by vague accounts, and were entirely unable to discover any traces by which they might be able to encounter him. Keeping in the open sea, and touching only at those desolate islands which form the Gallipagos, he left no traces by which he might be followed or discovered. Although he was deprived of all intelligence from land, and unable to gain any knowledge of home affairs, he often received a correct account of his enemies from the various prizes which he had captured.”

His success against the enemy’s whalers was, indeed, extraordinary. Between the 17th of April and the 3d of October, he captured no less than twelve British vessels,

having, together, a tonnage of 3369 tons, and mounting one hundred and seven guns. In the autumn of 1813, he learned that the *Phoebe* frigate, Captain Hillyar, was expected daily in the Pacific, accompanied by two sloops-of-war. He determined, without hesitation, to meet her. But, in consequence of the *Essex* having been at sea for such a length of time, some of her timbers were impaired and needed renewal, while the frigate required other repairs to enable her to face the foe. For this purpose, Porter repaired to the island of Nooaheevah, one of the Washington group, accompanied by several of his prizes. The inhabitants in the vicinity of the harbour received Captain Porter with marks of friendship; and they supplied him with abundance of provision, with which the island abounded. The life of the natives in this delicious island would have resembled a romance, but that feuds distracted them, leading to bloody wars, and, in one of these, Porter found it necessary to interfere. Having calked and completely overhauled the ship, made her a new set of water-casks, and taken on board a sufficient supply of provision for four months from the prizes, which he secured under the guns of a battery erected for their protection, Porter sailed for the coast of Chili, on 12th of December, 1813, leaving Lieutenant Gamble, of the marines, with twenty-one men, in command of the battery, with orders to proceed to Valparaiso after a certain time.

Having cruised off the coast of Chili, for a time, with the expectation of meeting Captain Hillyar, but without success, Porter proceeded to the port of Valparaiso. While lying here, Captain Hillyar arrived, having long sought for the *Essex*, but without success, and having almost given up all hopes of ever meeting with her. The *Phoebe* was accompanied by the sloop-of-war *Cherub*, which was strongly armed and manned. "Contrary to Captain Porter's expectation," says the authority so often quoted, "the *Phoebe* herself was far superior to the *Essex*. The united force of the *Phoebe*

and Cherub amounted to eighty-one guns and five hundred men; while the force of the Essex consisted of but forty-six guns, all of which, excepting six long twelves, were thirty-two pound carronades, only serviceable in close fighting. Her crew, having been much reduced by the manning of prizes, amounted to but two hundred and fifty-five men. The Essex Junior, being only intended as a store-ship, carried but ten eighteen-pound carronades and ten short sixes, with a complement of only sixty men. The Phœbe and Cherub, having been sent out expressly to search for and capture the Essex, were in prime order and good discipline, with picked crews, and hoisted flags, bearing the motto, 'God and our country, British sailors' best rights: traitors offend both.' This was in opposition to the American motto of 'Free trade and sailors' rights.' In reply to this motto, Captain Porter hoisted at his mizzen: 'God, our country, and liberty: tyrants offend them.'"

The two commanders now continued watching each other for a considerable period of time; Porter unwilling to engage the two British ships single-handed, and Hillyar declining the combat on any thing like equal terms. But the manœuvres on both sides, the desperate battle that ensued, and the violation of neutrality committed by Hillyar, in following the Essex into the harbour of Valparaiso, will be best narrated in the graphic language of Porter himself, as used in the official despatch. "On getting their provisions on board," he says, "the Phœbe and Cherub went off the port for the purpose of blockading me, where they cruised for nearly six weeks; during which time, I endeavoured to provoke a challenge, and frequently, but ineffectually, to bring the Phœbe alone to action, first with both my ships, and afterwards with my single ship with both crews on board. I was several times under way, and ascertained that I had greatly the advantage in point of sailing, and once succeeded in closing within gunshot of the Phœbe, and commenced a fire on her, when she

ran down for the Cherub, which was two miles and a half to leeward. This excited some surprise and expressions of indignation, as, previous to my getting under way, she hove to off the port, hoisted her motto-flag, and fired a gun to windward. Commodore Hillyar seemed determined to avoid a contest with me on nearly equal terms, and, from his extreme prudence in keeping both his ships ever after constantly within hail of each other, there were no hopes of any advantages to my country from a longer stay in port. I therefore determined to put to sea the first opportunity which should offer; and I was the more strongly induced to do so, as I had received certain intelligence that the Tagus, rated thirty-eight, and two other frigates, had sailed for that sea in pursuit of me; and I had reason to expect the arrival of the Raccoon from the north-west coast of America, where she had been sent for the purpose of destroying our fur establishment on the Columbia. A rendezvous was appointed for the Essex Junior, and every arrangement made for sailing, and I intended to let them chase me off, to give the Essex Junior an opportunity of escaping. On the 28th March, the day after this determination was formed, the wind came on to blow fresh from the southward, when I parted my larboard cable, and dragged my starboard anchor directly out to sea. Not a moment was to be lost in getting sail on the ship. The enemy were close in with the point forming the west side of the bay; but, on opening them, I saw a prospect of passing to windward, when I took in my top-gallant sails, which were set over single-reefed top-sails, and braced up for this purpose; but, on rounding the point, a heavy squall struck the ship and carried away her main-topmast, precipitating the men who were aloft into the sea, who were drowned. Both ships now gave chase to me, and I endeavoured, in my disabled state, to regain the port; but finding I could not recover the common anchorage, I ran close into a small bay, about three quarters of a mile to leeward of the battery, on

east side of the harbour, and let go my anchor within pistol-shot of the shore, where I intended to repair my damages as soon as possible.

“The enemy continued to approach, and showed an evident intention of attacking, regardless of the neutrality of the place where I was anchored; and the caution observed in their approach to the attack of the crippled *Essex* was truly ridiculous, as was their display of motto-flags and the number of jacks at their mastheads. I, with as much expedition as circumstances would admit of, got my ship ready for action, and endeavoured to get a spring on my cable; but had not succeeded when the enemy, at fifty-four minutes after three, P. M., made his attack, the *Phœbe* placing herself under my stern, and the *Cherub* on my starboard bow; but the *Cherub*, soon finding her situation a hot one, bore up and ran under my stern also, where both ships kept up a hot raking fire. I had got three long twelve-pounders out of the stern-ports, which were worked with so much bravery and skill, that in half an hour we so disabled both as to compel them to haul off to repair damages. In the course of this firing, I had, by the great exertions of Mr. Edward Barnewell, the acting sailing-master, assisted by Mr. Linscott, the boatswain, succeeded in getting springs on our cable three different times; but the fire of the enemy was so excessive, that before we could get our broadside to bear, they were shot away, and thus rendered useless to us. My ship had received many injuries, and several had been killed and wounded; but my brave officers and men, notwithstanding the unfavourable circumstances under which we were brought to action and the powerful force opposed to us, were noways discouraged, and all appeared determined to defend their ship to the last extremity, and to die in preference to a shameful surrender. Our gaff, with the ensign, and the motto-flag at the mizzen, had been shot away, but “Free trade and sailors’ rights” continued to fly at the fore. Our ensign was replaced

by another; and, to guard against a similar event, an ensign was made fast in the mizzen rigging, and several jacks were hoisted in different parts of the ship. The enemy soon repaired his damages for a fresh attack: he now placed himself with both his ships on my starboard quarter, out of the reach of my carronades, and where my stern-guns could not be brought to bear: he there kept up a most galling fire, which it was out of my power to return when I saw no prospect of injuring him without getting under way and becoming the assailant. My topsail sheets and halyards were all shot away, as well as the jib and fore-topmast stay-sail halyards. The only rope not cut away was the flying-jib halyards; and that being the only sail I could set, I caused it to be hoisted, my cable to be cut, and ran down on both ships, with an intention of laying the *Phoebe* on board. The firing on both sides was now tremendous; I had let fall my fore-topsail and foresail, but the want of tack and sheets rendered them almost useless to us—yet we were enabled, for a short time, to close with the enemy; and although our decks were now strewn with dead and our cock-pit filled with wounded,—although our ship had been several times on fire, and was rendered a perfect wreck, we were still encouraged to hope to save her, from the circumstance of the *Cherub*, from her crippled state, being compelled to haul off. She did not return to close action again, although she apparently had it in her power to do so, but kept up a distant firing with her long guns. The *Phoebe*, from our disabled state, was enabled, however, by edging off, to choose the distance which best suited her long guns, and kept up a tremendous fire on us, which mowed down my brave companions by the dozen. Many of my guns had been rendered useless by the enemy's shot, and many of them had their whole crews destroyed. We manned them again from those which were disabled, and one gun, in particular, was three times manned; fifteen men were slain at it, in the course of the action! But,



strange as it may appear, the captain of it escaped with only a slight wound. Finding that the enemy had it in his power to choose his distance, I now gave up all hopes of closing with him; and, as the wind, for the moment, seemed to favour the design, I determined to endeavour to run her on shore, land my men, and destroy her. Every thing seemed to favour my wishes.

“ We had approached the shore within musket-shot, and I had no doubt of succeeding, when, in an instant, the wind shifted from the land (as is very common in this port in the latter part of the day) and payed our head down on the *Phoebe*, where we were again exposed to a dreadful raking fire. My ship was now totally unmanageable; yet, as her head was toward the enemy, and he to leeward of me, I still hoped to be able to board him. At this moment, Lieutenant Commandant Downes came on board to receive my orders, under the impression that I should soon be a prisoner. He could be of no use to me in the then wretched state of the *Essex*; and finding (from the enemy's putting his helm up) that my attempt at boarding would not succeed, I directed him, after he had been about ten minutes on board, to return to his own ship, to be prepared for defending and destroying her, in case of an attack. He took with him several of my wounded, leaving three of his boat's crew on board to make room for them. The *Cherub* now had an opportunity of distinguishing herself, by keeping up a hot fire on him during his return. The slaughter on board my ship had now become horrible, the enemy continuing to rake us, and we unable to bring a gun to bear. I therefore directed a hawser to be bent to the sheet-anchor, and the anchor to be cut from the bows, to bring her head round: this succeeded. We again got our broadside to bear, and as the enemy was much crippled, and unable to hold his own, I have no doubt he would soon have drifted out of gun-shot, before he discovered we had anchored, had not the hawser unfortunately parted.

My ship had taken fire several times during the action, but alarmingly so forward and aft at this moment; flames were bursting up each hatchway, and no hopes were entertained of saving her. Our distance from the shore did not exceed three-quarters of a mile, and I hoped many of my brave crew would be able to save themselves, should the ship blow up, and I was informed the fire was near the magazine, and the explosion of a large quantity of powder below served to increase the horrors of our situation. Our boats were destroyed by the enemy's shot: I therefore directed those who could swim to jump overboard and endeavour to gain the shore. Some reached it, some were taken by the enemy, and some perished in the attempt; but most preferred sharing with me the fate of the ship. We, who remained, now turned our attention wholly to extinguishing the flames: and when we had succeeded, went again to our guns, where the firing was kept up for some minutes, but the crew had by this time become so weakened, that they all declared to me the impossibility of making further resistance, and entreated me to surrender my ship, to save the wounded, as all further attempt at opposition must prove ineffectual, almost every gun being disabled by the destruction of their crews. I now sent for the officers of division, to consult them; but what was my surprise to find only acting Lieutenant Stephen Decatur McKnight remaining, who confirmed the report respecting the condition of the guns on the gun-deck: those on the spar-deck were not in a better state. Lieutenant Wilmer, after fighting most gallantly throughout the action, had been knocked overboard by a splinter, while getting the sheet-anchor from the bows, and was drowned. Acting Lieutenant John G. Cowell had lost a leg; Edward Barnewell acting sailing-master, had been carried below, after receiving two severe wounds, one in the breast and one in the face; and acting Lieutenant William H. Odenheimer had been knocked overboard from the quarter an instant before,





CAPTURE OF THE ESSEX.

and did not regain the ship until after the surrender. I was informed that the cockpit, the steerage, the ward-room, and the birth-deck could contain no more wounded; that the wounded were killed while the surgeons were dressing them; and that, unless something was speedily done to prevent it, the ship would soon sink, from the number of shot-holes in her bottom. On sending for the carpenter, he informed me that all his crew had been killed or wounded, and that he had once been over the side to stop the leaks, when his slings had been shot away, and it was with difficulty he was saved from drowning. The enemy, from the smoothness of the water, and the impossibility of our reaching him with our carronades, and the little apprehension that was excited by our fire, which had now become much slackened, was enabled to take aim at us as at a target: his shot never missed our hull, and my ship was cut up in a manner which was, perhaps, never before witnessed. In fine, I saw no hopes of saving her, and, at twenty minutes after six, P. M., gave the painful order to strike the colours. Seventy-five men, including officers, were all that remained of my whole crew, after the action, capable of doing duty, and many of them severely wounded, some of whom have since died. The enemy still continued his fire, and my brave though unfortunate companions were still falling about me. I directed an opposite gun to be fired, to show them we intended no further resistance; but they did not desist: four men were killed at my side, and others at different parts of the ship. I now believed he intended to show us no quarter, and that it would be as well to die with my flag flying as struck, and was on the point of again hoisting it, when, about ten minutes after hauling the colours down, he ceased firing."

Never, perhaps, had a more unequal battle been protracted for so long a time. The disparity between the two forces was, in fact, about four to one against the Americans; for, while the Essex, except for a short period in closing, fought

the battle with her six long twelves, the enemy had the fifteen long eighteens which the *Phoebe* carried in her broad-side, besides the long guns of the *Cherub*. The conflict continued for two hours and a half, during which the long guns of the *Essex* were discharged seventy-five times. The American loss, as we have seen, was fifty-eight killed, sixty-six wounded, and thirty-one missing. The loss of the enemy was inconsiderable, being only five killed and ten wounded. In fact, after the *Essex* lost her topsail, it was left for the British to choose their position without resistance on the part of the Americans; and, selecting a convenient distance, they fired at the frigate of Porter as at a target, while, in consequence of the smoothness of the water, every shot told. The enemy's vessels, however, did not escape without serious injury. Thousands witnessed the sanguinary battle from the beach. During the conflict, Mr. Poinsett, the American consul, waited on the governor, and asked the protection of the batteries in behalf of the *Essex*; but he received an evasive answer, to the effect that, if the American frigate should succeed in reaching her ordinary anchorage, he would despatch an officer to Captain Hillyar, requesting him to cease firing. A resort to force he declined, under any circumstances. The fact was that the terror of the British name intimidated the governor, and hence he submitted to the violation of the Chilian waters without a complaint. Indignant at this subserviency, Mr. Poinsett seized the first occasion to leave the country.

The conduct of Captain Hillyar, in declining to meet the *Essex* single-handed, has generally been considered the result of secret instructions from his government. After the battle, he was exceedingly courteous to the conquered. He consented that the *Essex Junior* should be converted into a cartel, in order to carry the prisoners to the United States, furnishing a passport for the purpose. In virtue of this arrangement, that vessel left Valparaiso, and, after a rapid

voyage, arrived off Sandy Hook. Here she was brought to by the *Saturn*, Captain Nash, who questioned the authority of Captain Hillyar to grant the passport, and directed the *Essex Junior* to lie by him during the night. The next morning, Porter, suspecting that Captain Nash intended to detain him, sprang into a whale-boat, with a picked crew, and made for the land, which he safely reached, though thirty miles distant, and though, for part of the distance, the British pursued him. The suspicion of Porter, however, proved incorrect, for Captain Nash, discovering there was no artifice intended, but that the papers of the cartel were genuine, allowed the *Essex Junior* to proceed. The same day, Porter reached New York, where the fame of his exploits having already preceded him, he was the lion of the hour, the mob surrounding his carriage and taking out the horses, after which, with vociferous shouts, they dragged him to his lodgings.

The same enthusiasm which greeted him on this occasion, attended him wherever he went, and for a long period. The daring spirit shown in the conception of a cruise in the Pacific, the bold manner in which the plan had been carried out, the great losses inflicted on the enemy, the romantic incidents connected with the sojourn at Nooaheevah, and, lastly, the heroic courage with which Porter had fought his ship until she was a wreck,—all these, disseminated over the country by the returned prisoners, and eulogized for months subsequently by the public press, conspired to render the name of Porter more popular than that of any naval commander of the day except Decatur, and to cast into the shade, for a while at least, even the renown of Perry. Men said proudly that history furnished no parallel to this eventful cruise. The newspapers asserted that the annals of Britain might be searched in vain for a resistance so desperate as that of the *Essex*. And even veteran seamen, heroes who had fought in the Revolution, forgetting their usual

lamentations over the good old times, acknowledged that, in their days, nothing had been known to rival the courage with which Porter fought his ship, unless, perhaps, the stubborn bravery of Paul Jones in the *Bon Homme Richard*. On all hands, therefore, the returned warrior found himself renowned. Ambitious as he was of fame, he now had his fill of glory.

In January, 1815, the war terminated, and in the interval between his return and this event, Porter did not again get to sea. He was now appointed a naval commissioner, in which capacity he served until 1821. At this period, the West Indies were infested by pirates, and government being resolved on a serious effort to extirpate them, Porter volunteered to assume charge of the expedition. Perkins, in his *Historical Register*, says:—"A more difficult and hazardous service was scarcely ever undertaken. A long and constant exposure to a tropical sun by day, and deadly chills and damps by night, constantly threatened the lives of the little bands who were seeking, in open boats and vessels of the smallest size, the haunts of the freebooters, among the rocks and shoals of the uninhabited coasts of Cuba and St. Domingo. They performed it, however, with such signal zeal and success, that, at the end of sixty days from the commencement of his operations, the commodore, in his official despatches, was able to say, 'that there was not a pirate afloat in the region of Matanzas, the scene of their greatest depredations, larger than an open boat; and not a single piratical act had been committed on the coast of Cuba since he had organized and arranged his forces.' He, however, very much regretted that the gazettes of the United States had given publicity to the fitting out of his armament, its destination and object, long before his arrival in the West Indies, which enabled the pirates to change their ground, and prevented their complete destruction; which, otherwise, he should have accomplished. Many of them sought other hiding-places in the



southern and south-western coasts of Cuba, near Cape Antonio; whence, at an after period, they renewed their depredations."

We now approach a period of Commodore Porter's life which led to events much to be regretted, and in which both he and his country were seriously to blame. In October, 1824, the authorities of Foxardo, in Porto Rico, having committed an insult on the American flag, Porter, with his usual promptness, landed a force at the place and compelled an apology. In this conduct, while he exhibited a praiseworthy sensitiveness to the honour of his country, he acted, perhaps, with unbecoming haste, as he exceeded his powers. The intention of the act, however, should have been its apology. But there were envious men then, as now, in the navy of the United States—men only too glad to make a hero of Porter's renown amenable to the letter of the law; and, in consequence, when he returned home, he was tried by a court-martial and sentenced to be suspended from his command for six months. Unjust and ungenerous as this punishment was, the revenge taken by Porter is not to be defended. Indignant at the petty malice which led to the sentence; angry at being punished for a venial offence, which, in other cases, had been overlooked; irritated to reflect that, having voluntarily resigned a lucrative and easy post for an arduous duty, this had been the return; and forgetting that no ill-treatment on the part of one's country can excuse the desertion of her by a true patriot, he threw up his commission, and entered the naval service of Mexico. In this new situation, he continued until 1829, receiving an annual salary of twenty-five thousand dollars, and holding the rank of commander-in-chief over all the armed forces of the republic.

Little now remains to be told. The elevation of General Jackson to the Presidency of the United States opened a way for the return of Porter to his native land. The new executive had himself, when engaged in the Creek war, com-

mitted acts in defence of the honour of his country, far more violent than Porter's attack on Foxardo; and consequently he could appreciate the injustice of which the commodore had been made the victim. Accordingly, the post of minister to Algiers was offered to Porter, and accepted by the hero. On the conquest of Algiers by the French, the commodore was transferred to Constantinople, in the capacity of chargé d'affaires. Subsequently, he returned to the United States on a visit, and was afterwards sent out to the Porte as a full minister. In this capacity, he negotiated several important affairs with the court of Constantinople, and contributed to elevate materially the character of the American republic in the estimation of the Turks.

But the sands of the hero's life were now running low. In March, 1843, his health, which had been long failing, gave way finally, and, on the 28th of that month, he died, at his residence at Pera. His body was brought to the United States, and interred, with suitable honours, at the foot of the flag-staff, on the lawn in front of the Naval Asylum near Philadelphia.

Porter was comparatively short in stature. His countenance was a true index of his character, exhibiting the chivalry, heroism, and impulsiveness of his disposition.





JOHNSTON BLAKELEY.



ACTION WITH THE REINDEER.

## JOHNSTON BLAKELEY.

THE melancholy fate of Blakeley, who was lost at sea in the *Wasp*, with all his crew, in the autumn of 1814, will long keep his memory sacred among Americans. A gallant and efficient officer, his untimely fate can never be sufficiently regretted.

Johnston Blakeley was born near the village of Seaford, in the county of Down, Ireland, in the month of October, 1781. At the age of two, he accompanied his parents, who emigrated to the United States, then just acknowledged to be an independent nation. After residing in Philadelphia for a few months, the elder Blakeley removed to Charleston, South Carolina, with the intention of embarking in business. Subsequently, however, he established himself at Wilming-

ton, North Carolina. Here, in consequence of the insalubrity of the climate to persons not natives, Mr. Blakeley was deprived of his wife, and of all his children, except his son Johnston, by death. Warned of the peril that surrounded his sole remaining offspring, he resolved to send the lad away from the influences of the unhealthy region; and, accordingly, in 1790, he despatched Johnston to New York, to the care of an old friend, Mr. Hoope, a respectable merchant of that place.

Young Blakeley remained at New York, assiduously pursuing his studies, for a period of five years, after which he returned to Wilmington, and was for a time without any definite occupation. His father, however, had resolved to educate him for the bar, and though the inclinations of the son pointed to the sea, he concealed his wishes, deferring to those of his parent. It was therefore decided that he should be a lawyer. Accordingly, in 1796, he was placed at the University of North Carolina. In the ensuing year, the elder Blakeley died. Being without a relative on this side of the Atlantic, young Blakeley was, for a time, undecided what course to pursue; but having finally chosen for his guardian Mr. Jones, an eminent lawyer of Wilmington, he determined, by the advice of this gentleman, to continue his studies. Disaster, however, had not yet done with him. In 1799, his little fortune was unexpectedly swept away, and he found himself, while still at college, without means to complete his education. His guardian generously insisted on paying his expenses; but young Blakeley was averse to accumulating obligations he might never be able to repay; and believing himself released by necessity from executing his father's wish, he determined to abandon the law and adopt the profession of his choice. Accordingly, through the exertions of Mr. Jones, he obtained a midshipman's warrant, and made his first voyage in the year 1800.

His career, for a comparatively long period, presents

nothing eventful. He devoted himself, however, assiduously to his profession; the more so because, having no relatives in the United States, the service was emphatically to him country, family, and home. His aspirations for eminence were incessant. The few private letters of his which have been preserved, and which picture his feelings during this period, represent him as eager for the day to arrive when he should attain a command by which he might achieve something worthy of his name. "I hope the last Blakeley who exists," he says, "will lay down his life ere he tarnish the reputation of those who have gone before him. My father's memory is very dear to me, and I trust his son will never cast a reproach on it." When the war of 1812 broke out, Blakeley, then a lieutenant, received the command of the *Enterprise*. Her station was on the eastern coast, where she was kept actively employed in driving off the small privateers, which were sent out of the adjacent English ports continually. In August, 1813, the *Enterprise* captured the *Fly* privateer. It was Blakeley's ambition, however, to meet a British man-of-war of the size of his own vessel; but as this seemed impossible while he remained in the *Enterprise*, he was not sorry to be transferred from her, and appointed to the *Wasp*, a new sloop then building. Simultaneously with this change, he was promoted to the rank of master and commander.

Blakeley, however, had scarcely left his old schooner, when the British armed brig, the *Boxer*, appeared off the coast, and the battle ensued in which the heroic Burrows, who had succeeded him in the command, paid for victory with life. Fatal as was the triumph to Burrows, it would seem that Blakeley envied him notwithstanding. In a letter, written in January, 1814, he says, "I shall ever view as one of the most unfortunate events of my life, having quitted the *Enterprise* at the moment I did. Had I remained in her a fortnight longer, my name might have been classed with

those who stand so high. I cannot but consider it a mortifying circumstance that I left her but a few days before she fell in with the only enemy on this station with which she could have creditably contended. I confess I felt heartily glad when I received my order to take command of the *Wasp*, conceiving that there was no hope of doing any thing in the *Enterprise*. But when I heard of the contest of the latter ship, and witnessed the great delay in the equipment of the former, I had no cause to congratulate myself. The *Peacock* has ere this spread her plumage to the winds, and the *Frolic* will soon take her revels on the ocean; but the *Wasp* will, I fear, remain for some time a dull, harmless drone, in the waters of her own country. Why this is, I am not permitted to inquire."

The eager desire of Blakeley for distinction was not, however, suffered finally to be disappointed. In May, 1814, having received sailing orders, he left Portsmouth, New Hampshire, destined for a cruise upon the coasts of England. He soon reached the chops of the British channel, where he began to repeat the ravages caused by the *Argus*. The position of his ship at this juncture exacted the utmost vigilance, as she was in the very track of the enemy. Nor was it long before Blakeley met an enemy worthy of him. "At a quarter past four, A. M., on the 28th of June, 1814," says Mr. Cooper, who has left the best narrative of this event, "the *Wasp*, then cruising in latitude  $48^{\circ} 36'$  N., longitude  $11^{\circ} 15'$  W., made two sail, a little forward of the lee-beam. The weather was fine, the wind light, and the water exceedingly smooth for that sea. After keeping away in chase, another stranger was discovered on the weather-beam, when the ship was immediately brought by the wind, in order to close with her, it being obviously expedient for the American vessel to select the antagonist that had the most weatherly position. At 10, the chase showed English colours, and began to make signals. At noon, her signals were repeated,



and she fired a gun. The *Wasp* did not go to quarters until fifteen minutes past one; and soon after, believing he could weather the chase, Captain Blakeley tacked. The stranger also tacked, and stood off, no doubt to preserve the weather-gage. The *Wasp* now showed her ensign, and fired a gun to windward. The enemy, a large man-of-war brig, gallantly answered this defiance. The *Wasp* immediately set her light canvas to close, when, at thirty-two minutes past two, the enemy tacked, and began to draw near. The American now took in her light sails, and tacked in her turn; the English vessel still maintaining her weatherly position, and making sail to close.

“At seventeen minutes past three, the enemy was on the weather-quarter of the *Wasp*, distant about sixty yards, when he fired his shifting gun, a twelve-pound carronade mounted on a top-gallant fore-castle. Two minutes later, he fired again; and the discharges were repeated until the gun had been deliberately fired five times into the *Wasp*, at that short distance, and in unusually smooth water. All this time, the *Wasp* could not bring a gun to bear; and finding that the enemy drew ahead very slowly, Captain Blakeley put his helm down, and made a half-board, firing from aft forward, as the guns bore. He now hauled up the mainsail, and the two ships being necessarily very near, every shot told. But the fire of the *Wasp* was too heavy to be borne, and the brig ran her aboard, on her starboard quarter, at forty minutes past three, her larboard bow coming foul. The English now made several trials to enter the *Wasp*, led by their commander in person, but were repulsed with steadiness and without confusion. Two or three desperate efforts were repeated, but with the same want of success, when, at forty-four minutes past three, Captain Blakeley gave the order, in turn, to go on board the Englishman, and in one minute the flag of the latter was lowered. On the part of the enemy, this action lasted twenty eight minutes; on

the part of the *Wasp*, nineteen minutes, including the time employed in boarding.

“The prize was his Britannic Majesty’s sloop-of-war *Reindeer* eighteen, Captain Manners. The *Reindeer* was an ordinary thirty-two-pounder brig, but, like the *Peacock*, her armament, when taken, was of twenty-four pound carronades. She mounted eighteen guns, besides the shifting carronade, and had a complement on board of one hundred and eighteen souls. Her loss was twenty-five killed, and forty-two wounded; ten of the latter, dangerously. Among the slain was Captain Manners; and the first lieutenant and master were wounded. The *Wasp* had five men killed, and twenty-two wounded. Two midshipmen, both of whom subsequently died, were among the latter. The *Reindeer* was literally cut to pieces, in a line with her ports; her upper works, boats, and spare spars being one entire wreck. A breeze springing up next day, her foremast fell. The *Wasp* was hulled six times, and she was filled with grape. The principal loss she sustained in men, however, was in repelling the attempt to board. Captain Blakeley put a portion of his wounded prisoners on board a neutral, and proceeded himself to L’Orient, where he arrived on the eighth of July, with the remainder. The prize was burned, on account of the great danger of recapture.”

The *Wasp* was compelled to remain in port until the twenty-seventh of August; though her commander was impatient to get to sea, in order to signalize himself with more successes. Nor were the expectations of her heroic commander disappointed. When but three days out, the *Wasp* had a desperate action with a large man-of-war brig, belonging to the British navy, and would have succeeded in capturing her, but for the appearance of an enemy’s squadron in sight, which compelled Blakeley to forego the pleasure of destroying her. In an official letter to the Secretary of the Navy, dated at sea, September the 11th,

the hero gives this simple narrative of the affair. "After a protracted and tedious stay at L'Orient, we had at last the pleasure of leaving that place, on Saturday, the 27th of August. On the 30th, we captured the British brig *Lettice*, Henry Cockburn, master; and on the 31st of August, the British brig *Bon Accord*, Adam Durno, master. In the morning of the 1st of September, we discovered a convoy of ten sail to leeward, in charge of the Armada seventy-four, and a bomb-ship; stood for them, and succeeded in cutting out the British brig *Mary*, John D. Allen, master, laden with brass cannon, taken from the Spaniards, iron cannon and military stores from Gibraltar to England: removed the prisoners, set her on fire, and endeavoured to capture another of the convoy, but was chased off by the Armada. On the evening of the same day, at half-past six, while going free, discovered four vessels, nearly at the same time, two on the starboard, and two on the larboard bow, being the farthest to windward. At seven, the chase, a brig, commenced making signals, with flags, which could not be distinguished, for want of light, and soon after made various ones, with lanterns, rockets, and guns. At twenty-nine minutes after nine, having the chase under our lee-bow, the thirteen-pound carronade was directed to be fired into him, which he returned; ran under his lee-bow to prevent his escaping, and commenced the action. At ten o'clock, believing the enemy to be silenced, orders were given to cease firing, when I hailed, and asked if he had surrendered. No answer being given to this, and his firing having recommenced, it was again returned. At twelve minutes after ten, the enemy having suffered greatly, and having made no return to our last two broadsides, I hailed him the second time, to know if he had surrendered, when he answered in the affirmative. The guns were then ordered to be secured, and the boat lowered to take possession. In the act of lowering the boat, a second brig was discovered a

little distance astern, and standing for us. Sent the crew to their quarters, prepared every thing for another action, and awaited his coming up. At thirty-six minutes after ten, discovered two more sails astern, standing towards us. I now felt myself compelled to forego the satisfaction of destroying the prize. Our braces having been cut away, we kept off the wind until others could be rove, and with the expectation of drawing the second brig from his companions; but in this last we were disappointed. The second brig continued to approach us until she came close to our stern, when she hauled by the wind, fired her broadside, which cut our rigging and sails considerably, and shot away a lower main cross-tree, and retraced her steps to join her consorts; when we were necessitated to abandon the prize. He appeared in every respect a total wreck. He continued for some time firing guns of distress, until probably delivered by the two last vessels who made their appearance. The second brig could have engaged us, if he thought proper, as he neared us fast; but contented himself with firing a broadside, and immediately returned to his companions.

“Our loss is two killed, and one slightly wounded with a wad. The hull received four round-shot, and the foremast many grape-shot. Our rigging and sails suffered a great deal. Every damage has been repaired the day after, with the exception of our sails. Of the vessel with whom we were engaged, nothing positive can be said with regard to his name or force. While hailing him, previous to his being fired into, it was blowing fresh, (then going ten knots,) and the name was not distinctly understood. Of his force, the four shot which struck us are all thirty-two pounds in weight, being a pound and three-quarters heavier than any belonging to this vessel. From this circumstance, the number of men in his tops, his general appearance, and great length, he is believed to be one of the largest brigs in the British navy.”

This surmise of Blakeley proved correct. The vessel captured by the *Wasp* was the *Avon*, of eighteen guns, Captain Arbuthnot; and she was so much injured by the battle, that she sunk, her crew being with difficulty saved by her consort, the *Castilian* eighteen. The last boat from the *Avon* with the wounded was still half-way from the *Castilian*, when the former went down, head foremost. The loss to the British ship was nine killed and thirty-three wounded, among the latter being her second lieutenant, who received a mortal hurt early in the action. The *Wasp*, having made her escape from the squadron, after this gallant action, held on her course, and, on the 12th of September, captured the brig *Three Brothers*, and scuttled her. Two days subsequently, she took another brig, the *Bacchus*, scuttling her also. On the 21st, she captured the brig *Atlanta*, of eight guns; and the prize was a valuable one: she was despatched to America, under charge of Mr. Geisinger, one of the midshipmen of the *Wasp*. From that time, nothing was heard of the brave Blakeley, or his vessel, for many months; and conjecture was already speculating mournfully upon his fate, when it was ascertained that he had been spoken, nearly three weeks later, by a Swedish brig, bound from Rio Janeiro to Falmouth, England. This, however, proved the last intelligence that was ever heard of him. The gallant *Wasp*, with all on board of her, probably perished in a gale.

Thus terminated a highly successful cruise: thus perished many brave seamen and their leader. Though less than four months at sea, the *Wasp* had captured thirteen merchantmen, valued, with their cargoes, at a million of dollars. The sloop herself was one of the finest in the navy. Her crew were mostly young men, inspired by a laudable ambition, and emulating the bravery combined with discretion which so eminently distinguished their commander.

Blakeley had been married, in December, 1813, to Miss

Jane Hoope, the daughter of his father's old friend, Mr. Hoope, of New York. He left a posthumous daughter, whom the State of North Carolina, with substantial gratitude, educated at the expense of the commonwealth.

In person, Blakeley was rather below the middle stature. His eyes were black, expressive, and intelligent; his demeanour mild, yet manly; and his person handsome. His attainments were respectable; and he had considerable reputation for intellect.





LEWIS WARRINGTON.





## LEWIS WARRINGTON.

THE capture of the *Epervier*, by the *Peacock*, was deemed by Congress worthy of a gold medal; and accordingly this coveted honour was bestowed on Lewis Warrington, the captain of the *Peacock*, and the hero of the victory.

Warrington was born in Williamsburg, not far from the city of Norfolk, Va., on the 3d of November, 1782. At an early age he began his academic career, which he finished with honour at William and Mary College, in his native State, in his seventeenth year. Though fond of study, possessed of a retentive memory, and gifted with excellent abilities, in a word, qualified in every way to succeed in a learned profession, his views, from his earliest boyhood, pointed, not to the law, or politics, but the navy. Accordingly, in January, 1800, he obtained a warrant as midshipman, and entered on his first cruise.

He served, for a time, on board the *Chesapeake* thirty-

eight, Captain Samuel Barron. In this vessel he made a voyage to the West Indies, which formed his introduction to his new profession. Returning to the United States in May, 1801, he was removed to the *President*, forty-four, then fitting out for the Mediterranean, under Commodore Dale. On this cruise he was absent about a year, part of which period was spent in blockading Tripoli. In May, 1802, Warrington joined the *New York*, thirty-six, in which vessel he departed again for the Mediterranean. He had now acquired reputation as a deserving young officer, and accordingly was made master's mate of the frigate. In June, 1803, he once more returned to the United States, coming back in his old ship, the *Chesapeake*. On his arrival, he was immediately transferred to the *Vixen*, twelve, which sailed in August, 1803, for the Mediterranean, and, in this vessel, shared in the attacks on the gun-boats and batteries of Tripoli, which followed each other in such rapid succession during the ensuing year.

In November, 1804, Warrington was made an acting lieutenant, as a reward for his assiduous services of the past three years. In July, 1805, he was transferred to the *Siren*, sixteen, as junior lieutenant. In March, 1806, he joined the *Enterprise* twelve, as first lieutenant, another step in rank. In July, 1807, he returned to the United States. He had, on this last cruise, been absent from his country four years, during which he had been actively and unintermittingly occupied, and had seen every variety of service. His whole career in the navy had numbered but seven years, yet he had risen to comparatively advanced rank, and had participated in many stirring events. In three years he had visited the Mediterranean three times. He was considered an equally active and courageous young officer, and had already laid the foundation of the reputation which his victory over the *Epervier*, a few years later, perfected.

On his return to the United States, Warrington was

appointed to command a gun-boat at Norfolk, where Decatur was then stationed. It is almost impossible to conceive a situation more injurious to a young officer than the command of one of these paltry vessels. The impossibility of acquiring distinction, the temptation to habits of idleness, and the danger of contamination to the principles and manners were such as destroyed many of the most promising young officers at that time in the navy. Warrington, however, resisted the tendencies around him. His old love of study and the excellent associations he had formed in youth protected him where others succumbed, and he came out of the ordeal, tried and approved. He remained in the gun-boat service until February, 1809, when he was again ordered to the *Siren*, as first lieutenant. In this vessel, which carried out despatches, he visited France. On coming back to the United States, he was ordered to the *Essex* thirty-two, in which frigate he cruised as first lieutenant for some months on the American coast, after which he visited Europe, the *Essex* being again sent thither with despatches. In 1812, he returned to the United States, when Captain Smith, of the *Essex*, having been appointed to the Congress thirty-eight, that officer solicited as a favour that lieutenant Warrington might be allowed to accompany him. The request was complied with, and Warrington followed Smith to the Congress.

The war with England had just been declared. The Congress was one of the squadron lying at New York, under the command of Commodore Rodgers, and immediately put to sea, under that officer, in pursuit of the homeward bound British West India fleet. The unfortunate nature of this cruise is well known. Though Rodgers, during fourteen days, passed and repassed the British merchant-fleet continually, the fog was so thick, that his own vessels could not distinguish each other a quarter of a mile distant, much less discern the enemy. After sweeping the Atlantic, from New York

almost to the Cape de Verd, and thence to the chops of the British Channel, the American squadron returned to port, having failed entirely of the great prize of which they had been in pursuit. A few merchant-vessels were captured, but no men-of-war. Warrington continued in the Congress, with Captain Smith, until March, 1813, when he was transferred to the United States, as first lieutenant, under Decatur. In July of the same year, he was promoted to the rank of master-commandant, at the particular recommendation of Decatur. Shortly after, he received the command of the Peacock eighteen; and now the career of glory opened at last fairly before him!

The Peacock went to sea from New York, in March, 1814, and proceeded to the southward, as far as the Great Isaacs, cruising in that vicinity and along the Florida shore, to Cape Carnaveral. For some time, no vessels of the enemy were seen. But on the 29th of April, in latitude  $27^{\circ} 47'$  N., and longitude  $80^{\circ} 9'$  W., several strange sail were discovered, which, on a nearer approach, proved to be two merchantmen under convoy of a British brig-of-war. The former, immediately on detecting the Peacock, hauled up to the east-north-east, while the man-of-war edged gallantly away for the American ship. It was not long before the two vessels, both anxious for the combat, were alongside of each other. A close and spirited action instantly began. At the first broadside of the enemy, the Peacock received a couple of thirty-two pound shot in the quarter of her fore-yard, which, rendering her head-sails nearly useless, prevented manœuvring on her part, compelled her to fight running large, and reduced the struggle to one of skill in gunnery and weight of metal. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, however, the American ship, in about forty-two minutes, compelled her adversary to strike. The prize proved to be the brig Epervier, a vessel somewhat inferior to the Peacock. The weight of broadside

in favour of the latter was, however, comparatively slight, being only twenty pounds. But the difference in the damage sustained by the two vessels was very considerable, and altogether disproportionate to this disparity; for while the *Epervier* was hulled forty-five times, and lost twenty-six men, killed and wounded, the *Peacock* was not hulled by a single round-shot, and had not a man killed, and but two wounded. In an hour after the battle was over, the American ship was ready for action again.

The official letter of Warrington, communicating intelligence of this victory to the department, is modest and perspicuous. It is dated on the day of the battle, a few hours after the conflict. He writes:—"I have the honour to inform you that we have this morning captured, after an action of forty-two minutes, his Britannic Majesty's brig *Epervier*, rating and mounting eighteen thirty-two pound carronades, with one hundred and twenty-eight men, of whom eleven were killed, and fifteen wounded, according to the best information we could obtain; among the latter is her first lieutenant, who has lost an arm, and received a severe splinter-wound in the hip. Not a man in the *Peacock* was killed, and only two wounded, neither dangerously. The fate of the *Epervier* would have been decided in much less time, but for the circumstance of our fore-yard having been totally disabled by two round-shot in the starboard-quarter from her first broadside, which entirely deprived us of the use of our fore-topsails, and compelled us to keep the ship large throughout the remainder of the action. This, with a few topmast and topgallant backstays cut away, and a few shot through our sails, is the only injury the *Peacock* has sustained. Not a round-shot touched our hull, and our masts and spars are as sound as ever. When the enemy struck, he had five feet water in his hold; his maintopmast was over the side; his mainboom shot away; his foremast cut nearly in two, and tottering; his fore-rigging and stays

shot away ; his bowsprit badly wounded, and forty-five shot-holes in his hull, twenty of which were within a foot of his water-line, above and below. By great exertions, we got her in sailing order just as night came on. In fifteen minutes after the enemy struck, the Peacock was ready for another action, in every respect, but the fore-yard, which was sent down, fished, and we had the foresail set again in forty-five minutes—such was the spirit and activity of our gallant crew. The Epervier had under convoy an English hermaphrodite brig, a Russian, and a Spanish ship, which all hauled their wind and stood to the E. N. E. I had determined upon pursuing the former, but found that it would not be prudent to leave our prize in her then crippled state ; and the more particularly so, as we found she had on board one hundred and twenty thousand dollars in specie, which we soon transferred to this ship. Every officer, seaman, and marine did his duty, which is the highest compliment I can pay them.”

Warrington brought his prize safely into port, where, like all the naval victors who had preceded him, he was enthusiastically received. Congress, in gratitude for his victory, presented him with a gold medal. He was also promoted to be a post-captain. In the beginning of the ensuing year, he sailed from New York, in company with the Hornet, Captain Biddle, as part of the squadron of Decatur, intended to cruise in the Indian seas. The Hornet and Peacock were separated in a chase, and afterwards rejoined each other at Tristan d' Acunha, their appointed rendezvous ; but after waiting in vain for the President, which had meantime been captured off Long Island by the British squadron, they sailed for their destination. In a second chase, they were again separated, and did not afterwards meet. To effect her escape, the Hornet was compelled to throw overboard her guns, which rendered it necessary for her to return to port. The Peacock, however, continued her cruise, and,

gaining the Straits of Sunda, captured several vessels of the enemy, one of them an armed brig of fourteen guns. From this latter ship, Warrington learned of the declaration of peace, on which he returned to the United States, where he arrived in November, 1815. During the time he was in command of the Peacock, he captured nineteen of the enemy's vessels.

After the cessation of hostilities, Warrington passed a comparatively quiet and uneventful life. He served on several stations, and wore his broad pennant; but no opportunities for glory arose afterwards in his career.

Warrington died, at Washington city, Oct. 12th 1851.



## THOMAS MACDONOUGH.

THE fall of Napoleon, in April, 1814, by disengaging to a large extent the troops of Great Britain occupied in the continental war, left that power free to employ almost her entire strength against the United States. Accordingly, an invasion of the great State of New York, by way of Lake Champlain and the Hudson, was planned, and a formidable army detached, supported by a fleet upon the lake, in order to execute the scheme. The conquest of New York, and of some of the contiguous New-England commonwealths, was confidently predicted by the English government. But these brilliant expectations were doomed to a speedy disappointment. The army and fleet had advanced as far as Plattsburgh, on Lake Champlain, when they were met by the combined land and naval forces of the United States, the former under General Macomb, the latter under Commodore Macdonough. A desperate action ensued: the land attack met with a decided repulse; while, on the lake, the discomfiture of the British, was total. The supporting squadron being captured, the retreat of the royal army followed necessarily; and Macdonough had thus the good fortune of rescuing his country at a crisis even more imminent





THOMAS M. McDONOUGH.



than that from which Perry had saved her the autumn before.

Macdonough was born in Newcastle county, Delaware, in the month of December, 1783. His father had been a physician, subsequently a major in the continental line, and afterwards a judge of his native State; and dying in 1795, when our hero was still a youth, left a large family comparatively unprovided for. The influence of some friends procured for young Macdonough, however, a midshipman's warrant, thus giving him a start in life; and this was all he needed. He soon vindicated for himself, even among the gallant spirits by whom the navy was then filled, a high reputation for courage, skill, and industry. Everywhere he began to be spoken of as a young officer of great promise, who required only a fitting opportunity to distinguish himself signally. Being in the Mediterranean, accordingly, when it was resolved to burn the Philadelphia, Decatur paid him the compliment of selecting him as one of the midshipmen to accompany the expedition: and the result was that he shared in the merited glory of that enterprise. Throughout the hazardous voyage of the Intrepid into the harbour; throughout the exciting moments when the Philadelphia was fired; and throughout the perilous period that followed during the escape of the ketch, while the balls from the batteries were falling all around, the grave composure of Macdonough awakened general admiration, and gave an earnest of the calm heroism which, at a later day, made the flag of England sink before him at the battle of Champlain.

Not long after the destruction of the Philadelphia, Macdonough was at Syracuse, and one evening, being on shore, walked out alone. Robberies and assassinations were frequent after dusk, and the young officer suddenly found himself set upon, on this occasion, by three desperadoes. Placing his back against a wall, he soon had the good fortune to wound two. The third now took to flight. Macdonough,

however, rushed in pursuit, and pushed the wretch so hard, that he climbed to the roof of a building. But even here the assassin was not secure: the intrepid Macdonough followed him; and the villain, throwing himself, as a last resource, from the roof, perished by the fall. Another anecdote of the intrepidity of the young hero is told in the "Portrait Gallery," as having occurred in 1806, at Gibraltar, when Macdonough was first lieutenant of the *Siren*. "During the forenoon of a day in which Captain Smith," says that authority, "was on shore, a merchant-brig, under the colours of the United States, came into port, and anchored ahead and close to the *Siren*. Soon after, a boat was sent from a British frigate then lying in the harbour, on board this brig. After remaining alongside a little while, the boat returned, with one man more than she went with. This circumstance attracted the notice of Macdonough, who sent Lieutenant Page on board the brig, to know the particulars of the affair. Mr. Page returned with information that the man had been impressed by the boat from the British frigate, although he had a protection as an American citizen. Immediately on the receipt of this information, Macdonough ordered the *Siren's* gig to be manned, and putting himself in her, went in pursuit of the boat, determined to rescue his countryman. He overtook her alongside the British frigate, just as the man at the bow was raising his boat-hook to reach the ship, and took out the American by force, although the other boat had eight oars, and his only four, and carried him on board the *Siren*.

"When the report of this affair was made to the captain of the British frigate, he came on board the *Siren*, in a great rage, and desired to know how Macdonough dared to take a man from one of his majesty's boats. The lieutenant, with great politeness, asked him down into the cabin; this he refused, at the same time repeating the demand, with abundance of threats. The Englishman threw out some threats

that he would take the man by force, and said he would haul the frigate alongside the Siren for that purpose. To this Macdonough replied, that 'he supposed his ship could sink the Siren, but, as long as she could swim, he should keep the man.' The English captain said to Macdonough, 'You are a very young man, and a very indiscreet young man. Suppose I had been in the boat: what would you have done?' 'I would have taken the man, or lost my life.' 'What, sir! would you attempt to stop me, if I were now to attempt to impress men from that brig?' 'I would; and to convince yourself I would, you have only to make the attempt.' On this, the Englishman went on board his ship, and shortly afterwards was seen making in the direction of the American merchant-brig. Macdonough ordered his boat manned and armed, got into her himself, and was in readiness for pursuit. The Englishman took a circuit round the American brig, and returned again to the frigate. When Captain Smith came on board, he justified the conduct of Macdonough, and declared his intention to protect the American seaman."

Fortunately, the affair passed off without further difficulty. The anecdote illustrates not only the intrepidity of Macdonough, but the insolence with which American merchant-ships were treated by British men-of-war.

Nothing calling for particular mention occurred in Macdonough's career from this period up to the war of 1812. When that event took place, the elder officers were mostly sent to sea; and nothing remained for the junior ones but subordinate positions, unless they happened to be sent upon the lakes. It was the good fortune of Macdonough to be selected for the latter service. He was despatched to Lake Champlain, an important post, since it was on the direct route from Canada to the Hudson. For a time, however, there was little prospect of distinction to be gained in this quarter. The energies of the British were almost entirely devoted to contesting the supremacy of Erie and Ontario, in

order to avert the threatened invasion of Canada; and accordingly, the squadrons under Perry and Chauncey monopolized, for more than a year, the chief share of the attention of the nation. But early in the summer of 1814, it becoming known that the enemy was preparing for a descent upon the Hudson, the public interest was turned to Lake Champlain and to the young officer in command there. Rumour attached to the threatened invasion a strong probability of success. It was said that sixteen thousand veterans, selected from Wellington's army, had been landed in Canada, expressly to take part in this expedition; and it was added that the British fleet upon the lake was to be increased to such a size as would render the defeat of Macdonough inevitable. Nor did these rumours, on inquiry, prove exaggerations. The popular mind, in consequence, was raised to a great pitch of apprehension, and many persons, unacquainted with Macdonough's heroism, trembled for the result.

The naval force of the United States on Lake Champlain had been inconsiderable, until the winter of 1814, when a ship and schooner had been constructed. As soon as intelligence of the threatened invasion reached Washington, orders were issued for the keel of a brig to be laid, as well as for several galleys or gun-boats to be built. The British, on learning this, began the construction of a brig, taking care to make her larger than the American one. The brig of Macdonough was launched about the middle of August: the British brig on the 25th. The invading force was now known to be collecting on the frontier, and the American commander, accordingly, was anxious to get his little squadron ready before that of the enemy. In this he succeeded, and advancing to Plattsburgh, the point selected for defence, anchored on the 3d of September, on the flank of the troops occupying intrenchments at that place. The forces of General Macomb, commanding the American army at this point, amounted to but fifteen hundred effectives; while those of

Sir George Prevost, the British leader, were computed at not less than twelve thousand. From the 7th to the 11th, the enemy were employed in bringing up their battering train, stores, and reinforcements. On the latter day, Sir George Prevost having resolved upon the assault, the English squadron advanced to sustain it, by attacking the American fleet, and thus laying open the flank of Maccomb's troops, for defeat was regarded by the confident foe as impossible. The battle, however, resulted in one of the most glorious victories ever gained by the American flag. The triumph of Macdonough was complete. And not less conspicuous than his heroism in the struggle was the modesty with which he announced his success to the Secretary of the Navy. No biography of his life would be complete without this characteristically laconic despatch, written on the night after the battle. "The Almighty has been pleased," it says, "to grant us a signal victory on Lake Champlain, in the capture of one frigate, one brig, and two sloops-of-war of the enemy."

The best account of this remarkable battle, which, in consequence of its complexity, is difficult to describe lucidly, has been written by Mr. Cooper; and of his labours we shall avail ourselves. "Captain Macdonough," he says, "had chosen an anchorage a little to the south of the outlet of the Saranac. His vessels lay in a line parallel to the coast, extending north and south, and distant from the western shore near two miles. The last vessel at the southward was so near the shoal as to prevent the English from passing that end of the line, while all the ships lay so far out towards Cumberland Head as to bring the enemy within reach of carronades, should he enter the bay on that side. The Eagle, Captain Henley, lay at the northern extremity of the American line, and what might, during the battle, have been called its head, the wind being at the northward and eastward; the Saratoga, Captain Macdonough's own vessel,

was second; the Ticonderoga, Lieutenant Commandant Cassin, third; and the Preble, Lieutenant Charles Budd, last. The Preble lay a little farther south than the pitch of Cumberland Head. The first of these vessels just mentioned was a brig of twenty guns and one hundred and fifty men, all told; the second, a ship of twenty-six guns and two hundred and twelve men; the third, a schooner of seventeen guns and one hundred and ten men; the last, a sloop or cutter of seven guns and thirty men. The metal of all these vessels, as well as those of the enemy, was unusually heavy, there being no swell in the lake to render it dangerous. The Saratoga mounted eight long twenty-fours, six forty-two, and twelve thirty-two pound carronades; the Eagle, eight long eighteens, and twelve thirty-two pound carronades; the Ticonderoga, four long eighteens, eight long twelves, and four thirty-two pound carronades, and one eighteen-pound columbiad; the Preble, seven long nines. In addition to these four vessels, the Americans had ten galleys, or gun-boats, six large and four small. Each of the former mounted a long twenty-four, and an eighteen-pound columbiad; each of the latter, one long twelve. The galleys, on an average, had about thirty-five men each. The total force of the Americans present consisted, consequently, of fourteen vessels, mounting eighty-six guns, and containing about eight hundred and fifty men, including officers and a small detachment of soldiers, who did duty as marines, none of the corps having been sent on Lake Champlain. To complete his order of battle, Captain Macdonough directed two of the galleys to keep in shore of the Eagle, and a little to windward of her, to sustain the head of the line; one or two more to lie opposite to the interval between the Eagle and Saratoga; a few opposite to the interval between the Saratoga and Ticonderoga; and two or three opposite the interval between the Ticonderoga and Preble. The Americans were, consequently, formed in two lines, distant from each other



about forty yards; the large vessels at anchor, and the galleys under their sweeps.

“The force of the enemy was materially greater than that of the Americans. His largest vessel, the *Confiance*, commanded by Captain Downie in person, had the gun-deck of a heavy frigate, mounting on it an armament similar to that of the *Constitution* or *United States*, or thirty long twenty-fours. She had no spar-deck, but there was a spacious top-gallant fore-castle, and a poop that came no farther forward than the mizzen-mast. On the first were a long twenty-four on a circle and four heavy carronades; and on the last two heavy carronades, making an armament of thirty-seven guns in all. Her complement of men is supposed to have been considerably more than three hundred. The next vessel of the enemy was the *Linnet*, Captain Pring, a brig of sixteen long twelves, with a crew of from eighty to one hundred men. There were two sloops, the *Chubb*, Lieutenant McGhee, and the *Finch*, Lieutenant Hicks, the former carrying ten eighteen-pound carronades and one long six, and the latter six eighteen-pound carronades, one eighteen-pound columbiad, and four long sixes. Each of these sloops had about forty men. To these four vessels were added a force in galleys, or gun-boats, which Sir George Prevost, in his published accounts, states at twelve in number, and Captain Macdonough at thirteen. These vessels were similarly constructed to the American galleys, eight mounting two, and the remainder but one gun each. Thus the whole force of Captain Downie consisted of sixteen or seventeen vessels, as the case may have been, mounting in all ninety-five or ninety-six guns, and carrying about one thousand men.

“On the 3d of September, the British gun-boats sailed from *Isle aux Noix*, under the orders of Captain Pring, to cover the left flank of their army. On the 4th, that officer took possession of *Isle au Motte*, where he constructed a battery, and landed some supplies for the troops. On the

8th, the four larger vessels arrived under Captain Downie, but remained at anchor until the 11th, waiting to receive some necessaries. At daylight, on the morning just mentioned, the whole force weighed and moved forward in a body. The guard-boat of the Americans pulled in shortly after the sun had risen, and announced the approach of the enemy. As the wind was fair, a good working breeze at the northward and eastward, Captain Macdonough ordered the vessels cleared and preparations made to fight at anchor. Eight bells were striking in the American squadron, as the upper sails of the English vessels were seen passing along the land, in the main lake, on their way to double Cumberland Head. The enemy had the wind rather on his larboard quarter. The Finch led, succeeded by the Confiance, Linnet, and Chubb; while the gun-boats, all of which, as well as those of the Americans, had two latine sails, followed, without much order, keeping just clear of the shore.

“The first vessel that came round the Head was a sloop, which is said to have carried a company of amateurs, and which took no part in the engagement. She kept well to leeward, stood down towards Crab Island, and was soon unobserved. The Finch came next, and soon after the other large vessels of the enemy opened from behind the land, and hauled up to the wind in a line abreast, lying-to until their galleys could join. The latter passed to leeward, and formed in the same manner as their consorts. The two squadrons were now in plain view of each other, distant about a league. As soon as the gun-boats were in their stations, and the different commanders had received their orders, the English filled, with their starboard tacks aboard, and headed in towards the American vessels, in a line abreast, the Chubb to windward, and the Finch to leeward; most of the gun-boats, however, being to leeward of the latter. The movements of the Finch had been a little singular ever since she led round the Head, for she is said not to have hove-to, but

to have run off, half-way to Crab Island, with the wind abeam, then to have tacked and got into her station, after the other vessels had filled. This movement was probably intended to reconnoitre, or to menace the rear of the Americans. The enemy was now standing in, close-hauled, the Chubb looking well to windward of the Eagle, the vessel that lay at the head of the American line; the Linnet laying her course for the bows of the same brig; the Confiance intending to fetch far enough ahead of the Saratoga to lay that ship athwart hawse; and the Finch, with the gun-boats, standing for the Ticonderoga and Preble.

“As a matter of course, the Americans were anchored with springs. But not content with this customary arrangement, Captain Macdonough had laid a kedge broad off on each bow of the Saratoga, and brought their hawsers in upon the two quarters, letting them hang in bights, under water. This timely precaution gained the victory.

“As the enemy filled, the American vessels sprung their broadsides to bear, and a few minutes were passed in the solemn and silent expectation that, in a disciplined ship, precedes a battle. Suddenly the Eagle discharged, in quick succession, her four long eighteens. In clearing the decks of the Saratoga, some hencoops were thrown overboard, and the poultry had been permitted to run at large. Startled by the reports of the guns, a young cock flew upon a gun-slide, clapped his wings and crowed. At this animating sound, the men spontaneously gave three cheers. This little occurrence relieved the usual breathing-time between preparation and the combat, and it had a powerful influence on the known tendencies of the seamen. Still, Captain Macdonough did not give the order to commence, although the enemy’s galleys now opened; for it was apparent that the fire of the Eagle, which vessel continued to engage, was useless. As soon, however, as it was seen that her shot told, Captain Macdonough himself sighted a long twenty-four, and the

gun was fired. This shot is said to have struck the *Confiance* near the outer hawse-hole, and to have passed the length of her deck, killing and wounding several men, and carrying away the wheel. It was a signal for all the American long guns to open; and it was soon seen that the English commanding ship, in particular, was suffering heavily. Still the enemy advanced, and in the most gallant manner, confident, if he could get the desired position, that the great weight of the *Confiance* would at once decide the fate of the day. But he had miscalculated his own powers of endurance. The anchors of the *Confiance* were hanging by the stoppers, in readiness to be let go, and the larboard bower was soon cut away, as well as a spare anchor in the larboard fore-chains. In short, after bearing the fire of the American vessels as long as possible, and the wind beginning to baffle, Captain Downie found himself reduced to the necessity of anchoring while still at the distance of about a quarter of a mile from the American line. The helm was put a-port, the ship shot into the wind, and a kedge was let go, while the vessel took a sheer, and brought up with her starboard bower. In doing the latter, however, the kedge was fouled and became of no use. In coming-to, the halyards were let run, and the ship hauled up her courses. At this time the *Linnet* and *Chubb* were still standing in, farther to windward; and the former, as her guns bore, fired a broadside at the *Saratoga*. The *Linnet* soon after anchored, somewhat nearer than the *Confiance*, getting a very favourable position forward of the *Eagle's* beam. The *Chubb* kept under way, intending, if possible, to rake the American line. The *Finch* got abreast of the *Ticonderoga*, under her sweeps, supported by the gun-boats.

“The English vessels came-to in very handsome style, nor did the *Confiance* fire a single gun until secured; although the American line was now engaged with all its force. As soon as Captain Downie had performed this duty, in a sea-

manlike manner, his ship appeared a sheet of fire, discharging all her guns at nearly the same instant, pointed principally at the *Saratoga*. The effect of this broadside was terrible in the little ship that received it. After the crash had subsided, Captain Macdonough saw that near half his crew was on the deck, for many had been knocked down who sustained no real injuries. It is supposed, however, that about forty men, or near one-fifth of her complement, were killed and wounded on board the *Saratoga*, by this single discharge. The hatches had been fastened down, as usual, but the bodies so cumbered the deck, that it was found necessary to remove the fastenings and to pass them below. The effect continued but a moment, when the ship resumed her fire as gallantly as ever. Among the slain was Mr. Peter Gamble, the first lieutenant. By this early loss, but one officer of that rank, Acting Lieutenant Lavallette, was left in the *Saratoga*. Shortly after, Captain Downie, the English commanding officer, fell also.

“On the part of the principal vessels, the battle now became a steady, animated, but, as guns were injured, a gradually decreasing cannonade. Still the character of the battle was relieved by several little incidents that merit notice. The *Chubb*, while manœuvring near the head of the American line, received a broadside from the *Eagle* that crippled her, and she drifted down between the opposing vessels, until near the *Saratoga*, which ship fired a shot into her, and she immediately struck. Mr. Platt, one of the *Saratoga*'s midshipmen, was sent with a boat to take possession. This young officer threw the prize a line, and towed her down astern of the *Saratoga*, and in-shore, anchoring her near the mouth of the *Saranac*. This little success occurred within a quarter of an hour after the enemy had anchored, and was considered a favourable omen, though all well knew that on the *Confiance* alone depended the fate

of the day. The Chubb had suffered materially, nearly half of her people having been killed and wounded.

“About an hour later, the Finch was also driven out of her berth, by the Ticonderoga; and being crippled, she drifted down upon Crab-Island Shoal, where, receiving a shot or two from the gun mounted in the battery, she struck, and was taken possession of by the invalids belonging to the hospital. At this end of the line, the British galleys early made several desperate efforts to close; and soon after the Finch had drifted away, they forced the Preble out of the American line, that vessel cutting her cable, and shifting her anchorage to a station considerably in-shore, where she was of no more service throughout the day. The rear of the American line was certainly its weakest point; and having compelled the little Preble to retreat, the enemy’s galleys were emboldened to renew their efforts against the vessel ahead of her, which was the Ticonderoga. This schooner was better able to resist them, and she was very nobly fought. Her spirited commander, Lieutenant Commandant Cassin, walked the taffrail, where he could watch the movements of the enemy’s galleys, amidst showers of canister and grape, directing discharges of bags of musket-balls, and other light missiles, effectually keeping the British at bay. Several times the English galleys, of which many were very gallantly fought, closed quite near, with an intent to board; but the great steadiness on board the Ticonderoga beat them back, and completely covered the rear of the line for the remainder of the day. So desperate were some of the assaults notwithstanding, that the galleys have been described as several times getting nearly within a boat-hook’s length of the schooner, and their people as rising from the sweeps in readiness to spring.

“While these reverses and successes were occurring in the rear of the two lines, the Americans were suffering heavily at the other extremity. The Linnet had got a very com-



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manding position, and she was admirably fought; while the Eagle, which received all her fire, and part of that of the Confiance, having lost her springs, found herself so situated as not to be able to bring her guns fairly to bear on either of the enemy's vessels. Captain Henley had run his topsail-yards, with the sails stopped, to the mastheads, previously to engaging, and he now cut his cable, sheeted home his topsails, cast the brig, and running down, anchored by the stern, between the Saratoga and Ticonderoga, necessarily a little in-shore of both. Here he opened afresh, and with better effect, on the Confiance and galleys, using his larboard guns. But this movement left the Saratoga exposed to nearly the whole fire of the Linnet, which brig now sprang her broadside in a manner to rake the American ship on her bows.

“Shortly after this important change had occurred at the head of the lines, the fire of the two ships began materially to lessen, as gun after gun became disabled; the Saratoga, in particular, having had all her long pieces rendered useless by shot, while most of the carronades were dismantled, either in the same manner, or in consequence of a disposition in the men to overcharge them. At length, but a single carronade remained in the starboard batteries, and on firing it, the navel-bolt broke, the gun flew off the carriage, and it actually fell down the main hatch. By this accident, the American commanding vessel was left in the middle of the battle without a single available gun. Nothing remained but to make an immediate attempt to wind the ship. The stream anchor suspended astern was let go accordingly. The men then clapped on the hawser that led to the starboard quarter, and brought the ship's stern up over the kedge; but here she hung, there not being sufficient wind, or current, to force her bows round. A line had been bent to a bight in the stream cable, with a view to help wind the ship, and she now rode by the kedge and this line, with her stern under the raking

broadside of the *Linnet*, which brig kept up a steady and well-directed fire. The larboard batteries having been manned and got ready, Captain Macdonough ordered all the men from the guns, where they were uselessly suffering, telling them to go forward. By rowing on the line, the ship was at length got so far round that the aftermost gun would bear on the *Confiance*, when it was instantly manned, and began to play: the next gun was used in the same manner; but it was soon apparent that the ship could be got no farther round, for she was now nearly end-on to the wind. At this critical moment, Mr. Brum, the master, bethought him of the hawser that had led to the larboard quarter. It was got forward under the bows, and passed aft to the starboard quarter, when the ship's stern was immediately sprung to the westward, so as to bring all her larboard guns to bear on the English ship with fatal effect.

“As soon as the preparations were made to wind the *Saratoga*, the *Confiance* attempted to perform the same evolution. Her springs were hauled on, but they merely forced the ship ahead, and having borne the fresh broadside of the Americans until she had scarcely a gun with which to return the fire, and failing in all her efforts to get round, about two hours and a quarter after the commencement of the action, her commanding officer lowered his flag. By hauling again upon the starboard hawser, the *Saratoga's* broadside was immediately sprung to bear on the *Linnet*, which brig struck about fifteen minutes after her consort. The enemy's galleys had been driven back nearly or quite half a mile, and they lay irregularly scattered, and setting to leeward, keeping up a desultory firing. As soon as they found that the large vessels had submitted, they ceased the combat, and lowered their colours. At this proud moment, it is believed, on authority entitled to the highest respect, there was not a single English ensign, out of sixteen or seventeen that had so lately been flying, left abroad in the bay!

“In this long and bloody conflict, the *Saratoga* had twenty-eight men killed, and twenty-nine wounded, or more than a fourth of all on board her; the *Eagle* thirteen killed, and twenty wounded, which was sustaining a loss in nearly an equal proportion; the *Ticonderoga*, six killed, and six wounded; the *Preble*, two killed; while on board the ten galleys, only three were killed, and three wounded. The *Saratoga* was hulled fifty-five times, principally by twenty-four pound shot; and the *Eagle*, thirty-nine times. According to the report of Captain Pring, of the *Linnet*, dated on the 12th of September, the *Confiance* lost forty-one killed, and forty wounded. It was admitted, however, that no good opportunity had then existed to ascertain the casualties. At a later day, the English themselves enumerated her wounded at eighty-three. This would make the total loss of that ship one hundred and twenty-four; but even this number is supposed to be materially short of the truth. The *Linnet* is reported to have had ten killed, and fourteen wounded. This loss is also believed to be considerably below the fact. The *Chubb* had six killed, and ten wounded. The *Finch* was reported by the enemy to have had but two men wounded. No American official report of the casualties in the English vessels has been published; but by an estimate made on the best data that could be found, the *Linnet* was thought to have lost fifty men, and the two smaller vessels taken, about thirty between them. No account whatever has been published of the casualties on board the English galleys, though the slaughter in them is believed to have been very heavy.

“As soon as the *Linnet* struck, a lieutenant was sent to take possession of the *Confiance*. Bad as was the situation of the *Saratoga*, that of this prize was much worse. She had been hulled one hundred and five times; had probably near, if not quite, half her people killed and wounded; and this formidable floating battery was reduced to helpless impotency.

As the boarding-officer was passing along the deck of the prize, he accidentally ran against a lock-string, and fired one of the *Confiance's* starboard guns. Up to this moment, the English galleys had been slowly drifting to leeward, with their colours down, apparently waiting to be taken possession of; but at the discharge of this gun, which may have been understood as a signal, one or two of them began to move slowly off, and soon after the others followed, pulling but a very few sweeps. It is not known that one of them hoisted her ensign. Captain Macdonough made a signal for the American galleys to follow, but it was discovered that their men were wanted at the pumps of some of the larger vessels, to keep them from sinking, the water being found over the berth-deck of the *Linnet*; and the signal was revoked. As there was not a mast that would bear any canvas among all the larger vessels, the English galleys escaped, though they went off slowly and irregularly, as if distrusting their own liberty."

The same authority continues:—"The *Saratoga* was twice on fire by hot shot thrown from the *Confiance*, her spanker having been nearly consumed. No battery from the American shore, with the exception of the gun or two fired at the *Finch* from Crab Island, took any part in the naval encounter; nor could any, without endangering the American vessels equally with the enemy. Indeed, the distance renders it questionable whether shot would have reached with effect, as Captain Macdonough had anchored far off the land, in order to compel the enemy to come within range of his short guns. The Americans found a furnace on board the *Confiance*, with eight or ten heated shot in it, though the fact is not stated with any view to attribute it to the enemy as a fault. It was an advantage that he possessed, most probably, in consequence of the presence of a party of artillerists.

"Captain Macdonough, who was already very favourably known to the service for his personal intrepidity, obtained a vast accession of reputation by the results of this day. His

dispositions for receiving the attacks were highly judicious and seamanlike. By the manner in which he anchored his vessels, with the shoal so near the rear of his line as to cover that extremity, and the land of Cumberland Head so near his broadside as necessarily to bring the enemy within reach of his short guns, he made all his force completely available. The English were not near enough, perhaps, to give to carrouades their full effect; but this disadvantage was unavoidable, the assailing party having, of course, a choice in the distance. All that could be obtained, under the circumstances, appears to have been secured, and the result proved the wisdom of the actual arrangement. The personal deportment of Captain Macdonough in this engagement, like that of Captain Perry in the battle of Lake Erie, was the subject of general admiration in his little squadron. His coolness was undisturbed throughout all the trying scenes on board his own ship, and, although lying against a vessel of double the force and nearly double the tonnage of the *Saratoga*, he met and resisted her attack with a constancy that seemed to set defeat at defiance. The winding of the *Saratoga*, under such circumstances, exposed as she was to the raking broadsides of the *Confiance* and *Linnet*, especially the latter, was a bold, seamanlike, and masterly measure, that required unusual decision and fortitude to imagine and execute. Most men would have believed that, without a single gun on the side engaged, a fourth of their people cut down, and their ship a wreck, enough injury had been received to justify submission; but Captain Macdonough found the means to secure a victory in the desperate condition of his own vessel. At one moment, there was a cry in the *Saratoga* that, during the engagement, the commodore was killed. He was thrown on his face on the quarter-deck, nearly if not quite senseless, and it was two or three minutes before he came to his recollection. He pointed a favourite gun most of the action, and while standing in the middle of the deck, bending his body to sight it, a shot had

cut in two the spanker-boom, letting the spar fall on his back, a blow that might easily have proved fatal. A few minutes after this accident, the cry that the commodore was killed was heard again. This time, Madonough was lying on the offside of the deck, between two of the guns, covered with blood, and again nearly senseless. A shot had driven the head of the captain of his favourite gun in upon him, and knocked him into the scuppers."

Such was the victory of Lake Champlain—in popular estimation, regarded as second only to the battle of Lake Erie; by competent naval critics, adjudged to be superior. The enthusiasm with which its news was received throughout the nation was unbounded. By a single decisive action, Macdonough had frustrated the entire plan of the invasion; and the country hastened to testify its gratitude for the act. Congress voted the victor a gold medal and the thanks of the nation. He was also raised to a post-captaincy, his title as commodore having been merely by courtesy, and his real rank not being above that of a lieutenant. The State of New York bestowed on him a thousand acres of land, and the cities of New York and Albany also presented him with tracts. The legislature of Vermont purchased for him, with delicate tact, an estate of two hundred acres on Cumberland Head, overlooking the scene of his triumph. Wherever he travelled, for a long period after the victory, he was followed by the acclamations of the people. In a word, by one decisive battle, he had elevated himself, in a single day, and at the early age of twenty-eight, to an equality with such heroes as Hull, Decatur, Stewart, and Perry, so that life left him scarcely any thing more to desire of renown. Yet, with characteristic modesty, he declined, whenever it was possible, the festive honours tendered to him, and remained to the last undazzled by the exalted station which he had so suddenly attained.

Macdonough, after the close of the war, did not sink into

idleness. He shared the honours of the service, both at home and abroad, never regarding his own comfort when duty called him to action. His candid, earnest, and just mind rendered him a valuable member of court-martials. For some years prior to his decease, he resided at Middletown, Connecticut, where he had married. His life was not destined to be a protracted one. The fatal disease of our climate had early made inroads on his constitution. The premature death of his wife probably hastened his end. On the 10th of November, 1825, he breathed his last—another of the countless victims of consumption.

In person, Macdonough was tall and dignified. His complexion, hair, and eyes were light; his features were pleasing; and an air of resolution, indicative of his heroic soul, distinguished him on all occasions. He was sincerely pious. Before going into battle, on the memorable 11th of September, he prayed at the head of his officers; and, if we have faith in the interposition of Providence in behalf of a just cause, we must believe his petition was not without its influence on the day.



## ROBERT HENLEY.

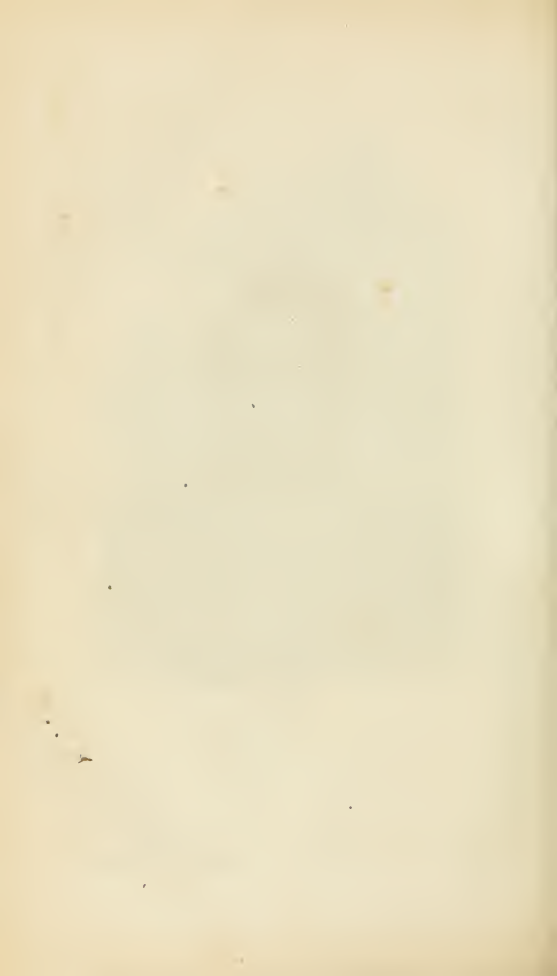
As second in command at the battle of Lake Champlain, Robert Henley will always be remembered gratefully by America. Though his bravery had been proved on preceding occasions, it was put to a test in that desperate and decisive combat, which established it as of the true heroic order.

Henley was a Virginian by birth, and connected with the family of Washington. His parents resided in James City county, where, on the 5th of January, 1783, he first drew breath. It was the original intention to educate him for the profession of the law, but he displayed such an aversion to this plan of life, and so manifestly preferred the naval service, that his family, reluctantly yielding to his inclinations, pro-





ROBERT HENLEY.



cured for him, in 1799, a midshipman's warrant. In contemplation of this favourite pursuit, he had, with an unusual energy for a lad of sixteen, applied himself to naval studies, so that, when he gained the darling object of his wishes, he was not wholly unprepared for his new duties.

He first served on board the *Constellation* thirty-eight, Commodore Truxtun. His attention to his profession, his sagacity, his courage, and the unusual information he possessed early attracted the attention of his comrades, and finally drew upon him the favourable notice of the commodore himself. His high qualities were prominently exhibited in the remarkable action between the *Constellation* and *La Vengeance*, on the 1st of February, 1800. In this battle, the American frigate, which carried only thirty-eight guns, was matched against a French man-of-war mounting fifty-four. The combat began at eight o'clock in the evening, and continued until after midnight, when the two ships were separated by a squall. Twice, during the battle, *La Vengeance* struck, but the darkness of the night prevented this being seen, on which the French captain, believing that it was the intention to sink him, renewed the conflict. The enemy's vessel was thought to have foundered in the hurricane, as she could not be seen after it was over; but five days afterwards she arrived at Curacao, almost a wreck, her pumps having been going uninterruptedly since the fight.

This, one of the most desperate naval actions on record, was the kind of a struggle to exhibit prominently the high qualities of Henley. Aware that the *Constellation* was engaged with an enemy vastly her superior, and convinced that only the most determined valour could obtain a victory, the young midshipman fought with a courage that inspired all within his reach, and thus contributed, in an unusual degree for one in so inferior a station, to the glorious result. In the most murderous crisis of the combat, he was foremost at his exposed post. Though nearly exhausted by fatigue,

he never, for a moment, left his station. His gallant behaviour attracted the particular notice of Truxtun, who, when the action was over, pointing to him, exclaimed, "That stripling is destined to be a brave officer." To have won such praise, from such a source, when but a lad of seventeen, stimulated Henley throughout his whole future career, and in part secured him the renown which this commendation by the commodore predicted.

On his return to the United States, at the close of the French war, Henley obtained leave of absence, and, repairing to Williamsburgh, in his native State, attended there a course of lectures on navigation and science. Not satisfied with a reputation for courage, he was ambitious of shining in the more intellectual walks of his profession. The government, aware of his merit, soon appointed him to the command of a gun-boat at Norfolk, with the rank of a lieutenant. This was, in his case, a compliment; but he longed for more active service. He continued, for several years, employed in this and similar situations, while others, more fortunate, were winning undying laurels in the war with Tripoli. At last, the threatened hostilities with Great Britain broke out, and Henley, who had long desired an opportunity to distinguish himself, saw in this event a possibility of his wish being gratified. Nor was he disappointed. In July, 1813, he was advanced to the rank of master-commandant, and, in the following year, having been appointed to command the brig *Eagle*, on Lake Champlain, had the good fortune to be second in command in the eventful battle of the 11th of September, 1814.

For this decisive victory the credit of the nation was indebted, after Macdonough, to Henley. The *Eagle* was placed at the head of the American line of battle, was the first vessel to open on the foe, and for a while received almost the entire fire of the advancing fleet. Later in the action, Henley's brig was exposed to the fire of two of the enemy's principal vessels, and for so long a time that the springs on

her cables were shot away. Finding that he could not bring his broadsides to bear, Henley, who had run his topsail-yards, with the sails stopped, to the mastheads, before engaging, sheeted home his topsails, cast the brig, and running down, anchored by the stern, between Macdonough's vessel and the Ticonderoga, necessarily a little in-shore of both. Here he opened his fire afresh, and with terrible effect. When the battle closed, it was found that the Eagle had lost thirteen killed and twenty wounded; a number that proportionably equalled the loss on board even Macdonough's ship, and evinced the desperate manner in which Henley had fought his brig. The Eagle was hulled thirty-nine times in the action; another fact indicative of her exposed situation. In a word, by his behaviour in this struggle, Henley had verified the prediction of his old commodore, Truxtun.

Macdonough, in his official despatches, did not forget the conduct of his second in command. "To Captain Robert Henley," he wrote, "of the brig Eagle, much is to be ascribed; his courage was conspicuous, and I most earnestly recommend him as worthy of the highest respect and confidence." Congress, as some manifestation of its approval, voted to Henley a gold medal, commemorative of the victory of Champlain. The same body also passed a vote of thanks to him. His countrymen unanimously extolled him, and sanctioned these marks of approval, declaring that, while Macdonough had set the example of victory, Henley had ably seconded him. In a word, the fame which Henley had acquired more than equalled his brightest visions, and he, who had so long deplored the want of a favourable opportunity, now acknowledged that Fortune had fully compensated him for her delay.

After the battle of Lake Champlain, Henley resided, for a time, at Norfolk. Subsequently he was promoted to the rank of post-captain. In 1827, he was appointed to the *Hornet*, a sloop-of-war, and ordered to cruise in the West

Indies. On his return from this voyage, he was stationed in North Carolina, where he remained several years. He was next ordered to Charleston, South Carolina. But his life was now drawing to a close. In 1829, he died in command at his new post, lamented not less by the navy in general than by his fellow citizens among whom he had but lately removed.

The personal appearance of Henley was noble and commanding. In temperament he was sanguine and ardent; his character chivalrous; and in manners affable, frank, and warm-hearted. He was as generous as brave; and though quick to take offence, easy to be appeased. He was magnanimous, he was hospitable, a devoted patriot, and the idol of his crews.





STEPHEN CASSIN.





## STEPHEN CASSIN.

ANOTHER prominent hero of the battle of Lake Champlain was Stephen Cassin, who, on that memorable day, was third in rank in the American squadron. The gallant manner in which he fought his vessel on that occasion, not only extorted the commendation of the commodore, but made his name famous throughout every State of the Union.

Cassin was born in Philadelphia, on the 16th of February, 1783, and was the son of John Cassin, a commodore in the infant navy of the United States. Like the younger Decatur, our hero adopted his father's profession, and in 1801, having obtained a midshipman's warrant the preceding year, made his first cruise in the Philadelphia thirty-eight. On board this vessel he served two years, when he left her for the Nautilus, a schooner of sixteen guns, which had been ordered to the Mediterranean, there to form part of Preble's squadron. By this fortunate transfer he escaped capture in the Philadelphia, and the long and rigorous imprisonment which her

officers and crew endured. He continued actively employed in the *Nautilus* for nearly two years, when he was removed to the *John Adams* twenty-eight, with the rank of a lieutenant.

On his return to the United States, which followed soon after this promotion, Cassin obtained leave of absence from the department, and embarked for the Pacific as master of a merchant-ship. During this voyage he was captured by the Spaniards, and detained a prisoner for nearly two years. Reaching his native land at last, he was appointed to the *Chesapeake* thirty-six, Captain Hull, in which vessel he made several cruises. The moments of peace are not those, however, in which a naval officer can distinguish himself, and hence the life of Cassin for many years presented no event worthy of our notice. He showed himself, however, on all occasions, a competent seaman, a good officer, and a brave man.

When, however, hostilities broke out between Great Britain and the United States, a new career opened to Cassin. Appointed to the *Ticonderoga*, of seventeen guns, the third vessel in size in the American squadron on Lake Champlain, he participated prominently in the battle of the 11th of September, 1814, manœuvring and fighting his schooner with the greatest skill and resolution. In the line of battle, as at first formed, the *Ticonderoga* was third, the *Eagle* being first, and the *Saratoga* second; but during the progress of the action, this order became materially changed. At one period of the struggle, the *Ticonderoga* was exposed, for some time, to a combined attack of the enemy's galleys. This happened after the *Preble*, of seven guns, which originally brought up the rear of the line, had been driven out of the action, and compelled to anchor considerably in-shore, where she was of no more service during the conflict. By this success on the part of the British, the American rear became the weakest part of the line, a circumstance which emboldened the

enemy's galleys to assail the *Ticonderoga* with the greatest fury, hoping to compel her to imitate the *Preble's* flight.

But the *Ticonderoga* was not only a vessel of far greater size than the *Preble*, but had for her commander a hero who was resolute to conquer or die. During the entire attack upon his schooner, Cassin walked the taffrail, watching the movements of the enemy's galleys, and directing discharges of bags of musket-balls and other light missiles on the assailants. Showers of canister and grape rained around, yet he maintained his exposed position notwithstanding, effectually keeping the enemy at bay. Several times the English galleys dashed up so close to the *Ticonderoga*, that scarcely the length of a boat-hook intervened between them and the schooner, and their crews, rising from the sweeps, stood up in readiness to board; but the calm and steady eye of Cassin, which detected the weakest points of the assailants, and the resolute courage with which his men plied their missiles of destruction under his orders, always repelled the British in time. Every attempt of the enemy to carry the *Ticonderoga* by boarding was thus frustrated, and the rear of the American line preserved in consequence unbroken. But for this successful defence of Cassin, the victory, notwithstanding the heroic efforts of Macdonough and Henley, would have been greatly endangered, and even probably lost.

The commodore, in his official despatches, noticed the conduct of Cassin in handsome terms. He said: "The *Ticonderoga*, Lieutenant Commandant Cassin, gallantly sustained her full share of the action." A higher compliment still was the selection of Cassin, by Macdonough, to carry the captured flags, and also the despatches describing the victory, to Washington. Throughout the nation there was a universal sentiment of admiration at the manner in which Cassin had defended the rear of the American line, and wherever the young officer appeared, both during his journey and afterwards, he was received with the utmost enthusiasm. In the

victorious squadron also, the deportment of Cassin and of his brave crew was the theme of general remark. Congress, in distributing the laurels of triumph, did not forget the young lieutenant, but presented him with a gold medal, similar to those bestowed on Macdonough and Henley. He was also promoted to the rank of master-commandant, his commission being made to date from the day of the battle.

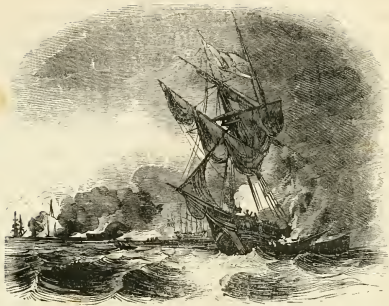
The loss of the *Ticonderoga* in the action was six killed and six wounded. As her crew consisted of one hundred and ten souls, she suffered relatively less than either the *Saratoga* or the *Eagle*. The former, with a crew of two hundred and twelve, had twenty-eight killed and twenty-nine wounded; and the latter, with a crew of one hundred and fifty, had thirteen killed and twenty wounded. This comparative immunity of the *Ticonderoga* arose from the fact that, instead of being under the fire of the batteries of heavier ships, as the *Eagle* and *Saratoga* were, she was, for most of the action, exposed only to the assaults of galleys. Had the latter indeed succeeded in boarding her, the slaughter would probably have surpassed that on board either of the other ships; and it is to the credit of Cassin that this was not allowed to occur. The greater loss of men in the *Saratoga* and *Eagle* is not therefore a proof that they were better fought. Where all, moreover, behaved so well, it would be invidious to draw distinctions.

After the declaration of peace, which ensued within the six months following this victory, Cassin was, for some time, unemployed. He subsequently was promoted, in due order, to the rank of post-captain, and commanded at the Rhode Island station, at Newport. Afterwards, the navy-yard at Washington was intrusted to him. At this post he remained five years. His residence, when not employed, was in the vicinity of the capital of the nation, where his amiable and courteous deportment, united to the reputation he so nobly won, drew about him a large circle of friends.





CHARLES STEWART.



## CHARLES STEWART.

PROMINENT among the naval heroes of the United States is Charles Stewart. His services during the war with France, his gallantry in the attacks on Tripoli, and his capture of the *Cyane* and *Levant* in the war of 1812, will ever be remembered by a grateful country. Few naval captains have been engaged successfully in so many actions; for of him, as of Marlborough, it may be said, "He never fought a battle which he did not win."

The parents of Stewart came originally from Ireland, and settled at Philadelphia. In that city the future hero was born, on the 28th of July, 1778, about a month after the British army had evacuated the place. Before the lad had reached his second year, his father was suddenly cut off by death, and the mother found herself left almost penniless, with eight children to support. Of these, the subject of our memoir was the youngest. The war, moreover, still lingered. The prices of almost every article were enormous, and money

was constantly depreciating in value. Under such circumstances, most women, situated as Mrs. Stewart was, would have despaired. But, possessing uncommon energy of character, and a firm trust in the protecting mercy of Heaven, she met the difficulties before her with a cheerful spirit, and, as is ever the case in similar circumstances, triumphed signally over them. She not only kept her family together, but gave the children a good English education, and, what was still better, trained them to habits of virtue, thrift, self-reliance, and industry.

Her youngest child having early showed a predilection for the sea, this admirable woman procured for him, when he was about thirteen, a situation in the merchant-service, where, profiting by her lessons, he rose steadily through the several grades, from the situation of a cabin-boy to the command of an Indiaman. When he attained this last elevation he was still under age. The breaking out of the war with France, and the consequent opening for talent in the navy, directed his attention, about this time, to the service of the United States. Accordingly, he sought for and obtained a lieutenancy in the navy. This was in March, 1798, when Stewart was not quite twenty years of age. He soon after joined the frigate *United States*, Commodore Barry, which, in July of the same year, went to sea on her first cruise. Some of the most gallant spirits in the service were then on board the *United States*; among others, Decatur, the future hero of Tripoli. The frigate first cruised to the eastward, but afterwards, in company with the *Delaware* twenty, and the *Herald* eighteen, sailed for the West Indies, where she performed valuable service in protecting our commerce. During the autumn, two privateers, the *Sans Pareil* sixteen, and *Jaloux* fourteen, were captured, and sent in. But no opportunity occurred by which the *United States* could measure herself with a foe of equal prowess, and consequently Stewart was deprived of the chance of distinction he so ardently desired.



Nevertheless the assiduity of the young officer, his evident fondness for his profession, and the indomitable energy which was observable in all his actions, recommended him to the favourable esteem of Barry, and, through the commodore, to the notice of the department. Accordingly, in July, 1800, Stewart was promoted to a separate command, being appointed to the schooner *Experiment*, of twelve guns. His destination, in his new vessel, was his old cruising ground, the West Indies. Fortune favoured him from the first moment when he began to act for himself. On the night of the 1st of September, he fell in with the French armed schooner, the *Two Friends*, of eight guns; and, after a combat which lasted scarcely ten minutes, captured her. Soon after, being short of water, he went into Prince Rupert's Bay, St. Domingo, where an incident occurred that proved him possessed of high merit as well as physical courage. The *Experiment* was still lying at anchor when two British sloops-of-war, each mounting twenty guns, arrived also at Prince Rupert's. On board of one of these ships was an American seaman, Amos Seeley, who had been impressed in England. The sailor, seeing the flag of his native country, resolved to seek its protection, and, accordingly, addressed a letter to Stewart, soliciting the interference of the latter in his behalf. Stewart, having satisfied himself that the man was really an American, opened a correspondence upon the subject with the captain of the ship. The courteous tone in which the epistle was couched led to a personal interview. Here the address of Stewart was exhibited in a striking manner. Representing the hardship of stealing the man from his family, and silencing every argument which the British officer brought forward, he adroitly compelled the latter either to deliver the sailor, or resort to physical force to retain him. After the courtesies which had passed, the latter could not well have been defended. The British captain still hesitated, averring that he feared censure at home, for the man had

been impressed as an Englishman. "Then prove him an Englishman," said Stewart, "and I say no more: but you cannot, while I can prove him to be an American." The interview here ended. But Seeley was surrendered, and entered on board the Experiment.

On the 30th of September, soon after leaving Prince Rupert's, and while cruising under the lee of the island of Bermuda, Stewart discovered two sail in pursuit of him, with English colours flying. The Experiment continued lying to, with the British signal of the day flying, until the strangers approached within gun-shot, when, finding one to be a brig-of-war of eighteen guns, and the other a three-masted schooner of fourteen guns, and that they would not answer the signal, Stewart determined to retreat from such superior force, and avail himself of any opportunity that might offer for cutting off one of the vessels. It was soon discovered that the Experiment could outsail either of the foe, and after a fruitless chase of two hours, on the wind, the latter gave up the pursuit, hoisted French colours, fired a gun of defiance to windward, and kept off before the wind. The Experiment being now satisfied of their character and force, manœuvred to gain their wake to windward, and thus became the pursuer in turn. The brig was now about a league ahead of the schooner, so that the latter was entirely in Stewart's power. Accordingly, he cleared for action, and closed with the foe by running up on her weather-quarter, and giving her a broad-side. The attack was so vigorous that the enemy, unable to resist it, almost immediately surrendered. Throwing Lieutenant Porter into the prize, Stewart promptly made sail after the brig: but the latter had, meantime, gained so much that the Experiment could not overtake her. The captured schooner proved to be the Diana, Captain Peraudeau, having on board General Rigaud, with some invalid soldiers, and a crew of sixty-five men. The prize was carried into St. Kitts. This brilliant success was entirely owing to the bold-

ness of Stewart's manœuvres, for the brig, if she had turned to meet him, was of sufficient force to have taken the Experiment in a few minutes.

Having disposed of his prisoners, Stewart repaired again to his cruising station, where he recaptured a number of American vessels from the French, and thus rescued a large amount of property. On the sixteenth of November, he made a suspicious sail, to which he gave chase until dark. Calculating the courses and distances, he ordered the Experiment to be kept in the required direction until midnight, when, if he did not close with the stranger, he intended to abandon the chase. At that hour, the schooner was hauled by the wind, accordingly; but, in a few minutes, a sail was made out quite near, and to windward. The Experiment immediately went to quarters, ran up under the stranger's lee, and hailed; but finding the other vessel indisposed to give an answer, Stewart ordered a gun fired, which was returned by a broadside. A sharp action now began, but, it blowing heavily, and the schooner lying over, it was found impossible to depress the guns sufficiently to hull the enemy. Planks were now cut and placed beneath the trucks of the gun-carriages. The shot of the Experiment, after this, told with terrible effect. Soon her antagonist struck. Lieutenant Porter was now directed to take possession of the prize, but, on getting alongside, he was refused permission to board. As soon as this was known in the schooner, the boat was directed to pull out of the line of fire, with a view to recommence the action, when the stranger hailed to say he submitted. The vessel proved to be an English privateer, the Louisa Bridger, out of Bermuda, with an armament of eight nine-pounders, and a crew of between forty and fifty men. She was much cut up, and had four feet water in her hold when she surrendered. Her captain was among the wounded. Stewart, as soon as he discovered his mistake, did every thing he possibly could to remedy the disaster, the Experi-

ment lying by her the whole of the next day, assisting in repairing damages. She then proceeded on her cruise, while Stewart returned to St. Kitts. The *Experiment* lost, in this action, one man killed and a boy wounded, and received considerable injury in her rigging.

Truxtun, who was now the senior officer in the West Indies, shortly after ordered Stewart to proceed with a convoy from Martinique to the island of St. Thomas, and thence to Curacao, to look for the United States brig *Pickering* and frigate *Insurgent*, both of which were missing, and supposed to be lost. Nothing, however, could be heard of either of these vessels; the fears respecting them proved to be true; both had foundered in the equinoctial gale, with a store-ship under their care, and all on board the three vessels had perished. Leaving Curacao, after her fruitless search, the *Experiment* proceeded towards Norfolk; but while standing in for the Mona passage, discovered a vessel in distress, on the reef off Saona island. The wreck proved to be filled with fugitives, flying from the siege of St. Domingo, as we have already narrated in our sketch of Porter. After conducting the survivors to St. Domingo, the *Experiment* proceeded to Norfolk, where, the war being now over, the schooner was sold out of the service. In the re-organization of the navy, which now ensued, Stewart was one of the thirty-six lieutenants retained. Nor was he suffered to remain unemployed. Almost immediately on landing he was placed in charge of the frigate *Chesapeake*, then lying in ordinary, at Norfolk, in which capacity he remained until the spring of 1802.

In March of this year, the *Constellation*, Captain Murray, being about to sail for the Mediterranean, in order to take part in the war against Tripoli, Stewart was ordered to join her in the capacity of first lieutenant. The cruise was a short and uneventful one. In the early part of 1803 the *Constellation* returned to the United States, when Stewart

was appointed to the command of the *Siren*, a brig of sixteen guns, then building at Philadelphia. This promotion gratified the young hero's brightest wish. He foresaw that many opportunities of distinction would necessarily occur before the war was over, especially to those in the enjoyment of a separate command; and, desirous to participate as soon as possible in the glorious struggle, he made almost incredible exertions to get the *Siren* to sea. In seven days, accordingly, after the brig was launched, Stewart was ready to sail, her coppering having only consumed ten hours, and her other preparations being executed as rapidly. After convoying some merchant vessels, and carrying the consular presents to Algiers, Stewart proceeded to Syracuse, where he met the squadron under Preble. Here he received the sad intelligence of the capture of the *Philadelphia*. The chivalrous Decatur had already projected the burning of that frigate, and the *Siren* was sent, by the commodore, to assist in the enterprise. Accordingly, while the *Intrepid* entered the harbour, the *Siren* lay off its mouth, to cover the retreat of the daring adventurers—a duty which was gallantly performed.

After this successful expedition, the *Siren*, *Vixen*, *Enterprise*, and *Nautilus*, all under the command of Stewart, were employed, by Preble's orders, in blockading Tripoli and her adjacent harbours. During the blockade, Stewart exhibited fresh proofs of his gallantry and courage. He frequently led his little fleet to the attack of the batteries and flotilla, partly to accustom the crew to the fire of the enemy, and partly to force the Tripolitans to expend their ammunition. On one of these occasions he destroyed two batteries, which the enemy had erected to the westward of the city for the protection of the coasting trade. When, subsequently, Preble himself appeared before Tripoli, and began the bombardment of the town and castle, Stewart continued to distinguish himself, especially in the memorable assault of the 3d of August. Throughout the entire series of operations that

followed, he gained successively new laurels. Nor did government suffer his services to go unrewarded. For his conduct during the blockade, he was promoted to the rank of master-commandant, and removed from the *Siren* to the frigate *Essex*. In this vessel, after the conclusion of the Tripolitan war, he proceeded, with the squadron under Commodore Rodgers, to Tunis, there to check a rising disposition in that power to begin hostilities on the United States. A council having been called on board the commodore's ship, at which the principal officers of the fleet were invited, the opinion of Stewart was adopted, and, as a consequence, peace preserved. It is said that when the despatches of this affair reached the United States, and the advice of Stewart became known, Mr. Jefferson expressed publicly his satisfaction that the service possessed an officer who united to personal skill and bravery such a thorough knowledge of international law and of the policy of his government. The difficulty with Tunis being adjusted, Stewart took command of the *Constellation* and returned to the United States.

On the 22d of April, 1806, Stewart received his long-coveted commission of post-captain. In the natural sequence of seniority, he would have attained this rank before Decatur, had not the latter, by his destruction of the *Philadelphia*, leaped over all intermediate grades. To the honour of Stewart, he never complained, though thus supplanted: he only regretted the absence of opportunities to achieve some deed similar to Decatur's. During 1806, and the following year, Stewart was employed at New York, in superintending the construction of gun-boats. When this duty terminated, as no other command offered, he solicited a furlough, to enable him to engage in the mercantile marine; and, during several following years, made numerous voyages to the East Indies, the Mediterranean, and the Adriatic. In this partial desertion of the service, during a period of inactivity and peace, Stewart had at that day many imitators, though the prece-

dent is one that could not be followed now. The want of employment, and the necessary expenses of a family, must be the excuses for a practice that cannot but lower, in a measure, the tone of the service. Some time before the war of 1812 broke out, however, he permanently abandoned the mercantile marine. When hostilities actively began, he was fortunately at home, and to his interference, in conjunction with that of Bainbridge, is to be attributed the reversal of the original cabinet order, not to suffer our national vessels to go to sea. Stewart, however, was not able to obtain a command suited to his wishes for several months, but was compelled to remain on shore, while Hull, Decatur, and Bainbridge were winning immortal laurels. At last, in December, 1812, he was appointed to the *Constellation* thirty-eight, then repairing at Washington.

In the ensuing month, the frigate being ready for sea, Stewart dropped down the river; but when he reached St. Mary's, he received an order that induced him to go to Annapolis, in order to examine his powder. From this place he was directed to Norfolk. The day after he had anchored in Hampton roads, a fleet of the enemy hove in sight; and as he had no hope of success in an engagement, a retreat became indispensable. As it was calm with him, he kedged his frigate towards Norfolk. Meantime, the British vessels approached rapidly, bringing a breeze with them; but when off Willoughby's Point, the wind died away, and, the tide beginning to ebb, they were compelled to anchor. The *Constellation*, however, was kedged up to the flats opposite Sowell's Point, where she lay aground for the rest of the day. The time was not lost, nevertheless, for Stewart, pressing the river-craft into his service, lightened his vessel. He also prepared for burning the frigate, in case the enemy, by a revival of the breeze, or by kedging, should overtake him. But, fortunately, no such crisis arose. At eight o'clock, P. M., the flood tide made, when the *Constellation* floated,

and, before three hours, was safely moored between forts Norfolk and Nelson. Here she remained for some time, and, when the enemy attacked Craney Island, contributed materially to his repulse, and thus assisted to save Norfolk and its dependencies from pillage and burning.

Stewart, though foiled in this attempt to get to sea, was more successful in the following year. In the summer of 1813, he was appointed to the *Constitution*, then undergoing repairs at Boston. In December he sailed. The cruise, however, was not marked by any brilliant event. He first shaped his course for the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina, from whence he proceeded to the vicinity of the Bermuda Islands. In the course of his voyage, he destroyed, however, a brig of sixteen guns, the *Picton*; a merchant-ship of ten guns; the brig *Catharine*; and the schooner *Phoenix*. He also chased several British ships of war. In the Mona passage, he met the frigate *La Pique*, and endeavoured to overtake her, but did not succeed, in consequence of the worn-out condition of the *Constitution's* sails. This failure determined him to return to Boston, in order to replace his old canvas with new. Accordingly, he shaped his course for the North. But, before he reached his port, he fell in with the British frigates the *Junon* and *La Nympe*, each of fifty guns, sailing in company. The enemy immediately gave chase, and for some time the result was doubtful. Stewart, finding himself hard pressed, threw overboard the provisions and started the water. Yet still the enemy gained on him. One of the frigates was already within three miles. But at this point, a lucky change took place. The breeze favoured the *Constitution*: she slowly drew ahead; and once more the enemy began to be at a safe distance. Finally, the good fortune which had always attended the *Constitution* returned to her, and, in the end, she escaped from her two adversaries, and arrived safely at Marblehead, in Massachusetts. This was in April, 1813. Soon after, Stewart took



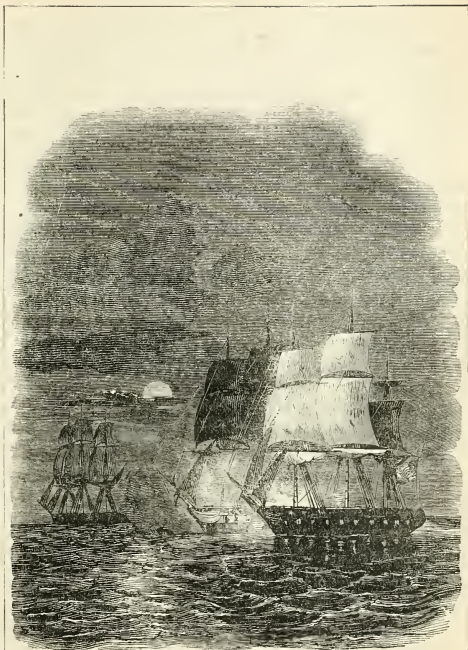
his ship into Boston, where she underwent a thorough repair.

After remaining in port nearly eight months, the Constitution sailed, on the 17th of December, on a new cruise. She first ran off Bermuda, thence shaped her course to Madeira, and afterwards beat up the Bay of Biscay. Finding no success in these places, she went off the Rock of Lisbon, where she made two prizes, one of which was destroyed, and the other sent in. A fortunate circumstance, connected with one of these captures, deserves notice, because adding another to the chain of lucky events which ever surrounded the Constitution. On the morning when Stewart made his last prize, a large ship was seen, to which chase was immediately given; but before the strange sail could be made out, a second one, promising a speedier reward, was discerned. While engaged in securing this, the other made off. The sail was subsequently discovered to have been the Elizabeth seventy-four, and, if Stewart had not been diverted from her pursuit, he would inevitably have become her prey. This line-of-battle ship, on her subsequent arrival at Lisbon, learning that the Constitution was off the coast, hastened to go out in pursuit of her. But Stewart, in the mean time, had stood to the southward and westward, in search of an enemy in that direction, and thus fortunately escaped.

The ambitious longings of the hero, so long thwarted, were now to be gratified. On the morning of the 20th of February, 1814, Stewart, finding nothing where he was, put up his helm, and ran the ship off southwest about fifty miles. A light wind was blowing from the east, with a cloudy sky, when, about one P.M., a strange sail was seen on the larboard bow, to which chase was immediately given. Soon after, another sail was discerned; and both were soon made out to be enemies. Stewart immediately attacked them. The larger of the two, after an action of about forty minutes, struck; when the other, despairing of victory, made sail to

escape. The Constitution, however, after manning her prize, pursued the flying vessel, and, after a chase of half an hour, overtook and captured her also. The prizes proved to be the Cyane, mounting thirty-four guns, with a crew of one hundred and sixty-eight persons; and the Levant, carrying twenty-one guns, with a crew of one hundred and sixty persons. The two British vessels lost, together, thirty-five killed and forty-two wounded. The Constitution lost but three killed, and had only twelve wounded. This brilliant victory was announced to the Secretary of the Navy in a modest letter, accompanied by the following minutes of the action.

“Commences with light breezes from the east, and cloudy weather. At one P. M., discovered a sail two points on the larboard bow—hailed up, and made sail in chase. At a quarter past one, made the sail to be a ship; at three-quarters past one, discovered another sail ahead; made them out, at two, to be both ships, standing close-hauled, with their starboard tacks on board; at four, the weathermost ship made signals, and bore up for her consort, then about ten miles to leeward; we bore up after her, and set lower top-mast, top-gallant and royal studding-sails, in chase; at half-past four, carried away our main royal-mast; took in the sails, and got another prepared. At five, commenced firing on the chase from our two larboard-bow guns; our shot falling short, ceased firing; at half-past five, finding it impossible to prevent their junction, cleared ship for action, then about four miles from the two ships; and forty minutes past five, they passed within hail of each other, and hauled by the wind on the starboard tack, hauled up their courses, and prepared to receive us: at forty-five minutes past five, they made all sail close hauled by the wind, in hopes of getting to windward of us; at fifty-five minutes past five, finding themselves disappointed in their object, and we were closing with them fast, they shortened sail, and formed on a line of



● CAPTURE OF THE CYANE AND LEVANT.



wind, about half a cable's length of each other; at six, having them under command of our battery, hoisted our colours, which was answered by both ships hoisting English ensigns; at five minutes past six, ranged up on the starboard side of the sternmost ship, about three hundred yards distant, and commenced the action by broadsides, both ships returning our fire with great spirit for about fifteen minutes; then the fire of the enemy beginning to slacken, and the great column of smoke collected under our lee, induced us to cease our fire to ascertain their positions and conditions: in about three minutes, the smoke clearing away, we found ourselves abreast of the headmost ship; the sternmost ship luffed up for our larboard quarter; we poured a broadside into the headmost ship, and then braced aback our main and mizzen topsails, and backed astern under cover of the smoke, abreast the sternmost ship, when the action was continued with spirit and considerable effect, until thirty-five minutes past six, when the enemy's fire again slackened, and we discovered the headmost bearing up; filled our topsails, shot ahead, and gave her two stern rakes; we then discovered the sternmost ship wearing also; wore ship immediately after her, and gave her a stern rake—she luffed to on our starboard bows, and gave us her larboard broadside: we ranged up on her larboard quarter within hail, and were about to give her our starboard broadside, when she struck her colours, fired a lee gun, and yielded. At fifty minutes past six, took possession of his majesty's ship *Cyane*, Captain Gordon Falcon, mounting thirty-four guns. At eight, filled away after her consort, which was still in sight to leeward. At half-past eight, found her standing towards us, with her starboard tacks close hauled, with topgallant sails set, and colours flying. At five minutes past eight, ranged close alongside to windward of her, on opposite tacks, and exchanged broadsides—wore immediately under her stern, and raked her with a broadside: she then crowded all sail, and endeavoured to

escape by running: hauled on board our tacks, set spanker, and flying-jib in chase. At half-past nine, commenced firing on her from our starboard-bow chaser; gave her several shot, which cut her spars and rigging considerably. At ten, finding she could not escape, fired a gun, struck her colours, and yielded. We immediately took possession of his majesty's ship *Levant*, Honourable Captain George Douglass, mounting twenty-one guns. At one A.M., the damages of our rigging were repaired, sails shifted, and the ship in fighting condition."

For a night combat, the execution on both sides was unusual in this battle. The manner in which Stewart handled his ship during the action excited the admiration even of his enemies; for when a single vessel engages two others, only the most skilful manœuvring can prevent her being raked. In this action, however, the *Constitution* not only avoided this danger, but actually raked both her antagonists. The manner in which she backed and filled through the smoke, forcing her two opponents down to leeward, when they were endeavouring to cross her stern or forefoot, has been pronounced, by a high naval authority, one of the most brilliant feats of seamanship on record. But it was not merely the skill of the victorious commander which is to be commended: the bravery of the men was signally exhibited; indeed, never before or since have American seamen distinguished themselves more honourably. A contemporary historian says: "The crew of the *Constitution* were all native-born, and as docile and obedient to the ordinary discipline of the service as they were intrepid in action. It would be easy to mention a number of anecdotes of the heroic character of our common sailors. There are two, in this action, that are particularly striking. A man, by the name of Tobias Fernall, of Portsmouth, had his arm shattered by a ball: after the surgeon had amputated it, when he had taken up the arteries, and before the dressing was completed, the

cheers on deck were heard for the surrender of the *Cyane*; the brave fellow twitched the bleeding stump from the surgeon, and waved it, joining the cheers! He is since dead. Another, John Lancey, of Cape Ann, was brought below, one thigh shattered to pieces, and the other severely wounded; the surgeon said to him, 'My brave fellow, you are mortally wounded.' 'Yes, sir, I know it: I only want to hear that the other ship has struck.' Soon after, the cheers were given for the surrender of the *Levant*; he raised his head, echoed the cheer, and expired a minute after.

"The first signal from the *Cyane* to her consort was that the sail in sight was an American sloop-of-war; afterwards, when they came within four miles of the *Constitution*, and the course was so altered that she discovered her broadside, she made a signal that it was a heavy American frigate, superior to one of them, but inferior to both. The signal from the *Levant* to her consort was to join company. The *Constitution* was not able to prevent their junction. The action was invited on the part of the *Constitution*, by firing a signal shot across the bow of the *Cyane*. The two ships cheered, and fired their broadsides; after receiving both, she returned it, and such was the eagerness of the men to fire, that when the word was given, they discharged the whole broadside at the same instant. In commencing the action, there was perfect silence on board the *Constitution*—the cheers were returned when the ships surrendered. The weight of shot fired by the British ships was superior by about ninety pounds, taking their shot at their nominal weight, though it was found, on weighing some of the English shot that came on board, that they weighed full thirty-two pounds, while the American of the same rate weighed only twenty-nine pounds; the action was so close, that their carronades had their full power. One of their shot came through the side of the ship, killed one and wounded four men, and lodged in the galley; another killed two men in the waist,

went through a boat in which two tigers were chained, and lodged in the head of a spar in the chains. In the action of the *Guerriere*, the *Constitution* was hulled three times; in that of the *Java*, four times; and in this engagement, thirteen times. The British ships were fully officered, and manned with picked men."

Stewart proceeded to Port Praya, with his two prizes, arriving on the 10th of March. A vessel was immediately engaged as a cartel, and about a hundred of the prisoners landed, the same day, in order that they might assist to fit her for sea. The ensuing morning, preparations were resumed with vigour, but, about noon, a large sail was suddenly discovered, luring above the fog that covered the harbour seaward. A few minutes after, two additional sail were seen, evidently heavy men-of-war. As there was every probability that the strangers were Englishmen, and as Stewart well knew that they would not respect a neutral port, he immediately ordered the cables to be cut, signalled the prizes to follow, and stood out to sea. In fourteen minutes after the first sail was seen, the little squadron was under way, the *Constitution* leading, under her three topsails. The American frigate, in going out, passed about gun-shot to windward of the British fleet. Meantime, the prisoners on shore, rushing to the Portugese battery commanding the port, forcibly took possession of the guns, and opened a fire on the retreating squadron. Simultaneously, the English vessels, perceiving three ships leaving the harbour so unceremoniously, divined the true state of affairs, and tacking, made all sail in chase. The *Constitution*, as soon as she cleared the land, crossed topgallant-yards, boarded her tacks, and set every thing that would draw. The chase now became animated to the last degree.

The fog still lay so thick upon the water as to hide the hulls of the strangers, but they were supposed to be two line-of-battle ships and a heavy frigate. The course of the chase



lay southward and eastward. "It was not long," to use the words of Cooper, who has given a most graphic account of this event, "before the frigate weathered all the American ships, gaining on the *Levant* and *Cyane*, but falling astern of the *Constitution*; while the two larger vessels, on the latter's lee-quarter, held way with her. As soon as clear of the land, the *Constitution* cut adrift two of her boats, the enemy pressing her too hard to allow of their being hoisted in. The *Cyane* was gradually dropping astern and to leeward, rendering it certain, if she stood on, that the most weatherly of the enemy's vessels would soon be alongside of her; and at ten minutes past one, Captain Stewart made a signal for her to tack. This order was obeyed by Mr. Hoffman, the prizemaster; and it was now expected that one of the enemy's ships would go about, and follow him; a hope that was disappointed. The *Cyane*, finding that she was not pursued, stood on until she was lost in the fog, when Mr. Hoffman tacked again, anticipating that the enemy might chase him to leeward. This prudent officer improved his advantage, by keeping to windward long enough to allow the enemy to get ahead, should they pursue him, when he squared away for America, arriving safely at New York on the 10th of April following."

Meantime, the pursuit of the other ships continued. Says Mr. Cooper: "As the vessels left the land, the fog lessened, though it still lay so dense on the immediate surface of the ocean, as to leave Captain Stewart in doubt as to the force of his pursuers. The English officers on board the *Constitution* affirmed that the vessel that was getting into her wake was the *Acasta* forty, Captain Kerr, a twenty-four-pounder ship, and it was thought that the three were a squadron cruising for the *President*, *Peacock*, and *Hornet*, consisting of the *Leander* fifty, Sir George Collier; *Newcastle* fifty, Lord George Stuart, and the *Acasta*: the ships that they subsequently proved to be. The *Newcastle* was the vessel on the

lee-quarter of the Constitution, and by half-past two the fog had got so low that her officers were seen standing on the hammock-cloths, though the line of her ports was not visible. She now began to fire by divisions, and some opinion could be formed of her armament by the flashes of her guns through the fog. Her shot struck the water within a hundred yards of the American ship, but did not rise again. By three P. M., the Levant had fallen so far astern that she was in the very danger from which the Cyane had so lately been extricated, and Captain Stewart made her signal to tack also. Mr. Ballard immediately complied, and, seven minutes later, three English ships tacked, by signal, and chased the prize, leaving the Constitution standing on in a different direction, and going at the rate of eleven knots. Mr. Ballard, finding the enemy bent on following the Levant, with the Acasta already to windward of his wake, ran back into Port Praya, and anchored, at four o'clock, within one hundred and fifty yards of the shore, under a strong battery. The enemy's ships had commenced firing, as soon as it was seen that the Levant would gain the anchorage, and all three now opened on the prize. After bearing the fire for a considerable time, the colours of the Levant were hauled down. No one was hurt in the prize, Mr. Ballard causing his men to lie on the deck as soon as the ship was anchored. The English prisoners in the battery also fired at the Levant."

The opinion of Stewart that the British would not respect the neutrality of Port Praya was thus verified. Had the English fleet, however, been better handled, there would have been no necessity for violating a neutral harbour, since the Constitution must have been inevitably captured. The British admiral was severely criticised for the course he pursued in the chase. Cooper, speaking the sentiment of naval critics generally, says: "It was certainly a mistake to call off more than one ship to chase the Levant, though the

position of the *Leander* in the fog, so far to leeward and astern, did not give the senior officer the best opportunities for observing the course of events. There was certainly every prospect of the *Acasta's* bringing the *Constitution* to action in the course of the night, though the other vessels might have been left so far astern as still to render the result doubtful. But whatever may be thought of the management of the enemy, there can be but one opinion as to that of Captain Stewart. The promptitude with which he decided on his course, the judgment with which he ordered the prizes to vary their courses, and the steadiness with which the *Constitution* was commanded, aided in elevating a professional reputation that was already very high."

Thus, continues Mr. Cooper, the *Constitution*, in the course of two years and nine months, "had been in three actions, had been twice critically chased, and had captured five vessels of war, two of which were frigates, and a third frigate-built. In all her service, as well before Tripoli as in this war, her good fortune was remarkable. She never was dismasted, never got ashore, or scarcely ever suffered any of the usual accidents of the sea. Though so often in battle, no very serious slaughter ever took place on board her. One of her commanders was wounded, and four of her lieutenants had been killed; two on her own decks, and two in the *Intrepid*; but, on the whole, her entire career had been that of what is usually called a lucky ship. Her fortune, however, may perhaps be explained in the simple fact that she had always been well commanded. In her last two cruises, she had probably possessed as fine a crew as ever manned a frigate. They were principally New-England men, and it has been said of them that they were almost qualified to fight the ship without her officers."

Stewart, after his escape, proceeded with the *Constitution* to Maranham, in Brazil, where he landed his prisoners, and

refitted his vessel. He next stood for Porto Rico, which he reached late in April. Here he learned for the first time that peace had been declared. He now shaped his course immediately for Boston, arriving there about the middle of May. The *Cyane*, as we have seen, had preceded him nearly a month, and his return had been looked for since with the greatest eagerness. On his landing, he was welcomed with enthusiasm. His journey to the capital of the nation was attended, at every stage, by demonstrations the most flattering. When he reached New York, the common council waited upon him with a tender of the freedom of the city, enclosed in a gold box, and, in addition, invited him and his officers to a public dinner. At Philadelphia, the legislature, then in session, voted him the thanks of the people of Pennsylvania, his native State, and presented him with a gold-hilted sword. Congress also displayed its gratitude, for when that body met, the thanks of the nation were bestowed on Stewart, besides a gold medal commemorative of his victory. It seemed, indeed, as if the people could scarcely find sufficient testimonials of their gratification. Hitherto, notwithstanding our naval victories, no single ship had captured, in any action, more than one man-of-war. It appeared as if fortune had reserved this crowning achievement, by which two of the enemy's vessels were compelled to strike to our flag, for the conclusion of the war; and the public exultation was proportionate.

The Constitution was now put out of commission, but Stewart was not allowed to remain idle. In 1816, he was appointed to the *Franklin* seventy-four, then just finished; and, in the following year, he sailed in her, as the flag-ship of the Mediterranean squadron. He first touched at England, where he landed the Hon. Richard Rush, minister to the court of St. James, after which he proceeded to Gibraltar, and thence up the Straits. He remained on this station for three years, returning to the United States in 1820. His

conduct in the Mediterranean had been so judicious, however, that the government, wishing a competent person to command in the Pacific, tendered him the charge of the fleet destined for that ocean. The Franklin was accordingly refitted, and, in 1821, Stewart sailed in her for his new destination. The disordered condition of South America, then torn by civil wars, rendered this command, as had been foreseen, equally important and delicate. It was not always easy to protect our commerce without involving the flag, or to preserve neutrality without offending covetous traders. Stewart, however, brought his usual ability to bear on his new situation, and, though met continually by unforeseen difficulties, triumphed in the end over all. It became necessary, occasionally, in the execution of his duty, to give offence to many persons: and though Stewart managed with the utmost prudence consistent with justice, he made enemies necessarily. Malignant representations found their way to the United States, and, on his return, he was arrested and summoned before a court-martial. His trial, however, resulted in a triumphant acquittal. On his arrival in Philadelphia, after safely passing this ordeal, he was received enthusiastically, and a public dinner given to him, by the citizens, in approbation of his conduct in the Pacific.

His services, since that period, have been confined to the shore, except for a short period in 1837, when he carried from Philadelphia to Norfolk the line-of-battle ship Pennsylvania, the largest man-of-war ever built in the United States. He has, more than once, commanded at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, has been a member of the Board of Navy Commissioners, and has served on numerous court-martials. When not in active employment, his time is spent on his farm, near Bordentown, N. J. On one occasion, his name was seriously proposed as a candidate for the Presidency; and had he been taken up, it is more than probable he would have been elected. Nor could any man, perhaps, have been

taken from the navy better qualified to assume the executive chair. The career of Stewart, at every stage, exhibits higher qualities than those of mere seamanship—qualities of intellect and character that are the true safeguards of a nation, when possessed by its head.

In youth, Stewart was eminently prepossessing in appearance. His hair was of a chestnut-colour; his eyes blue; his countenance bold and heroic in expression; his figure well proportioned; and his carriage erect, dignified, and commanding. His mind is vigorous and well-disciplined. In courage he has never been surpassed. His bravery, however, is less impetuous than that of Decatur, and more under the control of his judgment: it is the calm courage of the son of the North, rather than the impulsive heroism of the child of the South. His purposes, when once formed, are, as a consequence of this cast of character, inflexible. Fortunately, his passions are perfectly under his control, and his actions are ever regulated by a consummate judgment: in a word, he is as just as he is firm, and as wise as he is brave.



JAMES BIDDLE.







BIDDLE BOARDING THE FROG.

## JAMES BIDDLE.

THIS celebrated officer was one of the few naval commanders who have combined accurate seamanship with the acquirements of the scholar. Brave as the bravest, he was yet accomplished with the most accomplished. It was his good fortune, also, to participate in some of the most important naval affairs of his day.

James Biddle was born at Philadelphia, on the 18th of February, 1783, of a family conspicuous, both then and since, in the annals of the country. His education was received at the University of Pennsylvania. In his eighteenth year he sought and obtained a midshipman's warrant in the navy of the United States; and in September, 1800, made his first voyage, on board the frigate *President*, then belonging to the West India Station. The cruise, however, was of short duration. Without having met an enemy, the *President* returned to port early in 1801. Immediately afterwards, the war with France having been terminated, the navy was reduced to a peace establishment.

Biddle, however, was retained on the list of midshipmen, and, in 1802, was ordered to the *Constellation*, Captain

Murray, then about to sail for the Mediterranean. The voyage occupied about a year. In the spring of 1803, Biddle returned to the United States. But he was not long permitted to remain without employment. Indeed, at that period, the number of officers in the navy was comparatively so small, that almost constant service was the lot of all. Having been transferred to the Philadelphia, Captain Bainbridge, the young midshipman left his native country again in July, 1803.

But he was not destined, on this occasion, to return for many years. On the 31st of October, 1803, the Philadelphia, when off the harbour of Tripoli, struck upon a rock not laid down in the chart. Every effort made to get her off failed. Meantime, the gun-boats of the enemy, surrounding the unmanageable ship, and choosing positions where they were safe from her broadside, assailed her with a murderous and incessant fire. There was no resource but to surrender, and, with many vain regrets, and many a foreboding of the future, Bainbridge finally consented to haul down his flag, and render himself and crew prisoners to the barbarians. Accordingly the colours were struck, and a boat despatched to the nearest vessel of the enemy to inform him of the surrender. The command of this boat was given to Lieutenant David Porter, and Midshipman Biddle was ordered to accompany him.

The two officers had no sooner approached the Tripolitans than, from every gun-boat, they were commanded to come alongside. Uncertain to whom to yield, they directed their course towards what they supposed to be the commander's vessel. The Tripolitans, supposing the Americans were striving to escape, fired into the boat, gave chase, and finally ran them aboard. A score of ferocious ruffians, leaping into the boat, snatched away the swords of the two officers, half stripped their victims, and plundered both Porter and Biddle of nearly every thing they had about their persons. Fortu-

nately the latter had slipped into his boot gold to the amount of twenty dollars, and this escaped the search of the robbers. The captives were then carried on shore, and, amid the hootings of the rabble, conducted to the bashaw's palace. Here they remained for hours, ignorant of the fate of their companions, and tortured by questions. At last, however, Bainbridge, with his remaining officers and crew, was brought, with many tokens of popular insult, into the presence of the bashaw, and having been interrogated awhile, the whole were thrust into a prison hastily prepared for their reception.

In another place we have dwelt upon the horrors of that prolonged captivity. Pent up in close confinement, gradually deprived of their first hopes of a speedy release, and often threatened with death by the angry bashaw, it is a wonder that the health and spirits of the American prisoners did not give way. But crew and officers alike preserved their fortitude. The latter happily were confined together, and thus mutually deriving strength from each other, maintained almost a haughty port in the presence of their tyrant. Their cheerfulness amazed their jailers. The composed air with which they received the threats of the bashaw moved even the stoical Mohammedans. When the cannon of the American fleet, during Preble's famous assault, shook the solid walls of Tripoli, the kindling eye of the prisoners, and their scarcely suppressed hurrahs, half enraged, and yet appalled the Turks. Throughout the whole of this protracted captivity, Biddle bore himself with noble equanimity. His fortitude was surpassed by none, while his sacrifices exceeded those of many. The delay in his release having induced his family to take steps for his private ransom, he declared, as soon as he became acquainted with it, that he would remain to share the fate of his fellow-captives. Not until his country should entirely abandon him, he said, would he resort to other means to obtain his release.

At last, after an imprisonment of nineteen months, the

captives were liberated on the conclusion of the peace. In September, 1805, Biddle reached his native land. Arriving at Hampton Roads, in company with Bainbridge, they travelled northward to Philadelphia by land. Everywhere along the road they were received with marks of distinction. The people, affected by the story of their sufferings, thronged to behold them as they passed. Nor was the government behind in exhibitions of sympathy and respect. Biddle was immediately promoted to a lieutenantancy. After being at home for a few weeks only, he was ordered to the southern station, where he was given the command of a gun-boat. For some time he cruised in company with the frigate *Adams*, and afterwards in company with the brig *Hornet*. The principal rendezvous was Charleston. Here Biddle was received with particular distinction, not only because he had been one of the prisoners at Tripoli, but because he was the nephew of that gallant Nicholas Biddle, the favourite of the South, whose last expedition had been fitted out at that port, and who had perished as it were almost within sight of the Palmetto State.

In 1807, after having been on a furlough for several months, Biddle accepted an offer to make a voyage to China, in the capacity of first officer of a merchant-ship. During his absence the embargo act was passed. On his return, he was attached to the Delaware flotilla, employed, under Commodore Murray, to enforce the new law. Irksome as this gun-boat service was, no other was open, at that time, to those seeking employment; for but one frigate, the *Chesapeake*, was in commission. In January, 1809, however, Congress authorized the equipment of several frigates. To one of these, Bainbridge was appointed. He immediately selected Biddle for his second lieutenant. In May, 1810, Bainbridge gave up his vessel, when Biddle obtained the temporary charge of the *Syren* sloop-of-war. He subsequently served on board the *Constitution*, Captain Hull, and the *President*, Commodore Rodgers. In December, 1811, he sailed for Europe, as

bearer of despatches to our minister in France. Biddle was fortunate in his visit to Paris. The period was one memorable even in a memorable age. Napoleon was at the height of his career; the French capital was the centre of European attraction; and, in the very vortex of this glory and splendour, the young officer remained nearly four months. It was a scene never to be forgotten. Yet, in a little more than two years, all that pomp and power had departed; the emperor was dethroned and in exile; and foreign soldiers filled the proud streets, which but now glittered with a hundred thousand French bayonets.

Scarcely had Biddle reached the United States, on his return, when war was declared with Great Britain. Having no appointment to any vessel, he determined to volunteer. For this purpose he repaired to New York, intending to offer himself to Commodore Rodgers; but when he reached his destination, he found that the commodore had sailed a few hours before. He then sought to accompany Porter, who was about to sail in the *Essex*. But unfortunately for his dreams of distinction, Biddle was senior to any of Porter's lieutenants, and these naturally objected to receiving an officer on board who would outrank them. Yet the ardent young lieutenant was unwilling still to surrender his pursuit. Hurrying to Washington, he solicited of the secretary of the navy an order to join the first frigate that should arrive in port; but, as these all had their full complement of officers, the application necessarily failed. Disappointed at every turn, Biddle went back to Philadelphia. But here, to his joy, he found the sloop-of-war *Wasp*, Captain Jones, which had just arrived with despatches from France, and which was without her full complement of officers. He lost no time, but procured an order at once to join her as first lieutenant.

The eagerness which Biddle had displayed to be employed, —an eagerness conspicuous even in that day of ardent young

heroes,—was rewarded almost immediately after his vessel went to sea. On the 13th of October, 1812, the *Wasp* left the Delaware; and, on the 18th, she captured the *Frolic*. It was Biddle's duty, after the battle, to take charge of the prize. He had, however, scarcely begun to repair the *Frolic*, when a British line-of-battle ship hove in sight, and, as both the victor and vanquished were too much injured to escape, the seventy-four captured the *Wasp*, as well as recaptured the *Frolic*. Jones and Biddle, with the remaining officers and crew, were carried to Bermuda, and, after a short interval, released on parole, when they returned to the United States. Here honours were lavishly bestowed on Jones. Nor did Biddle go unrewarded. Pennsylvania voted him a sword. Maryland passed a complimentary resolution in his favour. Congress bestowed on him a silver medal. The citizens of Philadelphia presented him with a magnificent urn. And, on his exchange, he was promoted by the navy department to the rank of master-commandant, and, soon after, on the return of the *Hornet* to port, intrusted with that vessel.

Biddle lost no time in preparing his ship for sea, and, late in May, sailed from New York, in company with the frigates *United States* and *Macedonian*. But, on the first of June, the little squadron was met, off the eastern coast of Long Island, by a superior force of the enemy, and compelled to seek refuge in New London harbour. Here the three ships remained blockaded during the remainder of the year, and almost the whole of the next. During this period more than one attempt was made to arrange a combat between one or more of the American vessels and an equal force on the side of the British; but the efforts invariably failed. At one time a challenge passed between the *Loup Cervier*, an English sloop-of-war, and the *Hornet*, the captain of the former offering to limit his crew to the same number as that of the latter, provided Biddle would inform him what that

number was. But Decatur, the senior officer of the American squadron, declined to permit Biddle engaging on these terms, as the British evidently intended to man the *Loup Cervier* with a picked crew, an example which it would be both impossible and illegal for the Americans to imitate. He authorized Biddle, however, to fight the *Loup Cervier* under a pledge that no additions should be made to the crew of either vessel. Accordingly, Biddle notified his challenger of these terms, and, in addition, agreed to reduce the armament of the *Hornet* to eighteen guns, which was understood to be the force of the *Loup Cervier*. No answer was ever returned to this proposal. The day after Biddle despatched his letter, the British sloop-of-war left the vicinity, and did not return during the war.

In November, 1814, permission was granted by the department for the *Hornet* to leave New London, if she could make good her escape; for hitherto she had been detained in that harbour to assist in defence of the frigates moored higher up the Thames. Accordingly, on the night of the 18th, Biddle, having placed his ship in her best trim for sailing, eluded the British squadron, and safely made his way to New York. He was immediately attached to the squadron then fitting out under Decatur, destined to cruise in the East Indies. The *President* went to sea, with the commodore, on the 14th of January, 1815, leaving the *Hornet* and *Peacock* to bring out the store-ship subsequently, when she should be ready. The *President*, being pursued by the entire British fleet, and having sustained an injury in crossing the bar, was captured. The three remaining vessels went to sea in a gale of wind, on the 23d of January. Three days after, the *Hornet* separated from her consorts, to give chase to a strange sail, which, however, proved to be a neutral. She then held her course for the Island of Tristan d'Acunha, which had been appointed as a rendezvous for the squadron.

Here, at last, Biddle found the opportunity which he had so long desired. On the morning of the 23d of March, as he was about to anchor off the north end of the island, a sail was descried to the southward and eastward, which was almost immediately pronounced to be the foe. Once before, Biddle had met an enemy, but he was then in the position of a subordinate : now he was about to encounter one in a vessel commanded by himself; and his heart beat high in consequence. Yet, in his official letter describing the battle that ensued, there is no evidence of this proud exultation; but only a plain narration of facts, such as a brave but modest man might be expected to give. We cannot better do justice to Biddle, indeed, than by allowing him to tell his own tale. "I have the honour to inform you," he says, addressing Decatur, to whom, as commander of the squadron, he was bound to report, "that on the morning of the 23d instant, at half-past ten, when about to anchor off the north end of the island of Tristan d'Acunha, a sail was seen to the southward and eastward, steering to the westward, the wind fresh from S. S. W. In a few minutes, she had passed on to the westward so far that we could not see her for the land. I immediately made sail for the westward, and, shortly after getting in sight of her again perceived her to bear up before the wind. I hove to for him to come down to us. When she had approached near, I filled the main-topsail, and continued to yaw the ship, while she continued to come down, wearing occasionally to prevent her passing under our stern. At forty minutes past one P. M., being within nearly musket-shot distance, she hauled her wind on the starboard tack, hoisted English colours, and fired a gun. We immediately luffed to, hoisted our ensign, and gave the enemy a broadside. The action being thus commenced, a quick and well-directed fire was kept up from this ship, the enemy gradually drifting nearer to us, when, at fifty-five minutes past one, he bore up, apparently to run us on board.



As soon as I perceived he would certainly fall on board, I called the boarders, so as to be ready to repel any attempt to board us. At the instant every officer and man repaired to the quarter-deck, when the two vessels were coming in contact, and eagerly pressed me to permit them to board the enemy; but this I would not permit, as it was evident, from the commencement of the action, that our fire was greatly superior both in quickness and in effect. The enemy's bowsprit came in between our main and mizzen rigging, on our starboard side, affording him an opportunity to board us, if such was his design; but no attempt was made. There was a considerable swell on, and as the sea lifted us ahead, the enemy's bowsprit carried away our mizzen shrouds, stern-davits, and spanker-boom, and he hung upon our larboard quarter. At this moment, an officer, who was afterwards recognised to be Mr. McDonald, the first lieutenant and the then commanding officer, called out that they had surrendered. I directed the marines and musketry-men to cease firing, and while on the taffrel, asking if they had surrendered, I received a wound in the neck. The enemy just then got clear of us, and his foremast and bowsprit being both gone, and perceiving us wearing to give him a fresh broadside, he again called out that he had surrendered. It was with difficulty I could restrain my crew from firing into him again, as he had certainly fired into us after having surrendered. From the firing of the first gun, to the last time the enemy cried out he had surrendered, was exactly twenty two minutes by the watch. She proved to be his *Britannic Majesty's* brig *Penguin*, mounting sixteen thirty-two pound carronades, two long twelves, a twelve-pound carronade on the top-gallant fore-castle, with a swivel on the capstern in the tops. She had a spare port forward, so as to fight both her long guns of a side. She sailed from England in September last. She was shorter upon deck than this ship by two feet, but she had a greater length of keel, greater breadth

of beam, thicker sides, and higher bulwarks than this ship, and was in all respects a remarkably fine vessel of her class. The enemy acknowledged a complement of one hundred and thirty-two—twelve of them supernumerary marines from the Medway seventy-four, received on board in consequence of their being ordered to cruise for the American privateer *Young Wasp*. They acknowledge also a loss of fourteen killed and twenty-eight wounded; but Mr. Mayo, who was in charge of the prize, assures me that the number of killed was certainly greater. Among the killed are Captain Dickenson, who fell at the close of the action, and the boatswain; among the wounded are the second lieutenant, purser, and two midshipmen. Each of the midshipmen lost a leg. We received on board, in all, one hundred and eighteen prisoners, four of whom have since died of their wounds. Having removed the prisoners, and taken on board such provisions and stores as would be useful to us, I scuttled the *Penguin* this morning before daylight, and she went down. As she was completely riddled by our shot, her foremast and bowsprit both gone, and her mainmast so crippled as to be incapable of being secured, it seemed unadvisable, at this distance from home, to attempt sending her to the United States. This ship did not receive a single round shot in her hull, nor any material wound in her spars: the rigging and sails were very much cut; but having bent a new suit of sails, and knotted and secured our rigging, we are now completely ready in all respects for any service. We were eight men short of a complement, and had nine upon the sick-list the morning of the action."

In this gallant action, the Americans lost but one killed and eleven wounded. Biddle, however, had more than one narrow escape from death. In the early part of the battle, he was twice struck in the face with splinters, either of which might have inflicted a mortal wound. The injury in his neck, to which he so modestly alludes, was received

under circumstances that might have pardoned severe remark. As the enemy had surrendered, Biddle, standing on the tafferel, ordered the musketry from the *Hornet* to cease. At this instant one of his officers called to him that a man on board the *Penguin* was taking aim at him. Biddle did not hear the remark, his back being towards the speaker. But two of the marines, perceiving the man, simultaneously levelled their pieces, and he fell dead immediately, though not till he had discharged his gun. It is possible, however, that the balls struck him in time to disconcert his aim, or that the warning given to Biddle was overheard by him, and produced a similar effect; for the shot, instead of striking Biddle in a mortal part, lodged in the neck, inflicting a comparatively slight wound. The blood, however, flowed profusely, and two seamen, seizing him in their arms, would have carried him below. But Biddle refused to leave the deck. At this, one of the men tore off his shirt and tied it about his captain's neck. It was not until all the wounded had been attended to, that Biddle allowed the surgeon to approach him.

The *Hornet* was rejoined, soon after this victory, by the *Peacock* and the store-ship, from which, as we have seen, she parted on the voyage out. The capture of *Decatur* not being known to Biddle or his companions, they waited for some time, in hopes that the *President* would arrive at the rendezvous, according to appointment. But the period agreed on having past without tidings of their consort, the *Hornet* and *Peacock* continued their voyage, first having converted the store-ship into a cartel, to carry the British prisoners into *San Salvador*. The two men-of-war, however, had been but a fortnight on their way, when they fell in with a British seventy-four. The *Peacock*, in consequence of a better position, and superior fleetness, had but little difficulty in making her escape. But the *Hornet* was not so fortunate. For three days the enemy pursued the sloop-of-war, and, on

more than one occasion, capture appeared inevitable to Biddle and his crew. Their escape, at last, was almost miraculous. We again have recourse to the hero's own pen for a narrative of this extraordinary pursuit, which was as creditable to him, in every way, as even the victory over the Penguin. "I have the honour," he says, addressing Decatur from San Salvador, whither he had repaired to refit, "to report that the Peacock and this ship, having continued off Tristan d'Acunha the number of days directed by you in your letter of instructions, proceeded in company to the eastward on the 12th of April, bound to the second place of rendezvous. Nothing of any importance occurred to us until the 27th of April, when, at seven A. M., in lat.  $38^{\circ} 30'$  S. and lon.  $33^{\circ}$  E., we made a strange sail in the S. E., to which we gave chase. The wind was from the N. E. by N. and light throughout the day, and by sundown we had neared the chase considerably. It was calm during the night, and at daylight on the 28th he was yet in sight. A breeze springing from the N. W., we crowded sail, with steering-sails on both sides; the chase standing to the northward upon a wind. At forty-five minutes past two P. M. the Peacock was about six miles ahead of this ship; and observing that she appeared to be suspicious of the chase, I took in starboard steering-sails, and hauled up for the Peacock. I was still, however, of opinion that the chase was an Indiaman, though indeed the atmosphere was quite smoky and indistinct, and I concluded, as she was very large, that Captain Warrington was waiting for me to join him, that we might together go alongside of her. At twenty-two minutes past three P. M., the Peacock made the signal that the chase was a ship of the line, and an enemy. I immediately took in all steering-sails, and hauled open a wind; the enemy then upon our lee-quarter, distant about eight miles. By sundown I had perceived that the enemy sailed remarkably fast, and was very weatherly.

“At nine P. M., as the enemy was gaining upon us, and as there was every appearance that he would be enabled to keep sight of us during the night, I considered it necessary to lighten this ship. I therefore threw overboard twelve tons of kentledge, part of our shot, some of our heavy spars, cut away the sheet anchor and cable, and started the wedges of the masts. At two A. M., the enemy being rather before our lee beam, I tacked to the westward; the enemy also tacked and continued in chase of us. At daylight on the 29th, he was within gun-shot upon our lee quarter. At seven A. M., having hoisted English colours and a rear admiral's flag, he commenced firing from his bow guns. As his shot went over us, I cut away the remaining anchor and cable, threw overboard the launch, six of our guns, more of our shot, and every heavy article that was at hand. The enemy fired about thirty shot, not one of which took effect, though most of them passed over us. While he was firing, I had the satisfaction to perceive that we slowly dropped him, and at nine A. M. he ceased his fire.

“At eleven A. M. the enemy was again coming up with us. I now, therefore, threw overboard all our remaining guns but one long gun, nearly all our shot, all our spare spars, cut away the top-gallant fore-castle, and cleared every thing off deck, as well as from below, to lighten as much as possible. At noon the enemy again commenced firing. He fired many shot, only three of which came on board—two striking the hull, and one passing through the jib. It is, however, extraordinary, that every shot did not take effect; for the enemy, the second time he commenced firing, was certainly within three-quarters of a mile of the ship, and the sea quite smooth. I perceived from his sails that the effect of his fire was to deaden his wind; and at two P. M. the wind, which had previously, and greatly to our disadvantage, backed to the south-east, hulled to the westward, and freshened up. At sundown the enemy was about four miles astern. The wind

was fresh, and we went at the rate of nine knots throughout the night. We saw the enemy at intervals through the squalls during the night, and at daylight on the 30th he was about twelve miles astern, still in chase of us. At thirty minutes after nine A. M. he took in steering-sails, reefed his topsail, and hulled to the eastward, and at eleven he was entirely out of sight.

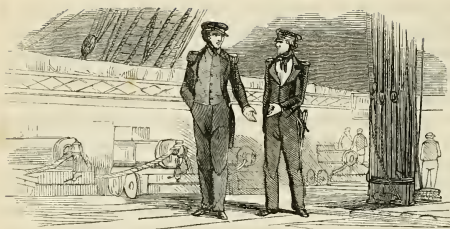
“During the chase the enemy appeared to be very crank, and I therefore concluded he must have been lightened while in chase of us. I did not at any time fire our stern-chasers, because it was manifest that the enemy injured his sailing by his firing. As we had now no anchor, no cable, no boat, and but one gun, there was of course an absolute necessity of relinquishing our intended cruise; and as in our then condition it would have been extremely hazardous, on account of the enemy’s cruisers, to approach our own coast, I considered it most advisable to proceed for this port. I arrived here yesterday, and on my arrival I received information of the peace between the United States and Great Britain. Permit me to state, that it was with the most painful reluctance, and upon the fullest conviction that it was indispensable, in order to prevent a greater misfortune, that I could bring my mind to consent to part with my guns; and I beg leave to request that you will be pleased to move the honourable secretary of the navy to call a court of inquiry to investigate the loss of the armament of this ship. It will be very satisfactory to me to have such an investigation.”

The court of inquiry, thus solicited, met at New York, where Biddle had arrived on the 30th of July. The result was a unanimous acquittal. Nor was this all. For the court was so deeply impressed with the perseverance, gallantry, and nautical skill which Biddle had displayed during the chase, that they recorded their admiration of it in their verdict. Indeed, among naval writers, the escape of the *Hornet* has generally been considered an exploit scarcely

surpassed by the capture of the Penguin, though that is regarded as one of the most brilliant affairs of the war of 1812. The seventy-four which chased Biddle was, at one time, as close to him as Decatur was to the Macedonian when he first opened his fire on the latter vessel. During the pursuit, too, Biddle was suffering from debility occasioned by his wound. In whatever light the exploit is regarded, it appears equally bold. In truth, the entire cruise of the Hornet was courageous, almost beyond precedent. Most naval commanders, after such a capture as that of the Penguin, would have returned to port; but Biddle's soaring spirit saw in one success only additional incentives for new enterprises. The popular voice, ever excited by a character so lofty, hailed the hero, on his return, with enthusiastic applause. The citizens of New York tendered him a public dinner. Those of Philadelphia presented him with a service of plate. His professional feelings were complimented in a way equally gratifying, for he found that, during his absence, he had been promoted to the rank of post-captain.

The services of Biddle did not close with the war of 1812, but the duties in which he was subsequently engaged afforded no opportunity for distinction. He took possession of Oregon in 1817, under orders from the government. He served in the West Indies in 1822, and again in the following year. He carried out Mr. Nelson, minister to Spain, in 1824, and, in the same vessel, Mr. Rodney, our first ambassador to Brazil. In 1828 he made a cruise in the Mediterranean, and signed, on behalf of his government, a commercial treaty with Turkey. He was afterwards appointed to the command of the Naval Asylum at Philadelphia, where he passed the closing years of his life. He died in 1848.

The personal appearance of Biddle was agreeable, and his manners singularly conciliatory. He was brave, yet prudent; adventurous, yet wise.



## JAMES BARRON.

No history of the navy would deserve to be considered impartial, which omitted to record the services of the unfortunate. Fame does not always shower her favours with an even hand. In the lottery of glory, some draw prizes greater than their deserts, while others are rewarded with unmerited blanks. An honest conviction that James Barron belonged to the latter class induces us to narrate the troubled story of his life.

Barron was the son of a naval officer renowned in the history of Virginia during the war of Independence; a bold, patriotic, sagacious seaman, who at one time held the rank of "Commodore of all the armed vessels of the commonwealth." It was in 1768 that James Barron was born. At an early age he displayed a fondness for the sea, and entering the mercantile marine, gradually rose in rank until he had reached his thirtieth year, when, on the formation of the federal navy, he sought for and obtained a lieutenancy in the new service. Here promotion soon rewarded him. In 1799 he was made a post-captain, the highest grade in the navy, a rank which he was destined to fill, through good and through evil repute, for more than fifty years.



His first employment after this elevation was in the Mediterranean, where he served under his elder brother, Commodore Samuel Barron. He soon attained a high reputation for seamanship. He was considered one of the best disciplinarians in the navy. He had invented the first code of signals used in the service. He was universally regarded as an efficient and accomplished officer, who, not content with mere experience, sought to add to it every aid of science. A bright and prosperous career was apparently before him. Successive administrations trusted and employed him, nor was the applause of the people wanting; when suddenly, and at the very height of his success, he met with a disaster which led to his suspension from the navy, and for nearly an entire generation consigned him to poverty and disgrace.

In 1807, having been appointed to the command of the Mediterranean squadron, he hoisted his broad pennant on board the Chesapeake, and sailed from Norfolk. The preparation of the ship had been left, as usual, to subordinate officers; and owing to the few frigates that were then fitted out, this duty had not been executed as it should have been. When Barron came on board, therefore, the vessel was in no condition to meet a foe. Little was thought of this, however, as the United States was not at war with any power, and nothing would have been considered more unlikely, perhaps, even if it had been suggested, than a rencontre with an enemy. But the result proved that a man-of-war should never be unprepared for the contingency of a battle. Scarcely had the Chesapeake left the coast, when the British ship *Leopard* intercepted her, to demand certain deserters, alleged to be on board the American frigate. Barron refused to deliver up the fugitives, when a broadside was fired into his ship, and, being in no condition to resist, he was compelled to strike his colours, and suffer the men to be seized.

The insult to the United States was avenged, as such insults too often are, by making a sacrifice of Barron. The

charge of cowardice was brought against him in the public prints, was echoed in political circles, and was even taken up in the service itself. A court-martial, summoned to try the unfortunate victim, pronounced him guilty, and suspended him from the navy for a term of years. In other parts of this volume we have discussed at length the justice of this penalty, and shall not consequently enter on the controversy again. It is sufficient here to say that Barron, like Byng, was the victim of circumstances, rather than of any cowardice of his own; but, more fortunate, even in his misfortune, than Byng, he escaped with his life. His sentence, at the time, was approved by all parties; but this establishes only the extent of the popular delusion: it becomes the duty of impartial history to cancel, in part, the verdict so unjustly rendered and enforced.

Poverty compelled Barron, thus deprived of his pay and rank, to seek employment; and for this purpose he went abroad. His term of suspension had not expired when the war of 1812 broke out. As soon as that period had passed, however, he determined to return to the United States; but circumstances, for a time, prevented the execution of his design; and when, at last, he reached his native land, hostilities had ceased. Meantime, his protracted absence had caused animadversion. Neither the poverty that drove him abroad nor the difficulties that prevented his return were known except to a small circle of his friends; so that what had really been his necessity, was charged upon him as his fault. The brave, but impetuous Decatur was foremost among those who censured Barron; and his charges were made so publicly, that the latter, in justice to his own reputation, was compelled to notice them. Decatur refusing to retract, a duel ensued, when the hero fell. This unfortunate result brought down on the head of Barron another tempest of popular indignation. But the condemnation was no less unjust than the preceding one, for, after such aspersions as

Decatur had cast upon his courage, a hostile meeting was inevitable, according to the code of honour. Barron cannot be censured, but is rather to be pitied. No man in the service, perhaps, could do as much injury to a fellow-officer as Decatur, by any imputation on his bravery, for no man was equally a popular idol. It is to the credit of the dying hero that he retracted his aspersions, regretted the controversy, and strove to repair the injury he had done.

Barron's closing years were spent entirely on shore. He commanded at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, and subsequently at that of Norfolk. His last post was that of superintendent of the Philadelphia Naval Asylum. When, finally, increasing infirmities compelled him to abandon all employment, he retired to his native State, and took up his residence at Norfolk. Here, in 1851, he died, the senior captain on the list.



MONTEREY.

## ROBERT F. STOCKTON.

HAD Stockton lived a generation earlier, he would probably have divided with Hull, Decatur, Stewart, and Bainbridge the glories of our naval victories in 1812. Nature lavished upon him largely every requisite for a hero. But the war in which those great men won their laurels found Stockton a lad, with no higher rank than a midshipman; nor did fate, during the entire contest, present him with a single opportunity to achieve that renown for which his ardent spirit burned.

The ancestors of Stockton were among the most eminent citizens of New Jersey; his paternal grandfather being particularly distinguished as a member of the Congress of 1776, in which capacity he voted for and signed the Declaration of Independence. Descended from such blood, it is no wonder that the subject of this sketch desired, even in his earliest years, to devote his life to the service of his country.



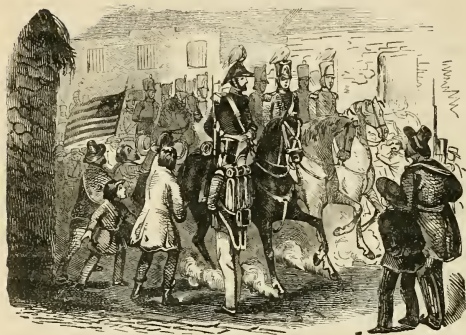
ROBERT F. STOCKTON.



His tastes and his ambition, not less than his patriotism, led him to seek admission to the navy. His family accordingly secured for him a midshipman's warrant. To his new profession he devoted himself enthusiastically. Promotion, which came far earlier than than now, did not long leave him unrewarded, for in 1814 we find him elevated to the rank of lieutenant, his commission dating from the 9th of July.

The reputation of Stockton, even before the close of the war, was considerable, though confined within the limits of his profession and of his personal friends. Already he was quoted as a thorough seaman. Already he was known for his dashing gallantry. Already his intellectual abilities attracted notice, as superior to those of his young contemporaries generally. After that period his reputation steadily increased. He served, for many years, on various stations, and gradually acquired the name of an energetic officer, who, in the event of a war, if in a separate command, would win his way to glory by making opportunities, if they failed to come of themselves. When hostilities broke out with Mexico in 1846, this reputation was fully confirmed by facts.

The Pacific squadron, under Commodore Sloat, had, immediately after the commencement of hostilities, seized Monterey, in California; and Sloat was still anchored at that town, when Stockton, on the 22d of July, 1846, arrived to relieve him. The eager hero immediately prepared, in conjunction with Colonel Fremont, then opportunely in California at the head of an exploring party, to reduce the entire province to subjection; and so rapid were the combined movements of the two American leaders, and with such courage were they supported by their followers, that, in a time almost incredibly short, the conquest was effected, and a provisional government established. On the 13th of August, or less than a month after Stockton appeared on the scene, he and Fremont triumphantly entered Los Angeles, the capital of the Californias.



STOCKTON AND FREMONT'S TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO LOS ANGELOS.

In the following December, however, the provinces rose in insurrection. At Los Angeles and other points, the flag of the United States was ignominiously torn down, and that of Mexico hoisted in its place amid the shouts of the populace. Stockton, learning this change in affairs, despatched the frigate *Savannah* to San Pedro, where her crew was landed, and the march taken up for Los Angeles. A superior force of the insurgents, however, compelled them to retreat, before they had attained their object. Stockton now hurried to the scene of action with the frigate *Congress*, and debarking six of the ship's guns, moved on Los Angeles with all speed. At the rancho Seputrida he met the enemy, when a sharp action ensued. Stimulated by their preceding successes, the Mexicans fought, at first, with much obstinacy; but the deadly fire of Stockton's cannon, which were served with grape and canister, finally drove them from the field, leaving one hundred of their dead behind.

This bold and decisive conduct on the part of Stockton



damped the spirits of the insurgents so that they never again recovered confidence. Nevertheless, they summoned courage, or, more correctly speaking, were driven by despair, to meet the Americans in two more pitched battles. These actions were fought on the 8th and 9th of January, 1847, by the combined naval and land forces of Stockton and Kearny, the latter general having just arrived in California from the United States, by the overland route, bringing one hundred dragoons and two mountain howitzers. Both combats terminated to the advantage of the Americans. The enemy, indeed, after the last battle, were completely broken up, nor did they ever again attempt to resist the victorious career of the invaders. Subsequent to this final subjugation of California, Stockton became involved in a controversy with Kearny, the latter claiming to be the rightful governor of California, an office which the former considered to belong to Fremont. This controversy, the merits of which are foreign to our present purpose, was terminated by the arrival of Commodore Shubrick, the senior officer of Stockton, who took the part of Kearny.

Stockton now returned to the United States, where he was received with great applause, on account of the brilliancy of these exploits in California. Soon after his arrival, he resigned his commission, and, in 1851, was elected to the Senate of the United States by the legislature of New Jersey.



LANDING OF THE AMERICAN ARMY AT VERA CRUZ.

## DAVID CONNER.

THE landing of Scott's army at Vera Cruz, during the struggle with Mexico, was unquestionably the most brilliant naval achievement of the war. The merit of this exploit, so far as it was shared by the navy, belongs equally, perhaps, to Commodores Conner and Perry; for while the last commanded the American squadron during the siege, to the first is due all the onerous preparations for that event.

David Conner, like most of those who have risen to distinction in the service, entered the navy at an early age. His warrant as a midshipman was dated the 16th of January, 1809. His youth and comparative inexperience, during the war then just begun, prevented his earning public distinction at that period; but he acquired in the service the reputation of thoroughly understanding his profession, of being a brave officer, and of possessing unusual suavity of manner. The



DAVID CONNER.



peace, which ensued in 1815, cut short any hopes he might have entertained of winning a more widely extended renown, when he should have attained a higher rank, and with it the chance for a separate command.

For the next thirty years, Conner, like most of his contemporaries, remained comparatively unknown out of his profession. But, meantime, his reputation steadily grew among those familiar with the service. He was frequently employed, and in positions continually increasing in importance, his promotion keeping pace with his employments. At last fortune presented to him a field worthy of his industry, courage, and abilities. The war with Mexico broke out, and the campaign on the Rio Grande, though successful in every particular, failing to subdue the determined hostility of the enemy, it was resolved to strike a blow at the heart of his territories, and accordingly the siege and capture of Vera Cruz was decided on, to be followed by a march on the capital. To Conner, as commander of the Gulf fleet, fell the duty of making preparations for these great events.

Already the commodore had done his part manfully in harassing the enemy. He had maintained the blockade of Vera Cruz with unabated spirit, in the face of frequent tempests, and in spite of many other difficulties. He had captured Tampico—he had harassed the coast of Mexico from the mouth of the Rio Grande to the banks of Gallego. His industry and watchfulness had been untiring. And now, when the capture of Vera Cruz was determined on, he laboured with even increased assiduity in preparing means for a successful landing, without which the enterprise, it was well known, must fail at the very threshold. The result was that the debarkation was finally effected without the loss of a life, and in a period of time almost incredible. The French admiral, in the famous expedition against Algiers, landed only nine thousand men on the first day, and did not succeed in doing this until nearly forty lives had been lost

by accidents of various kinds. It is by comparisons like this that the merit of Conner becomes apparent.

It was on the 7th of March, 1847, that Scott, accompanied by Conner, made a reconnoissance of the shore about Vera Cruz, in order to select a favourable spot for landing. The result of the united judgments of the general and commodore was to choose a point due west of the island of Sacrificios, and nearly equidistant from the castle of San Juan d'Ulloa and the grand plaza of the beleagured town. As a desperate resistance was expected, Conner took every possible precaution to secure a successful debarkation. Sixty-seven surf-boats had been prepared in anticipation of the event, so as to land five thousand five hundred soldiers at a time; and to cover these, two steamers and five gun-boats were directed to hold themselves in readiness. Every thing was finally arranged for the exploit, and Conner was probably congratulating himself on the fair promise of success, when he was superseded in command of the fleet, by Commodore Perry, and compelled to experience that most bitter of mortifications, the beholding another reap the harvest of renown which he had, by his own energies, sown and watered.

Conner did not, however, find the nation ungrateful. The public voice everywhere proclaimed him the real hero of the landing. His return to the United States was as triumphant as if he had remained in command to the fall of the town; and in Philadelphia, which had long been the residence of his family, a public dinner was tendered him by the citizens without regard to party.

Conner's countenance is distinguished and striking. He is rather above the medium height, with the erect air of his profession, and a presence commanding respect involuntarily.



BOMBARDMENT OF VERA CRUZ.

## MATTHEW C. PERRY.

As the naval officer in chief command at the siege and capitulation of Vera Cruz, Matthew C. Perry merits a place among the heroes whom we commemorate. As circumstances brought him on the scene of action at a moment unfortunate for Conner, he has been charged with grasping too eagerly at the opportunity for distinction. But though history would have praised his delicacy if he had temporarily waived his rights, it cannot justly censure him for insisting on them, nor deny that, if he had arrived earlier, he would probably have made his arrangements with the same care and completeness as his predecessor.

Perry is descended from a family illustrious, through two generations, in the naval annals of the United States. He entered the service at quite a youthful age, and rose rapidly through the earlier grades, so that we find him, in 1813, already a lieutenant. His commission bears date the 24th

of July, in that year, and he ranks fourteenth of the forty-four promotions of that date, a fact proving the comparatively high position he had already attained in his profession. In common, however, with most of the younger officers, he failed to obtain, during the war of 1812, any opportunity for special distinction. Fortune was, in truth, reserving her gifts for a future day, when she designed to favour him with prodigal liberality. We pass, at once, over a period of more than thirty years, during which Perry gradually rose to be a post-captain, in order to arrive at this point.

The siege of Vera Cruz had already been begun, in March, 1847, when Perry, who had just been appointed to the command of the Gulf fleet, arrived at the scene of action. Conner had already prepared every thing for the successful debarkation of the army, so that nothing remained for Perry but to superintend the enterprise. This duty he performed in the most creditable manner. Under his direction, twelve thousand men were landed in one day, without the loss of a single life, or the occurrence of any untoward accident whatever. This debarkation took place on the 9th of March, and from that time till the fall of the city, which occurred on the 27th of the same month, Perry was scarcely less efficient than Worth, or even Scott himself, in bringing about the final triumph. Not only did he maintain, from his own element, a vigorous bombardment on the castle of San Juan, but he also volunteered a battery on shore, which was served by detachments of officers and men from the fleet, and which materially assisted to reduce the town.

Like his great relative, Perry is devoured by the love of glory, nor will he, when occasion presents, neglect any labours to secure the prize. The war, however, presented but few further opportunities for naval distinction. He omitted, nevertheless, no efforts to win new laurels. Two towns of minor importance on the Gulf-coast, Tuspan and Alvarado, were captured while he was in command—the



latter by a subaltern, Lieutenant Hunter, whom Perry brought to a court-martial for acting without his orders.

In 1852, Perry was appointed to the command of the East India squadron, sailing with a larger fleet than ever before was despatched to the Chinese seas. He was directed, by his instructions, to open friendly intercourse with Japan. On this mission he is now absent.

