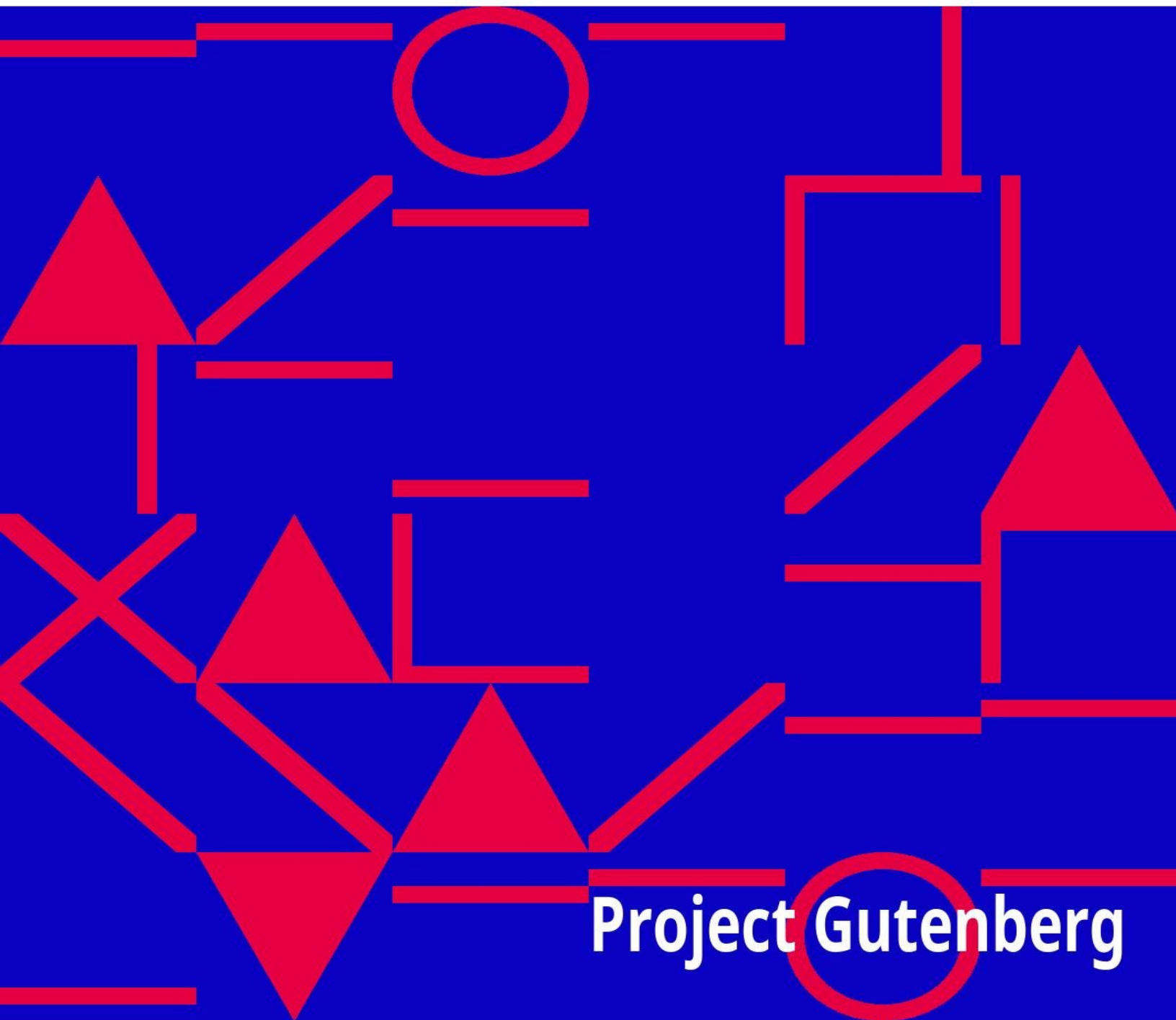


# Dewey and Other Naval Commanders

Edward Sylvester Ellis



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**ADMIRAL GEORGE DEWEY, U.S.N.  
ADMIRAL GEORGE DEWEY, U.S.N.**

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**DEWEY**  
**AND OTHER**  
**NAVAL COMMANDERS.**

**BY**

**EDWARD S. ELLIS, A.M.,**

**AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF THE WORLD," "THE PEOPLE'S STANDARD HISTORY OF  
THE UNITED STATES," "A HISTORY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK," "DEERFOOT  
SERIES," "LOG CABIN SERIES," ETC.**

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## INTRODUCTION

I purpose telling you in the following pages about the exploits of the gallant men who composed the American Navy, beginning with the Revolution and ending with the story of their wonderful deeds in our late war with Spain. You can never read a more interesting story, nor one that will make you feel prouder of your birthright. While our patriot armies have done nobly, it is none the less true that we never could have become one of the greatest nations in the world without the help of our heroic navy. Our warships penetrated into all waters of the globe, and made people, whether barbarous or civilized, respect and fear the Stars and Stripes.

This is due in a great measure to the bravery of our naval heroes, who did not fear to meet Great Britain, the "mistress of the seas," when her navy outnumbered ours one hundred to one. England is now our best friend, and no doubt will always remain so. Never again can there be war between her and us, and it will not be strange that one of these days, if either gets into trouble, the American and English soldiers will "drink from the same canteen," which is another way of saying they will fight side by side, as they did a short time ago in Samoa. All the same, our brethren across the ocean are very willing to own that we fought them right well. Indeed, they think all the more of us for having done so. You know that one brave man always likes another who is as brave as himself, just as Northerners and Southerners love each other, and are all united under one flag, which one side defended and the other fought against, through long years, terrible years from 1861 to 1865.

The decks of no ships have ever been trodden by braver men than our American sailors. There are no more heroic deeds in all history than those of Paul Jones, Porter, Hull, Decatur, Perry, Cushing, Farragut, Worden, Dewey, Schley, Evans, Philip, Hobson and scores of others, who have braved what seemed certain death for the glory of our flag. Many gave up their lives in its defence, and their names form one of the proudest and most cherished heritages that can descend to a grateful country.

So, I repeat, I am sure you will be interested and instructed in learning the story of the heroes who have done so much for us; and their example cannot fail to inspire you with loftier heroism, greater devotion, and deeper resolve to do all



you can for our favored land, which is the fairest that ever sun shone upon.

E.S.E.



# CHAPTER I

## THE BIRTH AND BOYHOOD OF GEORGE DEWEY.

The name of Vermont recalls the gallant "Green Mountain Boys," who proved their sturdy patriotism not only in the Revolution, but before those stormy days broke over the land. In the colonial times the section was known as the "New Hampshire Grants," and was claimed by both New York and New Hampshire, but Vermont refused to acknowledge the authority of either, even after New York, in 1764, secured a decision in her favor from King George, and set vigorously to work to compel the settlers to pay a second time for their lands. The doughty pioneers would have none of it, and roughly handled the New York officers sent thither. In 1777 Vermont formally declared her independence and adopted a State constitution. Then, since the Revolution was on, Ethan Allen and the rest of the "Green Mountain Boys" turned in and helped whip the redcoats. That being done, Vermont again asserted her independence, compelled New York to recognize it in 1789, and she was admitted to the Union in 1791.

It was away back in 1633 that the first Englishman bearing the name of Dewey arrived in Massachusetts with a number of other emigrants. They settled in Dorchester, and in 1636 Thomas Dewey, as he was named, removed to Windsor, Connecticut, where he died in 1648, leaving a widow and five children. Following down the family line, we come to the birth of Julius Yemans Dewey, August 22, 1801, at Berlin, Vermont. He studied medicine, practiced his profession at Montpelier, the capital, and became one of the most respected and widely known citizens of the State. He was married three times, and by his first wife had three sons and one daughter. The latter was Mary, and the sons were Charles, Edward, and George, the last of whom became the famous Admiral of the American navy and the hero of the late war between our country and Spain. He was born in the old colonial house of Dr. Dewey, December 26, 1837.

George was a good specimen of the mischievous, high-spirited and roystering youngster, who would go to any pains and run any risk for the sake of the fun it afforded. This propensity was carried to such an extent that the youth earned the name of being a "bad boy," and there is no use of pretending he did not deserve the reputation. He gave his parents and neighbors a good deal of anxiety, and Dr.

Dewey, who knew how to be stern as well as kind, was compelled more than once to interpose his authority in a way that no lad is likely to forget.

Dr. Dewey was a man of deep religious convictions. In middle life he gave up the practice of medicine and founded the National Life Insurance Company, to whose interests he devoted his time and ability, and met with a good degree of success. George was gifted by nature with rugged health, high spirits and indomitable pluck and fearlessness. None could surpass him in running, leaping, swimming and in boyish sports. He was fond of fishing and of rough games, and as a fighter few of his years could stand in front of him. In numerous athletic trials he was invariably the victor, and it must be admitted that he loved fighting as well as he liked playing ball or fishing. He gave and received hard knocks, and even at that early age showed evidence of the combative, aggressive courage that became so marked a feature of his manhood.

An incident is related by Z.K. Pangborn, the well known editor of New Jersey, who took charge of the Montpelier school, in which George Dewey was a pupil. The school was notorious for the roughness of a number of its pupils, who had ousted more than one instructor and welcomed the chance to tackle a new one. Master Dewey was the ringleader of these young rebels, and chuckled with delight when the quiet-looking, ordinary-sized teacher sauntered down the highway to begin his duties in the schoolroom.

At the time of the gentleman's appearance George was sitting astride of a big limb in a tree at the side of the road, his pockets bulging with stones, which he was hurling with unpleasant accuracy at every one who came within range. Several youngsters were howling from having served as targets to the urchin up the tree, and as soon as Mr. Pangborn saw how things were going he shouted to Dewey to stop his sport. The boy replied by advising the teacher to go to the hottest region named in works on theology, and, descending the tree, led several young scamps in an attack upon the instructor. There was a lively brush, in which it cannot be said that either party was the victor.

A drawn battle is always unsatisfactory to two armies, and George determined to have it out in the schoolroom with the teacher, who, expecting the struggle, had prepared for it and was as eager as the boys for the fight. As before, Dewey was the leader in the attack on the pedagogue, who was wiry, active, and strong. He swung his rawhide with a vigor that made Dewey and the others dance, but they pluckily kept up the assault, until the instructor seized a big stick, intended to serve as fuel for the old-fashioned stove, and laid about him with an energy that

soon stretched the rebels on the floor.

Then how he belabored them! As fast as one attempted to climb to his feet he was thumped back again by the club that continually whizzed through the air, and if a boy tried to stay the storm by remaining prone, the instructor thumped him none the less viciously. Indeed, matters had got to that point that he enjoyed the fun and was loath to let up, as he felt obliged to do, when the howling rebels slunk to their seats, thoroughly cowed and conquered.

George Dewey was the most battered of the lot and made a sorry sight. In fact, he was so bruised that his teacher thought it prudent to accompany him to his home and explain to his father the particulars of the affray in school. Mr. Pangborn gave a detailed history of the occurrence, to which Dr. Dewey listened gravely. When he understood everything, he showed his good sense by thanking the teacher for having administered the punishment, asking him to repeat it whenever the conduct of his son made it necessary.

This chastisement marked a turning point in the boy's career. He did a good deal of serious thinking throughout the day, and saw and felt his wrongdoing. He became an attentive, obedient pupil, and years after, when grown to manhood, he warmly thanked Mr. Pangborn for having punished him with such severity, frankly adding: "I believe if you hadn't done so I should have ended my career in the penitentiary."

Dr. Dewey wished to give George a career in the army, and he sent him to Norwich University, a military training school, in order to fit him for the Military Academy at West Point. George's tastes, however, were for the navy, and after much pleading with his father he brought him to his way of thinking. The utmost that Dr. Dewey could do was to secure the appointment of his son as alternate, who, as may be understood, secures the appointment only in the event of the principal failing to pass the entrance examination. In this case the principal would have passed without trouble, and, to quote an ordinary expression, George Dewey would have been "left," had not the mother of the other boy interposed at the critical moment. Under no circumstances would she allow her son to enter the navy. He was compelled to give up all ambition in that direction and to take up the study of theology. At this writing he is a popular preacher, who will always believe it was a most providential thing for our country that turned him aside from blocking the entrance of George Dewey to the Naval Academy at Annapolis.

Our hero entered the institution September 23, 1854. It did not take him long to discover that the institution, like that at West Point, is controlled by the most rigid discipline possible. No stricter rules can be devised than those that prevail at the two institutions. I have heard it said by a West Point graduate that a cadet cannot sit down and breathe for twenty-four hours without violating some rule. The fact that a few men do escape being "skinned"—that is, punished for derelictions of duty—does not prove that they have not committed any indiscretions, but that they have escaped detection.

Hard, however, as was the road for Dewey to travel, he never shrank or turned aside, for he knew the same path had been traveled by all who had gone before him, and he reasoned that what man had done man could do, and he did it.

It will be noted that the future Admiral entered the Naval Academy at a stirring period in the history of our country, over which the coming Civil War already cast its awful shadow, and, as the months and years passed, the shadow darkened and grew more portentous until the red lightning rent the clouds apart and they rained blood and fire and woe and death.

At the Annapolis Academy the lines between the cadets from the North and the South were sharply drawn. They reflected the passions of their sections, and, being young and impulsive, there were hot words and fierce blows. As might be supposed, George Dewey was prominent in these affrays, for it has been said of him that there was never a fight in his neighborhood without his getting into the thickest of it.

One day a fiery Southerner called him a dough-face, whereupon Dewey let go straight from the shoulder and his insulter turned a backward somersault. Leaping to his feet, his face aflame with rage, he went at the Green Mountain Boy, who coolly awaited his attack, and they proceeded instantly to mix it up for some fifteen minutes in the most lively manner conceivable. At the end of that time the Southerner was so thoroughly trounced that he was unable to continue the fight.

It was not long before Dewey had a furious scrimmage with another cadet, whom he soundly whipped. He challenged Dewey to a duel, and Dewey instantly accepted the challenge. Seconds were chosen, weapons provided and the ground paced off. By that time the friends of the two parties, seeing that one of the young men, and possibly both, were certain to be killed, interfered, and, appealing to the authorities of the institution, the deadly meeting was prevented.

These incidents attest the personal daring of Admiral Dewey, of whom it has been said that he never showed fear of any living man. Often during his stirring career was the attempt made to frighten him, and few have been placed in so many situations of peril and come out of them alive, but in none did he ever display anything that could possibly be mistaken for timidity. He was a brave man and a patriot in every fibre of his being.

A youth can be combative, personally brave and aggressive, and still be a good student, as was proven by the graduation of Dewey, fifth in a class of fourteen. As was the custom, he was ordered to a cruise before his final examination. He was a cadet on the steam frigate *Wabash*, which cruised in the Mediterranean squadron until 1859, when he returned to Annapolis and, upon examination, took rank as the leader of his class, proof that he had spent his time wisely while on what may be called his trial cruise. He went to his old home in Montpelier, where he was spending the days with his friends, when the country was startled and electrified by the news that Fort Sumter had been fired on in Charleston harbor and that civil war had begun. Dewey's patriotic blood was at the boiling point, and one week later, having been commissioned as lieutenant and assigned to the sloop of war *Mississippi*, he hurried thither to help in defence of the Union.

The *Mississippi* was a sidewheel steamer, carrying seventeen guns, and was destined to a thrilling career in the stirring operations of the West Gulf squadron, under the command of Captain David Glasgow Farragut, the greatest naval hero produced by the Civil War, and without a superior in all history.

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## CHAPTER II.

### DEWEY IN THE WAR FOR THE UNION.

No one needs to be reminded that the War for the Union was the greatest struggle of modern times. The task of bringing back to their allegiance those who had risen against the authority of the National Government was a gigantic one, and taxed the courage and resources of the country to the utmost. In order to make the war effective, it was necessary to enforce a rigorous blockade over three thousand miles of seacoast, open the Mississippi river, and overcome the large and well-officered armies in the field. The last was committed to the land forces, and it proved an exhausting and wearying struggle.

Among the most important steps was the second—that of opening the Mississippi, which being accomplished, the Southwest, from which the Confederacy drew its immense supplies of cattle, would be cut off and a serious blow struck against the armed rebellion.

The river was sealed from Vicksburg to the Gulf of Mexico. At the former place extensive batteries had been erected and were defended by an army, while the river below bristled with batteries and guns in charge of brave men and skilful officers.

While General Grant undertook the task of reducing Vicksburg, Captain Farragut assumed the herculean work of forcing his way up the Mississippi and capturing New Orleans, the greatest commercial city in the South. Knowing that such an attack was certain to be made, the Confederates had neglected no precaution in the way of defence. Ninety miles below the city, and twenty miles above its mouth, at the Plaquemine Bend, were the forts of St. Philip and Jackson. The former, on the left bank, had forty-two heavy guns, including two mortars and a battery of four seacoast mortars, placed below the water battery. Fort Jackson, besides its water battery, mounted sixty-two guns, while above the forts were fourteen vessels, including the ironclad ram *Manassas*, and a partially completed floating battery, armored with railroad iron and called the *Louisiana*. New Orleans was defended by three thousand volunteers, most of the troops formerly there having been sent to the Confederate army in Tennessee.

The expedition against New Orleans was prepared with great care, and so many months were occupied that the enemy had all the notice they could ask in which to complete their preparations for its defence. The Union expedition consisted of six sloops of war, sixteen gunboats, twenty mortar schooners and five other vessels. The *Mississippi*, upon which young Dewey was serving as a lieutenant, was under the command of Melanethon Smith. The land troops numbered 15,000, and were in charge of General Benjamin F. Butler, of Massachusetts.

Farragut arrived in February, 1862, nearly two months after the beginning of preparations to force the river. When everything was in readiness the fleet moved cautiously up stream, on April 18, and a bombardment of Forts St. Philip and Jackson was opened, which lasted for three days, without accomplishing anything decisive. Farragut had carefully studied the situation, and, confident that the passage could be made, determined it should be done, no matter at what cost. On the night of the 23d his vessels were stripped of every rope and spar that could be spared, the masts and rigging of the gunboats and mortar vessels being trimmed with the limbs of trees, to conceal their identity from the Confederate watchers.

At two o'clock in the morning the signal was hoisted on the *Hartford*, Captain Farragut's flagship, and the fleet started in single line to run the fearful gauntlet. The *Cayuga* led, the *Pensacola* followed, and the *Mississippi* was third. The rebels had huge bonfires burning on both shores, and as the *Pensacola* came opposite the forts they opened their furious fire upon her.

A good deal of uneasiness prevailed in the Union fleet regarding the rebel rams. It was known they were formidable monsters, which the Confederates believed could smash and sink the whole Union squadron. While it was known that much was to be feared from the forts, it was the ironclads that formed the uncertain factor and magnified the real danger in many men's minds.

The *Mississippi* was hardly abreast of Fort St. Philip when the dreaded *Manassas* came plunging down the river out of the gloom at full speed, and headed directly for the *Mississippi*. She was not seen until so close that it was impossible to dodge her, and the ironclad struck the steamer on the port side, close to the mizzenmast, firing a gun at the same time. Fortunately the blow was a glancing one, though it opened a rent seven feet long and four inches deep in the steamer, which, being caught by the swift current on her starboard bow, was swept across to the Fort Jackson side of the river, so close indeed that her gunners and those in the fort exchanged curses and imprecations.



SHELLING FORTS PHILIP AND JACKSON.  
**SHELLING FORTS PHILIP AND JACKSON.**

The passage of the forts by the Union vessels forms one of the most thrilling pictures in the history of the Civil War. The *Hartford*, like all the vessels, was subjected to a terrible fire, was assailed by the Confederate ironclads, and more than once was in imminent danger of being sent to the bottom. Following with the second division, Captain Farragut did not reply to the fire of the forts for a quarter of an hour. He hurled a broadside into St. Philip and was pushing through the dense smoke when a fire-raft, with a tug pushing her along, plunged out of the gloom toward the *Hartford's* port quarter. She swerved to elude this peril and ran aground close to St. Philip, which, recognizing her three ensigns and flag officer's flag, opened a savage fire, but luckily most of the shot passed too high.

There was no getting out of the way of the fire-raft, which, being jammed against the flagship, sent the flames through the portholes and up the oiled masts. The perfect discipline of the crew enabled them to extinguish the fire before it could do much damage, and the *Hartford* succeeded in backing into deep water and kept pounding Fort St. Philip so long as she was in range.

THE "HARTFORD"—FARRAGUT'S FLAGSHIP.  
**THE "HARTFORD"—FARRAGUT'S FLAGSHIP.**

Without attempting to describe the battle in detail, we will give our attention to the *Mississippi*. Within an hour and a quarter of the time the leading vessel passed the forts, all had reached a safe point above, where they engaged in a furious fight with the Confederate flotilla, the smaller members of which were soon disabled or sunk.

Meanwhile the ironclad *Manassas* had been prowling at the heels of the Union squadron, but being discovered by the *Mississippi*, the steamer opened on her with so destructive a fire that the ram ran ashore and the crew scrambled over the bows and escaped. The *Mississippi* continued pounding her until she was completely wrecked. The loss of the Union fleet was thirty-seven killed and one hundred and forty-seven wounded, while the Confederate land forces had twelve killed and forty wounded. The Confederate flotilla must have lost as many men as the Unionists. Having safely passed all obstructions, Captain Farragut steamed up to the river to New Orleans, and the city surrendered April 25, formal possession being taken on May 1.

It will be admitted that Lieutenant Dewey had received his "baptism of fire."

It is the testimony of every one who saw him during the turmoil of battle that he conducted himself with the coolness and courage of a veteran. At no time during the passage of the forts and the desperate fighting with the Confederate flotilla above did he display the first evidence of nervousness or lack of self-possession.

IRONCLADS ON THE MISSISSIPPI.  
**IRONCLADS ON THE MISSISSIPPI.**

The next engagement in which Lieutenant Dewey took part was the attempt by Farragut to pass the battery of nineteen guns, mounted on the hundred-foot high bluff of Port Hudson, on a bend of the Mississippi, below Vicksburg. The position was the most difficult conceivable to carry from the river, because of the plunging shots from the enormous guns on the bluff above.

Captain Farragut had no thought of reducing these batteries, which would have been impossible with a fleet double the strength of his, but he wished to get his vessels past in order to blockade the river above the bend. The attempt was made on the night of March 14, 1863, with the *Hartford* in the lead, and followed by the *Richmond*, *Monongahela* and *Mississippi*, with the smaller boats. The first three boats had as consorts the *Albatross*, *Kineo* and *Genessee*. Captain Mahan, in "The Gulf and Inland Waters," gives the following vivid description of this historical incident:

"As they drew near the batteries, the lowest of which the *Hartford* had already passed, the enemy threw up rockets and opened their fire. Prudence, and the fact of the best water being on the starboard hand, led the ships to hug the east shore of the river, passing so close under the Confederate guns that the speech of the gunners and troops could be distinguished. Along the shore, at the foot of the bluffs, powerful reflecting lamps, like those used on locomotives, had been placed to show the ships to the enemy as they passed, and for the same purpose large fires, already stacked on the opposite point, were lit. The fire of the fleet and from the shore soon raised a smoke which made these precautions useless, while it involved the ships in a danger greater than any from the enemy's guns. Settling down upon the water in a still, damp atmosphere, it soon hid everything from the eyes of the pilots. The flagship leading had the advantage of pushing often ahead of her own smoke; but those who followed ran into it and incurred a perplexity which increased from van to rear. At the bend of the river the current caught the *Hartford* on her port bow, sweeping her around with her head toward the batteries, and nearly on shore, her stern touching the ground slightly; but by her own efforts and the assistance of the *Albatross* she was backed clear. Then,

the *Albatross* backing and the *Hartford* going ahead strong with the engine, her head was fairly pointed up the stream, and she passed by without serious injury. Deceived possibly by the report of the howitzers in her top, which were nearly on their own level, the Confederates did not depress their guns sufficiently to hit her as often as they did the ships that followed her. One killed and two wounded is her report; and one marine fell overboard, his cries for help being heard on board the other ships as they passed by, unable to save him."

If the capture of the batteries was impossible, their passage was almost equally so. The *Richmond* was so badly injured that she was compelled to turn down stream, having suffered a loss of three killed and fifteen wounded, while the *Monongahela* had six killed and twenty-one wounded before she was able to wrench herself loose from where she had grounded and drift out of range.

Now came the *Mississippi*, whose tragic fate is graphically told by Admiral Porter in his "Naval History of the Civil War":

"The steamship *Mississippi*, Captain Melancthon Smith, followed in the wake of the *Monongahela*, firing whenever her guns could be brought to bear. At 11:30 o'clock she reached the turn which seemed to give our vessels so much trouble, and Captain Smith was congratulating himself on the prospect of soon catching up with the flag officer, when his ship grounded and heeled over three streaks to port.

"The engines were instantly reversed and the port guns run in in order to bring her on an even keel, while the fire from her starboard battery was reopened on the forts. The engines were backed with all the steam that could be put upon them, and the backing was continued for thirty minutes, but without avail.

"It was now seen that it would be impossible to get the ship afloat.

"Captain Smith gave orders to spike the port battery and throw the guns overboard, but it was not done, for the enemy's fire was becoming so rapid and severe that the Captain deemed it judicious to abandon the ship at once in order to save the lives of the men.

"While preparations were being made to destroy the ship, the sick and wounded were lowered into boats and conveyed ashore, while the men at the starboard battery continued to fight in splendid style, firing at every flash of the enemy's guns. The small arms were thrown overboard, and all possible damage was done to the engine and everything else that might prove of use to the enemy.

"The ship was first set on fire in the forward storeroom, but three shots came through below her water-line and put out the flames. She was then set afire in four places aft, and when the flames were well under way, so as to make her destruction certain, Captain Smith and his first lieutenant (George Dewey) left the ship, all the officers and crew having been landed before.

"The *Mississippi* was soon ablaze fore and aft, and as she was now relieved of a great deal of weight—by the removal of her crew and the destruction of her upper works—she floated off the bank and drifted down the river, much to the danger of the Union vessels below. But she passed without doing them any injury, and at 5:30 o'clock blew up and went to the bottom."

When the time came for the crew to save themselves as best they could, all sprang overboard and struck out for shore. A little way from the blazing steamer a poor sailor was struggling hard to save himself, but one arm was palsied from a wound, and he must have drowned but for Dewey, who swam powerfully to him, helped him to a floating piece of wreckage and towed him safely to land.

The lieutenant was now transferred to one of the gunboats of Admiral Farragut's squadron and engaged in patrol duty between Cairo and Vicksburg.

#### GUNBOATS PASSING BEFORE VICKSBURG. GUNBOATS PASSING BEFORE VICKSBURG.

The latter surrendered to General Grant July 4, 1863, and the river was opened from its source to the Gulf. Early in 1864 the lieutenant was made executive officer of the gunboat *Agawam*, and when attached to the North Atlantic squadron, took part in the attack on Fort Fisher, one of the strongest of forts, which, standing at the entrance of Cape Fear river, was so efficient a protection to Wilmington that the city became the chief port in the Confederacy for blockade runners. Indeed, its blockade was a nullity, despite the most determined efforts of the Union fleet to keep it closed. The Confederate cruisers advertised their regular days for departure, and they ran upon schedule time, even women and children taking passage upon the swift steamers with scarcely a fear that they would not be able to steam in and out of the river whenever the navigators of the craft chose to do so.

The first attempt against Fort Fisher was in the latter part of December, 1864, but, though the fleet was numerous and powerful, and the greatest gallantry was displayed, the attack was unsuccessful. General Butler, in command of the land troops, after a careful examination of the Confederate works, pronounced

capture impossible and refused to sacrifice his men in a useless attack. Nevertheless the attempt was renewed January 12, when General Alfred Terry had charge of the land forces. The garrison made one of the bravest defences of the whole war, and the hand-to-hand fight was of the most furious character. It lasted for five hours, when the fort was obliged to surrender, the garrison of 2,300 men becoming prisoners of war. It was in this fearful struggle that Ensign "Bob" Evans, who was with the naval force that charged up the unprotected beach, was so frightfully wounded that it was believed he could not live. When the surgeon made ready to amputate his shattered leg, Bob, who had secured possession of a loaded revolver, swore he would shoot any man who touched the limb with such purpose. Perforce he was left alone, and in due time fully recovered, though lamed for life.

Lieutenant Dewey was one of the most active of the young officers in the attack on Fort Fisher, and conducted himself with so much bravery and skill, executing one of the most difficult and dangerous movements in the heat of the conflict, that he was highly complimented by his superior officers.

But peace soon came, and a generation was to pass before his name was again associated with naval exploits. In March, 1865, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-commander and assigned to duty on the *Kearsarge*, the vessel that acquired undying glory for sinking the *Alabama*, off Cherbourg, France, during the previous July. Early in 1867 he was ordered home from the European station and assigned to duty at the Kittery Navy Yard, at Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

While at this station he became acquainted with Miss Susan B. Goodwin, daughter of the "war Governor" of New Hampshire. She was an accomplished young woman, to whom the naval officer was married, October 24, 1867. Their all too brief wedded life was ideally happy, but she died December 28, 1872, a few days after the birth of a son, named George Goodwin, in honor of his grandfather.

From 1873 to 1876 Dewey was engaged in making surveys on the Pacific coast; he commanded the *Juniata* on the Asiatic squadron in 1882-83, and the following year was made captain and placed in charge of the *Dolphin*, one of the original "white squadron." Next came service in Washington as Chief of the Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting, as member of the Lighthouse Board and president of the Board of Inspection and Survey (he being made commodore February 28, 1896), until 1897, when he was placed in command of the Asiatic squadron, much against his will.



## CHAPTER III.

### DEWEY IN THE WAR WITH SPAIN.

While engaged with his duties in Washington, Commodore Dewey found his close confinement to work had affected his health. Naturally strong and rugged, accustomed to the ozone of the ocean and toned up by the variety of the service, even in times of peace, the monotony of a continual round of the same duties told upon him, and his physician advised him to apply for sea service. He knew the counsel was wise and he made application, which was granted.

Assistant Secretary of War Theodore Roosevelt, after a careful study of the record of the different naval commanders, was convinced that George Dewey deserved one of the most important commands at the disposal of the Government. The impetuous official was certain that war with Spain was at hand, and that one of the most effective blows against that tyrannous power could be struck in the far East, where the group of islands known as the Philippines constituted her most princely possessions.

The assignment, as has been stated, was not pleasing to Dewey, because he and others believed the real hard fighting must take place in European or Atlantic waters. We all know the uneasiness that prevailed for weeks over the destination of the Spanish fleet under Admiral Cervera. Dewey wanted to meet him and do some fighting that would recall his services when a lieutenant in the Civil War, and he saw no chance of securing the chance on the other side of the world, but Roosevelt was persistent, and, against the wishes of the Naval Board, he obtained his assignment as flag officer of the Asiatic squadron.

Commodore Dewey felt that the first duty of an officer is to obey, and after a farewell dinner given by his friends at the Metropolitan Club in Arlington, he hurriedly completed his preparations, and, starting for Hong Kong, duly reached that port, where, on January 3, 1898, he hoisted his flag on the *Olympia*.

The official records show that the *Olympia* was ordered home, but Roosevelt, in a confidential dispatch of February 25, directed Commodore Dewey to remain, to prepare his squadron for offensive operations, and, as soon as war broke out with Spain, to steam to the Philippines and hit the enemy as hard as he knew

how. Meanwhile ammunition and supplies were hurried across the continent to San Francisco as fast as express trains could carry them, and were sent thence by steamer to Hong Kong, where they were eagerly received by the waiting Commodore.

Reverting to those stirring days, it will be recalled that the Queen Regent of Spain declared war against the United States on April 24, 1898, to which we replied that war had begun three days earlier, when the Madrid government dismissed our minister and handed him his passports. Then followed, or rather were continued, the vigorous preparations on the part of our authorities for the prosecution of the war to a prompt and decisive end.

Commodore Dewey's squadron lay at anchor in the harbor of Hong Kong, awaiting the momentous news from Washington. When it reached the commander it was accompanied by an order to capture or destroy the enemy's fleet at Manila. Almost at the same time Great Britain issued her proclamation of neutrality, the terms of which compelled Dewey to leave the British port of Hong Kong within twenty-four hours. He did so, steaming to Mirs Bay, a Chinese port near at hand, where he completed his preparations for battle, and on the 27th of April steamed out of the harbor on his way to Manila.

The city of Manila, with a population numbering about a quarter of a million, lies on the western side of Luzon, the principal island, with a magnificent bay in front, extensive enough to permit all the navies of the world to manœuvre with plenty of elbow room. The entrance to the immense bay is seven miles wide and contains two islands, Corregidor and Caballo, both of which were powerfully fortified, the works containing a number of modern guns. Torpedoes were stretched across the channel and the bay abounded with enough mines and torpedoes, it would seem, to blow any fleet of ironclads to atoms as soon as it dared to try to force an entrance into the waters. Some twenty miles beyond lay the city of Manila, and about ten miles to the south was Cavité, constituting the strongly fortified part of the city proper.

Of course the Spanish spies were on the watch in Hong Kong, and while the American squadron was steaming out of the bay the news was telegraphed to the authorities at Manila, who knew that the real destination of the enemy was that city. Every effort was made to keep the matter a secret, but it was impossible, and it soon became known to everybody that the American "pigs" were coming, and that Manila must fall, if the Spanish fleet were unable to beat off the enemy.



The Spaniards proclaimed that they would send every one of the American vessels to the bottom; but they had made similar boasts before, and their bombast did not quiet the fears of the people, among whom a panic quickly spread. Those who were able to do so gathered their valuables and took refuge on the merchant ships in the harbor and thanked heaven when they bore them away. Many others fled from the city, but the majority stayed, grimly determined to be in at the death and accept whatever fate was in store for them.

The distance between Hong Kong and Manila is 630 miles, and it needed only a little figuring on the part of the inhabitants to decide that the dreaded squadron would be due on the following Saturday evening or early the next morning, which would be the first of May. The self-confidence of Admiral Montojo and his officers was almost sublime. All they asked was a fair chance at the "American pigs." They hoped that nothing would occur to prevent the coming of the fleet, for the Spaniards would never cease to mourn if the golden opportunity were allowed to slip from their grasp. They were not disappointed in that respect.

It is proper to give at this point the respective strength of the American and Spanish fleets. The squadron under the command of Commodore Dewey was as follows:

*Olympia*—Protected cruiser (flagship), 5,500 tons. Speed, 21.7 knots. Complement, 450. Armor, protected deck, 2 inches to 4-3/4 inches. Guns, main battery, four 8-inch, ten 5-inch, rapid-fire; secondary battery, rapid-fire, fourteen 6-pound, seven 1-pound, four Gatlings, one field gun and five torpedo tubes. Captain Charles V. Gridley.

*Baltimore*—Protected cruiser, 4,400 tons. Speed, 20.1 knots. Complement, 386. Armor, 2-1/2 inches to 4 inches. Guns, main battery, four 8-inch, six 6-inch, slow-fire; secondary battery, rapid-fire, four 6-pound, two 3-pound, two 1-pound, four 37 MM. Hotchkiss, two Colts, one field gun and five torpedo tubes. Captain N.M. Dyer.

*Raleigh*—Protected cruiser, 3,213 tons. Speed, 19 knots. Armor, 1 inch to 2-1/2 inches. Guns, one 6-inch, rapid-fire, ten 5-inch; secondary battery, eight 6-pounders, four 1-pounders, and two machine guns. Complement, 320. Captain J.B. Coghlan.

*Boston*—Protected cruiser, 3,189 tons. Speed, 15.6 knots. Complement, 270. Armor, 1-1/2 inch deck. Guns, main battery, two 8-inch and six 6-inch rifles;

secondary battery, rapid-fire, two 6-pounders and two 3-pounders. Captain F. Wildes.

*Petrel*—Fourth-rate cruiser, 890 tons. Speed, 13.7 knots. Guns, four 6-inch, two 3-pounder rapid-fire, one 1-pounder, and four machine guns. Commander E.P. Wood.

*Concord*—Gunboat, 1,710 tons. Speed, 16.8 knots. Armor, 3/8-inch deck. Guns, main battery, six 6-inch rifles. Commander Asa Walker.

*Hugh McCulloch*—Revenue cutter, light battery of rapid-fire guns.

*Zafiro*—Auxiliary cruiser: supply vessel.

The vessels under command of Admiral Montojo were the following:

*Reina Cristina*—Cruiser (flagship). Built in 1887, iron, 3,090 tons, 14 to 17.5 knots, according to draught, and a main battery of six 6.2-inch rifles.

*Castilla*—Cruiser, built in 1881, wood, 3,342 tons, 14 knots, and four 5.9-inch Krupps and two 4.7-inch Krupps in her main battery.

*Velasco*—Small cruiser, built in 1881, iron, 1,139 tons, and three 6-inch Armstrongs in her main battery.

*Don Juan de Austria*—Small cruiser, completed in 1887, iron, 1,152 tons, 13 to 14 knots, and four 4.7-inch rifles in her main battery.

*Don Antonio de Ulloa*—Small cruiser, iron, 1,152 tons. Four 4.7-inch Hontoria guns; two 2.7-inch, two quick-firing; two 1.5-inch; five muzzle loaders.

Gunboats *Paragua*, *Callao*, *Samar*, *Pampagna*, and *Arayat*, built 1881-6, steel, 137 tons, 10 knots, and each mounting two quick-firing guns.

Gunboats *Mariveles* and *Mindoro*, built in 1886 and 1885, iron, 142 tons, 10 knots, each mounting one 2.7-inch rifle and four machine guns.

Gunboat *Manileno*, built in 1887, wood, 142 tons, 9 knots, and mounting three 3.5-inch rifles.

Gunboats *El Cano* and *General Lezo*, built in 1885, iron, 528 tons, 10 to nearly 12 knots, and each mounting three 3.5-inch rifles.

Gunboat *Marquis Del Duero*, built in 1875, iron, 500 tons, 10 knots, and

mounting one 6.2-inch and two 4.7-inch rifles.

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Through the bright sunshine and when the stars twinkled in the sky or the full moon rode overhead, the American ships steamed to the southeast across the heaving China Sea. The Stars and Stripes fluttered in the breeze and there was a feeling of expectancy on board the grim engines of war, that had laid aside every possible encumbrance, and like prize-fighters were stripped to the buff and eager for battle.

The run was a smooth one, and as the sun was sinking in the sky Commodore Dewey, peering through his glass, caught the faint outlines of Corregidor Island, and dimly beyond the flickering haze revealed the Spanish fleet in the calm bay. The Commodore had been in that part of the world before, and while waiting at Hong Kong had gathered all the knowledge possible of the defences of Manila. He knew the fort was powerfully fortified and the bay mined, and knowing all this, he remembered the exclamation of his immortal instructor in the science of war, the peerless Farragut, when he was driving his squadron into Mobile Bay. Recalling that occurrence, Commodore Dewey joined in spirit in repeating the words:

"D—— the torpedoes!"

It was still many miles to the entrance, and night closed in while the squadron was ploughing through the sea that broke in tumbling foam at the bows and spread far away in snowy wakes at the rear. All lights were put out, the full moon again climbed the sky and the shadowy leviathans plunged through the waters straight for the opening of the bay, guarded by the fort and batteries, with the Spanish fleet beyond, defiantly awaiting the coming of the American squadron.

Suddenly from Corregidor Island the darkness was lit up by a vivid flash, a thunderous boom traveled across the bay, and the heavy shot tore its way screaming over the *Raleigh*, quickly followed by a second, which fell astern of the *Olympia* and *Raleigh*. The Spaniards had discovered the approach of the squadron. The *Raleigh*, *Concord*, and *Boston* replied; all the shots being fired with remarkable accuracy.

One may imagine the consternation in Manila when the boom of those guns

rolled in from the bay, for none could mistake its meaning. Women and children ran to the churches and knelt in frenzied prayer; men dashed to and fro, not knowing what to do, while the Spanish soldiers, who had not believed the American ships could ever pass the harbor torpedoes and mines, were in a wild panic when they learned that the seemingly impossible had been done. To add to the terror, rumors spread that the ferocious natives were gathering at the rear of the city to rush in and plunder and kill.

When at last the morning light appeared in the sky, the Americans saw tens of thousands of people crowded along the shore, gazing in terror out on the bay where rode the hostile fleets, soon to close in deadly battle. Commodore Dewey coolly scanned the hostile vessels, and grasping the whole situation, as may be said, at a glance, led in the attack on the enemy.

While approaching Cavité two mines exploded directly in front of the *Olympia*. The roar was tremendous and the water was flung hundreds of feet in the air. Without swerving an inch or halting, Dewey signalled to the other vessels to pay no attention to the torpedoes, but to steam straight ahead. It was virtually a repetition of the more emphatic command of Farragut in Mobile Bay, uttered thirty-four years before.

The batteries on shore let fly at the ships, and the first reply was made by Captain Coghlan of the *Raleigh*. The *Olympia* had led the way into the harbor, and she now headed for the centre of the Spanish fleet. Calmly watching everything in his field of vision, and knowing when the exact moment arrived for the beginning of the appalling work, Commodore Dewey, cool, alert, attired in white duck uniform and a golf cap, turned to Captain Gridley and said in his ordinary conversational tone:

"Gridley, you may fire when ready."

A series of sharp, crackling sounds followed, like exploding Chinese crackers, and then the thunderous roars and a vast volume of smoke rolled over the bay and enveloped the warships that were pouring their deadly fire into the Spanish vessels. The American ships, in order to disconcert the aim of the batteries of the enemy, moved slowly in their terrible ellipses or loops, their sides spouting crimson flame and answered by the shots of the Spaniards, who fought with a courage deserving of all praise. The manœuvring of the American ships led the breathless swarms on shore to believe they were suffering defeat, and an exultant telegram to that effect was cabled to Madrid, nearly ten thousand miles away,

where it caused a wild but short-lived rejoicing.

At half-past seven there was a lull. Commodore Dewey drew off to replenish his magazines, of whose shortness of supply he had received disturbing reports. Advantage was taken of the cessation to give the men breakfast, for it is a well accepted principle that sailors as well as soldiers fight best upon full stomachs. As the wind blew aside the dense smoke, it was seen that the *Reina Cristina*, the Spanish flagship, was in flames. Hardly two hours later the American squadron advanced again to the attack, and Admiral Montojo was observed to transfer his flag from the doomed *Reina Cristina* to the *Isla de Cuba*, which soon after was also ablaze. Amid the crash and roar of the ponderous guns sounded the shrieks and cries of mortal agony from the Spanish crews, victims to the matchless gunnery of the Americans.

THE "OLYMPIA" IN MANILA BAY.  
**THE "OLYMPIA" IN MANILA BAY.**

The latter pressed their advantage remorselessly. The *Don Juan de Austria* was the centre of the heaviest fire, and suddenly a part of the deck flew upward in the air, carrying with it scores of dead and wounded. A shot had exploded one of her magazines, and at the sight of the awful results Admiral Montojo threw up his arms in despair. The crew refused to leave the blazing ship, and cursing and praying they went down with her. Then the *Castilla* burst into one mass of roaring flame, and the rest of the defeated fleet skurried down the long narrow isle behind Cavité. Others dashed up a small creek, where they grounded, and those that were left ran ashore. By half-past eleven the batteries of Cavité were silenced, the Spanish fleet was destroyed, and the victorious Americans broke into ringing cheers. The battle of Manila, one of the most remarkable in naval annals, was won and Commodore Dewey took rank among the greatest of all the heroes of the sea.

What a marvellous record! Of the Spaniards, the dead and wounded numbered nearly a thousand, while not a single life had been lost by the American squadron. Several were wounded, but none seriously. No such victory between ironclads has thus far taken place in the history of the world. In the face of mines, torpedoes and shore batteries, Commodore Dewey had won an overwhelming and crushing victory. The power of Spain in the Philippines was forever destroyed, and another glorious victory had been added to the long list that illumines the story of the American navy.

It was easy for Dewey to compel the surrender of Manila, but with the prudence that always guides him, he decided that since his force was not strong enough to occupy and hold the city, to await the arrival of reinforcements from the United States. They reached Manila the following August, and, under command of General Wesley Merritt and aided by the fleet, Manila surrendered, almost at the same hour that the representatives of Spain and our own officials in Washington signed the protocol that marked the cessation of war between the two countries.

Now came long and trying weeks and months to Rear Admiral Dewey, he having been promoted upon receipt of news of his great victory. Peerless as was his conduct during offensive operations, it was surpassed in many respects by his course throughout the exasperating period named. Germany and France were unfriendly and Aguinaldo treacherous, though Great Britain and Japan were ardent in their sympathy for the United States. Germany especially was a

constant cause of irritation to Admiral Dewey, whose patience was often tried to the utmost verge. To his tact, prudence, self-control, firmness, diplomacy and masterful wisdom were due the fact that no complication with foreign powers occurred and that the United States escaped a tremendous war, whose consequences no one could foresee or calculate.

Everybody instinctively felt that Admiral Dewey was the real hero of our war with Spain. The wish was general that he should return home in order that his countrymen might have opportunity to show their appreciation of him and to give him fitting honors.

And nothing could be more repugnant than all this to the naval hero, who is as modest as he is brave. Besides, he felt that his work was by no means finished in the far East, for, as has been shown, there was need of delicate diplomacy, prudence and statesmanship. He asked to be allowed to stay, and he did so, until, the main difficulty being passed, and his health feeling the result of the tremendous strain that was never relaxed, he finally set sail in the *Olympia* for home, leaving Hong Kong in May, and, one year after his great victory, proceeding at a leisurely rate that did not bring him to his native shores until the cool breezes of autumn. On the long voyage hither he was shown the highest honors everywhere, and Washington or Lincoln could not have received more grateful homage than was paid to him by his countrymen, whom he had served so long, so faithfully and so well.

Meanwhile, it should be added, that the rank of full Admiral of the navy, hitherto borne only by David Glasgow Farragut and David Dixon Porter, was revived and bestowed, in February, 1899, upon George Dewey, and of the three none has worn the exalted honor more worthily than the Green Mountain Boy, who has proven himself the born gentleman and fighter, the thorough patriot and statesman and the Chevalier Bayard of the American navy.

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# THE REVOLUTIONARY BATTLES





## CHAPTER IV.

### **Birth of the American Navy—The Privateers—Capture of New Providence, in the Bahamas—Paul Jones—A Clever Exploit—A Skilful Escape—Fine Seamanship—An Audacious Scheme.**

When, on April 19, 1775, the battle of Lexington opened the Revolution the Colonies did not possess a single ship with which to form the beginning of a navy. They had for many years been actively engaged in the coasting trade and some of their vessels did valiant service on the side of England in the wars against France and Spain. We had a good many hardy, skilled seamen, who formed the best material from which to man a navy, and before long Congress undertook the work of building one. That body ordered the construction of thirteen frigates—one for each State—and some of these did noble work, but by the close of the war few of them were left; nearly all had been captured or destroyed.

#### CAPTAIN JOHN PAUL JONES. CAPTAIN JOHN PAUL JONES.

It was far different with the privateers, which were vessels fitted out by private parties, under the authority of Congress, to cruise the seas wherever they chose and capture English vessels wherever they could. When a prize was taken the lucky officers and crews divided the plunder. It was a very tempting field for the brave and enterprising Americans and when, in March, 1776, Congress gave them permission to fit out and sail privateers, they were quick to use the chance of securing prize money as it was called. Those swift sailing vessels and their daring crews sailed out of Salem, Cape Ann, Newburyport, Bristol and other seacoast towns, and they did not have to hunt long before they found the richest sort of prizes. In the single year 1776 these privateers captured 342 British vessels and wrought great havoc among the English shipping.

In January, 1778, one of these privateers entered the harbor of New Providence, in the Bahamas, and captured the fort and a sixteen-gun man-of-war. Many other valiant exploits were performed and before long some of the more daring privateers boldly crossed the Atlantic and by their deeds threw the coast of Great

Britain into consternation.

Among the most remarkable of these naval heroes was a young Scotchman, not quite thirty years old.

:Flag-"Don't tread on me"

He had been trained in the merchant service and had become a skilful sailor before he removed to Virginia, where he made his home. He devotedly loved his adopted country, and, when the war broke out between the colonies and Great Britain, and the long, hard struggle for independence began, he was among the very first to offer his services on the side of liberty. His character was so well known and appreciated that he was appointed a first lieutenant. I am sure you have all heard of him, for his name was John Paul Jones, though since, for some reason or other, he dropped his first name and is generally referred to simply as Paul Jones.

His first service was on the *Alfred*, which helped in the capture of the fort at New Providence, already spoken of. Jones with his own hands hoisted the first flag displayed on an American man-of-war. It was of yellow silk, with the device of a rattlesnake, and bore the motto, "Don't tread on me."

Jones attracted such favorable attention during this enterprise that on his return he was made commander of the twelve-ton brig *Providence* and was employed for a time in carrying troops from Rhode Island to New York. Since he was by birth a citizen of Great Britain, which then insisted that "once a British subject always a British subject," the English cruisers made determined efforts to capture him. Many of the officers declared that if they could lay hands on the audacious freebooter, as they called him, they would hang him at the yard arm. But, before doing so, they had to catch him, and that proved a harder task than they suspected. He was chased many times and often fired into, but the *Providence* was always swift enough to show a clean pair of heels to her pursuers and Jones himself was such a fine sailor that he laughed at their efforts to take him prisoner.

One of the cleverest exploits of Jones was performed in the autumn of 1776. He saw an American brig returning from the West Indies, heavily laden with supplies for Washington's army, which was badly in need of them. A British frigate was in hot pursuit of the American, which was straining every nerve to escape, but would not have been able to do so except for Jones, who ran in between the two, and, firing into the frigate, induced her to let the American go

and chase him. Taking advantage of the chance thus offered, the brig got safely away and then Jones himself dodged away from the frigate, which thus lost both.

In the month of October, 1776, Jones was promoted to the rank of captain and ordered to cruise between Boston and the Delaware. I must tell you an anecdote which illustrates his wonderful seamanship.

Some weeks before he was made a captain, and while cruising off Bermuda, he saw five sail far to the windward and he beat up, doing so carefully and with the purpose of finding out whether there was a chance for him to strike an effective blow. He picked out what looked like a large merchant ship and gave chase. He gained fast, but to his dismay, when he was quite close, he discovered that instead of a merchant ship he had almost run into a twenty-eight gun frigate of the enemy.

Finding he had caught a Tartar, Jones did the only thing left to him. He hauled off and put on every stitch of sail and the frigate did the same. She proved the better sailer, and, though she gained slowly, it was surely, and in the course of a few hours she had approached within musket shot of the brig's lee quarter. There seemed no possible escape for Jones, knowing which, he did a remarkable thing. He veered off until the frigate was almost astern, when he put about dead before the wind, with every yard of canvas set.

The Englishman was dumfounded by the daring manœuvre, which brought the American within pistol shot, for he did not fire a gun until Jones was beyond reach of his grape. The pursuit was continued hour after hour, but the brig was now at her best and finally left her pursuer hopelessly astern. When the *Providence* ran into Newport in October she had captured or destroyed fifteen prizes.

Jones's bold and skilful seamanship drew attention to him and he was now given command of the 24-gun ship *Alfred*, while Captain Hacker took charge of the *Providence*. The two vessels started on a cruise in company and some days later the *Alfred* fell in with three British vessels, and, after a brisk action, captured them all. One proved to be a transport with 150 men and a large amount of supplies for Burgoyne's army, which was at that time organizing in Montreal for its notable campaign through New York, where it was captured by General Gates, at Saratoga.

This transport was so valuable that Jones, instead of putting a prize crew on board, determined to take her into port, and, if in danger of capture from pursuit,

he meant to sink her. It began snowing the following night and the *Providence* and *Alfred* were obliged to separate.

Jones was making for Boston when he was discovered by the frigate that he had outwitted two months before, when the *Providence* narrowly escaped capture. Night was closing in and the frigate being to windward, her outlines were indistinct. Captain Jones ordered his prizes to steer southward and to pay no attention to the signals displayed on his own vessel. At midnight he hoisted a topight and tacked to the west, knowing the others would continue to the southward as he had directed. The stratagem was successful, for at daylight the frigate was pressing hard after the *Alfred*, while the prizes had disappeared. The *Alfred* eluded her enemy as before, and, upon reaching Boston, Jones found his captives awaiting him.

An idea of the effectiveness of the privateers may be gained by the statement that during the year 1777 nearly 500 vessels were captured by them. By that time Paul Jones had proven himself to be the finest officer in the American Navy. He had every quality to make him such. No one could surpass him in seamanship. He was cool and daring and was animated by the highest patriotism for his adopted country. Such a man was sure to be heard of again, as Great Britain learned to her cost.

France had shown a strong liking for the American colonies from the first. No doubt this liking was influenced by her hatred of England, for the nations had been bitter rivals for years. We had sent several commissioners to Paris, and they did a good deal for our country. The commissioners had a heavy, single-decked frigate built in Holland, which was named the *South Carolinian* and was intended for Paul Jones, but some difficulties occurred and he was sent to sea in the 18-gun ship *Ranger*, which left Portsmouth, N.H., at the beginning of November. She was so poorly equipped that Jones complained, though he did not hesitate on that account.

On the way to Nantes, in France, the *Ranger* captured two prizes, refitted at Brest, and in April, 1778, sailed for the British coast. Having made several captures, Captain Jones headed for the Isle of Man, his intention being to make a descent upon Whitehaven. A violent wind that night baffled him, and, hoping to prevent his presence in the section from being discovered, he kept his vessel disguised as a merchantman. Sailing hither and thither, generally capturing all vessels that he sighted, he finally turned across to the Irish coast and in the latter part of the month was off Carrickfergus, where he learned from some fishermen

that the British sloop-of-war *Drake* was at anchor in the roads. Jones was exceedingly anxious to attack her, and planned a night surprise, but again the violent wind interfered and he was forced to give up the scheme, so well suited to his daring nature.

This brave man now set out to execute one of the most startling schemes that can be imagined. Whitehaven at that time was a city of 50,000 inhabitants and the harbor was filled with shipping. His plan was to sail in among the craft and burn them all. It seemed like the idea of a man bereft of his senses, but there was not the slightest hesitation on his part. Such enterprises often succeed through their very boldness, and his belief was that by acting quickly he could accomplish his purpose and strike a blow at England that would carry consternation to the people and the government.

Captain Jones had in mind the many outrages committed by British vessels along our seacoast, for, describing his purpose in a memorial to Congress, he said his intention was, by one good fire in England of British shipping, "to put an end to all burnings in America."

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## CHAPTER V.

### **A Daring Attempt by Captain Paul Jones—Why It Failed—A Bold Scheme—Why It Did Not Succeed—The Fight Between the *Ranger* and *Drake*.**

Paul Jones waited until midnight. Then, when no one was dreaming of danger, his men silently pulled away from the *Ranger* in two boats, one commanded by himself and the other by Lieutenant Wallingford. It was a long pull, and when they reached the outer pier of the harbor it was beginning to grow light in the east. They now parted company, and Jones directed his men to row for the south side of the harbor, while the Lieutenant was to make for the north shore. The object of the two was the same: the burning of the shipping.

Wallingford reached the north side, and then, strangely enough, gave up the attempt, his reason being that the candle on which he counted to start the fire was blown out. The reader must remember that in those days matches were unknown and the task of relighting had to be done with the steel, flint and tinder. Though the contrivance is an awkward one, we cannot help thinking the excuse of the Lieutenant was weak, but the result was a failure on his part to carry out the important work assigned to him.

Captain Jones was a different kind of man. Although day had fully dawned, he kept his men rowing rapidly. Reaching the south side of the harbor, he came upon a small fort garrisoned by a few soldiers. Leaping out of the boat, the American dashed forward, bounded over the walls and captured the sentinels before they knew their danger. The guns were spiked and the garrison made prisoners.

"Set fire to the shipping!" he commanded to his men, while he, with only a single companion, ran for a second fort some distance away and spiked the guns in that. Then he hurried back to the first fort and found to his surprise that the fire had not been started.

"The candles have given out," was the reply to his angry inquiry.

It being broad daylight, his men expected him to jump into the boat and order

them to return with all haste to the ship; but, instead of doing so, he darted into one of the nearest houses, procured some tinder and candles and began himself the work of destruction. Fixing his attention upon a large vessel, he climbed quickly aboard and started a fire in her steerage. To help matters, he flung a barrel of tar over the flames and in a few minutes they were roaring fiercely. It meant prodigious damage, for the vessel was surrounded by more than a hundred others, none of which could move, since they were aground and the tide was out.

As may be supposed, there was great excitement by that time. The alarm had been given. Men were running to and fro, and a number hurried toward the burning ship with the purpose of extinguishing the flames. All the Americans had entered the small boat and were impatiently awaiting their commander. Instead of joining them, Jones drew his pistol, and, standing alone in front of the crowd, kept them back until the fire burst out of the steerage and began running up the rigging. Backing slowly with drawn pistol, he stepped into the boat and told his men to row with might and main for the vessel.

The instant this was done the crowd rushed forward and by desperate efforts succeeded in putting out the blaze before it had done much damage. Then the forts attempted to fire on the Americans, but their guns were spiked. Some cannon on the ships were discharged at the boats, but their shots went wild. When the *Ranger* was reached Captain Jones made the discovery that one of his men was missing. The reason was clear. He was a deserter and had been seen by his former comrades running from house to house and giving the alarm. Such was the narrow chance by which one of the most destructive conflagrations of British shipping was averted.

As may be supposed, this daring act caused alarm throughout England. Jones was denounced as a freebooter and pirate, and every effort was made to capture him. Had his enemies succeeded, little mercy would have been shown the dauntless hero.

England was very cruel to many of her American prisoners, and Captain Jones fixed upon a bold and novel plan for compelling her to show more mercy toward those unfortunate enough to fall into her power. It was to capture some prominent nobleman and hold him as a hostage for the better treatment of our countrymen. It must be remembered that Jones was cruising near his birthplace and when a sailor boy had become familiar with the Scottish and the English coasts. The *Ranger* was a fast vessel, and, as I have shown, Jones himself was a master of seamanship. It would seem, therefore, that all he had to do was to be

alert, and it need not be said that he and his crew were vigilant at all times.

The Earl of Selkirk was a Scottish nobleman who had his country seat at the mouth of the Dee, and Jones made up his mind that he was just the man to serve for a hostage. At any rate, he could not be put to a better use and certainly would not suspect the purpose of the American vessel which, as night was closing in, anchored offshore. Indeed, no one dreamed that the vessel was the terrible American "pirate," which had thrown the whole country into terror.

Fortunately the night was dark and the men rowed to land without being noticed. The task was an easy one, for there was no one to resist them. They walked silently through the darkness to the fine grounds, and, having surrounded the handsome building, the officer in charge of the party presented himself at the door and made known his startling errand. He was informed that the Earl was absent. A careful search revealed that such was the fact, and all the trouble of the Americans went for naught.

It was a keen disappointment and the party decided to compensate themselves so far as they could. The Earl was wealthy and the house contained a great deal of valuable silver plate. A quantity of this was carried to the *Ranger*.

Captain Jones was angered when he learned what had been done. He knew the Earl and Lady Selkirk well and personally liked them both. The singular scheme he had in mind was solely for the benefit of his adopted countrymen.

"I am accused of being a pirate, robber and thief," he exclaimed, "and you are doing all you can to justify the charges. Every ounce of plate shall be returned."

He kept his word. The messengers who took back the silver carried a note from Captain Jones apologizing to Lady Selkirk for the misconduct of his men.

Now, if there was anything which Paul Jones loved it was to fight. It was simply diversion for him to capture merchantmen or vessels that could make only a weak resistance, and he longed to give the enemy a taste of his mettle. It may be said that his situation grew more dangerous with every hour. His presence was known and a score of cruisers were hunting for him.

The British sloop of war *Drake*, which the gale prevented him from attacking, was still at Carrickfergus, and Jones sailed thither in the hope of inducing her to come out and fight him. Being uncertain of his identity, the captain of the *Drake* sent an officer in a boat to learn the truth. Captain Jones suspected the errand and



skilfully kept his broadsides turned away until the officer, determined to know his identity, went aboard. As soon as he stepped on deck he was made a prisoner and sent below.

Captain Jones reasoned that the captain of the *Drake* would miss his officer after awhile and come out to learn what had become of him. He, therefore, headed toward the North Channel, the *Drake* following, with the tide against her and the wind unfavorable until the mid-channel was reached, when, to quote Maclay, Paul Jones "in plain view of three kingdoms, hove to, ran up the flag of the new Republic and awaited the enemy."

In reply to the demand of the *Drake's* captain, Jones gave the name of his vessel and expressed the pleasure it would give him to engage him in battle. The American was astern of the *Drake*, and, to show his earnestness, Captain Jones ordered his helm put up and let fly with a broadside. The *Drake* replied and then the battle was on. There was little manœuvring, the contest being what is known as a square yardarm and yardarm fight.

The comparative strength of the two vessels was as follows: The *Ranger* carried 18 guns and 123 men, the *Drake* 20 guns and 160 men, a number of the latter being volunteers for the fight, which lasted one hour and four minutes, at the end of which time the *Ranger* had lost two killed and six wounded and the *Drake* forty-two killed. The latter was so badly damaged by the well directed fire of the American that the captain called for quarter. Ceasing her firing, Captain Jones lowered a boat and sent it to the *Drake* to take possession.

As an evidence of the effect of the fire of the *Ranger*, the following words may be quoted from Jones's official report: "Her fore and maintopsail yards being cut away and down on the caps, the topgallant yard and mizzen gaff both hanging up and down along the mast, the second ensign which they had hoisted shot away and hanging on the quarter gallery in the water, the jib shot away and hanging in the water, her sails and rigging cut entirely to pieces, her masts and yards all wounded and her hull very much galled."

The damages to the *Ranger* were so slight they were repaired by the close of the following day, when she got under sail with her prize. Despite the swarm of cruisers that were hunting for him, Jones passed unscathed through North Channel, along the western coast of Ireland and arrived at Brest, in France, within a month of the day he left the port, his cruise having been one of the most remarkable in naval history.



## CHAPTER VI.

### One of the Most Memorable Sea Fights Ever Known—The Wonderful Exploit of Captain Paul Jones.

I have taken Paul Jones as the highest type of the infant American navy. There were others who fought with great bravery and did much to aid in the struggle for American independence, but none combined in such perfection the qualities of perfect seamanship, cool but dauntless courage and skill in fighting.

Of course, no matter how daring our cruisers, they did not always escape disaster. At the close of the Revolution there had been twenty-four vessels lost, carrying 470 guns. Several of these met their fate through shipwreck. Contrast with this the loss of Great Britain, which was 102 war vessels, carrying in all 2,624 guns. The total vessels of all kinds captured from the English by our cruisers and privateers was about 800.

Captain Jones had made so successful a cruise with the *Ranger* that he felt, upon returning to Brest, in France, he was entitled to a better ship. He wrote to Benjamin Franklin, expressing himself plainly on that point, and the American commissioner, after several months' delay, had a ship of 40 guns placed under the command of Jones. Her original name was the *Duras*, but at Jones's request it was changed to the *Bonhomme Richard*. This was in compliment to Franklin, who was often called "Poor Richard" by his admiring countrymen, because for many years he had published "Poor Richard's Almanac," filled with wise and witty sayings.

This ship was an old Indiaman, in which 42 guns were placed, and the final number of her crew was 304. The 32-gun frigate *Alliance*, Captain Landais, was put under the orders of Captain Jones and a third, the *Pallas*, was bought and armed with thirty guns. A merchant brig and a cutter were also added to the squadron. It was found very hard to man these vessels and any other captain than Jones would have given up the task as an impossible one. It seemed as if about every known nation in the world was represented and some of the men of the most desperate character. Maclay says in his "History of the American Navy" that the muster roll of the *Bonhomme Richard* showed that the men hailed from America, France, Italy, Ireland, Germany, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland,

England, Spain, India, Norway, Portugal, Fayal and Malasia, while there were seven Maltese and the knight of the ship's galley was from Africa. The majority of the officers, however, were American.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.  
**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.**

This squadron sailed from L'Orient on June 19, 1779. Almost immediately trouble occurred. Captain Landais, without any show of reason, claimed that the command, by right of seniority of commission, belonged to him. On the first night out the *Alliance* and *Bonhomme Richard* collided and were obliged to return to port for repairs. Vexatious delays prevented the sailing of the squadron until August 14.

One of the consorts captured an English war vessel in the latter part of June, but was compelled to abandon her on the appearance of a superior force of the enemy, and the squadron put into L'Orient for repairs. A piece of good fortune came to the *Bonhomme Richard* while in this port. About a hundred exchanged American prisoners volunteered and did a great deal to improve the discipline and strengthen the crew of Jones's ship.

The valiant American, however, met with difficulties that were of the most exasperating nature. A boat's crew deserted and spread the news of the arrival of the squadron off the English coast. Captain Landais, commander of the *Alliance*, refused to obey the signals of the flagship, and conducted himself so outrageously that Jones more than suspected his brain was askew. The *Bonhomme Richard* was old and in bad condition, but Jones told Benjamin Franklin in a letter that he meant to do something with her that would induce his Government to provide him with a better ship. He sailed almost completely around Great Britain, during which he captured seventeen vessels, most of which were destroyed though the more valuable were sent into port in charge of prize crews.

This depletion of his crew so weakened it that Captain Jones wisely refrained from remaining long in one place. Doubling Flamborough Head, he came up with his companions, the *Pallas* and the *Alliance*, the latter having been out of his company for a fortnight.

This was on September 23, 1779. It was near noon, while the American squadron was chasing a British brigantine and was approaching Flamborough Head from the south, that a large sail was discovered, rounding that promontory

from the south. Another and another followed, the astonished Americans counting them until the number had mounted up to forty-two.

It was a startling sight, for if these vessels were ships of war nothing could save the American squadron, or, if most of them were merchantmen, under a strong escort, the peril of Captain Jones and his crews would be almost as great. The commander studied the fleet through his glass, allowing it to come closer and closer and holding himself ready to flee, should it be necessary to do so. Finally, after a long scrutiny, Jones's face lit up with exultation. There were only two vessels of war in the fleet, and he immediately gave the signal for pursuit.

The *Serapis*, commanded by Captain Pearson, knew that he was confronted by the redoubtable Paul Jones, and he welcomed a fight with him, for the British captain was one of the bravest of men. He signalled for the merchantmen to scatter, and they did so with the utmost haste, while the frigate with her consort, the *Countess of Scarborough*, boldly advanced to engage the American squadron.

It was at this critical moment that the captain of the *Alliance* once more showed his insubordination. He refused to obey Jones's signal to fall to the rear of the *Bonhomme Richard* and the *Pallas* for a time was equally disobedient. Soon, however, she changed her conduct and gallantly advanced to engage the *Countess of Scarborough*. Captain Landais, however, sullenly kept out of the battle, and, as we shall presently learn, did even worse than that.

Captain Pearson, of the *Serapis*, waited until his convoy was beyond danger, when he tacked inshore. Fearing he would get away, Jones ran in between him and the land. It was now growing dark, and it was hard for the American commander to follow the movements of his enemy. But the latter was not fleeing, and, although dimly visible to each other, the two antagonists began cautiously approaching, both on the alert for any advantage that might present itself. Nothing but the rippling of water made by the vessels broke the profound, expectant hush that rested upon both.

Suddenly from the gloom came the voice of the captain of the *Serapis*:

"What ship is that?"

Jones wished to get nearer before opening fire and replied:

"I do not understand you; speak louder."

"What ship is that?" repeated the other in a louder voice through his trumpet. "Answer or I shall fire into you."

Jones made no reply, knowing that it was useless, but continued to edge near his antagonist. A minute later both ships discharged a broadside at the same moment, the gloom being lit up by spouts of crimson flame, while the thunder "shook the mighty deep" and the sulphurous smoke rolled slowly upward and drifted through the rigging. Then again came a minute or so of impressive stillness, while the crews of both looked around to learn the results of the awful tempest of round shot, grape and canister of which they had been the targets.

Sad work, indeed, had been done, for from each vessel rose the cries of the wounded and dying—cries that inspired their companions to revenge and caused them to hasten the reloading and firing of the cannon. But unfortunately the *Bonhomme Richard* suffered from her own guns as well as from those of the enemy. On the lower gun deck was an improvised battery of six 18-pounders, two of which burst, killing most of the men at work there and tearing away the deck above them. The remainder of the men refused to serve the other guns, and thus the *Bonhomme Richard* was deprived of the services of her heaviest battery, in addition to the serious loss in dead and wounded.

Captain Jones forged ahead, crossing his enemy's bow, while the latter came up on his port quarter. They were within a biscuit's toss of each other, wrapped in dense smoke, lit up by the jets of flame which were continuous. Mingled with the terrific booming was the spiteful rattle of musketry from the tops and yells and cries of the wounded. The decks of the *Bonhomme Richard* were slippery with blood, which increased until the men, as they ran to and fro, splashed in it, like children playing in a mud puddle, and it was the same on the *Serapis*. It found its outlet through the scuppers and crimsoned the deep blue of the ocean.

FIGHT BETWEEN "BONHOMME RICHARD" AND "SERAPIS."  
**FIGHT BETWEEN "BONHOMME RICHARD" AND "SERAPIS."**

Some of the shots from the *Serapis* pierced the *Bonhomme Richard* under the water line, causing her to leak badly. Deprived of his 18-pound guns by reason of the accident mentioned, Jones was forced to rely upon his 12-pounders. They were worked for all that was in them, but the whole fourteen were silenced in little more than half an hour and seven of the quarter deck and forecastle guns were dismantled. She was left with three 9-pounders, which, being loaded and aimed under the eye of Jones himself, did frightful execution on the deck of the

enemy.

An hour had passed and the men were fighting furiously, when the full moon appeared above the horizon and lit up the fearful scene. The *Serapis* attempted to cross the bow of the *Bonhomme Richard*, but miscalculated and the *Bonhomme Richard* shoved her bowsprit over the other's stern. In the lull that followed, when each expected his antagonist to board, Captain Pearson called out:

"Have you struck?"

"Struck!" shouted back Jones; "I am just beginning to fight!"

The *Serapis* made another effort to get into position to rake the American, but in the blinding smoke she ran her jibboom afoul of the starboard mizzen shrouds of the *Bonhomme Richard*. Captain Jones himself lashed the spar to the rigging, knowing that his only chance was in fighting at close quarters, but the swaying of the ships broke them apart. At that instant, however, the spare anchor of the *Serapis* caught on the American's quarter and held the two vessels, as may be said, locked in each other's arms.

They were so close, indeed, that the English gunners could not raise the lower port lids, and they blew them off by firing their cannon through them. The men on each ship in loading were forced to push their rammers into the ports of the other vessel. The *Bonhomme Richard* was set on fire by burning wads, but the flames were speedily extinguished.

The explosion of the American's lower guns at the opening of the battle had made her helpless against the corresponding battery of the enemy, which pounded away until a huge, yawning gap was opened. Some of the shots went clean through the battered hull and splashed into the water, hundreds of feet distant. The disadvantage was more than offset by the concentration of the Americans on the upper deck and in the rigging. The fire of the *Bonhomme Richard* became so terrible that every officer and man of the enemy kept out of sight, observing which an American seaman crawled out on the main yard, carrying a bucket of hand grenades which he threw wherever he saw a man. He did this with such excellent aim that he dropped one through the main hatchway and into the gunroom. It fell into a heap of powder and produced an explosion that was awful beyond description, for it killed and wounded thirty-eight men and really decided the battle.

At that moment, when it all seemed over, Captain Landais fired a broadside from

the *Alliance* into the *Bonhomme Richard*. Captain Jones called to him in God's name to desist, but he circled about the two ships and fired again and again into his ally, killing and wounding a number of men and officers. It was believed that the *Alliance* had been captured by the enemy and had joined in the attack on the *Bonhomme Richard*, which was so injured that she began slowly to sink. Having wrought this irreparable damage, the *Alliance* drew off and ceased her murderous work.

Jones incited his prisoners to desperate pumping by the report that the *Serapis* must soon go down and that the only way to save themselves from drowning was to keep the *Bonhomme* afloat. An officer ran to the quarter deck to haul down the colors, but they had been shot away. He then hurried to the taffrail and shouted for quarter. Jones, being in another part of the ship, did not hear him. The British commander mustered his men to board the American, but they were driven back by the firing from the rigging of the *Bonhomme Richard*. The condition of the latter could not have been more desperate. She was so mangled that she began to settle, most of her guns had been disabled, a fire that could not be checked was already close to her magazine and several hundred prisoners were stealing here and there, waiting for a chance to strike from behind.

#### OLD-TIME BATTLESHIPS. **OLD-TIME BATTLESHIPS.**

A deserter had slipped on board of the *Serapis* in the confusion and acquainted the commander with the frightful plight of the American. After firing with renewed ardor for several minutes Captain Pearson again called to know whether Jones had surrendered. He shouted back a defiant negative, and, pistol in hand, ordered his men to the guns, threatening to kill the first one who refused. All knew his temper too well to hesitate, and the battle was renewed with greater fury than before. Captain Pearson could not believe the condition of the *Bonhomme Richard* as bad as was represented by the deserter. He had lost a great many men, all his guns were silenced, and, being utterly unable to make any further defence, he hauled down his flag with his own hands.

The surrender was just in time to save the *Bonhomme Richard*, which was in danger of going down and blowing up. The united efforts of both crews were necessary to extinguish the flames before they reached the magazine. She was kept afloat through the night, while the wounded and prisoners were transferred to the *Serapis*. Then the battered and riddled old hulk plunged downward bow foremost into the depths of the German Ocean.



MEDAL PRESENTED BY CONGRESS TO CAPTAIN JOHN PAUL JONES.  
**MEDAL PRESENTED BY CONGRESS TO CAPTAIN JOHN PAUL  
JONES.**

This battle has never been surpassed in heroism. Both sides fought with a bravery that has given the conflict a place by itself in naval annals, and it will always stand as a proof of the dauntless courage of the Anglo-Saxon beyond the reach of those of the Latin race. The *Bonhomme Richard* had 42 guns and the *Serapis* 50; the American crew numbered 304 and the English 320. The killed on each side was 49; the wounded on the *Bonhomme Richard* was 116 and on the *Serapis* 117, there being a difference of only one in the total of killed and wounded. The battle lasted three hours and a half.

The *Countess of Scarborough* made a gallant resistance for two hours, when she was so crippled that she was compelled to surrender to the Frenchman. An investigation into the treacherous conduct of Captain Landais caused many to believe him insane, though others were convinced that he was inspired by intense jealousy of Captain Jones. He was discharged from both the French and American navy. Benjamin Franklin was among those who believed he deserved punishment for his perfidy.

The *Serapis* and *Countess of Scarborough* were refitted and given to France, while Captain Jones was placed in command of the *Alliance*. He was loaded with honors in France, the king presenting him with a gold sword, and when he sailed for the United States he gave another exhibition of his superb seamanship by eluding the blockaders that were waiting for him outside of Texel, running through the Straits of Dover and then defiantly standing down the English Channel in full view of more than one of the largest British fleets. He reached the United States in June, 1780, without mishap.

Congress gave Captain Jones a vote of thanks, and, had the war continued, no doubt he would have rendered more brilliant service for the country he loved so well, but before he could be given a fitting command hostilities ceased. He had won a world-wide reputation and accepted the appointment of rear-admiral in the Russian navy, but gained no opportunity to display his marvelous prowess. He died in Paris in 1792.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### **Our Naval War with France—The Tribute Paid to the Barbary States by Christian Nations—War Declared Against the United States by Tripoli—Bainbridge, Decatur, Stewart, Dale and Preble.**

Now I suspect that if my young readers were asked to name the nations with which, at one time or another we have been at war, they would not be likely to include France in the list. All the same, we have had a war with her, though it was confined to the ocean and there was no formal declaration on either side.

A few years after the close of our Revolution one of the most appalling uprisings in the history of the world took place in France. The kings and nobility ground the people into the very dust until they were goaded into revolt, which overturned the throne and was marked by atrocities that shocked the world. Incredible as it may seem, there were a million people put to death during the awful days of the Reign of Terror.

The mad rulers, not satisfied with deluging their own country with blood, were at war with most of the neighboring nations. They seemed to wish to array themselves against all mankind and began a system of action toward us which soon became unbearable.

They seemed to think we could be scared into paying the rulers immense sums of money for the privilege of being left alone. They encouraged their naval officers to capture American vessels, and when we sent commissioners to France to protest they were coolly told that outrages upon our commerce would not be stopped until we paid the leaders several hundred thousand dollars in the way of bribes. Then it was that one of our commissioners made the memorable reply: "Millions for defence, but not one cent for tribute."

Our representatives were driven out of France and the capture of our vessels by French cruisers continued. So Congress met, cancelled all treaties with France, formed an army, placed Washington, then an old man, at the head, formed a new navy and told the men-of-war to go out and give the insolent nation a lesson she very much needed.

And France got the lesson. The fighting on the ocean, beginning in 1798, continued for two years and a half. The French cruisers succeeded in capturing only one vessel from the American navy, while 84 armed French ships, mostly privateers, mounting more than 500 guns, were captured by our vessels. In February, 1801, a treaty of peace was signed with France, which brought our troubles with her to an end.

Now, if you will examine your map of Africa, you will notice a group of countries along the southern coast of the Mediterranean that are known as the Barbary States. Their names are Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. I remember when I was a boy how easy it was to learn the names of the capitals of those countries, for each one was the same as the country itself.

The people of the Barbary States are only half civilized or barbarous, but they have always had a mighty high opinion of themselves, though it can hardly be as high to-day as it was a hundred years ago. They looked upon the "dogs of Christians" as heathen nations, only fitted to be their slaves, and it must be admitted that it was quite natural they should hold the leading maritime nations of Europe as well as ourselves in contempt, for all deserved it.

The favorite business of those barbarians was playing pirate. Their corsairs roamed up and down the Mediterranean, eagerly hunting for Christian merchant vessels, that they might kill the crews and divide the plunder among themselves. Sometimes, by way of variety, they would throw their captives into dungeons and then notify the governments to which they belonged that they would be set free upon the payment of a large sum of money to their captors. If the government did not choose to pay the ransom, why their captors would give themselves the pleasure of putting the prisoners to death.

Now, it would have been an easy thing for any one of the Christian nations interested to send a fleet into the Mediterranean, which, speaking figuratively, would have wiped those miscreants off the face of the earth; but such an enterprise would have cost a good deal of money, so, instead of punishing the wretches as they deserved, the countries paid them a yearly sum of money on their promise not to disturb vessels when they ran across them.

So it was that, year after year, we sent a good round gift to those barbarians. You know our Government is often slow in meeting its obligations, and it happened now and then we were late in sending our tribute to the swarthy rulers. When that occurred, the Dey, or Bashaw, imposed a heavy fine to remind us of the

expense of trifling with him. We meekly bowed our heads, paid it, and tried to be more prompt afterward. Then, too, the mighty ruler sometimes expressed a wish to receive naval stores instead of money, and we were happy to oblige him. Of course, he set his own valuation on what he received, which was generally about one-half of what they cost our Government, but we made no complaint.

It came about that the Dey of Tripoli got the idea into his head that we were not paying him as much as we did his neighbors. In his impatience, he decided to give us a lesson as badly needed as it was in the case of France, to which I have alluded. So he declared war against the United States. It would be interesting to know what ideas the Dey had of the Republic on the other side of the Atlantic.

One good thing resulted from our flurry with France. A number of good ships had been added to our navy. Better still, many young officers, brave, skilful and glowing with patriotic ardor, were serving on those ships. They eagerly welcomed the chance of winning glory. To them the war with Tripoli offered the very opportunity for which they longed.

Among these was William Bainbridge, who was born in 1774 and died in 1833. He began life as a sailor at the age of fifteen, and was in several engagements before he was appointed to the navy in 1798, during our war with France.

Another was Stephen Decatur, born in Maryland in 1779 and killed in a duel with Commodore Barron in 1820. His father was a gallant officer in the Revolution, and his two sons were among the bravest officers who ever trod the quarter deck. Both entered the service in 1798, and Stephen is generally regarded as the best type of the young American naval officer during the early years of the present century.

Still another was Charles Stewart, born in Philadelphia in 1778, and, like those whom I have named, he entered the navy as lieutenant in 1798. It will always be one of my pleasantest recollections that I was well acquainted with Stewart, and spent many hours talking with him about the stirring scenes in which he took part. He lived to be more than ninety years of age, dying in 1869, and for a good many years occupied a modest little home, just below Bordentown, New Jersey. When eighty-eight years old he was as active as a man of half his years. I came upon him one wintry day, when he was of that age, and found him in the barn, shoveling corn into a hopper, of which a sturdy Irishman was turning the crank. The old admiral kept his hired man busy and enjoyed his own work. He was of small figure, always wore an old-fashioned blue swallow-tail with brass buttons,

took snuff, and would laugh and shake until his weatherbeaten face was purple over some of his reminiscences of the early days of the Republic.

Think of it! He remembered seeing Benedict Arnold burned in effigy in Philadelphia in 1781; he recalled Paul Jones, and had drunk wine and talked with Washington.

Stewart and Decatur were of about the same age, and attended the old Academy in Philadelphia. They were bosom friends from boyhood. Stewart told me that Decatur was a good student, but there was hardly a boy in the school, anywhere near his own age, with whom he did not have a fight. He would "rather fight than eat," but he was not a bully, and never imposed upon any one younger or weaker than himself.

A great many of my talks with old Admiral Stewart related to the war with Tripoli, which began in 1801 and lasted nearly four years. As you will learn, Stewart had a great deal to do with that war, and most of the incidents that follow were told to me by him, a fact which insures their truthfulness and interest.

Among others to whom I shall refer was Commodore Richard Dale, who was born in 1756, and died in 1826. He was older, as you will notice, than the three whom I have mentioned. As to his bravery, it is enough to say that he was first lieutenant on the *Bonhomme Richard* during her terrible fight under Paul Jones with the *Serapis*, and served with that wonderful naval hero on the *Alliance* and the *Ariel*. Had he not been made of the right stuff he never could have held such a position when a very young man.

COMMODORE EDWARD PREBLE.  
**COMMODORE EDWARD PREBLE.**

Another hero was Commodore Edward Preble, born in 1761 and died in 1807. When only sixteen years old he joined a privateer, and at eighteen was active in the attacks of the *Protector* on the British privateer *Admiral Duff*. He was on the *Winthrop*, and fought bravely in the battle which resulted in the capture of a British armed brig. He was commissioned lieutenant in 1798, and the year following commanded the *Essex*.

From what I have told you, it will be seen that it was a gallant band that our Government sent into the Mediterranean in 1801 to chastise the barbarians and compel them to respect the Stars and Stripes.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### **The First Serious Engagement—Loss of the Philadelphia—The Scheme of Captain Bainbridge—Exploit of Lieutenant Decatur.**

Andrew Sterrett was executive officer of the *Constellation*, which captured the French frigate *L'Insurgente*, in 1799, and *La Vengeance*, in 1800. It fell to his lot, while in command of the *Enterprise*, a vessel of 12 guns, to have the first serious fight in the war with Tripoli. When off Malta, he met a Tripolitan vessel of 14 guns, and they fought furiously for two hours, at the end of which time the enemy hauled down his flag. The Americans left their guns and broke into cheers, whereupon the Tripolitan fired a broadside. Nothing loath, Lieutenant Sterrett resumed the battle. The Tripolitans ran in close and attempted to board, but were repulsed, and, under the fierce fire of the *Enterprise*, they again hauled down their flag.

"I guess they mean it this time," remarked Lieutenant Sterrett, but the words were hardly spoken when the enemy let fly with another broadside.

As may be supposed, this exhausted the patience of the American commander. He ordered his men to their guns, and mentally resolved to finish the job without fail. Circling round his antagonist, he raked her from stem to stern, shot away the mizzen mast, made a sieve of the hull and killed and wounded fifty men. He was still at it, when, through the smoke, he caught sight of the swarthy captain, leaping up and down on the deck, swinging his arms and shrieking in broken English that he had surrendered. To show he was in earnest, he flung his colors overboard.

"Now throw your guns and powder after your flag," shouted Sterrett.

He was promptly obeyed; and, resolved to take no chances, Sterrett then compelled him to cut away his masts, after which he was permitted to rig a jury mast and a single sail.

"Now go home to your Dey," said his conqueror, "and give him my compliments."

Not a man was killed on board the *Enterprise*, though, as has been shown, the

loss of the enemy was severe.

**CAPTAIN WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE.  
CAPTAIN WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE.**

The American squadron in that part of the world was increased, and a number of engagements took place, with the advantage invariably on the side of our countrymen. By the opening of 1803 there were nine of our ships, carrying two hundred and fourteen guns, in the Mediterranean waters. The fine frigate *Philadelphia* captured a Moorish cruiser upon which were found papers signed by the Governor of Tangier authorizing the commander to destroy American commerce. Commodore Preble sailed into the harbor and demanded an explanation of the emperor. He denied having given any such authority to his subordinate, and in making his denial undoubtedly told a falsehood. Nevertheless, he was so scared that he signed anew the treaty of 1786, deprived the governor of his commission and confiscated his estates.

Captain William Bainbridge was in command of the *Philadelphia*, and was detailed to help in blockading Tripoli. His companion vessel was sent in pursuit of a corsair, so that the *Philadelphia* was left alone to perform blockade duty. On the last day of October, 1803, Captain Bainbridge observed a Tripolitan vessel trying to make port. He gave chase, but the coast was dangerous, abounding with shoals and reefs, with which the fugitive vessel was familiar, while Captain Bainbridge had to keep sounding and regulating his speed in accordance with the degree of danger.

In the midst of the pursuit, and while every precaution was taken, the crew, to their dismay, heard a dull, grating sound, whose meaning they well knew; the bow of the frigate rose six feet out of the water, and the stoppage was so sudden that nearly every one was thrown off his feet.

A hurried examination showed that the *Philadelphia* was inextricably fast, and could not be freed until the tide rose. Meanwhile the corsairs would issue from the harbor near at hand, and, choosing their own position, batter the frigate to pieces and kill or make prisoners of the crew.

Every possible effort was made to release the ship, but she was too firmly spiked on the jagged reef to be budged, and the dreaded peril speedily appeared. The Tripolitans soon discovered the plight of the American, and nine gunboats hurried out from the harbor. Fire was opened on both sides, but neither was effective, the position of the frigate preventing an effective aim. The sea drove



her higher upon the rocks, and she careened so much that all the guns became useless. The Tripolitans, seeing her helplessness, now came closer and increased their fire.

There was no help for Captain Bainbridge. Unable to deliver an effective shot, the enemy could kill every one of his men. He therefore flooded his magazine, blocked the pumps, bored holes through the bottom of the ship in order to sink her if his enemies succeeded in releasing her, and then struck his flag. Distrustful at first, though they ceased firing, the Tripolitans finally came aboard, plundered the officers and men of their personal property, and then took them—three hundred and fifteen in all—to the city, where they were lodged in prison.

Some days later a powerful northerly wind partly lifted the *Philadelphia* off the rocks, and by united efforts her captors succeeded in getting her into deep water. The holes in the bottom were plugged, and the guns and anchors that had been thrown overboard in the shallow water were easily recovered and replaced on the ship. Thus the Bashaw secured a most valuable prize.

The disaster gave a serious aspect to the war, for it not only added material strength to the enemy, but increased their courage and insured a more determined resistance on their part. While the loss was a severe one to the American navy, it was not difficult to replace it.

One day a letter reached Commodore Preble. Apparently it was nothing but a blank sheet of paper, but knowing that lemon juice had been employed for ink, the Commodore held it before a flame and brought out the following, in the handwriting of Bainbridge:

"Charter a small merchant schooner, fill her with men and have her commanded by fearless and determined officers. Let the vessel enter the harbor at night with her men secreted below deck; steer her directly on board the frigate, and then let the men and officers board, sword in hand, and there is no doubt of their success. It will be necessary to take several good rowboats in order to facilitate the retreat after the enterprise has been accomplished. The frigate in her present condition is a powerful auxiliary battery for the defence of the harbor. Though it will be impossible to remove her from her anchorage and thus restore this beautiful vessel to our navy, yet, as she may and no doubt will be repaired, an important end will be gained by her destruction."

Captain Bainbridge had sent several similar letters to Preble, his good friend, the Swedish consul, being the man who secured their delivery. The plan suggested

by Bainbridge was a good one, for, since it was impossible to add the *Philadelphia* to our navy, the next best thing was to prevent her remaining with that of Tripoli. It may as well be stated here that the court martial which investigated the particulars of the loss of the *Philadelphia* acquitted Captain Bainbridge of all blame and declared that he had done everything possible under the circumstances.

Fortunately, the American squadron succeeded about this time in capturing a Tripolitan gunboat, which would serve admirably to disguise the purpose of the Americans. Preble then told Lieutenant Decatur of the suggestion made by Bainbridge. No sooner was the young lieutenant acquainted with the plan than he volunteered to lead in the perilous enterprise. Nothing could have suited the daring fellow better.

Lieutenant Charles Stewart, who arrived a short time before in the *Siren*, not knowing of the scheme that had been formed, proposed with the *Siren's* men to cut out the *Philadelphia*. Preble informed him the honor had been given to Decatur. Stewart was disappointed, but expressed his honest pleasure that the management of the affair was entrusted to such worthy hands.

"He is the best man that could have been selected," he said heartily, "and there isn't a shadow of doubt that he will succeed."

Every one in the fleet was eager to volunteer, but Decatur selected sixty-two men, to which were added six officers from the *Enterprise* and six from the *Constitution*, with a native pilot. Knowing the daring nature of Decatur, he was given strict orders not to attempt to cut out the *Philadelphia*, but to destroy her.

Late in the day, February 9, 1804, the ketch left Syracuse for Tripoli, accompanied by the *Siren*, Lieutenant Stewart, to cover the retreat. The weather became so bad that the attempt had to be postponed, since the ketch was sure to be dashed to pieces on the rocks. The impatient crew was compelled to withdraw and wait for a week before the weather moderated. On the 15th, everything being favorable, the crew of the ketch bade good-by to their friends and set out on their perilous mission.

The night was clear and starlit, and at nine o'clock the ketch was in full view of the city and its twinkling lights, with the dark shores crowded with batteries, while far ahead, under the guns of the Bashaw's castle, lay the *Philadelphia*. The wind fell and the little craft crept slowly through the water, seemingly into the very jaws of death, until the outlines of the silent frigate loomed to sight through

the gloom. Following Decatur's guarded orders, the men lay flat on the deck, all concealing themselves as best they could, while five or six, dressed as Maltese sailors, lounged about in plain sight.

The quartermaster at the wheel, obeying the directions of Decatur, steered so as to foul the *Philadelphia*, from which there suddenly came a hail. Lieutenant Decatur whispered to the pilot to say they had just arrived from Malta, and, having lost their anchor, wished to make fast to the *Philadelphia's* cables until another could be got from shore. A brief conversation followed, during which the ketch edged closer, but the Tripolitans soon discovered the men in the starboard, and the alarm was sounded; but with great coolness and haste the ketch was worked into position and Decatur gave the order to board.

The eager Americans, with cutlass and boarding pike in hand, dashed through the gun ports and over the bulwarks. In a twinkling the quarter deck was cleared and all the Tripolitans on the foredeck were rushed overboard. The noise brought up a number of Turks from below, but the moment they saw what was going on they either leaped into the sea or hid themselves in the hold. They were pursued, and within ten minutes the frigate was captured, without a shot having been fired or an outcry made.

An abundance of combustibles had been brought, and they were now distributed and fired so effectively that nothing could save the fine vessel. Then the Americans scrambled back to the ketch, Lieutenant Decatur being the last to leave the doomed frigate, from which the dazzling glare lit up the harbor and revealed the smaller boat straining to get away. The batteries on shore opened fire, but, in their excitement, they aimed wildly, and no harm was done. Every American safely reached the *Siren*, waiting anxiously outside. The two made sail for Syracuse, where Captain Preble was vastly relieved to hear the news. The ketch was renamed the *Intrepid*, and Decatur, for his daring exploit, was promoted to the rank of captain and presented with a sword by Congress.

The *Philadelphia* was totally destroyed, and its remains still lie at the bottom of the harbor of Tripoli. In referring to this exploit, the great English naval commander, Lord Nelson, said it was "the most bold and daring act of the age."



## CHAPTER IX.

### **Bombardment of Tripoli—Treacherous Act of a Turkish Captain —A Quick Retribution at the Hands of Captain Decatur.**

The Bashaw of Tripoli was not yet subdued. He treated his American prisoners with greater harshness and refused to believe their nation was strong enough to bring him to terms.

On August 3, Commodore (as the senior officer of every squadron was then called) Preble sailed into the harbor of Tripoli with his fleet and opened the bombardment of the city. At the same time, several of his gunboats engaged those of the enemy. Lieutenant James Decatur, brother of Stephen, made chase of a Tripolitan vessel, reserving his fire until the two almost touched, when he poured in such a destructive discharge of musketry and grape that the terrified enemy surrendered. Lieutenant Decatur sprang aboard of his prize, when, at that instant, the Turkish commander, a man of massive strength and build, fired his pistol in the American officer's face and killed him. In the confusion caused by this treacherous act the enemy's boat got away and started for the city.

CAPTAIN STEPHEN DECATUR.  
CAPTAIN STEPHEN DECATUR.

Meanwhile, Captain Decatur had been doing characteristic work. With three gunboats he attacked a force three times as numerous as his own. Impetuously boarding the first craft, after a discharge from his long boat, he engaged the numerous crew in a furious hand-to-hand struggle, in which all were made prisoners or forced to leap into the sea to save themselves. Then Decatur began towing away his prize, when he was told of the murder of his brother.

The grief-stricken and enraged captain instantly cast his prize adrift and started after the "unspeakable Turk." The boat was easily recognized, and, delivering a destructive fire, the pursuer ran alongside and the Americans rushed aboard, with Decatur in the lead. The enormous size and gorgeous uniform of the Turkish captain made him so conspicuous that Decatur knew him at once, and, rushing forward, lunged at him with his boarding pike. The Turk must have felt contempt for the American who dared thus to assail him, for his assailant was

but a boy in size compared to him. He speedily proved his physical superiority over Decatur, for he not only parried the lunge of the pike, but wrenched it from his hand. He in turn drove his pike at Decatur's breast, but his blow was also parried, though its violence broke off the American's sword at the hilt. The active Turk came again, and his second blow was only partly turned aside, the point of the pike tearing through Decatur's coat and inflicting a bad wound in his chest.

Before the Turk could strike a third time, Decatur ran in, and the two instantly engaged in a fierce wrestling bout. The American was the most skilful, but by sheer strength his enormous antagonist threw him to the deck, and, gripping him by the throat with one hand, he reached down to draw a small curved knife, known as a yataghan. It was behind the sash in his waist and directly in front. Decatur threw both legs over the back of the Turk and pressed him so close that he could not force his hand between their bodies to reach his weapon. Decatur's pistol was at his hip. He was able to withdraw it, and he then did the only thing that could possibly save his life, though the chances were that the act would hasten his death.

Reaching over the back of the Turk, he pointed the weapon downward toward his own breast and pulled the trigger. In most cases the bullet would have passed through both bodies, but, fortunately, the ball encountered some obstruction and did not reach the imperiled American. He shoved off the bulky form, which rolled over on its back, dead.

It must not be supposed that while this furious hand-to-hand encounter was under way the respective crews were idle. They, too, were fighting fiercely, and, closing about the struggling commanders, each side endeavored to help its own. The crowd surged back and forth and became mixed in inextricable confusion. One of the Turks saw a chance to help his captain and made a vicious blow at his opponent with his scimitar. Reuben James, a sailor, who was so wounded in his arms that he could not use them, thrust his head forward and received the stroke upon his skull. The wound was a frightful one, but, beyond dispute, it saved the life of Decatur, who never forgot the man that had done him this inestimable service.

Reuben James was one of the volunteers who helped Decatur destroy the *Philadelphia*. He recovered from his terrible wound and did excellent service in the war of 1812. In one battle he was three times wounded before he would allow his comrades to carry him below. He lived fully twenty years after the death of his beloved commander, dying at a good old age, though he was scarred

with sabre cuts, wounded times innumerable by bullets, and compelled to suffer the amputation of a leg.

The bombardment of Tripoli was less successful than expected. The shells were of such poor quality that no impression was made on the defences. All naval operations have proven that, as a rule, ships are comparatively powerless for aggressive work against forts and batteries on shore.

An investigation into the cause of the failure of so many shells sent into Tripoli brought out several interesting facts. Captain Bainbridge, who carefully noted the results of the bombardment while a prisoner in the city, stated that out of forty-eight thrown on one day only one exploded. It was found that the fuses in many of the bombs had been choked by lead that was poured into them. This was probably done by French agents in Sicily.

At the beginning of hostilities, the Tripolitans placed great reliance upon their ability to fight at close quarters. Undeniably, they did better in such position than in handling their ships. They had all the viciousness of wild cats, and it has been shown how fiercely they fought in hand-to-hand encounters; but their experience with the Americans taught them that they were to be dreaded in any situation where their anger was aroused, and, as a consequence, the Turks became less eager for tests of individual strength, skill and bravery.



## CHAPTER X.

### **The Bomb Ketch—A Terrible Missile—Frightful Catastrophe— Diplomacy in Place of War—Peace.**

Whenever a war is under way a number of persons on each side are certain to come forward with ingenious schemes for injuring their opponents, through improvements upon the accepted methods of conducting hostilities. So it came about, after the slight success attained in bombarding Tripoli, that a plan was formulated for creating consternation in the blockaded city and bringing the defiant Bashaw to his senses.

The new scheme was to fix up the *Intrepid* as a bomb ketch, send her into the harbor at night and there explode her. While a few had no faith in the plan, others believed it would cause great destruction and spread dismay among the Tripolitans.

In the forward hold were stowed one hundred barrels of gunpowder, and on the deck above were piled one hundred and fifty shells and a lot of shot and scrap iron. The plan was to give this floating volcano the appearance of a blockade-runner. Two small boats were taken along, to be used by the crews after setting off the fuse that was to blow the ketch into a million atoms. It will be seen that the task was of the most dangerous nature conceivable, and yet when Captain Preble called for volunteers it seemed as if every one was eager to go.

The command was given to Master-Commandant Richard Somers, who was of the same age as Decatur and Stewart, and had established a reputation for coolness and intrepidity in the operations of the fleet. Midshipman Henry Wadsworth, an uncle of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the poet, was the second in command. They were accompanied by another midshipman named Israel, who begged so hard to be allowed to go that he could not be refused, and ten of the best seamen.

After waiting for several days, the night of September 4 was found to be just what was desired. A fog lay like a blanket on the sea, but it was so clear overhead that the stars shone with brilliant splendor. Before the start was made, Decatur, Stewart and Somers, all the most intimate of friends, had a long talk in

the cabin of the ketch, no one else being present. Each felt the gravity of the situation. Somers, though cool and composed, seemed to feel a presentiment that he would not return. He took a ring off his finger, and breaking it apart, gave one portion to Decatur, one to Stewart, and kept the other for himself. He told his friends what he wished done in case of his death, and they assured him that every wish should be respected.

During that last impressive interview Stewart asked Somers what he would do if discovered and attacked by the enemy.

"Blow us all up together!" was the instant response; "I shall never be taken prisoner."

I may remark here that no writer has recorded this expression of the gallant Somers, and I give it because Admiral Stewart assured me of its truth. His recollection of the incident, more than sixty years afterward, was as vivid as on the succeeding day. Indeed, Stewart, as is often the case with aged persons, remarked that his memory of occurrences a half century old was unerring, while of quite recent incidents it was unreliable.

It was comparatively early in the evening when the ketch got under way with a favoring breeze. Stewart, with the *Siren*, by order of Preble, stood toward the northern passage, through which the ketch was to pass. His purpose was to remain in as close as was safe, and hold himself ready to pick up the men as they returned in their boats. Stewart turned his night glass toward the *Intrepid* and watched her slowly fading from sight, until she melted into the gloom and not the slightest trace of her outlines was discernible.

Nothing could be more trying than the waiting of the craft outside, for Somers' own vessel and two small ones were near at hand. The stillness was so profound that men heard the suppressed breathing of their comrades. If one moved, he did so on tiptoe. Few words were spoken, and all in guarded undertones. The rippling of the water against the prows and cables was an annoyance, and on more than one forehead great drops of cold perspiration gathered.

Slowly and painfully the long minutes wore away, until it seemed as if several hours had passed, when in reality the interval was but a small part of that period. Every nerve was in this tense state, when suddenly the boom of a cannon came rolling through the fog from the direction of the city, followed soon by the rapid firing of artillery. The approach of the *Intrepid* had been discovered, and it seemed as if all the enemy's batteries were blazing away at her. But what of the



ketch itself?

Stewart, like all the rest, was peering into the black mist, when he saw a star-like point of light, moving with an up and down motion, in a horizontal line, showing that it was a lantern carried by a man running along the deck of a ship. Then it dropped out of sight, as if the bearer had leaped down a hatchway. For a moment all was profound darkness, and then an immense fan-like expanse of flame shot far up into the sky, as if from the crater of a volcano, and was crossed by the curving streaks of fire made by shells in their eccentric flight. Across the water came the crashing roar of the prodigious explosion, followed a few moments later by the sounds of wreckage and bodies as they dropped into the sea. Then again impenetrable gloom and profound stillness succeeded. The batteries on shore were awed into silence by the awful sight, and the waiting friends on the ships held their breath.

The hope was that Lieutenant Somers and his companions had fired the fuse and then rowed away in their boats, but as minute followed minute without the sound of muffled oars from the hollow night reaching the straining ears, suspense gave way to sickening dread. The vessels moved to and fro about the entrance, as if the inanimate things shared in the anxiety that would not allow them to remain still. At intervals a gun was fired or a rocket sent up to guide the missing ones, but none appeared. Every man had been killed by the explosion of the ketch.

Investigations made afterward seemed to establish that Somers was attacked by three gunboats, and, finding escape impossible, it was he who ran along the deck, lighted lantern in hand, and deliberately blew up the *Intrepid*, destroying not only himself and companions, but many of the enemy. The mangled remains of several bodies were found some days later and given burial on shore, but not one could be recognized. Captain Bainbridge and some of his brother officers, who were prisoners in Tripoli, were allowed to view them. He said: "From the whole of them being so disfigured, it was impossible to recognize any feature known to us, or even to distinguish an officer from a seaman."

In November, Commodore Samuel Barron arrived, and succeeded Captain Preble in command of the American squadron. He brought with him the *President* and *Constellation*, thereby increasing the force to ten vessels, carrying two hundred and sixty-four guns.

Having failed to bring the Bashaw to terms by force of arms, the Americans now resorted to what may be termed diplomacy. The reigning Bashaw of Tripoli was

a usurper, having displaced his elder brother, who had fled to Upper Egypt. He had a good many friends, who, if they dared, would have been glad to replace him on his throne. The American consul, who understood all the particulars, proposed to our government to use the deposed ruler as an instrument to compel the usurper to make terms. The Government authorized the consul to go ahead.

Accordingly, he made his way to Alexandria, sought out the banished ruler, proposed his plan, and it was eagerly accepted. He furnished the consul with a cavalry escort, enlisted a number of Greek soldiers, the party marched a thousand miles across the flaming Barcan desert, and in April appeared before Derne, one of the seaports of the reigning monarch, who was also advancing upon the place. With the help of the American fleet, the town was captured, and, for the first time in its history, the Stars and Stripes were given to the breeze above a fortification on the eastern side of the Atlantic.

By the enlistment of the mongrel population of the neighborhood, the American consul gathered a formidable force, with which the enemy were again defeated. Then they boldly set out for Tripoli.

Meanwhile the usurper was shivering with fear, and was more than ready to make a treaty of peace with the terrible barbarians from the other side of the ocean. The treaty was signed on June 2, 1805. The Bashaw, who had demanded a princely sum for the release of his American prisoners, was now glad to set them free for \$60,000. It was agreed, furthermore, that no more tribute should be paid, and thus ended all our troubles with Tripoli.

These proceedings left the rightful ruler in the lurch. He had been promised that he should be restored to his throne on condition of helping the Americans, and he had given the most valuable sort of aid, but the treaty declared that no assistance should be given him. It was a gross injustice on the part of our Government, which did no special credit to itself, when, after the deposed ruler had made a pitiful appeal to Congress, that body presented him with a beggarly pittance of \$2,400.



# **THE WAR OF 1812.**



## CHAPTER XI.

### **Cause of the War of 1812—Discreditable Work of the Land Forces—Brilliant Record of the Navy—The *Constitution*—Captain Isaac Hull—Battle Between the *Constitution* and *Guerriere*—Winning a Wager.**

Probably no hostilities in which the United States was ever engaged so abound with stirring, romantic and remarkable exploits as those upon the ocean in the War of 1812.

Now, as to the cause of the war between England and our country: Great Britain was engaged in a tremendous conflict with France, at the head of which was the greatest military leader of the world, Napoleon Bonaparte. England needed every soldier and sailor she could get. Some of them deserted to our ships, so her officers began the practice of stopping such vessels on the ocean, searching them for deserters, and if found they were taken away. Sometimes she took Americans, because she knew they were good seamen, and, to excuse her action, she declared they were deserters from the British navy.

#### **IMPRESSING AMERICAN SAILORS. IMPRESSING AMERICAN SAILORS.**

This action was against the law of nations. She had no more right to molest an American vessel than she had to land a force on our coast, march inland and search the house of a private family. We protested, but she paid no attention. It happened more than once that when our vessels refused to be searched the English fired into them and killed and wounded some of the American crews. If any nation acted that way toward England to-day she would declare war at once, and so would any other nation.

Finding there was no peaceable way of stopping the unbearable conduct of Great Britain, our country, in the month of June, 1812, declared war against her, and it lasted until the early part of 1815.

There was one feature of that war which it is not pleasant for Americans to recall. It opened with a cowardly surrender by General William Hull of Detroit

to the English army, and for two years our land forces did very little to their credit. They set out to invade Canada several times, but in every instance were beaten. The leading generals were "poor sticks," quarreled among themselves, and for a time failed to gain any advantage. The trouble was not with the soldiers. They were among the best in the world, but their leaders were of no account. By and by, however, the poor officers were weeded out and good ones took their places. Then something was accomplished in which we all could feel pride.

It was just the other way on the ocean. From the very start our naval vessels and privateers won the most brilliant of victories. This was the more remarkable when several facts are kept in mind. Great Britain had been at war so long that she had the most powerful navy by far in the world. It numbered one thousand and thirty-six vessels, of which two hundred and fifty-four were ships-of-the-line, not one of which carried less than seventy guns of large calibre. This prodigious navy was manned by one hundred and forty-four thousand sailors, and eighty-five of her war vessels were on the American coast, equipped and ready for action.

In amazing contrast to all this, we had only twenty large war vessels and a number of gunboats that were of little account. The disparity was so great that our Government, after looking at the situation and discussing the matter, decided that it would be folly to fight England on the ocean, and it was decided not to do so. When Captains Stewart and Bainbridge learned of this decision, they went to President Madison and his advisers and insisted that the American navy, weak as it was, should be given a chance of showing what it could do. Consent was finally given, and then opened the wonderful career of our cruisers and privateers.

Among the frigates that had been built during our war with France was the *Constitution*, which carried 44 guns. She earned the name of being one of the luckiest ships in the navy, and because of her astonishing record was named "Old Ironsides." The old hulk of this historical ship is still carefully preserved in remembrance of her brilliant record, which in some respects has never been equalled.

Sailors are superstitious, and the good name which the *Constitution* gained made it easy to get all the seamen needed. When you come to look into the matter you will find that the *Constitution* was a lucky ship, because it was always officered by the best men we had, and they were wise enough to choose the finest crews.

The captain of the *Constitution*, when the war broke out, was Isaac Hull, a nephew of General William Hull, who made the cowardly surrender of Detroit. He was born in Connecticut in 1773, and died in 1843. He was one of the brilliant young officers who received his commission in 1798, and was commander of the *Argus* during the war with Tripoli. He was made a captain in 1806, and the following year was given command of the *Constitution*.

Upon learning that the war had broken out, Captain Hull left the Chesapeake, with orders to join the squadron under the command of Captain Rodgers at New York. When off Barnegat, New Jersey, he was sighted by the blockading squadron of Captain Philip Bowes Vere Broke, which gave chase. The ingenuity and skill displayed by Captain Hull in escaping from the enemy, when all escape seemed hopeless, is still referred to as one of the most remarkable exploits in the history of the American navy. The chase lasted for more than two days and three nights, and it is safe to say that very few commanders placed in the situation of Captain Hull would have been able to save themselves from capture.

Captain Hull sailed on a cruise from Boston on August 21, just in time to dodge an order from Washington to remain in port until further orders. On the afternoon of August 19, when several hundred miles to the eastward of Halifax, he sighted the British frigate *Guerriere*. Her commander, Captain James E. Dacres, was an old acquaintance of Hull, and the two had made a wager of a hat during peace that if they ever met in battle the other would run.

The British officer was as anxious as Hull for a fight, and they drew near each other, both confident of winning the wager made half in jest a brief time before.

Great interest attaches to this naval battle, for it was the first of its kind and a fair test of the respective prowess of ships of and crews of that nature. The *Constitution* was somewhat the superior, carrying 55 guns and four hundred and sixty-eight men, while the *Guerriere* had 49 guns and two hundred and sixty-three men, but all of the latter were under fine discipline, while most of the Americans were green hands. Captain Dacres was confident of his superiority, and had no doubt that when the two frigates met the *Constitution* would be compelled speedily to strike her colors. He waited for the American to come up, each having cleared for action.

A little after four o'clock the two exchanged broadsides, but they were so far apart that no damage was done. Dacres manœuvred for a raking position, but Hull would not permit it, nor could he obtain one for himself. There was much

wearing and manœuvring, which prevented the firing on either side from being effective. Each was wary of the other and took the utmost pains to prevent his securing any advantage.

When it became certain that the battle was to be one at close range, Hull ordered the firing to cease, in order that the fullest preparation could be made for the next broadside. He knew the skill of his men in marksmanship, and determined to hold his fire until the most advantageous position was reached. As he drew near his enemy, the latter continued firing, and some of her shots were so effective that the crews cheered. The Americans, most of them barefooted and stripped to the waist, were standing beside their guns eager and impatient for the order to fire, but Hull, when appealed to, shook his head. It was a proof of the fine discipline of the American crew that when they saw two of their comrades killed by the fire of the enemy, they silently waited without murmur for the order whose delay they could not comprehend.

Not until about a hundred feet distant and in the exact position desired did Captain Hull give the order to fire as the guns bore. To quote Maclay: "In an instant the frigate belched forth a storm of iron hail that carried death and destruction into the opposing ship. The effect of this carefully aimed broadside at short range was terrific. The splinters were seen to fly over the British frigate like a cloud, some of them reaching as high as the mizzen top, while the cheers of her men abruptly ceased and the shrieks and groans of the wounded were heard. The Americans had struck their first earnest blow, and it was a staggering one. The Englishman felt its full weight, and perhaps for the first time realized that this was no child's play."

The Americans displayed remarkable skill in their gunnery, as it may be said they have always done. The main yard of the enemy was shot away in the slings, and hull, rigging and sails were badly mangled. A shot passing through the mizzenmast close to the deck, added to the stress from the sails, caused it to break in two and fall over the quarter. One curious effect of this dragging in the water was to make the wreckage act like a rudder, bringing her up to the wind in spite of the opposition of the helm. While the damage on the *Constitution* was less, it clogged her action, but she secured a position from which she delivered two raking broadsides. Then as the vessel see-sawed, the jibboom of the *Guerriere* crossed the *Constitution's* quarter deck. Both crews made ready to board, but each found the other so fully prepared that neither attempted it. Meanwhile the riflemen in the rigging were working with destructive energy. In each of the *Constitution's* tops were seven marines, six loading for the seventh,

who was the best marksman. A good many officers were wounded and killed on both sides.

THE "CONSTITUTION" AND THE "GUERRIERE."  
**THE "CONSTITUTION" AND THE "GUERRIERE."**

Although the vessels had been lashed together, their lurching broke them apart, and the Englishman gained a chance to use his broadsides. A fire broke out on the *Constitution*, but it was quickly extinguished, and the shot of the American soon made a complete wreck of the enemy. When it became clear that the *Guerriere* could make no further resistance, Captain Hull drew off to repair the damages to his own ship. Another English frigate was likely to appear at any moment, and she would make short work of the *Constitution* in her crippled condition. It took but a short time to complete the work, when she returned to her former position beside the wallowing *Guerriere*. A lieutenant was sent on board to receive the surrender, which Dacres gave with painful reluctance. When brought to the side of the *Constitution*, Hull assisted him up the rope ladder. Dacres extended his sword.

"No" replied Hull, "I will not take it from one who knows so well how to use it, but I must trouble you to pay me that hat I have won."





## CHAPTER XII.

### **Jacob Jones—The *Wasp* and the *Frolic*—James Biddle—The *Hornet* and the *Penguin*—A Narrow Escape.**

I must now tell you something about another gallant young officer who entered the American navy at the close of the century, when he was hardly thirty years old. He was Jacob Jones, who lived until 1850. He was a lieutenant on the *Philadelphia* for two years, and was with that frigate when she ran on the rocks in the harbor of Tripoli. He was given command of the 18-gun sloop of war *Wasp*, which sailed from the Delaware in October, 1812, and headed eastward, with the intention of intercepting some of the enemy's merchantmen plying between Great Britain and the West Indies.

About a week after sailing he sighted five merchantmen, several of which were well armed, while all were convoyed by a brig of war. Jones stood toward them, when the brig signalled to her companions to make all sail before the wind, while she dropped back to attend to the stranger. The American came up quite close, and hailing, demanded the name of the other. For a reply, the brig lowered the Spanish colors, ran up the British flag, and let fly with a broadside and volley of musketry.

The *Wasp* was expecting something of that nature and returned the compliment, the vessels working nearer each other and firing as rapidly as possible. The action had hardly begun when the *Wasp* lost her main topmast, and a few minutes later the mizzen topgallant mast and the gaff were shot away. These mishaps so crippled her that she became almost unmanageable. The *Frolic*, as the enemy was named, was also damaged, but not so badly as the *Wasp*, but, unfortunately for the *Frolic*, the heavy sea and the twisting about of the hull threw her into position to be raked by the *Wasp*, and Captain Jones was quick to seize the advantage, the vessels being so close that the ramrods were pushed against each other's sides while the gunners were loading. The sea was so heavy that the guns of the *Wasp* frequently dipped under water.

The intention of the Americans was to board, and Lieutenant James Biddle held himself and men ready to take instant advantage of the moment the roll of the sea brought them near enough to do so.

Captain Jones did not believe himself warranted in boarding, since he held the advantage of position, and he issued orders for the men to wait, but their ardor could not be checked. Among his sailors was one who had been impressed into the British service, where he was brutally treated. Springing upon his gun, he grasped the bowsprit of the brig, swung himself upon the spar and ran as nimbly as a monkey to the deck of the enemy. Imitating his enthusiasm, Lieutenant Biddle and his boarders took advantage of a favorable lurch at that moment and sprang upon the deck of the *Frolic*. There, every man stopped and repressed the cheer that rose to his lips, for the scene was one of the most dreadful that imagination can picture.

The quartermaster stood grimly clutching the wheel, a lieutenant, bleeding from several wounds, was leaning against the companionway, unable to stand without its support, while all along the deck were strewn the dead and dying. Silently the victors stepped over the prostrate forms to the quarter deck, where the officer weakly dropped his sword to signify his surrender. Lieutenant Biddle walked to where the colors were still fluttering and pulled them down. A few minutes later the mainmast and foremast fell.

Maclay gives the strength of the two vessels as follows: *Wasp*, 18 guns, *Frolic*, 22; crew of the *Wasp*, 138, of the *Frolic*, 110. On the *Wasp* 5 were killed and 5 wounded; on the *Frolic* 15 were killed and 47 wounded, the latter being completely riddled. The cause of this frightful difference in results was brought about by the Americans discharging their broadsides when their ship was on the downward roll, the shot landing in the hull of the enemy, while the latter fired on the rise, her broadsides mainly passing into and through the rigging.

As soon as Captain Jones learned of the fearful plight of the *Frolic* he sent his surgeon on board, and everything possible was done to assist the sorely smitten enemy.

The *Wasp* was so badly injured that Captain Jones gave his attention to repairing her, and was thus engaged when a sail appeared. It proved to be the British 74-gun ship of the line *Poictiers*, which, surmising what had taken place, bore down, took possession of both ships and carried them to Bermuda.

This battle, one of the most fiercely contested of the war, naturally caused much rejoicing throughout the United States. Congress voted \$25,000 to the officers and crew of the *Wasp* as prize money, and gave a gold medal to Master-Commandant Jones and a silver one to each of his officers, while the Legislature

of Pennsylvania presented a sword to Lieutenant James Biddle.

This gallant young officer is entitled to more notice than has been given him. He was born in Philadelphia in 1783, and died in 1848. After his exchange, he was appointed to the command of the *Hornet*, and sailed from New York in the month of January, 1815, in company with the *Peacock* and *Tom Bowline*, but the three became separated, each making for Tristan d'Acunha, which had been named as the rendezvous of the squadron under the command of Stephen Decatur.

This was on the last day of February, and Captain Biddle was about to drop anchor when a sail appeared, and the *Hornet* went out to reconnoitre. The stranger approached as if anxious to fight him, and, when within musket range, ran up the English flag and fired a shot, to which the *Hornet* replied with a broadside. The vessels continued firing as they drew near each other. The superior aim of the American speedily crippled the rigging of the other, and, coming together, the *Penguin*, as the British vessel proved to be, in preparing to board, succeeded in passing her bowsprit between the main and mizzen rigging of the *Hornet* on the starboard quarter. This gave the enemy the opportunity he seemed to be seeking, but his boarders did not appear.

The American sailors begged permission of Captain Biddle to board, but he would not consent, since he wished to hold the advantage already gained. Just then the heaving sea broke the vessels apart, the *Penguin* receiving considerable damage from the forcible rupture. The *Hornet* wore round to bring her broadside to bear, and was on the point of opening fire, when the surviving officer of the *Penguin* called out that they surrendered. His condition was so hopeless that no choice was left to him.

Captain Biddle ordered his men to stop firing, and, stepping to the taffrail, asked his enemy if they had struck. The answer was two musket shots, one aimed at the man at the wheel and the other at Biddle. The latter was hit on the chin and badly, though not dangerously, wounded, while the man at the wheel was not struck. The men who fired the treacherous shots were seen by two American marines, who shot them dead.

No doubt the action of the Englishmen was unauthorized, and probably was due to a misunderstanding; but the Americans were so incensed that it was difficult to restrain them from continuing the firing. The enemy hailed a second time and called out they had surrendered.

The strength of the *Hornet* was 20 guns and 132 men; of the *Penguin*, 19 guns and 128 men. The *Hornet* had 1 man killed and 11 wounded; the *Penguin*, 10 killed and 28 wounded. She was so badly shattered that, after taking out her stores, her captors scuttled her.

In order to complete our history of the gallant Captain James Biddle it is necessary to carry the record in advance of some of the incidents that follow.

As has been stated, the *Peacock* and the *Hornet* had gone to Tristan d'Acunha in obedience to the orders of Commodore Decatur, to wait for him and the *President*, but the latter never arrived, for the good reason that she had been captured by the enemy. Growing tired of waiting, Biddle and Captain Warrington, of the *Peacock*, started on an extended cruise, April 13, for the East Indies.

Doubling the Cape of Good Hope, they met with no incident of note until the latter part of April, when they sighted a large sail, which they believed to be a heavily laden East India merchantman. A chase immediately began. It continued a long time, and the *Peacock* was within a few miles, when she made the discovery that the stranger, instead of being a merchantman, was a ship of the line. Captain Warrington signalled the startling fact to Biddle, and the two turned to escape. Since the formidable vessel could not pursue both when they took different directions, she selected the *Hornet* for her prize.

All that Biddle could now hope to do was to out-sail his pursuer. He put forth every effort known to the most skilful seamanship. When night closed in, however, the pursuer had perceptibly gained. Since the weather was perfectly clear and the two were in plain sight of each other, the enemy could keep up the chase all night. Captain Biddle threw overboard some of his heavy spars, cut away the sheet anchor and flung several tons of kentledge into the sea.

This helped matters somewhat, but the stranger continued slowly to gain, and secured such a position that Captain Biddle was obliged to go about. Still he could not shake off the bulldog at his heels, and at daylight he was near enough to begin barking with the bow guns. Although the shot did not strike the *Hornet*, Captain Biddle dropped his remaining anchors into the sea, including six guns, launch, cables, and everything not absolutely necessary.

The lightening was so considerable that for the first time the *Hornet* began drawing away from her persistent pursuer. At the end of a few hours, however, he began creeping up again, and Captain Biddle tumbled overboard all his guns

except one, most of his shot, his extra spars, cutlasses, muskets, forge and bell, and indeed everything of which he could free himself. Not only that, but the men lay down on the quarter deck to help trim the ship.

All in vain. The shot and shell whistled about the *Hornet*, the enemy came closer, and every American prepared to submit as gracefully as possible to the inevitable. Captain Biddle addressed his men feelingly, telling them to show the same restraint in misfortune that they had in victory, and then the gallant officer coolly awaited the moment when he should be obliged to haul down his flag to save the lives of his brave crew.

But lo! the wind changed to a quarter favorable to the *Hornet*, and it lasted throughout the night and the next day. The *Hornet* drew steadily away from the British ship of the line *Cornwallis*, as she proved to be, and made her way at a leisurely speed to the United States.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### **Captains Carden and Decatur—Cruise of the *Macedonian*— Battle with the Frigate *United States*—Decatur's Chivalry.**

Before the war broke out between England and the United States the naval officers naturally were on the best of terms with one another. They exchanged visits, had dinners together and talked in the most friendly terms over the relations of their respective countries. Brave men always feel thus, and no matter how fiercely they have been fighting, they become friends again as soon as peace is declared.

You have already been told considerable about Stephen Decatur, one of the bravest and most chivalrous men that ever drew a sword. At the breaking out of the War of 1812 he was given command of the frigate *United States*, of 44 guns, built in 1798, and one of the finest in the American navy. While lying at Norfolk, some months before war was declared, the British frigate *Macedonian*, of about the same strength, was in port, and the officers and crews became well acquainted.

The commander of the *Macedonian* was Captain John Surman Carden, one of the finest officers in the British service. He and Decatur became fond of each other and often discussed the probable results of the impending naval contests, for it was apparent to both that their countries were on the brink of war. Captain Carden conceded the bravery and skill of the American officers and seamen, but insisted that they would be at a disadvantage, because they had not met with the experience of the Englishmen, who had been engaged in so many wars with European nations.

The *Macedonian* was made of oak and was without a superior in the British navy. In the latter part of September, 1812, she left Portsmouth, England. She was just off the docks and her crew, 297 in number, were such as the best officer would have been proud to command. The discipline was as near perfection as possible, Captain Carden being one of the severest of disciplinarians. His business was to look out for French merchantmen and warships, though as it was known that war had been declared with the United States, it was deemed probable that Captain Carden would have a chance of testing the mettle of her

naval officers and crews.

There were two American vessels that Captain Carden was specially anxious to meet. One was the *Essex*, which was playing havoc among the English shipping (and of which I shall tell you something later on), and the other that of Captain Stephen Decatur, the courteous but brave naval officer who had displayed so much intrepidity in the war with Tripoli and had insisted to Carden that the American sailors were the match of the English anywhere.

While at Madeira Captain Carden learned that the *Essex* had sailed from the Delaware and was expected to cruise in the neighborhood of the Canary Islands. The Englishman turned southward and was within a few days' sail of the islands when, on the 25th of October, the man at the masthead reported a sail. As it approached it was carefully scrutinized and found to be a frigate bearing down on the *Macedonian*.

Convinced that she was an enemy, Captain Carden at once issued the command to clear for action. The most thorough preparations were made and officers were stationed with orders to shoot down the first man who flinched from his duty. On board the ship were a number of American seamen, who began speculating among themselves as to whether the approaching frigate was a Frenchman or belonged to their own country. They were in a trying position, for they were patriotic and would have given anything in the world to escape firing upon their countrymen, but there was no help for it. Such a rigid disciplinarian as Captain Carden would listen to no protests from them, and, should the stranger prove to be an American, it would be a choice between helping to fight her or being shot down by their own officers.

The approaching frigate went through a number of evolutions of such a rapid and brilliant nature that the Englishmen murmured their admiration. Through their glasses the officers could see groups of men on the quarter deck scanning them closely, while glimpses of sailors were caught as they moved about the deck and of the gun crews standing quietly at their stations. Then, when there was a change of direction, parties of marines were observed in her tops, muskets in hand, coolly awaiting the time when the ships would engage at close quarters.

While Captain Carden and his officers were in doubt whether the ship was a French one she gave her colors to the breeze. They were the Stars and Stripes of the American Republic. One of the finest of its frigates had thrown down the gage of battle to as superb a frigate as belonged to the British navy.

Since all doubt of her nationality was dispelled, one of the American seamen walked resolutely to Captain Carden, saluted and told him that he and his companions had no wish to fight the flag of their country. In reply the officer ordered him back to his station and with notice that if the request was repeated he would be shot. Sad to say, the sailor who made his wish known was one of the first killed in battle.

The two ships now began exchanging shots, but the distance was too great for any damage on either side. A little after 9 o'clock on that bright sunshiny Sunday morning they were close enough for the wonderful marksmanship of the American to display itself. The first shot that found the *Macedonian* entered through the starboard bulwark and killed the sergeant of marines. A minute later the mizzen topmast was sundered, and, cluttered with sails, yards and rigging, it fell into the maintop, where it hung suspended, liable to fall at any moment and crush those beneath.

The fire of the American became frightfully destructive. It seemed as if every shot splintered some part of the rigging or hull and killed and wounded men right and left. The exasperating feature of this awful business was that neither Captain Carden nor his aids, who were directing operations from the quarter deck, could discover any corresponding damage on the American ship. Her mizzen topgallant mast had been carried away, but it looked as if all the other shots sent in her direction sped past without harm. She was wrapped in an immense volume of smoke made by her own broadsides, and through it constantly shot tongues of crimson flame, while the roar of the rapidly discharged guns was incessant.

Now and then a rift appeared in the billows of vapor, through which the Stars and Stripes were seen fluttering, while the men worked as coolly at their guns as if going through manœuvres in time of peace. Finally the smoke became so dense that the Americans were unable to see through it. Ceasing firing for a few minutes, the frigate moved far enough forward to pass from under the impenetrable blanket of vapor and then renewed the battle with more terrific effect than before. Her firing was so rapid that several times Captain Carden believed the incessant flame indicated she was on fire. The report was spread among his men to encourage them, but no such good fortune came to the Englishmen.

One of the men on board the *Macedonian* gave the following graphic account of his experience:



"Our men kept cheering with all their might. I cheered with them, though I confess I scarcely knew what for. Certainly there was nothing very inspiriting in the aspect of things. Grape shot and canister were pouring through our portholes like leaden hail. The large shot came against the ship's side, shaking her to the very keel, and passing through her timbers and scattering terrific splinters, which did more appalling work than the shot itself. A constant stream of wounded men were being hurried to the cockpit from all quarters of the ship. My feelings were pretty much as I suppose every one else felt at such a time. That men are without thought when they stand among the dying and dead is too absurd an idea to be entertained. We all appeared cheerful, but I know that many a serious thought ran through my mind. Still, what could we do but keep up a semblance at least of animation? To run from our quarters would have been certain death from the hands of our own officers; to give way to gloom or show fear would do no good and might brand us with the name of cowards and insure certain defeat."

In the desperate hope of warding off defeat, Captain Garden now ordered his helm a port and directed that boarders be called. The response was prompt, for the British sailor fights with unsurpassable heroism, but at the critical moment the forebrace was carried away, the ship was thrown into the wind and exposed to a raking fire. The American instantly seized the advantage and swept the decks with murderous destructiveness. In a brief time the *Macedonian* was completely disabled. Her rigging was in tatters and splinters and her hull had been pierced by more than a hundred shot, many of which struck between wind and water.

BATTLE BETWEEN THE "UNITED STATES" AND THE "MACEDONIAN."  
**BATTLE BETWEEN THE "UNITED STATES" AND THE  
"MACEDONIAN."**

Finally the American ceased firing and drew off to make the few repairs that were necessary. During the lull Captain Carden called his surviving officers around him for council. There was indeed but one thing to do, and it was agreed to surrender. As the American was returning, therefore, to resume her appalling work the English colors were hauled down. The victor lay to and lowered a boat, under charge of a lieutenant, who, as he climbed aboard, gave his name and that of the American 44-gun frigate as the *United States*, Captain Stephen Decatur. The *United States*, whose crew numbered 478, had 5 killed and 7 wounded, while the 297 of the *Macedonian* lost 36 killed and 68 wounded.

So it was that the old friends settled the question over which they had argued many times. When the English officer came aboard of the *United States* and offered his sword to Decatur the latter said: "I cannot receive the sword of a man who has defended his ship with such bravery."

The chivalrous nature of Decatur was shown in a private letter in which he wrote: "One-half of the satisfaction arising from this victory is destroyed in seeing the mortification of poor Carden, who deserved success as much as we did who had the good fortune to obtain it." Everything possible was done to alleviate the sufferings of the prisoners. The private property of the officers and seamen was returned or its equivalent in money. In a letter from Captain Carden to Captain Decatur he expressed his feelings and added: "I have much gratitude to express to you, my dear sir, for all your kindnesses, and all my officers feel it equally with myself. If ever we should turn the tables we will endeavor, if possible, to improve on your unusual goodness."

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### Occasional American Defeats as Well as Victories—Captain Decatur's Misfortune—The *Chesapeake* and *Shannon*.

You would gain a wrong impression if my account of the leading naval events in the War of 1812 were made up wholly of American victories. It was inevitable that our gallant officers and men should meet with some defeats. In order, therefore, to give as true an idea as possible of those times I shall devote this chapter to telling about some events which went the wrong way.

Enough has been related concerning Stephen Decatur to show that he was the most prominent of our naval leaders in our last war with Great Britain. He entered into the work with the same dauntless enthusiasm he showed whenever it was his privilege to serve his country, and his capture of the *Macedonian* was one of the most brilliant exploits of the many that took place during those memorable years.

In order to understand my use of the words "captain" and "commodore," it is necessary to explain that at the time to which I now refer the latter rank was different from what it is to-day. The commodore of a squadron was the highest ranking officer and he might be lower than a captain. Thus "Commodore" Perry, who won the remarkable victory on Lake Erie, was promoted from that rank to "captain."

Another interesting fact may be named. The Stars and Stripes used in that war was slightly different in pattern from the present, for, instead of containing thirteen stripes, as it did at the close of the Revolution and as it does to-day, it had fifteen. The first law of Congress bearing on this point was to add a stripe for every new State admitted to the Union, but after two had come in and others were making ready it became evident that before long the pattern of the beautiful emblem would be spoiled if the rule were followed. So the increase in the number of stripes stopped and remained fifteen for a few years after the close of the war, even though new States had been admitted. Then the law was changed so as to provide that the increase of States should be shown by the stars in the blue field, while the stripes should always remain thirteen in number, typical of the original colonies of the Revolution.

It was decided early in the war to send a squadron consisting of the *President*, Captain Stephen Decatur, and the sloop of war *Peacock*, Captain Warrington, and *Hornet*, Lieutenant Biddle, and the storeship *Tom Bowline* on a cruise in the Indian Ocean. This squadron was to rendezvous at Tristan d'Acunha, but failed to do so, for a reason that has been stated in the account of the exploits of the *Hornet* and *Peacock*.

Captain Decatur lay in the harbor of New York with his vessels and found himself so closely blockaded by the British squadron that it was impossible for the Americans to sail in company. He sent out the two ships named, and, on the night of January 14, 1815, when the blockading squadron had been driven to the south by a gale, he sailed down the Narrows, hoping to get to sea before it returned. There was good reason to expect success, but misfortune speedily came. The beacon lights had been removed and early in the evening the pilot ran the ship aground just before reaching Sandy Hook. It required two hours of the hardest kind of work to get her off. The *President* was not very seaworthy at the start, and the efforts to reach deep water so injured her that it was necessary to return to the city for repairs, but the strong contrary wind prevented and she was driven over the bar.

Meanwhile the blockading squadron had come back and, early the next morning, Decatur had four of them in full pursuit. He put on every stitch of canvas, threw overboard everything that could be spared and wet his sails, but the *President* was so badly crippled from having run aground that, despite all that was done, she steadily lost ground. The *Endymion* led the pursuers and soon drew up within range, her position such that Decatur could not reply to the shots which began to injure his ship and kill and wound his crew.

He formed a desperate scheme that was characteristic of him. The *Endymion* was so far in advance of the other pursuers that there was a possibility of turning about and capturing her. Then, by transferring the American crew to her, the worthless *President* could be abandoned and swift flight be made in the *Endymion*, which had already demonstrated her superior speed.

The great risk in this attempt (for no one among the Americans doubted their ability to overcome the other crew) was that before the capture could be accomplished the other vessels would come up and Decatur be assailed by an overwhelming force, but he did not hesitate. He explained his plan to his men and they responded with cheers. No commander was ever more beloved by his crew than Decatur, and they were ready to follow him to the death, for he was

always their leader and the foremost in personal danger.

Since every minute was valuable, Decatur put about and made for the *Endymion* with the intention of engaging her at close quarters. But the British vessel suspected his purpose, for she also turned, and, being much the superior sailer, was able to hold a safe distance between the two. It was an exasperating disappointment, but Decatur opened with a heavy fire, hoping to disable his antagonist before the arrival of the others.

A furious engagement followed, in which Decatur lost several of his most valuable officers and was himself painfully wounded by flying splinters. But the American guns were served with perfect precision and the *Endymion* was so broken and shattered by the fire that after two and a half hours she was incapable of further resistance. She would have surrendered had the time been sufficient for Decatur to enforce the demand, but the other blockaders were hurrying up and placed the American again in grave danger. He crowded on all sail once more, but the scurrying clouds which gave him a chance of escaping were swept from the sky and the bright moon revealed him so plainly to his pursuers that they rapidly overtook the *President*. A running fight followed, but the *President* was overmatched in every respect. In his official report Decatur said: "Two fresh ships of the enemy, the 38-gun frigates *Pomone* and *Tenedos*, had come up. The *Pomone* had opened fire on the port bow, within musket shot, the other, about two cables' length astern, taking a raking position on our quarter, and the rest, with the exception of the *Endymion*, within gunshot. Thus situated, with about one-fifth of my crew killed and wounded, my ship crippled and a more than fourfold force opposed to me, without a chance of escape, I deemed it my duty to surrender."

The British senior officer of the squadron to whom Decatur offered his sword showed his appreciation of the American's gallantry and of his chivalrous treatment of Captain Carden, when the situations were reversed, by handing the weapon back to Decatur with the remark that he was proud to return the sword of an officer who had defended his ship so nobly.

Shortly after this misfortune news reached this country of the signing of a treaty of peace, though several encounters took place on the ocean before the tidings could reach the various ships.

Turning back to the earlier part of the war, mention must be made of another American hero, James Lawrence, who was born in Burlington, N.J., in 1781 and

was active in the war with Tripoli. He was commander of the *Hornet* when she captured the *Peacock* in an engagement which lasted only fifteen minutes, with the loss of one American killed and two wounded. He was given the command of the frigate *Chesapeake*, which was repairing in Boston harbor. The ship had gained the reputation of being unlucky, and, having already passed through several accidents, Lawrence assumed command with extreme reluctance.

Among the blockading vessels of the enemy outside of Boston was the *Shannon*, commanded by Captain Philip Bowes Vere Broke. She was one of the most efficient ships in the British navy, carried 38 guns and had a crew of 330 men, all well disciplined and skilled in firing guns and in fighting, while Broke himself probably had no superior as an officer. That he was brave was proven not only by his sending a challenge to Lawrence, inviting him to come out and fight him, but by his conduct during the battle.

Captain Lawrence sailed out of Boston harbor before Broke's challenge reached him. He had learned that a single frigate had presumed to blockade the port, and, having been ordered to sail as soon as possible, he made unwise haste in venturing to give the *Shannon* battle, even though one cause was the wish to leave the port before other blockaders appeared.

CAPTAIN JAMES LAWRENCE.  
**CAPTAIN JAMES LAWRENCE.**

The crew of the *Chesapeake* was inferior in every respect to that of the enemy, except that it contained ten more men. The majority had been newly enlisted and contained many foreigners, landsmen, and objectionable sailors. They were not only unaccustomed to the ship—though they knew of its reputation as an unlucky one—but were unacquainted with one another and nearly all were strangers to the officers. The best of these were absent from illness and other causes. Worse than all, many were in a maudlin state of drunkenness when the *Chesapeake* started out with flags flying to engage the well-manned *Shannon*.

On the way down the bay some of the *Chesapeake's* crew impudently notified Lawrence that they would not fight unless they received the prize money earned a short time before. It was a humiliating situation for the young commander, but he was virtually in the face of the enemy and he issued prize checks to the malcontents. Well aware of the character of the foe he was about to encounter, he must have looked upon the meeting with foreboding. Maclay uses these impressive words:

THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE "CHESAPEAKE" AND THE "SHANNON."  
**THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE "CHESAPEAKE" AND THE  
"SHANNON."**

"The calm deliberation with which the American and English commanders went out to seek each other's life and the earnestness with which they urged their officers and men to steep their hands in the blood of their fellow beings form one of the sombre pictures of naval history. Lawrence was the youngest son of John Lawrence, Esquire, counselor-at-law at Burlington, N.J., and was the second in command at the celebrated capture of the *Philadelphia* in the harbor of Tripoli. Broke was the descendant of an ancient family which had lived in Broke Hall, England, over three hundred and fifty years and for four hundred years at Leighton. Both were men in the prime of manhood, Lawrence in his thirty-second year and Broke in his thirty-seventh. Both were models of chivalry and manly grace; both were held in the highest estimation in their profession. Lawrence had just taken an affectionate farewell of his two sons and an hour later was urging his men to "*Peacock* them! *Peacock* them!" Broke a short time before had committed his wife to God's mercy and soon afterward was urging his crew to 'Kill the men! kill the men!' Both were men of the kindest feelings and most tender affections; both acknowledged the justice of the cause for which the Americans were contending, yet with steady determination they went out at the head of their ships' companies to take each other's life. A few hours afterward, when Captain Broke fell on the *Chesapeake's* decks fainting and covered with his own blood, his lieutenants, on loosening his clothes, found a small blue silk case suspended around his neck. It contained a lock of his wife's hair."

DEATH OF CAPTAIN LAWRENCE.  
**DEATH OF CAPTAIN LAWRENCE.**

Lawrence, in accordance with his chivalrous nature, disdained to seek any unfair advantage, his purpose being to engage in what is called a fair yardarm and yardarm fight. It was toward the close of the first day of summer, with thousands crowding the hills and points of advantage and peering at the ships through glasses, that the battle opened by the fire of the *Shannon*. Great damage was inflicted and much execution done by the return broadside of the *Chesapeake*. The first fire severely wounded Lawrence in the leg, but he refused to go below. Then the firing became so close and rapid that half the American officers were killed or wounded. The most frightful confusion that can be imagined followed. When Lawrence formed his men to board after the two vessels had fouled the

bugler could not be found, whereupon Captain Broke led his own men upon the deck of the *Chesapeake*.

It was at this critical moment that Lawrence was fatally wounded and carried below. He kept calling out his commands while in the cockpit to fight harder and to keep the guns going. His last words, often repeated in his delirium, were "*Don't give up the ship!*" and they formed the motto of the American navy for many years afterward.

**THE OFFICERS OF THE "CHESAPEAKE" OFFERING THEIR SWORDS.  
THE OFFICERS OF THE "CHESAPEAKE" OFFERING THEIR  
SWORDS.**

In the wild, savage fighting, where everything was so mixed that an American lieutenant joined the British boarders under the impression that they were his own men, Captain Broke was fearfully wounded, though he afterward recovered. The *Chesapeake*, with a loss of 47 killed and 99 wounded to 24 killed and 59 wounded of the enemy, became the prize of the *Shannon*.





## CHAPTER XV.

### **David Porter—A Clever Feat—Numerous Captures by the *Essex* —Her Remarkable Cruise in the Pacific—Her Final Capture.**

David Porter was born in 1780 and died in 1842. He came from a seafaring family, and, entering the navy at an early age, did gallant service in the war with France and Tripoli. He was the father of David Dixon Porter, who, on account of his brilliant record in the war for the Union, was made vice-admiral in 1866 and admiral in 1870.

The elder Porter was appointed captain of the *Essex* at the beginning of the War of 1812, and, leaving New York, started on a cruise after the British 36-gun *Thetis*, which was on her way to South America with a large amount of specie aboard. She took several unimportant prizes, and, failing to meet the *Thetis*, turned northward and on the night of July 10, 1812, sighted a fleet of merchantmen.

The night was cloudy and dark and Porter with a great deal of cleverness pushed his way among the vessels without his identity being suspected. He had drawn in his guns, hidden most of his men and done all he could to give the *Essex* the appearance of being an inoffensive merchantman. His object was to learn whether the escort was too powerful to be attacked. He opened conversation with the captain of one of the vessels, who, unsuspecting of his identity, informed him that the fleet was carrying a thousand soldiers from Barbados to Quebec, and that the convoying vessel was the *Minerva*, a 32-gun frigate. In addition, several of the merchantmen were heavily armed.

Captain Porter's next act was still more audacious. He glided forward among the fleet and hailed the captain of a second vessel, but the latter became suspicious, and was on the point of signalling to the escort the appearance of a stranger among them, when Porter thrust out the muzzles of twenty cannon and warned him that if he failed to keep perfect silence and follow in his wake he would blow him out of the water. The English captain obeyed, and Porter extricated his prize with such astonishing skill that not a vessel took the alarm. When a safe point was reached, Porter found that his prize was a brig with about two hundred British soldiers on board.

Having succeeded so well, Porter again returned to the fleet for another capture. But by this time day was breaking and the character of his vessel was discovered. It being useless to attempt further disguise, he cleared for action and offered the *Minerva* battle. The captain, however, deemed it his duty to remain with his convoy, and continued his course to Quebec, while Porter headed southward, afterward restoring his prize to its owners for a liberal ransom.

Captain Porter had become so clever in disguising his vessel as a merchantman that some days later he lured the British 16-gun ship-sloop *Alert* to attack him. In the space of eight minutes the *Alert* was so helplessly crippled that her captain surrendered. The *Essex* did not suffer the slightest injury and no men were killed on either vessel.

The *Essex* had now five hundred prisoners aboard, and they formed an element of serious danger, for they began plotting among themselves to capture the ship from the Americans and turn her over to the enemy. Captain Porter was a severe disciplinarian, and one of his practices was to have the alarm of fire sounded at all hours of the day or night, that his crew might be taught the successful way of fighting the ever-present danger. To make such training perfect, he occasionally started a fire in the hatches.

The leader in the conspiracy to seize the ship fixed upon a night to make the attempt, and his friends were on the alert to join him the moment he gave the signal. In one of the hammocks was sleeping a midshipmite only eleven years old, but, young as he was, he was a hero. Pistol in hand, the plotter tiptoed up beside the hammock to learn whether the boy was asleep. The little fellow was never wider awake in his life; but he kept his eyes closed and breathed regularly, so as to deceive the scoundrel, who slipped away to lead his companions in their murderous uprising.

The instant the man disappeared the boy midshipman sprang out of his hammock, crept to the cabin and told Captain Porter what he had seen. That officer ran into the berth deck and loudly shouted "*Fire!*" The finely disciplined crew promptly answered the call, and going to the main hatch, were speedily armed and received their orders from Captain Porter. The plotters were overawed and the rebellion nipped in the bud.

Thus the *Essex* was saved by the wits of a boy only eleven years old. The name of that boy was David Glasgow Farragut, and he became the greatest naval officer of the American navy. Of course I shall have more to tell you about him

later on.

Determined to rid himself of the dangerous prisoners, Captain Porter placed them on board the *Alert* and sent them to Nova Scotia on parole. In a cruise of sixty days he made nine captures, recaptured five privateers and merchantmen, and arrived in the Delaware early in September.

He sailed again in the latter part of October with the smallest frigate in the navy, but with a full complement of officers and men. Among the former, it need hardly be said, was young Midshipman Farragut. The first port at which he stopped was Port Praya, where the Portuguese governor showed them much courtesy. In December the *Essex* crossed the equator, and soon after overhauled a British brig of war, which strained every effort to escape. The two manœuvred for position, but the *Essex* proved her superiority, and, after a volley of musketry, which killed one man, the *Nocton*, as she proved to be, hauled down her flag. She carried only 10 guns and 31 men, but had \$50,000 in specie on board. Captain Porter placed an officer and crew in charge of the prize, with instructions to make the nearest American port. While striving to do so he was captured by the British frigate *Belvidera*.

Captain Porter's instructions were to meet the *Constitution* and *Hornet*, which were cruising in that part of the world. He made continued efforts to do so, and frequently got on their track, but finally had to give it up. Then Captain Porter formed the bold plan of doubling Cape Horn and entering the Pacific ocean.

This venture was more dangerous than would be supposed, for all the South American countries on that side of the continent were dominated by Great Britain, and in entering the vast expanse the American knew he would meet plenty of enemies and not a solitary friend. Like an army when it invades a country, however, he determined to live off the enemy. He knew that scores of English vessels were in the Pacific, and all Porter had to do was to capture them. He had had sufficient experience at that sort of work to give him confidence, and he liked the business.

Unfortunately, it was the most dangerous season of the year for doubling the Horn, which is always attended with peril. The *Essex* was caught in a tempest that lasted for three days, and was so terrific that the stoutest hearted sailors quailed. The escape of the gallant little ship could not have been narrower, and she suffered great damage, but finally the dreaded extremity of South America was weathered, and in the beginning of March, 1813, the *Essex* sailed into the

calmer water of the Pacific, where no armed American vessel had ever before penetrated.

The first halt was made off the island of Mocha, where a hunting party secured a number of hogs, which were salted down for future use. Captain Porter wished to keep secret his presence in that part of the world until after he had secured a number of prizes, but the condition of his vessel compelled him to put into Valparaiso, where he learned that Chili had begun her war of independence against Spain.

A sail which was sighted displayed the Spanish colors, and, believing her to be one of the vessels that had been preying upon American commerce in the Pacific, Captain Porter hoisted the British flag. The stranger approached and sent an armed boat to the *Essex*. It was immediately sent back with orders for the Peruvian cruiser to come under the lee of the *Essex*. This was done, and she was compelled to strike. Upon the demand of Porter, her captain gave a list of all the vessels, so far as he could remember, that were cruising in the Pacific. Then the arms, ammunition and spars of the captive were thrown overboard and she was allowed to go.

From that time forward the captures made by the *Essex* were so numerous that the full story would be monotonous. The swiftest and best of the captured cruisers were fitted out with crews and added to the American vessel, until Captain Porter had under his command seven ships, carrying 80 guns and 340 men, in addition to nearly a hundred prisoners. Still more were added, and the cruise of the *Essex* and her companions in that part of the world became very much like a picnic.

A number of powerful British frigates were searching for the *Essex*, which had wrought such prodigious mischief. Porter sailed for the Marquesas Islands, reaching them in the latter part of October. There he landed, built a fort and made the repairs of which his vessel stood in sore need.

The work accomplished by Captain Porter was almost beyond computation. He literally destroyed English commerce in the Pacific, for none of the vessels not captured dared leave port, and the American merchant ships were protected. The play being over, he craved more serious business. He therefore set out to hunt up some of the British cruisers that were trying to hunt him up.

In February, 1814, the *Essex* and the *Essex Junior*, as one of the newly manned prizes had been christened, entered Valparaiso, where they learned that the 36-

gun frigate *Phoebe* was in the neighborhood searching for them. Captain Porter gave a reception to the officials of Valparaiso, and the next morning, while half of the crew were ashore, the *Essex Junior* signalled from the offing that two British frigates were in sight. They came into port, the captain of the *Phoebe* exchanging compliments with Porter, they being old acquaintances; but, all the same, each was distrustful of the other, and both maintained what may be termed a position of armed neutrality.

For six weeks the two frigates blockaded Porter. Learning then that other ships were expected, Porter determined to get to sea. In the attempt, his vessel was completely disabled by a storm. Despite the neutrality of the port, the two British frigates attacked him, keeping beyond range of the *Essex's* short guns and thus rendering her perfectly powerless to help herself. The *Essex* was pounded at long range until 58 of her men were killed and 66 wounded, when, to save her officers and crew from annihilation, she surrendered.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### **Oliver Hazard Perry—Prompt and Effective Work—"We Have Met the Enemy and They Are Ours"—Death of Perry.**

Oliver Hazard Perry was born in Rhode Island in 1785, and entered the American navy as midshipman when fourteen years old, under his father, Captain Christopher Raymond Perry, who commanded the 28-gun ship *General Greene*, which did good service in the war against France. The son also served on the *Constellation* in the Tripolitan war, and afterward gave his attention to ordnance.

The surrender of Detroit by General William Hull at the opening of the war gave the British control of the Territory of Michigan and Lake Erie. They had formed the formidable plan of extending the Dominion of Canada along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to the Gulf of Mexico, thus inserting an immense wedge between the United States and the great West, which has since become so important a part of our country. The only way of blocking this far-reaching and dangerous scheme was for the Americans to regain control of Lake Erie, and to young Perry was assigned the seemingly almost impossible task.

At the little town of Erie, Perry began the construction of his fleet, and pushed it with such vigor, in the face of every sort of obstacle, that early in July, 1813, he had ten vessels ready for sea, but only enough men to man one of them. The end of the month made the total three hundred, but he determined to get to sea on the first opportunity. Outside was a powerful blockading squadron, and the water in the lake was so low that it was not until the 4th of August that he was able to get all his vessels over the bar. They comprised the *Scorpion*, *Ariel*, *Lawrence* (flagship), *Caledonia*, *Niagara*, *Somers*, *Porcupine*, *Tigress* and *Trippe*. The total guns carried were 54, with a force of 490 men.

The British squadron consisted of six vessels, with an aggregate of 63 guns and 502 men. They were under the command of Commander Robert H. Barclay, who had fought under Nelson at Trafalgar, and in another battle lost an arm. It was less than three months before that the dying Lawrence had uttered the appeal, "Don't give up the ship!" and Perry hoisted a flag with the words displayed in large letters. As it floated in the breeze from his vessel it was received with

enthusiastic cheers.

It was on the 10th of September, 1814, that the two squadrons met at the western end of Lake Erie. When a mile apart, the *Detroit*, the British flagship, fired a shot to test the distance. It ricocheted past the *Lawrence*. A few minutes later she fired a second shot, which smashed into the starboard bulwarks of the *Lawrence* and sent a cloud of splinters flying. The reply to these was a 32-pounder from the *Scorpion*. Then the firing became more rapid, the enemy possessing the advantage at long range.

Most of the shots from the British vessels were directed against Perry's flagship, which suffered considerably. He therefore made sail to get to close quarters. His ship and the *Scorpion* and *Ariel* drew considerably ahead of the rest of the fleet. As a consequence they received the main fire of the enemy, which soon became concentrated on the *Lawrence*, that was gallantly fighting against overwhelming odds. Moreover, she was at a hopeless disadvantage with her short guns, and soon became a wreck, with a large number of her men killed or wounded.

Gradually the boats drifted nearer and the Americans were able to make use of their short guns and small arms. Perry's clothing was torn by splinters and two musket balls passed through his hat. The battle continued for more than two hours with the utmost desperation, during which the scenes on the *Lawrence* were too frightful to be described. Finally the wrecked flagship began drifting helplessly out of action, when Perry determined to transfer his flag to the *Niagara*.

COMMODORE PERRY AT THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE.  
**COMMODORE PERRY AT THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE.**

With his broad pennant folded over his arm, and accompanied by a younger brother and four seamen, he stepped into the small boat, which began pulling in the direction of the *Niagara*. The thick smoke concealed them for a time, but it soon lifted, and Barclay aimed a shot at the boat. He said in his official report that he saw the shot strike the boat, whereupon Perry took off his coat and plugged the hole with it. But for the temporary veil the American commander could not have made half the brief distance between the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara*. As it was, however, he reached the latter without a scratch. He hoisted his pennant and the flag bearing the immortal words of the gallant *Lawrence*. Then an officer was sent in a boat to communicate the orders of the Commodore to the other vessels. This was hardly done when Perry saw with the keenest

distress the surrender of the *Lawrence*. Such submission was inevitable, for almost every man on board was either killed or wounded and every gun on the engaged side was disabled. The English crews broke into cheers, believing the battle won, but they could not take possession of the *Lawrence*, which drifted out of range.

Captain Barclay now made an attempt to change his line of battle with a view of bringing his other broadsides into action. The line became broken and entangled, observing which, Perry took instant advantage of it. The *Niagara*, passing through the disorganized squadron, raked the vessels fore and aft, while the other American vessels promptly followed, and added to the confusion of the enemy and the dreadful destruction on board. The Americans were now at close quarters and able to do their best work, and so dreadful was it that fifteen minutes later a white handkerchief was waved at the end of a boarding-pike on one of the boats as a signal of surrender.

Firing ceased, and in the smoke and confusion two of the enemy's boats darted away in an attempt to escape; but they were followed and brought back. Determined to honor the *Lawrence*, Perry now had himself rowed to the wreck, drifting some distance away in charge of the few that had survived the awful conflict. Perry took his position aft and with calm dignity received the surrender. As the defeated officers approached and presented their swords in turn, he told each to retain the weapon, accompanying the remark with words of compliment for the bravery he had displayed.

The loss of the Americans was 27 killed and 96 wounded, and that of the British 41 killed and 94 wounded. Perry showed every possible kindness to the suffering prisoners, who expressed their gratitude. Commander Barclay displayed conspicuous bravery throughout the battle and was twice wounded, one of his injuries depriving him of the use of his single remaining arm.

From what was stated at the beginning of this chapter, it will be seen that this battle was one of the most important of the war. Not only was it a glorious victory of itself, the occasion being the first time in England's history that she surrendered a whole squadron, but it settled a much more momentous matter. The British General Proctor was waiting with his army on the Canadian shore ready to be carried across the lake by the English fleet, in the event of their being successful, and pressing his invasion of Ohio, which would have been an almost fatal blow to our country.



On the Ohio shore General Harrison was waiting with an American force to invade Canada, if Perry gained a victory. Hardly had the surrender been made when the commandant, using his cap for a desk and the back of an old letter for paper, pencilled the despatch which has become famous: "We have met the enemy and they are ours—two ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop," which he sent by messenger to General Harrison.

THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE.  
**THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE.**

In the following month Harrison invaded Canada, with Proctor retreating before him, and accompanied by the famous Indian, Tecumseh, and several hundred of his warriors. Proctor halted near the Moravian Towns, where a battle was fought October 5, in which the British and Indians were decisively defeated. The Indian confederacy was destroyed and all danger of the invasion of Ohio ended.

Master-Commandant Perry's victory caused his promotion to the rank of captain, and Congress awarded him a gold medal, besides suitably rewarding his officers and men. After the war he was sent into southern waters to help suppress piracy, which had become very troublesome. While engaged on this duty he was seized with yellow fever, and died August 24, 1819, just as his ship reached Port of Spain, Trinidad.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### **A Hero of the Olden Days—Cruise of the *Constitution*—Her Capture of the *Cyane* and *Levant*—Reminiscences of Admiral Stewart—His Last Days.**

During the early days of President Lincoln's administration, before the firing upon Fort Sumter by the Confederates, the all-absorbing question was as to whether or not the fort should be reinforced by the Government. A good many opposed, because it was known that the attempt would bring on a conflict, and, if war was to come, each was anxious that the other side should strike the first blow.

It was amid those times of excitement, doubt and trouble that Commodore Charles Stewart left his modest home near Bordentown, N.J., and went by train to Washington. From the station he made his way straight to the White House and sent in his name to President Lincoln. As usual, the Executive had a swarm of visitors, but he directed the distinguished caller to be admitted at once. As the tall, sad-faced man rose from his chair he towered fully two feet above the diminutive form of the naval officer in his blue swallow-tail, who took the proffered hand, and, after a few conventional words, looked up and said in his brisk manner:

"Mr. President, I'll reinforce Fort Sumter."

"You, Commodore! We are just discussing the question."

"There's no need of discussing it; it must be done! Give me the men and ships—there won't be many required—and I'll do it."

The President saw that his caller was in earnest, and he respected him too highly to indulge in anything like jesting.

"I am inclined to think as you do, Commodore, but—"

"But *what?*" impatiently interrupted the veteran.

"You have already done so much for your country that it seems only fair that we

should give the younger men a chance."

"Younger men! What's the matter with me? I'm not old enough yet to need a cane."

"I observe that; you are wonderfully spry for one of your years. Let me see, what is your age?"

"Not quite eighty-four."

"Why, you are still a young man; but the trouble is, Commodore, we have so many that are still younger, that they are plaguing the life out of me; I don't see how I can refuse them, but I shall be grateful to have the benefit of your counsel any time you are willing to give it."

THE BOMBARDMENT OF FORT SUMTER.  
**THE BOMBARDMENT OF FORT SUMTER.**

"Counsel be hanged! We have had too much *talk*; it's time for actions, and I demand that you give me a chance with the rest."

With that inimitable tact for which President Lincoln was noted, he succeeded in soothing the ruffled feelings of the Commodore (soon afterward made an admiral), but the old gentleman was not quite satisfied, when he bade the President good-by, without having obtained the opportunity to re-enter the active service of his country.

This little anecdote, which is authentic, may serve to introduce my last references to one of the most remarkable naval heroes of our country. If his fire, vigor and patriotism burned so brightly in 1861, little need be said in way of explanation of its nature when he was less than forty years of age.

Captain Stewart came back from a cruise in the West Indies in the spring of 1814, and found the *Constitution*, "Old Ironsides," closely blockaded by a powerful British squadron. That remarkable frigate had already won such a reputation that the enemy were determined she should not get to sea again. They held her locked in the port for months, but despite their unceasing vigilance, Captain Stewart, who was a consummate seaman, slipped out in December and sailed away.

He made several captures, and the frigates of the enemy began an industrious search for him, while all the lesser craft strained every nerve to keep out of his

way. On the 20th of February, 1815, when off the coast of South America, he gave chase to two of the enemy's vessels, one of which proved to be the *Cyane* and the other the *Levant*. The two together carried 55 guns and 313 men, while the *Constitution* had 51 guns and a crew of 456 men. The *Cyane* was properly a frigate, and she being at the rear, Stewart opened fire from the long guns of his port battery. The response from the starboard guns of the enemy was prompt, and for a time the cannonade was deafening. The *Constitution* gave most of her attention to the rear ship. The smoke around the American becoming so dense as to cloud the vision, Stewart slipped forward and quickly delivered a double-shotted broadside. Before it could be repeated the other ship attempted to gain a raking position across the stern of the *Constitution*. By a splendid manœuvre, Stewart defeated the purpose, and, placing himself abreast the rear ship, delivered another destructive broadside before the more sluggish enemy comprehended their danger. He maintained his tremendous fire for a time, when he observed the other ship luffing across his course to secure a raking position, whereupon, with the same unsurpassable seamanship that he had shown from the first, he crossed the wake of the foremost ship and obtained a raking position himself. Before the vessel could extricate itself Stewart raked her twice. Then the second ship repeated the attempt of its consort, but Stewart not only defeated her, but again laid the *Constitution* so as to rake her.

In the manœuvring the two ships drew up side by side, and, the enemy opening with the port battery, Stewart replied with his starboard guns. The fire of the American was so amazingly accurate and effective that in a short time the enemy hoisted a light and fired a gun in token of surrender. The battle occurred in the early hours of evening.

Upon sending an officer to take possession, it was found that the captured vessel was the English 32-gun frigate *Cyane*. It took an hour to transfer and secure the prisoners, when the *Constitution* started after the other ship, which was some distance away, engaged in repairing her rigging. Seeing the American approaching, and not knowing what fate had befallen her consort, the Englishman gallantly bore down to meet his formidable enemy. The two vessels passed each other and exchanged broadsides, but with another display of masterly seamanship Stewart, before the other was aware of her danger, crossed her wake and raked her.

This startling experience convinced the Englishman that he had met his master and he crowded on all sail in the desperate effort to escape. The *Constitution* was immediately after her, and by ten o'clock secured a position from which to

deliver another of her terrible broadsides, seeing which the enemy surrendered. She proved to be the British sloop of war *Levant*, of 21 guns.

In this battle the *Constitution* had 4 killed and 10 wounded, while on the *Cyane* and *Levant* 35 were killed and 42 wounded. Of all the battles in which this famous ship was engaged, there was none more remarkable than this. When Stewart advanced to the attack he believed both his enemies were frigates. The manner in which he baffled every effort of the two to rake him, while he repeatedly raked them, was one of the many proofs that the American navy contained no finer seaman than he. The grand old *Constitution* seemed to anticipate every wish of her commander and responded with a promptness that could not have been surpassed. The discipline of the crew was perfect, and, after all, therefore, it is little wonder that one of the last acts of the famous ship was the most brilliant of them all.

It is stated by Richard Watson Gilder that when Captain Stewart was talking with the respective captains of the *Cyane* and *Levant* in his own cabin, the two fell into a dispute, each charging the other with failing to do the right thing during the engagement, and insisting that if it had been done they would not have been defeated. Stewart sat amused and interested until he saw they were becoming angry, when he interfered.

"Now, gentlemen," said he, "there's no need of your growing warm over this affair; no matter what evolutions you made, or what you did, the end would have been the same. If you don't believe it, I will put each of you back on your ship with the same crews and we'll fight it all over again."

Neither of the gentlemen was prepared to accept this proposal, and there can be no doubt that Captain Stewart was warranted in his declaration, and his prisoners knew it.

Stewart started for home with his prizes, and early in March anchored in Port Praya. While there, three powerful British frigates approached, which, through a series of singular coincidences, were blockading Boston at the time the *Constitution* made her escape some months before. They were anxious, above everything else, to capture the most dreaded ship in the American navy. Stewart knew that his only chance was to get away before they shut him in, for the experience of the *Essex* at Valparaiso proved that the neutrality of no port would protect an American cruiser.

Accordingly, he lost no time in getting to sea, leaving with the utmost haste and

signalling to the *Cyane* and *Levant* to follow. They obeyed, and were handled with such skill that all got to sea, with the squadron in hot pursuit. The chase was continued for a long time, with the remarkable result that both the *Constitution* and *Cyane* safely reached Boston, while the *Levant* was recaptured—a small reward for the exertions of the British squadron.

Maclay says: "In this brilliant cruise Captain Stewart proved himself an officer of rare ability. His action with the *Cyane* and *Levant*, and his masterly escape from the British squadron, called for all the qualities of a great commander, while his unhesitating attack on what appeared, in the heavy weather, to be two frigates, the beautiful style in which the *Constitution* was put through the most difficult manœuvres, and the neatness with which he captured a superior force, have ranked him as one of the most remarkable naval officers of his day. Congress awarded him a sword and gold medal."

It happened one day, when I was talking with Admiral Stewart at his home, that he showed me a Toledo sword which had been presented to him by the King of Spain, because of his rescue of a Spanish ship, drifting helplessly in mid ocean, with the captain and all the crew dead or prostrated by yellow fever.

The blade of the weapon, although quite plain and ordinary looking, of course was very valuable, but the hilt was so rough and crude that I expressed my surprise.

"I supposed that when a king makes a present of a sword," I said, "that the hilt is generally of a more costly pattern than that."

"So it is," replied Stewart, accepting it from me and playfully making a few lightning-like passes in the air just to show that he had not forgotten how to handle the weapon; "that was a very handsome sword when it came to me, and I could not accept it until authorized by Congress. During my fight with the *Cyane* and *Levant* I was walking back and forth with this sword under my arm, the hilt slightly projecting in front of my chest, when a grapeshot slipped it off, as it grazed me. The hilt which it now has was put there by my gunner."

"Were you ever wounded in battle?" I asked. "I was struck only once, and it amounted to nothing. It was in the same battle. A pigeon became so frightened by the smoke and racket that it flew hither and thither, and finally perched on my shoulder. While there a musket ball struck its claw at the junction of the toes with the leg, and entered my shoulder. The resistance it met was so tough that it saved my shoulder from being shattered; except for that, the hurt must have

proved serious, but it did not bother me at all."

The Admiral, still loosely holding the weapon in his hand, turned his faded eyes toward the window and gazed out over the snow. Those eyes seemed to look backward over the vista of forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty years, and must have recalled the many stirring scenes in which he had taken part, as well as the faces of the brave fellows, like himself, who had gone from earth long ago, leaving him alone. Then the old veteran, still erect and with the fires of patriotism glowing in his brave heart, softly murmured:

"I have been more fortunate than I deserve; strange that I should be the only one left, but it cannot be for long."

And yet he lived for seven more years. Then, when a scirrhus cancer appeared on his tongue, a skilful surgeon told him it could be easily removed and need cause him no trouble.

"Oh," said the Admiral, who was then past ninety, "I've lived long enough; let it alone."

He died a few months later, and, as has been stated, was in his ninety-second year.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### **Captures Made After the Signing of the Treaty of Peace—The Privateers—Exploit of the *General Armstrong*—Its Far-Reaching Result.**

The treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States was signed December 24, 1814, at the city of Ghent, in Belgium. Had the submarine telegraph been known at that time, or had we possessed our ocean greyhounds, a good deal of blood-shed would have been saved, and the most important victory of the whole war would not have been gained. General Jackson won his famous triumph at New Orleans—still celebrated in all parts of the country—January 8, 1815; the *President* was captured by a British fleet, January 15; Captain Stewart captured the *Cyane* and *Levant*, February 20; the *Hornet* took the *Penguin*, March 23, and the *Peacock* captured the *Nautilus*, in a distant part of the world, June 30. That was the last of hostilities between the two countries, and let us pray that it will be the last for all time to come.

In the account of the naval exploits of the War of 1812, I have confined myself to those of the regular cruisers of the United States, but in no other war in which we were engaged did the privateers play so prominent a part. These vessels were usually schooners or brigs of 200 or 300 tons, with crews varying from 75 to 100 men. They left all of our principal ports, many of the swiftest and most effective going from Baltimore, but twenty-six were fitted out in New York alone in the summer of 1812. Probably the whole number engaged was about six hundred. Of the four hundred British prizes captured in the second year of the war, four-fifths were taken by privateers. A favorite cruising ground was the West Indies, but some of the vessels ventured across the ocean and displayed a degree of boldness that recalled the days of Paul Jones. Among the most famous were the *Reindeer*, *Avon* and *Blakeley*, built in a few weeks, near Boston, in 1814. They were so large and well equipped that more than once they attacked and defeated British warships.

Some of the privateers which left Charleston, Bristol and Plymouth were nothing but pilot boats, carrying twenty or thirty men each, who gave their attention to the West Indies. They were often obliged to deplete their crews to that extent in



order to man their prizes that barely enough were left to manage their own ships. In those days all, of course, were sailing vessels, and they carried nothing in the shape of armor. Their guns were cannon, loading at the muzzle and firing solid shot. The most effective of these was the "Long Tom," which was generally mounted on a pivot forward, and used in firing upon a fleeing vessel.

GENERAL ANDREW JACKSON.  
GENERAL ANDREW JACKSON.

*Afterward President of the United States*

The most famous achievement was that of the privateer *General Armstrong*, which carried nine long guns, the largest being 24-pounders, or "long nines." She sailed with a large crew, which was depleted to ninety on account of the number in charge of the prizes captured. Her commander was Captain Samuel C. Reid, born in Connecticut in 1783, and died in 1861. It was he who designed the accepted pattern of the United States flag, with its thirteen stripes and one star for each State. The fifteen-striped flag, which it has been stated was carried through the War of 1812, remained the pattern until 1818, when the change referred to was made.

While engaged upon one of his successful cruises, Captain Reid put into the harbor of Fayal, one of the Azores, to provision his ship. He was thus employed when Admiral Sir Thomas Cochrane, of England, reached the same port and on the same errand. He had with him three vessels: the flagship *Plantagenet*, 74 guns; the frigate *Rotan*, 38 guns, and the brig *Carnation*, 18 guns. This powerful squadron was manned by 2,000 men, and was on the way to New Orleans with the purpose of occupying the city.

When the British admiral discovered the American privateer within the harbor, he placed his own vessels so as to prevent its escape. Captain Reid did not think the enemy would attack him, since the harbor was neutral, but the previous experience of his countrymen warned him that it was not safe to count upon the British respecting the laws of war when there was an opportunity to destroy one of the pests of the ocean. He cleared his decks and made every preparation against attack, and it was well he did so.

It was not long before he observed several boats, crowded with men, leave the *Plantagenet* and row toward him. This was on the 26th of September. There being no doubt of their hostile purpose, Captain Reid several times warned them off, but they paid no attention to him. He then fired upon the boats, and a number of the crews were killed and wounded. This was a sort of reception they had not counted upon, and the boats turned about and hastily rowed back to the flagship.

"We have got to fight," said Captain Reid to his men; "they will attack us again to-night, and things will be lively."

There was no thought of surrender on the part of the Americans, though, as will be noted, they were threatened by a force more than twenty times as numerous as their own. They sent their valuables ashore and disposed of everything, as if not a man expected to emerge from the fight alive. All were cool and confident, and the dauntless courage of the commander inspired every one around him.

Night settled over the harbor, and by and by the sounds of oars showed the enemy were approaching again. Through the gloom seven boats, containing two hundred men, loomed into view, coming straight for the *General Armstrong*. Each carried a carronade, with which they opened fire on the privateer. The reply of the latter was so well directed and effective that three of the boats were sunk and their crews left struggling in the water. The cries that sounded across the harbor left no doubt of the effect of the fire of the American.

The four remaining boats were not frightened off, but, rowing with might and main, reached the side of the vessel and began clambering on board. They were enraged, and as their heads rose above the gunwales they shouted, "No quarter!"

"No quarter!" replied the Americans, discharging their pistols in their faces and pressing them back into the water with their pikes. The assailants displayed great bravery and made desperate efforts to board the privateer; but the Americans needed not the incentive of the warning that no quarter would be given to fight with all the vigor and skill at their command. The struggle was a furious one, but in the end the British were so decisively defeated that only two of the boats returned to the ships. The others, filled with dead and wounded, drifted ashore.

**BRITISH ATTACK ON SULLIVAN ISLAND.**  
**BRITISH ATTACK ON SULLIVAN ISLAND.**

[(*Our Last Naval Engagement with England.*)]

In this brief but terrific struggle there were only two Americans killed and seven wounded, while the enemy acknowledged a loss of thirty-four killed and eighty-six wounded, the former including the leader of the expedition.

Admiral Cochrane was so incensed by the rough treatment his men had received that he determined to throw neutrality to the winds and destroy the defiant privateer. Nothing more was attempted that evening, but in the morning the *Carnation* advanced to the attack of the *General Armstrong*. This gave the latter a chance to bring its Long Tom into play, and it was served with such unerring accuracy that not a shot missed. Before the brig could come to close quarters she

was so crippled that she was obliged to withdraw.

The three ships now closed in. It would have been folly to fight them. So Captain Reid scuttled his ship, lowered his boats and rowed ashore. The enemy were disposed to follow him thither, but he and his men took refuge in an old stone fortress and dared the Englishmen to do so. Upon second thought they decided to leave the Americans to themselves.

This wonderful exploit was celebrated in song, one stanza of which ended thus:

"From set of sun till rise of morn, through the long September night, Ninety men against two thousand, and the ninety won the fight;

In the harbor of Fayal the Azore."

While the victory of itself was one of the most remarkable of which there is any record, it resembled that of Perry on Lake Erie in its far-reaching consequences. Admiral Cochrane found his ships so crippled that he returned to England to refit. He then sailed for New Orleans, which he reached a few days after it had been occupied by General Jackson. But for the delay caused by his fight with Captain Reid he would have shut out General Jackson from the city and prevented his winning the most glorious land victory of the whole war.



# LESSER WARS



## CHAPTER XIX.

### **Resentment of the Barbary States—The War with Algiers— Captain Decatur's Vigorous Course—His Astonishing Success as a Diplomat.**

It was not alone in our wars with the leading nations that the American navy won glory. Wherever there arose a demand for its work, its patriotism, skill and bravery were instant to respond.

England had its hands full during the early years of the nineteenth century in combating Napoleon Bonaparte and other nations with which she became embroiled. Had she been wise and treated the United States with justice, she would have saved herself the many humiliations received at our hands. She is another nation to-day, but it was wholly her fault that her "children" on this side of the ocean were forced to strike for the defence of their rights in the Revolution and the War of 1812.

In the account of our war with Tripoli it has been shown that the young American navy performed brilliant service. The Barbary States took naturally to piracy, and Great Britain, by securing immunity for her vessels through the payment of tribute, also secured a virtual monopoly of the commerce of the Mediterranean. Her policy was a selfish one, for she believed the United States was too weak to send any effective warships into that part of the world. The story of Tripoli convinced her of the mistake of this belief.

The Barbary States were sour over their defeat, and, when the War of 1812 broke out, they eagerly seized the occasion to pick a quarrel with us. The Dey of Algiers opened the ball by insisting that \$27,000 should be paid him, the same being past due (under the old treaty providing for tribute from the United States), owing to the difference in the methods of computing time by the two countries. Since our war with England prevented the sending of any force to the Mediterranean at that time, the consul complied and the blackmail was handed to the Dey.

This concession only whetted the barbarian's appetite, and his next step was to order the consul to leave the country, since he was not honest enough to make

his residence in the Dey's dominions congenial to the latter. About that time the Dey received a present of valuable naval stores from England, and he lost no time in sending out his corsairs to prey upon American commerce.

Tripoli and Tunis were not so active, but believing the British boast that they would sweep the American navy from the seas, they allowed the warships of that nation to recapture several prizes that the American privateers had sent into their ports. Their sympathies were wholly with England and against the United States, which they hated with an intensity natural to their savage nature.

The United States bided its time. No sooner had the War of 1812 closed than our Government decided to give its attention to Algiers, whose defiant Dey had not only refused to allow his American prisoners to be ransomed, but had insolently declared that he meant to add a good many more to them.

Hardly had the treaty with England been proclaimed when two squadrons were ordered into Algerian waters. The first was under the command of Captain William Bainbridge and assembled at Boston, and the second, under Captain Stephen Decatur, was organized at New York. Decatur was the first to get under way, sailing on May 20 with a squadron consisting of ten vessels, mounting 210 guns. He had under his direct command nearly all the seamen who had served under him and survived the last war.

It may seem that Decatur had an easy task before him, but Maclay shows that the force against which he sailed was really the stronger. It consisted of 5 frigates, 6 sloops of war and 1 schooner—all carrying 360 guns, which exceeded those of the American squadron by 50 per cent. The Algerian admiral was the terror of the Mediterranean. He had risen from the lowest to the highest rank by his indomitable valor and skill. He once captured by boarding in broad daylight a Portuguese frigate within sight of Gibraltar. He had performed other valiant exploits; his ships were well equipped and manned, and the crews trained in modern warfare.

In addition, the city of Algiers was so strongly fortified that Lord Nelson declared that twenty-five ships of the line would not be more than enough to capture it. As Decatur drew near the Portugal coast he made guarded inquiries as to the whereabouts of the Algerian squadron. He used the utmost care to prevent his presence from becoming known to the enemy, and finally heard that which led him to believe the Moorish admiral had passed through the Straits of Gibraltar and entered the Mediterranean. At Gibraltar Decatur saw several boats

hurrying off to Algiers to warn his enemy of his danger. He made sail up the Mediterranean, hoping to beat the despatch boats. The admiral's flagship was descried, and, still striving to avert suspicion, the American ships worked gradually toward him. Before they could get within range the Moorish admiral took the alarm, and, crowding on every stitch of canvas, made a resolute effort to escape. He handled his ship with great skill, and Decatur feared he would succeed in reaching some neutral port or elude him in the night, which was near at hand.

A hot chase followed, and the Turks soon opened on the American flagship and wounded several men, but Decatur reserved his fire until able to deliver one of his fearful broadsides. A shot literally cut the Moorish admiral in two. A few minutes later a second broadside was fired, but no signal of surrender was made, and the men in the tops continued firing until the American marines picked them off. Seeing there was no escape for the enemy, and wishing to save the unnecessary shedding of blood, Decatur took a position off the frigate's bow, whereupon she made a vigorous effort to escape.

In doing this, she headed directly for the 18-gun brig *Epervier*, which was in danger of being run down; but the plucky master-commandant, John Downes, backed and filled away with wonderful skill, chased the flying frigate, delivered nine diminutive broadsides and compelled the Turk to strike his colors.

Upon taking possession of the prize it was found that 30 had been killed and there were 406 prisoners. On the *Guerriere* 3 had fallen and 11 were wounded by the fire of the enemy.

Believing that the rest of the Algerian squadron would make haste to their home port, Decatur hastened thither with the view of cutting them off. If the Dey refused to come to terms, he intended to blockade the squadron and bombard the city. It was on the 28th of June, 1815, that the American fleet appeared off Algiers, and the commander signalled a request for the Swedish consul to come aboard. He came out a few hours later, accompanied by the Algerian captain of the port. When Decatur proved by the testimony of one of the native prisoners that their admiral had been killed and his ship and a second one captured, the officer was astounded, and so alarmed that he asked the American commander on what terms he would make peace.

Decatur was prepared for this question, and produced a letter to the Dey from the President of the United States, in which it was declared that the only conditions



upon which peace could be made was the full and final relinquishment by Algiers of all claim to tribute in the future, and the guarantee that American commerce would not be molested. The captain, like all Orientals, began to quibble to gain time, asking that the commissioners should land and conduct the negotiations on shore. Decatur replied that they must be negotiated on board the *Guerriere* and nowhere else.

The next day the Moorish captain returned with full powers to negotiate. Decatur now notified him that, in addition to the terms already named, every American prisoner must be given up without ransom, and the value, to the last penny, of their stolen property restored. Other minor demands were added, all of which were within the province of Decatur, who had been clothed with full authority to make peace. The captain asked for a truce that he might lay the terms before the Dey. This was denied. Then he asked for a delay of three hours.

"Not three minutes," replied Decatur; "if the remaining ships of your squadron appear before the treaty is signed, or before every American prisoner is on board this ship, I will capture every one of them."

**CAPTAIN BAINBRIDGE AND THE DEY OF ALGIERS.  
CAPTAIN BAINBRIDGE AND THE DEY OF ALGIERS.**

The Moor was thoroughly cowed by the aggressive American, and, promising to do all he could to secure the consent of the Dey, he was hastily rowed ashore. It was understood that if the Dey agreed to the terms the captain would return in the boat with a white flag displayed at the bow.

He had been gone but a short time when an Algerian ship of war was discovered, crowded with soldiers and approaching. Decatur instantly cleared for action, and had started to meet the enemy, when the port captain was observed approaching as rapidly in his boat as his men could row, and with the white signal fluttering from the bow. All the Americans, including Decatur, were disappointed, but as he had promised, he waited until the boat was within hail. Then he called out to know whether the treaty was signed. He was told that it was, and in a short time the prisoners were brought alongside and delivered to their rescuers. Wan, emaciated and hollow-eyed from their long and bitter imprisonment, they wept tears of joy and kissed the American flag that, coming so many thousand miles, had brought them deliverance.

Thus in two weeks after the arrival of the American squadron in Algerian waters, every demand of its Government was complied with, and a treaty of peace made

on terms dictated by its gallant and faithful representative. It will be admitted that Stephen Decatur proved himself one of the most successful diplomats as well as intrepid and skilful of commanders.

He now proceeded to Tunis and notified the Dey that he would give him twelve hours in which to pay \$46,000 for allowing the seizure of American prizes in his port during the late war. The Dey paid it. The next call of the American commander was on the Bashaw of Tripoli, who, although he blustered a good deal, was compelled to hand over \$25,000 for a similar breach of the law.

Among the vessels of the American squadron were three—the *Guerriere*, *Macedonian*, and the *Peacock*—which had been captured from Great Britain during the late war. This fact gave peculiar point to the reproof of the Dey's prime minister to the British consul: "You told us that the Americans should be swept from the seas in six months by your navy, and now they make war upon us with some of your own vessels which they took from you."



## CHAPTER XX.

### **Piracy in the West Indies—Its Cause—Means by Which It Was Wiped Out—Piracy in the Mediterranean.**

We hear little of pirates in these days, but for ten years or more after the close of the War of 1812 the West Indies were infested by them. Our Government saw that in self-defense they must be wiped out, for they grew bolder with every month and made it unsafe for our commerce in those waters.

Where did they come from and what gave rise to the ocean nuisances? About the time named Spain was the mistress of most of the South American countries. When she discovered America through Columbus, and for a long period afterward, she was one of the greatest maritime nations in the world. Like England at the present time, she had colonies in all parts of the globe, and had she not been so cruel and unwise in the treatment of her dependencies, would still have retained a great deal of her former greatness and power; but she is one of the few nations that never learn from experience, and a short time after our second war with Great Britain her South American colonies began revolting against her, and one by one they gained their independence.

Among the most powerful of the rebelling provinces were Buenos Ayres and Venezuela; and, taking lesson from the success of our privateers, they sent out many swift sailing, well-armed vessels to prey upon Spanish commerce. They did their work so effectively that by and by they extended their attacks to the vessels of all nations. Nothing being done for a time to check them, they grew rapidly in numbers and audacity, until, as has been stated, the West Indies swarmed with the pests. The men living along the coast found buccaneering so profitable that they gave up their peaceful pursuits and became free-booters of the sea. Like the Spaniards themselves, they were ferocious, and generally murdered the crews of the captured vessels and then divided the plunder among themselves.

Seeing that something must be done to check these intolerable outrages, our Government gave the task, in 1819, to Oliver Hazard Perry, the hero of Lake Erie. His work was more difficult than would be supposed, for, in addition to destroying the pirates, he had to avoid offending the countries named, with

whom we wished to maintain friendly relations. They sent out regular cruisers that had the same right to prey upon Spanish commerce that our privateers had to attack English ships when we were at war with their country. Some of these cruisers secretly engaged in piracy; many that flew the black flag, in the presence of those who could not defend themselves, claimed to be authorized privateers at other times and carried forged commissions. They were treacherous, cruel and merciless to the last degree.

It will be seen, therefore, that the task assigned to Captain Perry required quick decision, courage and discretion. He possessed all those qualities in a high degree, and, in the performance of his duty, reached the mouth of the Orinoco in July, 1815, in command of three powerful ships. The following extract from his journal will give a vivid idea of the discomforts which he and his men underwent in the performance of their work:

"The sun, as soon as it shows itself in the morning, strikes almost through you. Mosquitoes, sand flies and gnats cover you, and as the sun gets up higher it becomes entirely calm and the rays pour down a heat that is insufferable. The fever that it creates, together with the irritation caused by the insects, produces a thirst which is insatiable, to quench which we drink water at a temperature of eighty-two degrees. About four o'clock in the afternoon a rain squall, accompanied by a little wind, generally takes place. It might be supposed that this would cool the air, but not so, for the steam which arises as soon as the sun comes out makes the heat still more intolerable. At length night approaches and we go close inshore and anchor. Myriads of mosquitoes and gnats come off to the vessel and compel us to sit over strong smoke created by burning oakum and tar, rather than endure their terrible stings, until, wearied and exhausted, we go to bed to endure new torments. Shut up in the berth of a small cabin, if there is any air stirring, not a breath of it can reach us. The mosquitoes, more persevering, follow us and annoy us the whole night by their noise and bites until, almost mad with heat and pain, we rise to go through the same trouble the next day."

Perry sailed three hundred miles up the Orinoco and was undaunted by the fact that the dreaded yellow fever soon appeared among his men. He was seized with the terrible disease and died on the 24th of August. He was buried with the highest civic and military honors at Trinidad, many British officers who had fought against him on Lake Erie showing their respect for his bravery and an appreciation of his kindness to them when they were prisoners of war. His remains were afterward removed to Newport, Rhode Island, where a magnificent monument was erected to his memory.

The untimely death of this naval hero before he had time to complete his work encouraged the West Indian pirates and they became more audacious than before. In the autumn of 1821 several naval vessels were sent thither by our Government. They did vigorous work, capturing and destroying a number of piratical vessels, but there were too many of them, and they were spread over too extended a space to be wiped out by a few captures. In the following year a still more powerful squadron went to the West Indies under the command of Captain James Biddle, who did such valiant service in the War of 1812. A good many buccaneers were destroyed, including several leaders of the buccaneers whose atrocious deeds had long made their names a terror. In one of these attacks Lieutenant William H. Allen, of the schooner *Alligator*, was killed by a musket ball. His gallantry in the fight between the *Argus* and *Pelican* in the war with Great Britain sent a thrill of admiration through the country and brought him well-merited promotion.

You have not forgotten the wonderful cruise of Captain David Porter in the *Essex*, when he entered the Pacific Ocean and caused such havoc among the British shipping. He was appointed commander of the West India forces and arrived off Porto Rico in March, 1823. He was provided, in addition to his warships, with a number of barges, furnished with twenty oars apiece, and which were indispensable in following the pirates up the shallow creeks and into the shoal waters where the vessels could not go.

#### OUR FLEET IN THE BALTIC. **OUR FLEET IN THE BALTIC.**

Captain Porter was discreet but impatient with injustice. When one of his schooners was fired into by the Porto Rican authorities he promptly demanded an explanation, which was given. The most important incident of his service occurred in the autumn of 1824 and is known as the "Foxardo Affair."

In October of that year the storehouse of the American consul at St. Thomas was broken into and robbed of much valuable property which there was reason to believe had been carried to the small port at the eastern end of Porto Rico known as Foxardo. Lieutenant Platt, of the *Beagle*, anchored off the town and asked the help of the authorities in capturing the criminals and recovering the property. The officer was treated with the grossest discourtesy. Having landed in civilian clothes, the authorities accused him of being an impostor and ordered him to show his commission. The Lieutenant produced it, whereupon they declared it a forgery and arrested him on the charge of being a pirate. After he and a

midshipman who accompanied him had been insulted repeatedly they were allowed to leave.

When Captain Porter learned of this outrage he entered the harbor with several of his vessels and sent a letter to the alcalde or governor, notifying him that he had one hour in which to send an explanation of his action. While waiting for the return of the flag of truce Captain Porter saw one of the shore batteries getting ready to fire upon him. Instantly, he sent a detachment, which captured the battery and spiked the guns. Then Captain Porter landed, and, after spiking another battery, made his way to the town. By and by the alcalde and captain of the port appeared and made such profuse and humble apologies that the officer could not refuse to accept them, and returned to his ship.

Such is a truthful account of the incident as it occurred. It would seem that there was nothing in the course of the gallant naval officer that deserved censure. One of his officers had been insulted and he compelled the offenders to make a suitable apology. Fearing with good reason a treacherous attack from the batteries on shore, he spiked their guns. But when the news reached our Government Captain Porter was ordered home, tried by court martial and sentenced to be suspended from the service for six months. Feeling himself unjustly treated, Captain Porter resigned and entered the Mexican navy, where he remained until 1829. In that year Andrew Jackson became President of the United States. He had been through trying and stormy times himself and would never submit to insult from any man or nation. He appointed Porter consul general at Algiers. He afterward became minister to Turkey and died March 28, 1843.

Captain Lewis Warrington succeeded Porter in the West Indies and followed out his aggressive policy. The buccaneers were hunted down without cessation and nest after nest broken up until, at the close of 1825, piracy in those waters was practically suppressed. For several years, however, a squadron was maintained there and more than once its services were needed, but the work was completed and since then no trouble in that quarter of the world of the nature described has plagued either ourselves or any other nation.

Even in the Mediterranean our navy had similar work to do. While little Greece was making so gallant a struggle for freedom against Turkey a number of her vessels played the rôle of pirate and attacked ships of other nations. Among others, an English brig had been seized, but Lieutenant Lewis M. Goldsborough, after a furious fight, recaptured the vessel. Lieutenant John A. Carr singled out

the Greek captain and in the fierce hand-to-hand conflict killed him. Lieutenant Goldsborough—who afterward became rear-admiral—received the thanks of several of the Mediterranean powers for his assistance in ridding the waters of the pirates who, though few in number, became exceedingly troublesome.

It was by such prompt, vigorous and brave measures that the American navy compelled the respect not only of civilized but of barbarous peoples in all parts of the world. This fact is proven by a remarkable occurrence, not often mentioned in history, the particulars of which are given in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### The Qualla Battoo Incident.

Qualla Battoo is the name of a small Malay town, which stood on the northwestern coast of Sumatra. In the month of February, 1831, the *Friendship*, a trading vessel from Salem, Mass., lay at anchor off the town, taking on board a cargo of pepper. Her captain, Mr. Endicott, and crew numbered fifteen men. There being no harbor, the vessel was about half a mile from shore. The day was oppressively hot and no one on the *Friendship* put forth more exertion than was absolutely necessary. Even the swarthy natives seemed to languish in the flaming heat and displayed less vigor in bringing out the pepper in their boats than they did when the sun beat down upon them with its usual rigor.

Captain Endicott understood the treacherous nature of the Malays, and he and his crew kept sharp watch of those who were given the management of the vessel's boats, owing to the difficult character of the coast which made such a course necessary.

The trade in pepper was almost the only one in which Qualla Battoo engaged. Captain Endicott, his second mate and four seamen were on shore at the trading station, a little way up the river, superintending the weighing of the pepper. The first mate and the rest of the crew waited on the vessel to receive and stow away the cargo. The work had hardly begun when a suspicious proceeding caught the eye of Captain Endicott.

The first boat, after receiving its load, passed the short distance necessary down the river to the sea, where, instead of rowing directly out to the ship, it turned up the coast and took on board more men. The Captain concluded the crew needed this additional help to work their way through the heavy surf. But, not wholly satisfied, he told two of his men to go nearer the shore, keep their eyes on the boat and report to him anything that looked wrong.

Captain Endicott, from his position, was unable to catch the full significance of the first action of the natives in charge of the outgoing boat, for, instead of taking on board more help, the whole unarmed party stepped ashore and twice as many fully armed warriors took their places. They carefully concealed their weapons



and the Americans on the vessel made the same mistake as their captain in believing they were merely the additions necessary to help work the craft through the surf.

They tied fast to the gangway and most of them climbed over the side with their daggers hidden in their clothing. The mate would have stopped them, but they pretended not to understand his words and acted as if interested in the appearance of the guns and rigging. Their conduct was so natural that the mate and his men gave their whole attention to taking the pepper on board and stowing it away. The mate was absorbed in his work, when suddenly several Malays sprang with lightning-like quickness at him and buried their daggers in his back. He turned and attempted to defend himself, but was quickly despatched. Five men rushed to the help of the mate, but they were unarmed and outnumbered four to one. Two were quickly killed and three made prisoners. The other four seamen sprang overboard and swam for land. They saw that the beach was lined with warriors waiting for them. Accordingly they turned to one side and swam several miles to a promontory, where they were safe for the time.

Seeing that their friends had gained possession of the ship, several boatloads of natives rowed out to it, took possession, plundered and then tried to run it ashore, that they might break out the metal work at their leisure.

Meanwhile the two seamen stationed near shore by the captain saw what had taken place and ran back to him with the alarming news. He instantly ordered all into the second boat and hurried down the river, hoping to reach the vessel in time to recapture it. The boat was pursued by the natives along the bank, but it managed to reach the mouth of the river, where it would have perished in the surf but for the help of a friendly member of an adjoining tribe, who sprang from his armed coasting schooner and swam to their assistance. He helped them through the surf, and, when confronted by the native armed boats, made such threats and flourishes with his sword (none of the Americans being armed) that he kept the miscreants at bay and the white men succeeded in reaching the open sea.

Seeing that it would be sure death to go to the vessel, the boat was rowed to a small town about twenty miles distant, where the occupants found three American merchant vessels. The officers and crews were enraged upon learning what had taken place, and, although it was night, they made sail at once for Qualla Battoo, reaching it next day. In reply to the demand that the *Friendship* should be returned, the insolent Rajah told them to take her if they could. The

three ships moved as close to shore as was safe and opened fire with such guns as they had. All merchant vessels carried some kind of armament against pirates in that part of the world. Impatient with the delay involved in recapturing the *Friendship*, by attacking at long range, as it may be called, three boats were filled with armed men who rowed straight for the vessel. It was swarming with armed natives, who kept up a vicious but ill directed fire, the result of which was the sailors rowed the faster, eager to get close enough to punish the miscreants for their murderous work.

When they were almost to the ship the Malays sprang overboard and swam frantically for land. Captain Endicott regained possession of his vessel, and, upon examination, found it had been rifled from stem to stern. Among the plunder taken away was \$12,000 in specie. Altogether the loss was \$40,000 to the owners of the ship and the captain was compelled to give up his voyage and return home.

It took a long time for news to travel in those days, but it finally reached the United States, where Andrew Jackson happened to be President. He immediately ordered the 44-gun frigate *Potomac* to that out of the way corner of the world, with instructions to punish the guilty parties concerned in the outrage. Captain Downes lost no time in getting under way and arrived off Qualla Battoo in February, 1832, just a year after the treacherous attack upon the *Friendship*.

Anxious to prevent his errand becoming known so that he might surprise the Malays, Captain Downes disguised his ship as a merchantman, closing his ports and taking every precaution possible. He displayed the Danish colors, still maintaining the guise of a merchantman, and sent a boat's crew to take soundings along shore. The natives on the beach displayed so hostile a disposition that no landing was made, and, having gained the necessary information, the boat returned to the frigate. Captain Downes then informed them that the expedition would leave the ship at midnight.

A strong armed force in several boats secretly rowed to land at the time named, but day was approaching when they reached the beach, where the men landed under the guidance of the former second mate of the *Friendship* and started inland. One division turned to the left to attack the fort at the northern end of the town. The Malays received them with a brisk discharge of cannon, muskets, javelins and arrows. But, returning the fire, the Americans burst open the gate of the stockade, fought hand to hand with the fierce Malays and drove them out of the open space into the citadel. There they were attacked with the same

impetuosity, but they fought like tigers, and it was not until twelve had been killed and a great many wounded that they were overcome. The Rajah in command, after a desperate defence in which he wounded several Americans, was finally despatched.

In the meantime the fort in the middle of the town had been attacked by the other division and carried after a bloody fight in which a marine was killed and a number wounded. But the strongest fort of all stood on the bank of the river near the beach. There the Rajah of Qualla Battoo, who was the real author of the attack on the *Friendship*, had gathered a large force of his best warriors and announced that he would fight to the death.

The strength of the force which marched against the fort was eighty-five men. One of the officers who took part in this attack said: "The natives were brave and fought with a fierceness bordering on desperation. They would not yield while a drop of their savage blood warmed their bosoms or while they had strength to wield a weapon, fighting with that undaunted firmness which is the characteristic of bold and determined spirits and displaying such an utter carelessness of life as would have been honored in a better cause. Instances of the bravery of these people were numerous, so much so that were I to give the detail of each event my description would probably become tiresome."

The barricades stoutly resisted the fire. Leaving a force to engage the fort in front, Lieutenant Shubrick led a body of sailors through the woods to the rear with the 6-pounder which had been brought from the frigate. When they reached their position they came upon three heavily armed schooners, swarming with warriors, awaiting a chance to take part in the fight. Shubrick promptly opened upon them with his cannon, followed by a destructive fire of musketry, which sent the Malays leaping overboard and into the woods. They succeeded, however, in warping one of the schooners beyond range.

The Americans now being at the front and rear of the fort, a simultaneous attack was made. The gate was wrenched from its fastenings, but the first American who tried to enter was killed and three others badly wounded. Undaunted the remainder of the assailants rushed through and drove the defenders to a high platform, where they made their final stand. The other stockade was in flames, which were burning so fast that the Americans themselves were in danger from them. The little cannon was brought into play from a neighboring elevation and poured canister and grape into the Malays. Meanwhile the Americans, who had performed their part so well, came up and joined in the attack on the main fort.

The Malays, still fighting, shrieked out their defiant cries. In the ardor of the assault the little cannon was too heavily loaded and dismounted. Amid the wild confusion the flames of the second fort reached the magazine and the whole structure blew up with a tremendous explosion.

The cannon being useless, Lieutenant Shubrick ordered a general assault upon the citadel, and it was made with a resistless rush. The men scrambled upon the platform, in the face of the swarthy wild cats, and despatched them in a whirlwind fashion. The work being apparently completed, the bugle was sounded for retreat and the Americans returned to the beach. On the way they were fired upon by another fort for which they had searched without being able to find it. Returning the fire, the Americans charged through the jungle and after another desperate fight it was captured, most of the garrison slain and the remainder sent scurrying through the woods.

The roll call revealed that two Americans had been killed and eleven wounded. All were gently lifted into the boats and carried to the ship. A moderate estimate made 100 of the Malays killed and fully double the number wounded.

Captain Downes now brought his long 32-pounders to bear and opened a bombardment of Qualla Battoo which spread destruction and death among the natives. Many were killed and others sent scurrying in terror to the jungle. Toward the close of the day white flags were displayed and the firing ceased. Immediately after a boat was sent out by the remaining rajahs, with a white flag fluttering at the bow. On coming aboard the messengers were presented to Captain Downes and they humbly prayed that he would stop the firing of his big guns, which were killing all their people. He promised to do so on their pledge never again to molest an American. He assured them that if they ever did his country would send larger and more terrible ships across the ocean that would lay their towns in ashes and slay hundreds of their men. The subsequent history of that quarter of the world leaves no doubt that the impressive warning of Captain Downes produced the best of results, for Sumatra has never required any further attention from our navy.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### Wilkes's Exploring Expedition.

Perhaps my young readers have wondered over the same fact that used to puzzle me when a boy. While the civilized world was interested, as it has been for hundreds of years, in trying to reach the Pole, and the nations were constantly sending expeditions to search for it, to be followed by others to hunt for the expeditions and then by others to look up those that were hunting for the others and so on, all these efforts were confined to the North Pole. Everybody seemed to have forgotten that there is also a South Pole, which is not a mile further from the equator than the North Pole.

Of course there was good reason for all this. There is a great deal of land in the north, while the unbroken ocean seas stretch away from the South Pole for hundreds and thousands of miles in every direction and the prodigious masses and mountains of ice make it impossible to get anywhere near it. Our daring explorers are continually edging further north, and doubtless within a few years the Pole will be reached, but there appears no prospect of the South Pole being seen for many a year to come.

CAPTAIN CHARLES WILKES.

**CAPTAIN CHARLES WILKES.**

Lieutenant Charles Wilkes was born in 1798 and died in 1877. He entered the American navy at an early age and in 1838 was made commander of the squadron which spent four years in sailing through the Pacific, along its American coasts and in the Antarctic regions.

Before giving an account of this memorable scientific expedition, let me add a little more information concerning this distinguished naval officer, since this is the only chapter which contains any reference to him. He was made a captain in 1855. In the month of November, 1861, while in command of the steamer *San Jacinto*, he stopped the British ship *Trent* and forcibly took off the two Confederate commissioners, Mason and Slidell, who were on their way respectively to England and France to secure their aid for the Southern Confederacy.

Captain Wilkes was highly applauded for his act by his countrymen, but England was very indignant. It was an illegal proceeding on his part, since the deck of a ship is the same as the soil of the country whose flag she flies. Our Government was compelled to disavow his action and restore the commissioners to English custody.

In the War for the Union Captain Wilkes commanded the James River squadron, was made commodore in 1862 and was retired in 1864 and made rear-admiral on the retired list.

THE "SAN JACINTO" STOPPING THE "TRENT."  
**THE "SAN JACINTO" STOPPING THE "TRENT."**

The scientific expedition of which Lieutenant Wilkes was given command was intended, to quote the words of Congress, "for the purpose of exploring and surveying the southern ocean, as well to determine the existence of all doubtful islands and shoals as to discover and accurately fix the position of those which lie in or near the track of our vessels in that quarter and may have escaped the observation of scientific navigators."

Lieutenant Wilkes sailed from Hampton Roads on the 19th of August, 1838, his flagship being the 18-gun sloop-of-war *Vincennes*, the 18-gun sloop-of-war *Peacock*, the 12-gun brig-of-war *Porpoise*, the storeship *Relief*, the tender *Sea Gull* and the tender *Flying Fish*. Since one of the main objects was scientific research, the expedition was provided with a philologist, naturalists, conchologists, mineralogist, botanist, draughtsmen and a horticulturist.

A halt for a week was made at the Madeira Islands, when the ships headed southward, reaching Rio Janeiro late in November. In January, 1839, they halted at Orange Harbor, Terra del Fuego, and made it their base of operations. On the 25th of February Lieutenant Wilkes, in the *Porpoise*, accompanied by the *Sea Gull*, started for the South Pole. On the 1st of March considerable ice and snow were encountered and an island sighted, but the men could not land because of the surf. The next day the Ashland Islands were discovered and soon after the two vessels reached Palmersland. The following is the account of Lieutenant Wilkes:

"It was a day of great excitement to all, for we had ice of all kinds to encounter, from the iceberg of huge quadrangular shape, with its stratified appearance, to the sunken and deceptive masses that were difficult to perceive before they were under the bow. I have rarely seen a finer sight. The sea was literally studded with these beautiful masses, some of pure white, others showing all shades of the opal, others emerald green and occasionally, here and there, some of deep black. Our situation was critical, but the weather favored us for a few hours. On clearing these dangers we kept off to the south and west under all sail, and at 9 P.M. we counted eight large islands. Afterward the weather became so thick with mist and fog as to render it necessary to lie to till daylight, before which time we had a heavy snowstorm. A strong gale now set in from the southwest; the deck of the brig was covered with ice and snow and the weather became exceedingly damp and cold. The men were suffering not only from want of sufficient room

but from the inadequacy of the clothing."

Naturally the further south they penetrated the greater became their danger from the increasing fields of ice and icebergs. The *Peacock* and *Flying Fish* left Orange Harbor on the same day with the *Porpoise* and *Sea Gull*. They were separated by a gale and the *Peacock* was continually beset by icebergs. Every rope and the deck, spars and rigging were thickly coated with ice. Some days later the *Flying Fish* was met and she reported that she had penetrated to the parallel of 70 degrees. There was imminent danger of being frozen in, and, as they were short of provisions, they sailed northward. The *Flying Fish* reached Orange Harbor in April, while the *Peacock* continued on to Valparaiso, where the storeship *Relief* was found. In May the other members of the squadron arrived at the port, with the exception of the *Sea Gull*, which was never heard of again.

The squadron now crossed the Pacific, reaching Sydney, New South Wales, in the latter part of November. There, after consulting with his officers, Lieutenant Wilkes decided to make another Antarctic cruise. The *Flying Fish* proved so unseaworthy that, after passing through a violent storm, she was obliged to return to port and took no further part in the enterprise.

Once more among the ice fields, the ships were menaced by danger from every side. Some of the escapes were of the most thrilling nature. One of the ships barely missed being crushed by hundreds of tons of ice which fell from the top of an overhanging iceberg. The weather was intensely cold and the snow and fine sleet which were whirled horizontally through the air cut the face like bird shot.

The *Vincennes* prowled along the edge of the Antarctic Continent as far as 97 degrees east, when Lieutenant Wilkes headed northward and arrived at Sydney in March, 1840, and found the *Peacock* at anchor. The *Porpoise* reached 100 degrees east and 64 degrees 65 minutes south when she turned her prow away from the inhospitable solitude and in March arrived at Auckland Isle.

The following summer was spent in exploring the islands of the Southern Archipelago. A party was engaged in a launch and cutter, when a tempest compelled them to run into a bay of the Fiji group for shelter. While working its way back the cutter ran upon a reef and was attacked by the natives. The ammunition of the Americans was wet and they abandoned the cutter and returned to the *Vincennes*.



Since these natives needed a lesson, Lieutenant Wilkes landed a force and burned the native village. A few days later an exploring party was again attacked while trying to trade with the natives. The men were forced to retreat to their boats, under a hot fire, many of the savages using muskets with no little skill. Reinforcements were landed and the savages put to flight, but in the fighting Midshipman Underwood and Henry Wilkes were mortally hurt and a seaman dangerously wounded.

Matters had now assumed so serious a shape that a detachment of seventy officers and men landed at another point on the island and marched upon the nearest village, laying waste the crops as they advanced. When the village was reached it was found to be defended by a strong stockade, with a trench inside, from which the crouching natives could fire through loopholes, while outside of the stockade was a deep ditch of water. Feeling their position impregnable, the savages flourished their weapons and uttered tantalizing whoops at the white men. The whoops quickly changed when the cabins within the stockade were set on fire by a rocket. The natives fled, leaving the village to be burned to ashes. The Americans pushed hostilities so aggressively that on the following day the islanders sued for peace.

The squadron next sailed to the Hawaiian Islands, where several months were spent in exploration. Then the coast of Oregon was visited and the *Peacock* suffered wreck at the mouth of the Columbia. Doubling the Cape of Good Hope, the expedition reached New York in June, 1842, having been gone nearly four years and having sailed more than 30,000 miles.

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# THE WAR FOR THE UNION



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### **A New Era for the United States Navy—Opening of the Great Civil War—John Lorimer Worden—Battle Between the *Monitor* and *Merrimac*—Death of Worden.**

The War for the Union ushered in a new era for the American navy. Steam navigation had been fully established some years before. As all my readers no doubt know, the first successful steamboat in this country was the *Clermont*, made by Robert Fulton, which ascended the Hudson in the summer of 1807. The average speed of the pioneer boat was about five miles an hour, so that the trip occupied more than thirty hours. This great invention was a novelty, and, like many others of a similar nature, it required considerable time for it to come into use. The first western steamboat was built at Pittsburg in 1811. It gave an impetus to river navigation by steam, and before long the boats were ploughing the principal streams of the country. The first steamer to cross the Atlantic was the *Savannah*, which made the voyage in 1819, but ocean navigation was not fairly begun until 1838, when the *Sirius* and *Great Western* made the voyage from England to the United States. It is a noteworthy fact that one of the greatest of English scientists, after demonstrating that ocean navigation by steam was impossible, was a passenger on the *Great Western* on her first trip across the Atlantic.

When the great Civil War burst upon the country the National Government not only failed to comprehend the gigantic nature of the struggle, but was almost wholly unprepared for it. The navy consisted of 90 vessels, of which only 42 were in commission, while 21 were unfit for service, and of those in commission there were but 11, carrying 134 guns, that were in American waters. The remainder were scattered over the waters of the globe, such being the policy of President Buchanan's Secretary of the Navy, who, like the Secretary of War and other members of the Presidential Cabinet, were secessionists who did all they could to pave the way for the establishment of the Southern Confederacy.

On the authority of Maclay, the total number of officers of all grades in the navy on August 1, 1861, was 1,457, in addition to whom an immense volunteer force was called for and 7,500 volunteer officers were enrolled before the close of the

war. Three hundred and twenty-two officers resigned from the United States navy and entered that of the seceding States, of which 243 were officers of the line. The 7,600 sailors in the navy at the opening of the war was increased to 51,500 before the close of hostilities.

In a work of this nature the difficulty is to select the most striking and interesting incidents from the scores that formed a part of the War for the Union. One of the many heroes who was brought into prominence was John Lorimer Worden, who was born in Dutchess County, N.Y., March 12, 1818. He entered the navy when sixteen years old and became a lieutenant in 1840. His services in the Mexican War were unimportant and he was a first lieutenant of the Brooklyn Navy Yard when the Civil War broke out.

In the month of April, 1861, when a conflict was inevitable, the Government was anxious to send dispatches to Captain Adams commanding the fleet at Pensacola, who was waiting for orders to reinforce with two companies of artillery, that post being in danger of capture by the Confederates. The dispatches intrusted to Lieutenant Worden were orders for such reinforcements to be made.

It was so delicate and dangerous a duty, since Worden was compelled to make his way through the South which was aflame with secession excitement, that he committed the dispatches to memory and then destroyed them. He applied to General Bragg in command of the Confederate forces in that neighborhood for permission to make a verbal communication from the Secretary of War to Captain Adams. Permission was given, and, going on board, Worden delivered his message like a boy reciting his piece at school. Captain Adams gave him a written acknowledgment of the receipt of the dispatches, adding that the orders of the Government would be carried out.

Having thus cleverly eluded the suspicious watchfulness of the authorities, Lieutenant Worden started for home, but when near Montgomery, Ala., then the capital of the Confederacy, he was arrested, taken from the train and thrown into prison. This was on the order of General Bragg, who discovered how he had been outwitted, and the prompt reinforcement prevented the capture of Fort Pickens, for which Bragg had made every preparation. The post was held by the Unionists throughout the war and was the only one south of Mason and Dixon's line so held.

Lieutenant Worden was kept a prisoner until the 13th of the following November, when, his health having broken down, he was exchanged and sent

North. There he remained, slowly regaining his strength until March, 1862, when it fell to his lot to become a leading actor in one of the most famous naval engagements in all history.

When war had fully begun the Union forces in charge of the Norfolk Navy Yard saw they were not strong enough to prevent its capture by the Confederates, who were arming for that purpose. They therefore set fire to the numerous and valuable shipping there. Among the vessels scuttled and sunk was the steam frigate *Merrimac*, at that time the finest vessel in the service. In truth, she went down so quickly that very little damage was done to her. The Confederates raised her, fastened a huge iron snout or prow at the front, cut down her deck and encased her with railroad iron, which sloped at an angle of forty-five degrees, and was smeared on the outside with grease and tallow. Her enormous weight made her draw more than twenty feet of water and when she was moving slowly through the bay or river her appearance suggested the mansard roof of a vast house. From what has been said it will be noted that the *Merrimac* was a genuine ironclad, something which had never been heard of before.

BLOCKADE RUNNER—THE "MONITOR"—CAPTAIN ERICSSON.

**BLOCKADE RUNNER—THE "MONITOR"—CAPTAIN ERICSSON.**

Regular news of the building of the *Merrimac* (called the *Virginia* by the Confederates) was telegraphed to Washington by friends of the Government. The authorities felt some uneasiness, but were far from suspecting the terrible power for destructiveness possessed by the monster. Captain Ericsson, the famous Swedish inventor, was constructing on Long Island an ironclad about one-fourth the size of the *Merrimac*, and he was urged to all possible speed in its completion. He kept his men busy night and day and had it finished a day or two before the completion of the *Merrimac*.

The *Merrimac* carried ten guns, which fired shells and had a crew of 300 men, under the command of Commodore Franklin Buchanan, a former officer of the United States navy. Late in the forenoon of March 8, 1862, a column of black smoke rising over the Norfolk Navy Yard gave notice that the *Merrimac* had started out at last on her mission of destruction and death. As the enormous craft forged into sight it was seen that she was accompanied by three gunboats ready to give what help they could.

Five Union vessels were awaiting her in Hampton Roads. They were the steam frigates *Minnesota* and *Roanoke* and the sailing frigates *Congress*, *Cumberland*

and *St. Lawrence*, all of which immediately cleared for action. Turning her frightful front toward the *Cumberland*, the *Merrimac* swept down upon her in grim and awful majesty. The *Cumberland* let fly with her terrific broadsides, which were powerful enough to sink the largest ship afloat, but the tons of metal hurled with inconceivable force skipped off the greased sides of the iron roof and scooted away for hundreds of yards through the startled air.

The prodigious broadsides were launched again and again, but produced no more effect than so many paper wads from a popgun. The iron prow of the *Merrimac* crashed through the wooden walls of the *Cumberland* as if they were cardboard, and, while her crew were still heroically working their guns, the *Cumberland* went down, with the red flag, meaning "no surrender," flying from her peak. Lieutenant Morris succeeded in saving himself, but 121 were lost out of the crew of 376.

Having destroyed the *Cumberland*, the *Merrimac* now made for the *Congress*, which had been vainly pelting her with her broadsides. The *Congress* was aground and so completely at the mercy of the *Merrimac*, which raked her fore and aft, that every man would have been killed had not the sign of surrender been displayed. As it was, her commander and 100 of the crew were slain by the irresistible fire of the tremendous ironclad.

By this time the fearful spring afternoon was drawing to a close and the *Merrimac* labored heavily back to Sewall's Point, intending to return on the morrow and continue her work of destruction.

The news of what the *Merrimac* had done was telegraphed throughout the South and North. In the former it caused wild rejoicing and raised hope that before the resistless might of the new ironclad the North would be compelled to make terms and save her leading seacoast cities from annihilation by acknowledging the Southern Confederacy. The national authorities were thrown into consternation. At a special meeting of the President's Cabinet Secretary of War Stanton expressed his belief that the *Merrimac* would appear in front of Washington and compel the authorities to choose between surrender and destruction, and that the principal seaports would be laid under contribution.

But at that very time the hastily completed *Monitor* was speeding southward under the command of Lieutenant Worden, who had risen from a sick bed to assume the duty which no one else was willing to undertake. Her crew numbered 16 officers and 42 men, with Lieutenant S. Dana Green as executive officer. Her

voyage to Hampton Roads was difficult and of the most trying nature to the officers and crew, who were nearly smothered by gas. The boat would have foundered had not the weather been unusually favorable, but she reached Hampton Roads on the night of March 8 and took a position beside the *Minnesota*, ready and eager for the terrific fray of the morrow. The *Monitor* carried two 11-inch Dahlgren guns and fired solid shot.

THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE "MERRIMAC" AND "MONITOR."  
**THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE "MERRIMAC" AND "MONITOR."**

When the *Merrimac* steamed back the *Monitor* moved out from her position and boldly advanced to meet her. The huge monster and smaller craft, whose appearance suggested the apt comparison of a cheese box on a raft, silently drew near each other until within a hundred yards, when the smaller opened with a shot to which the larger replied. The battle was now between two ironclads. If the shots of the *Monitor* glanced harmlessly off of the *Merrimac* those of the latter were equally ineffective against the *Monitor*. The latter had the advantage of being so much smaller that many of the shells of the *Merrimac* missed her altogether. Those which impinged against the pilot house or turret did no harm, while the lesser boat was able to dart here and there at will, dodging the *Merrimac* and ramming her when she chose, though such tactics accomplished nothing. All attempts to run down the *Monitor* were vain. The novel battle continued for four hours, when the *Merrimac*, unable to defeat her nimble antagonist, steamed back to Norfolk and the strange contest—the first between ironclads—was over.

The *Monitor* had proven her inestimable value and was held in reserve by the Government for future emergencies. But the first battle between the two proved the last. Some months later, when the Union troops advanced upon Norfolk, the *Merrimac* was blown up to prevent her falling into the hands of the Federals, while at the close of the year the *Monitor* foundered in a gale off Cape Hatteras.

This fight marked an era in the history of naval warfare. The days of wooden vessels were numbered. All nations saw that their warships to be effective must be ironclad, and the reader does not need to be reminded that such is the fact to-day respecting the navy of every civilized nation.

During this memorable fight a shell from the *Merrimac* lifted the iron plate of the pilot house of the *Monitor* and disabled Lieutenant Worden by driving the fragments into his face, while he was peering out of the peep-hole. He was

compelled to give way to Lieutenant Green, who handled the little ironclad throughout the remainder of the fight.

Lieutenant Worden never fully recovered from the injuries received in his fight with the *Merrimac*. As soon as he was able to take an active command he asked the privilege of doing so. In charge of the *Montauk*, of the South Atlantic blockading squadron, he destroyed, while under a heavy fire, the Confederate steamer *Nashville* and participated in the unsuccessful attack upon Charleston. He received the thanks of Congress and was promoted to be a commander for his services with the *Monitor*. From 1870 to 1874 he was superintendent of the Naval Academy at Annapolis, becoming commodore in 1868, rear admiral in 1872 and was retired in 1886. It was said that he never was without pain from the injuries received in the battle with the *Merrimac* until his death, October 18, 1897.





## CHAPTER XXIV.

### **Two Worthy Sons—William D. Porter—The Career of Admiral David Dixon Porter.**

The reader will not forget the exploits of Captain David Porter, in command of the *Essex* in the War of 1812. Contrary to the rule that great men never have great sons, Captain Porter left two boys who possessed the same remarkable qualities as himself and one of whom became more famous than his gallant father.

The eldest of his sons was William D., who was born in New Orleans in 1809, but was educated in the North and was appointed to the navy when fourteen years old. He was placed in command of a cumbrous ironclad constructed from a ferryboat at the beginning of the war and named the *Essex*, in honor of the famous cruiser with which his father played havoc with the shipping of Great Britain in the Pacific. In the attack on Fort Henry, in February, 1862, the *Essex*, while doing effective service, had her boiler pierced by a shot from the enemy, with appalling consequences. Porter was scalded and knocked senseless and twenty-nine officers and men were disabled or killed by the escaping steam.

Later, when he had fully recovered, he was placed in command of the *Essex*, which was repaired and greatly improved. The Confederates had completed a more terrible ironclad than the *Merrimac*, which they named the *Arkansas*. Manned by brave officers and crew, it came down the Yazoo into the Mississippi, and, secure in her fancied invulnerability, challenged the whole Union fleet which was assisting in the siege of Vicksburg. In the furious engagement that followed Captain Porter, with the *Essex*, succeeded in destroying the ironclad. He rendered his country other valuable service, but his health gave way, and, while in the East for medical attendance, he died in the City of New York at the age of fifty-three.

The more famous son of Captain Porter was David Dixon, who was born in Chester, Pa., in 1813. He entered Columbia College, Washington, when only eleven years old, but left it in 1824 to accompany his father on his cruise in the West Indies to break up piracy in those waters. When, two years later, Captain Porter entered the Mexican navy he appointed his son a midshipman. He

acquitted himself gallantly in more than one fight with the Spanish cruisers. While still a mere boy he was made a midshipman in the United States navy. As a lieutenant he saw plenty of active service in the war with Mexico, and, at the beginning of the Civil War, was one of our most trusted officers. In command of the *Powhatan* he covered the landing of the reinforcements for Fort Pickens just in time to save its capture by Confederates.

DAVID DIXON PORTER.  
**DAVID DIXON PORTER.**

One of the most important captures of the war was that of New Orleans, in the spring of 1862. The naval forces were under the command of Admiral Farragut, while Commander Porter had charge of the mortar fleet. The principal defences below the city were Forts Jackson and St. Philip. In approaching them Porter had his ships dressed out with leaves and branches of trees, the clever disguise proving an effectual protection from a very destructive fire.

The furious bombardment lasted for several days and nights. The river was spanned by a boom of logs, which it was necessary to break through that the vessels might reach the city above. This was done, Porter protecting the expedition which effected it. When the situation of the forts became hopeless his demand for their surrender was accepted and an officer came on board under a flag of truce to complete the negotiations.

While Porter and his visitor were conversing an officer came forward with the information that the immense floating battery *Louisiana*, of four thousand tons burden and carrying sixteen heavy guns, had been set on fire, as Admiral Cervera did with his ships a generation later, when his escape was cut off from Santiago.

"Such an act is anything but creditable to you," remarked Porter, addressing the Confederate commander.

"I am not responsible for the acts of the naval officers," replied the visitor.

The explanation was reasonable, and without any excitement, Commander Porter renewed the conversation respecting the surrender, but a few minutes later the officer again approached.

"The ropes which held the floating battery to the bank have been burned and she is drifting down stream toward us."

"Are her guns loaded and is there much ammunition aboard?" asked Porter of the Confederate commander.

"I suppose the guns are loaded, but I know nothing about naval matters here," was the reply.

Just then the heated cannon began firing their huge charges, which, though without aim, were likely to do injury to the Union vessels toward which the battery was floating. Besides, the magazine was stored with powder and the impending explosion could not fail to be disastrous.

"If you do not mind it," said Porter, addressing the visitor, "we will continue our negotiations."

In referring to this incident, the Admiral said:

"A good Providence, which directs the most important events, sent the battery off toward Fort St. Philip, and, as it came abreast of that formidable fort, it blew up with a force which scattered the fragments in all directions, killing one of their own men in the fort, and when the smoke cleared off it was nowhere to be seen, having sunk immediately in the deep water of the Mississippi. The explosion was terrific and was seen and heard for many miles up and down the river. Had it occurred near the vessels, it would have destroyed every one of them."

#### **GUN AND MORTAR BOATS ON THE MISSISSIPPI. GUN AND MORTAR BOATS ON THE MISSISSIPPI.**

After the fall of New Orleans Porter was sent to Ship Island to await the attack that was in contemplation upon New Orleans. He was recalled by Admiral Farragut to aid him in the siege of Vicksburg. In passing the batteries Porter had three of his vessels disabled and twenty-nine men killed and wounded. The capture of that last Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi was a severe and tedious task, but General Grant, with that bulldog tenacity for which he was famous, held on until the 4th of July, 1863, when General Pemberton, the Confederate commander, surrendered his whole garrison of more than 20,000 men. In thus opening the Mississippi all the way to the Gulf the navy rendered invaluable assistance. Porter's aid was so important and his conduct so gallant that he received the thanks of Congress and was created a full rear admiral, his commission dating from July 4, 1863. In a public dispatch the Secretary of the Navy said, addressing Admiral Porter: "To yourself, your officers and the brave

and gallant sailors who have been so fertile in resources, so persistent and so daring under all circumstances, I tender, in the name of the President, the thanks and congratulations of the whole country on the fall of Vicksburg."

One of the most disastrous expeditions of the Civil War was that which was undertaken by General N.P. Banks, in the spring of 1864. His ostensible purpose was to complete the conquest of Texas and Louisiana, but there is good reason to believe that the famous Red River expedition was little more than a huge cotton speculation. Immense quantities were stored along the river and could it have been secured would have been worth many hundred thousand dollars to the captors. The charge has been made, with apparent reason, that several Confederate leaders were concerned in the "deal," seeing as they did, that the end of the Confederacy was at hand. The trouble, however, was that other Confederates like General Dick Taylor did all they could to defeat the purpose of General Banks and they succeeded to perfection.

The Union commander had an army of 30,000 men with which he began the ascent of the Red River. He captured Fort de Russy March 14 and then marched against Shreveport. His forces were strewn along for miles, with no thought of danger, when at Sabine Cross Roads they were furiously attacked by General Dick Taylor and routed as utterly as was the first advance upon Manassas in July, 1861. The demoralized men were rallied at Pleasant Hill, where they were again attacked and routed by Taylor. Banks succeeded at last in reaching New Orleans, where he was relieved of his command.

When Porter had waited a short time at the appointed place of meeting for Banks's army a messenger reached him with news of that General's defeat and his hurried retreat. Porter saw that it would not do for him to delay an hour. He had had great difficulty in getting his fifty vessels up the narrow stream, whose current was falling so rapidly that it already appeared impossible to get the fleet past the snags and shoals to the point of safety two hundred miles below.

Improving every moment and under a continual fire from the shore, Porter managed to descend something more than half way down the river to Grand Ecore, where he found Banks and his demoralized army. Porter advised the commander to remain where he was until the spring rains would enable the fleet to ascend the river again, but Banks was too frightened to do anything but retreat, and he kept it up until he arrived at New Orleans.

The river fell so rapidly that all the fleet would have been stranded above the

falls but for the genius of Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Bailey, of Wisconsin, a military engineer who accompanied Banks's expedition. Under his direction several thousand men were set to work, and, at the end of twelve days, they had constructed a series of wing dams, through which the vessels were safely floated into the deeper water below the falls. This accomplished their deliverance from what otherwise would have been certain destruction. Porter pronounced the exploit of Bailey the greatest engineering feat of the whole war. One of the Admiral's most pleasing traits was his appreciation of the services of his assistants. He complimented Bailey in glowing terms in his official report, secured his promotion to brigadier-general and presented him with a sword which cost nearly a thousand dollars.

**BREAKING THROUGH THE DAMS ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.**  
**BREAKING THROUGH THE DAMS ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.**

Porter was now transferred to the North Atlantic Squadron and commanded the powerful naval contingents in the two attacks on Fort Fisher, December, 1864, and January, 1865. In the latter Porter and General Terry succeeded in capturing the last important sea fortress belonging to the Confederates. Porter was promoted to be vice-admiral in 1866 and admiral in 1870. He was superintendent of the naval academy until 1869, and died in Washington, February 13, 1891, one day before the death of General Sherman.



## CHAPTER XXV.

### **Charles Stuart Boggs—His Coolness in the Presence of Danger— His Desperate Fight Below New Orleans—His Subsequent Services.**

When the gallant Lawrence, mortally wounded on the *Chesapeake*, was dying, he called out in his delirium, "Don't give up the ship!" thus furnishing a motto that has served times without number for the American navy. Among the mourning relatives left by Lawrence was a married sister, Mrs. Boggs, who lived in New Brunswick, N.J., where a son was born to her in January, 1811, and named Charles Stuart.

It was probably the admiration formed for his heroic uncle which led the boy to determine to follow in his footsteps, for he was appointed a midshipman when fifteen years old, and saw active service in the Mediterranean against the Greek pirates, to which reference has been made in a previous chapter. He was made lieutenant in 1833. One of the most marked traits in young Boggs was his perfect coolness in times of peril and his instant perception of the best thing to do. The following incident will illustrate this remarkable power on his part, which was united to a gentleness of disposition that made one wonder at his daring and intrepidity.

During the war with Mexico Lieutenant Boggs was ordered to the steamer *Princeton*, which took a leading part in the bombardment of the Castle of St. Juan de Ulloa and of Tampico. The brig *Truxton* unfortunately ran aground on the bar of Tuspan River and had to be surrendered to the Mexicans. The *Princeton* was ordered to destroy her. Anchoring near the wreck, a boat was manned and placed in charge of Lieutenant Boggs, to whom the work of destruction was intrusted.

The boat had nearly reached the stranded vessel when it was caught in one of the tropical tempests, which sometimes appear with cyclonic suddenness in that part of the world. It was impossible to board the wreck, and equally impossible to get back to the *Princeton*. A powerful current set in toward shore, in which direction the gale was blowing. The combined efforts of the sturdy rowers could not check

the progress of the boat, which perhaps would have been the right course to take but for an alarming discovery.

On the beach a company of Mexican soldiers were drawn up with a field piece, making ready to annihilate the little American company, as they could do without the slightest difficulty before the gallant sailors could land and make a charge. Here was a dilemma indeed. Nothing could extricate the boat and its crew from their peril and not a man could raise a finger to help himself.

There was only one person who saw the only possible thing to do. Lieutenant Boggs ordered the single white shirt in the party to be torn up, tied on the end of a boathook and displayed as a flag of truce. Then, by his directions, the men rowed with all speed straight for the enemy, who were thus disarmed of their hostile purpose. Walking up to the leader of the company, the lieutenant explained that he had been sent to destroy the *Truxton*, but had been driven ashore against his will. He hastened to explain to the officer that he had no intention of attacking the town, but he should do so if any one tried to prevent his destruction of the stranded vessel.

When the insignificance of the American party is remembered, there was something amusing in this; but the Mexican officer not only gave his promise, but entertained his visitors until the gale was over. Then the *Truxton* was fired and Boggs returned to his ship.

He was on the Pacific coast when the Civil War broke out, serving as inspector of lighthouses. Chafing under idleness, he petitioned the Government to give him active employment afloat. His wish was granted and he was placed in command of the *Varuna*, a passenger steamer, purchased by the Government and changed into a gunboat. Admiral Farragut was making his preparations to attack New Orleans, and the *Varuna* was added to his fleet. She was a very swift but frail craft, a fact which led Farragut to grant Boggs' request to be allowed to run ahead of the position that had been assigned him.

In order to get up all the steam possible, the pork among the ship's store was flung into the blazing furnace under the boilers. The craft went through the water at a tremendous speed, and upon coming opposite the forts, Boggs fired his starboard battery and then ordered grape and canister to be used as rapidly as possible. Work had hardly begun when the Confederate gunboats appeared on every hand. With the same coolness that he had shown when driven ashore in Mexico, the command was given for the guns to be fired "on both sides." Indeed,

there were so many targets that it would have been about as difficult to miss as to hit one.

ATTACK ON ROANOKE ISLAND—LANDING OF THE TROOPS.  
**ATTACK ON ROANOKE ISLAND—LANDING OF THE TROOPS.**

The *Varuna* did terrific work, her gunners displaying fine marksmanship. The formidable craft *Governor Moore* had detected her in the early morning light, and steaming after her, fired a shot when only a hundred yards away, but missed. The *Varuna* replied, killing and wounding men on the *Governor Moore* at every shot. One of the enemy's shot, however, raked the *Varuna*, killing four men and wounding nine. Another struck the *Varuna's* pivot gun and killed and wounded a number more. Then the *Governor Moore* rammed the *Varuna* twice in quick succession.

But while the Confederate was doing so, Boggs planted three 8-inch shells into his antagonist, which set her on fire and compelled her to drop out of action. Her loss had been heavy and her engines were so battered that her commander ran her ashore, where she was burned to the water's edge.

Out of the misty light burst the *Stonewall Jackson* and rammed the *Varuna* on the port side, repeating the blow with a viciousness that stove in the vessel below the water line; but the *Varuna* swung the ram ahead until her own broadside guns bore, when she planted several 5-inch shells into the *Stonewall Jackson*, which set her on fire and caused her to drift ashore.

But the *Varuna* had been mortally hurt and was sinking fast. To quote the words of Commodore Boggs: "In fifteen minutes from the time the *Varuna* was struck by the *Stonewall Jackson*, she was on the bottom, with only her topgallant forecastle out of the water."

But those were exceedingly lively minutes for the *Varuna* and the other craft in her neighborhood. Commander Boggs turned her prow toward shore and crowded all steam, firing his guns as the water rose about the trucks. When the last shell left the side of the sinking vessel the current had reached the mouth of the piece, and some of it was blown out like mist with the shrieking missile.

The moment the bow of the *Varuna* struck the bank a chain cable was fastened around the trunk of a tree, so as to prevent her from sliding into deep water as she went down and taking the wounded and dead with her. This was a precaution which would not have occurred to every man in the situation of Commander



Boggs.

The daring conduct of this officer brought a tribute from one of our poets, which contains the stanzas:

"Who has not heard of the dauntless *Varuna*?  
Who shall not hear of the deeds she has done?  
Who shall not hear while the brown Mississippi  
Rushes along from the snow to the sun?"

"Five of the rebels like satellites round her,  
Burned in her orbit of splendor and fear,  
One like the Pleiad of mystical story  
Shot terror-stricken beyond her dread sphere."

When Boggs' native city heard of his gallant conduct it voted him a sword, and the State of New Jersey did the same. He came North and was appointed to the command of the blockading squadron off Wilmington. He would have preferred active service, and finally his health broke down under the exposure and fatigue to which he was subjected, and he was compelled to return home to recruit. Upon his recovery, he was appointed to duty in New York, but the war ended without his having another opportunity to distinguish himself in the service of his country. He died a few years after the close of hostilities.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

### **John Ancrum Winslow—His Early Life and Training—The Famous Battle Between the *Kearsarge* and *Alabama*.**

A few weeks ago I had as guests at my house two young men who were graduates of the West Point Military Academy in 1889. One was my son, at present an instructor in the Academy, and the other was E. Eveleth Winslow, of the corps of engineers, who had the honor of being graduated at the head of his class. During the course of the conversation I asked Captain Winslow whether he was a relative of the late Commodore John Ancrum Winslow, commander of the *Kearsarge* in her famous fight with the *Alabama*.

"He was my grandfather," replied my friend, with a glow of pride.

It was a pleasant bit of information, but it made me realize how the years are passing. It seems but a short time ago that the country was electrified by the news of the great battle, off Cherbourg, France, which sent to the bottom of the ocean the most destructive cruiser the Southern Confederacy ever launched. And here was the grandson of the hero of that fight, already thirty years of age, with the hair on his crown growing scant. *Tempus fugit* indeed.

The name Winslow is a distinguished one in the annals of our country, and especially in Massachusetts, the State from which Captain Winslow hails. He is the ninth generation from John Winslow, brother of Edward Winslow, Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, and the founder, as may be said, of Plymouth Rock itself. John A. Winslow, the subject of this sketch, however, was a Southerner by birth, being a native of Wilmington, North Carolina, where he was born November 19, 1811. His mother belonged to the famous Rhett family of the fiery State of South Carolina. The father had gone to Wilmington from Boston, to establish a commercial house, four years before the birth of the son, who was sent North to be educated. At the age of sixteen he entered the navy, and saw a good deal of dangerous service in the extirpation of the West Indian pirates. The exciting experience was exactly to the liking of young Winslow, whose life more than once was placed in great peril.

After an extended cruise in the Pacific, he returned east in 1833, and was

promoted to past midshipman. His service was of an unimportant character for a number of years, the rank of lieutenant coming to him in 1839. His conduct was so gallant in the war with Mexico that he was publicly complimented by Commodore Matthew C. Perry, a younger brother of the Lake Erie hero, and given the choice of vessels belonging to the fleet.

A curious incident is mentioned by his biographer. He went with the division which set out to capture Tampico, but the city surrendered without a fight upon the approach of the boats. He remained several weeks and then went back to the fleet at Vera Cruz. One of the vessels had been capsized in a squall, and the captain was occupying Winslow's room, and continued to share it until other arrangements could be made. The name of this visitor was Raphael Semmes, afterward the commander of the *Alabama*. The history of our navy is full of such strange occurrences. When the furnace blast of secession swept over the country, the most intimate friends—in many cases brothers—became the deadliest of enemies. For a time two flags were flung to the breeze in the United States, and the men who fought under each were among the bravest of the brave, for they were all *Americans*.

In 1855 Winslow was made a commander and was engaged in various duties until the breaking out of the Civil War. He hurried to Washington and applied for active service. Captain Foote was busy fitting out a flotilla at St. Louis, and Winslow was sent to join him. The work involved great labor and difficulty, and Winslow's aid was invaluable, although far from congenial. The task of blazing away at the guerrillas in the bushes and woods along shore, of raking the muddy rivers and streams for torpedoes, and of managing the awkward, nondescript craft, was not to the liking of the naval officer, accustomed to the free air of the deep, blue ocean. Finally his request to be transferred to sea service was granted, and in the early part of 1863 he was placed in command of the *Kearsarge*.

This sloop of war had a crew of 163 men, carried two 11-inch pivot guns, four short 32-pounders and one rifled 30-pounder, the total shot weight of the seven guns being 430 pounds. In this place it may be well to give the statistics of the *Alabama*, since the two vessels were so intimately associated in history. The Confederate cruiser carried one 100-pounder Blakely gun, one 8-inch shell gun and six long 32-pounders, the eight guns having a total of 360 pounds shot weight, while the crew consisted of 149 men, of mixed nationalities, nearly all of them being Englishmen.

England at that time was less friendly to the United States than she has since

become, and she gave most unfair help to the Southern Confederacy by aiding to fit out and man cruisers for it. When the war was over she was compelled to pay a good round sum for her dishonest course, and was taught a lesson she is not likely soon to forget. These cruisers wrought immense havoc among our shipping, and Commander Winslow was sent into European waters in quest of them. He was specially anxious to meet the *Florida*, and followed her from the coast of South America to that of England and France. The governments of those two countries threw every possible obstacle in his way. The French pilots were forbidden to serve the *Kearsarge*, and Captain Winslow had to be his own pilot—something he was well able to do because of his familiarity with the coasts.

Finding the *Florida* in Brest, he blockaded the port. It was in the depth of winter and the shore was dangerous, but Winslow did his duty so well that the *Florida* dared not poke her nose outside, until he was compelled, because of shortness of provisions, to steam over to Cadiz to obtain them. He made all haste to return, but when he arrived the *Florida* had slipped out and was gone.

There was no telling to what part of the world she had fled, and Captain Winslow sailed to Calais, where he learned that the rebel *Rappahannock* was awaiting a chance to put to sea. He held her there for two months, when a French pilot purposely ran the *Kearsarge* into the piers along shore. It was done by prearrangement with the officers of the *Rappahannock*, in order to give the latter a chance to put to sea. The indignant Winslow drove all the French pilots off his ship, and by vigorous work got her off by daylight the next morning. Meanwhile the *Rappahannock*, which had greatly overstayed her time, was ordered by the French authorities to leave. Winslow heard of this, and, without waiting for some of his men and officers who were on shore, he moved out of the harbor. When the commander of the *Rappahannock* saw the *Kearsarge* once more off the port of Calais, he knew it was all up and dismantled his ship.

There was one Confederate scourge that had been roaming the seas for months which Captain Winslow was anxious, above all others, to meet; that was the *Alabama*, commanded by his former room-mate, Captain Raphael Semmes. The *Kearsarge*, like many other vessels of the United States, had been hunting here and there for the ocean pest, but it seemed impossible to bring her to bay.

On Sunday morning, June 12, 1864, the *Kearsarge* was lying off the town of Flushing, Holland, with many of the officers and men ashore, and with everything wearing the appearance of a protracted rest for the crew. Some hours later, however, a gun was fired as a signal for every member of the ship's

company to come aboard at once. The cause of this sudden awaking was a telegram from Minister William L. Dayton, at Paris, notifying Captain Winslow that the *Alabama* had arrived at Cherbourg. On Tuesday, Winslow appeared off the fort, and saw the cruiser within, with her Stars and Bars floating defiantly in the breeze. Had Captain Winslow followed, he would have been compelled by law to remain twenty-four hours after the departure of the *Alabama*, so he took a station outside, determined that the cruiser should not escape him again.

In this case, however, the precaution was unnecessary, for Semmes had made up his mind to fight the National vessel. He had been charged with cowardice in running away from armed ships, and he had destroyed and captured so many helpless merchantmen that he felt something was due to retrieve his reputation. A comparison of the crews and armaments of the *Kearsarge* and *Alabama* will show that they were pretty evenly matched, though the slight numerical superiority of the Union ship was emphasized by the fact that her men were almost wholly American, while those of Semmes, as already stated, were nearly all English.

Shortly after the arrival of Captain Winslow the following challenge was brought out to him:

CONFEDERATE STEAMER *Alabama*,  
CHERBOURG, June 14, 1864.

SIR:—I hear that you were informed by the United States Consul that the *Kearsarge* was to come to this port solely for the prisoners landed by me, and that she was to depart in twenty-four hours. I desire you to say to the United States Consul that my intention is to fight the *Kearsarge* as soon as I can make the necessary arrangements. I hope these will not detain me more than till tomorrow evening, or next morning, at the farthest. I beg she will not depart before I am ready to go out.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant

R. SEMMES, *Captain*.

This note, though couched in seemingly courteous language, contained the most aggravating sort of sting, in the hope expressed that the *Kearsarge* would not leave until the *Alabama* was ready to go out, and the intimation—undoubtedly false—that the sole business of the Union vessel was to take charge of the prisoners brought thither by the Confederate. Captain Winslow had not spent months in hunting over the globe for such a chance as this to let it slip.

The *Alabama* was among friends. She had the sympathies of the thousands, who hoped to see the Yankee ship sunk by the fearful commerce-destroyer. Excursion trains were run from Paris and other points to Cherbourg, and among the vast multitude who gathered on shore on that warm, hazy Sunday morning—June 19—to witness the coming battle, it may be doubted whether there were a score who wished to see the *Kearsarge* win.

The respective captains were brave men and good officers. Both had declared that, if they ever met, the battle would not end until one of the ships went to the bottom, and each knew that the other would keep his word. Such a thing as surrender was not thought of by either.

Semmes was confident of his ability to sink the *Kearsarge*. Being a Roman Catholic, and unable to attend service, he requested a friend to go to mass and have it offered up for him, which was done. His accumulated sixty chronometers were sent ashore, and the motto displayed by his ship was "*Aide toi et Dieu t'aidera*," meaning, "Help yourself and God will help you," another version of the old adage, "God helps them that help themselves."

The church chimes were sending out their mellow notes on the warm summer air when the *Alabama* began slowly steaming out of the harbor. She was cheered by the sympathetic thousands, who heard the drums beating to quarters, and fervently prayed that their favorite might return victorious.

Winslow neglected nothing in the way of preparation. While calmly confident, his experience had taught him that such a contest is often decided by a chance shot, and he knew that the doom of one of the ships would be sealed before the set of sun. Having done all he could, he committed everything to the God of battles, content to abide by His will, whatever it might be.

It was about ten o'clock that Winslow, with his glass pointed toward shore, saw the head of the *Alabama* coming round the point of the mole, some three miles distant. He immediately beat to quarters. The *Couronne* accompanied the *Alabama* to the limits of French waters, and then turned back. The English yacht *Deerhound* had hurried down from Caen, upon being telegraphed of the impending fight, and the owner, with his family on board, followed the *Alabama* at the risk of receiving a stray shot that would wind up the career of the pleasure craft and all on board.

Some time before Captain Winslow had arranged his sheet chains for a distance of fifty feet amidships and over the side of his vessel, extending six feet down. They were intended as an additional protection to his machinery, and the practice is common among warships. The chains were secured by marline to eyebolts protected with one-inch boards. This natural precaution was the foundation for Captain Semmes' charge that the *Kearsarge* was partly armored. During the fight this part of the ship was hit only twice, so that the protection, if it be considered such, bore an unimportant part in the battle itself.

Captain Winslow was determined that no question about neutral waters should be raised. Accordingly, as the *Alabama* approached, he steamed out to sea, as if running away from his antagonist. Another object he had in mind was to prevent the *Alabama*, in case she was crippled, from escaping by running into the harbor.

When the *Kearsarge* had reached a point some seven miles from land, she swung around and made directly for the *Alabama*, although such a course exposed her to the raking broadsides of the enemy. Reading his purpose, Semmes slowed his engines and sheered off, thus presenting his starboard battery to the *Kearsarge*. When the vessels were about a mile apart, the jets of fire and smoke from the side of the *Alabama*, followed by the reverberating

boom of her cannon, showed that she had fired her first broadside. It did only trifling damage to the rigging of the *Kearsarge*. A second and part of a third broadside were delivered, with no perceptible effect. All the time, under a full head of steam, Winslow was rushing toward his enemy for the death grapple. Still in peril of being raked, he now sheered when half a mile distant and fired his broadside of five-second shells, at the same time endeavoring to pass under the *Alabama's* stern, but Semmes defeated the manœuvre by also sheering his vessel. The effort of each was now to keep his starboard broadside presented to the other, the attempt causing the two ships to describe an immense circle, the diameter of which steadily decreased, until it was barely a third of a mile.

Ten minutes after the opening of the battle the spanker gaff of the *Alabama* and the ensign were brought down by the fire of the *Kearsarge*, whose crew burst into cheers, but the Confederates quickly hoisted the colors to their mizzen. When the two ships were within a third of a mile of each other the fire became terrible; but from the first that of the *Kearsarge* was more accurate and did vast damage. This was impressively shown by the fact that although the *Kearsarge* fired only 173 shots during the fight, nearly every one struck the *Alabama*, which fired 370, of which only 28 landed.

One of the *Alabama's* 60-pound Blakely shells passed through the bulwarks of the *Kearsarge*, and, bursting on the quarter deck, wounded three men, of whom William Gowin was mortally hurt. When carried to the surgeon, the intensely suffering man smiled. "We are whipping the *Alabama*," he said, "and I am willing to give my life for such a victory."

Another Confederate shell burst in the hammock nettings and started a fire, which was easily extinguished. A third lodged in the sternpost, but failed to explode. Had it done so, its effect would have been terrific. The damage done by the other shells was insignificant.

A far different story was told on the Confederate cruiser. Winslow's instructions to his gunners were to fire slowly and to make every shot tell, and they did so. The men on the *Alabama* stripped to their shirts and drawers and fired rapidly, as if the only thing to do was to work the guns without taking pause to aim. Crashing planks and timber and exploding shells seemed to be all about them. A single shot from the *Kearsarge* killed and wounded eighteen men and disabled a gun. Another burst in the coal bunks and cluttered up the engine room. Death and destruction raged on every hand, and still the terrible *Kearsarge* kept working nearer, the dearest wish of Winslow being to get to close quarters.



The ships had described seven circles about each other and were starting on the eighth, when Winslow, all alive and eagerness, saw the *Alabama* set her fore trysail and two jibs and start for shore. That meant that it was all up with her, and her captain's only hope now was to get into the harbor of Cherbourg. Winslow ran across her bow and was on the point of raking her, when the *Alabama's* flag came down. Uncertain whether this was an accident, and suspecting a ruse by which the enemy expected to reach shore, now only two miles off, Winslow stopped firing, but held himself ready to open again. A white flag was displayed, and he began preparations to render assistance to his defeated antagonist. Just then, however, the *Alabama* fired again, upon which Winslow answered with several shots, when the white flag was run up for the second time.

The doom of the *Alabama* had overtaken her at last. She was fast settling, and while the only two serviceable boats of the *Kearsarge* were hurrying to the relief of the crew, the famous cruiser threw her prow high in air and slid stern foremost into the depths of the Atlantic.

In the midst of the wild confusion a boat from the *Alabama*, under charge of the English master's mate, came alongside, announcing that the *Alabama* had surrendered and begging for help. On the promise of this man to return, Winslow allowed him to go back to the aid of the drowning crew, but instead of keeping his pledge, he took refuge on the yacht *Deerhound*, which was circling about and doing all it could for the struggling wretches in the water. Among those picked up was Captain Semmes, who had flung his sword into the sea and leaped overboard as his ship was going down. He was suffering from a painful wound in the hand, and when helped on board of the *Deerhound* was in an exhausted condition. The captain of the yacht, after picking up thirty-nine men, including a number of officers, instead of delivering them to Captain Winslow, as he was in honor bound to do, edged away from the scene, and, putting on all steam, did not pause until he reached Southampton. The *Kearsarge* picked up the men that remained and took them into Cherbourg.

In this famous battle the *Kearsarge* had only 1 killed and 2 wounded, while Semmes lost 40 killed and 70 taken prisoners. The Confederate commander and his sympathizing British friends offered all sorts of excuses for his defeat. Some of them were ingenious, but none was the true one. The cause of the sinking of the *Alabama* was the same as that which gave us so many wonderful naval victories in the War of 1812. Our vessels were manned by Americans, while the *Alabama* was really an English ship, armed with English guns and manned and fought by an English crew: there's the truth in a nutshell.

Captain Winslow received the promotion to the grade of a commodore which he had so gallantly won. He died in 1873. It was a source of regret throughout the country that on the night of February 2, 1894, the *Kearsarge* was wrecked off Roncador Reef, while on a voyage from Port-au-Prince, Hayti, to Bluefields, Nicaragua. None of her crew was drowned, but the vessel itself was lost, despite every effort to save her.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

### **An Unexpected Preacher—Andrew Hull Foote—His Character and Early Career—His Brilliant Services in the War for the Union.**

One Sunday morning early in the Civil War a large assemblage had gathered in a prominent church in a Western city for the purpose of worship. But the hour for opening the services came and passed and the preacher, the one indispensable individual, did not appear. The auditors became uneasy. No one knew the cause of his absence and no word came from the parsonage, which was at some distance from the church. When the congregation were about to break up and pass out a stranger, sitting near the front, quietly arose, walked up the pulpit steps, gave out the opening hymn, led in prayer and preached a sermon which impressed all by its plain, practical truths. He held the attention of the people from the opening to the close, and among the listeners were more than one who felt that the unexplained absence of the regular pastor had resulted in a gain, though a brief one, for them.

Naturally there was no little curiosity to learn the name of the stranger. When approached by some of the leading brethren at the close of the services, he modestly said he was Captain Foote of the United States navy. He occasionally preached, when there seemed to be a call for such work on his part, but preaching was not his profession, and he would not have thought of entering the pulpit had he not seen that it was a choice between doing so and allowing the congregation to go home.

Andrew Hull Foote was born in New Haven, Conn., September 12, 1806. He belonged to a prominent family, his father, Samuel A. Foote, having served in Congress for several terms, as United States Senator, and as Governor of his State. The son received the best educational training and was subjected to the strict religious discipline characteristic of the Puritan families of old New England. His romantic nature was deeply stirred by the accounts of the naval exploits of his countrymen in the War of 1812, and he set his heart upon entering the navy. His mother opposed, but, when she saw it was useless, wisely yielded. His father's influence readily procured him the appointment of midshipman, and

he was directed to report on the schooner *Grampus*, under the command of Lieutenant (afterward Admiral) Gregory.

ANDREW HULL FOOTE.  
**ANDREW HULL FOOTE.**

The *Grampus* went to the West Indies in quest of pirates, but never found any. Young Foote was then transferred to the sloop of war *Peacock*, which had made such a glorious record in the last war with Great Britain, his next transfer being to the frigate *United States*, the flagship of Commodore Isaac Hull, who won the famous victory over the *Guerriere* in August, 1812.

The cruise lasted three years, and Foote returned to New York in the spring of 1837. He made a visit to his home, when he was once more ordered to the West Indies.

About this time he was brought under religious influence. He read his Bible and spent many hours in prayer, and finally yielded completely to God. He made his mother inexpressibly happy by sending her the glad news, and thenceforward throughout his stirring life he was one of the most humble, devout and consecrated of Christians.

Like Havelock, he did an amount of good among those placed under his charge, the full extent of which can never be known in this world. While on duty at the Naval Asylum in Philadelphia he persuaded the men to give up their grog rations and sign a pledge of total abstinence, and when executive officer on the *Cumberland* he did the same thing with its crew. He was a voluntary chaplain and gave a religious address on the berth deck every Sunday evening to those who wished to listen.

Disease of the eyes incapacitated him for duty for a long time, and he was much disappointed that he was not permitted to take any part in the Mexican war. One of his most practical temperance addresses was that, while engaged off the coast of Africa in suppressing the slave trade, he persuaded the men under him on the *Perry*, of which he was the commander, to give up the use of liquor. Although exposed to one of the most pestilential climates in the world, he did not lose a man.

At the breaking out of the Civil War he was in command of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. He was overwhelmed with work for a time, and was glad when, early in the autumn of 1861, he was ordered to the West to help in the building of an

inland navy on the Mississippi.

Captain Foote worked with the tremendous energy which he threw into every task, and succeeded in getting together seven boats, four of which were partly protected by armor. At the beginning of February, 1862, he started from Cairo to ascend the Tennessee, his objective point being Fort Henry, though the Confederates were deceived into thinking it was Columbus, on the Mississippi. He asked the Government for more men with which to man additional boats, but they were not furnished, and he went forward with such as he could get.

On the night preceding the attack on Fort Henry the little fleet anchored abreast of the army under General Grant, which was encamped on the bank. The night was cold and tempestuous, but the morning dawned keen and clear, and no time was lost in preparing the flotilla for the attack on the fort. He intimated to General Grant that he must not linger if he wished to cut off the retreat of the enemy. Grant assured him he would be on time to put his army in motion.

Fort Henry stood on a bend in the river, which it commanded for a long distance up and down stream. Foote placed his boats behind an island a mile below the fort, with a view of avoiding the long range rifles of the Confederates, which were liable to cripple the gunboats before they could get into close action. The wooden vessels halted upon coming in view of the fort, and the ironclads, as they were called, moved slowly up stream abreast of one another, firing their bow guns in answer to the shots of the rebels. The latter had had the time to practice to acquire the exact range, while the boats had yet to find it. They fired slowly and with such accuracy that the infantry stationed outside of the works hastily fled, though the gunners bravely remained at their posts.

Foote opened fire when not quite a mile from the fort. His instructions were to fire slowly and with care, the result of which was that guns were continually dismounted and the earth and sandbags sent flying in every direction. It was while the attack was being pressed in this vigorous fashion that a shell pierced the boiler of the *Essex*, commanded by Lieutenant Porter, and caused so many deaths, as has been related in a preceding chapter.

This appalling accident was a serious loss to Captain Foote, for Porter was doing inestimable service when thus driven out of action, but the daring commander pressed forward in the face of the murderous fire, encouraged by the visible results of his shots, which were playing frightful havoc against the defences of the fort. Tilghman, the Confederate commander, displayed great bravery,

fighting until every one of his guns was dismounted. Then, finding himself powerless to offer further resistance, he hauled down his flag. Firing immediately ceased on the part of the Union flotilla, and Foote sent a boat ashore to take possession.

Despite General Grant's usual promptness, he did not arrive in time to intercept the flight of the garrison. As a consequence the prisoners surrendered, including General Tilghman and his staff, numbered less than a hundred. The others fled overland to Fort Donelson, only to be compelled to surrender shortly afterward to Grant in what proved to be the first great Union victory of the war.

The severity of this battle is shown by the fact that Foote's ship was struck 31 times, the *Essex* 15, and the *Carondelet* 6. The total number of killed, wounded and missing was 48. The success was so decisive that Foote was applauded throughout the North, sharing the well-earned honors with General Grant, whose successful career is known to every boy in the land.

Foote now steamed down the river to Cairo and began the ascent of the Cumberland, to assist General Grant, who was marching overland to the attack on Fort Donelson. Dauntless as was the courage of the naval leader, he knew his task was a hopeless one. He had not only lost the *Essex*, but Fort Donelson was greatly superior in strength to Fort Henry. The water assault, however, was deemed a military necessity, and he did not hesitate.

On February 14 he advanced resolutely to the attack with his two wooden gunboats and four partial ironclads. The tremendous land batteries opened on this weak force the moment it came within range, and the results were of the most destructive nature. As usual, the chief attention was given to the flagship, which was struck again and again by the flying shot and shell. Undismayed by the awful tempest, Foote pushed steadily onward, cool, calm, hopeful and prepared for the worst.

His pilot was a brave man, but under the frightful fire he began to show a nervousness that caught the eye of Foote. Walking up to him, he placed his hand in a kindly manner on his shoulder and spoke encouragingly to him. While he was doing so, the poor fellow was torn into pieces by a shot, and the captain himself was badly wounded in the foot by a flying splinter. Paying no heed to the bleeding member, he limped about the boat, swept by the iron hail, and gave his orders as coolly as before. But the shot that killed the pilot also smashed the wheel, and the unmanageable boat began drifting down stream. The tiller ropes

of another boat were also cut about the same time, and she also floated helplessly with the current. The Confederates increased their fire, and the other two boats, also greatly damaged, followed the flagship, and the ferocious fight that had lasted more than an hour was over, with the Union flotilla badly repulsed.

The flagship had been struck 59 times, and 54 had been killed and wounded on the different ships; but Foote would have maintained the fight, with a fair probability of success, but for the destruction of his steering gear.

Grant and Foote now formed a plan for the capture of Nashville, but on the eve of starting were stopped by a telegraphic order from General Halleck not to allow the gunboats to go further up the river than Clarksville. Foote was greatly disappointed, and, absolutely certain of capturing the city, telegraphed for permission to do so, but it was refused. Thus he was left no alternative but to return to Cairo.

While there, he learned that the Confederate force occupying Columbus had evacuated the town and fortified themselves on Island No. 10. They numbered about 8,000 and were under the command of General Mackall, from Beauregard's army. Foote transferred his flag to the ironclad *Benton* and advanced against the powerful works that had been erected on the island. The bombardment was continued for three weeks, without inflicting serious damage, and there was little prospect of capturing the place from the river, when General Pope arrived with a large land force; but to reach the fort it was necessary for him to get his troops across the river, and he had not a single transport to use for that purpose.

Pope's arrival below made it necessary to send a gunboat down to him, for until that was done he could make no movement against the rebel force there. The all-important question was whether any one of the gunboats could run the terrific gauntlet of the batteries that lined the shore. It looked as if the attempt must result in the inevitable destruction of any craft before half the distance could be accomplished. At a council of the officers it was agreed that it was too hazardous to try to run one of the gunboats past the batteries. Such was the opinion of every man except Henry Walke, commander of the *Carondelet*, who volunteered to try the seemingly impossible task. Captain Foote reluctantly gave his consent.

It was understood that Walke was to make the attempt on the first rainy or foggy night. In the event of success, he was to coöperate with Pope, and, when he

moved, to assist in the attack on the fortifications. Captain Foote closed his instructions to his faithful aide with the following impressive words:

On this delicate and somewhat hazardous service to which I assign you I must enjoin upon you the importance of keeping your lights secreted in the hold or put out, keeping your officers and men from speaking at all, when passing the forts, above a whisper, and then only on duty, and of using every other precaution to prevent the rebels suspecting that you are dropping below their batteries.

If you successfully perform this duty assigned to you, which you so willingly undertake, it will reflect the highest credit upon you and all belonging to your vessel, and I doubt not but that the government will fully appreciate and reward you for a service which, I trust, will enable the army to cross the river and make a successful attack in the rear, while we storm the batteries in front of this stronghold of the rebels.

Commending you and all who compose your command to the care and protection of God, who rules the world and directs all things, I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

A.H. FOOTE.

P.S.—Should you meet with disaster, you will, as a last resort, destroy the steam machinery, and, if possible, to escape, set fire to your gunboat, or sink her, and prevent her falling into the hands of the rebels.

The night selected—April 4—was rainy and of inky blackness, relieved by vivid flashes of lightning. No precaution that could be thought of was neglected. Chains were twisted around the pilot-house and other vulnerable parts, and wood was piled against the boilers, with which the hose was connected, to make the jets of steam available to repel boarders. On one side was lashed a boat loaded with pressed hay, while a barge of coal was fastened on the side furthest from the dangerous batteries, and the escape steam was led into the paddle-wheel house in order to muffle the sound. Among the fully armed crew were twenty of the most expert sharpshooters in the army.

It was about ten o'clock when the *Carondelet* swung round in the stream and started on its fearful race. The fleet fairly held its breath, as officers and men



listened and peered down the river in the tempestuous darkness. Now and then the zigzagging lightning gave a momentary glimpse of the craft moving away, but the straining eye and ear caught no sight or sound.

But when the *Carondelet* was close to the batteries a blaze suddenly shot up several feet above the chimneys. The soot had caught fire and the reflection was thrown far out on the water. The engineer immediately opened the flue caps and all was darkness again. So quickly did this singular glow come and vanish that it must have been mistaken by the sentinels for a part of the lightning display, for it caused no alarm; but the turning of the escape steam into the paddle-box had allowed the soot to get dry, and they flamed up a second time. Though extinguished as promptly as before, the sentinels knew something was wrong and signalled to the batteries below that one of the boats of the enemy was approaching.

It was useless to attempt concealment any longer. Walke ordered the engine ahead at full speed and ran close to the shore nearest the batteries, that their shot might pass over him. Aside from the enemy, this was dangerous work, for there was no telling into what obstruction the boat would dash. A man stood at the front with lead and line, quietly calling out in a guarded voice the soundings, which were repeated by a second man on deck, who forwarded the report aft to Walke, standing beside the pilot.

All the time the rain was falling in torrents. Suddenly a dazzling gleam showed the pilot he was speeding straight for a shoal under the guns of the Confederate battery.

"Hard aport!" commanded the captain, and the heavy craft barely missed the island, past which it shot at the highest speed. The lightning flashes helped the *Carondelet* in more than one way. It not only gave the pilot the necessary knowledge to avoid running aground, but confused the Confederate gunners, who sent most of their shots over the boat, which was not struck once during its remarkable run down the Mississippi. Two shots had entered the barge at her side, but not a man was hurt. The boat was received with wild cheers by the expectant soldiers, who, while hoping for the best, feared the worst.

It had been agreed between Walke and Captain Foote that in case the former was successful, he was to make it known by firing minute guns. The captain was listening intently, when through the rain and darkness the welcome signals reached his ears, and he thanked God that all had come out so well.

Now that General Pope had received the transport for which he longed, Captain Foote breathed freely and prepared to give what help he could in the attack upon the rebel fortifications; but, to his surprise, Pope sent an urgent request that a second boat should be sent to him on the next night, adding that the success of the whole movement depended upon a compliance with this request.

Foote replied that it would be as safe to run the batteries at midday as on a clear night; for a vessel had to pass not only seven batteries, but be kept "head on" to a battery of eleven guns, at the upper part of Island No. 10, and to pass within 300 yards of it. In deference to Pope's earnest request, Captain Foote consented to prepare another boat, but would not permit it to start until the night was favorable.

The second night was similar to the one described, and Lieutenant Thompson, in charge of the *Pittsburg*, started down the river at two o'clock in the morning. Although exposed to the same fire as the *Carondelet*, he was equally fortunate, and ran the gauntlet with the same good fortune.

The passage of these two ironclads sealed the fate of Island No. 10, for Pope could now cross the river, and, by taking position in the rear of the Confederate works, cut off the supplies of the garrison. The crossing was made and the enemy's batteries silenced. On the 8th the island was surrendered to Captain Foote and General Pope, including the garrison of 5,000 men.

Captain Foote's next move was to Fort Pillow. All this time he was suffering so severely from the wound in his foot that it affected his spirits, usually buoyant and hopeful. Another disturbing cause was the continual interference of General Halleck, who prevented several movements that Foote knew must have resulted in important successes.

His health continued to decline till finally the day came when he was compelled to ask for a leave of absence. He went to his brother's home in Cleveland, where his condition caused great solicitude throughout the country. Afflictions crowded upon him. He returned to his home, which was shadowed by the death of his bright boy at the age of fourteen years. A few months later two of his daughters died. How hollow sounded the praises of his countrymen when his head was bowed with such overwhelming sorrow! He had been made rear admiral, and, though still weak, was by his own request assigned to the command of the North Atlantic squadron. He went to New York to complete his preparations, but while there succumbed to his illness, and died at the Astor House, June 26, 1863.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### **A Man Devoid of Fear—William Barker Cushing—Some of His Exploits—The Blowing Up of the *Albemarle*—His Sad Death.**

If ever man lived who knew not the meaning of fear, he was William Barker Cushing, born in Wisconsin in 1842. He entered the Naval Academy in 1857, remained four years, received his appointment from the State of New York, but claiming Pennsylvania as his residence. He was wild and reckless, and resigned in March, 1861, when even his closest friends saw little hope of his success in life.

Many heroes are referred to as fearless, but that man is reckoned brave who knows the full extent of the danger facing him, and yet does not hesitate to meet it; but Cushing was a youth who really seemed to love danger for its own sake, and never flinched while death was on every hand, but went unhesitatingly forward, when it would have been no reflection upon his courage had he turned about and run.

The breaking out of the Civil War offered so fascinating a field for him that he could not resist the temptation. The Secretary of the Navy always had a tender spot in his heart for the daring fellow, and when Cushing promised that if he would give him a chance he would prove himself worthy of the Secretary's confidence, that official consented and attached him to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. At the very first opportunity Cushing displayed the wonderful personal intrepidity which was soon to make him the most famous naval officer of his age.

In the expedition against Franklin, Va., in the autumn of the year, he was placed in command of the gunboat *Ellis*, and showed such skill and bravery that he was recommended by the acting admiral to the Navy Department. Some weeks later he steamed into New River Inlet, with the object of capturing Jacksonville and destroying the salt works. He was successful, secured three vessels and drove the enemy from two pieces of artillery with which they were firing on him at short range. All was going well, but while still close to the abandoned works Cushing's little steamer ran aground, and, despite every effort, he could not work her free.

He saw it was useless to try to get the boat off. He therefore took everything out of her, excepting the pivot gun and ammunition, and, placing them on board one of the captured schooners, ordered the crew to leave. Knowing the enemy would soon return in overwhelming numbers, he asked for six volunteers to stay with him and fight with the single gun to the last. The response was prompt, for his daring spirit was infectious, and he instructed the others, in the event of him and his comrades being attacked, to make no attempt to help them.

Just as he anticipated, the Confederates opened upon the doomed steamer at daylight, firing from so many different points that the defenders were helpless. As fast as the gun could be loaded, it was pointed here, there and everywhere, for, no matter in what direction it was aimed, it was pretty sure to hit some of the enemy; but a single gun against a score could accomplish nothing, and the lieutenant had to decide whether to remain, with the certainty of every man being shot to pieces, of surrendering, or of rowing in an open boat for more than a mile through the murderous fire. With scarcely a moment's hesitation, he resolved upon the last plan, which looked as suicidal as remaining on the steamer.

The gun was loaded to the muzzle and trained upon the enemy, so as to go off when heated, the steamer set on fire in several places, and, dropping into the smaller boat, the men pulled with might and main for the schooner. Fortune favors the brave, and they reached it in safety, and soon after arrived at Beaufort.

This exploit won for Cushing the commendation of the Navy Department for "his courage, coolness and gallantry."

His restless spirit would not allow him to remain idle. He was continually engaging in some daring enterprise, in which it must not be supposed he displayed nothing more than headlong recklessness. That quality was supplemented by coolness and skill, without which he never could have attained the remarkable success that attended his career.

Among the numerous achievements the following will serve as an illustration of the young man's disposition:

Lieutenants Lamson and Cushing had command of a number of gunboats that were sent to the aid of General Peck, stationed at Norfolk. In the latter part of April it was learned that a Union boat had been decoyed ashore by the display of a white handkerchief and then fired upon. The angered Cushing asked for and received the privilege of retaliating for this treacherous act. In charge of seven

boats, manned by ninety sailors, he set out and landed under the protection of the fire of the vessels. Leaving a part of his force to protect the boats, he started inland, taking a 12-pounder howitzer with him.

His objective point was a village three miles away, where several hundred cavalry were stationed. Advancing boldly, he drove in the pickets, and coming across a span of mules hitched to a cart, he tied the rope of the howitzer to the rear, lashed the animals to a gallop and went clattering into the village to the loud shouts of "Forward, double quick!"

Just as they entered the formidable body of cavalry were discerned, galloping down the street toward them, swinging their sabres and shouting at the top of their voices. In a twinkling the howitzer was unlimbered, and the charge of grape which was poured into the approaching horsemen was supplemented by a volley of musketry. The racket terrified the mules, which broke into a gallop, dragging the cart and ammunition after them, and never paused until they were among the ranks of the enemy. With a shout, Cushing was after them, followed by his men, and mules and ammunition were recovered in a twinkling. By this time the demoralized cavalry had fled, and Cushing, after retaining possession of the village until dusk, leisurely made his way back to the boats.

The war having proven the immeasurable value of ironclads of the *Merrimac* type, the Confederates strained every nerve to build them, often succeeding under the most trying conditions. One of the most formidable of these craft was the *Albemarle*, upon which work was begun early in 1863, at Edward's Ferry, several miles up the Roanoke River. Iron was so scarce that the country was scoured for miles in every direction for bolts, bars and metal. As stated by Maclay, the keel was laid in an open cornfield, and an ordinary blacksmith's outfit formed the plant for building; but the makers persevered and completed a craft 122 feet over all, with 45 feet beam and drawing 8 feet of water. The casemate was 60 feet long, constructed of massive timbers, covered with 4-inch planking, over which were placed two layers of 2-inch iron. The motive power was furnished by twin screws operated by engines of 200 horse-power each. Her armament consisted of an Armstrong 100-pounder in the bow and another in the stern, the casemate being so pierced that the guns could be used at broadside or quarter.

At midnight, April 19, 1864, the *Albemarle* gave a proof of her prodigious power of destruction. On the preceding two days the Confederates had made a determined attack on Plymouth, held by the Union forces, and the ironclad now

set out to render assistance. The wooden gunboats *Miami* and *Southfield* offered just the sort of targets the monster fancied. Under a full head of steam, the *Albemarle* rammed her iron beak clean into the fire room of the *Southfield*. The latter was skewered upon the projection and began slowly sinking. The snout was so entangled with the *Southfield* that the victim could not be shaken off, and as she sank she carried her foe with her. The bow of the ironclad dipped below the surface, and a most extraordinary and inglorious end seemed inevitable, when the *Southfield* touched bottom, rolled over and freed itself from the bow of the ram, which popped up again.

Meanwhile the *Miami* was pounding the iron hide of the monster, which shed the missiles as the *Merrimac* shed the broadsides from the *Cumberland* and *Congress*. When only a few feet from the *Albemarle*, Lieutenant Flusser, standing directly behind a gun of the *Miami*, let fly with a heavy shell, which, striking the armor of the *Albemarle*, was shivered into a thousand fragments, most of which rebounding, instantly killed the officer and wounded a dozen men. The *Miami* retreated, and the next day Plymouth surrendered to the Confederates.

In May, the *Albemarle* steamed down into the Sound and attacked the Union gunboats, which made a heroic defence. The monster received broadside after broadside and was repeatedly rammed, but suffered no material damage, while she killed 4, wounded 25 and caused the scalding of 13, through piercing the boiler of one of her assailants.

It will be seen that this ironclad had become a formidable menace to the Union arms, not only in the immediate neighborhood, but further north. It was the intention of her commander to clear out the fleets at the mouth of the river, and then make an excursion up the coast, somewhat like that which Secretary Stanton once believed the *Merrimac* was about to undertake. General Grant was pressing his final campaign against Richmond, and the *Albemarle* threatened to interfere with his plans, for if she made the diversion of which she was capable, she was likely to postpone indefinitely the wind up of the war.

Ah, if some daring scheme could be perfected for destroying the *Albemarle*! What a feat it would be and how vast the good it would accomplish! There was one young officer in the American navy who believed the thing could be done, and he volunteered to undertake it.

Well aware that the Unionists would neglect no means of blowing up the

*Albemarle*, the Confederates used every possible precaution. At the wharf in Plymouth, where she was moored, a thousand soldiers were on guard, and her crew, consisting of sixty men, were alert and vigilant. To prevent the approach of a torpedo boat, the ram was surrounded by a boom of cypress logs, placed a considerable distance from the hull, and a double line of sentries was stationed along the river. What earthly chance was there under such conditions of any possible harm coming to her?

The picket boat in which Lieutenant Cushing undertook to destroy the rebel ram was built at New York under his supervision, and taken to Norfolk by way of the canals, and thence to *Albemarle* Sound again by canal. He made his preparations with great care, and on the night of October 27, which was dark and stormy, he started in his picket boat. He was accompanied by eight men and the following officers: Acting Ensign William L. Howarth, Acting Master's Mates Thomas S. Gay and John Woodman, Acting Assistant Paymaster Francis H. Swan, Acting Third Assistant Engineers Charles L. Steever and William Stotesbury.

Cushing took in tow a small cutter, in which he intended to capture the Confederate guard, that was in a schooner anchored near the wrecked *Southfield*, and prevent their sending up an alarm rocket as a warning to the sentinels above of the approach of danger. He stationed himself at the stern, his plan being to land a little way below the ram and board her from the wharf. A sudden dash promised her capture by surprise, when she could be taken down stream. If this scheme could not be carried out, he intended to blow her up with a torpedo as she lay at the dock.

The launch crept along the river bank as silently as an Indian canoe stealing into a hostile camp. The distance to be passed was fully eight miles, and the peril began almost from the moment of starting. The necessary commands were spoken in whispers, and the waiting men scarcely moved as they peered into the deep gloom and listened to the almost inaudible rippling of the water from the bow. Speed was reduced as they drew near Plymouth, in order to lessen the soft clanking of the engine or the motion of the screw.

They were still a mile below Plymouth when the shadowy outlines of the wrecked *Southfield* loomed dimly to view. The Confederates had raised her so that her hurricane deck was above the surface. Within a few yards of the wreck a schooner was anchored containing a guard of twenty men with a field piece and rocket, provided for precisely such danger as now drew near. But on this night, of all others, the sentinels were dozing, for had they been vigilant they must have



seen the little craft whose crew saw theirs and were on the *qui vive* to board on the instant of discovery.

The good fortune encouraged all hands, and as the schooner and wreck melted into the darkness the launch swept around a bend in the river and caught the glimmer of the camp fires along the banks, partly extinguished by the falling rain. Still creeping cautiously on, the outlines of the prodigious ram gradually assumed form in the gloom. It looked as if the surprise would be complete, when a dog, more watchful than his masters, began barking. He had discovered the approaching danger, and the startled sentinels challenged, but no reply was made. A second challenge bringing no response, several muskets flashed in the night. Other dogs joined in barking, alarm rattles were sprung and wood flung upon the fires, which, flaring up, threw their illumination out on the river and revealed the launch and cutter. The hoarse commands of officers rang out, and the soldiers, springing from sleep, caught up their guns and rushed to quarters.

Amid the fearful din and peril Cushing cut the tow line and ordered the cutter to hasten down the river and capture the guard near the *Southfield*. At the same moment he directed the launch to go ahead at full speed. He had changed his plan. Instead of landing he determined to blow up the ram. When close to it he learned for the first time of the cordon of logs which surrounded the *Albemarle*, but, believing they were slippery enough from remaining long in the water to be passed, he sheered off, made a sweep of a hundred yards and again charged under full steam for the obstruction.

As he drew near the guards fired a volley which riddled Cushing's coat and tore off the sole of his shoe.

At the same moment he heard the vicious snapping of the primers of the huge guns, which showed they had missed fire.

"Leave the ram!" he shouted. "We're going to blow you up!"

The Confederates, however, did not follow the advice and the launch fired her howitzer. Then she glided over the slimy logs and paused in front of the muzzle of a loaded cannon which could be almost reached with the outstretched hand. Still cool and self-possessed amid the horrible perils, Cushing stood erect, lowered the torpedo spar, shoved it under the overhang, waited a moment for it to rise until he felt it touch the bottom of the ram, when he gave a quick, strong pull on the trigger line. A muffled, thunderous explosion followed, an immense column of water rose in the air and the tremendous tipping of the *Albemarle*

showed she had received a mortal hurt.

It was accomplished at the critical second, for the rifled gun, filled with 100 pounds of canister and pointed at the launch ten feet away, was immediately discharged. The careening of the ram deviated the aim just enough to prevent the crew from being blown to fragments, but confident that not a man could escape, the Confederates twice called upon their assailants to surrender, and several did so, but Cushing was not among them. With the same marvelous coolness he had displayed from the first he took off his coat and shoes, flung his sword and revolver aside and shouted:

"Every man save himself!"

Then he leaped into the water and began swimming with might and main down stream, the bullets skipping all about him, but he soon passed beyond sight and was still swimming when he heard a plashing near him. It was made by one of the acting master's mates, John Woodman, who was exhausted. Cushing helped him until he himself had hardly an ounce of strength left, when he was obliged to let go, and the poor fellow, calling good-by, sank from sight.

When unable to struggle longer, Cushing let his feet drop and they touched bottom. He managed to reach land, where he sank down so worn out that he lay motionless until daylight. Then he crawled into a swamp, where he remained hidden until a friendly negro appeared, who extended every possible kindness to him. From him Cushing learned that the *Albemarle* had been destroyed and was at the bottom of the river. It was thrilling news, and the following night, after he had thoroughly rested and been fed by his dusky friend, he moved down the river, found a skiff and in it made his way to the fleet, bringing the first news of the success of an exploit which it is safe to say has never been surpassed in the history of our navy. Even the captain of the *Albemarle* declared that "a more gallant thing was not done during the war."

While conceding to Lieutenant Hobson the full credit for his daring achievement in sinking the *Merrimac* in the channel of Santiago harbor, on June 3, 1898, it was by no means the equal of that of Lieutenant Cushing, thirty-four years before.

For his superb work Cushing received a vote of thanks from Congress and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant commander. He led a division of sailors in the second and what proved to be the successful attack upon Fort Fisher, in January, 1865. It was a desperate fight and none displayed more heroism than the young

officer who had destroyed the *Albemarle*.

Hon. J.T. Headley, the biographer of Cushing, in an article written immediately after the close of the Civil War, used these words: "Still a young man, he has a bright future before him, and if he lives will doubtless reach the highest rank in the navy. Bold, daring and self-collected under the most trying circumstances—equal to any emergency—never unbalanced by an unexpected contingency, he possesses those great qualities always found in a successful commander. No man in our navy, at his age, has ever won so brilliant a reputation, and it will be his own fault if it is not increased until he has no superior."

And yet Commander Cushing's reputation was not increased nor was it through any fault of his own. It was not long after the war that his friends were pained to observe unmistakable signs of mental unsoundness in the young hero. These increased until his brain was all askew, and he died in an insane asylum in 1874.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

### **The Greatest of Naval Heroes—David Glasgow Farragut.**

David Glasgow Farragut was the greatest naval hero of modern times. There are many honored names connected with the American navy, but his towers above them all. The highest honors that his country could give were freely bestowed upon him and no one will deny that he earned them all.

His father, although a native of Minorca, came to this country in 1776 and lost no time in joining the ragged, starving patriots in their struggle for independence. His skill and gallantry won him the rank of major. When the war ended he settled on the western frontier, near Knoxville, Tenn., where at a place called Campbell's Station his son David was born in 1801. When only nine years old he was appointed midshipman under Captain David Porter, the heroic commander of the *Essex*. Captain Porter and Major Farragut were old friends, to which fact was due the privilege extended to a lad of such tender years.

In the sketch of Captain Porter the reader will recall the incident in which young Farragut learned of the conspiracy among the 500 prisoners on board the *Essex*, and, by giving his commander warning, prevented the capture of the ship by the savage plotters.

The boy was on the *Essex* when, disabled and helpless, she was pounded into a surrender by two British ships while in the harbor of Valparaiso, in January, 1814. It was one of the most sanguinary battles of the war, when the decks ran with blood and the dead and dying were stretched on every hand. Amid the terrible carnage the boy Farragut conducted himself with such coolness and bravery that he was specially complimented by Captain Porter in his report. Although wounded, he stood unflinchingly to his guns, winning the admiration of the grim heroes around him and demonstrating the wonderful qualities which later were to raise him to the position of the foremost naval hero of the age.

Peace came, and, although Farragut was in continual service, promotion was slow. He became lieutenant in 1825, commander in 1841 and captain in 1851. His first wife, whom he married in Norfolk, became an invalid and did not live long. His second wife was also a native of Norfolk. Thus he was not only a

Southerner himself, but his wife was a native of that section. When, therefore, civil war came and it became fashionable for people to express secession sentiments, it was taken for granted that Farragut would cast his fortunes with the South; but upon being approached he indignantly replied: "I would see every man of you damned before I would raise my hand against that flag!" Being told that it would be unsafe for him to remain in the South, he added that he wanted only two hours to find another place of residence. He moved away at once and with his wife and only son took up his home on the Hudson near Tarrytown.

COMMODORE DAVID GLASGOW FARRAGUT.  
**COMMODORE DAVID GLASGOW FARRAGUT.**

Being a stranger in that neighborhood, he was regarded with suspicion. He was fond of taking long walks, and it is said that some of the people suspected that he belonged to a gang of plotters who intended to cut the Croton Aqueduct, but the quiet man was simply awaiting the summons of his country to serve her in any capacity possible.

The call came in the spring of 1861, when he was about threescore years old. His duty was that of serving on the board appointed by Congress to retire superannuated officers from the active service. This duty completed, he was appointed to the command of the expedition organized for the capture of New Orleans. He sailed from Hampton Roads on the 3d of February, 1862, in the flagship *Hartford* and arrived seventeen days later at Ship Island, the place of rendezvous. There he set to work to make his arrangements for the great task which was wholly different from any that had ever engaged his attention. But how well he completed this grand work, he being the real supervisor and superintendent, has been referred to in a previous chapter and is told in every history of our country.

CAPTURE OF NEW ORLEANS—ATTACK ON FORT PHILIP.  
**CAPTURE OF NEW ORLEANS—ATTACK ON FORT PHILIP.**

The skill and courage displayed by Farragut in the capture of New Orleans attracted national attention and added greatly to his reputation. In the latter part of June he ran the batteries of Vicksburg, but notified the Government that though he could go up and down the river as he chose and silence the batteries when he pleased, no substantial good would result unless a land force of ten or twelve thousand men attacked the town from the rear. It was this plan which brought about the capture of Vicksburg by General Grant and the opening of the Mississippi River. Farragut, who had been made rear admiral, afforded great aid in taking Port Hudson and cleaning out all rebel fortifications along the Father of Waters.

This immense work having been accomplished, the Government now gave its attention to Mobile, another of the Confederate strongholds in the South. The campaign arranged was to attack it with a land force under the command of Generals Canby and Granger and a naval force under Farragut. In January, 1864, he made a reconnaissance of Mobile Bay and informed the Government that if it

would supply him with a slight additional force he would attack and capture it at once. He knew that the defences were being strengthened every day and repeatedly urged that he be furnished with the means of making an immediate assault. But the ill-advised and disastrous expedition of Banks up the Red River took away the available troops and the appeal of Farragut remained unheeded until the summer was well advanced.

By that time the defences of Mobile were well nigh impregnable. Fort Gaines, on Dauphin Island, had a garrison of 864 men and mounted three 10-inch columbiads, four 32-pounder rifled guns and twenty smoothbore guns of 32, 24 and 18-pound calibres. The principal pass to Mississippi Sound was commanded by Fort Powell, with one mounted 10-inch gun, one 8-inch columbiad and four rifled guns. The main fortification was Fort Morgan, whose heavy guns were placed in three tiers. It mounted seven 10-inch, three 8-inch and twenty-two 32-pounder smoothbore guns and two 8-inch, two 6.5-inch and four 5.82-inch rifled guns. The exterior batteries were also heavily armed and the garrison numbered 640 men. The bay was filled with skilfully placed torpedoes, some of them of stupendous size and power and sufficient, it would seem, if properly handled, to destroy all the navies of the world.

All arrangements being completed, the signal for the advance was hoisted at daylight, August 5, 1864. The Union fleet consisted of 21 wooden vessels and 6 ironclads. The wooden vessels sailed in pairs, the larger on the starboard, so that if either was disabled the other could carry it along. Farragut's intention was to lead with the flagship *Hartford*, but he reluctantly allowed the *Brooklyn* to take that post, since she carried four chase guns to the *Hartford's* one and was provided with an ingenious apparatus for picking up torpedoes. It was contended further that the flagship would be the special target of the enemy, a fact that was likely to cripple her and prevent the employment of the all-important signals. The last argument bore no weight with Farragut, who replied that she would be the chief target anyway, no matter what the position, and exposure to fire was one of the penalties of rank in the navy. The monitors were to advance in single file, slightly in advance of the wooden ships, the *Tecumseh*, Commander Tunis A.M. Craven, in the lead.

IN MOBILE BAY.  
**IN MOBILE BAY.**

In this order the slow advance was begun and at a few minutes past seven the *Tecumseh* fired the first gun. The forts waited twenty minutes when they replied,

and the *Brooklyn* responded with two 100-pounder Parrot rifles. Under the protection of Fort Morgan nestled the Confederate rams and ironclads, which directed their fire principally at the wooden vessels. The great battle was opened.

The enemy's gunboats and the ram *Tennessee* moved out from behind the fort and continued firing at the wooden boats, giving principal attention, as was expected, to the flagship, which was struck several times. She soon began returning the fire, still advancing, and repeatedly drove the gunners from the water batteries, but they immediately returned and kept bravely at work.

Smokeless powder was unknown in those days, and, as the vapor enfolded the ships, Farragut kept stepping up the rigging almost unconsciously until he was so high that he was clinging to the futtock shrouds. He had his spyglass in one hand and kept raising it to his eyes. Captain Percival Drayton had been closely watching the Admiral and now became alarmed, lest some damage to the ropes should cause him to fall overboard. He told Signal Quartermaster Knowles to climb the rigging and secure Farragut to the shrouds. He obeyed and passed a lead line to one of the forward shrouds and then drew it around the Admiral to the after shroud and made it fast. Feeling the faithful officer at work, the Admiral looked down kindly at him and said: "Never mind me, I am all right." But Knowles persisted and did not descend until he had completed his work.

By and by the increasing smoke made it necessary for the commander to ascend still higher, in order to maintain a clear view of the battle. He untied the fastenings, and, climbing to the futtock shrouds, passed the rope once more around his body several times and tied the end to the rigging. The picture of Admiral Farragut thus lashed to the rigging has been seen thousands of times in the histories of the Civil War.

While in this perilous position he signalled for closer order. The bombardment of the fort was terrific and produced great effect. Commander Craven, with the *Tecumseh*, singled out the ram *Tennessee*, under the command of Admiral Franklin Buchanan, who had charge of the *Merrimac* on the first day of her fight with the *Monitor*. Both were ironclads and Buchanan was as anxious to fight Craven as the latter was to fight him. Craven, fearing his adversary would retreat, pressed forward so eagerly that he paid no attention to the torpedoes over which his hull was continually scraping. One or more of these suddenly exploded, the front dipped and the *Tecumseh* plunged bow foremost to the bottom of the bay, carrying with her 93 men out of a crew of 114.



This appalling disaster was accompanied by a touching incident. When the *Tecumseh* was diving downward Commander Craven and the pilot instinctively started for the opening through which only one man could pass at a time. They reached the foot of the ladder at the same moment. "You first," said Craven, halting. The pilot just succeeded in scrambling out, when the *Tecumseh* went down, taking her heroic captain with her.

The terrible occurrence was witnessed by friends and foes. A boat was quickly lowered from the *Metacomet* and sent to the relief of the survivors. It passed within a hundred yards of Fort Morgan, which could have easily blown it out of the water. But General Page, the Confederate commandant, knowing her errand, gave the order not to harm the boat, which was on its way to save drowning men. His soldiers broke into cheers, but he sternly stopped them, with the advice to wait till the *Hartford* was sunk. The boat picked up ten men and officers, while four swam to the beach and were made prisoners.

When the lull was over Farragut headed his ship for the fort, signalling to the remainder of the fleet, which followed close after him. When warned of the torpedoes the wrathful Admiral came near adding a little profanity to his contemptuous opinion of them as he passed on. Wheeling, he launched his whole broadside at the fort, then delivered a second at the *Tennessee* and headed for the gunboats *Selma*, *Gaines* and *Morgan*, all of which were raking him. Casting off his consort, the *Metacomet*, he sent her after the *Selma*, and, after a hot chase, she captured her. The other two took to shallow water under the guns of the fort.

The ships, having passed the latter, were about to anchor when the *Tennessee* was perceived coming straight for the fleet, with the intention of attacking it. Farragut signalled to the vessels to run her down and ordered the pilot of the *Hartford* to drive her with full speed at the ironclad. The *Monongahela* was the first to reach the monster, struck her fairly, and, swinging around, let fly with a broadside of 11-inch shot, which dropped harmlessly from her mailed side. Undaunted, the *Monongahela* rammed her again, though she received ten times as much damage as she inflicted. The *Lackawanna* passed through a somewhat similar experience but a gunner drove a 9-inch shell into one of the shutters, which was shattered and forced within the casemate. The crews were so close that they taunted each other through the portholes and even hurled missiles across the brief intervening space.

At this juncture the *Hartford* arrived, charging full speed upon the ram, which so shifted its position that the blow was a glancing one. Recoiling, the flagship

delivered its most tremendous broadside, doing no harm, while the *Hartford* itself was pierced again and again by the exploding shells which strewed her deck with dead and dying. Nothing daunted, Farragut prepared to ram once more, when his ship was badly injured by an accidental blow from the *Lackawanna*. But Farragut, seeing that she still floated, called for a full head of steam that he might deliver a blow that was likely to send his own ship to the bottom.

By this time the slower going monitors had arrived and were getting in their fine work. The *Tennessee's* smokestack was shot away, her stern port shutter was disabled, making the gun useless, while her steering chains were smashed. Like a stag beset by a pack of hounds, she was brought to her knees. The white flag was raised, and the sorely battered *Tennessee* became the captive of the Union fleet. The forts were passed and the victory of Mobile Bay was secure.

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But it had cost dearly. In addition to the men lost on the *Tecumseh*, there had been 25 killed and 28 wounded on the *Hartford*, 11 killed and 43 wounded on the *Brooklyn*, the total of all, including those lost on the *Tecumseh*, being 145 killed and 170 wounded. The Confederate loss was 12 killed, 20 wounded and 280 prisoners.

Fort Powell was subjected to a severe bombardment that afternoon and on the following night was abandoned and blown up. Fire being opened on Fort Gaines, it also surrendered. Fort Morgan, the only fort in the possession of the enemy, surrendered August 23, before an attack of the navy and the land forces under General Granger from New Orleans.

Soon after this splendid victory Admiral Farragut went North, where he was received with all possible honors. The war ending soon after, his inestimable services came to a close. That no reward might be lacking, the office of vice-admiral was specially created for him in December, 1864, and that of admiral in 1866. He died in 1870.



# **THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR**

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## CHAPTER XXX.

### **The Movement Against Cuba—The Destruction of Cervera's Fleet—Admiral Sampson—Admiral Schley—"Fighting Bob" Evans—Commodore John C. Watson—Commodore John W. Philip—Lieutenant Commander Richard Wainwright.**

Since the war with Spain was undertaken for the liberation of Cuba from the most frightful atrocities that mind can conceive, it was natural that the chief attention of our Government should be directed to the expulsion of the Spaniards from that island. Neither the Ladrones nor Philippines entered into the question; but, inasmuch as they were valuable possessions of Spain, their conquest was a natural and effective blow against the nation with which we were at war.

In view of what subsequently occurred, we can smile at the general uneasiness and fear which prevailed in this country at the opening of hostilities regarding the fleets of Spain. She was known to have a formidable navy and a great many believed it was superior to our own. There was no telling where it would strike the first blow. Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington and other seaboard cities made powerful preparations against the dread fleet, which in truth was no more to be feared than the ferryboats on the North River, and yet but for the preparations referred to it is more than probable we should have suffered.

The most formidable fleet was under the command of Admiral Cervera. Our own squadrons were engaged for weeks in hunting for it, and it was reported in a dozen different places. Finally it was learned that it had taken refuge in the harbor of Santiago, the city of that name being besieged by the land forces under General Shafter. Immediately the American fleet of Admiral Sampson blockaded the ships of the enemy, determined to hold it powerless inside the broad harbor, for it followed, as a matter of course, that so long as it was bottled up there it could do nothing to help Spain.

No one could know his weakness better than the Spanish Admiral. He had fine ships and fine guns, but his crews were undisciplined. They were wretched marksmen and in no respect to be compared with our gunners, who demonstrated in the War of 1812 that they have no equals in the whole world.

Knowing all this, Admiral Cervera was loth to venture out of the harbor of Santiago, and the days and weeks passed in idleness while the monotonous blockade continued.

ADMIRAL CERVERA.  
**ADMIRAL CERVERA.**

It was the fear that the Spanish ships would make a dash on some dark, stormy night and escape that led to one of the most striking and brilliant exploits of the war. That is the sinking of the collier *Merrimac* in the channel of the harbor by Lieutenant Richmond Pearson Hobson, on the night of June 3. That the effort was not wholly successful does not detract from the glory of the brave men who went unflinchingly to what looked like almost certain death.

The companions of Lieutenant Hobson in this remarkable achievement were Osborn Deignan, George F. Phillips, Francis Kelly, George Charette, Daniel Montague, J.C. Murphy and Randolph Clausen. The last named was not one of the original six chosen, but he had been at work on the *Merrimac* preparing her for the attempt and hid himself away on the lumberesome craft and they were obliged to take him.

As soon as the Spaniards discovered the approach of the *Merrimac*, in the darkness, they opened upon her with their batteries from both shores, and she was subjected to a fire which it would seem must riddle her like a sieve and kill every man. But under the direction of the cool-headed and daring Lieutenant the collier was swung into the right position, and, but for the shooting away of the rudder, would have been sunk directly across the channel, which would have been effectively blocked. The position of the wreck as a consequence was diagonal and left the passage partly open.

LIEUTENANT RICHMOND PEARSON HOBSON.  
**LIEUTENANT RICHMOND PEARSON HOBSON.**

Having accomplished as nearly as possible the perilous task the brave party were obliged to remain clinging to a raft until morning, when the Spaniards discovered and made them prisoners. Admiral Cervera himself helped to take Hobson out of the water and was so filled with admiration of the extraordinary daring of himself and companions that he sent a flag of truce to Admiral Sampson with the welcome news that all the men were safe in his hands. They were confined first in Morro Castle and later in the city of Santiago. They were treated with the respect their heroism deserved and on July 6 were exchanged for

a number of prisoners held by our forces.

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Just one month after this exploit, that is on the morning of July 3, 1898, Admiral Cervera attempted to escape from the harbor of Santiago. The smoke of his vessels was discerned over the hills, and the watchful ships outside signalled the fact to the other members of the squadron. A few minutes later the bow of one of the Spanish steamers came into sight from behind the Estrella Battery. The *Brooklyn*, *Iowa* and *Oregon*, some two and a half miles distant, crowded on all steam and headed for the harbor. The first Spanish cruiser to show itself was the *Infanta Maria Teresa*, followed by the *Vizcaya*, the *Almirante Oquendo* and the *Cristobal Colon*, with the torpedo boats *Pluton* and *Furor* bringing up the rear. The *Infanta Maria Teresa*, leading the procession, was the flagship of Admiral Cervera. He sent a shell toward the American vessels, but, in accordance with the rule, it went wide of the mark. The *Texas* opened with her big guns and her companions quickly joined in the thunderous chorus.

No sooner were the Spanish ships clear of the harbor than they turned westward and strained every nerve to escape, firing at their pursuers, who were equally determined to overtake or destroy them. The *Brooklyn*, further away from shore, changed her course so as to follow a parallel direction, and, as soon as she attained a fair range, opened a tremendous and well directed fire. The *Texas*, whose course was somewhat diagonal, singled out the *Vizcaya*, and, unable to outspeed her, pounded her savagely with her shells.

CAPTAIN JOHN PHILIP, OF THE "TEXAS."  
**CAPTAIN JOHN PHILIP, OF THE "TEXAS."**

Every movement of the splendid battleship was directed by her Captain, John W. Philip. The *Texas* was struck several times, but did not receive any material damage, while she wrought frightful havoc on the *Vizcaya*.

The *Oregon*, the finest ship in our navy, which had come more than 14,000 miles from the Pacific coast, was ploughing forward under forced draught, and, with a tremendous burst of speed, shot past the *Texas* and drew up on the *Brooklyn* in the effort to head off the leading fugitive, while the *Iowa* was doing her utmost to maintain her killing pace and was firing her great guns with splendid precision. Suddenly the *Vizcaya* broke into flames and headed for shore. Knowing that she was doomed, the *Brooklyn* and *Oregon* gave her a few parting

shots and kept up their furious pursuit of the *Almirante Oquendo* and the *Cristobal Colon*.

Just then the torpedo boat destroyers *Pluton* and *Furor* were discovered speeding also to the westward. Lieutenant Commander Richard Wainwright, who was an officer on the *Maine* when she was destroyed, was now in command of the auxiliary cruiser *Gloucester*, and, without hesitation, he dashed after the destroyers, though for a part of the time he received the fire of Morro Castle, the *Vizcaya* and both of the dangerous craft he was chasing. But the *Gloucester* seemed to bear a charmed life, or, more truthfully speaking, the Spanish gunners didn't know how to shoot.

Unfortunately for Admiral Sampson, he had gone some miles away to hold a conference with General Shafter when the Spanish fleet made its attempt to escape, but he now came up with the *New York*, eagerly rushing forward to bear a hand in the fight. The *Pluton* and *Furor* fled before her, while the *Indiana* shelled the first destroyer so mercilessly that she turned and headed for the mouth of the harbor, several miles distant. The vigilant *Gloucester* joined the *Indiana* and one of the destroyers displayed a flag of truce. She was ablaze from bow to stern and her crew ran her ashore, where she blew up. The second was also beached and deserted by her crew. Meanwhile the *Vizcaya* ran up the white flag and the *Texas* stopped firing. She, like the *Infanta Maria Teresa*, was on fire and her crews could do nothing but take to the shore in the desperate effort to save themselves.

The *Almirante Oquendo* and the *Colon* were still fleeing for life, with the *Iowa*, *Oregon*, *Brooklyn* and *Texas* hard after them. Suddenly the *Almirante Oquendo* turned toward shore. The *Brooklyn* and *Oregon* kept after the *Cristobal Colon*, leaving the *Texas* to dispose of the *Almirante Oquendo*. But the latter was in flames and the flag at her stern was pulled down. The *Texas* was approaching when the Spanish ship was torn by a tremendous explosion. The Americans broke into cheers. Captain Philip threw up his hand and called:

"Don't cheer, boys; the poor fellows are dying!"

It was chivalrous and thoughtful on the part of the American commander and will never be forgotten.

The *Cristobal Colon* steamed along the coast with the speed of a race horse, but the *Brooklyn*, *Texas* and *Oregon* seemed to feel the prick of the spur and ran as never before and as their captains did not believe them capable of doing. The

*Brooklyn* gradually drew ahead and the Spaniard, seeing that escape was out of the question, hauled down his flag. Thus the victory became complete.

The news was just in time to help in the universal rejoicing and celebration of the Fourth of July. The Spanish fleet on the other side of the globe had been destroyed and now the second fleet was wiped out. In the former instance not a life was lost and in the latter only one man was killed on our side, while the loss of the enemy was severe. Never was a more decisive victory gained by one nation over another in the whole history of the world.

All my readers are familiar with the events that immediately followed, but perhaps they would like to know something concerning the naval heroes who did so much to contribute to the grand naval victory off Santiago.

William T. Sampson was born in Palmyra, N.Y., February 9, 1840. He was the son of an ordinary day laborer and had few early educational advantages, but he was appointed to the Naval Academy and was graduated at the head of his class. He was on the frigate *Potomac*, with the rank of master, when the war broke out, but was too young to secure a command during the war. He became a lieutenant in July, 1862, and served with that rank on the practice ship *John Adams* at the Naval Academy and on the ironclad *Patapsco*. On January 15, 1865, the *Patapsco* attempted to force an entrance into the harbor of Charleston, which was one network of mines. Sampson exposed himself fearlessly and the ship met with a fearful disaster by being blown up by a submarine mine. Seventy went down to death as did those on the *Maine*, while Sampson and more than a score of others, after being blown a hundred feet through the air, saved themselves by swimming until they were picked up. Sampson was commissioned as lieutenant commander in 1866, was at the Naval Academy from 1868 to 1871, cruised for two years in European waters and first commanded the *Alert* in 1874. Appointed to the superintendency of the Naval Academy in 1888, he held the situation for four years.

With the construction of the new navy, Sampson commanded in turn two modern ships, the cruiser *San Francisco* and the battleship *Iowa*. He was a close student of ordnance matters, gave special attention to torpedo work and was chief of the Bureau of Naval Ordnance from 1893 to 1897. There can be no question of his fine ability nor that, had the opportunity presented, Rear Admiral Sampson, as he had become, would have proven himself among the foremost officers in our navy. It was a great personal misfortune that he happened to be absent from the front of Santiago when the Spanish fleet made its venture, but it must not be



forgotten that, in anticipation of such action, he had planned the battle that was fought by the American ships.

VIEW OF CHARLESTON HARBOR, SHOWING THE SUNKEN VESSELS.  
**VIEW OF CHARLESTON HARBOR, SHOWING THE SUNKEN  
VESSELS.**

Winfield Scott Schley was born in Frederick, Md., October 9, 1839, and was graduated from the Naval Academy at the beginning of the Civil War. After brief service on the storeship *Potomac* he was promoted to master in 1861, and served on the *Winona*, of the West Gulf blockading squadron, 1862-63. He there gained a taste of real war and performed a number of exploits which proved his coolness and daring. He received honorable mention for his services in the engagements which led to the capture of Port Hudson. He was commissioned lieutenant in July, 1862, and was executive officer of the *Wateree* from 1864 to 1865, having been made lieutenant commander in July, 1866, after which he spent three years again at the Naval Academy, serving as instructor of modern languages.

Admiral Schley has done brilliant service outside of what is generally considered the routine duty of his profession. When he was in Eastern waters in 1864 he landed 100 men, who protected the American consulate when threatened during a native insurrection among the natives of the Chin-Chi Islands. His most famous exploit was the rescue of the Greely Arctic expedition. In 1881 Lieutenant Adolphus W. Greely commanded an expedition of twenty-five men, which established an observation station at the farthest point in the polar regions then attained. The expedition, when in a starving condition and with only seven men alive, was rescued at Cape Sabine, Grinnell Land, in 1884 by Captain Schley. He was rewarded for this service by a gold medal from Congress and promoted by President Arthur to chief of the Bureau of Equipment and made captain in 1888.

COMMODORE WINFIELD SCOTT SCHLEY.  
**COMMODORE WINFIELD SCOTT SCHLEY.**

After resigning this position Captain Schley commanded the cruiser *Baltimore*, which bore the remains of Ericsson, the great Swedish inventor, to his native land, whose king presented Schley with a gold medal in recognition of this service. He won the commendation of the Navy Department for his tactful success in settling threatened trouble over the stoning of a number of American

sailors from the *Baltimore* by a party of Chilians at Valparaiso. Commodore Schley is a fine tactician, possesses a winning personality and his work with the *Brooklyn*, off Santiago, on July 3, was neither more nor less than his friends expected of him.

Robley D. Evans, known everywhere as "Fighting Bob," was born in Virginia in 1846. When his father died he made his home with his uncle in Washington, D.C., where he attended Gonzaga College. In 1859 a Congressional Representative from Utah appointed him to the Naval Academy. It was necessary for the boy to take up a nominal residence in that distant territory, and on the journey thither and back he encountered many personal dangers through all of which he conducted himself with the pluck and bravery which afterward distinguished him in the service of his country. He entered the academy in 1860 and upon his graduation became a midshipman and ensign, first on the frigate *Powhatan*, and before he had attained his majority took part in the desperate assault on Fort Fisher. He was stretched on the ground, dreadfully wounded and with so many dead men piled upon him that he barely escaped suffocation. He was wounded twice in the body and shot through both legs. It seemed scarcely possible for him to live, and he lay in the hospital for months. But when a surgeon prepared to amputate one of his legs Evans, who had managed to procure a revolver, warned him that upon his first attempt to do so he would shoot him. The leg was saved, but Evans was lamed for life.

CAPTAIN ROBLEY D. EVANS, OF THE "IOWA."  
**CAPTAIN ROBLEY D. EVANS, OF THE "IOWA."**

As soon as he was able to get about he applied for active service and his application was granted. He was engaged in various duties and in October, 1891, he arrived in command of the *Yorktown* at Valparaiso, directly after the attack of a mob of Chilians upon the sailors of the *Baltimore*. When some of the refugees fled for safety to the *Yorktown* and the Chilians demanded their surrender "Fighting Bob" replied that he would defend them until the *Yorktown* went to the bottom. Some time later the captain's launch was stoned, for the Chilians hated the Americans as intensely as did the Spaniards. Captain Evans placed a rapid fire gun in the bow of the launch, filled her with armed men and went ashore. Hunting out the authorities, he notified them that if any more stones were thrown at his launch he would make life a burden for every Chilian within reach of the *Yorktown's* guns. The launch was not stoned again.

It is a mistaken though general impression of "Fighting Bob" that he is simply a

headlong and reckless fighter. Such is far from being the case, for he is deliberate, thoughtful and tactful. He is a fine scholar, possesses a thorough knowledge of international law and is simply resolute in protecting the rights of himself and countrymen. This was proven by his conduct when in charge of the American fleet in the Bering Sea, placed there to prevent the illegal killing of seals. There was a good deal of friction at that time between this country and England and had Captain Evans been the reckless "scrapper" that many supposed he could not have failed to involve us in trouble with that country. There was not a word of censure upon his course. Out of 108 vessels engaged in the illegal trade he captured 98 and of the several hundred seals unlawfully killed he captured every one. Like all the other officers and sailors who took part in the destruction of Cervera's fleet, he was energetic, skilful, brave and chivalrous, for when Captain Eulate, of the captured *Vizcaya*, offered his sword to the Captain of the *Iowa* that gentleman kindly waved him back and told him to keep the weapon he had used so well.

Captain Evans does not like the name "Fighting Bob", for he feels he has no more claim to the distinction than the rest of his associates. Many of the stories told of his roughness of speech and profanity are not true, though it cannot be denied that he has a habit of expressing himself very vigorously when his feelings are stirred. By his own request, Captain Evans was relieved, September 15, 1898, of the command of the *Iowa*, he having served more than his regular term of sea service. At present he is a member of the Board of Inspection and Survey.

John C. Watson was born in Frankfort, Ky., August 24, 1842, and is a member of one of the leading families of the State. He entered the Naval Academy at the age of fourteen and was graduated near the head of his class in June, 1860. He was a midshipman on the *Susquehanna* in Europe, at the breaking out of the war, and was made master in August, 1861.

It is proof of the worth of the man that he was assigned as navigator of the flagship *Hartford*, commanded by the lion-hearted Farragut. He became lieutenant in June, 1862, and flag lieutenant to Farragut in January, 1864.

The reader of these pages has learned something of the great battles of New Orleans, Mobile Bay, Vicksburg and Port Hudson. Watson took part in all of them and none acquitted himself better. In a letter to his son, Admiral Farragut wrote: "I am almost as fond of Watson as I am of your own dear self." In his report of the battle of Mobile Bay, where Watson was wounded, Farragut wrote:

"Lieutenant Watson has been brought to your attention in former times. He was on the poop attending to the signals and performed his duty, as might be expected, thoroughly. He is a scion worthy of the noble stock he springs from, and I commend him to your attention."

A squadron of invincible power was made up for Watson in the summer of 1898, with which it was intended Commodore Watson should pay a hostile visit to the coast of Spain. But for the signing of the peace protocol, that visit under its gallant and distinguished commander would have proved one that the decrepit monarchy would remember to the end of time.

Captain John W. Philip, promoted to the rank of commodore for his superb work with the *Texas* off Santiago, is brave, modest, devout and fond of practical joking. He is genial, exceedingly popular with his associates and men and one of the finest officers in the navy. The little incident well illustrates his character, when, in the midst of the wild rejoicing of his men over the destruction of the Spanish fleet, he checked them with the words: "Don't cheer, boys; the poor fellows are dying!"

Lieutenant Commander Richard Wainwright performed an unequalled exploit when in command of the *Gloucester*, formerly the yacht *Corsair*, he wiped out the two torpedo boat destroyers *Pluton* and *Furor*. At the time of that exploit he was only forty-eight years old and the youngest man of his grade in the navy. He is a fine officer and is a son of the late Commodore Wainwright, who died in the service of his country during the Civil War. Like many of our naval heroes, he seems to inherit his fine fighting qualities, though it would not be far from the truth to say that such is the rightful heritage of every American soldier and sailor.

[THE END.]

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