



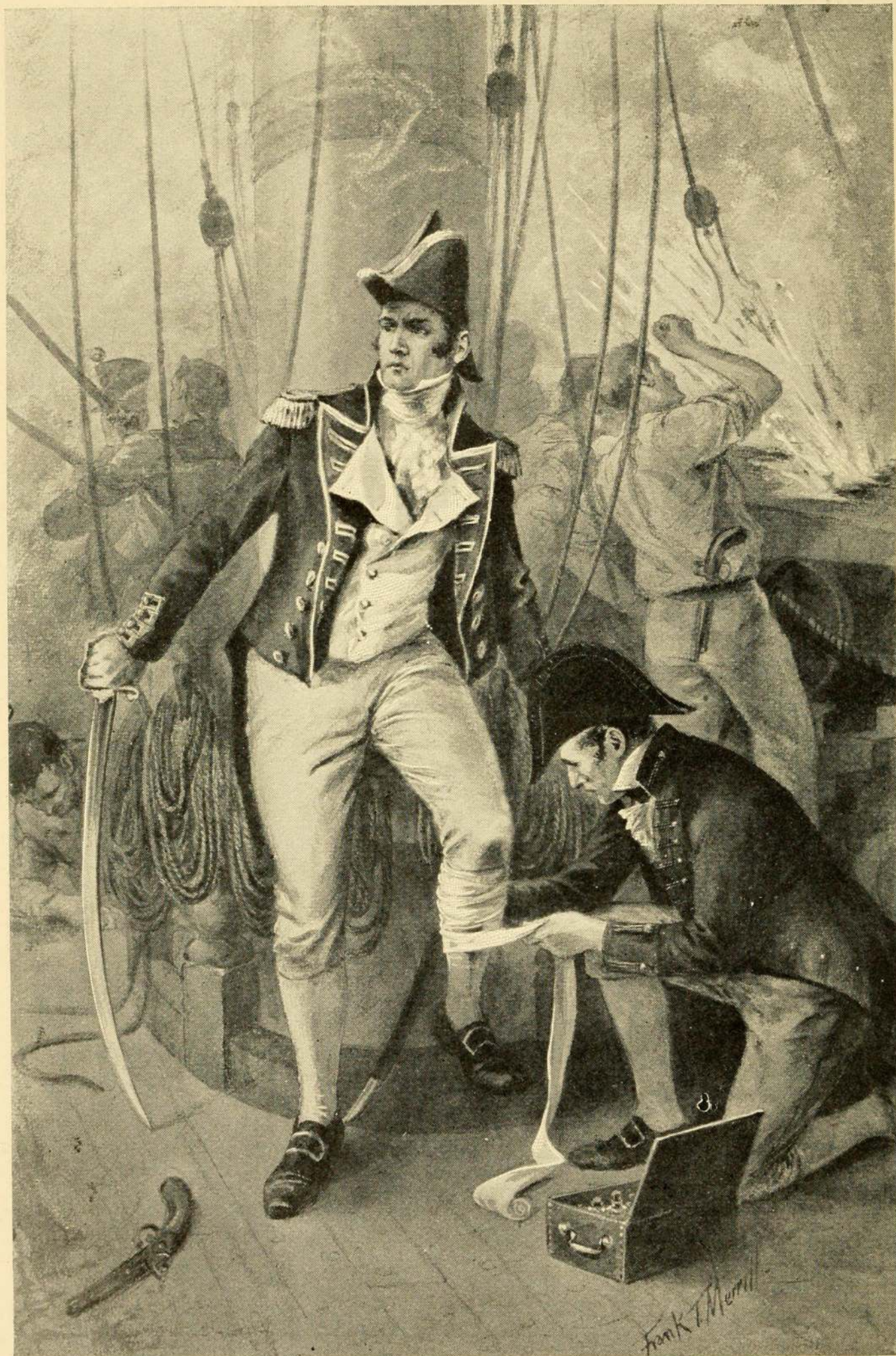
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LEANING AGAINST A MAST HE STAYED ON DECK AND DIRECTED THE BATTLE. FRONTISPIECE. *See Page 84.*



# Heroic Deeds of American Sailors

BY

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AND

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"The English History Story-Book," etc.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

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Boston

Little, Brown, and Company

1915



E182  
B63

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Published, September, 1915

Bo. 70

Set up and electrotyped by J. S. Cushing Co., Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.  
Presswork by S. J. Parkhill & Co., Boston, Mass., U.S.A.

© Cl. A 411546

SEP 16 1915

No. 1.



## PREFACE

THIS book is intended for young people between the ages of eleven and fifteen. It is also designed for collateral reading in connection with the study of one or more of the formal elementary textbooks on American history.

The authors have attempted to set forth with some fullness of detail a number of dramatic and picturesque events to illustrate the perils and bravery of our heroes of the sea, in the hope of stimulating young people to further reading of maritime and other history. The stories herein narrated have been rewritten or adapted from trustworthy sources, and contain such incidents and anecdotes as are likely to hold the attention because of their human interest.

It is suggested that teachers and parents supplement these narratives with other historical



## PREFACE

material obtained at school, in the home, or from the public library.

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ALBERT F. BLAISDELL,  
FRANCIS K. BALL.

AUGUST, 1915.



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# HEROIC DEEDS OF AMERICAN SAILORS

## I

### “OLD IRONSIDES”

**I**T was on a hot August afternoon, a little over one hundred years ago. About seven hundred miles north-east of Boston two of the finest warships in the world met in a fierce battle. One was the British frigate *Guerrière*; the other the American frigate *Constitution*, ever since known as “Old Ironsides.”

All was hurry and bustle on board the *Constitution*.

“Clear for action,” sounded the boatswain’s shrill whistle, and every man hurried to his place.



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The *Guerrière* flung out a flag from each topmast. "Bang! bang!" flashed her big guns, but the cannon balls fell short.

The British frigate drew nearer and nearer, and poured in a broadside. Not a gun was fired from the *Constitution*.

"Shall we not fire, sir?" asked Lieutenant Morris.

"Not yet," replied Captain Hull.

Three times Morris asked leave to fire a broadside. Each time Hull answered, "Not yet."

The men at the double-shotted guns grew restless as the cannon balls of the enemy tore through the rigging and the splinters wounded the crew. Indeed, it was trying to be under a hot fire without being allowed to strike back.

Shortly the two warships were within pistol shot of each other.

"Now then, men, do your duty. Fire," shouted Captain Hull.

The *Constitution* fired a broadside at close



## “ OLD IRONSIDES ”

range. The shock was like an earthquake. It made sad havoc on the *Guerrière*. Her mizzenmast was shattered and fell overboard.

“Why, Jack, we have made a brig of her,” shouted a sailor to his mate.

“Wait a minute, and we will make a sloop of her,” was the answer.

The raking fire from the *Constitution* did indeed cut away the enemy's foremast and most of her rigging. In thirty minutes the proud British frigate was a helpless wreck in the trough of the sea.

It was during the hottest part of this famous battle that the *Constitution* got the nickname of “Old Ironsides.” As the story goes, a sailor saw a cannon ball strike the side of the vessel and fall back into the sea.

“Hurrah for Old Ironsides!” he shouted; “don't you see her sides are made of iron?”

However true the story may be, the name stuck to the glorious old frigate ever after.

This battle between the *Guerrière* and the *Constitution* is one of the most famous and



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glorious in the history of our navy. Stories have been told and retold about it that would fill a big book. All agree that Captain Hull proved himself a fearless naval officer. His skill in handling his vessel won for him the deepest respect and confidence. Sailors were always eager to ship with him. They knew that whatever stress or danger they might meet with, they had a true man and a skillful sailor to look after their welfare.

When Captain Dacres was climbing up the side of the American frigate to surrender his sword, Captain Hull went forward to meet his old friend. Reaching out his hand, he said, "Dacres, give me your hand; I know you are hurt, but I will thank you for that hat." It seems that these two old friends had bet a hat on the result of a possible battle between the two warships.

The *Guerrière* was so badly battered that Captain Hull gave orders to set her on fire. He asked Dacres if there was anything he wished to save from the ship.



## “ OLD IRONSIDES ”

“Yes,” said Dacres, “my mother’s Bible has been left behind. I have carried it with me for many years.”

From that day a still closer friendship began between these two gallant naval officers, and lasted until Hull’s death, thirty years afterward.

What a royal greeting was given Captain Hull and his men as “Old Ironsides” sailed into Boston Harbor! The people were wild with joy. Thousands of men, women, and children crowded the streets. The city was gay with flags and bunting. There was a grand banquet in Faneuil Hall with many patriotic speeches and stirring music.

The reason for this was plain. The war with England was well under way. Our people were feeling blue over the outlook. Trade was dead. Our merchant vessels were shut up in the harbors. British warships blockaded every important port. Captain Hull’s superb victory broke the charm. It was like a bright gleam in the darkest night.



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In this victory all parts of the country could rejoice. It belonged to the nation as a whole.

It was only a few weeks after her victory over the *Guerrière* that the *Constitution* fought her hardest fight. It took place off the coast of Brazil with the British frigate *Java*, a few days after Christmas in the year 1812.

Captain Lambert in command of the *Java* was held to be one of the ablest naval officers of his day. The *Constitution* sailed this time under the command of Captain Bainbridge. This officer, as you may remember, lost his frigate, the *Philadelphia*, off the harbor of Tripoli and was kept in prison for a long time.

At two o'clock this December afternoon the battle began with broadsides from both frigates. It was a sharp and lively fight. Bainbridge headed for the enemy, running great risk of being raked. The *Java* did little damage. Many of her shots went wild. By four o'clock the big guns of the *Constitu-*



## “ OLD IRONSIDES ”

tion had cut away everything except a part of the mainmast. The fine British frigate was now a helpless wreck. The Java had met the same fate as did the Guerrière. “Old Ironsides” lost her wheel during this battle, but too late in the action to do any harm. After the battle was over, the wheel of the Java was taken and put in place on the other ship.

A little story is often told about this wheel. One day, years afterwards, some British naval officers paid a visit to the Constitution.

“You have a fine vessel,” remarked one of them, “but I must say that you have an ugly wheel for so beautiful a frigate.”

“Yes,” replied the captain, “it is ugly. We lost our wheel in fighting the Java, and after the battle we replaced it with her wheel. Somehow we have never felt like changing it.”

In the battle with the Java, Captain Bainbridge was hit with a musket ball, and had also been wounded in the hip. He would not leave the deck. Captain Lambert, mor-



## HEROIC DEEDS OF AMERICAN SAILORS

tally wounded, was carried on board the Constitution, and laid in Captain Bainbridge's cabin. Everything was done to ease his pain.

Captain Bainbridge put the dying officer's sword into his hand and said, "I return your sword with my sincerest wish that you may recover and wear it with honor to yourself and to your country."

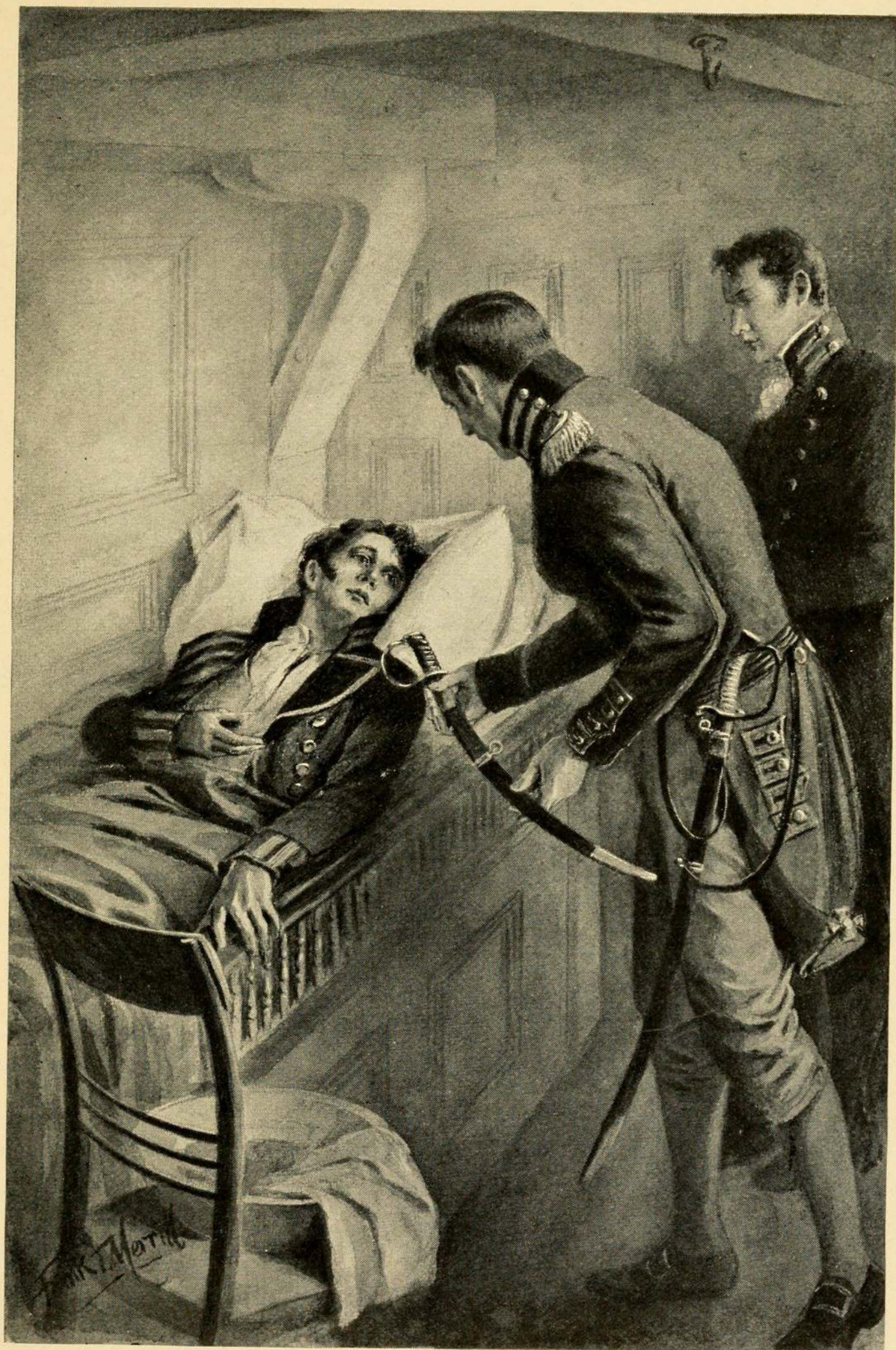
There was now another procession up State Street in Boston, and another banquet in Faneuil Hall, when Captain Bainbridge landed after his victory over the Java. And again they crowded to greet him when he set out by stage coach on his way to Washington.

One moonlight night, three years after her victory over the Java, "Old Ironsides" fought another famous battle off the Madeira Islands. She was now commanded by Captain Charles Stewart.

"My dear, what shall I bring you for a present?" said Captain Stewart to his young wife as he was setting sail.

"Bring me a British frigate."





CAPTAIN BAINBRIDGE PUT THE DYING OFFICER'S  
SWORD INTO HIS HAND. *Page 8.*







## “ OLD IRONSIDES ”

“My dear, I’ll bring you two,” smiled the gallant husband.

Late one October afternoon in 1815 the British frigate *Cyane* and the sloop of war *Levant* hove in sight.

Captain Stewart was one of the ablest sailors and most skillful fighters in the history of our navy. The seamanship shown in the battle between the *Constitution* and the two British warships has excited the wonder and admiration of naval experts. In just forty minutes the *Cyane* struck her colors. Before ten o’clock that same evening, under the bright light of a full moon, the *Levant*, a helpless wreck, hauled down her flag.

Single-handed Captain Stewart had fought and defeated two British men-of-war at one time. And that, too, with the loss of only three men killed and twelve wounded. Thus ended the last great battle of “Old Ironsides.”

Captain Stewart served his country faithfully for more than seventy years. He lived to be ninety-one.



## HEROIC DEEDS OF AMERICAN SAILORS

As for "Old Ironsides," it would take a book much larger than this to tell you all her exploits. We have no space to describe her remarkable escape from a British fleet. Our old friend Captain Isaac Hull was in command, and he proved himself every inch a sailor. After a chase of three days and two nights the British squadron gave up the pursuit. One week later Boston was nearly wild with joy when the grand old frigate ran the blockade and came to anchor in the harbor.

After the War of 1812 there was a long period of peace. "Old Ironsides" had carried her country's flag with dignity and honor. When the frigate was about thirty years old, she was called unseaworthy. The outside planking and the decks were half rotted away. Some officials at Washington decided to have the old vessel broken up and sold for junk.

Now we must keep in mind that the Constitution even from the first was a lucky vessel. She never lost a mast, and was



## “OLD IRONSIDES”

never badly injured in battle or in storm. Not one of her many captains died on board, and few of her crew were killed in action. Once more the good luck of the vessel came to her help.

It happened in this way. Oliver Wendell Holmes, a law student at Harvard College, read in the morning paper that it was planned to send the Constitution to the scrap heap. With a lead pencil he scribbled some verses and sent them to a Boston daily paper. This little poem of twenty-four lines appeared with the title of “Old Ironsides,” and aroused great enthusiasm. Far and wide it traveled through the country. In some of the large cities it was even printed as a handbill and scattered about the streets. Popular feeling swept everything before it. The officials at Washington saw their mistake. They made haste to revoke their order. The gallant old ship was saved. After all these years this spirited little poem will stir the blood of any American boy or girl.



## HEROIC DEEDS OF AMERICAN SAILORS

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down !  
Long has it waved on high,  
And many an eye has danced to see  
That banner in the sky ;  
Beneath it rung the battle shout,  
And burst the cannon's roar ; —  
The meteor of the ocean air  
Shall sweep the clouds no more !

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,  
Where knelt the vanquished foe,  
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,  
And waves were white below,  
No more shall feel the victor's tread,  
Or know the conquered knee ; —  
The harpies of the shore shall pluck  
The eagle of the sea !

O better that her shattered hulk  
Should sink beneath the wave ;  
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,  
And there should be her grave :  
Nail to the mast her holy flag,  
Set every threadbare sail,  
And give her to the god of storms,  
The lightning and the gale !

The fighting career of "Old Ironsides" lasted only about twelve years. She went out of commission nearly sixty years ago.



## “OLD IRONSIDES”

When the Civil War broke out, she was used as a training ship for the cadets at the Naval Academy in Newport, Rhode Island. Later she served as a receiving ship at the Portsmouth navy yard. In October, 1897, she was towed to the navy yard at Charlestown to take part in her centennial celebration. She is still to be seen lying at the wharf, in plain view of the thousands who pass that way daily.

The Constitution was built in Boston near what is now Constitution Wharf, only a few rods across the river from the navy yard. The best material was used. A man was sent to the South to select for her the live oak timbers, the red cedar, and the hard pine. In her long life of nearly one hundred and twenty years she has been partly rebuilt and repaired many times. Her floor frame and keel, hewn by hand from solid oak, are the same as when she bombarded the granite forts off the Barbary coast. Over these oak timbers floated the star-spangled banner and



## HEROIC DEEDS OF AMERICAN SAILORS

the pennants of the gallant men whose deeds have shed luster on the American navy.

There she lies, within the shadow of the large battleships and swift cruisers of our present navy, scarred and weather-beaten, a precious relic of the nation's glory.



## II

### THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GASPEE

**O**UR forefathers were thrifty and frugal. Even during the long and costly wars with the French and Indians the American colonies prospered. They built ships and made a good deal of money by trading with the West Indies. Their vessels carried out lumber, cloth, gunpowder, leather, and many other useful goods, and brought back molasses, sugar, rum, and kegs of silver dollars. At this time New England had more than five hundred vessels doing business along the coast and in foreign lands.

The European nations were treating their colonies in America after the selfish and narrow notions of the times. They made all manner of laws to squeeze money out of them. Twenty-five years before the battle



## HEROIC DEEDS OF AMERICAN SAILORS

of Bunker Hill twenty-nine acts of the British Parliament had been passed with the purpose of letting all the loss of trade fall on us while all the gain should accrue to the mother country; for the signs of prosperity in America did not please England.

“This will never do,” said the English rulers; “our colonies across the sea are getting rich trading with foreign people. We must stop it. We need the money to help to pay our war debt. We must force them to trade with us.”

It was a sorry day for our forefathers when, in 1760, George the Third, a young man of twenty, came to the English throne. He was narrow-minded, selfish, stubborn, and subject to attacks of mild insanity.

“My colonies in America,” said the dull monarch, “must pay our war debt and the cost of keeping my soldiers to enforce the laws.”

“We will not pay for your soldiers to stand guard over us,” was the reply; “and what



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is more, we will not pay taxes unless we have something to say about making the laws."

And so it came about that a quarrel was picked with our people. Harsh and unjust laws which had been a dead letter for years were brought to life and put in force.

Our ships could not bring home from the West Indies sugar and molasses without paying a tax. They could not carry goods to other countries or bring back any except from English colonies. All kinds of hardware must be bought in England. Farmers could not even make goods from the wool of their own sheep. Pine trees of a certain size were marked with an arrow to show that they must be saved for the king's navy. A settler could not cut down a tree on his own land to build his own house. To make bad matters worse the people were subject to general search warrants, called "writs of assistance." That is, a tax collector could put in the warrant any name he wished. He did not bother about the right and wrong



## HEROIC DEEDS OF AMERICAN SAILORS

of it. He could enter a private house and search for smuggled goods when and where he pleased. Since he was not held responsible for any rudeness or insult, he would often enter and search private houses purely out of spite.

Of course these unjust and harsh laws made a good deal of ill will toward the mother country. The quarrel grew more and more bitter as the years rolled by.

Our forefathers thought it right to evade the unjust revenue laws. And so in spite of war vessels that served as watch dogs along the coast, our merchants loaded their ships and sailed them out of port as best they could. On their return home these vessels evaded the revenue officers and brought in smuggled goods, in spite of the strict laws. In a word, our merchants did a good deal of smuggling.

At the time of our story trading vessels were doing a brisk business in smuggling goods into Newport and Providence. New-



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port was at this time one of the most important seaports on the coast. Shrewd men used to say that if New York continued to increase as rapidly as it was doing, it would soon rival Newport.

The royal revenue officers, with the aid of the warships stationed along the coast, were doing their best to put a stop to this illicit trade in Narragansett Bay. The king's tax collectors and the naval officers were too zealous in carrying out their orders. They greatly annoyed coasting vessels that were doing an honest business. The good people of Newport chafed under the yoke and were quick to seek revenge for the cruel and harsh treatment they received. Deeds of violence became common.

Ten years before the battle of Lexington, the Maidstone, a British warship, lay at Newport for several months. The captain of the vessel aroused the hatred of the citizens by his high-handed actions. He not only impressed sailors entering the harbor



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from foreign lands, but took them from ships and small craft in the bay.

The climax was reached one day when a brig from Africa sailed into Newport. The captain of the Maidstone boarded the ship and forced the entire crew into the king's service. That same night a crowd of five hundred men and boys seized one of the boats of the Maidstone, dragged it through the streets of the town to the common, and burnt it amid the shouts and cheers of the angry citizens.

Five years after this affair the warship Liberty fired on a brig entering the harbor, although no attempt had been made to evade the revenue laws. When the brig had lain at anchor for several days, her captain went on board the warship to claim the clothing that had been taken from his cabin. After some hot words he stepped into his boat to return, and was fired at several times.

The news of the insult quickly spread



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through the little town. That night a mob of angry citizens sprang over the gunwale of the Liberty. The crew were driven below. There was no bloodshed. The cable was cut and the vessel soon drifted ashore. With the first high tide the hulk of the ill-fated warship floated away and drifted ashore again on a neighboring island. During the night a mob of angry citizens rowed over and set her on fire. The Liberty was burned to the water's edge.

Of course, this defiance of the royal authority made a great stir. Every means was taken to find out and punish those who were concerned in the capture and destruction of the royal vessel. The name of not a single person who took part in this exploit was ever known.

While the people of Newport were still gossiping, another outbreak took place which surpassed the burning of the Liberty. This was the affair of the Gaspee. Some wise men claim that this was the real opening



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of the war between King George and his American colonies.

His Majesty's armed schooner, the Gaspee, under the command of Lieutenant Duddington, was first seen about Newport in the spring of 1772. This ship was also sent to break up the smuggling carried on along Narragansett Bay. The Gaspee was a clean-cut, swift little vessel carrying eight light cannon. She could easily overhaul any vessel on the coast.

The captain of the Gaspee went about his task with reckless zeal and rash judgment. He seized whatever goods he pleased, whether contraband or not. He stole the sheep, cattle, hogs, and poultry from the farmers along the shore. He cut down valuable trees and fired on market boats. Not a boat could sail between Newport and Providence without being searched. The result was that the over-zealous young captain made himself hated by the Rhode Island people for his insolent behavior and his foolhardy deeds.



## THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GASPEE

The angry people appealed to Admiral Montague, who was in command of the British fleet about Boston. The Admiral replied that Duddington was doing his duty, and threatened them if they dared to interfere with His Majesty's officers.

One day in early June, about noon, Captain Lindsey left Newport in his little packet named the Hannah to go to Providence. Soon after the Gaspee sailed in pursuit. The chase was kept up as far as Namquit Point, now Gaspee Point, which runs out into the bay seven miles below Providence. The Gaspee was fast overhauling the packet, when by some blunder of the pilot she ran aground on a sand bar. Amid the cheers and jeers of the crew the little packet Hannah sailed away and reached Providence about sunset.

Captain Lindsey rushed to the office of Mr. John Brown, one of the great merchants of the city, and urged him to act.

“The Gaspee will stick on that sand bar



until after midnight," he said; "and now is our time to put an end to the trouble and insults they have heaped on us."

"Rest assured, Captain Lindsey, I will attend to the matter at once."

Straightway the patriotic merchant ordered one of his trusty shipmasters to get together eight of the largest longboats in the harbor. His orders were to have the oars muffled, and to have boats anchored off Fenner's Wharf, near a noted tavern known as the Sabin House.

Soon after sunset a man walked through the main streets of Providence beating a drum and crying aloud: "The Gaspee is ashore on Namquit Point. Who will help to destroy her? Go to the Sabin House this evening."

Later in the evening all was hurry and bustle in the old tavern. Scores of sturdy men with their guns and powderhorns crowded into the great hall. Before the fireplace in the large kitchen men were busy casting bullets.



## THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GASPEE

Shortly before midnight sixty-four sturdy citizens, without disguise, were chosen and ordered to go on board the longboats at Fenner's Wharf. A veteran sea captain was selected to serve as steersman for each of the eight longboats. On the way down the river a number of paving stones and stout clubs were taken on board for those who had no guns.

"Who goes there?" sharply rang out across the water, when the boats came within sixty yards of the stranded Gaspee.

No answer was made, and the lookout quickly repeated his call.

"I want to come aboard," shouted Captain Whipple, one of the steersmen.

Captain Duddington, who was asleep in his cabin, now rushed on deck in his night clothes and cried out, "Stand off there, you Yankees, you can't come on board."

"The captain makes a good mark," said a young fellow, and thoughtlessly fired at him; the captain of the Gaspee fell to the deck.

Just then one of the leaders shouted, "I'm



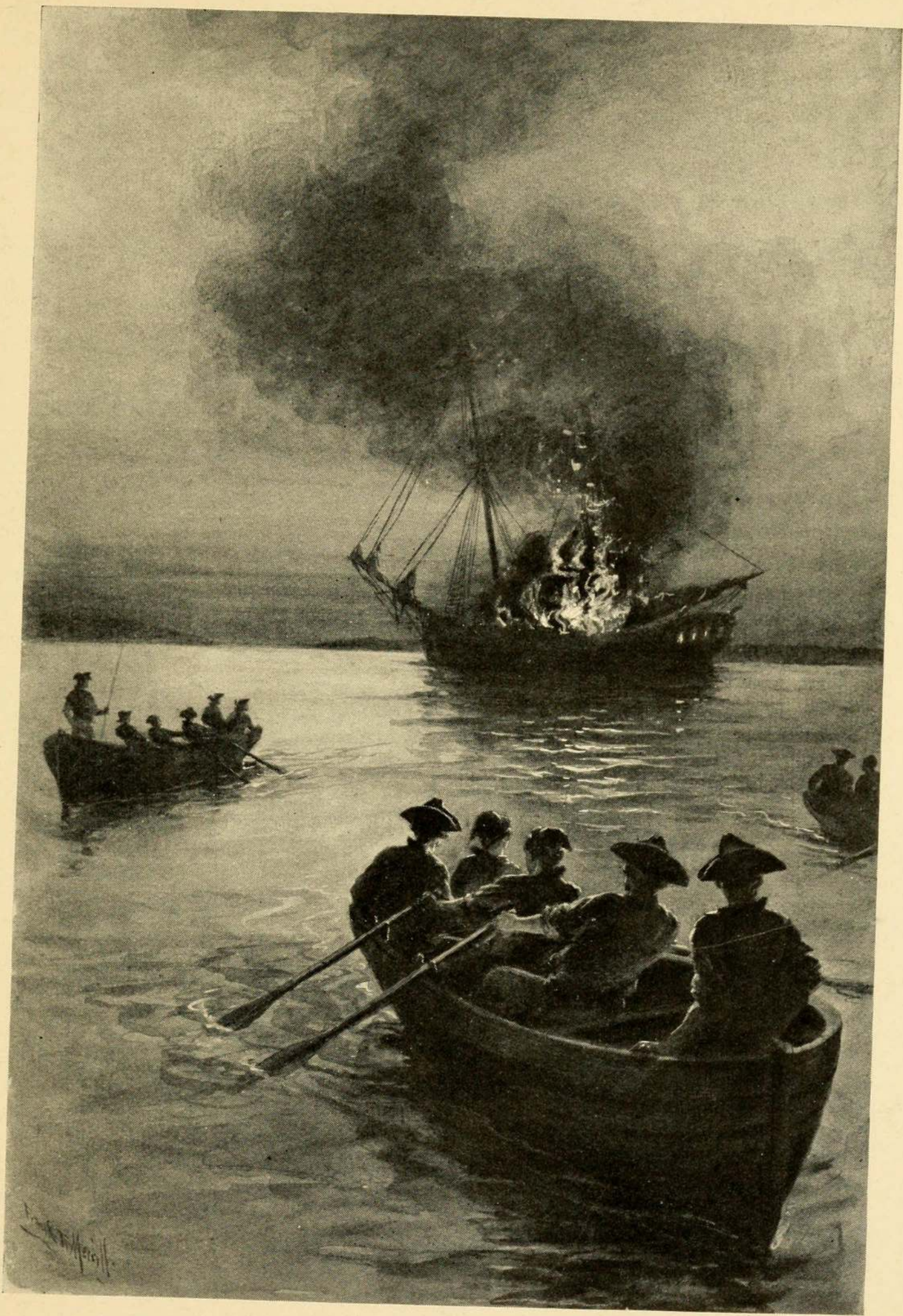
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the sheriff of Kent County. I must have the captain of this vessel, dead or alive. Boys, spring to your oars."

In another moment the eight boats were alongside the Gaspee. The men clambered to the deck, and drove the crew below. A young fellow of nineteen, a medical student, named John Mawney, was sent into the cabin to attend the wounded captain. Duddington was shot through the hip and bleeding freely. There were no bandages, and the young surgeon tore his own shirt into strips to bind up the wound. The injured officer was gently lowered into a boat and carried up the river to Providence.

Captain Duddington was so pleased with the young surgeon's skill that he offered him his gold stock-buckle. This gift was refused, but a silver buckle was offered and accepted. In after years young Mawney became a famous surgeon and lived to a great age. It is said that he wore this silver stock-buckle until the day of his death.





THE VESSEL WAS THEN SET ON FIRE, AND  
ABOUT SUNRISE BLEW UP. *Page 27.*







## THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GASPEE

The crew of the Gaspee were allowed to carry away their clothing. The personal baggage of Captain Duddington was carefully placed in one of the boats, to be delivered to the wounded officer. The men in the long-boats now began the work of destruction.

More than fifty years afterward Dr. Mawney wrote an account of the exploit. He tells us that some of the men made a rush for the captain's cabin, in which a large amount of strong drink was stored. He himself broke the bottles by stamping them to pieces with the heels of his heavy boots, and no scenes of drunkenness took place. The furniture and fixtures of the ill-fated vessel were broken up. The crew were hurried into boats and put ashore. The vessel was then set on fire, and about sunrise blew up.

In the early hours of a lovely June morning, the sturdy men of Providence rowed back to the city and quietly scattered to their homes.

Of course there was a great hue and cry among the royal officials over the insult to



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King George. The British government offered a reward of a thousand pounds for the leader of the expedition, and five hundred pounds to any person who would reveal the names of the guilty parties, with the promise of a pardon should the informer be an accomplice. No arrests were made.

Long letters were written and despatches sent to and fro by the king's officials in England and the royal officers in this country. Nothing came of them. A court of inquiry under the great seal of England was established, which sat for six months. Not a single clue was ever discovered, although most of those who took part in the exploit were known to the people of Providence.

All this seems hard to believe, for Mr. Howland, one of the party, in his old age said that on the morning after the affair a young fellow named Jacobs, with Duddington's gold-laced hat on his head, paraded on Great Bridge and gave the full details to a crowd of admiring friends. The secret of



## THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GASPEE

the names was kept for many years. Long after the war some of the men, who had become leading citizens, came forward and boasted of the part they had taken in the destruction of the Gaspee.

Four of the sixty-four who destroyed the Gaspee were mere lads, under nineteen years of age. They lived to take part, fifty-four years afterward, in the famous semicentennial of American Independence, July 4, 1826. The last survivor of the party was Colonel Bowen, who, at the age of eighty-six, wrote a most readable story of what took place on that eventful June night in Narragansett Bay.



### III

#### A LEAP FOR LIFE

**T**HE gallant frigate "Old Ironsides" had made a long cruise on the western coast of Africa in search of slave traders. She was now lying at anchor in a little harbor near Gibraltar. It was nearly sunset on a lovely summer day. The breeze of the morning had died away, and not a breath of air disturbed the quiet of the scene.

Even on board the frigate there was unusual stillness. The upper deck was almost deserted. The quartermaster of the watch, spyglass in hand, standing aft on the taffrail, was motionless as a statue. A group of some half dozen sailors had gathered on the fore-castle, where they were lying under the shade of the bulwarks. Here and there along the gangway sat three or four others. One with



his clothes bag beside him was overhauling his simple wardrobe. Another was working on a hammock for some favorite officer. A third was engaged, perhaps, in carving his name on the handle of a jackknife.

In the full glare of the sun lay a negro, known as Black Jake. His flat nose was dilated to unusual width, and his ebony cheeks fairly glistened with delight, as he looked up at the gambols of a pet monkey named Jocko, clinging to the mainstay, just above Jake's wooly head, and chattering and grinning back at the negro.

A minute later a merry laugh burst forth from some of the crew. Little Bob Stay, as the sailors called the commodore's son, stood halfway up the main-hatch ladder, clapping his hands and laughing while looking aloft. A single glance told the story of his laughter. Jocko, sitting at the end of the main yard, was picking threads from the tassel of Bob's cap, occasionally scratching his side and chattering as if enjoying the success of his mischief.



## HEROIC DEEDS OF AMERICAN SAILORS

Bob was an active little fellow. Although he could not climb as nimbly as the monkey, he did not intend to lose his cap without an effort to regain it. Perhaps he was the more strongly urged to make chase after Jocko by the loud laugh of Black Jake, who seemed delighted at the monkey's trick and showed his pleasure by shaking his huge head and performing other grotesque actions.

“Ha, you rascal, Jocko, ain't you got no mo' respec' fer de young off'cer dan ter take dat cap? We gwimeter fetch you ter de gangway, you black nigger, an' give you a dozen on yo' bar' back.”

The monkey looked down from his perch as if he understood the threat of the negro, and chattered a sort of defiance in answer.

“Ha, ha! Marster, he say you mus' ketch 'im 'fo' you flog 'im; an' hit ain't easy fer a midshipman in boots ter ketch a monkey bar'foot.”

A red spot mounted to little Bob's cheek, as he cast one glance of offended pride at



Jake and then sprang across the deck to the Jacob's ladder. In an instant he was halfway up the rigging, running over the ratlines as lightly as if they were a flight of stairs, while the shrouds scarcely quivered beneath his light steps. In a second more his hand was on the futtock shrouds.

“Marster!” cried Jake, who sometimes, being a favorite, ventured to take liberties with the younger officers. “Marster, better crawl thoo de lubber's hole; hit take a sailor ter climb de futtock shroud.” \*

But he had scarcely time to utter his pretended caution before Bob was in the top.

Jocko had awaited the lad's approach until he got nearly up the rigging. Then suddenly putting the cap on his head, he ran along the yard to the opposite side of the top, sprang

\* “Futtock shrouds” are short iron rods which lead from the lower mast to the edge of the platform called the “top.” The “lubber's hole” is a hole in the floor of the platform, through which sailors may go aloft without climbing up outside. The hole is considered by sailors as only fit to be used by lubbers.



up a rope, and thence to the topmast backstay, up which he climbed to the topmast crosstrees. Here he quietly seated himself and began again to pick the tassel to pieces.

For several minutes the little boy followed Jocko from one piece of rigging to another. The monkey all the while exerted only so much agility as was necessary to elude his pursuer, and paused whenever the latter appeared to be growing weary of the chase. At last the animal succeeded in enticing Bob to the royal masthead. Springing suddenly on the royal stay, it ran nimbly down to the foretopgallant masthead, thence down the rigging to the foretop. Leaping on the foreyard, it ran out to the yardarm, and hung the cap on the end of the studding-sail boom. There taking its seat, the monkey began a loud and exulting chattering.

By this time Bob was tired out, but unwilling, perhaps, to return to the deck to be laughed at for his fruitless chase. He sat down in the royal crosstrees, while the sailors



returned to their occupations. The monkey, no longer the object of pursuit or attention, remained a little while on the yardarm, and then, taking up the cap, dropped it to the deck.

All at once a cry of fright broke from Black Jake.

“Fer de Lawd’s sake! Marse Bob is on de maintruck!”

It was too true. The rash boy, after resting on the royal crosstrees, had been seized with a wish to go still higher. He had climbed the main-skysail mast and was now actually standing on the very top. There was nothing above the boy or round him but the empty air; beneath him, nothing but a point, hardly large enough to stand on.

An attempt to get down from that dizzy height would be almost certain death. He would surely lose his balance and be hurled to the deck.

What was to be done? To call to him and tell him of the danger would be but to insure



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his death. Indeed, the rash boy seemed to realize his peril. Nobody could bear to look at him, nor yet could look away from him. The atmosphere appeared to grow thick and tremble and waver like the heated air round a furnace. The mast seemed to totter, and the ship to pass from under their feet.

The news of Bob's peril had spread through the ship, and officers and crew crowded to the deck. Everybody turned pale, and all eyes were fastened on the truck. Nobody made a suggestion, nobody spoke.

Once the first lieutenant seized the trumpet, as if to hail the boy. He had hardly raised it to his lips, when his arm sank to his side.

At this moment there was a stir among the crew about the gangway. Another face was added to those on the deck. It was that of the commodore, Bob's father. He had come alongside without having been noticed, so intense was the interest that held every eye riveted to the mast.

The commodore asked not a question,



uttered not a syllable. On reaching the deck he ordered a marine to hand him a musket. Then stepping aft, and getting on the lookout-block, he raised the gun to his shoulder and took deliberate aim at his son, at the same time hailing him, without a trumpet, in a voice of thunder.

“Robert! My boy! Jump! Jump overboard! Jump, or I’ll fire!”

The boy hesitated. He was tottering. His arms were thrown out as if he could scarcely keep his balance. The commodore raised his voice again, and in a quicker and more energetic tone cried, “Jump, Robert! It’s your only chance for life!”

The words were hardly out of his mouth before the little fellow was seen to leave the truck and spring into the air. A sound between a shriek and a groan burst from the sailors. The father spoke not, sighed not, indeed he did not seem to breathe. The moment was intense. With a rush like that of a cannon ball the body struck the water.



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Before the waves closed over it, twenty stout fellows, among them several officers, had dived from the bulwarks. Another period of anxious suspense. The boy came to the surface. His arms were seen to move. He struck out for the ship. Despite the discipline of a man-of-war a cheer burst forth that rent the air.

Up to this moment the old commodore had stood unmoved. The eyes of the sailors, glistening with joy, now sought his face, and saw that it was ashy pale. He started forward, but his knees bent beneath him. He gasped for breath, and put up his hand, as if to tear open his vest. He staggered, and would have fallen, had he not been caught by old Black Jake.

“His father drew in silent joy  
Those wet arms round his neck,  
And folded to his heart the boy,  
And fainted on the deck.”



## IV

### DECATUR BURNS THE PHILADELPHIA

“**A**LL hands to muster!” was the order on board the little twelve-gun schooner called the Enterprise.

“I need sixty men to go with me on the Intrepid to blow up the Philadelphia. Who will volunteer? Step forward, men, if you are willing.” Thus spoke Stephen Decatur.

With a wild cheer every sailor, every officer, and even the youngest powder boy answered the call. The fine face of the young captain lighted up with joy.

“A thousand thanks, men, I ’m proud of you. I wish I could take you all.”

Sixty of the younger and most active men were chosen.

“Thankee, sir,” said each man, as his name was called from the quarter-deck.

This scene took place in the harbor of



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Syracuse, in Sicily, in the year 1803, more than a hundred years ago.

At this time the people on the north coast of Africa, the nations called the Barbary states, were making a great deal of trouble for our country, as well as for the nations of Europe. These Barbary pirates used to capture and destroy the merchant vessels of all nations. They threw the sailors into prisons or sold them as slaves. As slaves they were cruelly treated and often died from their hardships.

To get the good will of these pirates the nations of Europe used to give them cannon and gunpowder, and paid them big sums of money. This was, of course, blackmail.

We did the same thing as the others. At first there was no help for it, for we were a young and feeble nation. There was also plenty of trouble at home, and we had only a few warships. After a time, however, this matter of paying blackmail to the Barbary states became a serious question.



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Then the ruler of Tripoli declared war against our country and insulted our flag. Two other Barbary states, Morocco and Tunis, burned our vessels, threw their officers into prison, and sold their crews as slaves. It was plain that these pirates must be taught a lesson.

“It is high time to stop paying this blood money,” said President Jefferson. “We must deal with these fellows with an iron hand.”

The fearless man who wrote the Declaration of Independence was as good as his word. A fleet of warships, under the command of Commodore Dale, was sent to the Barbary coast. The rulers of Morocco and Tunis were soon glad to sue for peace. The next step was to bring Tripoli to terms.

One day Captain Stewart, who afterward became the best naval fighter of his time, in command of the lucky little Enterprise, gave the proud ruler of Tripoli a hint of what might be done. There was a short but brisk fight with a Tripolitan man-of-war. Three



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times the captain of the pirate vessel hauled down his flag as if to surrender. When the Enterprise stopped firing, up went the flag again.

This insult was too much for the young American captain. He brought the Enterprise alongside the pirate vessel. Followed by his men he sprang over her side. The Tripolitans were called the hardest hand-to-hand fighters in the world. But they had met their match this time. In less than thirty minutes their captain pulled down his flag and begged for quarter. Our men threw the cannon overboard, stripped the vessel of everything except an old sail and a single spar, and then set her adrift to make the nearest port.

“Tell your pasha,” shouted Captain Stewart, as the pirate warship drifted away, “that’s the way my country will pay blackmail after this!”

Shortly afterward Commodore Preble was given the command of our fleet off the Bar-



## DECATUR BURNS THE PHILADELPHIA

bary coast. His flagship was the newly built frigate Constitution, now known to every American boy and girl as "Old Ironsides." The captains in our fleet at this time were young men. Indeed, they were so young that the bluff old commodore used to poke fun at them and call them his "schoolboy captains."

Late in the fall of 1803 the Philadelphia, one of the finest frigates in our little navy, while chasing a pirate vessel, ran on a reef near the harbor of Tripoli.

Captain Bainbridge and his men did the best they could. They cut away the foremast and threw the cannon overboard. It was all in vain. The fine warship was helpless either to fight or get off the reef. The Tripolitan gunboats swarmed round the vessel and opened fire. The gallant captain was forced to pull down his flag and surrender. He was the last man to leave his ship. The officers and men were taken ashore and put in the pasha's stone prison.



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After a time the Tripolitans got the frigate off the reef, towed her into the harbor, and anchored her under the cannon of the great stone castle. The Philadelphia was refitted, and the crescent flag raised over her. She was now ready to sail out and attack our shipping.

These were sad days and nights for Captain Bainbridge and his men. It was hard for them to look out of the heavily barred windows and see the pirate flag floating over their splendid ship.

Of course all kinds of plans were made to rescue the Philadelphia. Captain Bainbridge wrote letters to Commodore Preble with lemon juice. These bits of paper looked blank. They could be read if held to the fire, for the heat brought out the trace of the lemon juice. The letters suggested various plans for sinking the ill-fated frigate.

We may be sure that the "schoolboy captains," made up of such men as Isaac Hull, Stephen Decatur, Thomas MacDonough,



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James Lawrence, Charles Stewart, and David Porter, were eager to suggest some plan to destroy or recapture the vessel.

“For the honor of our country,” said Commodore Preble to his officers, “the Philadelphia must never sail out under that pirate flag.”

“I have a plan, sir,” said Stephen Decatur. “If I succeed, it will be glory enough for a lifetime.”

Shortly before this, Decatur in the Enterprise had captured a small Tripolitan vessel called a ketch.

“I will take the ketch and a crew of fifty or more men. I will fill the vessel with stuff that will burn easily. This kind of boat is so common here that the enemy will not suspect anything. I will steal into the harbor some dark night and get alongside the Philadelphia, capture her, set her on fire, and get away before the Tripolitans know what has happened. My father, sir, was the first captain of the Philadelphia, and I claim the honor.”



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The young officer's fine black eyes shone like fire. He was only twenty-three years old, but was already known as one of the bravest officers of the time.

Commodore Preble decided to try the plan. "You have spoken first," he said, "and it is only right that you should have the honor. May you succeed."

Now there was hurry and bustle everywhere. It seemed as if everybody in the fleet wished to take part in the deed. Decatur picked out sixty-two sailors and six officers from the crews of the *Enterprise* and the *Constitution*. These along with a Sicilian pilot named Catalano, who knew the harbor of Tripoli, made up the crew for this desperate exploit. Barrels of oakum soaked in oil and turpentine, together with kegs of gunpowder, were stored on board the ketch. The little vessel's name was changed to the *Intrepid*.

On the ninth day of February, amid the wild cheers of the fleet, the little ketch sailed out of the harbor of Syracuse.



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The brig Siren sailed with her as a helper. On the fourth day the two vessels reached the coast of Tripoli. The weather suddenly changed. A stiff breeze drove them off shore and out to sea. For six days the gale blew. The poor fellows on the Intrepid had a hard time of it. The little craft was too small for so large a crew. The sailors slept on the deck or on the tops of the water casks. The officers slept on planks laid across the barrels of powder in the hold. The food ran short. The meat and bread were soaked with salt water. We are informed that the men told stories, cracked jokes, sang songs, and never lost their courage. They made light of their hardships and kept good-natured.

After six days the sun shone again and brought comfort to the crews. The two vessels now set sail for Tripoli. When they drew near the city, the Siren was becalmed, while the Intrepid with a lighter breeze sped toward the harbor.

“It is all right, boys, the fewer the men



the greater the glory," said Decatur. "Keep cool and do as you are ordered."

Finding that he should reach the harbor before dark, Decatur put buckets, spare sails, and other drags over the stern of the ketch. He did not dare to shorten sail for fear that the watchful Tripolitans would be put on their guard.

As it grew dark, he boldly steered his little craft into the harbor, where the black hull and spars of the ill-fated frigate stood out sharp against the blue African sky. His men, disguised in red jackets and fezzes, lay hidden on the deck behind the rails and masts. Decatur and Catalano, dressed like Maltese sailors, stood calmly at the wheel.

"Vessel ahoy! Who are you? What do you want?" shouted an officer from the frigate, as the Intrepid calmly sailed across the bows of the Philadelphia.

Catalano replied in Italian: "This is a ketch from Malta. We lost our anchor in the gale. Let us ride near you for to-night."



## DECATUR BURNS THE PHILADELPHIA

“All right, but only for to-night. We will throw you a line.”

A line was lowered. The sailors on the Intrepid brought the little ketch close to the huge black hull of the frigate, and made her fast.

The officer on the Philadelphia did not like the looks of things.

“Cut that hawser. These fellows have lied,” he shouted to his men.

“Board, board,” shouted Decatur, and sprang for the deck of the Philadelphia.

The Tripolitans were caught napping, but they fought hard. Decatur and his men hewed their way through the pirates on the main deck while MacDonough and Lawrence swept everything before them on the gun deck.

“No prisoners,” was the order. “Philadelphia” was the watchword. It was a sharp hand-to-hand fight. No firearms were used, only cutlasses. It was quick work. In less than half an hour every Tripolitan had been killed or driven overboard. Not an American received more than a scratch.



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Now for still quicker work. Every man had been drilled and knew exactly what to do. Kegs of powder and oakum soaked in oil were quickly passed up from the ketch and carried below decks. Cannon were dragged amidships and pointed down the main hatch. In ten minutes everything was ready.

“Start the fires,” came the command.

A puff here and there, a little smoke, a crackling, and a hissing. Another moment and the flames burst forth.

Quick and sharp the order rang out, “Cast off; every man to the ketch!”

Decatur was the last to leave the doomed frigate. The Intrepid had begun to move away, and to save himself he had to jump into the rigging. There was a delay for a moment. The hawser which the Tripolitans had thrown to the ketch still held her. It was a moment of peril. The gunpowder on the deck was only covered with canvas, and the flames were streaming out of the port-holes. Decatur cut the hawser with his



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sword, and the Intrepid drifted away. The men bent to their oars and pulled for their lives.

The flames lit up the whole harbor. The Intrepid was brought into plain view. She was the target for the cannon. Grape shot and cannon balls from the fort on the shore whizzed through the air and threw up the spray as they struck the water. The Tripolitans were too excited to shoot accurately. Not a shot struck. One shot whizzed through the mainsail of the ketch. Soon the little vessel and her crew were safe under the guns of the Siren.

“Oh, but it was a glorious sight. What a bonfire she made!” and Decatur, begrimed with powder, sprang on board the brig.

Indeed, it was a superb sight. The flames burst out of the frigate and ran up the masts and rigging and lighted up the sky with a lurid glow. One by one the cannon became heated and went off. There was a mighty puff of fire and smoke, and a noise like a



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thousand cannon, when the magazine exploded. Countless burning fragments of the vessel fell like so many rockets into the sea. The Philadelphia was no more.

Decatur took the greatest risk, but his cool-headed leadership and the fine discipline of his men won success. And well did Admiral Nelson, England's greatest naval commander, speak of the exploit as "the most bold and daring act of the age."

When only twenty-five years old, although the youngest officer of his rank in the navy, Decatur received the command of "Old Ironsides," which was called the finest frigate in the world.



V

SOMERS, THE SCHOOLBOY CAPTAIN

“DON’T you see now,” said Richard Somers, a young naval officer, to his best friend, Stephen Decatur, “it is a scheme that may mean liberty to four hundred of our shipmates shut up in yonder stone prison. Do you think I should stop for one moment if there were a bit of chance for success?”

“No indeed, I ’m sure you wouldn’t.”

“I should say not,” continued Somers. “Just think of my plan. There would be two boats to tow the fireship into the harbor, four men in my boat, and six in another, with only one officer besides myself, twelve men in all to risk their lives. Oh, what a chance, my dear Decatur, to serve our country!”

Somers explained his plan. Like a true



friend, Decatur told him the weak points of it. The longer they talked, the more grave became Decatur, while Somers, usually sober and sedate, grew more gay. The two young captains were having this talk on board a little war vessel named the Nautilus.

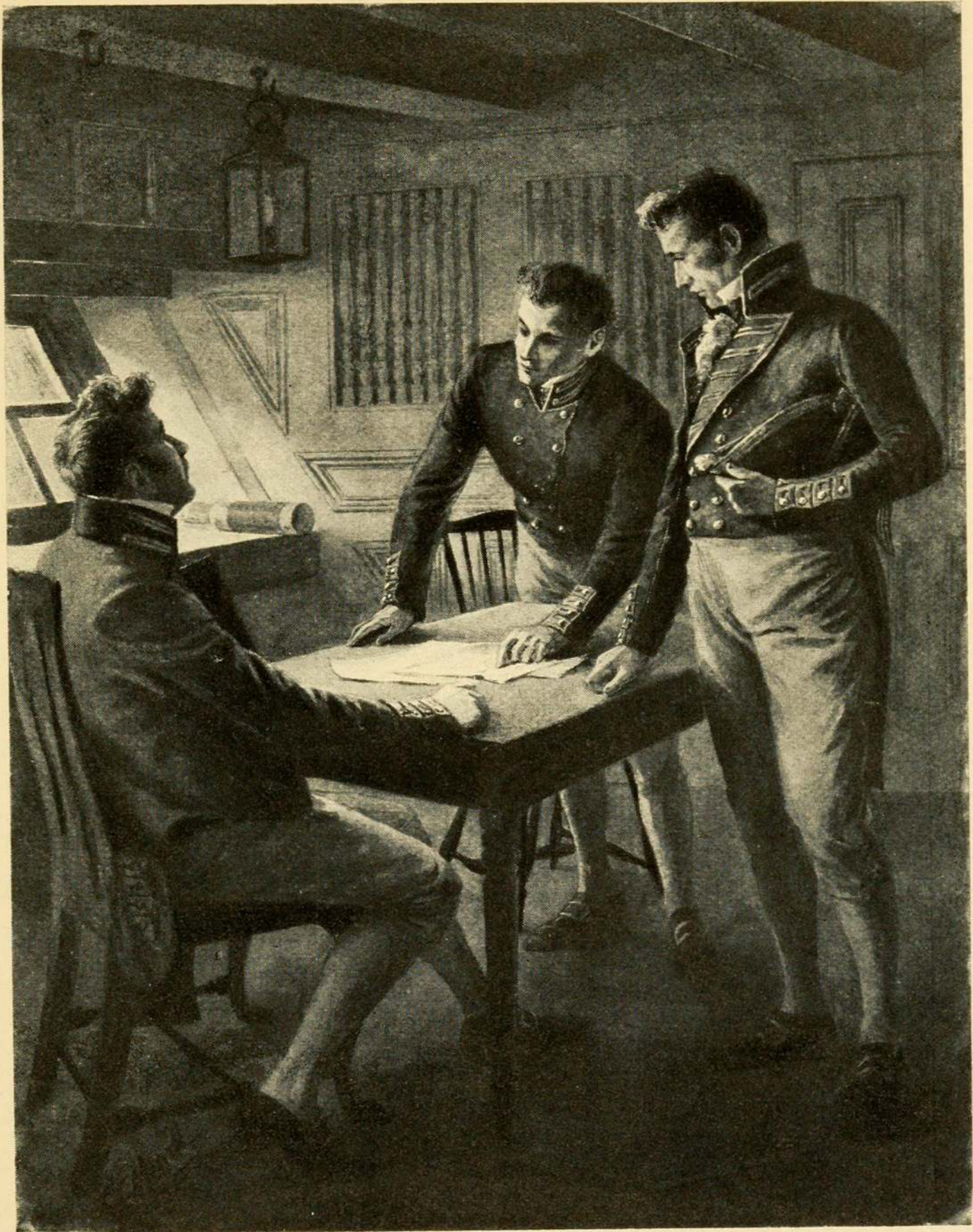
“Come,” said Decatur, “it is getting late. Let us row over to the flagship and lay your plan before Commodore Preble.”

This was not long after the burning of the Philadelphia, and the crews were still talking about it. Of course the other young captains were eager to rival Decatur’s desperate exploit. To destroy the enemy’s warships in the harbor of Tripoli, to shatter the pasha’s city, and perhaps to rescue Captain Bainbridge and his men meant glory and promotion. It might also mean failure and death.

“And what have you in mind?” asked Commodore Preble, when the two young officers were seated in his cabin.

Somers took out some charts and notes,





"YES," SAID COMMODORE PREBLE; "BUT SUPPOSE  
THE PIRATES CATCH YOU?" *Page 55.*







and after explaining them said, "On the first dark night I would take a vessel like the *Intrepid*, put gunpowder and shells on board, tow her into the harbor, and set her afire among the shipping."

"Yes," said Commodore Preble; "but suppose the pirates catch you, and the gunpowder falls into their hands? They are now short of powder, and this would be enough to prolong the war for a whole year. What do you say, Captain Somers?"

"I have thought of that. If the pirates capture the *Intrepid*, they will never capture the powder. I will blow up the vessel. I will take no man with me who is not willing to die rather than let the enemy use the powder against our fleet."

"It is a great responsibility for so young a man as you are, Captain Somers. Are you sure that you wish to take it?"

"Certainly I am. Sir, is it a greater responsibility than my friend here, Captain Decatur, took when he led seventy-five men



into the jaws of death to set the Philadelphia afire?"

Commodore Preble, nicknamed "Old Pepper" on account of his quick temper, began to wipe his eyes and blow his nose. Suddenly he grabbed the hand of each of his two young officers.

"Boys, when I first met you at this table I was vexed because you looked so young. I called you my 'schoolboy captains.' Forgive me, young men. I'll never call you so again. Go on with your plan, Captain Somers. You have my permission and my blessing for your success."

These words of praise from the stern, hot-tempered, old commodore deeply moved the young men.

"You see, sir," said Decatur, "it is because we have had such a good schoolmaster in the art of war."

Early the next morning the Intrepid was brought alongside the flagship. The men were soon busy passing gunpowder and shells aboard



the little vessel. They knew well enough that some desperate undertaking was at hand.

In the cabin of the Nautilus young Somers was arranging his private affairs, making his will, and writing several letters of farewell to his friends at home.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon. A call was to be made for volunteers. Decatur, usually so calm and cool in the hour of peril and desperate risk, was sad and nervous. For hours he had been pacing up and down the deck of "Old Ironsides."

"Pipe all hands aft on deck," was the order. A few minutes more, and eighty men of the Nautilus were reported "up and aft."

"My men," said Captain Somers, with a glitter in his eyes and a glow on his face, "yonder is the Intrepid. Well is she named since Decatur's glorious deed. She has on board one hundred barrels of powder, one hundred shells, and barrels of pitch. Tonight she is to be towed into the harbor of Tripoli and set on fire among the shipping.



## HEROIC DEEDS OF AMERICAN SAILORS

I need four men to go with me. I have the honor to lead you. Remember, men, the Intrepid will not be captured. These four men must be ready to die for their country. Are you ready? If so, hold up the right hand and say 'Ay.'"

Quick and sharp came the reply. Every man of the Nautilus held up his right hand and shouted "Ay, ay, sir!"

The sailors cheered with a hearty good will as the four men chosen by their young captain came forward and shook hands with him.

Late that afternoon the men who were to go on the Intrepid were mustered on the quarter-deck of "Old Ironsides." With tears rolling down his cheeks the stern old commodore made a short speech.

"I must tell you plainly, men, that the pirates are not to get hold of that powder. With fear and pride I send you out. Every man of you from Captain Somers has volunteered. You know the risk. May you win. May you come back safe and sound."



The men on "Old Ironsides" manned the yards and cheered. The young captains chatted while they waited for the darkness which was now fast coming on.

Decatur was sad and silent. He felt that he and his friend were never to meet again. But Somers wore his same sweet smile.

He said to Decatur, as he was bidding him good-by, "If we never meet again, keep this half of my ring. I'll put the other half in the pocket of my jacket — I need not ask you —" He could say no more. He was quickly rowed back to his vessel, where he shut himself up in his cabin and burst into tears.

It was now dark. The hulls and spars of the ships loomed up through the mist. Somers went aboard the Intrepid. Soon the little fireship, with every sail set to catch the breeze, was cutting the dark water.

Helped by wind and tide, the vessel soon made the western entrance of the harbor. Far away in the mist could be seen the grim



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stone forts and the twinkling lights of the city. At anchor near the entrance of the inner harbor lay three gunboats of the enemy. They looked like great shadows.

The breeze had died out. The men took to their boats and began to tow the *Intrepid*. With muffled oars they crept past the rocks and reefs. Soon they came within the outer harbor of Tripoli. Grim and silent stood the stone towers of the pasha's castle. The sky above was clear, and stars shone out like diamonds. A fog that lay on the water hid the *Intrepid* as she crept into the inner harbor.

All of a sudden the dark forms of three gunboats loomed out of the fog. The men in the boats grabbed the tow lines and pulled themselves back to the *Intrepid*. Quickly the pirate gunboats closed in on the little vessel, and the alarm was quickly spread.

With a torch in his hand Captain Somers rose on the deck.

“Men, are you ready?”



“Ay, ay, sir.”

“Then may God bless our country. May He have mercy on us.”

He threw his torch on the train of gunpowder that led to the magazine, and leaped into his boat. In another moment there came an explosion which seemed to tear asunder the sea and sky. The castle trembled, and vessels in the harbor careened and were nearly swamped. The sky was lighted up with a glare that was seen for miles.

Amid the frightful roar and crash the sail and mast of the ill-fated Intrepid were seen for a moment like a huge rocket blazing in the sky, and then fell into the sea. All was now silence and darkness.

Not a man on the American fleet slept that night. Guns were fired every few minutes in the hope that at least one on board the Intrepid had escaped death. During the long hours Decatur swung on the forechains of his vessel and flashed a lantern across the water. He listened for the signal



## HEROIC DEEDS OF AMERICAN SAILORS

agreed on, and watched for some sign from the dear friend of his youth.

At daybreak the smaller vessels of the fleet ran in where they had a view of the harbor. Not a sign of the Intrepid or of her two boats, or even of a spar, was to be seen.

The next day Captain Bainbridge was allowed to leave his stone prison and see the mangled bodies that came ashore.

Outside the walls of Tripoli, near a little clump of trees, the remains of the brave sailors were laid to rest. Cheerfully they gave up their lives in a desperate exploit. They died in the service of their country. It was the best they could do.



## VI

### MYSTERIES OF THE SEA

**D**ID you ever watch boys on a warm sunny day sail their toy ships on a pond? With a light wind one little vessel without a captain or crew sails smoothly across the water and safely reaches a harbor. A sudden gust of wind strikes another little ship and drives it ashore, a total wreck. Shifting breezes now and then send another toy craft first this way and then that, up and down the pond. In vain the boys try to rescue the vessel. At last, as it grows dark, the young ship owner gives it up as a bad job and starts for home, leaving his pet vessel sailing about on the tiny ocean.

So it is with many vessels that without captain or crew sail to and fro on the great sea. Such waifs that thread their way over



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the pathless deep are called "derelicts," which means abandoned vessels. Every captain knows of them and fears them as one of the greatest perils on the ocean. For months, and sometimes for years, the storm-tossed hulks of vessels whose crews have long since gone to death drift about at the mercy of wind and wave.

Twenty-four years ago the good ship Fannie E. Woolstein was wrecked on our coast, drifted across the Atlantic Ocean to England, and thence along the western coast of Europe. Finally, after sailing across the Atlantic again, she was cast ashore only a few miles north of the point where she first went adrift. In her phantom travels, without captain or crew, she had sailed more than ten thousand miles.

Another notable derelict was the Alma Cummings. Some twenty years ago she was wrecked off the coast of North Carolina. After a week of terrible suffering, the crew were taken off. The vessel went adrift, and



was reported many times. At last, after keeping afloat for almost two years, and sailing more than five thousand miles, she went ashore near the Isthmus of Panama.

Think of the wanderings of the little schooner B. R. Woodside. She began her career as a derelict off the coast of Georgia, drifted off to Europe, turned near the Canary Islands, and then drifted back within twenty miles of the place where she was wrecked. Again she zigzagged across the Atlantic, and was at last towed to one of the West India Islands. She had been reported by forty sea captains.

The four-masted schooner George B. Taylor was run down and cut in two by an ocean liner. Strange to say, both bow and stern kept afloat. The stern drifted north and went ashore on the coast of Maine, while the bow sailed south and drifted on the beach off the coast of South Carolina.

One of the most notable of the later derelicts was the Norwegian bark Crown, which



was abandoned in midocean at Christmas, 1909. Loaded with lumber, she kept afloat easily. For a hundred and eighteen days she was reported frequently, and had drifted some two thousand miles, when she finally lost herself in the weedy confines of the Sargasso Sea, the graveyard of scores of these forgotten ships.

Sailors take derelicts as a matter of course. The battered hulks and shattered masts of these phantom wanderers are grim reminders of the ever present dangers of sailing the great ocean. But an abandoned vessel is something quite different. The sea-faring man cannot understand why a ship in good order should be given up until the last hope is gone. The mystery usually linked with the fate of such a vessel makes her story one of the most thrilling in a sailor's life.

A strange tale is that told about the Gloriana. Through many years there have arisen so many different stories that it is hard to sift the facts from fiction.



## MYSTERIES OF THE SEA

Nearly forty years ago the captain of a Greenland whaler, who was dodging his way through the ice fields of the arctic regions, spied before him what seemed to be a spectral brig, picking her way through a narrow channel between two large icebergs.

Her rigging was a hopeless tangle. Her frozen sails were hanging in shreds, her decks were piled high with the snows of many seasons. Her hulk was sheeted in glittering white. It was a frightful sight, but the Greenlander at last got up courage enough to go aboard.

While he pulled himself up to the deck, he stopped to peer in at one of the portholes. There he saw a man seated before the cabin table. The log book lay before him, and in his clenched hand was a pen. The man was dead.

When the Greenlander looked at the log, he found that the last entry, made while the captain was awaiting death, was dated November 11, 1862. For thirteen years the Gloriana had been winding in and out among



the ice floes with no hand to guide her. Not far from the captain were found several other bodies, one of them being that of a woman.

Another strange story is that of the brig *Marie Céleste*. More than forty years have passed since this vessel was discovered on her lonely voyage, and yet nobody has ever been able to solve the mystery of what happened to her. The *Céleste* sailed from New York in the year 1872, with a cargo of kerosene and alcohol for a little port in Italy. Captain Briggs was in command. His wife and little daughter sailed with him. The brig was in the best of order, well manned, and well equipped. About a month after sailing from New York she was picked up by the brig *Gloria Dei*, off the Azores, aimlessly drifting about in light winds.

The upper sails had been clewed up, as if the intention had been to stow them. The full lower canvas was properly set. Under this she moved along in the calm water as silently as a phantom ship. Not



a sail, sheet, or halyard was missing. Her perfect condition created more fear among our sailors than if she had shown signs of human conflict, or ordinary breakage from stress of weather.

Now, as we have just said, a vessel in midocean, in broad daylight and in good weather, slowly sailing along unguided by human hand, is an uncanny sight. It reminds you, somehow, of those stories of cavalymen sitting erect in their saddles and riding on in battle after they have been shot dead.

With fear and trembling the first mate of the *Gloria Dei* had a grappling iron thrown into the main rigging of the stranger, and climbed on board. The stern of the boat was gone, but otherwise everything looked as if the crew were still there. Her running rigging was all properly made fast and the slack coiled neatly on the decks.

Rushing to the companionway, the mate shouted, "Ahoy, there! Below, there!"



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On that day the ocean was almost as still as a mill pond, and silence reigned in the vessel. The hollow echoes of the mate's voice, coming from the interior, seemed more horrible than screams or groans. He was himself startled, and was in no hurry to descend, but gave the order to heave to.

After they had slacked the head sheets and swung the mainyard, he and his men went down the companionway. The captain's gold watch hung beside the cabin clock. Below, in the small saloon, a cloth was spread on the table. Dinner was served and partly eaten. Among other things was a pair of roast chickens, which were partly carved and still fresh.

The weather had been so calm that dishes and cups of tea had remained where they were last placed by human hands. The meal had been abandoned when half over.

Farther on, in the corner, was a sewing machine. Under its needle was a child's cotton dress, in which a seam had been half



sewed. On the edge of the machine rested a woman's thimble.

They entered the small staterooms cautiously, expecting to find dead bodies in the bunks. But, no! Neither death nor life was there. The rooms were in a condition as if their occupants had just left them. Half-turned music lay on the rack of the little cabinet organ, and the toys of the captain's child were scattered about. In the wife's room the impress of the child's head was distinct on the pillow.

Of course the men of the *Gloria Dei* expected those who had thus left things would come out from some place of hiding and make explanation. The mind refused to believe that they were all dead.

Suddenly the chief mate rushed upstairs crying, "I know where they are. There has been a mutiny, and the captain and his family are locked up in the fore-castle."

They mounted to the deck, and rushed forward to the seamen's quarters. Here they



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found another half-consumed meal. Neither forward nor aft, nor anywhere else did they find a human being, nor any sign of bloodshed or violence.

There was not even a sign of disorder or haste. The men's chests had not been disturbed. The binnacle and chronometer were in perfect condition. The other compasses were in their places. Chickens and ducks in coops under one of the boats were all alive, though sickly for want of water. But of human life there was none.

The mate then examined the ship's papers, for nothing was locked up. The ship's name, as we have said, was the *Marie Céleste*, bound from New York to a little port on the Mediterranean. She had a valuable cargo, and the log book showed that the voyage had been quiet and easy. The last entry in it had been made only forty-two hours before. Those final words were not without pathos. They made a single line and read, "Fanny, my dear wife." Whether the words



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were written merely in remembrance of a distant loved one or in the depths of despair, it is impossible to say.

The money chest, in which a considerable sum was found, was intact, as was also the cargo, showing that piracy was not to be thought of in searching for a solution of the mystery.

The log book also showed that thirteen persons, including the captain's wife and child, had sailed from New York. Not one of those thirteen has ever been heard of since.

A crew was put on board the *Céleste*, and the ship was towed into port. When her cargo was disposed of, she sailed back to her owners in New York.

The United States authorities took up the case and had the consuls inform foreign governments of the facts, in the hope that some explanation might be found. But all inquiries were in vain.

In after years it was difficult to procure



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crews for the ill-fated vessel. No sailors except those who were free from superstition or ignorant of her history would ship aboard her. She was employed between New York and Cuba. It was her fate to be wrecked on the Cuban coast.

How those thirteen persons were spirited away from a perfectly able and well-appointed ship, during calm weather, will probably never be known. The story as it now stands, with its facts proved in a court of law, is one of the most mysterious of all the tales of the deep.

There have been numerous theories offering a solution, but none that is convincing. There was talk of pirates, but there was no looting. There was a story that the captain and crew had put off in a boat and got lost in fog, but there were no fogs. One of the owners of the vessel thought that the alcohol escaped from the casks and generated a gas which exploded, frightening Briggs and his men into abandoning the ship. Even that



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explanation is purely a matter of guesswork. The riddle of the Marie Céleste remains unsolved.

The story of an old sea captain whose vessel was near the Marie Céleste is interesting and gives a reasonable solution of the mystery.

He said that about noon of the day preceding the discovery of the Marie Céleste there was a black cloud seen off to the southeast, in the direction of the abandoned vessel, during a dead calm. His idea was that the people of the Marie Céleste saw a waterspout coming directly toward their vessel, and being unable to sail in the calm, rushed to their boat and rowed away to escape destruction.

“It may be,” he said, “that the waterspout veered in its course, as they frequently do, and destroyed the boat while sparing the ship.”

“But,” he added, “in a matter of this sort, where no reason can be found for acting in an unheard of way, I generally put it down



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to somebody's insanity. Suppose the captain, having gone mad, summoned all hands from dinner, and after telling them that the ship was sinking, ordered them into a boat. Without counting his wife and child, there were only ten others. Under the muzzle of a revolver they could not refuse, during calm weather, to descend into the small boat. He might then have forced them to row away, and the boat, with all on board, might have been lost. But imagine what we may, the mystery remains unexplained."



## VII

### A DUEL AT SEA

**D**URING the War of 1812 there took place, off the coast of Massachusetts, the famous and ill-fated duel between the American frigate *Chesapeake* and the British frigate *Shannon*. In this fight Captain Lawrence lost both his vessel and his life, because in his zeal to do his whole duty he made a mistake.

James Lawrence was, as we have read, one of Commodore Preble's "schoolboy captains." At seventeen he became a midshipman, and at nineteen was put in command of a gunboat. He was second in command to Decatur when that officer captured and destroyed the *Philadelphia* under the walls of Tripoli. At twenty-seven he was first lieutenant of "Old Ironsides," and at twenty-



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nine he commanded the Hornet. In this vessel a little later he captured the British brig Peacock after a brisk battle of less than fifteen minutes. For this victory Congress gave him a medal, a sword of honor, and made him a captain. By the irony of a cruel fate he was given, much against his will, the command of the frigate Chesapeake, then being refitted in Boston.

Now sailors are on the lookout for all manner of signs of ill or good luck. The Chesapeake had been an unlucky vessel. She was a slow sailer and unfortunate in capturing prizes. At this time she had just arrived from a long cruise, with a few worthless prizes, while much smaller and poorer vessels were gaining for themselves fame and riches. She was now blockaded in Boston Harbor by two British frigates. Captain Lawrence had asked for the command of "Old Ironsides," but was given the Chesapeake.

"The Chesapeake is a worthless ship," he said to his friends; "I would not take com-



mand of her if I could well refuse. This I cannot do.”

At the time of our story Lawrence had been in command of this unpopular vessel for only ten days. They were days of trouble and anxiety. The best sailors did not care to enlist on his ship. They hated her and would not sail on her if they could help it. Many privateers were being fitted out. Men were glad to ship in these vessels, for the discipline was easy and the prize money sure.

As a result, the crew for the Chesapeake was made up of men of several races and colors, with forty British sailors and a number of Portuguese. A leader of these Portuguese, a boatswain's mate, proved the worst of the lot. He almost brought about a mutiny in a dispute over unpaid prize money. Then some of the old sailors from the last cruise claimed they had been cheated, and were ugly and sullen. Besides, all the officers except one had been recently promoted and were new to the vessel. Captain Lawrence



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himself was new to his officers, to his crew, and to his ship.

When Lawrence stepped on deck, some of the crew were coming aboard for the first time; others were standing in groups, not knowing their duties or not caring to do them. With his usual fiery energy he set about to make ready for what he knew must be a fierce combat.

As for the Shannon, she was called one of the crack frigates of the British navy. For seven years she had been under the command of Captain Broke, an officer of long experience and of great skill and energy. A fearless and able officer, he fought with a desire to gain glory and a great name for himself. To this intent he had sent away the line-of-battle ship, the Tenedos, that he alone might fight with the Chesapeake.

The gunners on the Shannon were in the highest state of discipline and efficiency. We are told that Captain Broke would often order a cask to be thrown overboard and



have a gunner's crew sink it as it bobbed about on the waves. Extra rations were served out to the crew that hit it first. The men were also drilled in firing at targets with muskets. A pound of tobacco was given to every man who hit the bull's-eye.

Such was the British warship that lay outside of Boston Harbor in the early summer of 1813. Captain Broke was eager to test his vessel against the Chesapeake, and sent a challenge, written in the formal and stilted wording of the time. This challenge showed him to be a fair and honorable man. He gave a careful statement of the guns and equipment of the Shannon, to assure Lawrence that the two frigates were fairly matched. He said he should be pleased to meet the Chesapeake at any time within two months. With the usual ill-luck that attended the Chesapeake, this challenge, sent by the way of Salem, did not reach Boston until Captain Lawrence had sailed out to meet the enemy.



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On the first day of June, the Shannon had sailed into the entrance of Boston Harbor, flying signals of defiance. Lawrence took the appearance of the Shannon as a challenge, and had no desire to decline battle.

It was a sad mistake. Lawrence knew that the Chesapeake was in no condition for the duel. If he had received the written challenge, the combat could honorably have been postponed for at least two months, and his green crew might have been taught something.

In spite of the warnings of Commodore Bainbridge and other veteran naval officers, Captain Lawrence, in a moment of overconfidence, hoisted anchor and stood out of Boston Harbor to meet the enemy. A large fleet of smaller pleasure craft followed, filled with people from Boston and neighboring towns who were eager to see the battle.

While the Chesapeake was making her way down the harbor, Lawrence had a flag hoisted on which was painted the motto "Free Trade



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and Sailors' Rights." He made a short speech to his men, but they were in no mood to hear it. Only a faint cheer was raised as they went back to their places.

The Chesapeake was cleared for action. The Shannon, sailing close to the wind, was waiting for her. Both frigates now sailed to a point about thirty miles off Boston Light, between Cape Ann and Cape Cod.

When the two vessels came together, Lawrence was in a position to rake the Shannon. This he did not do. Why he failed to do so, is not known. About six o'clock in the afternoon the two warships were alongside each other and about one hundred and fifty feet apart. The Shannon fired her first broadside, which the Chesapeake immediately answered. The effect on the American ship, at short range and in calm weather, was something frightful. The deck was littered with a mass of tangled rigging, splinters, and hammocks, mingled with men, killed and wounded. Three men



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at the wheel were shot down. With sails riddled, the ill-fated frigate was raked again and again. Lawrence was shot in the leg. Leaning against a mast he stayed on deck and directed the battle. Most of the under officers were wounded. English marines in the tops, armed with hand grenades, picked off the gunners.

The fluke of an anchor on the Shannon caught in the rigging of the Chesapeake. The two ships could not drift apart.

“Boarders away! Call up the boarders! Boarders away!” shouted Lawrence.

The boatswain was mortally wounded. The bugler, a negro, nearly scared to death, had hidden under a boat. When pulled out, he could not sound a note. Standing on deck in full uniform, the gallant Lawrence was an easy mark for the enemy's sharpshooters. An officer of the marines on the Shannon caught sight of the white vest of the American captain. He snatched a musket from a marine and fired. Captain



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Lawrence fell to the deck, shot through the body. Limp and dying he was carried below.

“Tell the men to fire faster,” said the wounded officer, in a steady voice. “Fight until she sinks or strikes her colors. Don’t give up the ship.”

The scene on the decks of the Chesapeake was something frightful. In a panic the men did not stand by their guns.

“So much for not paying men their prize money,” shouted one of the cowardly fellows, as they ran below.

A sailor dropped a hand grenade from the yard of the Shannon. It fell into a chest on the quarter-deck of the Chesapeake. A roar like a thunder clap followed, and the deck was filled with flying splinters and wounded men.

Captain Broke was quick to seize the advantage. Leading his boarders he sprang on the deck of the Chesapeake. The chaplain, the only officer left, put up a stiff fight, and almost cut off Captain Broke’s arm.



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The few Americans in the crew fought bravely, but were all killed.

At five minutes past six, just fifteen minutes after the first gun was fired, the battle was over. There was no officer left to give up the Chesapeake. The British merely took possession. An officer of the British marines hauled down the flag. While he did so, a bullet from his own vessel killed him.

Thus ended one of the most remarkable naval duels on record. It is hard to say what might have happened if the two frigates had not run foul of each other. They presented a horrible sight after the battle. Said one old sailor: "They were crowded with the wounded and dying. They were like floating hospitals, giving forth groans at every roll of the ships."

Meanwhile the dying Lawrence lay on a cot in the wardroom below. The noise of the confusion came to his ears. He sank back in a spasm of pain. "Don't give up the ship! Don't give up the ship!" he whispered.



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He lingered in great pain for four days and then died in silent anguish.

Five days after the battle, the Shannon with her prize sailed into Halifax Harbor. The body of Lawrence, wrapped in the flag of his vessel, lay on the quarter-deck.

Captain Lawrence and his first officer, Lieutenant Ludlow, who had also died of his wounds, were given a magnificent military funeral in Halifax. Afterwards their remains were brought to New York and buried with imposing naval honors in Trinity churchyard.

James Lawrence was only thirty-two years old when he died. Half his life had been passed in the service of his country. He was a man of noble personal appearance and a superb sailor, beloved by all for his generosity and kindness of heart. His dying words, "Don't give up the ship," served for many years as a watchword for our navy.



## VIII

### THE ENTERPRISE AND THE BOXER

**O**UR war with the Barbary pirates, a little over a hundred years ago, was a fine training school for our naval officers. In our second war with Great Britain many of these men rendered a splendid service to their country.

Of the many warships of that time no vessel of her size had a more brilliant record than the Enterprise. This little twelve-gun schooner was a lucky boat. Indeed, she was nicknamed the "Lucky Little Enterprise."

It is no wonder that the Enterprise gave a good account of herself. Think of the gallant young officers who commanded her. There were sturdy Isaac Hull, with whose deeds we are familiar, and Stephen Decatur, whom we have just read about. Then there were James Lawrence, who lost his life on



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the deck of the ill-fated Chesapeake, and Thomas MacDonough, who won the glorious victory on Lake Champlain. Among other captains of the Enterprise was Charles Stewart, who, in command of "Old Ironsides," captured two British frigates in one of the most skillful naval battles ever fought.

There is not time now to tell you of the many daring adventures and thrilling escapes of the Enterprise in her service in the West Indies, in the short war between the United States and France, and still later in the hand-to-hand fight with the Barbary pirates on the coast of Africa. Our present story is about the battle between the Enterprise and His Britannic Majesty's brig named the Boxer.

Our second war with Great Britain began in the summer of 1812. Every effort was made to put our navy in good order. The Enterprise was rigged as a brig and armed with fourteen 18-pound cannon, and two larger guns called Long Toms. She was



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manned with a crew of one hundred men. A young lieutenant named William Burroughs was put in command. He was only twenty-eight years old, but he had already won fame in the war with the Barbary states, and had become a skillful sailor. He had orders to sail along the coast and keep a lookout for English privateers.

On September 1st, 1813, Burroughs sailed from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in search of several British privateers that had been reported off the coast of Maine. Early on the morning of the third day he sighted a brig inshore getting under way. This proved to be the British ship Boxer. The Enterprise was at once cleared for action. The Boxer fired several guns as if in challenge, and stood out to sea.

At this time the Long Tom was one of the most effective cannon used in naval battles. Burroughs gave orders that one of these should be brought up and run out of a stern port in the main cabin. The carpenter cut



away the woodwork to give a better elevation to the gun. Some of the crew grumbled that their commander intended to run away from the enemy and use the stern chaser as a defense.

“Yonder,” replied Burroughs, “is one of the finest ships in the British navy. Rest easy, men. Before sunset you will have all the fighting you want.”

The wind had died away. For six hours or more the two brigs drifted about in a calm. Meanwhile the officers of the two vessels were watching each other through their glasses. All were eager for battle the moment they should get within pistol shot.

About the middle of the afternoon a light breeze sprang up. In silence the two warships came nearer and nearer. The young commander of the Enterprise was walking to and fro alone on the quarter-deck.

The two vessels were soon within range. The men on the Boxer cheered and fired a broadside. The Enterprise returned the



cheers and also fired a broadside. The battle now became general. The Enterprise drew ahead and ran across the enemy's bow. Bang, bang! spoke the Long Tom at short range, with telling effect. The vessels again exchanged broadsides. Again the Enterprise ran across the enemy's bow and raked her with the Long Tom. Down came the Boxer's main topmast, bringing with it the topsail yards. The Enterprise now held her position and kept up her fire for some twelve minutes.

Burroughs saw with pride the discipline and the accurate firing of his men. He turned to speak to his first officer, Lieutenant McCall.

"See how the boys are hulling the Boxer."

At this moment a canister shot struck him in the hip, and he fell, mortally wounded. He refused to be taken from the deck.

"Don't carry me below. Never strike that flag," he said to McCall.

The dying commander was laid on deck, with a hammock placed beneath his head.



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McCall now took command. This young officer, only twenty-three years old, had never before so much as seen a battle. But he was equal to the occasion, and fought with great skill.

At four o'clock the Boxer became silent. Her colors were still flying at her masthead.

"Stop firing. We have surrendered," came a voice through the smoke.

McCall gave orders to cease fighting.

"Why don't you haul down your colors?" he shouted.

"We can't; they are nailed to the mast."

A boat was lowered from the Enterprise, and McCall soon reached the deck of the Boxer. He found that her commander, Captain Blythe, was dead, almost cut in two by a shot.

This Captain Blythe was a brave and gallant officer, and only twenty-nine years of age. A few weeks before, he had been one of the pallbearers, in Halifax, at the funeral of Captain James Lawrence. Perhaps he



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had had in mind the good fortune of the Shannon, for he said just before his death that he hoped "to lead another captured Yankee into Halifax Harbor."

Back came Lieutenant McCall with Captain Blythe's sword and put it in the hands of Lieutenant Burroughs.

"Sir, you have only a few hours to live," said the surgeon.

The young commander grasped the sword and pressed it to his breast. "Now I am satisfied; I die content."

A few hours later his body was laid out in his cabin, covered with the flag for which he had given his life. "A sweet smile was on his lips," as one of his officers wrote to his wife.

In a short time the Enterprise and the Boxer reached Portland. The bodies of the two commanders were brought on shore, and guns were fired from the vessels in the harbor. The one burial ceremony served for both. A long procession of military and



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civic officers marched slowly through the streets of the city. The officers and crews of the Enterprise and the Boxer acted as mourners.

With all the honors of war the two commanders were buried side by side.

Just off Congress Street, one of the busy thoroughfares of this lovely city, may still be seen the monuments erected to these brave men. The memorials are of brick and red sandstone, covered with marble slabs setting forth in the quaint language of the time the deeds of the two gallant young officers. The monument of Lieutenant Burroughs speaks of him as "a patriot, who, in the hour of peril, obeyed the loud summons of an injured country, and gallantly met, fought, and conquered the foeman."



## IX

### THOMAS MACDONOUGH

**T**HOMAS MACDONOUGH was of Scotch descent. His ancestors had emigrated from Scotland to Ireland, and from there his grandfather came early to America. His father, a successful physician, gave up his practice to serve as an officer during the Revolution. His brother served as a midshipman on the frigate *Constellation*, but lost a leg and was forced to resign from the service.

It was no wonder, then, that MacDonough, a tall, slender, red-headed young fellow of seventeen, with plenty of Scotch-Irish fight and pluck in him, was glad to get an appointment as a midshipman. He was sent to the Barbary coast, to serve on the *Philadelphia* under Commodore Bainbridge.



Afterwards we find him on the "Lucky Little Enterprise," under Decatur. In the many lively fights with the Barbary pirates the young midshipman was always found at the post of danger. When Decatur planned to destroy the Philadelphia, MacDonough was one of the eleven officers chosen to take part in this glorious but desperate deed.

Two years later, when he was only twenty-three, he was first lieutenant of the Siren, a brig which had seen notable service on the north coast of Africa.

While the Siren was at anchor at Gibraltar, the young officer had a chance to show what stuff he was made of. One day when the captain was on shore, MacDonough saw a boat from a British frigate run up to an American merchant vessel close by and then put off with an extra man on board.

"So that's the game," he said to himself. "They have impressed an American sailor from that brig."



He quickly lowered the cutter and set off in pursuit. He overhauled the British boat under the bow of the frigate. Seizing the American sailor by the collar, he lifted him into his own boat, and was pulling back to the Siren before the British officers realized what had taken place. When the captain of the frigate was informed of the act, he was exceedingly angry. He ordered out his cutter and pulled to the Siren.

MacDonough was calmly walking the quarter-deck.

With great politeness he asked the British captain into the cabin. This the latter refused, at the same time demanding the return of the sailor. He had a mind to take the man by force. He said he would haul the frigate alongside the Siren for that purpose.

“I will not give up this American sailor,” replied MacDonough; “I look to the captain of my own vessel for orders.”

“I could blow you out of the water in three minutes.”



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“Perhaps you could, but as long as the vessel floats I shall keep the man.”

“You are young and indiscreet. If I had been in the boat, what would you have done?”

“I would have taken the man or lost my life.”

“What, sir! would you attempt to stop me, if I were now to impress men from that brig?”

“I would. If you doubt it, you have only to try.”

The baffled officer returned to his ship. Shortly afterward he was seen bearing down in the direction of the Siren.

MacDonough ordered his boat manned and armed, got in, and was in readiness for pursuit. The Englishman took a circuit round the American brig, and went back to the frigate.

After this incident, which made a great stir at the time in the various warships at Gibraltar, the British naval officers treated the American lieutenant with respect.



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During the summer of 1814, the last year of the War of 1812, it was plain that the British in Canada were planning an important military movement. They were getting ready to march down the old warpath and cut our young nation in two. You may remember that General Burgoyne had tried this thirty-seven years before and was forced to surrender at Saratoga.

Large bodies of troops that had fought in the wars against Napoleon were now hurried to Canada. Sir George Prevost, the British commander, at the head of fourteen thousand veterans, began the invasion of New York by the western bank of Lake Champlain. His first move was to attack the forts round Plattsburg. General Maccomb, the American commander, with a small body of regulars and a few thousand militia, awaited the advance.

In this campaign, with Canada as a base, the control of Lake Champlain became a matter of great importance. If you will



look on the map, you will see that this inland lake flanked the march of the invading army for more than a hundred miles. It was also the safest and quickest way to forward supplies to the army. With the control of the lake the way down the valley of the Hudson would be clear, and the march to New York City easy. If these plans worked out well, the struggling young nation would be at the mercy of the enemy.

In the summer of 1814, MacDonough was given the command of the American naval forces on Lake Champlain. He was only thirty years of age. His rank was that of lieutenant, but by courtesy he was called commodore. Everybody said he was just the man to take command of the little squadron.

The quiet shores of this beautiful inland lake became full of life. The young commander was at work building and equipping a fleet. Often he might have been seen handling the saw and broadax. Officers and men worked night and day with the greatest



zeal. Timbers for a small frigate were cut in the forest. Within forty days the vessel was launched. The American fleet was now made up of the new flagship *Saratoga*, of twenty-six guns; the brig *Eagle*, of twenty guns; the schooner *Ticonderoga*, of seventeen guns; the sloop *Preble*, of seven guns; and ten gunboats, carrying in all sixteen guns, and mainly handled with oars.

Cannon for the vessels had to be dragged for many miles through the trackless wilderness. At one time the ox teams hauling the cables came to a standstill forty miles from the lake. Nobody knew what to do. At last an old sailor suggested that the cables should be unwound and carried on the shoulders of the men. This was slow and tedious work, but it was done.

Meanwhile the British were busy. Captain Downie, a young officer about thirty years old, was in command. He had for his flagship a newly built frigate named the *Confiance*, of thirty-nine guns. In his fleet



were also the brig *Linnet*, of sixteen guns; the sloops *Chubb* and *Finch*, of eleven guns each; and thirteen large gunboats armed with one gun each. These vessels were manned by veteran sailors, many of whom had fought with Nelson at Trafalgar.

In the first week of September, 1814, the fleets were ready to battle for the control of the lake. MacDonough chose to fight at anchor in Plattsburg Bay. He made a most excellent choice of position. He prepared for every possible risk. Each of his ships had anchors so arranged that by hauling or slacking off with cables the vessel could be turned in any direction.

The sun rose bright and clear on that eventful Sunday morning, September 11, 1814. Early autumn with its magical foliage presented a lovely scene along the shore of the lake. A gentle breeze ruffled the surface of the water at sunrise, and the British fleet began to beat slowly up toward Plattsburg Bay.

On the American fleet all hands were called

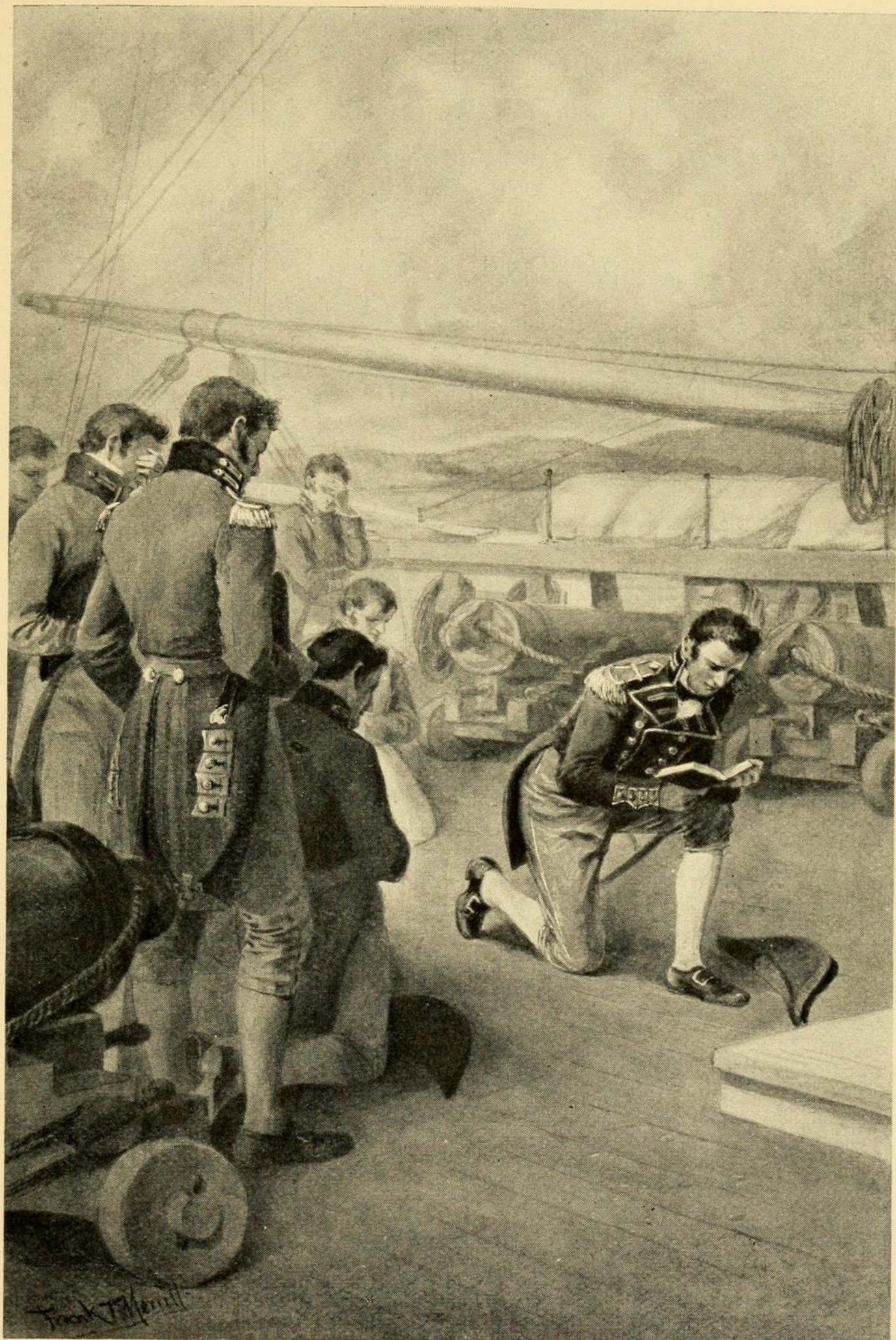


to muster. The American flag was run up. In the deep silence which precedes a battle at sea there was a rare scene. With his officers about him, and the men standing with bare heads, MacDonough knelt on the quarter-deck and read from the Book of Common Prayer the prayers appointed to be read before a battle at sea. The men now waited in grim silence.

When the four large ships of the British fleet came near the American line, the Eagle fired a broadside, which fell short. The Linnet now came abreast of the Ticonderoga and fired a broadside. Every shot fell short except one, which smashed a hencoop on the deck of the schooner.

As the story is told, the sailors on the Ticonderoga had a pet rooster in the coop. The bird, delighted to get free, flew to one of the guns, clapped his wings, and crowed lustily. The men laughed and gave three cheers. Then the rooster flew into the rigging and kept up his crowing while the enemy's





MACDONOUGH KNELT ON THE QUARTER-DECK AND READ FROM THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER. *Page 104.*







fleet was advancing. The sailors readily believed that it meant victory.

The *Confiance* came steadily on until almost abreast of the *Saratoga*. With his own hand MacDonough aimed and fired the first gun. The 24-pound cannon ball hit the English frigate, killed several men, carried away her wheel, and did other damage. The English flagship was raked again and again. She could not break through the American line.

Downie now dropped anchor, took in sail, swung the flagship round, and at short range brought his broadside to bear on the *Saratoga*. Over a hundred men on the American flagship fell. The shattered vessel reeled and shivered from the force of the shock. MacDonough returned the broadside in good earnest. The two flagships now fought in a deadly duel for two hours.

Meanwhile, at the head of the line the *Linnet* and the *Chubb* were fighting the *Eagle*. After a hard battle of an hour the



## HEROIC DEEDS OF AMERICAN SAILORS

Chubb was raked by the Eagle. Drifting helpless down the line, she was disabled by a 24-pound shot from the Saratoga and forced to haul down her colors.

While the duel was going on between the two flagships, the Linnet got across the bows of the Saratoga and began to rake her. On the other end of the line the little Preble was driven out of the battle by the fierce attack of the British gunboats. The Finch was hammered by the larger Ticonderoga and forced to surrender.

The thirty-one big guns of the Confiance had now put to silence the eight guns of the Saratoga. Hot cannon balls had twice set her afire. Every officer except MacDonough had been killed or wounded. Three times he had been knocked senseless by splinters and broken pieces of the yards. Three times he began fighting again none the worse except for cuts and bruises. It was indeed fortunate for the issue of the battle that he did not know when he was beaten.



Every gun in the starboard battery of the *Saratoga* was useless. What was to be done? The *Confiance* was still pouring in her broadsides. MacDonough now gave orders to turn the vessel round, so that he could use the other cannon. Under the galling fire of the enemy this difficult feat was done. A raking fire from the unused battery soon made a beginning of the end. Downie had been killed early in the battle. The officer who took his place tried to bring his ship about, but failed. The *Eagle* and the *Saratoga* now raked the *Confiance* fore and aft.

After two hours of bitter fighting the British flagship was forced to haul down her colors. The *Confiance* was a wreck. Not five men of her three hundred and fifty were left unhurt. Her masts were so splintered that they looked like a bundle of matches. Her sails were torn to rags. After the battle it was found that the *Saratoga* had fifty-five shotholes in her hull, while the *Confiance* had but ten.



## HEROIC DEEDS OF AMERICAN SAILORS

The little Linnet was now left to keep up the fight single-handed. The gunboats did not come to her help, and she had the Saratoga against her. In fifteen minutes, with her hull riddled like a sieve, her masts shot away and the water a foot deep in her hold, the plucky little brig hauled down her colors.

The battle was fought and won in a little over two hours and a half after the first gun was fired. Of the sixteen British flags which proudly fluttered in the breeze early that Sunday morning not one remained at the masthead.

The news of MacDonough's victory was received with joy all over the country. Medals, prize money, grants of land, and presents of all kinds poured in on him.

"In one short forenoon," he said, "from a poor lieutenant I became a rich man."

The effects of the victory were far-reaching. Sir George Prevost and his army fled to Canada, leaving a large part of their military supplies behind. New York was at last free from British invasion.



## THOMAS MACDONOUGH

When peace was declared, MacDonough continued in the naval service. His last cruise was in command of "Old Ironsides." Even from boyhood his health had been delicate, and he never recovered from the hardships and rough exposure of his services on Lake Champlain. He died of consumption, at sea, on his way home from Europe, only eleven years after his memorable victory.

MacDonough passed away at the early age of forty-two. Few men have enjoyed such esteem and affection as this brilliant naval commander. A man of high spirit and superb courage, yet a deeply religious man; with all his stern ideas of discipline and fearlessness in battle, he was a man of the gentlest manners and mildest disposition.

"These gave a perfume to his name," remarked a quaint old writer, "which the partial page of history seldom can retain for departed warriors, however brilliant their deeds."



## X

### CUSHING SAVES THE FLEET

**D**URING the first years of the Civil War the Union forces began a blockade of the Southern seaports. This was done to prevent the Confederate vessels from passing in or out. The blockade almost stopped the shipping of cotton to Europe and the bringing back of guns, cannon, clothing, and many articles used in everyday life. This caused the people of the South great hardship.

In the summer of 1864 the Union fleet almost controlled the great bays and rivers along the coast of North Carolina. The Confederates planned to build a vessel having its sides covered with iron, to destroy the wooden vessels of the Union fleet and thus open up the coast trade.



## CUSHING SAVES THE FLEET

The warships in which Decatur, Hull, and Bainbridge won glory for our nation in the War of 1812 were like those in which Nelson, Drake, and other famous sailors gained splendid naval victories for England. These warships were sailing vessels and carried cannon on each side.

Naval battles had thus been fought for several hundred years, with the same kind of weapons and under the same conditions.

Our Civil War, fought fifty or more years ago, put an end to the old way of fighting at sea. The protecting of vessels with iron armor, the use of steam, torpedoes, and cannon of high power sent the old-time wooden warships to the scrap heap. In a single year these vessels became as useless for hard fighting as would be the galleys of ancient Greece or Rome.

In the early part of 1864 Captain Cooke, an able officer in the Confederate navy, laid the keel of an ironclad ram. He was nicknamed the "scrap-iron captain," because



he ransacked the country for iron to build the vessel.

Compared with the battleships of our time, the Albemarle, as the ram was called, was a small vessel. She was only one hundred and twenty-two feet long, and drew but eight feet of water. She was built of massive Carolina pine timbers, covered with heavy planks and sheathed with two layers of iron, four inches thick. On her deck was a shield, or casement, sixty feet long, covered with planking and sheathed with two layers of two-inch iron. The ram was of solid oak plated with heavy iron, and tapered to an edge. The vessel was armed with two cannon.

Even on her first trip down the Roanoke River the Albemarle made sad havoc with the Union wooden gunboats. She sank or disabled them, while she received little or no damage.

Late in the autumn the vessel steamed up the Roanoke River some eight miles to the little town of Plymouth, and lay at the



## CUSHING SAVES THE FLEET

wharf to be refitted and made ready for another attack on the Union fleet. She was under the guns of a fort, with a regiment of soldiers ready to defend her. Her crew and cannon were kept ready for an attack at a moment's notice. A great boom of cypress logs was thrown round the vessel about thirty feet from her side.

It was now plain that the wooden vessels of the Union fleet were no match for the ironclad ram. All kinds of schemes were planned to destroy her, but they came to nothing.

At this crisis there was a young naval officer in the Union fleet named William B. Cushing, then only twenty-one years old. This young man had already been successful in several adventures. Just a few months before, with only twenty-five men, he had landed and taken an earthwork by storm. Later he had gone into the Confederate lines and captured an officer of high rank. He had also made several raids up the rivers



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along the coast and escaped without the loss of a man.

To such an officer was entrusted the duty of destroying the dreaded Albemarle. It was indeed a task for a man of cool head, iron nerves, and superb self-control. Such a man, a born leader of men, was young Cushing. With his reckless courage he combined a rare coolness in extreme danger, and a quick and resourceful brain, so necessary in such an undertaking.

The admiral in command of the Union fleet having approved of the plan for blowing up the ram, Cushing went to New York and secured one of the new steam launches which had just been invented. This vessel was an open boat thirty feet long, fitted with a small steam engine. Cushing had the little craft equipped with a twelve-pound cannon and a torpedo fastened to a spar twenty-eight feet long.

About midnight, one dark night in October, with a picked crew of fifteen officers and



## CUSHING SAVES THE FLEET

men, the young commander was ready to steam up the Roanoke River.

“Come on, boys,” he said, when it began to rain, “now is our time; it’s as black as a nigger’s pocket.”

“Good-by, boys,” he called, as he left the gunboat to go on board the launch; “it is another stripe or a coffin this time.”

It was no idle word. Some of the crew had been with him before in his desperate raids and knew what he meant.

The little engine began to puff softly, and the launch moved out into the dark waters of the sound. Soon they began to steam slowly up the Roanoke. Once in a while they could hear the tread of the Confederate sentry on the banks of the river. It was now only a mile to the wharf where the Albemarle lay. The river at this point was narrow, being only three hundred feet wide. As good fortune would have it, the watch fires that rainy night burned low. Suddenly out of the pitchy dark loomed



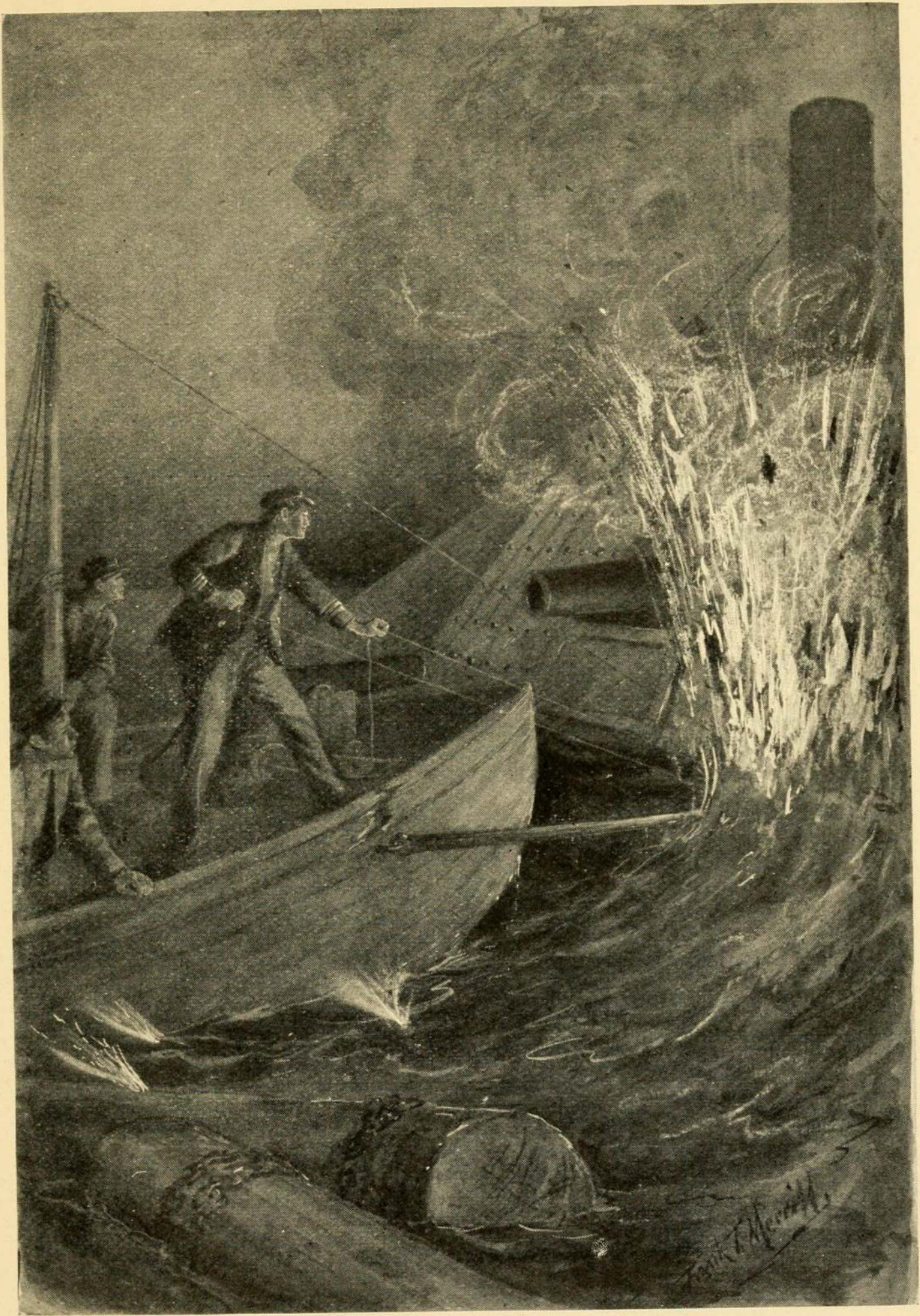
the black ironclad ram. A dog on shore began to bark.

“Boat ahoy! boat ahoy! What boat is that?” shouted a sentry on the ram.

A medley of voices burst out of the midnight silence. Guns were fired. The watch fires began to burn briskly, for the sentinels piled on fresh fuel. Now it was Cushing's turn to be surprised. The light showed the ironclad made fast to the wharf with the boom of logs round her.

The test of a great leader had come. Quick as a flash Cushing headed his little launch straight for the ironclad. His only hope was to drive the bow of his boat over the string of logs and thus get a chance to use the torpedo boom. The launch struck the logs and was driven part way up on them. Cushing ran to the bow of the boat and stood by the torpedo spar. The men on the ironclad were making things lively. The air seemed full of bullets, but a shot from the cannon on the launch disturbed their aim.





THE TORPEDO HAD DONE ITS WORK. *Page 117.*







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To handle the torpedo Cushing had fastened different cords to his fingers and wrist. With wonderful skill and quickness he lowered the spar and by a strong pull succeeded in placing and exploding the torpedo just as a shot from the ironclad went crashing through his boat.

“Surrender! Surrender!” shouted the captain of the Albemarle.

Cushing refused.

The Confederates kept up their fire at close range.

But the torpedo had done its work. The dreaded ironclad was sinking. She would no longer be able to make havoc with the wooden vessels of the Union fleet. The carpenter reported that there was a “hole in her bow big enough to drive a wagon in.”

“What happened to Cushing?” you ask.

That will be told you in another story.



## XI

### HOW CUSHING ESCAPED

**W**HAT became of Cushing and his brave men is best told in his own words. They are as interesting now as when written, more than fifty years ago.

“Twice refusing to surrender, I told my men to save themselves. I threw off my sword, revolver, shoes, and coat, and struck out from my sinking boat into the river. It was cold, long after the frosts, and the water chilled the blood. The whole surface of the stream was plowed up by grape and musketry. My nearest friends, the fleet, were twelve miles away; but anything was better than to fall into the enemy’s hands, so I swam for the opposite shore.

“The Confederates were out in boats,



## HOW CUSHING ESCAPED

picking up my men; and one of the boats, attracted by the sound, pulled in my direction. I heard my own name mentioned, but was not seen. I now struck out down the stream, and was soon far enough away again to attempt landing. This time, as I struggled to reach the bank, I heard a groan in the river behind me, and although very much exhausted, concluded to turn and give all the aid in my power to the poor fellow who had bravely shared the danger with me.

“Swimming in the night, with eye at the level of the water, one can have no idea of distance, and labors, as I did, under the discouraging thought that no headway is made. But if I was to drown that night, I had at least an opportunity of dying while struggling to aid another. The swimmer proved to be the master’s mate, named Woodman, who said that he could swim no longer. Knocking his cap from his head, I used my right arm to sustain him, and ordered him to strike out. For ten minutes at least, I



think, he managed to keep afloat, when, his physical force being completely gone, he sank like a stone.

“Again alone upon the water, I directed my course toward the town side of the river. I did not make much headway, as my strokes were now very feeble. My clothes were soaked and heavy; the little chop-seas splashed with choking persistence into my mouth every time I gasped for breath. Still there was a will not to give up. I kept up a sort of mechanical motion long after my bodily force was in fact expended.

“At last, and not a moment too soon, I touched the soft mud, and in the excitement of the first shock I half raised my body and made one step forward. I fell, and remained half in the mud and half in the water until daylight, unable even to crawl on hands and knees. I was nearly frozen, with my brain in a whirl, but with one thing strong in me, the fixed determination to escape.

“As the day dawned, I found myself in a



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point of swamp that enters the suburbs of Plymouth, and not forty yards from one of the forts. The sun came out bright and warm. It gave me back a good portion of the strength which I had lost during the night. Its light showed me the town swarming with soldiers and sailors, who moved about excitedly, as if angry at some sudden shock. It was a source of satisfaction to me to know that I had pulled the wire that set all these figures moving.

“I had no desire of being discovered. My first object was to get into a dry fringe of rushes that edged the swamp. To do this I was forced to pass over thirty or forty feet of open ground, right under the eye of a sentinel who walked the parapet.

“Watching until he turned for a moment, I made a dash across the space. I was only halfway over when he again turned and forced me to drop down right between two paths, and almost entirely unshielded. Perhaps he did not see me because of the mud that



covered me and made me blend with the earth. At all events the soldier continued his tramp for some time, while I, flat on my back, lay awaiting another chance for action.

“Soon a party of four men came down the path on my right, two of them being officers, and passed so close to me as almost to tread upon my arm. They were talking upon the events of the previous night, and were wondering ‘how it was done.’ This proved to me the necessity of regaining the swamp. I sank my heels and elbows into the earth and forced my body, inch by inch, toward it.

“For five hours then, with bare feet, head, and hands, I made my way where I venture to say none ever did before, until I came at last to a clear place, where I rested upon solid ground. . . . A working party of soldiers was in the opening, engaged in sinking some schooners in the river to obstruct the channel. I passed twenty yards in their rear through a corn furrow, and gained some woods below. Here I met an old darky, and



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after serving out to him twenty dollars in greenbacks, I trusted him enough to send him into town for news of the ram. The negro soon came back, his face all of a grin.

“‘What news?’ said I.

“‘Mighty good news,’ said the darky, ‘the big iron ship’s gone to the bottom. Don’t you want something to eat?’ I said I could eat anything. Upon this he took a corncake and cold boiled sweet potato from out the bosom of his shirt. These I greedily ate. The kind old negro then tried to tell me how to get back to the fleet.

“I went on again, and plunged into a swamp so thick that I had only the sun for a guide. It was a tangle of underbrush and creeping vines. I could not see ten feet in advance. There was one thing quite certain. Nobody would be likely to find me.

“About two o’clock in the afternoon I came out from the dense mass of reeds upon the bank of one of the deep, narrow streams that abound there, and right opposite to the



only road in the vicinity. It seemed providential, for, thirty yards above or below, I never should have seen the road. I might have struggled on until, worn out and starved, I should find a never-to-be-discovered grave.

“As it was, my good fortune had led me to where a picket party of seven soldiers were posted. They had a little flat-bottomed, square-ended skiff tied to the root of a cypress tree. Watching them until they went back a few yards to eat, I crept into the stream and swam over, keeping the big tree between myself and them, and making for the skiff. Gaining the bank, I quietly cast loose the boat and floated behind it some thirty yards around the first bend, where I got in and pulled away as only a man could when his liberty was at stake.

“Hour after hour I paddled, never ceasing for a moment, first on one side, then on the other. Sunshine passed into twilight, and that was swallowed up in thick darkness only relieved by the few faint star rays that pene-



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trated the heavy swamp curtain on either side.

“At last I reached the mouth of the Roanoke, and found the open sound before me. My frail boat could not have lived in the ordinary sea there, but it chanced to be calm that night. There was only a slight swell, which was, however, sufficient to have an effect upon my frail skiff, so that I was forced to paddle all upon one side to keep her on the intended course.

“After steering by a star for perhaps two hours for where I thought the fleet might be, I at length discovered one of the vessels, and after a long time got within hail. My ‘Ship ahoy!’ was given with the last of my strength, and I fell powerless, with a splash, into the water in the bottom of my boat, and waited results. I had pulled every minute for ten successive hours, and for four my body had been asleep with the exception of my arms and brain.

“It was about eleven o’clock that night.



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The lookout on the picket ship Valley City saw a skiff slowly floating along.

“‘Ship ahoy! who goes there?’ shouts the lookout, as he watches the frail craft.

“‘A friend; take me up,’ comes a feeble cry. A boat is lowered with a crew armed to the teeth. ‘Who are you?’ comes the hail, as the boat draws near the skiff.

“‘Lieutenant Cushing, or what is left of me,’ is the reply.

“‘What about the Albemarle?’

“‘Will never sink another gunboat. She is at the bottom of the Roanoke.’

“At last I was on board of the Valley City, had drunk a little strong coffee, and was on my way to the flagship.

“As soon as it became known that I had returned, rockets were thrown up and all hands were called to cheer ship; and when I announced success, all the commanding officers were summoned on board to deliberate upon a plan of attack.

“In the morning I was well again in every



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way, with the exception of hands and feet, and had the pleasure of exchanging shots with the batteries that I had inspected the day before. I was sent in the Valley City to report to Admiral Porter at Hampton Roads, and soon after Plymouth and the whole district of the Albemarle, deprived of the ironclad's protection, fell an easy prey to our fleet."

The Albemarle had sunk instantly in the eight feet of water at her berth. Of Cushing's crew, he himself, one sailor, and two officers escaped. The remaining eleven men were captured. The captain of the Albemarle said that a more gallant thing had not been done during the war.

For his brave deed Cushing received substantial recognition. He was given a vote of thanks by Congress, and although not yet twenty-two, was promoted to the rank of lieutenant commander.

Lieutenant Cushing, the hero of this and many other daring exploits, was engaged in



## HEROIC DEEDS OF AMERICAN SAILORS

thirty-five naval contests during the Civil War. He was only twenty-three years old when the war was over.

In 1872 Cushing was promoted to the grade of commander, the youngest officer of that rank in the navy of the United States. Two years later his health began to fail. He died in Washington during the week before Christmas in 1874. He was but thirty-two years of age.



## XII

### RUNNING THE BLOCKADE

**F**IFTY or more years ago the people of the South did not manufacture many goods, and during the Civil War they had to get their war supplies from foreign lands. To pay for them they shipped cotton, which was their chief product. To elude the Union ships, steamers called blockade runners came into use. These steamers found shelter in several English ports not far off the Southern coast, such as Nassau and the smaller ports of the Bermuda Islands. It was only a short run to the great commercial centers at Savannah, Charleston, and Wilmington.

The blockade runner of fifty years ago was a narrow side-wheel steamer of five or six hundred tons. Her hull rose only a few



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feet above the water, and was painted a dull gray or lead color. To avoid making smoke, hard coal was used. While running into port all lights were put out and steam was blown off under water.

Blockade runners made a great deal of money for their owners. Even British naval officers sometimes took false names to be made captains of these swift vessels. They were often paid five thousand dollars for a round trip from Nassau to one of the Southern ports. Cotton cost from twelve to fifteen cents a pound in Charleston, and brought from fifty to seventy-five cents a pound in Liverpool. One famous blockade runner, the Robert E. Lee, is said to have run the blockade twenty-one times in one year.

We may be sure that these steamers, with their cargoes of "hardware," as they were called, tried every means to avoid capture by the Union fleet.

The captain of the blockade runner Stormy Petrel was an Englishman, a born sailor,



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short, active, and fearless as a lion. He knew the Southern coast as well as he did the yard of his cottage in England. His price for running the Stormy Petrel from Nassau into Charleston and back was four thousand dollars. The risk was great, and the price was high. His pilot was a Mr. Polter. His supercargo, named Debenham, had the care of the cargo of clothing, rifles, and cannon, and the buying of as much raw cotton as the steamer could carry back to England.

Early one evening in June, 1862, the Stormy Petrel moved out to an anchorage at Nassau, and there awaited her pilot.

The dusk came on. The men were at their posts, and the captain gave the word. The Stormy Petrel, which had been getting up her steam for the last hour or more, swung slowly round and worked her way out of the port as quietly as she had entered. The row of lamps on the quay, the scattered lights along the shores of the bay, and the steady fire of



the beacon at the mouth of the harbor faded away and were lost one by one in the distance.

For a long time the steamer skirted the coast line, keeping among the Bahamas, and pursuing her way through British waters. A little after midnight she stood out to sea.

It was a lovely night, with the horizon somewhat hazy after the heat of the day. The sea broke into phosphorescent smiles and dimples. The heavens were one glowing vault of stars. The Stormy Petrel, her steam being now well up, rushed on with a foam of fire at her bows and a train of molten diamonds in her wake. Thus the night wore on. At gray dawn the boy in the crow's nest reported a steamer on the starboard quarter.

Scarcely had this danger been seen and avoided than another and another were sighted at some point or other of the horizon. And now swift orders, prompt obedience, eager scrutiny, were the rule of the day. The vessel was in perilous waters. Her only



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chance of safety lay in the sharpness of her lookout, and the speed with which she changed her course when any possible enemy appeared in sight. All day long she kept doubling like a hare, sometimes stopping altogether, to let some dangerous-looking stranger pass, sometimes turning back on her course, but, thanks to her general invisibility and the vigilance of her pilot, she escaped unseen, and even made fair progress.

The sun went down, half gold, half crimson, settling into a bank of haze. Lower it sank, and lower, the gold diminishing, the crimson gaining. For a moment it hung on the verge of the waters. The sky was flushed to the zenith, and every ripple crested with living fire. Suddenly it was gone, and before the glow had yet had time to fade, the Southern night rushed in.

An hour or so later the wind dropped, and the Stormy Petrel steamed straight into a light fog, which lay across her pathway like a soft, fleecy wall of cloud.



“This fog is in our favor, Mr. Polter,” said Debenham, pacing the deck with rapid steps.

“Well, sir, that ’s as it may be,” replied the pilot, cautiously. “The fog helps to hide us; but then, you see, it likewise helps to run us into danger.”

It was a little after midnight. All seemed to be solitude and security. No sound was heard save the rushing of the Stormy Petrel through the calm waters. Suddenly there rose before them a great, ghostly, shadowy something, a phantom ship, vague, mountainous, terrific, from the midst of which there issued a trumpet-tongued voice.

“Steamer ahoy! Heave to, or I’ll sink you!”

“Guess it’s the Roanoke,” observed the pilot, calmly.

Even as he said the words, the man-of-war loomed out more distinct, and was within pistol shot.

The captain of the Stormy Petrel answered the hostile summons.



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“Ay, ay, sir,” he shouted through his speaking trumpet. “We are hove to.”

And then he called down the tube to those in the engine room, “Ease her.”

“You won’t stop the vessel, Captain Hay?” exclaimed Debenham, breathlessly.

“I have stopped her, sir,” was the curt reply.

Then thundered a second order from the threatening phantom alongside.

“Lay to for boats.”

To which the captain again replied, “Ay, ay, sir!”

Debenham ground his teeth. “Good heavens, man!” he muttered, scarcely conscious of his own words; “do you give in thus, without an effort?”

The captain turned on him with an oath.

“Who says I’m going to give in?” he answered savagely. “Wait till you see me do it, sir!”

And now the Stormy Petrel, her steam turned off, had ceased to move. All on the deck stood silent, motionless, waiting with



suspended breath. They could hear the captain of the cruiser issuing his rapid orders. Through the fog they dimly saw the boats as they were lowered into the water, and they heard the splash of the oars and the boisterous gayety of the men.

Debenham uttered a suppressed groan. The perspiration stood in great beads on his forehead.

“Will you let them board us?” he asked hoarsely, pointing to the boats, now halfway between the two vessels.

The captain grinned, put his lips again to the tube, and shouted down to the engineer, “Full speed ahead!”

With one quivering leap the Stormy Petrel shot out again on her course, like a greyhound let loose.

“There, Mr. Supercargo,” said the captain, grimly, “that is my way of giving in. Our friend will hardly desert his boats in the open sea a night like this, even for the fun of capturing a blockade runner.”



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At this moment a red flash and a tremendous report declared the prompt resentment of the Union commander. But almost before those rolling echoes had died away, the Stormy Petrel was half a mile ahead. Not a sign of the cruiser was visible through the fog.

The night passed away without further incident, and by five o'clock the next morning the blockade runner was within eight hours of her destination. Both captain and pilot had allowed more time for delays. They were not a little perplexed at finding themselves so near the end of their journey. To go on was impossible, for they could only hope to slip through the blockading fleet under cover of the night. To remain where they were was almost as bad. However, they had no choice, and so, after some consultation, they agreed to lie to for the present. But they kept up steam, and held themselves in readiness to repeat the tactics of the preceding day.



The fog had now disappeared. The day was brilliant, the sky one speckless dome of intense blue. The Stormy Petrel would have given much for dark and cloudy weather. Presently a long trail of smoke on the horizon warned her of a steamer in the offing, whereupon she edged away in the opposite direction as quickly as possible.

Toward sunset the pilot began to look grave. "Guess we sha'n't know where we are if this game goes on much longer. It isn't in nature not to get out of one's reck'ning after dodging about all day long in this style."

Still there was no help for it. Dodge the Stormy Petrel must, if she was to keep out of harm's way. With all her dodging it seemed well-nigh miraculous that she should escape observation.

At length, as evening drew on and the sun neared the horizon, preparations were made for the final run. The captain and pilot, by the help of charts, soundings, and the like, had pretty well satisfied themselves as to



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their position. The pilot, knowing when it would be high tide on the bar, had calculated the time for going into the harbor.

“’Twouldn’t be amiss, captain,” he added, “if you was to change that white vest for something dark; nor if you, sir,” turning to Debenham, “was to take off that light suit altogether for the next few hours.”

The captain muttered something about “infernal nonsense,” but went to his cabin to change his clothes. Whereupon Mr. Polter gave it as his opinion that if the captain and all on board were to black the whites of their eyes and put their teeth in mourning, it would not be more than the occasion warranted.

The brief twilight being already past, the engineers began to pile on the coal. The captain gave the word, and the blockade runner steered straight for Charleston.

And now it was night, clear, but not over-clear, although the stars were shining. Objects, however, were discernible at some distance, and ships were sighted continually.



But since none of these lay directly in his path, and since he knew his own boat to be invisible by night beyond a certain distance, the captain held his course.

In the meanwhile the hours seemed to fly. The Stormy Petrel was cutting the waters at full speed. She flung the spray over her sharp bows and flew onward. About midnight the stars began to get hazy and the night thickened, but there was still no mist on the sea.

Toward two in the morning they found that they were nearing shore, and the pilot gave orders to slow down the engines. A breathless silence prevailed. Every eye was on the watch, every ear on the alert. Expecting every moment to catch their first glimpse of the blockading squadron, they stole ahead slowly and cautiously.

Up to this time the hours had gone by like minutes; now the minutes went by like hours. There were no beacons to show the way, for the harbor lights had not been used since the arrival of the Union ships outside



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the bar. The men on the deck began to ask themselves whether some outline of the coast ought not to have been visible before this.

The ship crept onward. Each fresh sounding brought her into shallower water. The eager watchers stared into the darkness. They knew that the tide would turn and the dawn come ere long. After sunrise neither speed nor skill could save them.

At length, when suspense was sharpened almost to pain, there came into sight a faint indefinite something, and presently they made out the lines of a large vessel lying at anchor, with her head to the wind and a faint spark of light at her prow.

With a quiet laugh the pilot slapped his thigh.

"That's the senior officer's ship," he whispered. "She lies just two miles off the mouth o' Charleston Bar, an' she's bound, you see, to show a light to her own cruisers. Zounds, now, if we haven't fixed it uncommon tidy this time!"

Not one by one, but, as it were, at once,



the whole line of blockaders came into sight, all under way and gliding slowly, almost imperceptibly, to and fro in the darkness.

Between some two of these the Stormy Petrel must make her final run.

Steam was got up to the highest pressure, and the blockade runner ran at full speed. The two ships between which lay her perilous path grew nearer and clearer, and a dark ridge of coast became dimly visible beyond them.

The supreme moment was now at hand. Straight and fast the vessel flew, her propellers throbbing furiously, like a pulse at high fever, and the water hissing past her bows. Every man on board held his breath. Flagship and cruiser, the one half a mile to the right, the other half a mile to the left, lay a few hundred yards ahead. For a moment the Stormy Petrel was in a line with them. All at once she was in the midst of a current and rushing straight at the long white ridge of boiling surf that marked the position of the bar.



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“By Jove!” exclaimed the captain, drawing a long breath, “we ’ve done it.”

“Don’t you make too certain, Cap’n, till we’re over the bar,” was the reply. “We aren’t out o’ gunshot range yet awhile.”

Over the bar they were, however, ere long, safe and successful.

The whistle was blown twice, shrill and fearlessly, and two white lights were hung out over the bow. Had these signals been neglected, the ship would have been fired on by the Confederate forts.

And now other lights flashed out, tongues were loosened, and the captain, unbending for once, promised the men extra reward.

The long irregular line of coast had emerged into the gray of dawn; and just as the first flush of crimson streamed up the eastern sky, the Stormy Petrel cast anchor under the batteries of Morris Island in Charleston Harbor.



## XIII

### THE WRECK OF THE SAGINAW

**I**N the Pacific Ocean, more than fifteen hundred miles west of the Hawaiian Islands, is Ocean Island, a lonely and desolate strip of sand, out of the usual path of ships. There is no water on it, nothing green, and only now and then a stray gull or seal.

In the fall of 1871 the United States steamer Saginaw, a side-wheel vessel of three hundred tons, set out from Midway Island, a hundred miles away, to go to Ocean Island. The object of this visit was to rescue any sailors that might have been shipwrecked there.

Captain Sicard and his men were in high spirits. They felt as secure in their staunch little craft as if they were at their own fire-sides in their distant homes.



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In the night, as the ship was slowly approaching the island, she ran on a reef. The bottom of the vessel was crushed. The breakers swept over her decks, smashing or sweeping away most of the boats. Battered and strained, the captain's gig was the only boat left that was strong enough to pass through the surf. By a bit of skill and hard work the gig was launched and filled with men. The frail craft passed safely across the reef to smooth water, and reached the sandy beach. Before daybreak the officers and crew of the ill-fated steamer were landed on the desert island.

There were ninety-six men all told on that sandy shore, without food or fresh water, and with little or no hope of rescue from a passing vessel.

The careful training and strict discipline of the men stood them in good stead. Boxes and barrels of provisions, which washed ashore from the wreck, were pulled up on the beach. But many of the provisions were



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soaked with salt water and worthless. At best there was not enough food saved to last the crew eight weeks on quarter rations.

To get drinking water, they boiled sea water in an old boiler which they had succeeded in getting out of the wreck, and condensed the steam.

The most rigid rules for daily living were put in force. The greatest peril was from want of suitable food, and the slightest waste was forbidden. Certain men were chosen to kill what birds, turtles, and seals they could find. A few fish were caught in the lagoons. All this helped but a little.

Midway Island was only a hundred miles distant, but no help could be expected there. The nearest port at which they could look for assistance was at Honolulu, fifteen hundred miles away. It was soon plain that if they were to save their lives, somebody must go to Honolulu.

“I will take the captain’s gig and go,” offered Lieutenant Talbot.



“If you please, sir, let me go with you,” begged William Halford, one of the crew of the captain’s boat.

Three good men besides Talbot and Halford were chosen to man the little vessel.

The boat was dragged up on the beach, a new mast put in, and other preparations made for the perilous trip. Enough food was taken to last five men for twenty-five days on quarter rations. The food was indeed poor stuff. Most of it was peas, beans, and rice, which had been rescued from the wreck, dried in the sun, and put up in tin cans. The rest of the food consisted of dried potatoes. Casks of distilled water were put on board to furnish drinking water.

“Give them three cheers, boys,” called Captain Sicard, when the boat passed safely over the reef.

Back came cheers as the frail little craft sailed out to the open sea.

In front lay the great ocean.

Even from the first day the weather was



stormy. A gale set in and the waves soaked the crew with spray.

“The grit of the men was superb,” said Halford, long afterward; “they smoked their pipes and cracked jokes and spun yarns.”

Their food proved to be almost worthless. When one of the men made a slit with his knife through the top of a tin can, a tiny pop, as from a soda bottle, told the grim story that the cereals had fermented. Can after can was opened, with the same result.

“We must eat this if possible,” declared Talbot, “for most of our food is just like it.”

With a wry face the men tried to eat. The food made them terribly sick, but for three days they did their best to live on it. By this time they were hardly able to move about from pain.

“Throw the stuff overboard before we all die,” ordered Talbot.

So overboard went three fourths of all their food. Nothing was left but dried potatoes and water. The next day each man was



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served with a teaspoonful of the potatoes made into a mush with water. Not a man even hinted at sailing back to Ocean Island.

The boat had a small tin stove, heated by oil; but when five days out, they lost their light and the means of making it. Finally they obtained a light by using the lens from a spyglass. By this time they had suffered greatly from wet, cold, and the want of food.

Talbot seemed to depend most on Halford. The man was of the stuff that heroes are made of. He endured all kinds of hardships with grim calmness.

“It is a close call, Halford, and we are all likely to starve to death before we reach Honolulu. But it is our only chance. There are ninety-one shipmates waiting for help over there.”

“We must do it,” was the simple answer of the sturdy sailor; “these men will all die game. You may risk your life on that. We must reach Honolulu.”

It was impossible to take observations



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properly in a bobbing boat, and they went sixty miles out of their course.

About this time the sea grew ugly. Weak and sick, Halford stuck to his post at the tiller. Big waves threatened to break over the boat at every moment. A huge wave came along one night and carried away the lantern which was lashed to the compass. After this they had to steer by the wind and the waves. The sperm oil used in the lantern was now eaten as sauce for the potato mush. Nobody but Halford could keep the stuff on his stomach.

“Sorry for you, boys,” he said grimly, smacking his lips; “it puts me in mind of the puddings my good old mother used to bake for us boys up on our Vermont farm.”

The days dragged on. There was little or no sunshine. Gale after gale pursued them. The poor fellows were kept busy reefing the sail, bailing the boat, and dodging the huge waves. One day the oars were swept overboard.



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Every hour the men grew weaker. They were nearly starved. Their daily ration was two teaspoonfuls of mush, for this was all that could be spared from the scanty stores. Leaving one man at the helm, the others would lie in the bottom of the boat. Halford was the hero. He never seemed to get tired. He could stand a long turn at the helm. He kept good-natured. He told sea stories and cracked jokes. In brief, he did all he could to keep up the courage and strength of his ship-mates.

Twenty-five days had now dragged by since these weather-beaten men began to fight their way across the trackless ocean.

“Boys, here is all that is left of our food,” said Talbot, as he scraped the bottom of the box which held the dried potatoes. There was only one teaspoonful of mush left for each man.

The next day a bird called the booby perched on the gunwale of the gig. Halford grabbed it by the leg, killed it, and cut it into five pieces. A tiny piece of the tough,



raw meat was all they had to eat that day. The next day a flying fish fell into the boat. It made a mouthful for each man.

“Ahoy there! Wake up, boys! Land ho!” shouted the man at the tiller, early the next day. Far away in the dim haze was the low-lying land. The half-starved men crawled up from the bottom of the gig and cried for joy.

“It is surely land, boys,” Halford assured them, putting his pipe in his mouth and pulling on it with a feeling of comfort.

All day the wind blew hard. The poor fellows worked their frail craft through the choppy sea at a fair rate of speed. When they came nearer, the island seemed a huge cliff overhanging the sea. It looked like a lonely coast without the sign of a human being. Night came on before they could find a place to land. Of course it would be safer to wait until the next morning; but a contrary wind might drive them out to sea.

With Halford to help him Talbot took the tiller and made ready to get over the reef in



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the dark. They sadly needed oars to pull them through the great breakers. They drew nearer and nearer. Just as they seemed out of danger, a huge wave caught the gig and threw it on its side. Halford kept cool and clung to the boat. Wave after wave hurled him about. At last the frail craft, half filled with water, was carried over the reef into the lagoon. Halford and one of his shipmates still hung on. The others had been swept into the sea. Almost within a stone's throw of safety the starving men had lost their lives in the surf.

Slowly the battered gig was driven toward the shore. Halford tumbled overboard and made for the land. His companion, whom he helped ashore, died of exhaustion. Halford crawled up on the sand and fell in a faint.

At daylight he awoke. One of his knees was badly hurt. He could not walk a step. Using a piece of the wreckage for a crutch, he made his way a little distance up the beach. A native peeped out from the under-



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brush. When he caught sight of the strange-looking being, he was too frightened to move. Other natives came running.

“Aloha! Aloha!” cried Halford, which was the Kanakas’ word of friendly greeting.

After getting over their fright, the natives were kind and gentle, and brought somebody who could speak a little English. They carried Halford to a plantation where a white man lived, and furnished him with food and clothing.

In a few days he was well enough to sail in a native schooner to Honolulu, ninety miles farther to the east. Here he told his story. It was hard to believe. The people at once loaded a steamer with food and medical supplies and sent it to Ocean Island.

Captain Sicard and his entire crew were found alive and in good health. They had also had a hard time of it, until they got used to a diet of meat. They were building a flat-bottomed schooner, in which they hoped to escape if relief did not come.



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Halford was sent home by steamer, and spent some time in a naval hospital on the Pacific coast. He was well rewarded for his plucky deed. As for his poor comrades who were lost in the surf, nothing more was ever known. They had fought their way for thirty-one days across the stormy ocean only to be drowned at last. They had done their duty, but paid for it with their lives.



## XIV

### A FIGHT WITH FILIPINOS

**I**N a little town near the prosperous city of Portland, Oregon, there was built some ten years ago a fair and stately monument to the memory of a sailor named Arthur Venville, only seventeen years of age.

This lad was born in England, but was brought to this country while a child. When he was seven years old, his father died, telling him to take care of his mother and his sisters.

It seems that Arthur wanted to prepare for college, but had to go to work in a shop to help support the family. His health soon began to fail. He enlisted in the navy as an apprentice. He was such a frail lad that the others used to call him "sissy," "girl sailor," and other names.



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In the year 1899, one year after the close of the war with Spain, young Venville went to the Philippine Islands on board of the gunboat Yorktown.

At this time there was lively fighting in those distant islands. For almost a year a band of fifty Spanish soldiers had held out against five hundred Filipinos. The Spaniards were besieged in a stone church at Baler, a little town on the coast of the island of Luzon. With plenty of food and guns the Spaniards had fought long and hard.

Admiral Dewey was in command of the naval forces in the Philippines. He made up his mind to help this handful of Spaniards, and gave the Yorktown the task of doing so.

The gunboat arrived at Baler Bay about the middle of April. The village of Baler could not be seen even from the masthead, for it lay several miles up the river, and was hidden by the tropical forest.

“I have a little job for you,” said the captain of the Yorktown to Lieutenant Gillmore.



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“It may keep you away from the ship for an hour or so. Before daylight to-morrow take a crew and make a study of the coast.”

A little after four o'clock the next morning the second cutter, under the command of Lieutenant Gillmore, started with seventeen men. They were forbidden to speak above a whisper, and used muffled oars in pulling up the river. The two men who were to serve as scouts were presently put ashore and soon lost from sight in the thick woods.

The crew pulled up the river as far as it seemed prudent. The shore was low and marshy, deep with mud, and covered with high swamp grass. Lieutenant Gillmore had just given the order to return. The men were swinging the cutter round, when suddenly from a bit of high wooded ground a sentry fired his gun as a signal and ran into the woods.

Trouble came with a rush. Within a minute after the disappearance of the sentry a volley burst out of the thick brush. A



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sailor named Morrissey was shot through the head and instantly killed. He fell heavily and carried another man down with him. A man named Dillon, pulling at an oar, was shot in the eye, and never knew what struck him. He, too, toppled over and plowed down through the sailors, knocking one or two of them into the bottom of the boat. Rynders, at another oar, felt something the matter with his left hand. A chance shot, running along the oar, had cut off his fingers as a surgeon's knife might have done.

"You are fearfully wounded, Rynders," called Gillmore; "you may drop your oar."

"Oh, no, it is not much. I am used to this sort of thing. I used to be in the Dutch navy."

The other men were calm. They did not speak to one another or cry out. They were trying their best to obey orders to back water, to work the boat farther out. Some of the landsmen were firing rifles.

Two of the sailors were in the bow of the



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boat, trying to get the cannon into action again. They had fired a few rounds from it, but it had been disabled by the enemy's second volley. The two men were cool and deliberate, but they were not able to repair the gun.

More volleys came cracking and hissing from the brush. Gillmore was standing in the stern of the boat. McDonald and Nyberg, standing by his side, fell, mortally wounded, adding their bodies to the heap fast accumulating in the bottom of the boat. Two men were lying dead. Four were seriously or mortally wounded. Two or three who had been toppled over were struggling out from under the mass of their bleeding comrades. The wounded begged to be shot, that they might not fall into the hands of the savages. Those who were able to handle a rifle managed to return the enemy's fire. The worst of it was they could not see anybody to shoot at.

"I remember most vividly," Gillmore told



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afterwards, "the fierce desire I had at that moment to get back at the foe — to see some of them fall and bite the dust and writhe in pain as our men were doing. For a short time the fighting instinct crowded out of my mind pity and fear.

"Having no other weapon than a revolver, useless at that range, I reached for the rifle dropped by one of the dead. It had been hit in the lock, and the clip was jammed in.

"Arthur Venville, one of our apprentice boys, tried to repair it. A bullet went through the flesh of his neck.

"'Mr. Gillmore, I'm hit,' he said quietly. But he continued working at the rifle.

"A second shot plowed through the boy's breast and came out in his armpit.

"'I'm hit again, Mr. Gillmore.'

"He was still trying to pull out the jammed clip, when a ball cut a furrow in the left side of his head.

"'Mr. Gillmore, they've hit me again.'

"He wiped the blood from his brow and



eyes with his coat sleeve, and then returned to his task as calmly as if it were only a mosquito that had stung him. It was not three minutes till a ball crashed into his ankle, inflicting a painful hurt. There was just a slight quiver in the lad's voice as he looked up to me and said, 'Mr. Gillmore, I'm hit once more, but I've fixed the gun, sir.'

"This beardless boy of seventeen had never been under fire before.

"I heard bullets singing past me. One cut the loose folds of my blouse. Others passed so near to my face that I could feel little whirs of air brushing cool against the skin. Obviously the insurgents were concentrating their fire on me. First McDonald and Nyberg, and then little Venville, had stopped the bullets which just missed the man at whom they were aimed. I fired at the brush again and again. It was maddening to hear the incessant whistle of bullets and see my men dropping round me without being able to draw sight on a single foe. I had been under



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fire before, but never like this. Here I felt that I was the target, the hunted man, and this made it all the more bitter to be compelled to endure a galling fire which could not be effectively returned.

“Now the boat was drifting with the strong tide nearer and nearer the enemy. The men at the oars worked nobly, for it required nerve to sit there and keep stroke with their backs turned to a rain of lead, but no headway was made. Several of the starboard oars had been shattered by the heavy Remington balls, and that side of the cutter was pierced with many bullets. Ellsworth, the coxswain, who also occupied an exposed position, flinched not a hair's breadth under the hot fire, but coolly directed and encouraged his men.

“Seeing that it was useless to struggle further with the oars, Ellsworth, Woodbury, and Edwards jumped overboard on the port side and tried to swim the boat out. Despite their efforts we drifted slowly toward a bank



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of sand. Soon we struck. More bullets whistled round our heads, and still not an enemy was to be seen.

“In another moment a motley crew, like savages, half nude, some in shirts, some with only trousers, armed with bolos, spears, and a rifle here and there, all mad with joy, yelling and brandishing their weapons, ran down the spit of sand from the right bank of the river.

“The white flag was hoisted. The man who held it aloft received a ball in the wrist, and the banner came fluttering down to the bottom of the boat. If the tide would not let us get away, if the foe would not permit us to make surrender, there was one thing we could do with what strength we had left, and that was to go on fighting. We began to fire again.

“From the left bank nothing had been heard up to this time but the crack of unseen rifles. Now a voice rang out from the thicket. It announced to us in Spanish that



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unless we ceased firing and surrendered we should all be murdered in our tracks. The tones were those of an officer, and realizing that the threat might quickly be made good, I threw up my arms in token of submission. There were no more shots.

“In an instant the savages were on us. They jabbered incessantly, and threatened with their bolos and spears. But they did no harm. One by one they took the men out of the boat. They were not rough or cruel. They treated the wounded carefully. They appeared to covet their personal belongings more than their lives. In a twinkling they stripped them of coats, hats, and shoes. They took money and watches from their pockets. They even pulled the rings from their fingers. All this time the men were calm and silent. They did not resist.”

It would fill many pages to tell the story of the hardships endured by Gillmore and his men after their capture. They tramped for hundreds of miles through the forests and



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over the mountains of the great island of Luzon. After being kept as prisoners for nearly a year, and meeting with many thrilling adventures and narrow escapes from death, he and six others reached the deck of an American warship.

And what became of Arthur Venville?

Lieutenant Gillmore could learn nothing. The lad was so badly hurt that he could not travel, and was left behind at Baler. No news of him was ever received. The monument to his memory stands as a symbol of his heroic life.



## XV

### FACING DEATH UNDER THE SEA

**L**ATE in the spring of 1907 the Navy Department decided to send the Atlantic fleet of sixteen battleships on a cruise to the Pacific coast. In December the fleet assembled at Hampton Roads, and with Admiral Evans in command started on its voyage of more than fourteen thousand miles.

It was planned for the fleet to spend the month of March of the following year in Magdalena Bay, on the coast of Lower California.

After an eventful passage round Cape Horn and up the coast of South America, the fleet reached Magdalena Bay two days ahead of the appointed time. For the next month officers and men were kept at work in good earnest in firing at targets, laying mines, and doing other exercises.



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One morning during the last week in March a signal was flying for the laying of mines. The boatswain's whistle was followed by the lowering of boats. Every man was eager that his crew should gain the pennant, a mere bit of red and blue bunting to be flown by the winning ship.

In a short space of time the many tons of mines, anchors, chains, and other things which made up the equipment were towed to the field of operations. Each vessel was to lay twelve mines within a certain area and depth of water. A single mine consisted of an anchor, a length of wire rope, and an iron ball containing an explosive charge. Such an outfit weighed more than a thousand pounds.

Henry Nixon was a gunner's mate on the battleship Georgia, and had charge of a boat's crew on this particular day. In a letter to friends he gave a graphic account of how he almost lost his life.

"We arrived at our field," he wrote,



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“planted our mines, and got back to the Georgia in record-breaking time. Nothing now remained to be done except to wait for a few hours, and then recover the mines and test them for tightness and general condition.

“We succeeded in recovering eleven of our mines, but were unable to locate the missing one. Time was flying, and every minute’s delay cut down our hard-earned score. We kept our steam launch running over the field with grappling irons, but without result. There was nothing to do but to send to the ship for the diving outfit. A diver was hastily rigged and sent overboard. His method of searching for the missing mine was not satisfactory, and I ordered the crew to haul him to the surface.

“Our mines had been planted at a depth of ninety feet, or fifteen fathoms of water. The diver reported that the bottom was of dark clay, and that other conditions were unfavorable for diving. I was anxious, however, to make up for lost time, and so, regardless



of the depth of water, and without the least forethought or hesitation, I got into the suit, stepped over the side, and stood on the ladder while the helmet was being bolted into place. My intention was to remain down only a few moments. To save time, I did not wait for the diver's knife and belt to be buckled about my waist, but gave the order to put on my faceplate and lower away.

“‘Here goes for Davy Jones,’ I said to the man who was fastening on the faceplate. The clank and whine of the air pump filled my ears, but I could see his face wrinkle into a grin at my attempt at a joke. Then the bright sunshine of the warm afternoon gave place to the bottle green of the sea as I sank slowly into its depths.

“The depth did not bother me until I began to get near the bottom. It is necessary to lower slowly, that the pressure of the increasing depth may come more gradually on the diver's ear drums. Every moment, as this pressure becomes greater, he finds it



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more difficult to breathe. Until the bottom is reached, he labors under physical pain. I got down in pretty good condition, and immediately started off in the direction in which I supposed the missing line to lie.

“I walked about for what I judged to be twenty minutes, and then, failing to find any trace of the mine, I gave three pulls on my life line, to signal my desire to be hauled to the surface. When a signal is given by a diver, it is answered by the man tending the life line in the boat above. The steady chug-chug of the air pump comforted me with the assurance that I was being carefully tended, but there was no answer to my signal. I pulled the line again, and waited for a reply. None came, however, and in a mild panic I reached for the air hose and gave the signal on that. If my life line had parted, then the air hose could be used to haul me to the surface. Again I received no answer.

“It occurred to me that the line and hose



must have got foul of something that cut off the signals. Quickly I followed my line hand over hand until it ended at the mine for which I had been looking. I was pleased to have found it, but joy was speedily changed to dismay. It was light enough at this point to show me that I was in a desperate plight.

“The mushroom-shaped anchor lay in the mud, while the wire rope holding the mine in position led straight up until it disappeared in the dark water overhead. Round this rope was a hopeless tangle of air hose, life line, and electric wire. In the semidarkness I could see that it would require at least an hour to free myself.

“The pressure under which I labored was now beginning to affect me. My breath came with difficulty. My wits, however, were keenly alive. I began to walk round the rope to clear myself from it. In thinking over the matter now it seems to me that I must have caused the tangle in the first place by walking in a circle, with the mine as a



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center, and that in stepping over my life line and hose I had actually made three knots in them, round the rope. The pump fortunately was still sending air down to me, and I knew that the crew would not cease to pump until my dead body was lifted into the boat. This thought cheered me wonderfully.”

While Nixon was trying to get free, ninety feet below the surface of the sea, his crew began to get anxious. A half hour had passed, and no sign from the diver. The line tender gave the signal to come up. There was no answer. The man repeated it. Still no answer. The signal was repeated every few minutes. At last it was plain that the line had become fouled. The bubbles from the diver's helmet showed his position. Evidently the poor fellow was foul of the mine. What was to be done to save his life? Nobody could think of a plan.

A launch and crew from the Georgia now arrived on the scene.

“The man is probably dead,” said one of



the crew; "why not take a desperate chance and haul him up from the bottom bodily?"

Since this would put a weight of more than a thousand pounds on the life line, it was clear that Nixon was in a dreadful situation.

"In the mean time," continued Nixon, "I was striving desperately to clear myself, but with every moment that passed I realized more clearly that my case was hopeless. It was not so much that I was entangled so tightly, but the pressure on my lungs made every movement a torture. I felt that each hard-drawn breath must be my last. Nevertheless this did not prevent me from keeping up my efforts to free myself. How I regretted that I had not taken along my diver's knife! I tore at the wire rope with my finger nails; I pressed my helmet against the rope and tried to get a grip on it with my teeth. This, of course, was sheer nonsense, induced by my frenzied struggles against death.



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“My dear reader, have you ever been face to face with death? What did you think about? past mistakes? loved ones? regrets? I didn't. I was sure that death would claim me soon, but my mind was so busy in scheming some method of getting the better of the grim enemy that the actual thing had no terrors for me.

“Suddenly the bight of the line which was about my waist began to grow taut. The crew above me were evidently taking a desperate chance. They were staking everything on the strength of that slender life line. I felt myself being dragged along the bottom. The pressure about my waist was terrible. Just as I felt myself lapsing into unconsciousness, the crew stopped hauling for a moment. I recovered instantly, and looking round, could see the mud drifting down with the tide. I was breathing heavily, and felt as if my lungs must burst.

“Again the line straightened out, and under the terrific pressure one of my ribs bent in-



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ward until it snapped. At this same moment my helmet came into violent contact with the anchor. A blinding sheet of water poured over my face. I instantly realized that my helmet was punctured.

“If my situation was desperate a moment ago, it was surely hopeless now. Hurriedly I felt for the hole and thrust my fingers into it. The rough edges cut to the bone, but the greater flow of water was checked. The strain was too great, however, and I lost my senses. My hand slipped out of the puncture, and the inrushing water revived me.

“How many times I fainted, I do not know. Each time a jet of cold water revived me sufficiently to make me realize that my only salvation lay in keeping my hand stuffed into the hole of the helmet. Even in these desperate moments the thought that the men would keep on pumping until I was hauled to the surface was a great comfort. Although the hose was knotted and twisted, the life-giving air came down in steady



## FACING DEATH UNDER THE SEA

throbs. This in a large measure served to keep the water from pouring into the helmet.

“It seemed to me that I had been in the death trap for ages. An occasional ray of sunlight, however, penetrated even to this depth, and I tried to think how many hours remained before darkness would set in. I will not dwell on my great agony, mental and physical. My fractured rib did not bother me. My bleeding hand, thrust tightly into the helmet, was numb and without pain. The terrific stress under which I labored, due to the great pressure, made breathing so difficult that it was nothing short of torture. It seemed as if I must die at any moment.

“Suddenly the rope about my waist became still tighter. I felt myself dangling and twisting clear of the bottom. A cloud of mud filled the surrounding water, but as it cleared under the influence of the tide, I could see a tangle of wire, ropes, and other gear belonging to the outfit. The anchor,



weighing five hundred and forty pounds, was suspended, a dead weight, from my body.

“Picture yourself, reader, within the coil of a thin rope, suspended seventy feet below the surface of the sea, with a broken rib, and a trickling stream of water rising slowly to your chin. Then hang a weight of five hundred and forty pounds below your fractured rib, and you will be in the same position that I was in.

“I was too far gone to realize that if the line would stand the strain, I should soon be grasping the hands of my shipmates in the sunlight above. I was dimly conscious that the water about me was becoming more transparent, and the chill of the depths giving place to the warm water near the surface. The tangle of ropes and gear gave off bubbles under the decreasing pressure. In spite of the crushing strain of the line about my waist, I began to breathe with less effort, and all at once I realized what I had gone through.



## FACING DEATH UNDER THE SEA

“I could now see the bottom of the launch, and was within five feet of it, when my upward progress came to a sudden halt. I later learned that the crew had stopped pulling on the life line to gather in the slack rope that had come to the surface. A coil of the rope slipped under my leg in such a way that I was almost stood on my head. The water in my diving suit began to flow into the helmet. It quickly rose to my eyes, then covered my nose and mouth, and there I dangled.

“I prayed that death might come swiftly. A wave of pity swept over me at the thought that one good pull on the line would set me upright again and thus drain the helmet. I was now in a desperate situation — within a few feet of the surface, yet apparently doomed to death.

“But help was at hand. One of the boat crew, hastily stripping himself, dived down to get a closer look at the conditions. He noticed the bight of line that kept me in-



verted, and by a single swift pull had me upright in a second.

“There is little more to tell. I was soon hauled on board the launch. When it was discovered that my helmet was punctured, the astonishment that I still lived knew no bounds. The crew had long ago given me up for dead.

“I had succeeded in finding the mine, but for several years my experience seemed to me like some awful nightmare.”



## PRONUNCIATION OF PROPER NAMES

### A

Albemarle, al'be-marl  
Azores, a-zōrz'

### B

Baler, ba-lâr' (*â* as in *care*)  
Bahamas, ba-hâ'maz  
Bermuda, ber-mū'da (*ū* as in  
*use*)  
Blythe, blīth  
Burgoyne, bur-goin'  
Burroughs, bur'ōz

### C

California, kal-i-for'ni-a  
Carolina, kar-o-li'na  
Catalano, kâ-tâ-lâ'no (*ä* as in  
*arm*)  
Champlain, sham-plān'  
Chesapeake, ches'a-peek  
Confiance, kon-fe-âns' (*â* as in  
*ask*)  
Cyane, se-ân' (*â* as in *ask*)

### D

Dacres, da'kerz  
Debenham, deb'en-am  
Decatur, de-kâ'tur  
Dewey, dew'y

Dillon, dil'un  
Downie, doun'y  
Duddington, dud'ing-tun

### F

Faneuil, fun'l or fan'l  
Filipino, fil-i-pe'no

### G

Gaspee, gas-pee'  
Gibraltar, jī-brol'ter  
Gloria Dei, glo'ri-a de'i  
Gloriana, glo-ri-ä'na (*ä* as in  
*arm*)  
Guerrière, gě-ri-ër' (*g* as in  
*get*)

### H

Halford, hal'ford  
Hawaiian, hä-wī'yan (*ä* as in  
*arm*)  
Honolulu, hō-nō-loo'loo

### I

Indies, in'diz

### J

Java, jä'va (*ä* as in *arm*)  
Jocko, jök'o



## PRONUNCIATION OF PROPER NAMES

### K

Kanaka, kan'a-ka

### L

Levant, le-vant'

Liverpool, liv'er-pool

Luzon, loo-zōn'

### M

MacDonough, mak-don'o

Macomb, ma-koom'

Madeira, ma-de'ra

Magdalena, mag-da-le'na

Maltese, mol-tēz'

Marie Céleste, ma-re' se-lest'

Massachusetts, mas-a-choo'sets

Mawney, maw'ny

Montague, mon'ta-gū (ū as in use)

Morocco, mo-rok'o

Morrissey, mor'i-sy

### N

Namquit, nam'kwit

Napoleon, na-po'le-un

Narragansett, nar-a-gan'set

Nassau, nas'aw

Nautilus, naw'ti-lus

Norwegian, nor-we'jan

### P

Panama, pan-a-mä' (ä as in arm)

Parliament, pär'li-ment (ä as in arm)

Petrel, pet'rel

Philippine, fil'i-pin

Plymouth, plim'uth

Portuguese, pōr'tu-gēz (g as in get)

Preble, preb'l

Prevost, pre-vo'

### R

Roanoke, ro'a-nōk

Rynders, rin'derz

### S

Sabin, sab'in

Saginaw, sag'i-naw

Saratoga, sār-a-to'ga

Sargasso, sār-gas'o (ä as in arm)

Savannah, sa-van'a

Sicard, se-kār' (ä as in ask)

Sicily, sis'i-ly

Syracuse, sir'a-kūs (ū as in use)

### T

Talbot, tol'but

Tenedos, ten'e-dos

Ticonderoga, ti-kon-der-o'ga

Trafalgar, traf-al-gär' (ä as in arm)

Tripoli, trip'o-ly

Tripolitan, tri-pol'i-tan

### W

Woolstein, wool'stīn









Nancy  
Hanks  
Lincoln  
Public  
Library