

NELSON IN THE BATTLE OF THE NILE.



BARON NELSON OF THE NILE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the brilliant victory of the British fleet off Cape St. Vincent, the Mediterranean remained, throughout the year 1797, in the control of the French and Spaniards, virtually undisturbed by any intrusion of their enemies. French divisions came and went at their will and leisure, and the nation soon learned to look upon the sea as a French lake. Aware, however, of naval inferiority, and attaching exaggerated importance to the holding of maritime territory and fortified harbors, independent of purely naval force, many schemes were broached for strengthening their grip upon the inland sea. The Ionian Islands, Corfu and its neighbors, had fallen to them as their share of the spoils of Venice, and after peace was made with Austria the determination was reached to seize Egypt and Malta. The importance of the former need scarcely be insisted upon to men of our generation, familiar with the Suez Canal and the jealousy with which France now regards the rule of England over the country. Malta was still in possession of the Knights, but intrigues with some of their number had been initiated, and it was well understood that little resistance need be feared from the Order, which had long outlived its usefulness and its discipline.

For the seizure of these two points, of the first importance to any system of general

Mediterranean control, an expedition was organized in Toulon and adjacent ports in the first months of 1798. It was to consist of 35,000 troops, to be convoyed in between three and four hundred vessels, under the protection of a fleet of thirteen ships of the line, with numerous frigates and smaller ships of war. The whole command was in the hands of General Bonaparte.

Despite all attempts at concealment, some rumor of the preparations reached the British government, by whose directions Lord St. Vincent, early in May, sent Nelson into the Mediterranean, with three ships of the line, to gain intelligence as to what was in contemplation. This force was afterward raised to thirteen ships of the line, and one of fifty guns; but the reinforcement did not reach Nelson until June 7, he being then to the westward of the northern part of Corsica. The French had already left Toulon on May 19, and proceeded leisurely by the east of Corsica, picking up on the way divisions from that island and Genoa. On June 7, when Nelson's chase of them began, they had rounded the western point of Sicily, and were steering for Malta with a fair wind. Here then began the pursuit, which ended nearly two months later in the naval battle of the Nile—called by the French *Aboukir*.

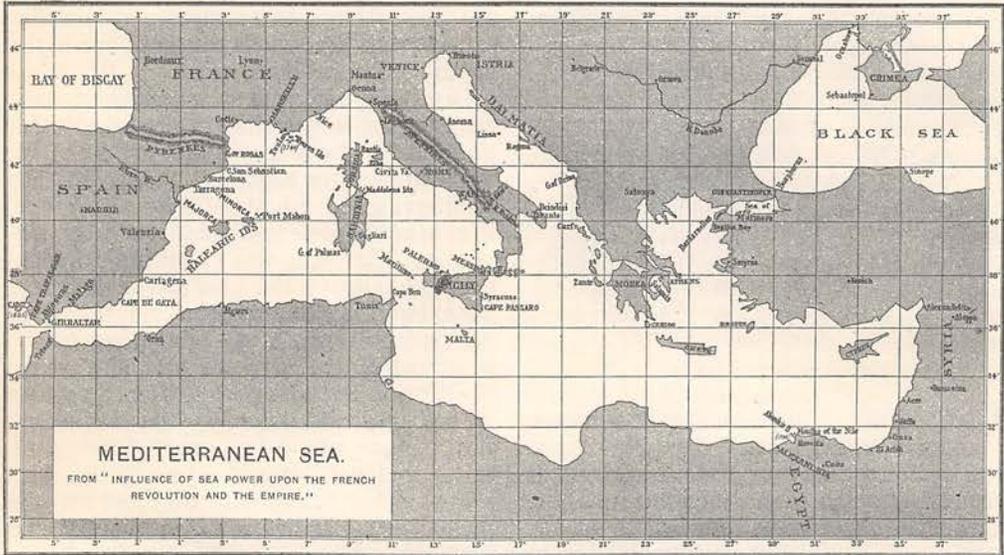
On the 9th of June the French armament appeared off Malta. The island was at once summoned, and after a faint show of resistance capitulated on the 12th. It is said that when General Caffarelli, the senior French engineer of the expedition, looked on the complicated pile of fortifications, the massive growth of centuries of warfare, he remarked that it was fortunate for the French that there had been some people inside to open the gates. The next day the three hundred French vessels entered Valetta harbor, and remained till July 19; then, having left a garrison of 4000 to hold the place, they again sailed for Alexandria.

Five days before they departed, Nelson, who had followed their supposed course east of Corsica, was off *Cività Vecchia*, and there learned on June 14 that the enemy had been seen ten days before near the west end of Sicily, steering east. On the 17th, off Naples, he heard that they had landed at Malta. Pushing

hastily forward, he passed through the Straits of Messina, where, on June 20, he was informed of the island's surrender. As Bonaparte had sailed thence only on the previous day, the two fleets, pursued and pursuers, were now less than two hundred miles apart, the latter pressing in fiery haste straight for the point where the quarry at the moment was; yet six weeks were to elapse before the two met.

Though bound for Alexandria, Bonaparte ordered that the great fleet should first be

upon the latter country. A week before he had written: «If they pass Sicily»—the case which had now apparently arisen—«I shall believe they are going on their scheme of possessing Alexandria and getting troops to India: a plan concerted with the Sultan of Mysore»—the most formidable of the Indian sovereigns,—«and by no means so difficult as might at first view be imagined; for three weeks from Suez to Malabar is a common passage at this season of the year.» On the other hand, he had been particularly cau-



steered for the south side of Crete, instead of heading direct for its port. To this was due the fact that Nelson missed it; and it is probable that the French leader, who already knew of the British having entered the Mediterranean, laid this false course for the express purpose of throwing off his enemy. As news was his great want, Nelson kept close to Sicily; and on the 22d, off the southeast point of the island, a Genoese brig from Malta was spoken, which reported, truly, that the French had sailed from Malta, but on the 16th instead of the 19th, as was actually the case. The informant added that their supposed destination was Sicily.

The British admiral was in a dilemma. That neither Sicily nor Naples was the object of the French he now had fairly satisfactory proof from his general information; and as strong westerly winds prevail at that season throughout the western Mediterranean, he argued justly that they could have gone only to the eastward, as to Corfu or to Egypt. He had already gained an inkling of their designs

tioned not to let the enemy's force get to the westward of him; and how then could he, with nothing definite to allege, in reliance simply on his own insight, go to the extreme east of the Mediterranean, deliberately yielding them, in case of mistake, the advantage against which he had been warned?

In this perplexity Nelson summoned on board the *Vanguard* four of the captains in whom he had special confidence, and asked their opinion, laying his reasons before them. They agreed with him on the propriety of going at once to Alexandria. To this conclusion the mistake in the date of Bonaparte's sailing from Malta contributed. If he had sailed on the 16th for Sicily, surely on the 20th at Messina, or on the 22d off Syracuse, they would have heard something about him. Had Nelson then known that his enemy had moved only three days before, instead of six, he might reasonably have waited for further tidings about Sicily. As it was, he decided to make the best of his way for Alexandria, «as the only means,» to use the words of the officer next in rank to

him,—Sir James Saumarez,—“of saving the British possessions in India, should the French armament be destined for that country.” Another of those consulted, a man of conspicuous sagacity,—Captain Alexander J. Ball,—writing when it appeared that the pursuit had been a mistake, deliberately reaffirmed this opinion as a support to the then seemingly discomfited admiral: “Egypt appeared to be the most likely place to which they were bound. You had a prospect of overtaking them and destroying their expedition, which probably was intended against our settlements in India. But they having five days’ start of you, your only chance of accomplishing this was by an immediate pursuit: a delay of twelve or twenty-four hours to have endeavored to obtain more correct intelligence would have rendered your pursuit almost useless.” It is interesting to observe that men of the first order of naval ability did not then see in Bonaparte’s undertaking the absurdity which has been attributed to it by after-sight.

As the enemy, wherever bound, was believed to have six days’ start, the need of haste was evident, so the British not only steered a straight course for their port, but carried all sail. Their passage, therefore, was for two reasons much more rapid than that of Bonaparte’s force. A small body of well-drilled ships accustomed to work together, as Nelson’s were, can under all circumstances make greater speed than three hundred such as those that composed the French armament, picked up wherever they could be had, without the habit of concerted action, and altogether too numerous to be controlled by the few ships of war, themselves not of the most efficient. Consequently, starting for Alexandria, from a point about as distant from it as Malta is, three days later than the French, but going direct and with all speed, Nelson arrived at his destination three days before they, by their roundabout route, appeared off the coast of Egypt. During this passage neither saw the other. Nelson’s frigates, by an unfortunate error of their commander, had separated from him before the reinforcement joined. Having no scouts, the British could even during daylight command no wider a horizon than that over which the ships of the line could be spread without losing sight of one another; but at night they had to draw together, because the military necessity of keeping the force entire and in hand, when it would have so much work to do if the enemy were met, was even greater than that of learning the latter’s whereabouts. Under these disadvantages, and with hazy weather, it happened

by an extraordinary chance that, during the night after the day on which Nelson headed for Alexandria, his fleet and the French crossed the same spot without meeting or seeing, unaware of so critical a proximity, and by morning the diverging tracks and differing speeds put them again out of each other’s view. Pursuing their respective courses, they continued to separate more and more, but for some days were at no time over a hundred miles apart.

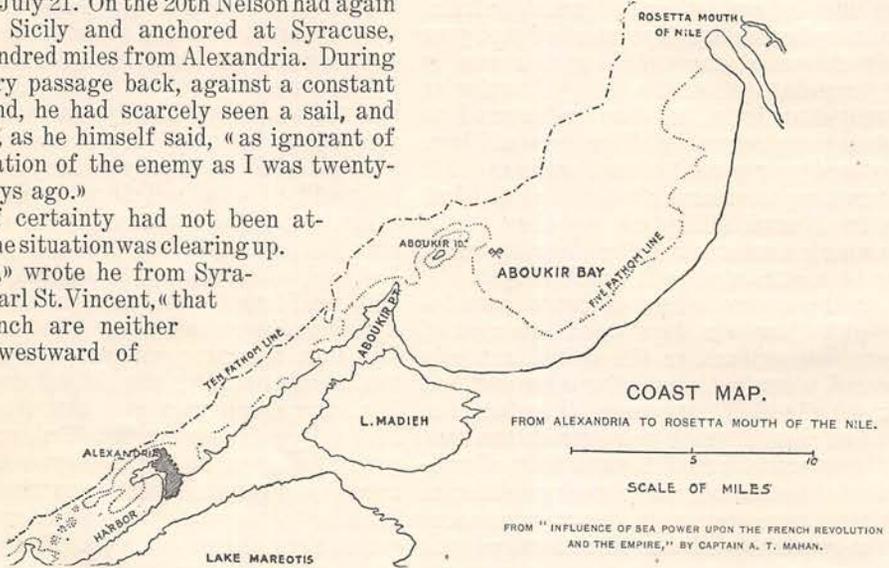
On the 28th, Nelson came in sight of Alexandria. Two days before he had sent a brig, his one despatch vessel, ahead of the fleet to communicate with the British consul there. To his surprise and consternation, not only was the enemy not in Egyptian waters, but nothing was known of his movements. Overwrought with the anxiety of the past month, and feeling the full weight of the risk he had taken,—of which Saumarez, a man calm and steadfast, approving, too, what had been done, had said, “Did the chief responsibility rest with me, I fear it would be more than my too irritable nerves would bear.”—Nelson showed less than the clear judgment and sagacity that at other times so markedly characterized him. It will be remembered that this was his first independent command. Brilliant as his career had been, he had as yet no established record as a general officer upon which to fall back, or to extenuate the want of success, to which alone the public looks. Fairly arrived at the place whither his best reason had assured him the enemy was bound, he failed to allow duly for the time he might have outsailed their unwieldy numbers. “His active and anxious mind,” wrote the captain of the flag-ship, who was hourly witness of his motives and feelings, “would not permit him to rest a moment in the same place; he therefore shaped his course to the northward for the coast of Karamania” in Asia Minor. Still obtaining no information, he here, to use his own expression, “became distressed for the kingdom of the Two Sicilies,” and started back for it, keeping along the northern shores of the Mediterranean. Though his decision to quit the neighborhood of Alexandria was precipitate, the course he took in returning covered all other probable routes that the enemy’s armament might have followed.

On June 29, the day after Nelson departed, the advance squadron of the French fleet sighted the sands of Egypt. Wily and calculating as usual, Bonaparte was again too shrewd to make at once for his port; and after passing Crete the course was shaped for the African coast seventy miles west of

Alexandria. Frigates had been sent ahead to ascertain if the enemy's fleet had appeared, and it is even said by a prominent French officer, one of Bonaparte's aides-de-camp, that the upper sails of Nelson's ships were still visible above the horizon as these look-outs approached the town. Be that as it may, the coming and the going of the British were now known. Skirting the coast, the expedition arrived off Alexandria on July 1, and the troops landed the same day. Pushing its conquest rapidly forward, the army entered Cairo on July 21. On the 20th Nelson had again reached Sicily and anchored at Syracuse, eight hundred miles from Alexandria. During the weary passage back, against a constant head wind, he had scarcely seen a sail, and was still, as he himself said, "as ignorant of the situation of the enemy as I was twenty-seven days ago."

But if certainty had not been attained, the situation was clearing up. "I know," wrote he from Syracuse to Earl St. Vincent, "that the French are neither to the westward of

unanswerable reply to the representations that the French minister did not fail to make. After a five days' stay the fleet, having been victualled and watered, sailed again on July 25. Though no time was lost, the imminent urgency that had appeared for the former chase did not now press, as the advantage it was then hoped to pluck by encountering the enemy before he landed could no longer be expected, and more thorough search could be made. More haste had once been, and



Sicily nor at Corfu.» This was at least something—nay, it was much; but even now in Syracuse he could "learn no more than a vague rumor that the French are gone to the eastward." Satisfied that that general direction only could they have taken, he decided to return to the Levant, going first to the mouth of the archipelago, whence the wind would be fair to carry him to Cyprus, and finally to Egypt, a course which could not fail to bring tidings within his reach. Before pursuing, however, it was necessary to renew the water of the fleet. The kingdom of the Two Sicilies being then formally at peace with France, though secretly hostile to her, the governor of Syracuse raised many objections to supplying her enemies, as a breach of neutrality; but Nelson had orders from St. Vincent to treat a refusal as hostile, and to exact supplies by force, if necessary. This had probably been arranged to cover the liability of the kingdom to reprisals by France upon its Italian dominions. The broadsides of the British ships in a defenseless port were an

might again prove, less speed. The fleet steered for the southern point of the Morea, and on the 28th the *Culloden* (seventy-four) was sent into the Gulf of Koron to seek intelligence. She returned with word that the French armament had been seen from Crete four weeks before, steering to the southeast. This could mean only Egypt, and getting at the same moment other corroborating information, Nelson again shaped a direct course for Alexandria, off which the British fleet arrived four days later, on August 1.

As the French received the attack where they then lay at anchor, it is necessary to describe their preparations, and briefly the events of the month of July which had decided their movements and position.

Bonaparte had wished that the whole fleet, and especially the ships of war, should be brought into the harbor of Alexandria, where it would be out of reach of an enemy. He considered that its preservation, the mere fact of its being "in being," would be a powerful factor in the general international situ-

ation, of which the existing enterprise, like all wars, was simply one political incident among many others. How right he was in this forecast was shown by the convulsion which the whole political fabric underwent immediately after the fleet was destroyed. In consequence of his wish, which was in fact a command, Admiral Brueys remained at anchor off the port from July 1, the day the troops landed, until July 7, seeking a channel by which the heavy ships—those of the line—could enter. Failing to find one that satisfied him, he then sent in the transports, and took the rest of the fleet to Aboukir Bay, fifteen miles east of Alexandria. The search for a practicable channel into the port was continued by skilful officers, and on July 18 these reported to Brueys that they had found one; but in the fortnight of grace that still remained he neglected to take advantage of it, having persuaded himself that the British were gone for good. «My opinion,» he wrote, «is that they have not so many as fourteen sail of the line, and, not being superior in number, have not thought fit to try conclusions with us.» In this conviction he remained passive, exposed to attack in an open roadstead. Bonaparte, who, though he shared the admiral's belief and frequently took the most tremendous risks, never did so needlessly, was urgent for him to move; but preoccupied with the land operations, and not on the spot, he could not compel compliance with instructions that were perforce somewhat discretionary.

The Bay of Aboukir, in the western part of which the battle was fought, begins at the promontory of the same name and extends eighteen miles eastward to the Rosetta mouth of the Nile. The low ground of the Nile delta, the slow deposit of centuries, continues under the sea beyond the shore line, the depth increasing very gradually, so that water enough for the heavy ships of that day (thirty feet) was not found till three miles from the coast. Two miles from Aboukir Point to the northeast is Aboukir Island, —since called Nelson's,—linked with the point by a chain of rocks. Outside the island similar rocks, with shoals, prolong this foul ground farther to seaward, forming a reef which, being covered with water, constituted a serious peril to a stranger approaching the bay. For a vessel inside, however, this dangerous barrier broke the waves from the northwest, the direction of the prevailing summer wind, and so made of the bay a fairly convenient summer anchorage. It must be noted, as one of the dangers which Nelson faced, that he had no knowledge of the

place except a rough sketch found upon a passing merchant ship. Beyond the difficulties that ignorance might impose, the situation of the French fleet offered no local protection against an enemy's approach.

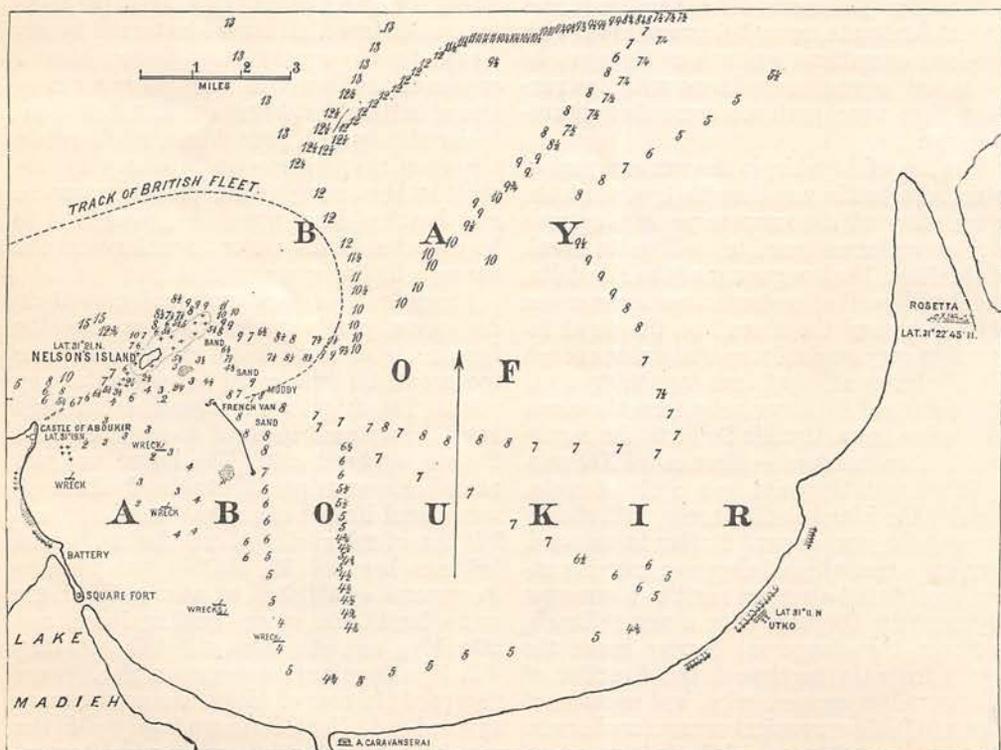
It was therefore incumbent upon Brueys to strengthen—fortify—by every means in his power a position so exposed. This he cannot be said to have done, although he was apparently satisfied with his own preparations; but in such a case, where the conditions demand the utmost diligence, a man must be judged not by his personal convictions, but by the reasonable criticism of others. By his own statement to the French minister of marine, the head ship—head, that is, with reference to the northwest wind, to which all would head while lying at anchor—was placed as close as possible to the shoal connected with Aboukir Island, the other twelve being formed behind her in a column, the general direction of which was from northwest to southeast, but curving a little, as shown in the diagram. The distance between two ships was five hundred feet, more than twice a ship's length. «This position,» said Brueys, «is the strongest we can possibly take in an open road, where we cannot approach sufficiently near the land to be protected by batteries, and where the enemy has it in his power to choose his own distance. It cannot be turned by any means to the southwest.» Nelson himself speaks of the French as «moored in a strong line of battle»; but however unalterably bent to dare the hazard, he could not fail to retain the deep first impression produced by the sight of the enemy's formidable array as he was bearing down upon them, nor is it to be expected of the victor to undervalue the dangers he has overcome.

Brueys's dispositions were faulty, partly in design and partly in thoroughness. For the former the distance between the ships was too great: the line could be pierced at any point. The frigates also could and should have been placed in shoal water to support the van or head ship. The latter was not placed as near as possible to the shoal ahead, for several British ships, by a wonderful exhibition of mingled skill and daring, passed between her and it. Neither was the line in general established so near shoal water as to forbid the enemy getting inside and attacking on both sides, for this too they did. By a singular misconception, also, Brueys regarded the rear of his column as the more exposed end. For this reason he placed in the van his weakest ships, upon which consequently fell the first brunt of the enemy's

skilfully combined onset. At the center, the seventh vessel of the thirteen in the order of battle was the flag-ship, the tremendous *Orient*, of one hundred and twenty guns, flanked on each side by the *Franklin* and the *Tonnant*, of eighty guns each. Among the thirteen British ships of the line, properly so called, there was not one equal to either of these, nor could the *Leander* (fifty) be considered to redress in any degree the balance of aggregate force. Having thus very properly provided against his order being overwhelmed in the center, Brueys, moved by the belief already mentioned, stationed his next heaviest ships in the rear to leeward, expecting the enemy to attack there. The British admiral, on the contrary, knew, and at once saw, that with a line extending in the direction of the wind, as did the French in Aboukir Bay, it was in the power of the assailant to throw his whole force upon the ships to windward, and to destroy them before the others could work up against the wind to their aid; and this, in brief, was his plan of battle, which was virtually won, its result assured, as soon as it began. Nelson repeats a story that Brueys from the beginning of the fight declared that all was lost. Though scarcely

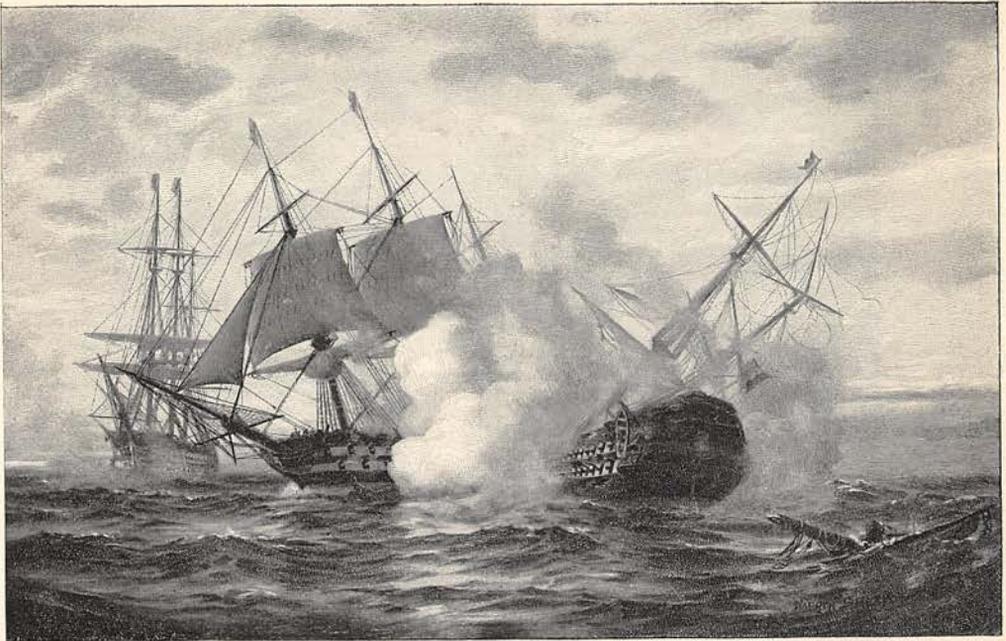
a becoming remark in a commander-in-chief, the thought may well have flashed across him as soon as he realized the unfolding of his opponent's plan; and if he expressed it, his heroism redeemed whatever of weakness his anguish thus betrayed.

In the order for battle thus adopted, the morning of the fatal first of August, 1798, dawned upon the French ships in Aboukir Bay. None on board of them suspected the near approach of the British fleet, of whose whereabouts they were as ignorant as Nelson not long since had been of their own. As on other days of judgment, men rose and went about their daily round, personal or public, unknowing that for so many it was their last. The cares of the admiral were numerous and varied, for the fleet was ill equipped, short of provisions, and ill manned; but among his anxieties fear of the enemy's fleet was not prominent. Hundreds of the crews were on the beach three miles away, busied in getting water, of which the supply was running short; and with them were important boats urgently needed in case of a sudden call to battle; for among the preparations postponed to the last moment was the running of cables from ship to ship, which should close the intervals against



DRAWN BY AUGUST WILL.

BATTLE OF THE NILE, ABOUKIR BAY.



DRAWN BY WARREN SHEPPARD.

THE «THESEUS» ATTACKING THE «GUERRIER.»

an enemy's passing. The sun mounted to the meridian, but still no sign appeared to fore-show the destruction which was now near at hand, for at this moment the lighthouse at Alexandria was sighted from the British ships of the main body. The dinner-hour passed undisturbed, and again men turned to their appointed tasks, soon to be rudely interrupted.

When the lighthouse was reported to Nelson, the fleet was steering southeast by east for the town. Two ships, the *Alexander* and the *Swiftsure*, were ten miles ahead, having been sent forward the night before to reconnoiter. The course was at once changed to east, parallel to the shore, which brought these two to leeward of the others, and had the effect—fortunate, as it proved—of delaying their entrance into the battle. The *Culloden*, having to tow a prize brig laden with wine, which the fleet needed, was thereby seven miles astern, a fact which resulted in a bitter mortification to Trowbridge, her «nonpareil» captain, to use Nelson's word. The advanced ships saw the French flag flying on the ramparts, and the port full of vessels, but among them none of the line. Having signaled this, they were recalled; but the wind not allowing them to head high enough, they fell behind, as before said. Their news, succeeding all the buffets of adverse fortune during the last two months, caused a general feeling of depression in the fleet. «Never,» wrote Saumarez to his wife, «do I recollect to have felt so utterly

hopeless or out of spirits as when we sat down to dinner» (about two o'clock); but at a quarter before three the *Zealous*, one of the leading ships of the main body, made signal that a fleet of ships of war was at anchor in the direction east by south—nearly ahead. «Just as the cloth was being removed,» continues Saumarez, «the officer of the watch came hastily in, saying, (Sir, a signal is just now made that the enemy is in Aboukir Bay, and moored in a line of battle.) All sprang from their seats, and, only staying to drink a bumper to our success, we were in a moment on deck,» where Nelson's appearance was greeted with a round of cheering that doubtless resounded from ship to ship. Suspense was ended.

Suspense, but for the admiral not anxiety. The waters were unknown, no officer of the fleet had ever visited them, the day was far gone, and the foe, though in view, was still distant. Three hours at least would be needed to reach him, postponing the encounter till close to night, even if its fall could be anticipated. On the other hand, off these low alluvial shores soundings are commonly regular, and give timely warning of the approach of danger. Reefs, doubtless, might exist (Aboukir Island itself showed an outcropping from the bottom); but something must be left to chance, and much might be hoped from the unexpected appearance of the British, and from depriving the enemy of the time to repair defects in his dispositions. In such a



FROM A BUST MADE IN VIENNA IN 1801, IN POSSESSION OF EARL NELSON.

HORATIO, VISCOUNT NELSON.

balance of arguments temperament commonly turns the scale, and, besides, Nelson's mind was prepared. All plain sail that could be borne was put upon the ships, which had been under short cruising canvas, and they bounded forward to a fine breeze from north-northwest. Signal was made to prepare for battle, and for the *Culloden* to join the main body, dropping the prize. An hour and a half later, as the enemy's position developed to view, the admiral signaled again that he intended to attack their van and center, and to prepare to anchor by the stern. The reason for the

latter order was that ships when anchored lie head to the wind, if the cable, as is usual, runs out from the bow; and therefore they either must be turned round head to wind before anchoring or will swing round after it. In either case, at Aboukir, this would have exposed them to a raking or enfilading fire for some critical moments. Anchoring by the stern avoided this.

At a quarter before six Nelson ordered the line of battle to be formed, there being then with him ten ships of seventy-four guns and one fifty, the *Culloden*, the *Alexander*, and the

Swiftsure still distant. A few minutes later, as the head of the line was drawing by the island and its reef, he hailed Captain Hood of the *Zealous*, and asked if he thought they were far enough to the eastward to clear the shoal, if they turned inshore. Hood replied that he had no chart, but was then in eleven fathoms, and would, if authorized, feel his way in with the lead, and be careful not to bring the fleet into danger. This was done, the *Zealous* keeping ahead and somewhat inshore of the flagship, the *Vanguard*, which gradually dropped to sixth in the order. Ahead of the *Zealous* was the *Goliath*, Captain Foley, who from the first secured and kept the distinguished honor of leading the fleet.

The steadiness and caution of the approach, in which daring and prudence met on equal terms, led the column to make a long sweep round the shoal in water of safe depth, passing, in so doing, well beyond the head of the enemy's column, so that finally the ships had turned far enough to bring the wind on the other side. In fact, as a French spectator says, they wore in succession, and then stood down obliquely toward the van of the hostile fleet. The latter awaited the attack in the order before described. Brueys had for a moment thought of getting under way, but soon dismissed the idea. At 2 P. M., while preparing to entertain at dinner guests from Alexandria, he had received his first intimation of the British being at hand. Signals to recall the absentees and to prepare for battle were duly made, but received imperfect execution: it is even said that the guns of the broadsides toward the shore were not in all cases got ready for action. In short, though lying in a position which demanded unremitting vigilance, the French were found unready. A brig was sent to reconnoiter, and to attempt, by moving over the shoal where there was water enough for her light draft, to lure the enemy upon it; but the stale ruse had no effect. «The English admiral,» said Blanquet Du Chayla, the second in command, «doubtless had experienced pilots on board; he hauled well round all dangers.» Brueys for a time hoped that Nelson would not attack that night; but when the shoal was passed and the British continued to stand down, nothing was left but to abide the issue, the full peril of which he could not even yet perceive. According to French reports, he had said as the British approached, «They will not dare to attack us.»

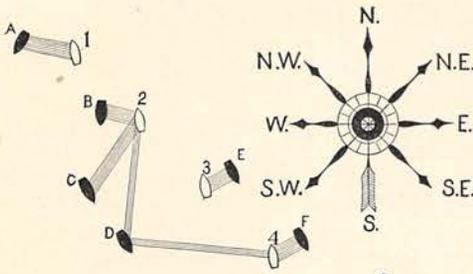
It was now past six o'clock, and sunset but half an hour distant. The British column advanced with solemn stillness, broken only by

the short orders of the officers, the cry of the leadsmen in the chains, the rattling of blocks and cordage when sails were handled. While still out of gunshot, canvas was reduced to topsails, the three principal sails of a ship, sufficient in such a breeze to insure managing her, without embarrassing overmuch the critical moment of coming to anchor; for upon the accuracy of the positions taken would greatly depend the fortune of the day. About half-past six the French opened fire, and broadsides were exchanged as the two vans neared. Nelson then made the signal to engage the enemy close.

The *Goliath*, closely followed by the *Zealous*, both feeling their way with the lead in the anxiously shallow water where the French line lay, passed round the bows of its leading ship, the *Guerrier*, which Brueys had thought could not be done. «Being in five fathom,» wrote Captain Hood afterward, «I expected the *Goliath* and *Zealous* to stick fast on the shoal every moment.» Foley's decision to dare this risk, which Nelson did not order, was necessarily reached at the moment of action, for not till then could he have been sure of the conditions; but it appears to have rested upon a purpose, previously entertained and maturely considered, to do so if the soundings justified him. He reasoned that the enemy, trusting to his position, would be less ready to fight on the other side, and the apparent quickness of his judgment is but the more meritorious for the alertness of mind which made it possible. As the *Goliath* passed she raked the *Guerrier*. It was Foley's intention to anchor abreast her, but the anchor hung, and he brought up on the inner quarter of the second French vessel, the *Conquérant*. Hood, in the *Zealous*, took the place on the inner bow of the *Guerrier*, whose foremast fell under his first raking broadside. The *Orion* followed, and, making a wide sweep round her two predecessors, reached the inner quarter of the fifth Frenchman, the *Peuple Souverain*, toward whom she directed most of her fire; but her after guns, bearing more efficiently upon the *Franklin* (the sixth), were used against that vessel. The *Audacious* passed between the first and the second of the French ships, and took position on the inner bow of the *Conquérant*, already attacked by the *Goliath*.

The fifth ship was the *Theseus*, Captain Ralph Willett Miller. This gentleman, whom after his premature death¹ Nelson styled

¹ Captain Miller was killed within a year of the battle of the Nile by the accidental explosion of some shells on the deck of the *Theseus*.



BATTLE OF THE NILE,
FIRST STAGE.

1, *Guerrier*; 2, *Conquérant*; 3, *Spartiate*; 4, *Aquilon*; 5, *Peuple Souverain*; 6, *Franklin*; 7, *Orient*; 8, *Tonnant*; 9, *Heureux*; 10, *Mercure*; 11, *Guillaume Tell*; 12, *Généreux*; 13, *Timoléon*.

A, *Zealous*; B, *Audacious*; C, *Goliath*; D, *Theseus*; E, *Vanguard*; F, *Minotaur*; G, *Defence*; H, *Orion*; I, *Bellerophon*; J, *Majestic*.

«the only truly virtuous man I ever knew,» was by birth a New-Yorker, whose family had been loyalists during the American Revolution. A letter from him to his wife gives an account of the fight which is at once among the most vivid, and, from the professional standpoint, the most satisfactory, of those which have been transmitted to us. Of the *Theseus's* entrance into the battle he says: «In running along the enemy's line in the wake of the *Zealous* and *Goliath*, I observed their shot sweep just over us; and, knowing well that at such a moment Frenchmen would not have coolness enough to change their elevation, I closed them suddenly, and, running under the arch of their shot, reserved my fire, every gun being loaded with two and some with three round-shot, until I had the *Guerrier's* masts in a line and her jibboom about six feet clear of our rigging; we then opened with such effect that a second breath could not be drawn before her main and mizzen-masts were also gone. This was precisely at sunset, or forty-four minutes past six; then, passing between her and the *Zealous*, and as close as possible round the off side of the *Goliath*, we anchored by the stern exactly in a line with her, and abreast the *Spartiate*. We had not been many minutes in action with the *Spartiate* when we observed one of our ships (and soon after knew her to be the *Vanguard*) place herself so directly opposite to us on the outside of her that I desisted firing on her, that I might not do mischief to our friends, and directed every gun before the mainmast on the *Aquilon* (fourth French), and all abaft it on the *Conquérant*, giving up my proper bird to the admiral.»

Nelson, by taking this position with his own

ship (the sixth), imparted by example a new and proper direction to the British movement. By the repeated raking broadsides of five vessels, the two leading French were already beaten ships; the flank of their line was crushed. Nelson himself doubled upon the outer side of the third, the inner side of the French line as far as the sixth ship being already occupied by British vessels. The rest of his column followed him. The *Minotaur* (seventh), passing just outside the *Vanguard*, anchored abreast number four; the *Defence* (eighth), covered by the fire of her two predecessors until she reached her berth, fixed herself abreast number five, already for some minutes in action with the *Orion*. The smoke and gathering darkness impaired the accuracy with which the *Bellerophon* and the *Majestic* took their stations.

The former missed the sixth Frenchman, and brought up squarely abreast the *Orient*, whose force was to hers at the least as five to three, while the *Majestic* ran into the ninth ship, hanging for some minutes at great disadvantage (her captain was there killed); then, swinging clear, she anchored on the bow of the tenth French, the *Mercure*, from which position she reduced her nearly to a wreck.

While ten British seventy-fours were thus getting into battle, the *Culloden*, under a press of sail, was hastening forward to bear her needed share; for, whatever the advantage skilfully secured by the plan of attack, there were, after all, thirteen hostile ships to be handled. Coming up too late to see clearly the route followed by the others, and eager to get into position while he might yet have light to do so, her ardent captain, always prone to undervalue danger, steered too straight for the scene of action. The lead, however, was kept duly going, and a depth of ten fathoms had shortly before been reported, when the *Culloden*, fifteen minutes after sunset, brought up on the reef which the main column had so warily rounded, and there she stuck till the battle was over. The fifty-gun ship *Leander*, not yet engaged, went to her assistance, but in vain. The incident shows vividly the risks which Nelson had to confront.

The two detached ships, the *Alexander* and

the *Swiftsure*, being so far to leeward at the start, had close work to weather the reef, and the *Alexander* even had to make a tack to seaward. Thus delayed, it was already night when they turned the dangerous point. The *Culloden*, serving as a beacon, kept them clear; then the two seventy-fours, with the fifty, bore down together into the midst of the darkness, smoke, and uproar, heading toward the eastern fringe, where the British fire seemed least sustained. It was past eight o'clock when they reached the scene of battle.

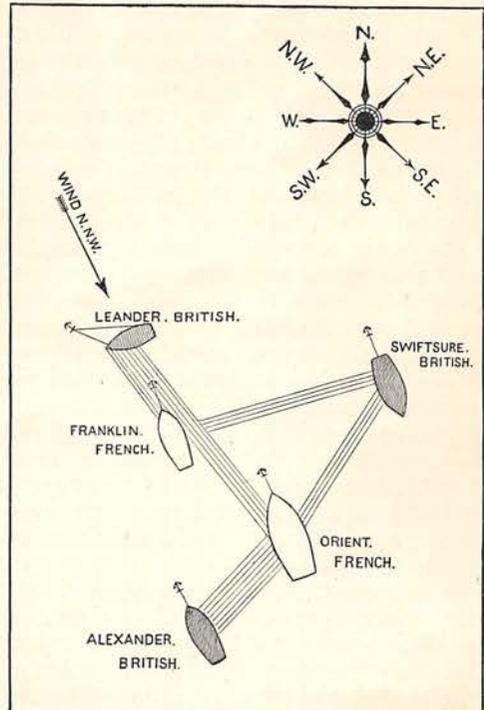
By this time the *Bellerophon* had been fairly crushed by the gigantic *Orient*: all her masts were swept out of her, and two hundred of her people killed or wounded. Her cable was cut and she was dropping out of action when this welcome reinforcement came up. The *Orient* was yet unconquered, and her powerful next ahead, the *Franklin*, of eighty guns, sixth in the French order, had had no immediate antagonist, although, as the fifth ship, the *Peuple Souverain*, had been not only silenced, but, through the shooting away of her cables by shot, driven clean out of the line by the *Orion* and *Defence*, she had received some injury from each of these.

Five ships, the left wing of the French, were now subdued. On the right was going on a detached single combat between the *Majestic* and the *Mercure*, which for the moment could only be left to itself. The sixth, seventh, and eighth ships, the French center, were distinctly indicated as the point upon which the approaching reserve should direct their attack, linked thus in close support to their predecessors, whose efforts and whose injuries had left them for the moment unfit for further vigorous action. Accordingly, even in the obscurity, the *Alexander* anchored on the inner quarter of the *Orient*, and the *Swiftsure* on her outer bow, part of the latter's guns playing also on the *Franklin*; while the *Leander*, gliding into the gap left by the *Peuple Souverain*, placed herself so judiciously across the bows of the two French ships as to rake them both.

The *Orient*, which had suffered severely in her contest with the *Bellerophon*, was soon nearly silenced by the combined fire of three fresh ships. Admiral Brueys had already been twice wounded, when, at half-past eight, a cannon-ball carried away his left leg at the thigh. Recognizing that the wound was mortal, he refused to be taken below. «A French admiral,» he said, «should die at his post of command»; and he expired where he fell. Thirty minutes later it was seen throughout the field of battle that the *Orient* was in flames. Her two immediate antagonists re-

doubled their fire, directing it chiefly upon the scene of conflagration, frustrating the attempts to extinguish it, and insuring her destruction. All eyes were inevitably drawn to this imposing, and at the same time menacing, climax to the night's excitement. Over half an hour before Nelson had been struck on the head by a flying splinter of wood or iron, causing a wound which he for the moment thought mortal, while the flowing blood, and the cut skin falling over his only remaining eye, blinded him. He had been taken below, but when the flag-captain reported the impending catastrophe he desired to be led on deck, where he watched the outcome, and gave orders for saving the *Orient's* people with such boats as could still float.

The fire spread rapidly downward and upward, illumining the waters of the bay, and visible twenty miles away to French watchers in Rosetta, who from their distant post of observation saw the flashes of the guns, and noted by the sounds the alternate swelling and falling of the tide of battle, though unable to detect to which side were inclining the fortunes of the night. The ships near by awaited anxiously the results to themselves of the coming explosion. It was suggested



BATTLE OF THE NILE, SECOND STAGE; CONCENTRATION OF THE BRITISH RESERVE ON THE FRENCH CENTER.

to Captain Hallowell of the *Swiftsure* that she should be moved farther off; but she was already to windward, and he replied that the riven fragments would be more likely to fall far than near—an opinion that was justified by the issue. The *Franklin*, Du Chayla's flag-ship, was only five hundred feet ahead of the blazing vessel, where she likewise held on; but the three French ships astern of her slipped their cables and drifted to the rear, where two of them went ashore. The *Alexander*, after the destruction of the *Orient* was assured, also dropped astern, not so soon, however, but that she underwent the worst of the explosion, much of the burning wreckage falling on board. Her sails had been thoroughly wetted and closely furled, and all preparations against fire made, so that no serious damage was done. About a quarter before ten the *Orient* blew up with her freight of noble dead, and, it is to be feared, with many a helplessly wounded man. The hour when this occurred is closely determined by the rising of the moon, which is by one eyewitness reported to have been shortly before the catastrophe, and by another shortly after it. «Immediately after the explosion,» wrote Du Chayla, «the action ceased everywhere, and was succeeded by the most profound silence. The sky was obscured by thick clouds of black smoke which seemed to threaten destruction to the two fleets. It was a quarter of an hour before the ships' crews recovered from the kind of stupor into which they were thrown.» Some seventy of the survivors were rescued by British boats, a few made their way to the shore in French ones. The lower hull of the *Orient* sank, and to this day rests beneath the deserted waters of Aboukir Bay.

The battle now was not only won, but its aggregate results were virtually determined. Most of the ships that had been seriously engaged on both sides were too much injured for further decisive action. After the silence that followed the explosion, firing was resumed in the center and rear, and toward midnight some British ships from the van ran down by Nelson's direction to support their consorts there engaged. But all these movements, though proper and necessary, were desultory in character, and carried on by men nearly worn out by twelve hours of constant excitement, exertion, and fighting. «My people were so extremely jaded,» says Captain Miller, who bore a prominent share in thus garnering the spoils of victory, «that as soon as they had hove our sheet-anchor up they dropped under the capstan-bars, and were asleep in a moment in every kind of posture, having been then working at their fullest

exertion, or fighting, for near twelve hours without being able to benefit by the respite that occurred, because while *l'Orient* was on fire I had the ship completely sluiced, as one of our precautionary measures against fire.»

At daybreak of August 2, six French ships of the line still had their colors flying. Of these, three were so badly injured that they could by no means escape, two being on shore. The three rear ships had received little injury, and they attempted with their boats to set fire to those that were aground before themselves putting to sea. The boats were driven off by the fire of British ships which had dropped down within range, and toward noon of the 2d the three got under way; but in doing so one of them, the *Timoléon*, «cast,»—that is, turned the wrong way,—and ran on shore, where she was burned by her own crew. The other two, the *Guillaume Tell* and the *Généreux*, got away, there being no adequate force of British ships in condition to pursue. The former was flag-ship of Rear-Admiral Villeneuve, who was in the future to command the allied fleets at the memorable disaster of Trafalgar. It has been held by French critics that he could have brought up the uninjured ships before the battle was decided, and was culpable in failing to do so. It is only fair to say that this is doubtful, though probably true. Villeneuve's personal courage was indisputable, but not his professional energy. Two frigates accompanied the flight of this scanty remnant of a great armada.

Of thirteen French ships of the line all but two were thus taken or destroyed. The fleet was annihilated. «Victory,» said Nelson justly, «is certainly not a name strong enough for such a scene as I have passed.» In completeness of immediate results upon the field, no fleet action has ever equaled the battle of the Nile. Upon the fortunes of the particular enterprise which elicited it,—Bonaparte's Oriental expedition,—the effect was absolutely decisive. It became impossible, and was by experience demonstrated to be impossible, to afford to the expeditionary force the renewal of men and supplies upon which depended not only the prosecution of the undertaking, but even the maintenance of the position already achieved.

The influence of the battle of the Nile was more far-reaching still: the continent of Europe became convulsed from end to end as soon as the news was received. Elated by Bonaparte's career of victory in Italy, and by the submission of Austria to terms of peace, the French government had entered upon a course of arrogant aggression toward other countries—of which the unprovoked Egyptian expedition was only one example—that had

aroused the wrath of all nations. Even the United States was forced from its attitude of benevolent neutrality, which had depended upon the tradition of the War of Independence and the adoption by France of republican institutions. The general resentment in Europe was, however, curbed by experience of the might of the French revolutionary movement, and of the French armies when wielded by a man like Bonaparte, and there was wanting the demonstration of some power capable of imposing an absolute check upon their future progress. The battle of the Nile gave such a demonstration. As Nelson said, it was more than a victory: it was a catastrophe. The French fleet was annihilated, the Mediterranean passed into the absolute control of Great Britain, the flower of the French army and the invincible Bonaparte were cut off hopelessly from France. Turkey, previously overawed by the fleet, declared war in a month. Austria, Russia, and Naples had already drawn together in coalition. They were emboldened, as the permanence of the conditions due to the battle became evident, to pursue their military enterprises upon a scale which brought the republic to the brink of ruin, from which it was saved only by the unexpected and fortuitous return of Bonaparte, and his accession to supreme power, a year later. Before the year 1798 expired a combined Russian and Turkish fleet entered the Mediterranean from the Black Sea, and undertook to wrest the Ionian Islands from France. In India the movements against the British domination which had been fomented by French negotiations, and which Bonaparte expected to foster, fell still-born when the disaster became known there. Nelson, aware of the importance of the news to British interests, had at once despatched a special messenger overland to Bombay.

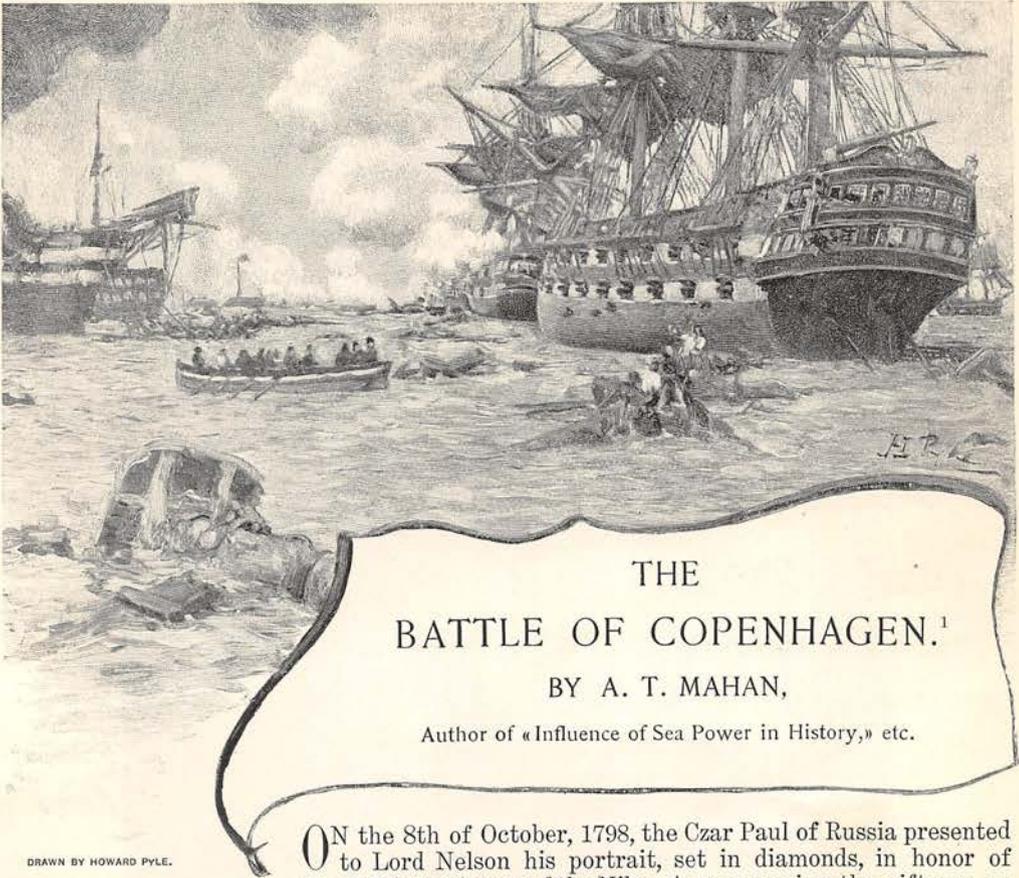
The general satisfaction, not to say exultation, was shown by the honors and rewards showered from all sides upon the victor. The Sultan and the Czar, the kings of Sardinia and of the Two Sicilies, sent messages of congratulation and rich presents, the Czar accompanying his with an autograph letter. On the part of his own country, the two houses of Parliament voted their thanks and a pension of £2000 a year. The East India Company by a gift of £10,000 acknowledged the security gained for the Indian possessions. Other individual corporations took appropriate notice of the great event; instances so far apart as the cities of London and Palermo and the island of Zante showing how wide-spread was the sense of relief.

In titular rank Nelson was raised to the lowest grade of the peerage, as Baron Nelson of the Nile. Indignant comment was made in some quarters upon the inadequacy of this advancement to the brilliancy and importance of the service done. The ministry justified its action upon the technical ground that, though no superior was within two thousand miles of Aboukir, Nelson was nevertheless a subordinate flag-officer, not a commander-in-chief.

Not least gratifying to him, with his sensitive appreciation of friendship and susceptibility to flattery, must have been the numerous letters of congratulation he received from friends in and out of the service, and especially from men whose eminence and professional standing made their praise a sound criterion for the calm after-judgment of mankind. Besides many other officers of character and reputation, the three great admirals, Lords Howe, Hood, and St. Vincent, the leaders of the navy in rank and distinguished service, wrote to him in the strongest terms of admiration. The latter two did not hesitate to style the battle the greatest achievement that history could produce, while Howe's language, if more measured, was so only because, like himself, it was more precise in characterizing the special merits of the action, and was therefore acknowledged by Nelson with particular expressions of pleasure.

"The consequences of this battle," says a distinguished French naval officer only recently dead, "were incalculable. Our navy never recovered from this terrible blow to its consideration and power. This was the combat which for two years delivered the Mediterranean to the English, and called thither the squadrons of Russia; which shut up our army [in Egypt] in the midst of a rebellious population, and decided the Porte to declare against us; which put India out of the reach of our enterprise, and brought France within a hair's-breadth of her ruin: for it rekindled the scarcely extinct war with Austria, and brought Suwarrow and the Austro-Russian forces to our very frontiers."

That these effects upon the course of contemporary history were not quickly productive of permanent results was due to causes in which neither Nelson nor the sea had any part; but though its immediate fruits were somewhat marred by the blunders of others, nothing can deprive this battle of its significance as announcing the existence of a force destined to limit the flight of French conquest, and ultimately to involve it in a ruin no less utter than that wrought in Aboukir Bay.



THE BATTLE OF COPENHAGEN.¹

BY A. T. MAHAN,

Author of «Influence of Sea Power in History,» etc.

DRAWN BY HOWARD PYLE.

ON the 8th of October, 1798, the Czar Paul of Russia presented to Lord Nelson his portrait, set in diamonds, in honor of the brilliant victory of the Nile. Accompanying the gift was an autograph letter expressing his personal gratification at a success which, to use his words, «could not fail to attract to the victor the suffrages of the sane part of Europe.» It could scarcely then have been foreseen that within the short space of thirty months the most arduous battle of the renowned admiral would be fought with, and his most hard-won success wrested from, an ally of the same sovereign engaged in a coalition of which the chief instigator and main support was the Czar himself.

The ostensible reasons assigned for the confederation of the Northern states of Europe in 1800 to resist the maritime policy and practice of Great Britain were substantially those alleged for the formation in 1780, during the American Revolution, of the Armed Neutrality—a name also assumed by the League of 1800. The real cause, however, at the latter date was the personal policy, or, more accurately, the personal feeling and violent passion, of the Czar, who throughout his short reign (from 1796 to 1801) was in a state not far removed from insanity. Carried by paroxysms of anger from one extreme to the other, he passed rapidly from the position of the ally of Great Britain to that of an enemy, and from enthusiasm for the rights of dethroned monarchs to an equally engrossing admiration of Bonaparte, the overthrower of thrones.

In his wish to injure Great Britain he found ready to his hand the old grievance of the belligerent right to capture enemy's property under a neutral flag, and also those arising from the disputed question as to what articles were really contraband of war. It was to the interest of Great Britain, as a belligerent state supreme upon the sea, to give the widest extension to the definitions of enemy's property and contraband of war. It was to the interest of neutrals to limit the scope of restrictions which materially diminished the amount of trade that they could carry on. Denmark and Sweden, as neutral states,

¹ In preparing this article, there have been consulted, besides various British narratives, two Danish accounts, one of which appeared in the «Cornhill Magazine» a few years ago. Quotations have also been made from the article «Battle of Copenhagen» in «Macmillan» for June, 1895.



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HORATIO, VISCOUNT NELSON.

sought continually to evade the restraints which the great maritime power claimed to enforce as a matter of prescriptive right, essential to her safety in war; but they were too weak to do so alone. In 1780 they had been backed by Russia, but in the early years of the French Revolution the instincts of her sovereigns prompted them to resist any action that tended to favor a convulsion threatening the foundations of absolute power.

The smaller Baltic states had therefore to submit outwardly, while they tried by indirection to evade the inconvenience suffered by their traders. In 1799 Denmark took a more decisive stand. She gathered her merchant

ships in fleets protected by vessels of war, and claimed that the assurance of the senior naval officer, that there was in them nothing lawfully liable to capture, was sufficient to exempt the whole body from a search by British ships of war. The right of a belligerent to examine a neutral merchant ship and her cargo—the right of search—was then, and still is, admitted by all nations as a part of international law. Of this right Great Britain justly claimed she could not be deprived by a modification introduced by Denmark alone. The latter ordering her officers to resist, hostile encounters took place in the Mediterranean and in the English Channel.

In the latter, in July, 1800, several persons were killed and wounded, and the Danish frigate was carried into an English port. The British ministry then sent a fleet and a negotiator to the Baltic, and Denmark, without abandoning her contentions on other points, agreed no longer to send ships of war to convoy traders.

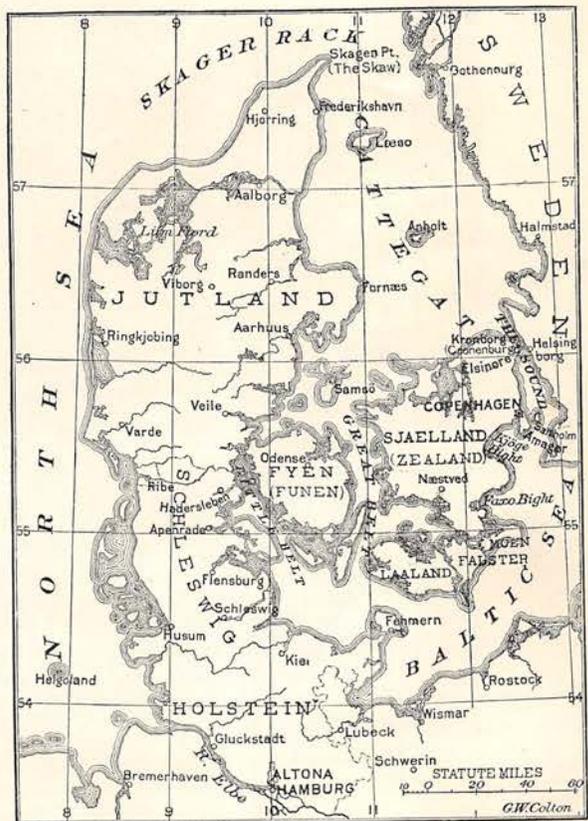
When this convention was signed, August 29, 1800, the rage of Paul I against Great Britain was fast approaching a climax, which was finally reached when she refused to recognize claims put forth by him to the possession of Malta, surrendered by the French to the British in September. Utilizing the maritime grievances of the Baltic states, and still more imposing upon their fears by his overwhelming power and personal irresponsibility, he drew them again into a treaty, signed toward the end of 1800, affirming a number of propositions concerning neutral rights which it was known Great Britain would not admit, and pledging the powers to mutual support by force of arms if necessary. To this treaty Prussia was also a party.

The reply of Great Britain was immediate, emphatic, and unanimous. No party in the state permitted doubts as to her claims, nor allowed any hesitancy to appear at a moment when she stood alone, almost all Europe against her, and not a single ally on her side. A large fleet was gathered at Yarmouth, the chief command being given to Sir Hyde Parker, a brave officer of excellent reputation, but who had never been tried in high command, while by a strange contrast, due primarily to the strong conservative instinct so rooted in the British, under him was placed Nelson, who had already done greater deeds and shown far greater powers than any British seaman that had yet appeared on her long roll of naval heroes. What followed was, from the point of glory, brilliant enough; but had he been in full charge, the coalition of the Baltic navies would have been to him an opportunity greater than ever fell to his lot, and it is scarcely doubtful that the results would have demonstrated his peculiar genius and energy to a degree that even the Nile and Trafalgar failed fully to do. It may here be said that Nelson had returned to England only in November, 1800, from

an absence of three and a half years in the Mediterranean.

As in the previous August, a negotiator went with the fleet, the admiral having instructions to act in case the demands were not granted. On March 12, 1801, the expedition sailed from Yarmouth. It numbered twenty-one ships of the line, of from ninety-eight to sixty-four guns each, besides two of fifty guns, which bore a manful part in the battle of Copenhagen. There were attached to it twenty-five frigates and smaller vessels, needed for the shoal and often intricate waters in which operations were to take place, and also seven bomb-vessels; for the intention was to bombard the capital of Denmark, if by no less extreme measure could the country be detached from the hostile league. On the 19th of the month the greater part of the fleet was collected at its first rendezvous, off the Skaw, at the northern extremity of Denmark.

The wind was then blowing fresh from the northwest, fair for entering the Cattegat, and here first was shown the difference of spirit between the commander-in-chief and



APPROACHES TO COPENHAGEN.



DRAWN BY HOWARD PYLE.

NELSON SEALING THE LETTER TO THE CROWN PRINCE OF DENMARK AT THE BATTLE OF COPENHAGEN.

Nelson, whose views as to the conduct of an armed negotiation were characterized by the clear incisiveness with which he went straight to the center of every question, military or diplomatic, that came within the circle of his action. «All I have gathered of our first plans I disapprove most exceedingly. Honor may arise from them: good cannot. I hear we are likely to anchor outside Cronenburg Castle» [twenty-five miles from Copenhagen], «instead of Copenhagen, which would give weight to our negotiation. A Danish minister would think twice before he put his name to war with England, when the next moment he would probably see his Master's fleet in flames and his capital in ruins; but (Out of sight, out of mind) is an old saying. The Dane should see our flag waving every moment he lifted up his head.» As a question of diplomacy, which was not Nelson's profession, this energetic dictum reflected accurately the temper of the ministry, whose envoy had orders to allow only forty-eight hours for the withdrawal of Denmark from the league. From the naval point of view, and especially with sailing ships that would have to pass a very narrow channel to reach their object, the need of losing no opportunity to advance while the possible enemy was still in the midst of hurried and imperfect preparations is obvious. Nelson was naturally vexed at the delay.

The fleet, however, waited off the Skaw, and of course the wind shifted. The envoy was sent ahead in a frigate, landed, and went to Copenhagen. On the 24th he rejoined the fleet, the British terms having been rejected. It was not till the 30th that the wind again served to pass the Sound, a narrow passage not over three miles wide leading from the Cattegat to the Baltic. On the Danish side lies the castle of Cronenburg (Kronborg), a work sufficiently formidable to sailing ships, the commander of which had intimated his intention to fire. The Swedes, however, had failed to fortify their coast, and consequently the British fleet, inclining to that side, underwent only a distant and harmless cannonade. At noon it anchored about five miles from Copenhagen.

Negotiations being ended, the question of hostilities alone remained. Herein the impulsive ardor of the second in command received, for the moment at least, no further check from his superior. A reconnaissance was made at once, and it was determined, in accordance with Nelson's previously expressed opinion, that the attack on the Danish defenses should be made by a heavy

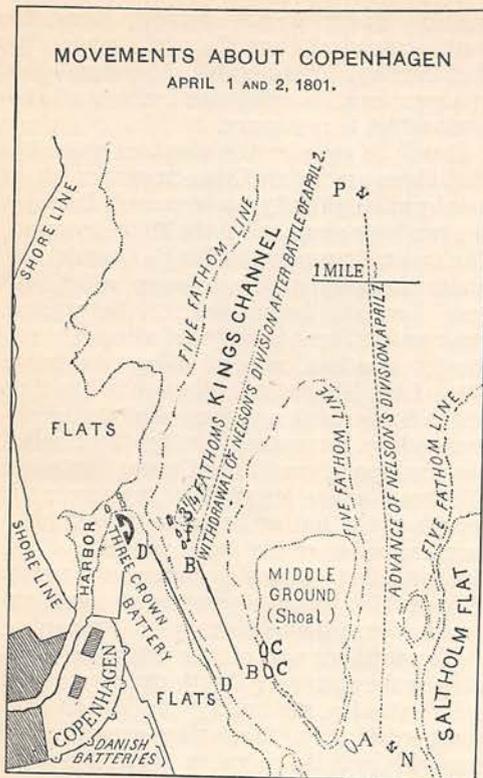
division, under Nelson himself, from the south instead of from the north, where the fleet then lay. This dictated the general plan of operations, to understand which a brief explanation is necessary.

It will be seen by the chart on page 530 that there are before Copenhagen two channels by which the city can be passed. Between the two lies a shoal called the Middle Ground. The inner, known as the King's Channel, lay under the guns of the defenses which had been hurriedly improvised for the present emergency. These consisted of a line of hulks, mostly mastless, ranged along the inner side of the King's Channel close to the flats which bordered it, and flanked at the northern end by permanent fortifications called the Trekrøner,¹ or Three Crowns batteries. Westward of the latter there lay across the mouth of the harbor two more hulks, and a small squadron consisting of two ships of the line and a frigate, masted and in commission. This division was not seriously engaged, and as a factor in the battle may be disregarded.

The northern part of this defense was decidedly the stronger. To attack there Nelson called «taking the bull by the horns.» The southern wing was much more exposed. Nor was this all. An advance from the north must be made with a northerly wind. If unsuccessful, or even in case of success, if ships were badly crippled, they could not return to the north, where the fleet was. On the other hand, attack from the south presupposed a southerly wind, with which, after an action, the engaged ships could rejoin the fleet, if they threaded safely the difficult navigation. In any event there was risk, but none knew better than Nelson that without risks war is not made. To the considerations above given he added that, when south of the city, the British would be interposed between the other Baltic navies and Denmark. The latter, therefore, could not receive reinforcements unless the squadron were first defeated.

The King's Channel being under fire of the enemy, it was necessary to utilize the outer passage in order that Nelson's division might reach the position south of the Middle Ground uninjured. The nights of the 30th and 31st were employed in surveying the waters, in laying down buoys to replace those removed by the Danes, and in further reconnaissance of the enemy's position. The artillery officers who were to supervise the bombardment

¹ Trekrøner, which was then a favorite military name in Denmark, refers to the three crowns of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, once united.



A, *Agamemnon* at anchor; BB, British line of battle; CC, British ships aground; f, British frigates; DD, Danish line of hulks; N, anchorage of Nelson's division, April 1 and 2; P, anchorage of British main fleet under Sir H. Parker.

satisfied themselves that if the floating defenses south of the Trekroner were destroyed, the bomb-vessels could be placed in such a position as to shell the city without being themselves exposed to undue risk.

But while observing such necessary precautions to insure getting at his object, Nelson's resolute temper chafed angrily against every appearance of over-prudence, of timidity, or hesitating counsels, based upon fears of the enemy's superior force. The Danes, Swedes, and Russians might aggregate a much greater number of vessels than Parker had: all the more reason to hit quick and hard before the melting of the ice in the Northern harbors released the ships of the latter two powers. "I don't care which way you go," he said, when the drawbacks of the Sound and the Great Belt channels had been discussed off the Skaw, "so long as you fight them." And now before the city, at a council of war held on the afternoon of the 31st, he repelled vigorously all those suggestions of possible dangers of which such meetings are ever fruitful. To the representations of the numerical superiority he replied, "The

more numerous the better; I wish they were twice as many: the easier the victory, depend upon it"; meaning that masses of ships so unaccustomed to fleet manœuvres as were those of the Northern powers rather hindered than helped one another.

Nelson asked for ten ships of the line. Parker gave him twelve, but they had to be of the smaller classes, because in shallow waters surrounded by flat land and shoals each additional foot of draft adds to the embarrassment of the vessel. On the 1st of April there blew a fair though light northerly wind, with which Nelson's division passed through the outer channel. The frigate *Amazon* led the way. She was commanded by Captain Riou, who was killed in the next day's battle. Nelson, who had never met him till the day before, had been much impressed by the discipline of his ship and by a certain chivalry of bearing distinctive of the man, and in his report spoke of him as the "gallant and good"—words which the poet Campbell adopted in his well-known ode. Buoys and small vessels, carefully placed, showed where safety and where danger lay, and by dark the squadron was gathered south of the Middle Ground, about two miles from the city. As the anchor of the flag-ship dropped, Nelson was heard to say with emphasis, "I will fight them the moment I have a fair wind." The remark summed up the spirit of his whole career—never to let opportunity slip.

There being altogether thirty-three ships of war, from ships of the line to bombs, and the anchorage-ground being contracted, the vessels lay so close together as to make a good target for mortar-firing had the Danes availed themselves of the chance. They did throw a few shells about 8 P. M., which fell dangerously near the British fleet; but fortunately for the latter, the enemy did not realize their opportunity, or were too preoccupied with strengthening their yet imperfect defenses to utilize it. For there had come upon Denmark one of those days of judgment to which nations are liable who neglect in time of peace to prepare for war; and when her honor demanded, or she thought demanded, that she should choose resistance rather than submission, there was little left but to take her beating first and to submit afterward. Her population responded to the country's call as the old Norse blood might be expected to respond. There was shouting, and singing of patriotic songs, and volunteering *en masse*, nor was enthusiasm belied by any failure of heroic performance in the day of battle; but all this did not supply the

strength which preparation and training give to the latent powers of a country, as to the muscles of an athlete.

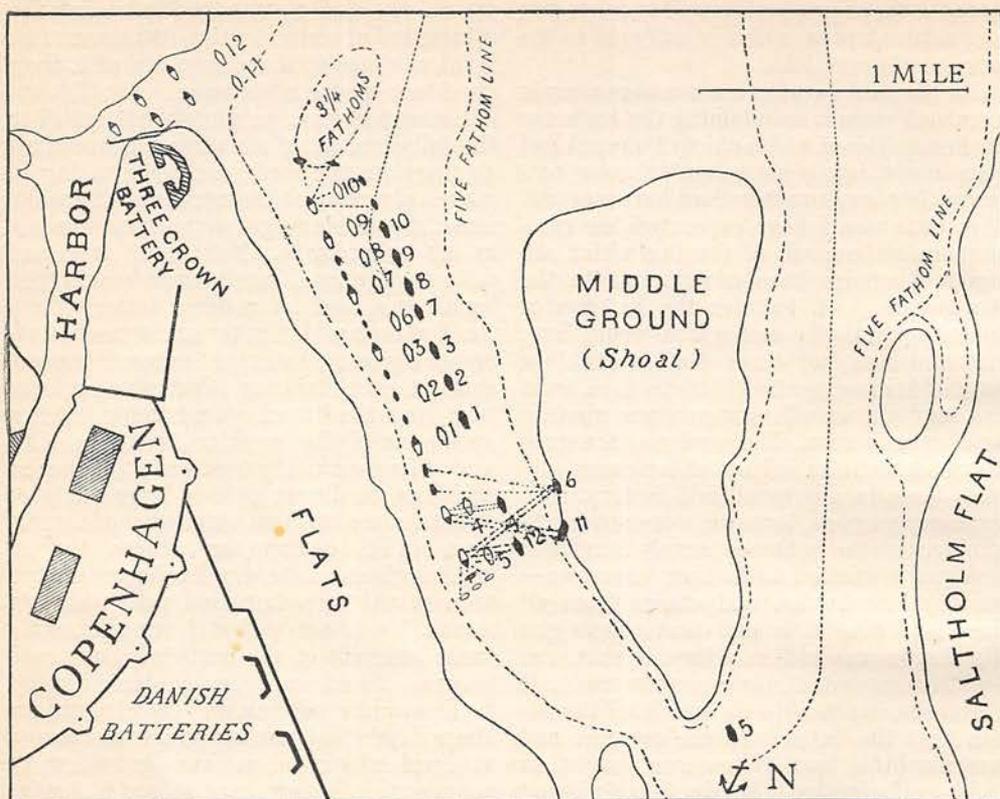
For the most part the seamen were away in merchant vessels, maintaining the trade for the immunities of which chiefly Denmark had been drawn into a contest which now concerned her honor rather than her interests. This alone would have prevented her manning the sixteen sail of the line which she might otherwise have contributed to the confederate fleet, but for the defense of Copenhagen at the moment it would have mattered less had there been available a body of fairly expert artillerists, such as at that day almost all seamen were, whether naval or merchant. The service of the guns in anchored hulks did not differ essentially from those in a covered land-battery. The necessary gunners, however, were not forthcoming, and the fight was largely fought by men unaccustomed to military exercises—peasants, mechanics, and others from all classes of life. It is told that at one gun the charge was put in after the shot, and doubtless many such mistakes were made. It is therefore greatly to the credit of the nation that the battle was the severest and most doubtful that Nelson ever fought, as he himself admitted. Accidents contributed to this result, but the fact remains.

The Danish line of defense south of the *Trekroner* numbered eighteen vessels. Of these seven may fairly be called ships of the line, moored head and stern as they were, and with a shoal close behind them, so that neither advance nor retreat was possible, the strength of the center was less important than in most cases where the enemy by penetrating can cut the force in two. Here it was impossible to pass through without going aground, so the attempt would not be made. The Danes, therefore, were discreet in strengthening the two flanks, on each of which were stationed together two of the heavy ships. The remaining three were spaced between the extremes, thus affording strong points of support for the weaker vessels which filled up the line. In this position it will be remembered that the Danes had only to fight their guns; no fear for them of running aground, no embarrassment in taking position in the smoke, nor loss of power in handling sails or clearing the wreckage of spars. On the British side these difficulties must be overcome; they are those of the offensive, of the men who must cross ground and overcome obstacles before reaching the enemy; but with them, also, re-

mained the choice of method in making the attack, and of concentrating its power. This is the privilege of the offense, and of it their chief took a wise advantage.

Parker had most judiciously left to Nelson the full direction of the attack. Beyond assigning him the force, and undertaking to make a diversion at the north end of the defense, if possible to get up to it, all was left to his subordinate. Nelson, of frail and delicate physique, rarely knew what good health was, and he suffered bitterly from the Northern cold; but the excitement of approaching battle had upon his heroic temperament the exhilarating effect which a brisk turn upon the bicycle on a bracing day has upon a man dulled and dazed with his office work. As soon as the fleet was at anchor he sat down to dinner with a large party of officers, some of them shipmates of former days, old Nile captains, and others. He was in the highest spirits, drank to the next day's success, and to a fair wind with which to attack. Be it noted that, having promptly availed himself of the north wind to reach his present anchorage, he had placed himself in the way of good luck, and good luck came. The wind shifted in the night to southeast, with which he could not have got where he now was; but, being there, it was just what he needed. "I believe," said Farragut, "in celerity." It is suggestive to compare this with Parker's failure to improve his first opportunity to pass the Sound, which was followed by several days of foul winds.

After dinner all the captains except Riou sought their ships. He and Foley, the flag-captain, who had led the column at the Nile, remained with Nelson while the latter perfected the details for the attack, based upon the reconnaissances of the enemy's positions already made. He was greatly fatigued by the exertions of the previous days, so much so that the officers present urged him to go to bed, in which they were peremptorily supported by one of his attendants who had long been with him, and who assumed in consequence the liberties of an old family servant. A cot was placed upon the cabin floor, and lying there, he dictated the remainder of his instructions. While this was going on, Captain Hardy, who afterward commanded the flag-ship at Trafalgar and received Nelson's last messages, was away sounding again the ground over which the next day's advance must be made. At 11 P. M. he returned, having pushed his examination up to the enemy's line, even passing with muffled oars round the leading ship. At one o'clock on the morning



BATTLE OF COPENHAGEN, AS PLANNED AND AS FOUGHT.

□ Danish block-ships; ○ British ships according to Nelson's plan; ● British ships as battle was fought; ▣ Danish floating batteries.

of the 2d the plan of attack was completed, and half a dozen clerks were busy making copies for the officers concerned.

A full analysis of this order is too technical for a paper of this character; yet in brief it should be shown that it was marked by that sagacity and forethought which raised Nelson very far above the level of the mere fighting man, where alone popular fame has placed him. The order in which the ships should advance having been prescribed, it was further directed that the first four should pass on, maintaining their order, beyond the extreme of the enemy's line, anchoring farther down. The Danish southern flank would thus receive the fire of four ships in succession—a powerful concentration; then, but not till then, the fifth ship, coming up fresh, would anchor abreast the first Dane, and engage this single enemy, originally her equal, but now greatly reduced by the blows already received. The second Dane, assigned to the fourth British ship, would suffer a similar but somewhat lesser disadvantage. Not content, however, with this means of

overpowering resistance, Nelson accumulated still further force on this one point. Several frigates and smaller vessels were specifically detailed to place themselves so as to rake the same two flank ships. It was naturally expected that such an overwhelming combination would speedily crush resistance, and the British vessels were directed, when that happened, to move along the line and reinforce the attack where it might be necessary to do so, thus rolling up the enemy's order from south to north.

The leading British ship was to stop abreast the fifth Dane, which was the first ship of the line north of the flank ships. The rest of the British column was to pass on the off side of their own vessels already engaged, each anchoring in succession by the stern as she fairly opened the Danish line, being thus covered in her advance by her predecessors until she reached her station comparatively unharmed. In this way the British order became gradually inverted, the last ship anchoring last, ahead of the others, at the farthest extremity of the enemy's line, and

getting there uninjured, as far as human foresight could provide. It appears to the writer, however, that in proposing to extend his line so as to cover not only the *Trekroner* but the two block-ships west of it, Nelson threw an undue and unnecessary burden upon the force he could assign to the northern flank. It is doubtful whether four ships of the line, though seventy-fours, could be considered equal to four sixty-fours securely moored and supported by permanent works of from sixty to eighty guns. That he himself was uneasy on this point is suggested by the stringent orders given to the two southern ships to cut their cables and immediately make sail to strengthen this part of the battle, when their own opponents were subdued, « which is expected to happen at an early period.»

With this possible deduction, the plan for this battle demonstrates that Nelson's conceptions of battle tactics were in strict conformity with the best principles of military art. It is simply an application of them to the circumstances before him; but it is the application which discriminates the hand of the master from that of the tyro or the student. Deeds, not words, however wise, are the proof of the warrior, and by deeds Nelson's fame as a tactician stands with the highest. Chance, for which, as Napoleon has taught us, something must always be allowed, prevented the full realization of the idea; but from the embarrassment, approaching almost to disaster, which succeeded, Nelson extricated himself with equal sagacity, and by a display of resolution and adroitness that has by some been thought to verge on sharp practice.

April 2 dawned fair, and brought a south-east wind, than which nothing could be more favorable. Nelson, who had slept little, constantly calling to the clerks to hurry their work, breakfasted before six. At seven the captains were all on board the flag-ship, and by eight were familiar with the admiral's plans, and had copies of the orders in their hands. But here a delay occurred, owing to the hesitation of the pilots. These, being Englishmen, had gained their knowledge chiefly as captains and mates of the merchant ships trading to the Baltic, which in those days were usually small. They were nervous about taking charge of ships drawing many feet more than they had ever before had to consider. At length a naval officer, the master of the *Bellona* (seventy-four), announced himself prepared to pilot the fleet. At half-past nine the signal was made to

weigh, and a few minutes later the *Edgar* (seventy-four), which was to lead the column, was seen standing for the channel. Some confusion now arose, possibly from the contracted nature of the ground, for the ships did not advance in the exact order laid down by Nelson; nevertheless, as was the case in his other actions, a clear plan clearly understood proved sufficient for the guidance of capable men among the mishaps or unforeseen occurrences inevitable on a field of battle. The main and decisive lines of his admirable conception were fully observed as far as they depended upon the discretion and power of his captains. The *Agamemnon*, a ship he himself had once commanded, was unable, with the wind, to clear the south end of the Middle Ground; she was obliged to anchor, and took no part in the fight. As she was the appointed antagonist of the first Danish ship, the *Prøvesteen*, it was necessary to signal another to take this essential position. Further changes followed, partly from unavoidable causes, partly from the steps taken to remedy the accidents thus occasioned.

The failure of the Danes to bombard the enemy's fleet had allowed the British seamen a sound night's sleep. The former, on the contrary, had been hard at work, pushing forward on the very eve of battle preparations that should have been completed long before. The raw guns' crews were drilling throughout the night. « We had not,» says a Danish author, « believed Great Britain was in earnest until the fleet actually sailed.» In the city few had slept. Most had relatives or friends on board the line of vessels, who, at a distance of not over half a mile from the city front, were about to fight under the eyes of their fellow-citizens; and all looked forward to the falling of shells into the town as part of the coming day's terrors. The churches were filled with women and old men at prayer; the roofs and towers which afforded a view of the scene of conflict were covered with spectators.

The *Vagrien*, which supported the *Prøvesteen* upon the southern flank of the Danish line, was commanded by a captain who had served several years in British fleets—a school frequently sought in those and earlier days by young officers of the Baltic navies. Watching with understanding eye the indications of the enemy's movements, he turned at last to his officers, and said: « Gentlemen, let us get breakfast. We are sure of this meal, whatever may be the case with dinner.» Soon afterward the timeliness of his suggestion

was evidenced by a signal to prepare for battle from the flag-ship *Dannebroke*, on which then flew the broad pendant of Commodore Olfert Fischer, the commander-in-chief, an accomplished seaman, but who had not before been in action.¹ The British fleet was then approaching under manageable canvas, and with a favoring current, presenting a noble and imposing sight to the onlooking enemy.

The *Edgar*, piloted by a capable man, passed safely and steadily down the channel to her appointed station, but the ships following her were not all so fortunate. An impression prevailed that the water was shoaler on the side of the city, near the enemy's line, than by the Middle Ground shoal. The two ships next the *Edgar*, shaping their course for the *Prøvesteen* and the *Vagriën*, went clear; but from the opinion concerning the depth of water, they, and the British ships generally, anchored farther from their antagonists than Nelson's favorite practice demanded. The *Bellona* and the *Russell*, following them, but keeping to the eastward, struck on the Middle Ground, where they remained fast, not wholly out of action, as was shown by their losses,—especially that of the *Bellona*,—but in positions that left vacant their intended places in the contest, and made only partly effective the effort they could exert against the hostile ships at all within their reach. The British line was thus at the very outset weakened by the absence of three heavy vessels—a full fourth of its fighting force.

Lord Nelson's flag-ship, the *Elephant*, came next. He did not for the moment recognize that the two predecessors were aground. When he did, his agitation was noticeable; for, with a courage and resolution that knew no wavering, he was a man of very nervous temperament, susceptible to emotion, starting, as a contemporary has told us, if a coil of rope were unexpectedly dropped near him. It was not on this occasion, says the narrator, «the agitation of indecision, but of ardent, animated patriotism panting for glory which had appeared within his reach, and was vanishing from his grasp.» Unshaken in resolve, if distressed in spirit, as Farragut when his line doubled up at Mobile, he turned instinctively to the seaman's first resource, and ordered the *Elephant's* helm put over; at the same time hoisting a signal to «close the enemy,» which at once indicated his resolve, and tended to draw the other ships to the side where safe naviga-

tion lay. The rest of the column, under this lead of its commander, passed on without accident to take up their stations.

By this time the two southern Danes were fully engaged by the British ships *Polyphemus* and *Isis*, which had been assigned to that position. They were supported by the two grounded ships, which lay abreast, and, though too far for the full effect of their batteries, contributed materially to the concentration desired here by Nelson. The frigate *Désirée*, a capture from the French, also aided in this attack, as Nelson had prescribed. To quote the words of an eyewitness: «This service was performed by Captain Inman in a masterly style at the instant our ship [the *Monarch*] was passing. He ran down under his three topsails, came to the wind on the larboard tack about half a cable's length [one hundred yards] ahead of the *Prøvesteen*, hove all aback, gave her his broadside, filled and made sail, then tacked and ran down to his station.» It is to be feared that few but seamen can understand so technical a description, but the pleasure that possible readers among seamen will derive from so clever a manœuver may excuse its insertion.

The *Edgar* also was now in position nearly abreast the *Jylland*, and engaged. North of her were ranged successively the *Ardent* and the *Glatton*. The former, a fifty-gun ship, was opposed to two of the floating batteries with which the Danes had filled the gaps between their heavier block-ships. The *Glatton* fell into place accurately, not far ahead of the *Ardent*, whence her guns played partly upon a floating battery and partly upon the flag-ship *Dannebroke*. Next to her should have come the *Bellona*; but she having grounded, the duty assigned to her of supporting the *Glatton* by engaging the batteries ahead of the *Dannebroke*, as well as the latter herself, was taken by Nelson's flag-ship, the *Elephant*, which at about eleven anchored on the bow of the *Dannebroke*, as the *Glatton* already had on her quarter.

The *Ganges*, which followed the *Elephant* in the column of attack, was hailed by the admiral as she passed the latter, and directed to anchor close ahead instead of passing on to the station first assigned her. This contraction from the line first intended was due to the absence of the *Bellona*, and was necessary in order to insure mutual support by closing the order to the rear. From this cause, also, it happened that the *Monarch*, placing herself ahead of and near the *Ganges*, occupied the berth opposite the *Sjaelland*

¹ Denmark had then enjoyed eighty years of uninterrupted peace.

(seventy-four), the heaviest ship in the enemy's line, which Nelson in the original disposition had appointed to himself. As the *Monarch* was drawing up, her captain stood on the poop scanning the position he was to take, in his left hand the card showing the plan of battle, his right raised to his mouth with the speaking-trumpet. He gave the order "Cut away the anchor," and almost immediately was struck dead.

The action now became general as far as the *Sjælland*. Between her and the *Trekroner* lay five Danish vessels, two of them being the line-of-battle ships which closed the northern flank. To these for the time there was no opponent, and but one British ship of the line remained to fill up the space originally intended for four. This one, the *Defiance*, carried the flag of Rear-admiral Graves, Nelson's second. She was somewhat later in getting into action than was the *Monarch*; it is said by Danish accounts that she was for nearly quarter of an hour engaged with the *Prøvesteen*, the leading Danish ship. This, if correct, was in conformity with Nelson's general plan of first crushing that end of the line, but was unfortunate for the *Monarch*. The *Defiance*, when she came up, anchored ahead of the latter, drawing off part of the fire to which she had been exposed. She was herself within range of the *Trekroner*, shot from which injured her bowsprit as well as her main- and mizzen-masts.

Captain Riou had been given command of a squadron of frigates, with orders to act as he might be directed. Perceiving the vacant space ahead of the *Monarch* and the *Defiance*, he attempted to supply the place of the absent ships of the line, and engaged the northernmost enemy and the *Trekroner* with his light division. The heroic attempt proved beyond his strength. In making it, however, he showed as much of judgment as of gallantry; for it appears from Danish accounts that the fire of five frigates and two smaller vessels was concentrated upon the northernmost block-ship, the *Indfödsretten*, which was repeatedly raked fore and aft. The captain, Thurah, fell early; and soon afterward, also, the second in command. The crew continued to fight, sending a message ashore for a new captain. Captain Schrödersee, a retired and invalid naval officer, volunteered. He had scarcely put his foot on board when a shot cut him in two. The *Indfödsretten*, reduced to a complete wreck, struck soon after, about 1 P. M., before Parker's signal called the frigates out of action. Riou's blood was not shed in vain.

The Danes fought not only with great resolution, but with an effectiveness that is really remarkable in view of the rawness of the material hastily worked up for the occasion. They were also greatly favored by the fact that the northern portion of their line had no immediate antagonists except Riou's frigates. It is to be presumed that the ships there moored, in comparative immunity during a measurable time, managed to direct their batteries upon the northernmost British ships of the line. Such certainly was their duty, which Captain Riou's gallant effort should not have wholly prevented; and Colonel Stewart, whose contemporary narrative still forms one of our best sources of information, distinctly states that the *Monarch*, besides her broadside antagonist, the *Sjælland*, the heaviest ship in the Danish line, was engaged by the block-ship *Holsteen* upon her bow. The loss on those British ships was accordingly heavy, that of the *Monarch*, two hundred and twenty killed and wounded, exceeding any incurred either at the Nile or at Trafalgar. A singular picture of the desolation wrought on her decks has been given by a midshipman on board of her: "Toward the close of the action the colonel commanding the detachment of soldiers on board told me that the quarter-deck guns wanted quill or tin tubes (which are used as more safe and expeditious than loose priming), and wanted me to send some one, adding, his own men were too ignorant of the ship, or he would have sent one of them. I told him I knew no one that could so well be spared as myself. He, however, objected to my going; and as I was aware of the dreadful slaughter which had taken place in the center of the ship, I was not very fond of the jaunt; but my conscience would not let me send another on an errand I was afraid to undertake myself, and away I posted towards the fore magazine. When I arrived on the main deck, along which I had to pass, there was *not a single man standing* the whole way from the mainmast forward, a district containing eight guns on a side, some of which were run out ready for firing, others lay dismounted, and others remained as they were after recoiling. . . . I hastened down the fore ladder to the lower deck, and felt really relieved to find somebody alive. I was obliged to wait a few minutes for my cargo, and after this pause I own I felt something like regret, if not fear, as I remounted the ladder on my return. This, however, entirely subsided when I saw the sun shining and the old blue ensign flying as lofty as ever. I never felt the

genuine sense of glory so completely as at that moment. I took off my hat by an involuntary motion, and gave three cheers as I jumped on to the quarter-deck. Colonel Hutchinson welcomed me at my quarters as if I had been on a hazardous enterprise and had returned in triumph; the first lieutenant also expressed great satisfaction at seeing me in such high spirits and so active.»

The effect of splinters—fragments of wood, whether large or small, being technically so called—is shown by the same writer in a few scattered but graphic sentences: «Our signal midshipman was bruised from head to foot with splinters in such a manner as compelled him to leave the deck. Mr. Le Vesconte, another midshipman, who was my companion on the quarter-deck, and who was as cool and apparently unconcerned as usual, shared the same fate. I attended him to the lower deck, but could not prevail upon myself to set foot on the ladder to the cockpit. [The cockpit is the place below the water-line where the wounded are taken.] «I left him there to make the best of his way. As the splinters were so plentiful, it may be wondered how I escaped; the fact is, I did not escape entirely. When the wheel was shot away I was in a cloud; but being some little distance before the wheel, I did not receive any of the larger pieces. . . . Our first lieutenant, Mr. Yelland, had taken care to have the decks swept, and everything clean and nice, before we went into action. He had dressed himself in full uniform, with his cocked hat set on square» [a touch which recalls Collingwood's eccentric captain, Rotheram, at Trafalgar, who, upon being remonstrated with for the exposure full dress entailed, replied, «I have always fought in a cocked hat, and I always will!], «his shirt-frill stiff starched, and his cravat tied tight under his chin, as usual. How he escaped unhurt seems wonderful. Several times I lost sight of him in a cloud of splinters; as they subsided I saw first his cocked hat emerging, then by degrees the rest of his person, his face smiling, so that altogether one might imagine him dressed for his wedding day.»

We have ordinarily too little of these small details in naval battles. On board the flag-ship *Elephant*, fortunately, there was a distinguished army officer who during the naval part of the engagement had little to do except to note incidents especially connected with the great admiral, near whose person he was. It had been the intention, if the full results of the attack by the ships were realized, to follow them up with an assault by troops

in boats upon the Three Crowns batteries. For this purpose detachments of soldiers were on board each ship of the line, and flat-boats were towed alongside ready to land them when required. The commander of the whole, Colonel Stewart, was on board the flag-ship; but the opportunity was not obtained, owing to the accidents which kept three ships out of line, and the injuries done to the others by the desperate resistance of the Danes. The northern division of the British fleet, under Parker, the commander-in-chief, did not succeed in working up against the wind and current which favored Nelson in time to engage the *Trekroner* before the southern part of the fight was over. Even then the ships were at long and ineffective range. The batteries were therefore uninjured, and assault was impossible.

Stewart, being otherwise unemployed, had full time to observe. Lord Nelson, he tells us, was most anxious to get nearer the enemy, but was deterred by the strong assertions of the pilots that the ships would take the ground. Both for penetration and accuracy he relied always upon getting close alongside. Just before leaving England he had written to a friend: «As for the plan for pointing a gun truer than we do at present, I shall of course look at it; but I hope we shall be able, as usual, to get so close to our enemies that our shot cannot miss their object; and that we shall again give our Northern enemies that hail-storm of bullets which gives our dear Country the dominion of the seas.» Practised thus as the British seamen of that day were, the effect made upon their inexperienced though heroic enemies would unquestionably have been more rapid and sustained than it actually was, the contest sooner decided, and the loss less. Rapidity rather than fine sighting was then the boast of British gunnery.

At 1 P. M., therefore, the contest, after a duration of more than two hours, still raged, though with somewhat diminished fury. Men of the same blood and traditions had met in a struggle of endurance. Nelson's own name was of Norse origin. Enumerating the severe injuries already received by the British, Stewart says: «Few, if any, of the enemy's heavy ships and praams had yet ceased to fire. The contest in general, although from the relaxed state of the enemy's fire it might not have given much room for apprehension as to the result, had certainly at 1 P. M. not declared itself in favor of either side. About this juncture, and in this posture of affairs, the signal was thrown out on

board the *London* [Parker's flag-ship, then four miles distant] for the action to cease.

«Lord Nelson was at this time, as he had been during the whole action, walking the starboard side of the quarter-deck, sometimes much animated, and at others heroically fine in his observations. A shot through the mainmast knocked a few splinters about us. He observed to me, with a smile, (It is warm work, and this day may be the last to any of us at a moment); and then, stopping short at the gangway, he used an expression never to be erased from my memory, and said with emotion, (But, mark you, I would not be elsewhere for thousands.)» With this spirit may be compared his rebuke some days after the battle to a lieutenant who during the action had made a hopeless report about the grounded ships: «At such a moment the delivery of anything like a desponding opinion, unasked, was highly reprehensible, and deserved much more censure than Captain Foley gave you.»

«When the signal from the *London*, No. 39, was made,» continues Stewart, «the signal lieutenant reported it to him. He continued his walk, and did not appear to take notice of it. The lieutenant, meeting his lordship at the next turn, asked whether he should repeat it [by which, if done, the squadron engaged would retire to the northward]. Lord Nelson answered, (No; acknowledge it.)¹ On the officer returning to the poop, his lordship called after him, (Is No. 16 [for close action] still hoisted?) The lieutenant answering in the affirmative, Lord Nelson said, (Mind you keep it so.) He now walked the deck considerably agitated, which was always known by his moving the stump of his right arm. After a turn or two he said to me in a quick manner, (Do you know what's shown on board the commander-in-chief—No. 39?) On asking him what that meant, he answered: (Why, to leave off action. Leave off action!) he repeated; and then added with a shrug, (Now, damn me if I do!) He also observed, I believe, to Captain Foley, (You know, Foley, I have only one eye—I have a right to be blind sometimes); and then, with an archness peculiar to his character, putting the glass to his blind eye, he exclaimed, (I really do not see the signal.)» Professor Laughton, whose authority on matters relating to Nelson is second to that of no one living, has lately told us in his «Life of Nelson» that this little display was but a joke, Nelson having received a message from Parker that

he was to use his own discretion as to obeying the signal. If so, it is not improbable that he had in view the effect of his manner upon the many bystanders who must have witnessed the scene in the midst of a yet doubtful and desperate battle. It is the converse of the outward bearing which he reprehended in the lieutenant. The moral effect of such self-possession is indescribable. The *Monarch's* midshipman already quoted speaks thus of a wounded and disabled officer on board of her: «When the carnage was greatest he encouraged his men by applauding their conduct, and frequently began a huzza, which is of more importance than might generally be imagined; for the men have no other communication throughout the ship, but when a shout is set up it runs from deck to deck, and they know that their comrades are, some of them, alive and in good spirits.» As Parker's messenger, Captain Otway, did not reach Nelson until after the signal was hoisted, it is possible the scene witnessed by Stewart occurred before Nelson knew Parker's purpose. Parker's private secretary, who afterward served in the same capacity with Nelson for two years, has also affirmed that there was a previous understanding between the two admirals. The matter is of less consequence than appears, for the supreme merit of Lord Nelson was not the disregarding of the signal, but the sound judgment and tenacity with which he refused to incur the risk of giving ground at that moment. This was wholly his.

Nelson's second, Rear-admiral Graves, repeated the signal to withdraw; but, like his own leader, kept that for close action still flying. Not a ship of the line budged, but the repeating by Graves shows that it is playing with edged tools to hoist signals not meant to be obeyed. Situated as Nelson was, there was no safety but to fight it out till the Danish line of vessels was subdued. To retreat under the guns of the still unharmed *Trekroner*, through an intricate channel, would be bad enough if no ships were left to oppose him. If the ships were destroyed, his own, roughly handled as many had been, would, for the most part, be too far from the enemy's land-batteries to receive any serious additional injury. Nothing could have been more dangerous for the whole force than the attempted withdrawal of a few ships.

This the frigates proved. Riou, at the north end of the line, was being severely handled, but he was doing good service, and understood. To *repeat* is to transmit the signal, by repetition, to the vessels which are to execute the order.

¹ To *acknowledge* a signal is to hoist a flag which simply indicates that the signal has been seen and un-

was within touch of support if the southern ships came to him. Seeing Parker's signal, and that it was repeated by the flag-ship nearest him, he doubtless expected the whole division to retreat. The frigates hauled off, and in moving away necessarily exposed their sterns to a raking fire. «What will Nelson think of us!» exclaimed Riou, who, already wounded by a splinter, was sitting on a gun encouraging his men. His clerk was killed by his side, and by another shot several marines while hauling the main-brace. Riou then exclaimed, «Come, then, my boys; let us all die together!» The words were scarcely uttered when a ball cut him in two. «Thus,» writes Colonel Stewart, «was the British service deprived of one of its greatest ornaments, and society of a character of singular worth, resembling the heroes of romance.»

At half-past eleven the Danish flag-ship *Dannebrog* caught fire, and Commodore Fischer shifted his broad pendant from her to the *Holsteen*, the second ship from the north end of his line. The *Dannebrog* continued to fight bravely. At the end, out of three hundred and thirty-six men with which she began, two hundred and seventy had been killed and wounded. This large proportion is doubtless to be explained by the fact that reinforcements from shore were being continually carried to the ships. For a time the flames were got under, but they broke out again and again; the *Elephant* redoubled her efforts, and at length the *Dannebrog* was driven out of the line, on fire fore and aft. She drifted with the wind toward the *Trekroner*, within two hundred yards of which she grounded, and at about half-past four, after the battle, she blew up.

The two southern ships, the *Prøvesteen* and the *Vagrién*, also suffered very severely, being overmatched and outnumbered by the force concentrated upon them. Lassen, the captain of the *Prøvesteen*, became the Danish hero of the day; for long he could not appear in the streets of Copenhagen without being followed by a crowd. But popular favor passes; he died in poverty and neglect, nor is any memorial of his valor to be seen in the capital of his country. The *Vagrién*, from two hundred and seventy men, lost all but fifty killed and wounded. Both flag and pendant were shot away, and «nobody,» by a Danish account, «had time to raise a new one. The *Vagrién* fought a long time without the flag hoisted.» This irregularity has its bearings on the motives alleged by Nelson for his subsequent action in sending a flag of truce.

The block-ship *Jylland*, between the *Va-*

grién and the *Dannebrog*, fought long with the *Edgar*. The floating batteries lying between her and the *Dannebrog* being at length driven out of action, the space thus left vacant was utilized by smaller British vessels to rake the block-ships lying on each side of it. This incident, which rests on Danish accounts, was distinctly in the line of Nelson's orders, and shows, as already remarked, that a plan correctly traced in its broader lines will not, in the hands of capable men, be necessarily disarranged and fail, even through mishaps and changes of conditions as serious as those which marked the British fortunes on this day.

At 2 P. M. the cables of the *Sjælland*, next north of the *Dannebrog*, and the immediate antagonist of the *Monarch*, which suffered so severely at her hands and those of her consorts, were shot away, and the ship drifted out of position. This was a most important injury to the Danes, for she was their strongest ship. At the same hour Fischer found it necessary again to shift his pendant, going from the *Holsteen* to the *Trekroner* shore-battery, which had now become the center of what remained of the Danish line. The southern vessels, up to and including the *Sjælland*, were silenced; the *Holsteen* was a wreck; and Parker's division, though not within effective range, was getting nearer.

At the same time matters had become extremely serious with the British also. Firing had indeed ceased throughout the Danish line which lay south of Nelson's flag-ship, to which circumstance is doubtless due the fact, noted by the Danish commodore, that during the latter part of the engagement she fired only occasional guns. Fischer thought from this that she had been reduced nearly to silence by her losses, whereas the legitimate inference is that, owing to the limited sweep of broadside guns, only a few bore on the enemies ahead of her and could be effectively used. «He states,» wrote Nelson, who was unnecessarily wroth over the matter, «that the ship in which I had the honor to hoist my flag fired latterly only single guns. It is true; for steady and cool were my brave fellows, and did not wish to throw away a single shot.» Naval seamen will readily understand that until springs could be run out—a long process—few guns would bear under the conditions.

But, ahead of the *Elephant*, the *Ganges*, the *Monarch*, and the *Defiance* were at two o'clock still warmly engaged, the last two especially, while the *Trekroner* was uninjured and injuring them. At the same time the

shore-batteries on the island of Amak continued to fire from behind the silenced Danish ships; and though the flags of the latter were in many cases down, the British crews who sought to take possession were refused admission, and even fired upon, by men on board. This statement, which rests upon several British authorities, is by no means in itself incredible. Their crews knew nothing of war or its usages, and there was a scarcity of trained officers. As before quoted from a Danish source, the *Vagriën* fought some time without either flag or pendant, because no one had time to hoist others. But, however pardonable in purpose, there is no excuse in fact for any avoidable delay in replacing the tokens that one has not yielded, but is fighting. In truth, no ship should go into battle with only one flag flying. The account of the *Monarch's* midshipman is of interest in this connection: «Most of the enemy's vessels had struck their colors, in consequence of which I was desired to send Mr. Home (lieutenant), who commanded the flat-bottomed boat and launch which were both manned and armed alongside, to board the prizes opposed to us. He accordingly set off for that purpose; when almost half-way he saw a boat, which was probably sent on the same errand, knocked to pieces, the crew of which he picked up; but as the other ships and batteries still continued firing, he thought it in vain to attempt boarding the prizes, which were, moreover, prepared to resist, notwithstanding they had struck their colors.»

The time of this occurrence is fixed by the fact that Home then pulled to the *Elephant* to ask instructions of Nelson, and was by him told that he had sent a flag of truce ashore, and that if it was accepted he should remove from the action as soon as possible. Colonel Stewart's account of the flag of truce mentions that at half-past two the action was over astern of the *Elephant*, but that the ships ahead and the *Trekroner* were engaged, and the British repelled by force from the surrendered vessels. «Lord Nelson naturally lost temper at this, and observed that he must either send on shore and stop this irregular proceeding, or send in our fire-ships and burn the prizes. He accordingly retired into the stern-gallery, and wrote with great despatch that well-known letter addressed to the crown prince.» This celebrated and much-discussed letter ran thus:

TO THE BROTHERS OF ENGLISHMEN, THE DANES.

Lord Nelson has directions to spare Denmark when no longer resisting; but if the firing is con-

tinued on the part of Denmark, Lord Nelson will be obliged to set on fire all the floating batteries he has taken, without having the power of saving the brave Danes who have defended them. Dated on board his Britannic Majesty's ship *Elephant*, Copenhagen Roads, April 2, 1801.

NELSON AND BRONTÉ, *Vice-Admiral*, under the command of Admiral Sir Hyde Parker.

It will be observed that, whatever motives may be assumed, the words of the letter convey simply a threat that if the surrendered vessels are not given up, the admiral will throw away upon them no more shot, but instead use fire-ships, a recognized weapon of war. There is no request for a suspension of hostilities, and only the boat carrying the letter showed a flag of truce. The decks being cleared of all partitions fore and aft, and all ordinary conveniences removed, Nelson wrote in full view of all on the deck where he was, at the casing of the rudder-head, standing; and as he wrote an officer standing by took a copy. The original, in his own hand, was put into an envelop and sealed with his arms. The officer was about to use a wafer, but Nelson said, «No; send for sealing-wax and candle.» Some delay followed, owing to the man sent having had his head taken off by a ball. «Send another messenger for the wax,» said the admiral when informed of this; and when the wafers were again suggested he simply reiterated the order. A large amount of wax was used, and extreme care taken that the impression of the seal should be perfect. Colonel Stewart asked, «Why, under so hot a fire and after so lamentable an accident, have you attached so much importance to a circumstance apparently trifling?» «Had I made use of a wafer,» replied Nelson, «the wafer would have been still wet when the letter was presented to the crown prince; he would have inferred that the letter was sent off in a hurry, and that we had some very pressing reasons for being in a hurry. The wax told no tales.» It was the same sagacious regard to effect which possibly dictated the by-play of refusing to see Parker's signal of recall.

An officer who had served in the Russian navy and spoke Danish bore the letter. He found the crown prince, who was also prince regent, near the sally-port of the fortifications, encouraging his people. He sent a verbal reply by General-Adjutant Lindholm, who, upon meeting Nelson, gave the following written memorandum of his message:

His Royal Highness the Prince Royal of Denmark has sent me, General-Adjutant Lindholm, on

board to his Britannic Majesty's Vice-admiral, the Right Honorable Lord Nelson, to ask the particular object of sending the flag of truce.

Nelson replied in writing:

Lord Nelson's object in sending on shore a flag of truce is humanity; he therefore consents that hostilities shall cease till Lord Nelson can take his prisoners out of the prizes, and he consents to land all the wounded Danes, and to burn or remove his prizes. Lord Nelson, with humble duty to his Royal Highness, begs leave to say that he will ever esteem it the greatest victory he ever gained if this flag of truce may be the happy forerunner of a lasting and happy union between my most gracious Sovereign and his Majesty the King of Denmark.

NELSON AND BRONTÉ.

Lindholm was then referred for further negotiation to Sir Hyde Parker, who was four miles distant in the *London*; and to that ship he proceeded, to obtain a definite understanding with the commander-in-chief.

Between the times when Nelson's flag of truce went on shore and when Lindholm reached the *Elephant*, resistance ceased upon all the Danish ships south of the *Trekroner*, except one small frigate which escaped. In the same interval Nelson held a consultation with the flag-captain, Foley, and Fremantle, captain of the *Ganges*, next ahead, as to the practicability of advancing the ships which were least damaged against that part of the Danish line of defense yet uninjured, *i. e.*, the *Trekroner* and the ships northwest of it at the harbor's mouth. «Their opinions,» says Colonel Stewart, «were averse from it, and, on the other hand, decided in favor of removing our fleet, whilst the wind yet held fair, from their present intricate channel.»

The great obstacle to this desirable end was the *Trekroner*, while the block-ships northwest of the latter might possibly have supported its fire. But Lindholm, either before or after his interview with Nelson, had given orders, in the name of the crown prince, that firing should cease. This order reached the *Trekroner* at four o'clock, according to Fischer, who was then in the battery, but before that the British ships had begun to move out. The indomitable *Monarch*, despite her tremendous losses, was engaged in springing her broadside upon the *Trekroner*, after the ships abreast her struck, when Rear-admiral Graves, returning to the *Defiance* from an interview with Nelson, hailed her to cut her cable and follow him out. This was done, but the sails being wholly unmanageable, the ship refused to steer, falling off broadside to the wind and current. The

Ganges, following her, struck her amidships, and the two ships drifted, the *Ganges* pushing the *Monarch* toward the *Trekroner*, which opened fire upon them, showing that the message to cease had not yet been received there. It soon was, however, and Nelson's division withdrew to the northward without further molestation. On the way out both flag-ships, the *Defiance* and the *Elephant*, grounded, and remained for several hours about a mile from the *Trekroner*. For the gunnery of the day that was long range, but they would undoubtedly have received much harm if the enemy's fire had not been discontinued. Commenting upon this condition, Colonel Stewart says: «It should be observed, on the other hand, that measures would in that case have been adopted, and they were within our power, for destroying this formidable work.»

Nelson returned that evening to his regular flag-ship, the *St. George*, which he had left for the battle, she being of too heavy draft to participate. Lindholm's negotiations with Admiral Parker resulted in an agreement that hostilities should remain suspended for twenty-four hours, and that the Danish ships which had struck during the action should be surrendered to the British. The night and the next day were passed in getting afloat the grounded ships, and in bringing out them and their prizes. Continued negotiations followed, which ended, on the 9th of April, in Denmark signing an armistice for fourteen weeks—a practical abandonment of the Armed Neutrality, for Nelson bluntly stated that he needed that time to act against the Russian fleet. It is to be remarked that during this week of diplomatic discussion, in which Nelson was the leading British negotiator, the British bomb-vessels were being put in position for the bombardment of the city, to which the battle, by removing the southern line of block-ships, was the essential and effectual prelude.

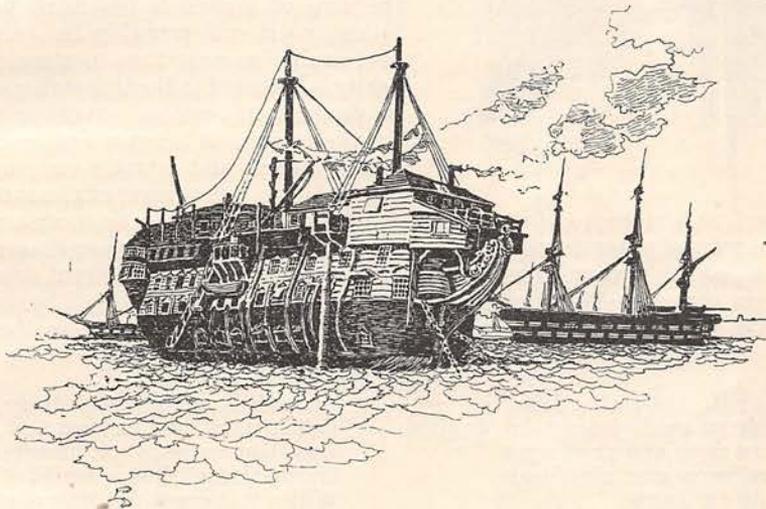
The remark is necessary, for it bears directly upon the impression, never wholly dispelled, that Nelson, in removing his crippled ships during the suspension of hostilities on the 2d, took unfair advantage of the flag of truce. The reply is that this was done openly; that if the Danes felt that an unfair advantage was being taken, it was in their power to stop it at once; that, instead of so doing, they conceded also the surrender of the prizes which had struck but had not been taken possession of; and finally, that the active preparation for renewed hostilities in the following days, while an armistice was in force, shows

that the understanding between the parties did not go further than the cessation of fighting. To all this is to be added the fact that Lindholm, the Danish bearer of the flag of truce, and thenceforth engaged through all negotiations which resulted in the fourteen weeks' armistice, wrote to Nelson a month later (May 2) in the following terms: «As to your lordship's motive for sending a flag of truce to our government, it can never be misconstrued, and your subsequent conduct has sufficiently shown that humanity is always the companion of true valor.»

The crown prince, on the other hand, has been considered weak in ordering the cessation of hostilities at the moment, seeing the disabled condition of Nelson's division. The conditions before him at 3 P. M.—the results of the fight—were these. The entire right

wing of the defense, from the Trekroner south, was crushed. Nothing stood between the city and bombardment. Parker's division was uninjured, and much of Nelson's, though badly mauled, was out of range, and could refit unmolested. Above all, and this Nelson knew and reckoned upon, although Denmark had tried to carry her points about the neutral trade by a bluff, her rulers had no desire for war, but were acting under the coercion of the Czar. The glorious and desperate resistance she had made both vindicated her honor and testified to her allies that further persistence would be fruitless, except in wanton suffering. By prolonging the struggle she could gain neither in advantage nor in reputation, for nothing could place a nation's warlike fame higher than did her great deeds that day.

A. T. Mahan.



INSTRUMENTS.

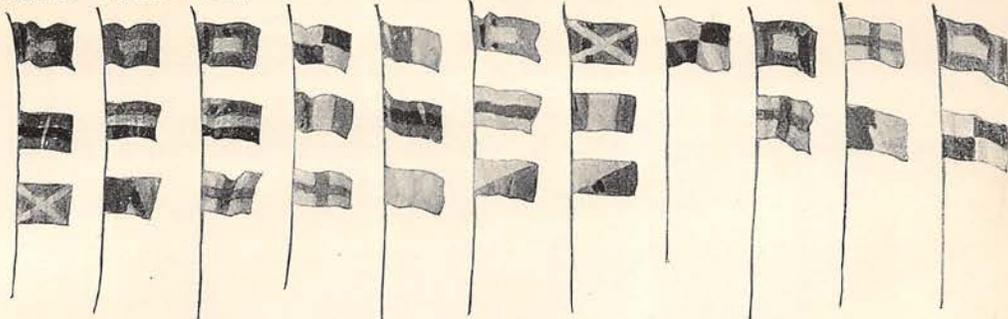
THE rugged cliff that faced the main
 Cherished a pine against its breast,
 Whereon the wind woke many a strain,
 As 't were a violin caressed;
 And souls that heard, although in pain,
 Were soothed and lulled to peace and rest.

A people strove to break their chains,
 And many bled, and strife was long,
 Until a minstrel voiced their pains,
 And woke the world with echoing song;
 And even the tyrant heard the strains,
 And hastened to redress the wrong.

The souls of men were dried like dew,
 And earth cried out with bitter need,
 Until one said, «I dare be true,»
 And followed up the word with deed.
 Then heaven and earth were born anew,
 And one man's name became a creed!

Charles Crandall.

England expects every man will do his D U T Y



DRAWN FROM THE MODEL IN THE GREENWICH COLLEGE MUSEUM.

NELSON'S SIGNAL.

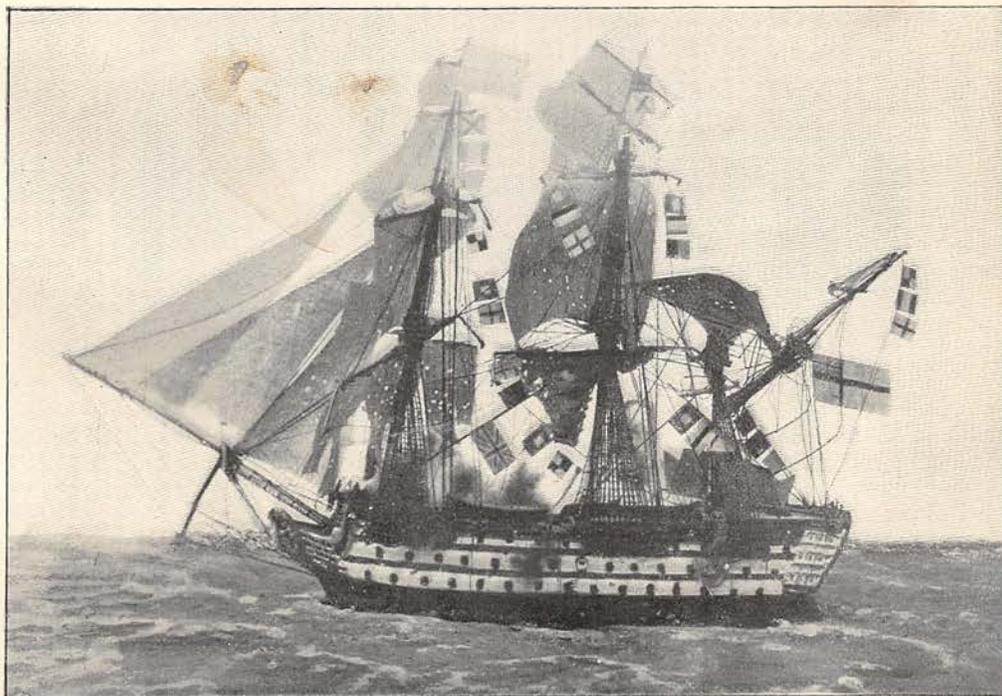
NELSON AT TRAFALGAR.

BY CAPTAIN A. T. MAHAN, U. S. N. (Ret'd),
Author of «The Influence of Sea Power upon History,» etc.¹

IN August, 1805, Nelson landed in England after a continuous absence of two years and three months. He remained twenty-five days, and then again departed, to die at Trafalgar. This short interval was all that the pressing exigencies of the times allowed him to spend with those who were dearest to him in the world—the woman he loved with un-

diminished fervor, and the only child he had. Brief as it was, it succeeded a period of tumultuous cruising and anxious care in the Mediterranean, during which, as he noted in his private diary, for more than two years he never went on shore; yet, although from the enfeebled condition of his health, always delicate, he for a great part of the time had in his hands permission to return to England, he could not bring himself to use it while any near prospect existed of the enemy's putting

¹ This is the last paper of a series by the same author, the others being, «Nelson at Cape St. Vincent,» «Nelson in the Battle of the Nile,» and «The Battle of Copenhagen.»



RESTORED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY HENRY F. BRION, LONDON.

MODEL OF THE «VICTORY» FLYING THE SIGNAL «ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY.»

to sea. The passion which had swept before it all other obstacles was powerless to drag his frail and suffering body from the post of painful duty to the comforts of home.

The armed struggle between Great Britain, single-handed, and France in alliance with Holland and Spain was then approaching its

A series of untoward circumstances, and the irresolution of its admiral, Villeneuve, brought that great fleet, not to the Channel, but to Cadiz, whence it issued again only two days before Trafalgar. On the 19th of August, at 9 P. M., Lord Nelson's flag, the symbol of his command, was hauled down at



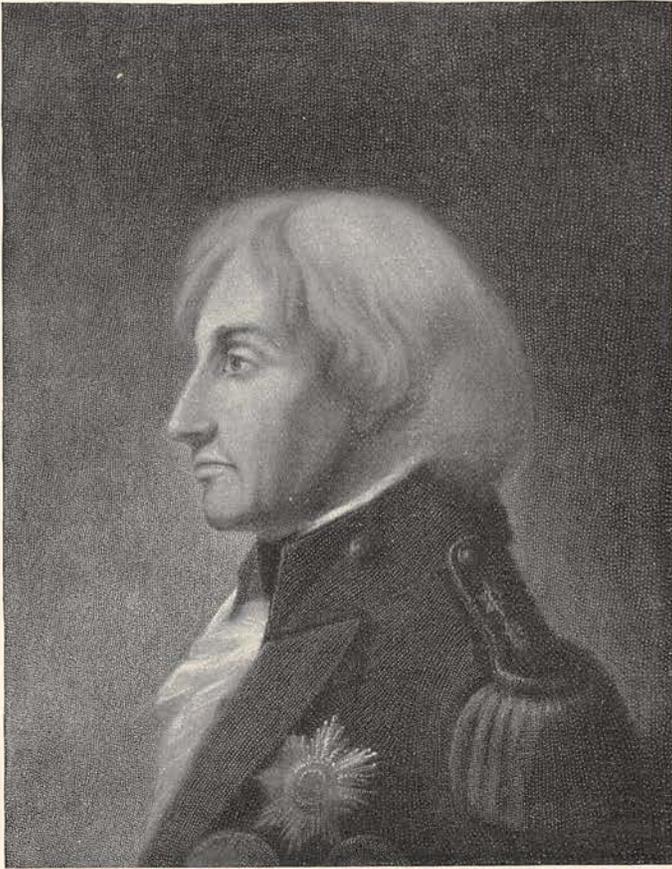
DRAWN BY WARREN SHEPPARD.

A SHIP OF THE LINE UNDER FULL SAIL.

ENGRAVED BY JOHN W. EVANS.

crisis. Since the declaration of war, May 16, 1803, Napoleon had given his great energies to the preparations for an invasion of England with an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men. In July, 1805, these were collected on the coasts of France over against Dover, ready to embark at a moment's warning upon the approach of the great fleet of thirty-five ships of the line, French and Spanish, which the emperor, with profound wiliness and sagacity, was concentrating from various quarters to cover the crossing.

Spithead, and he left the *Victory*, the ship at the masthead of which it had so long flown. On the afternoon of the 20th, Villeneuve brought the Franco-Spanish fleet into Cadiz. This marked, in Napoleon's judgment, the failure of the scheme of invasion; but to Great Britain it remained no less imperative than before to crush the allied fleet as the sure seal and gage of future safety. There was but one man to whom with perfect confidence the heart of the nation turned as surely able to save it; upon him it called, and



DRAWN FROM LIFE BY JOHN WHICHELO, IN SEPTEMBER, 1805, AT MERTON.

OWNED BY SIR W. BIDDULPH PARKER.

PORTRAIT OF NELSON.

he, not unwilling, yet with sad foreboding, obeyed.

«At half-past ten,» wrote Nelson in his diary for September 13, «drove from dear Merton, where I left all which I hold dear in this world, to go to serve my King and Country. May the great God whom I adore enable me to fulfil the expectations of my Country; and if it is His good pleasure that I should return, my thanks will never cease being offered up to the throne of His mercy. If it is His good providence to cut short my days upon earth, I bow with the greatest submission, relying that He will protect those so dear to me that I may leave behind. His will be done! Amen, amen, amen.»

At two o'clock the next afternoon he embarked in a boat at Portsmouth to return on board the *Victory*. He had sought an unfrequented landing-place to elude the crowd, but one collected, nevertheless, «pressing forward to obtain sight of his face. Many were in tears, and many knelt down before him and blessed him as he passed.» With softened

feelings, still fresh from his recent parting, Nelson was visibly moved. «I had their huzzas before,» said he to his old comrade in arms, Captain Hardy, who sat beside him; «I have their hearts now!» «On the 14th,» reads the *Victory's* log, «hoisted the flag of the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Nelson, K. B. Sunday, 15th, weighed, and made sail to the S. S. E.» (for Cadiz).

On the 28th of September the *Victory* joined the fleet before Cadiz, which to the number of twenty-nine ships of the line had been rapidly collected under Admiral Collingwood after Villeneuve entered the port. By Nelson's orders none of the customary salutes were exchanged, it being his object to keep the enemy, as far as possible, ignorant both of his own arrival and of the force that they might have to encounter, lest they might hesitate to come out. For the same reason the main body of the British fleet was kept fifty miles west of the port; but between the latter and it there were spaced three subdivisions, the innermost of which, composed

of frigates and other lighter vessels, kept within sight of the enemy, watching every indication. Despite these precautions, however, Villeneuve could not fail ultimately to hear of Nelson's coming, and the number of his fleet, which gradually rose to thirty-three, of which twenty-seven only were present when the battle was fought. The French admiral despaired of success; but learning that the emperor, dissatisfied with his previous conduct, was about to relieve him from command, and aware that malice attributed to him cowardice, when weakness only was his fault, he closed his eyes to all other considerations than that of wounded honor, and went forth to hopeless battle. The orders to the French fleet were to enter the Mediterranean and appear off the coast of Italy, where its presence was expected to favor the great campaign, then beginning, which is identified with the name of Austerlitz.

«The morning of the 19th of October,» wrote an eye-witness from the inshore squadron, «saw us so close to Cadiz as to see the ripple of the beach and catch the morning fragrance which came off the land; and then, as the sun rose over the Trocadero, with what joy we saw the fleet inside let fall and hoist their topsails, and one after another slowly emerge from the harbor's mouth!» The movement began at 7 A. M., but there were eighteen French and fifteen Spanish ships of the line, besides smaller vessels, to take part in it, and the operation is long and intricate for a body of sailing ships in a restricted harbor, especially with unskilled men, such as were many of the allies. At 9:30 Nelson knew that the movement was begun. «At this moment,» wrote the commander of the advanced frigates later in the day, «we are within four miles of the enemy, and talking to Lord Nelson by means of Sir H. Popham's signals, though so distant, but repeated along by the rest of the frigates of this squadron. The day is fine, the sight, of course, beautiful.» Nelson at once made signal for a «general chase southeast,» and the fleet moved off to the Straits of Gibraltar, to block the suspected purpose of the allies to enter there. On that day only twelve of the allied ships cleared the harbor.

The following morning, Sunday, October 20, the remainder got to sea. The wind and weather had changed. It now blew from the southwest with heavy rain, thick and squally. With the wind from this quarter the Franco-Spanish fleet could not clear the shoals off Cape Trafalgar, and it had therefore to steer to the northwest from Cadiz. In its move-

ments it was closely dogged by the hostile frigates, the main body of the British being then near the Straits' mouth, between Cape Trafalgar and Cape Spartel, on the African coast. In this locality it continued to work back and forth, keeping out of the enemy's sight, but observing their movements warily by the lookout ships. At five in the evening Captain Blackwood, the commander of the frigate squadron, signaled that the allies seemed determined to go to the westward. «That they shall not do,» said Nelson in his diary, «if in the power of Nelson and Bronté to prevent them»; and he replied that he relied upon the frigates' keeping track of them during the night. «The last twenty-four hours,» wrote Blackwood next day to his wife, «have been hard and anxious work for me; but we have kept sight of them, and are this moment bearing up to come to action.»

On the evening of the 20th Nelson issued special orders. Two frigates were to keep the enemy in sight throughout the night. Between them and his flag-ship communication was maintained by a chain of four ships, duly spaced, which repeated signals from end to end. If the enemy steered in one direction two blue lights were burned together; if in the other, three guns were fired in rapid succession. Thus throughout the watchful night messages flashed back and forth over the waste of waters separating the hostile squadrons. From their tenor Nelson judged that the enemy sought to keep open their retreat upon Cadiz. He was therefore careful not to come near enough to them to be seen before daybreak. From twelve to fifteen miles was the distance between the two fleets.

October 21, the day of the battle, dawned hazy, with light airs from west-northwest, and a heavy swell, a token of the approaching gale which during the succeeding days wrought devastation among the prizes. Soon after daylight Nelson came on deck. It was noticed that he wore his usual service coat, on which were stitched the stars of four different orders won by him in battle, and which he always carried. His sword, contrary to his custom, he did not wear, probably by oversight. The hostile fleet was visible in the east-southeast, forming a long irregular column, distant ten or twelve miles, and heading to the southward. Cape Trafalgar lay in the same direction, about ten miles farther off. The place where the battle would be fought was therefore dangerously near the land, if the threatening gale fell upon ships crippled in the encounter.

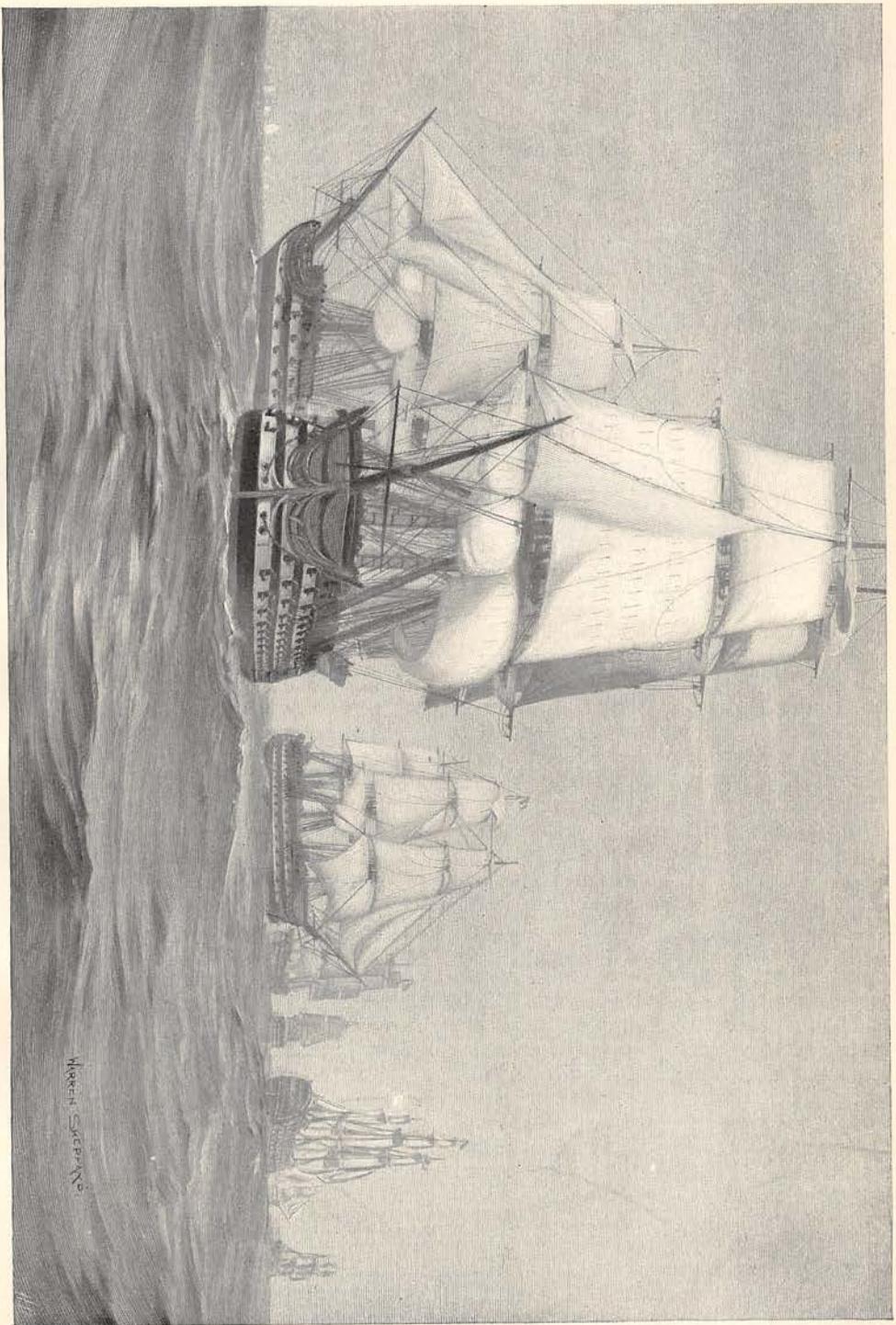
The British were then under easy sail head-

ENGRAVED BY T. COLE.

«THE FIGHTING 'TÉMÉRAIRE,' TUGGED TO HER LAST BERTH TO BE BROKEN UP.»

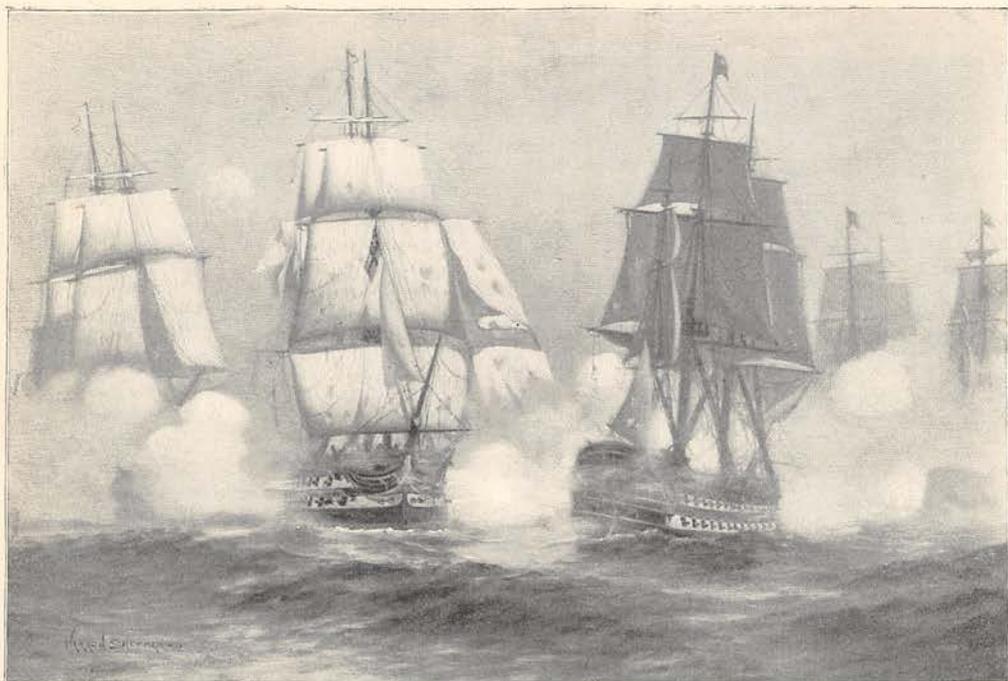
FROM THE PAINTING BY J. M. W. TURNER IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.





DRAWN BY WARREN SHEPARD.

THE SPANISH AND FRENCH FLEETS WEARING SHIP.



DRAWN BY WARREN SHEPPARD.

THE «BELLEISLE» APPROACHING THE ENEMY'S LINE.

ing to the northward, nearly parallel to the enemy. At 6:30 were made in quick succession the signals to «form order of sailing in two columns» and to «prepare for battle.» Ten minutes later followed the decisive command to «bear up» for the enemy, steering east-northeast. The plan upon which the battle was to be engaged, and his own share in it, were perfectly understood by every flag-officer and captain in the fleet; for it was Nelson's practice to assemble them in his cabin, to explain both his general idea and the varying phases and conditions to which it might have to be applied, as far as he could foresee them. The general idea was to throw upon the rear twelve ships of the enemy a superior number—fifteen or sixteen—under the command of Admiral Collingwood, while Nelson himself, with the remainder of his force, would act as seemed best to prevent Collingwood being disturbed. The particular application in the battle was that the attacking fleet advanced in two columns perpendicular to the enemy's line, Collingwood assailing the rear as proposed, and Nelson piercing the hostile order a little forward of the center; so that the brunt of the fight fell on the twenty-three rear ships of the allies, the ten which formed the van being for a long time untouched, and themselves remaining inactive. There is reason to believe that

Nelson would have preferred to attack in line instead of column, thus bringing his ships into action simultaneously, instead of one after another; but the wind was so light that invaluable time would have been consumed in the necessary manœuvres. Obedient to his unvarying principle, he would not give the enemy time which might possibly permit them to escape battle altogether; for Cadiz was not far distant, neither were the days long, and at their best the ships, with the breeze they had, were unable to make more than two to three miles an hour.

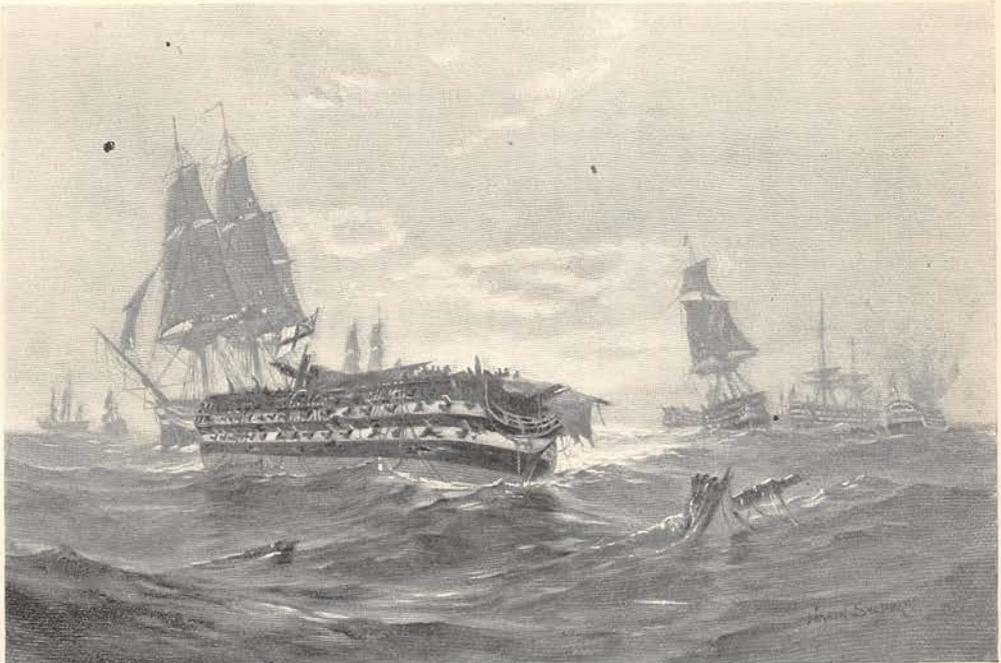
From the same cause—the faintness of the wind—the ships advanced under every stitch of canvas they could carry, even to studding-sails on both sides. Studding-sails, commonly pronounced «stu'n'sails,» are light sails of large spread hoisted outside of the ship, and which, when not in use, are not, like the principal sails, furled upon the yards, but gathered into the body of the vessel and stowed within her. They were rarely carried when going into action, but the urgent need to gain every foot of ground and moment of time necessitated their use at Trafalgar. The ships kept them set, if not shot away, up to the instant of reaching the enemy's line, and then, according to the exigency of each case, they were either taken in, or cut adrift and dropped overboard.

Six British ships were absent at Tetuan for water. The remaining twenty-seven, while still advancing, formed as best they could into two columns, separated by a distance of about a mile. On the left were twelve, led by Nelson's flag-ship, the *Victory*; on the right, Collingwood, in the *Royal Sovereign*, headed the remaining fifteen. The wind being from the west-northwest, the former body was to windward, and has therefore been commonly spoken of in contemporary accounts of the battle as the « weather line.» It was neither possible nor desirable, with the little wind, to form the columns with great precision, ship after ship. The vessels got forward as they could, sometimes sailing in pairs; and, in fact, the need of gaining time was so urgent that faster ships were in some instances ordered to leave their regular station, and approach the head of their column by passing their slower predecessors. The great point was to get the heads of the columns into action as soon as possible. As will appear, that was not accomplished until noon, while over two hours more elapsed before the rear ships came fairly under fire.

The allied commander-in-chief, Villeneuve, was of course watching the British movements. As their plan developed he saw that battle was inevitable; and knowing that, even if total defeat were avoided, there would still

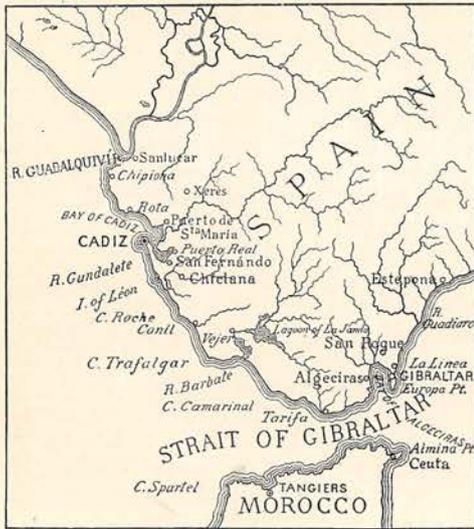
be many ships too crippled to admit of his entering the Mediterranean, he looked to the safety of their retreat. This could be made only upon Cadiz, some twenty miles to the north-northeast. He therefore ordered his fleet to wear (turn around from the wind), and form its line again, heading north. This would cause it gradually to bring Cadiz more and more under the lee. The manœuver, being executed simultaneously by the allied ships, reversed their order. Admiral Gravina, commander of the Spanish contingent, had been leading. His now became the rear ship, and it was upon his portion of the field that the brunt of Collingwood's attack was to fall.

Nelson could hardly have been unprepared for this step of Villeneuve's, but he viewed it with great concern. By it Gibraltar, the British port of refuge, became less accessible, the retreat of the allies more secure, and the perilous shoals off Cape Trafalgar more immediately to leeward. He had summoned the frigate captains on board the *Victory*, to be at hand to receive in person his last commands; for, the frigates not being in the fighting line, the character of services to be required of them was too varied to admit of being laid down long before. A close and practised observer of the weather, Nelson foresaw clearly the approaching gale. He expressed his uneasiness to Blackwood; and



DRAWN BY WARREN SHEPPARD.

THE « BELLEISLE » AFTER THE BATTLE.



WHERE THE BATTLE WAS FOUGHT.

the practical outcome was that just before the *Victory* came under fire the signal was made to be prepared to anchor immediately after the close of the day. But one more general signal followed: «Engage more closely.» With that flying the *Victory* disappeared into the smoke of battle.

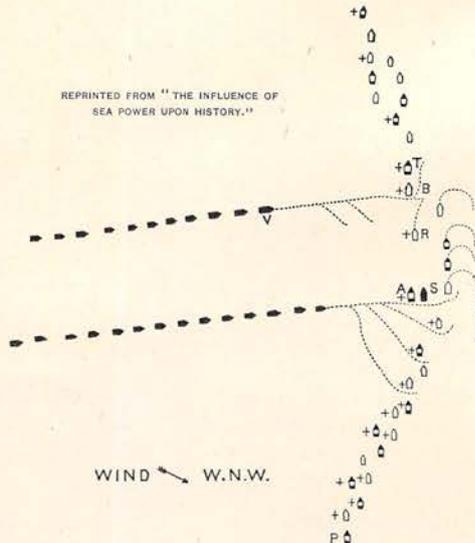
The line of battle of the combined fleet was badly formed. Many of the captains were unskilful, and manœuvres were doubly difficult when wind so failed. Consequently, instead of a long and fairly straight line, in which the ships stood in close succession, each with its broadside clear to fire upon the enemy, the order assumed was that of a bow, or a crescent, with the horns toward the British. In many cases ships lay behind others, occasionally three deep, unable, therefore, to fire at the enemy except through their friends. On the other hand, British ships that entered at such points soon found themselves in a hornets' nest, and suffered severely from the successive and concentrated fires which they there underwent.

It was with these dispositions on each side that the battle was engaged, and it may here be added that Nelson's general plan received substantial fulfilment. Like Copenhagen, though from other causes, there were many variations in detail, and unlike Copenhagen, once the battle joined, it quickly passed into a confused mêlée, in which each captain acted on his own judgment, following simply the general directions before given by his commander-in-chief. How effective these

were may be inferred from the fact that, of the sixteen rear ships of the allies, twelve were taken or destroyed. Of the six others captured, the principal loss fell upon the center. The place where the weight of the blow was struck, therefore, was that chosen by Nelson, but the manner of the striking he left perforce to the capable hands of his lieutenants.

Apart from its technical aspect, consequently, the living interest of the battle of Trafalgar centers upon the fortunes of the single ships, and upon the heroic figure of the British admiral, whose glorious career there terminated. Ever conspicuous and dazzling where dangers thickened, the light that at the last gathers round the closing hours of Nelson's life has lost nothing in intensity, while in radiancy and purity it has gained much. The flashing brilliancy of a star, which characterized the restless manifestations of his earlier course, gives place to the calm and settled effulgence of a sun that has run its race, triumphed over the storms that sought to obscure its shining, and now sinks to rest in a cloudless sky, secure that over the firmament of its glory neither evil chance nor lapse of time can henceforth throw a veil. The shadow of death, which hung over him with a darkness that he himself felt, softened and mellowed the vivacity natural to him, and imparted to his

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THE ATTACK AT TRAFALGAR
 OCTOBER 21, 1805
 FIVE MINUTES PAST NOON
 ■ BRITISH, 27 SHIPS
 □ FRENCH, 18 } 33 SHIPS
 ▲ SPANISH, 15 }

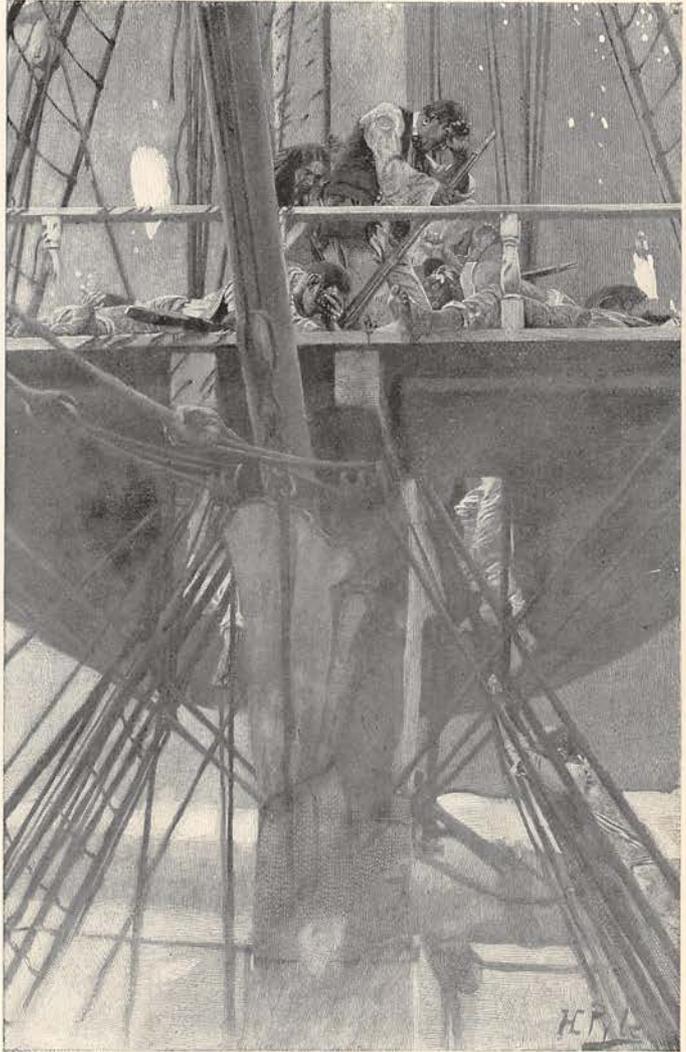
whole bearing on that final day a solemnity, not uncheerful, yet impressive, that reflected, although without a trace of irresolution, the conscious resignation and self-devotion with which he went forward to his last battle.

The admiral in person, accompanied by the train of frigate captains, inspected the *Victory* and her preparations throughout all decks, ample time for the tour being permitted by the slowness of the advance. At 11 A. M. he was in his cabin, where the signal-lieutenant, entering to prefer a request of a personal nature, found him upon his knees writing; and it is believed that the following words, with which his private diary closes, were then penned: «May the great God whom I worship grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory; and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it; and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet. For myself individually, I commit my life to Him who made me; and may His blessing light upon my endeavours for serving my country faithfully. To Him I resign myself and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen, amen, amen.»

After returning to the deck, Nelson asked Blackwood whether he did not think another signal was needed. The captain replied that he thought every one understood perfectly what was expected of him. After musing a while, Nelson said; «Suppose we telegraph that (Nelson expects every man to do his duty.)» The officer to whom the remark was made suggested whether it would not read better, «England expects.» In the fleet, or, for the matter of that, to the country, the change signified little, for no two names were ever more closely identified than those of England and Nelson; but the latter wel-

comed it eagerly, and at 11:30 the signal which has achieved world-wide celebrity flew from the *Victory's* masthead, and was received with a shout throughout the fleet.

The *Royal Sovereign*, Collingwood's flagship, leading the other column, had been



DRAWN BY HOWARD PYLE.

THE MIZZENTOP OF THE «REDOUBTABLE.»

recently coppered, and accordingly outstripped the *Victory*, although the latter was a fast ship. She was now about two miles distant to the southeast, a considerable interval separating her from the ship next behind in her own column—the *Belleisle*. At noon she was within range of the enemy, and the day's combat was opened by a French ship called the *Fougeux*, the nineteenth in the allied order counting from the van. At

that moment, as though by signal, the ships of both fleets hoisted their colors, and the admirals their flags, a necessary yet chivalrous display, resembling the courteous salute which precedes a mortal combat. It has been said that Villeneuve's flag was not then hoisted, but the log of a British ship distinctly mentions that it was flying before the

under a fire which centered upon her alone for a measurable time, until some of it was drawn off by the *Belleisle*. Nelson watched her with emulous and admiring eyes, ungrudging of her glory. «See how that noble fellow Collingwood takes his ship into action!» he cried. Beside Collingwood stood his flag-captain, Rotherham, between whom and him-



PAINTED BY A. W. DEVIS.

THE DEATH OF NELSON.

IN THE PAINTED HALL, GREENWICH COLLEGE.

Victory opened fire. This she did not, and indeed could not, do until some time after the enemy had begun to fire at her. When the shots began to pass over, Nelson dismissed Blackwood and the captain of another frigate, who had till then remained, directing them to pull along the column, and tell the captains of the ships of the line that he depended on their exertions to close rapidly with the enemy, but that he left much to their discretion in the unforeseen contingencies that awaited them. As Blackwood took his hand to say good-bye, he said, «I trust that on my return to the *Victory* I shall find your lordship well, and in possession of twenty prizes.» To this Nelson replied, «God bless you, Blackwood; I shall never speak to you again.»

The *Royal Sovereign* advanced in silence

self there had been bad blood till Nelson in person had reconciled them a few days before. As the *Royal Sovereign* drew up with a Spanish three-decker—the *Santa Ana*, of 112 guns—to pierce the hostile array between her and the *Fougeux*, and open the day for the British, Collingwood, in keen sympathy with the old and tried friend he should never again see alive, made the like remark: «Rotherham, what would Nelson give to be here!» An instant later the guns of the port (left-hand) batteries were fired in rapid succession, as the ship's measured advance brought them to bear, pouring a double-shotted broadside into the *Santa Ana's* stern, raking her fore and aft, and striking down, by Spanish accounts, four hundred of the thousand men that manned her decks. The starboard guns were at the same time discharged

at the *Fougeux*, but, being from a greater distance, with less effect. The *Royal Sovereign*, putting her helm over as she fired, now ranged up alongside the *Santa Ana* so closely that the muzzles of the guns of the two ships nearly touched. A desperate duel then ensued, much to the disadvantage of the *Santa Ana*, already dazed by the fearful first blow; but round the *Royal Sovereign* were grouped four other hostile ships, from which issued such storms of shot that it is reported they were often seen to strike together in mid-air.

For some minutes the *Royal Sovereign* was alone engaged, but before long the *Belleisle*, a large two-decker of eighty guns, came to her relief. As one of the ships most severely handled on this day, losing all her masts, the dry, brief, jerky remarks of her log possess interest; and they are typical, as by family likeness, of the experiences common to most in such a scene. «At 12:05 opened our fire on the enemy; 12:13, cut the enemy's line astern of a French 80-gun ship, second to the Spanish rear-admiral's ship (*Santa Ana*), at the same time keeping up a heavy fire on both sides; 12:40, our maintopmast was shot away. At 1 a great ship bore up to rake us, and a ship on each side engaging us. At 1:10 the mizzenmast went six feet above the deck. At 1:20 the enemy's ship on our starboard side sheered off; at 1:30 the enemy's ship which had laid itself athwart our stern placed herself on our larboard quarter; at the same time a fresh ship ranged up at our starboard side. Kept up a heavy fire on them as we could get our guns to bear, the ship being lately unmanageable, most of her rigging and sails being shot. At 2:10 the mainmast went by the board;¹ at 2:30 an enemy's ship placed herself across our starboard bow; at 2:40 the foremast and bowsprit went by the board, still engaging three of the enemy's ships; 3:15, one of our ships passed our bow and took off the fire of one of the enemy's ships laying there. At 3:20 the enemy's ship on our starboard side was engaged by one of our ships. At 3:25 the *Swiftsure* passed our stern, and cheered us, and commenced firing on the enemy, and into the enemy's ship on our larboard quarter. Ceased firing, and turned the hands up to clear the wreck. Sent a boat and took possession of the Spanish 80-gun ship *Argonaut*. The action still continuing general, cut away the wreck fore

and aft. . . . At 8 P. M. mustered the ship's company; found killed in battle two lieutenants, one midshipman, and thirty-one seamen and marines, and ninety-four seamen and marines wounded.»

But we have also of the *Belleisle* one of those too rare personal accounts which let us into the human interest of such a scene. The writer² was a lieutenant of marines, only sixteen years old, and had but just joined the ship when called to pass through this fierce ordeal.

«As the day dawned the horizon appeared covered with ships. I was awakened by the cheers of the crew, and by their rushing up the hatchways to get a glimpse of the hostile fleet. The delight manifested exceeded anything I ever witnessed, surpassing even those gratulations when our native cliffs are described after a long period of distant service. At nine we were about six miles from them, with studdingsails set on both sides. The officers now met at breakfast, and though each seemed to exult in the hope of a glorious termination to the contest so near at hand, a fearful presage was experienced that all would not again unite at that festive board. One was particularly impressed with a persuasion that he should not survive the day.³ The sound of the drum, however, soon put an end to our meditations, and after a hasty, and, alas! a final farewell to some, we repaired to our respective posts. Our ship's station was far astern of our leader, but her superior sailing caused an interchange of places with the *Tonnant*. On our passing that ship, the captains greeted each other on the honourable prospect in view. Captain Tyler (*Tonnant*) exclaimed: (A glorious day for old England! We shall have one apiece before night!) As if in confirmation of this soul-inspiring sentiment, the band of our consort was playing (Britons, strike home!)

«The drum now repeated its summons, and the captain sent for the officers commanding at their several quarters. (Gentlemen,) said he, (I have only to say that I shall pass close under the stern of that ship; put in two round shot and then a grape, and give her *that*. Now go to your quarters, and mind not to fire until each gun will bear with effect.) With this laconic instruction, the gallant little man posted himself on the slide of the foremost carronade on the starboard side of the quarter-deck.

«From the peculiar formation of this part of the enemy's line, as many as ten ships brought their broadside to bear with powerful effect. The determined and resolute coun-

¹ Close to the deck.

² Lieutenant Paul Harris Nicolas. The account was published in 1829.

³ This officer, first lieutenant of the ship, was killed.

tenance of the weather-beaten sailors, here and there brightened by a smile of exultation, was well suited to the terrific appearance which they exhibited. Some were stripped to the waist; some had bared their necks and arms; others had tied a handkerchief round their heads; and all seemed eagerly to await the order to engage. The shot began to pass over us, and gave us an intimation of what we should in a few minutes undergo. An awful silence prevailed in the ship, only interrupted by the commanding voice of Captain Hargood, (Steady! starboard a little! steady so!)¹ echoed by the master directing the quartermasters at the wheel. A shriek soon followed, a cry of agony was produced by the next shot, and the loss of a head of a poor recruit was the effect of the succeeding; and as we advanced destruction rapidly increased.

«It was just twelve o'clock when we reached their line. Our energies became roused and the mind diverted from its appalling condition by the order of (Stand to your guns!) which, as they successively came to bear, were discharged into our opponents on either side. Although until that moment we had not fired a shot, our sails and rigging bore evident proofs of the manner in which we had been treated; our mizzenmast was shot away, and the ensign had thrice been re-hoisted. The fring was now tremendous, and at intervals the dispersion of the smoke gave us a sight of the colors of our adversaries.

«At this critical period, while steering for the stern of the *Indomptable*, which continued a most galling raking fire upon us, the *Fougeux* being on our starboard quarter and the Spanish *San Justo* on our larboard bow, the master earnestly addressed the captain: (Shall we go through, sir?) (Go through, by —!) was his energetic reply. (There's your ship, sir; place me close alongside of her.) Our opponent defeated this manœuver by bearing away in a parallel course with us, within pistol-shot.

«About one o'clock the *Fougeux* ran us on board on the starboard side, and we continued thus engaging till the latter dropped astern. Our mizzenmast soon went, and soon afterward the maintopmast. A two-decked ship, the *Neptune*,² 80, then took a position on our bow, and a 74, the *Achille*, on our quarter. At two o'clock the mainmast fell over our larboard side; I was at the time under the break of the poop aiding in run-

ning out a carronade, when a cry of (Stand clear there! here it comes!) made me look up, and at that instant the mainmast fell over the bulwarks just above me. This ponderous mass made the ship's whole frame shake, and had it taken a central direction it would have gone through the poop and added many to our list of sufferers. At half-past two our foremast was shot away close to the deck.

«In this unmanageable state we were but seldom capable of annoying our antagonists, while they had the power of choosing their distance, and every shot from them did considerable execution. Until half-past three we remained in this harassing situation. At this hour a three-decked ship was seen apparently steering toward us; it can easily be imagined with what anxiety every eye turned towards this formidable object, which would either relieve us from our unwelcome neighbors or render our situation desperate. We had scarcely seen the British colors since one o'clock, and it is impossible to express our emotion as the alteration of the stranger's course displayed the white ensign to our sight. Soon the *Swiftsure* came nobly to our relief. Can any enjoyment in life be compared with the sensation of delight and thankfulness which such a deliverance produced? On ordinary occasions we contemplate the grandeur of a ship under sail with admiration; but under impressions of danger and excitement such as prevailed at this crisis every one eagerly looked toward our approaching friend, who came speedily on, and when within hail manned the rigging, cheered, and then boldly steered for the ship which had so long annoyed us.

«Before sunset all firing had ceased. The view of the fleet at this period was highly interesting, and would have formed a beautiful subject for a painter. Just under the setting rays were five or six dismantled prizes; on one hand lay the *Victory* with part of our fleet and prizes, and on the left hand the *Sovereign* and a similar cluster of ships; the remnant of the combined fleet was making for Cadiz to the northward; the *Achille* had burned to the water's edge, with the tricolored ensign still displayed, about a mile from us, and our tenders and boats were using every effort to save the brave fellows who had so gloriously defended her; but only two hundred and fifty were rescued, and she blew up with a tremendous explosion.»

The *Royal Sovereign* suffered even more severely than did her successor, the *Belleisle*. Her loss in men was forty-seven killed and ninety-four wounded, and although one of

¹ Orders for steering.

² There were three *Neptunes* at Trafalgar—one French, one Spanish, and one British.

her masts was still standing when the battle ceased, it was so tottering as to fall within twenty-four hours. It is, in fact, inseparable from all attacks in column, whether on sea or land, that the leading ships or men take the brunt of the punishment, while their followers, coming in fresh upon the havoc they have wrought or sustained, reap the fruits of the victory of which the seed has been sown by the former. This was more especially true in the days of sailing ships, because, their artillery being necessarily disposed along their sides, they had no offensive power directly ahead; nor was it practicable to support them, as a shore column often could be, by a flank cannonade before and during its advance. At Trafalgar the leaders underwent the greater injury because the sluggish breeze made the rear ships slow in coming to their aid. So it was that on the left the *Victory* and her next astern, the *Téméraire*, shared the experience of the *Royal Sovereign* and the *Belleisle*, with results the same in broad outline, but so far differing in detail as to afford themes of novel interest and peculiar excitement.

About twenty minutes after the *Fougeux* had opened upon the *Royal Sovereign*, the *Bucentaure*, Villeneuve's flag-ship, fired at the *Victory* a shot which fell short. This trial for range was repeated at intervals till the fifth or sixth shot, passing through one of the upper sails, showed the enemy that she was under their guns. Seven or eight ships then opened a tremendous cannonade concentrated upon this single vessel bearing the flag of the hostile commander-in-chief, which was powerless to reply. Nelson's secretary was killed near him among the first, all the studdingsails were stripped from the yards, and by the time the *Victory* reached the enemy her sails were riddled; but though the result could not but be to deaden her already slow progress, and though she lost fifty killed and wounded before able to return a gun, she was not stopped, nor were her powers of offense seriously impaired. When still five hundred yards from the enemy her mizzentopmast and her wheel were knocked away, and another shot passed between Captain Hardy and Nelson. The latter smiled, and said, "This is too warm work, Hardy, to last long." At about 1 P. M. her hour of vengeance arrived.

Nelson, in his instructions to his captains, had laid particular stress upon the speedy reduction and capture of the enemy's commander-in-chief, and, following precept by example, he now aimed to make her the

special antagonist of the *Victory*. Unexpected difficulties prevented. The two allied ships behind the *Bucentaure* had dropped to leeward, leaving an open space in which, though commanded by their guns, the *Victory* might have found room to manœuvre, and to place Nelson alongside of Villeneuve; but the third ship, the *Redoutable*, 74, Captain Lucas, pressed into the place left by them, obtaining thus a position which, by the gallantry displayed alike in taking and holding it, has given to her and her commander a renown second to none achieved on that day of so many heroic deeds and so much heroic endurance. Thus were three ships crowded together behind and on the far side of the *Bucentaure*, while the *Santisima Trinidad*, a huge four-decked ship of 120 guns, immediately ahead of her, throwing her sails aback, drew nearer her there. To use the vivid phrase of the naval historian James, the French and Spanish ships ahead of the *Victory* "closed like a forest."

Nelson was walking the quarter-deck when Captain Hardy, who directed the *Victory's* steering, told him it was impossible to pass through the line without running into one of the three ships there assembled. "I cannot help it," replied the admiral. "Go on board which you please; take your choice." At one o'clock the bows of the *Victory* reached the wake of the *Bucentaure*, the British ship passing within thirty feet, a projecting yard-arm grazing the enemy's rigging. One after another, as they bore, the double-shotted guns tore through the timbers of the French ship, the smoke, driven back, filling the lower decks of the *Victory*, while persons on the upper deck, including Nelson himself, were covered with the dust which rose in clouds from the wreck. As, from the relative positions of the two ships, the shot ranged from end to end of the *Bucentaure*, the injury was tremendous. Twenty guns were dismounted, and the loss by that single discharge was estimated by the French at four hundred men. Leaving the further care of the French flag-ship to her followers, the *Victory* put her helm up, inclining to the right, and ran on board the *Redoutable*, whose guns, as well as those of the French *Neptune*, had been busily playing upon her while she was dealing with the *Bucentaure*. At 1:10 P. M. the *Victory* lay along the port (left) side of the *Redoutable*, the two ships falling off with their heads to the eastward, and moving slowly before the wind to the east-southeast.

The *Téméraire*, 98, a three-decked ship, had followed close on the heels of the

Victory. The movements of the latter, and the other exigencies of the situation, had compelled her to keep more and more to the right, so that she passed through the enemy's line somewhat to the rear of the place pierced by the *Victory*, amid a heavy cannonade, and in a cloud of smoke. Here she endeavored, in accordance with the general instructions sent by Nelson through Blackwood, to haul up to the left. A slight lifting of the smoke showed her the *Redoutable* on her port side, and after a few minutes' cannonading, in which some of the *Téméraire's* spars went overboard, the two ships, now virtually un-governable, fell together, so that the little *Redoutable*, with her colors still flying in defiance, lay between the *Victory* on her left side and the *Téméraire* on her right, the three lashed together.

The contest seemed, and was, most unequal; yet the little French vessel possessed a means of offense in which her two adversaries were deficient. The French ships, imperfectly manned with seamen, carried many soldiers, and their musketry fire was comparatively heavy. They also stationed many musketeers and men with hand-grenades aloft—in the tops—a practice to which Nelson was averse. Therefore, although the *Redoutable* could oppose but feeble resistance below decks, and received such injuries to the hull that she sank in the gale of the following day, on the upper deck her small-arm fire dominated that of both antagonists. Thus it was that Nelson met his death. He was pacing the quarter-deck side by side with Captain Hardy, the two officers having just then little to do but to await the issue of the strife raging round them. At 1:25 they were walking from aft, and were within one pace of the forward end of their short promenade, when Nelson suddenly faced left about and fell to his knees, his left hand touching the deck. Hardy hastened to him, expressing the hope that he was not much hurt. «They have done for me at last,» replied the admiral; «my backbone is shot through.» The fatal ball had come from the mizzen-top of the *Redoutable*. He was carried below, where he lingered for a little over three hours, receiving before his death the assurance of a decisive victory.

Nelson fell a few moments before the *Téméraire* and the *Redoutable* came together. So destructive was the fire which claimed him as its greatest victim that the upper deck of the *Victory* was almost deserted. Captain Lucas, noticing this, conceived the bold idea of carrying his opponent by boarding. A

large part of the French crew, with their cutlasses and pistols, assembled for that purpose along the side engaged; but it was found impossible to pass, because the upper parts of the ships, being narrower than the lower, were by the latter kept too far apart to permit men to leap across. An attempt was made to use as a bridge the main-yard of the *Redoutable*, which either had fallen or was lowered for the purpose; but the British improved the respite to gather a party from their lower decks to repel the attack. A sharp musketry skirmish followed, which cost the *Victory* forty killed and wounded, including several officers; but the enemy was forced to retire.

At this moment occurred the collision between the *Téméraire* and the *Redoutable*. The latter was swept by the fire of her new heavy antagonist, which, being nearly raking, struck down near two hundred of her already desolated crew. Nevertheless, the fire from aloft continued so galling that Captain Harvey of the *Téméraire* ordered his men below to escape injury and to concentrate their effort on the great guns, which the weaker vessel could not expect long to resist.

Still, among the fluctuating fortunes of the day, neither hope nor chance had yet wholly forsaken the dauntless though well-nigh prostrate *Redoutable*. The *Fougeux*, which had opened the fire upon Collingwood, had afterward stood slowly north, crossing the space separating the allied rear and center. Seeing the *Téméraire* before her, she shaped her course with the apparent intention of either raking or boarding that already crippled ship. But the latter had as yet had no occasion to use her starboard broadside, on which the *Fougeux* threatened her, the *Redoutable* being on the other. The starboard guns, therefore, were manned under charge of her first lieutenant, the captain continuing to devote his attention to the *Redoutable*. When the *Fougeux* approached within a hundred yards, incautiously confiding, perhaps, in the preoccupation of her intended victim, she received the full force of a nearly fresh broadside. The crash was by the British described as terrible, and the *Fougeux*, in confusion, ran on board of the *Téméraire*, where she was immediately lashed. A small party of boarders sprang upon the French vessel, and after a short contest she was taken into possession. Her captain had been mortally wounded by the broadside.

Thus was decided this singular encounter, in the midst of which England's greatest sea-captain met his fate. While these excit-

ing events were occurring about him, Nelson's life was rapidly ebbing away in the cockpit of the *Victory*. Nothing could be done for the glorious sufferer but to ease the pain and thirst which harassed him, and to bring him assurance from time to time that the fortunes of the day were with Great Britain. He was from the first hopeless of recovery, nor did the surgeon, after examination, mock him with vain assurances. "You know I am gone," said the admiral to him. "My lord," replied he, with a noble and courteous simplicity, "unhappily for our country, nothing can be done for you." "I know it," said Nelson. "God be praised, I have done my duty."

For a few minutes the four ships, *Victory*, *Redoubtable*, *Téméraire*, and *Fougeux*, lay side by side; but about 2:15 the *Victory* shoved herself clear, getting her head to the northward, while the other three drifted off in the other direction. The main- and mizzenmasts of the *Redoubtable* fell almost immediately. A lieutenant, with a few men, crossed from the *Téméraire* to her by one of these impromptu bridges, and took quiet possession of a ship already beaten, but whose heroic efforts, second to none in naval annals, have linked her name enduringly, if mournfully, with that of the greatest of seamen. Her loss was, by the French official returns, stated to be three hundred killed and two hundred and twenty-two wounded, out of a total of six hundred and forty-three.

The fate of the *Bucentaure*, the flag-ship of the allied fleet, was decided at about the same moment. The results of the *Victory's* attack upon her have been mentioned. The ships following in the column obeyed Nelson's injunction to concentrate their efforts on the capture of the enemy's commander-in-chief. The *Téméraire* had been unable to do so, but the *Neptune* (British) at 1:45 passed close under the *Bucentaure's* stern. Her broadside, raking like that of the *Victory*, brought down the French main- and mizzenmasts. To the *Neptune* succeeded the *Leviathan*, which raked at a distance of thirty yards. Upon the *Leviathan* followed the *Conqueror*, which, after raking, hauled up on the lee side of the crushed vessel, and in a few minutes shot away the one remaining mast. Twenty minutes of careful concentration had reduced the *Bucentaure* to absolute helplessness. Villeneuve, a man of gallant but dejected spirit, who had undergone the disasters of the day with the same hopelessness that had characterized him throughout the campaign, looked sadly upon the scene of

ruin and desolation about him. "The task of the *Bucentaure* is fulfilled," said he; "mine is not yet finished;" and he ordered a boat manned to carry him to one of the vessels in the van which, still unharmed, had viewed with strange apathy and inaction the destruction of their comrades. But no boat was left that could swim, and his brave resolve could not receive fulfilment. At 2:05 the *Bucentaure* struck to the *Conqueror*. The *Santísima Trinidad*, next ahead, lost her three masts within the next thirty minutes, and although not taken possession of for some hours, was thenceforth virtually at the mercy of the British.

This, at 2:30 P.M., completed the ruin of the allied center, its other ships having gradually moved to the assistance of the rear. The contest there was more prolonged, a much greater number of the allied ships, first and last, taking part in it. Although in that quarter occurred the heaviest of the struggle and the most copious fruits of their victory were reaped by the British, no attempt will be made to present in further detail the course of the fight there; for to do so would be but to repeat, though with much variety of incident, the fortunes of the *Belleisle* and the *Royal Sovereign*, the *Victory* and the *Téméraire*, the *Redoubtable* and the *Bucentaure*.

Yet, before quitting this part of the subject, it may receive further interesting illustration from the log of a ship which for long viewed from the outside, and undisturbed, the events of which inside accounts of participants have been quoted. The *Spartiate*, 74, was the rear ship in Nelson's column, and the failing wind left her out of action, gliding imperceptibly forward, until nearly two hours after the *Victory* entered upon it. The following brief memoranda of incidents observed will, with but slight effort of the imagination, convey to the reader a striking picture of the vivid scene, which must have borne no faint resemblance to the felling of a forest:

"At 12:25 H. M. ship *Victory* commenced firing at a ship ahead of her, she then bearing down on the *Santissima Trinidad* and a French two-decker with a flag at the fore. 12:30, the *Tonnant* lost her foretopmast and main-yard. 12:31, the *Victory* lost her mizzen-topmast. 12:33, a Spanish two-decker struck to the *Tonnant*. 12:45, a Spanish two-decker's mizzenmast fell. 12:51, the *Santa Anna* struck to the *Royal Sovereign*, she then making sail ahead to the next ship. 1:02, the *Téméraire* lost her maintopmast. 1:05, the *Santa Anna* rolled overboard all her lower masts. 1:15, observed the *Tonnant* had wore,

and had lost her maintopmast, an enemy's ship being on board her on the quarter. 1:25, observed a Spanish two-decker, who was engaged by the *Neptune*, lose her main and mizzen masts. 1:51, observed *Santissima Trinidad's* main and mizzen masts go by the board, then engaged by the *Neptune* and *Conqueror*. 1:56, the Spanish two-decker, which had struck to the *Neptune*, lost her foremast and bowsprit. 2:03, the *San Trinidad* lost her foremast and bowsprit. 2:06, the *Royal Sovereign* lost her main and mizzen masts. 2:11, one of the enemy's two-deckers lost her main and mizzen masts. 2:23, cut away our lower and topmast studdingsails, observing the van of the enemy's ships had wore to form a junction with their center.» With this last entry the *Spartiate's* own share in the battle began.

The heads of the British columns had dashed themselves to pieces against the overpowering number of foes which opposed their passage. An analysis of the returns shows that upon the four ships which led—the *Victory* and the *Téméraire*, the *Royal Sovereign* and the *Belleisle*—fell one third of the entire loss in a fleet of twenty-seven sail. But by this sacrifice they had shattered and pulverized the local resistance, destroyed the coherence of the hostile order, and opened the way for the successful action of their followers. With the appearance of the latter upon the scene, succeeded shortly by the approach of the allied van, but too late, and in disorder, began what may be called the second and final phase of the battle.

Before the *Bucentaure* struck, Villeneuve had seen that his van was quiescent, instead of initiating the prompt steps necessary to retrieve the day, by coming betimes to the aid of the center and rear, against which it was already apparent that the weight of the British effort was to be thrown. The thought must arise whether his mind did not then revert to the catastrophe of the Nile, and his own passivity under circumstances not dissimilar, which had drawn upon him the severe reproach of a brother admiral there engaged. Be that as it may, he shortly before two o'clock made a signal, duly repeated by the attendant frigates, that «the ships which were not engaged should take the positions which would bring them most rapidly under fire.» The lightness of the breeze made it difficult for the van ships to turn round and move toward the center and rear, whither both the signal and the call of honor imperatively summoned them; but by using their boats their heads were got in the right

direction before 2:30. By an inconceivable fatality, however, they did not keep together. Five passed to leeward of the line of battle, and five to windward; with the latter division being Rear-Admiral Dumanoir, the commander of the van.

The two divisions, being thus separated, met with different antagonists and different fortunes. As the farthest ships could not have been much over a mile from the *Bucentaure*, half an hour sufficed, even with the flickering breeze, to bring most of them to that part of the field where lay the shattered and glorious relics of the fight. As has before been said, several of the allied center had fallen to leeward, and not being able to regain their true positions, had made the best of their way to the rear to support their comrades in that quarter. To this is partly due the fact that Collingwood's column met much heavier resistance and loss than did Nelson's.¹ The rear ships of the latter, with two exceptions, had reached their disabled predecessors before Dumanoir's squadron put about. Passing through the line of wrecks, they fell in to leeward with the ships of the allied van that passed on that side, and captured two of them.

When Dumanoir's five other ships showed their purpose of passing to windward, the British *Minotaur* and *Spartiate* had not yet come up with the *Victory*—that is, they were still to windward of the field of battle. It is advisable here to mention that when a ship has lost her masts she no longer drifts to leeward as fast as she did; and, besides, the movement of the vessels in the mêlée would necessarily tend rather to leeward than to windward. From these causes it resulted that the dismantled ships—the *Victory* and the *Royal Sovereign* among them—lay to windward of most of their consorts, who were still under sail, and were specially threatened by the approach of these five fresh ships. At this moment Captain Hardy saw Nelson for the first time after he received his wound. «They shook hands affectionately, and Lord Nelson said, (Well, Hardy, how goes the battle? How goes the day with us?) (Very well, my lord, replied Captain Hardy; (we have got twelve or fourteen of the enemy's ships in our possession; but five of their van have tacked, and show an intention of bearing down upon the *Victory*. I have therefore

¹ The heavier loss of Collingwood's column was also due to the fact that his ships distributed their efforts more widely, whereas Nelson's concentrated their efforts upon the hostile flag-ship and her two seconds. The comparative losses may be stated thus: in force, Collingwood's was to Nelson's as 5 to 4; in total loss it was as 8.2 to 4; in killed alone as 7.2 to 4.

called two or three of our fresh ships around us, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing.) (I hope,) said his lordship, (none of our ships have struck, Hardy.) (No, my lord,) replied Captain Hardy; (there is no fear of that.)»

The *Spartiate* and the *Minotaur* were two of the fresh ships of which Hardy spoke. They were in a sense old comrades, having been near neighbors at the battle of the Nile, where the *Spartiate* was taken from the French. The two now hauled close to the wind, to cover the *Victory* and her disabled companions,—consorts and prizes,—and hove to (stopped), with their maintopsails to the mast and their heads to the northward, between Nelson and Dumanoir. As the latter's division went by on the opposite tack, steering to the southward, a sharp cannonade followed, in which the *Victory* joined. «Oh, *Victory, Victory!*» said the dying admiral, as he felt the concussion of the guns, «how you distract my poor brain!» and added, «How dear is life to all men!» Four of the allied ships passed without serious injury, and continued to sea to the southwest. A few days later they were all taken by a British squadron which had had no share in Trafalgar. The *Minotaur* and the *Spartiate* succeeded in cutting off the fifth ship,—the Spanish *Neptuno*, 80,—and she was added to the list of prizes.

The *Neptuno* struck at 5:15, after a gallant defense, in which were shot away her mizzenmast and fore and main topmasts—a loss which left her helpless. Fifteen minutes later firing had ceased altogether: the battle was over. Eighteen ships had struck their colors to the British, one of which—the French *Achille*—was then in a blaze, and at 5:45 blew up. With her went many of her crew, despite the efforts of British boats to save them. Four ships had escaped with Dumanoir. Admiral Gravina, the senior Spanish officer, was by Villeneuve's capture

left in command of the allies. His ship, the *Principe de Asturias*, had been desperately assailed and had fought desperately. Her loss was forty-one killed and one hundred and seven wounded, among them being Gravina himself, who lost his arm, and afterward died from the effects of the amputation. She now retreated upon Cadiz with a signal flying to rally round her flag. Ten ships—five French and five Spanish—accompanied her. These eleven only, of the thirty-three that had sailed two days before, again saw a friendly port. None of those which returned to Cadiz ever went to sea again during that war.

Three years later, in 1808, the Spaniards rose in revolt against Napoleon's attempt to impose a French sovereign upon them. With that struggle we have no present concern; but one of its earliest incidents was the enforced surrender of the French ships that had taken refuge in Cadiz after Trafalgar.

Nelson's spirit had departed before the last guns of the battle had been fired, but not before he knew the probable extent of the victory. He died at half-past four o'clock, his last audible words being, «Thank God, I have done my duty.» These he had frequently repeated, making, said the medical eye-witness, every now and then a greater effort, and with evident increase of pain, to utter them distinctly.

Other men have died in the hour of victory, but to no other has victory so singular and so signal stamped the fulfilment and completion of a great life's work. «*Finis coronat opus*» has of no man been more true than of Nelson. Results momentous and stupendous were to flow from the annihilation of all sea power except that of Great Britain, which was Nelson's great achievement; but his part was done when Trafalgar was fought, and his death in the moment of completed success has obtained for that superb victory an immortality of fame which even its own grandeur could scarcely have insured.

A. T. Mahan.

A DARK DAY.

GLOOM of a leaden sky,
 Too heavy for Hope to move;
 Grief in my heart to vie
 With the dark distress above;
 Yet happy, happy am I,
 For I sorrow with her I love.

Robert Underwood Johnson.