

Fourth of July celebration that Stumpville had ever known!

Nick hurried homeward, not feeling just in the mood to hear about the celebration.

He went into the back yard, thinking he would creep up to his room by the back stairs, and not let anybody see him. But he stumbled over Tommy, who was fast asleep on a heap of empty torpedo boxes and fire-cracker papers, with a pop-gun still clutched tightly in his hand, and Tommy awoke, with one of the resounding screams for which Tommy was famous.

"Keep still! what have *you* got to cry about?" said Nick, bitterly.

"I w-w-want it to be F-f-fourth of July some more!" sobbed Tommy.

Tommy's cry drew Aunt Jane from the front gate, where she was talking over the glories of the day with a neighbor, and Nick was discovered.

"So it 's you, though I would n't have believed it," said Aunt Jane. "I don't believe in boys slinking in by the back way, even if they have reason to be ashamed of themselves. If you 'd been here you might have touched off the cannon, for Captain Thumb said he meant to let you—though I don't believe in boys touching off cannons. And you might have gone up in the balloon, for

you had an invitation, and your father said he should have let you go, though I don't believe in balloons. I should like to know *where* you have been, for I don't believe in people leaving a splendid Fourth of July celebration in their own town to tramp all over the country!"

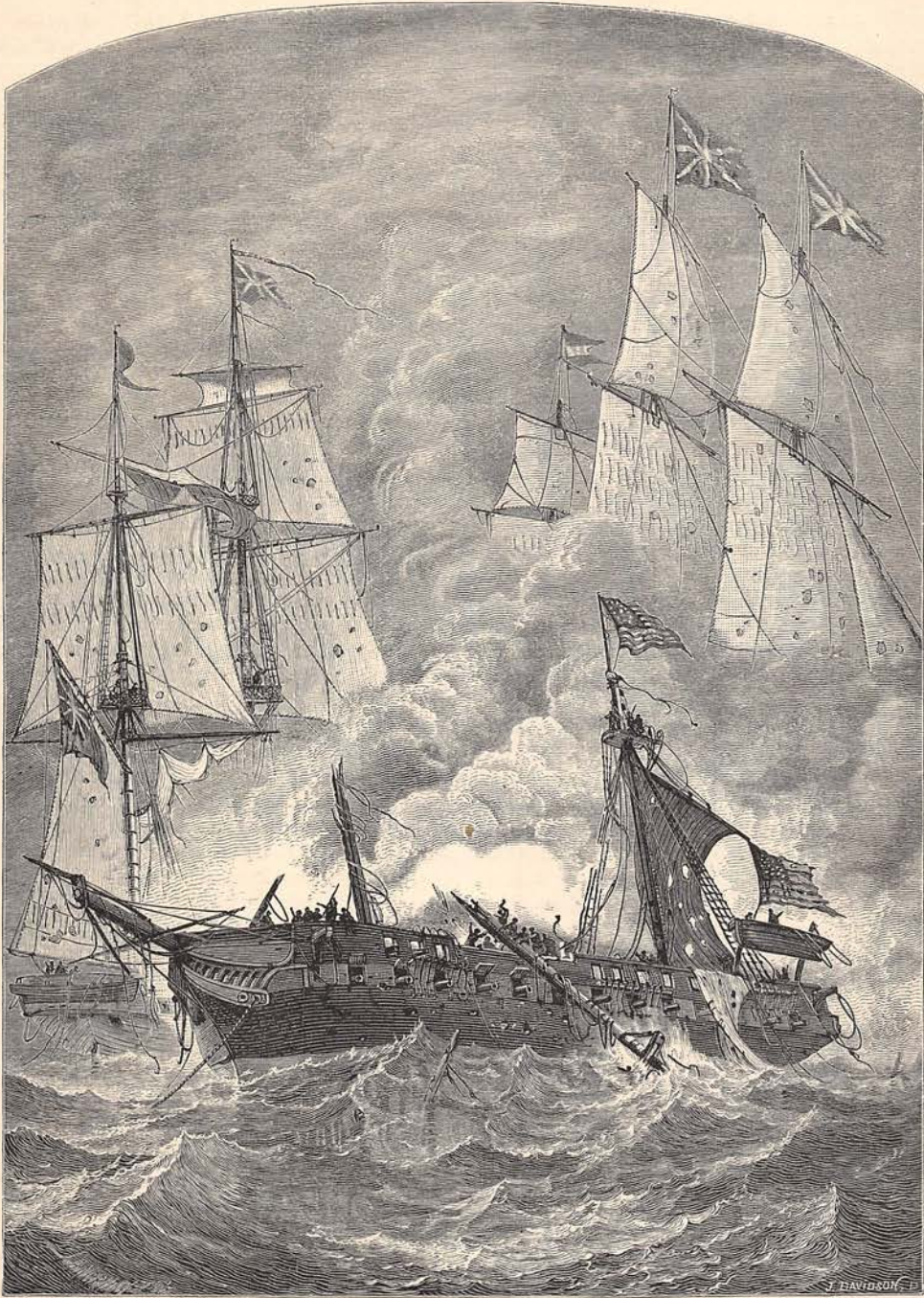
"Neither do I," said Nick. He would n't have believed that he should ever come to share one of Aunt Jane's unbeliefs, but he did.

Nick never expected to hear anything of the result of his effort to arouse the patriotic feelings of the Polywhappers; but in less than a week after his return he received a letter in which Lysander Hewitt, in behalf of the selectmen, returned thanks for his generous gift, and regretted to say that, owing to the lateness of its reception, they had been unable to apply it to the object which he had mentioned, but as the town had been for years afflicted with the nuisance of stray animals, especially pigs, running loose about the streets for lack of a suitable inclosure, they had resolved to use the money, with his permission, to make a pound, to be called in compliment to him "The Nick Tweedle Pig-pound"! Nick hoped he never should hear anything more from those benighted Polywhappers, who preferred a pig-pound to a Fourth of July celebration.

A FAMOUS SEA-FIGHT.

WHEN I was a small youngster, years ago, we boys used to be told thrilling stories of what was called "The Last War." In these later days, we have had a war on our own soil, which was, let us hope, the last war that we shall ever be engaged in as long as the American Republic lasts. But boys of an older generation than this knew "The Last War" to be the war between the United States and Great Britain, now generally called "The War of 1812." It is a long and painful story of misunderstandings and oppressive acts which must be told to explain the causes that led to the beginning of that war. Happily, the contest was not a very long one, and Americans, whatever may be said of the rights and wrongs of the two parties engaged in the fight, look with pride upon the achievements of the American navy of that period. The names of Bainbridge, Hull, Decatur, Porter, Perry, and many other gallant sailors, will be remembered as long as the traditions of the United States navy endure. Their wonderful exploits did much to close the sorrowful and wasteful struggle.

In 1813, the frigate "Essex," commanded by Captain David Porter, after committing much havoc upon the British marine off the Atlantic coast of South America, sailed boldly around Cape Horn into the Pacific Ocean. Porter had resolved to strike out into a new field of operations, and, carrying into the Pacific the first American flag that had floated from the mast-head of a man-of-war, he swooped down upon the British merchantmen and whalers, causing tremendous consternation. Nobody had dreamed that the Yankees would dare to send a man-of-war into this distant sea, and the British frigates were making things very uncomfortable for the few American merchantmen engaged in the Pacific trade. The arrival of the "Essex" soon changed all that. Within a year she had captured four thousand tons of British shipping, and had taken four hundred prisoners. She may be said to have subsisted upon the enemy, as the vessel was not only supplied with everything needed for repairs, rigging, ammunition, clothing, and provisions, taken from the enemy's captured



THE BATTLE OF THE "ESSEX" WITH THE "PHEBE" AND THE "CHERUB."

ships, but the men were paid with money found on board of one of her prizes.

Orders were given that the "Essex" must be destroyed, at all hazards, by any British man-of-

war that should be fortunate enough to catch her.

But the American frigate was fleet, and difficult to catch. Finally, in February, 1814, the frigate, accompanied by a small craft called the "Essex

Junior," a cruiser made over from one of the prizes captured from the British by Porter, cast anchor in the harbor of Valparaiso, Peru. The Peruvian Government was not then independent, Peru being a province of Spain. But Valparaiso was a neutral port, although the people of Peru, and the Spanish, also, were somewhat unfriendly to the Americans. So, when two British men-of-war, the "Phœbe" and the "Cherub," entered the port, it was tolerably certain that there would be a fight, should the "Essex" dare to put out to sea.

The Englishmen had the redoubtable "Essex" and her little consort in a trap. For six weeks, the two British vessels kept a very close watch on the Americans, sailing up and down the coast, just outside of the entrance to the harbor. Finally, on the 28th of March, Captain Porter, trusting to his ability to outsail either of the British vessels, and draw them away, so that the "Essex Junior" might escape, set sail and drew out of the anchorage. In doubling a headland at the entrance of the harbor, the "Essex" was struck by a squall, which carried away her maintopmast and several men. Captain Porter returned toward the roadstead, and anchored three miles from the town and about the distance of a pistol-shot from the shore. The "Phœbe" and the "Cherub" had been exchanging signals, and it was evident that they meant to attack, although the vessels were all in neutral waters.

The "Phœbe" carried thirty long eighteen-pounders and sixteen thirty-two-pound carronades for her armament, besides seven small guns in her tops. She also had 320 men, all told. The "Cherub" carried twenty-eight guns of various caliber and 180 men. To meet this formidable force the "Essex" had 255 men, and her armament consisted of twenty-six thirty-pounders and six long twelve-pounders. The "Essex Junior," which took no part in the fight, had twenty guns and sixty men. Nevertheless, Porter resolved that he would never surrender as long as he had men enough to work his guns; and right manfully did he hold to his resolution.

The "Phœbe" opened fire at four o'clock in the afternoon, being then nearly dead astern of the disabled "Essex." The long eighteens of the Englishman did great damage on board the "Essex," which, notwithstanding her disadvantage, returned the fire with gallantry and spirit. The "Cherub," then on the starboard bow of the "Essex," next opened fire also, but was driven off by the guns of the American. Three of the long twelve-pounders of the "Essex" were then got out astern, and played upon the "Phœbe" with such terrible effect that she, too, was hauled off for repairs, many of the shot having struck below the water-line.

Both the British vessels now closed upon the American frigate, being on her starboard quarter, and poured into her a fire so galling that the spars and rigging of the doomed ship were soon in a tangle of wreckage. Porter slipped his cable, and, hoisting his flying-jib, bore down upon the enemy, pouring broadsides into them as the ship slowly drifted. The "Cherub" was driven off for a second time, and the "Phœbe" retired out of the reach of the guns of the "Essex," but near enough to worry her with her long-range ordnance. After two hours of fighting, Porter tried to run his vessel ashore, to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy; but a change of wind prevented him, and he anchored once more, making fast a sheet-anchor with a hawser.

Very shortly after, the hawser parted, and, to increase the trials of these determined heroes, the ship took fire below deck. In this extremity, Captain Porter told the men to save themselves as best they could. Some threw themselves into the sea and swam to shore, some were drowned, and many were picked up, while clinging to bits of wreck, by the boats of the enemy. But a larger part of the crew staid by the ship, and continued firing into the enemy, in the midst of the smoke and flames. Finally, the fire was partly subdued, and men enough to work two of the long twelves kept up a brisk fire.

But further resistance was useless. Only seventy-five men were left to do duty, the remainder being killed, wounded, or missing. So, after an engagement that had lasted two hours and a half, Porter, with a sorrowful heart, hauled down the American flag, and the wreck of the gallant "Essex" was surrendered to the foe. The British lost four killed and seven wounded on the "Phœbe," and one killed and three wounded on the "Cherub." Both ships were badly crippled, their sails and rigging being riddled, and the "Phœbe" had received eighteen shots below water-line from the long twelves of the "Essex." Thousands of spectators crowded the shores to gaze on the bloody encounter. The Spanish Viceroy was vainly entreated by the American Consul to insist upon the maintenance of neutrality. He refused to interfere.

This ended one of the most remarkable naval engagements of modern times. It ended in disaster to the American cause. But the heroic defense of the "Essex," in which officers and men vied with one another in a determination not to give up the ship, fired with fresh enthusiasm all who heard the story of their brave and obstinate fight. And, when the young people of this republic shall celebrate once more the deeds of the patriotic defenders of the American Republic, let them give a hearty cheer for David Porter and his crew.