



Frederick Whymper

The Sea

*Its Stirring Story of
Adventure, Peril,
& Heroism*

(Vol. 1-4)

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The Sea: Its Stirring Story of Adventure, Peril, & Heroism (Vol. 1-4)

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Table of Contents

[Volume 1](#)

[Volume 2](#)

[Volume 3](#)

[Volume 4](#)

Volume 1

[Inhaltsverzeichnis](#)

Table of Contents

THE SEA.

CHAPTER I. Men-of-War.

CHAPTER II. Men of Peace.

Chapter III. The Men of the Sea.

CHAPTER IV. Perils of the Sailor's Life.

CHAPTER V. Perils of the Sailor's Life (continued).

CHAPTER VI. Round the World on a Man-of-War.

CHAPTER VII. Round the World on a Man-of-War
(continued).

CHAPTER VIII. Round the World on a Man-of-War
(continued).

CHAPTER IX. Round the World on a Man-of-War
(continued).

CHAPTER X. Round the World on a Man-of-War (continued).

CHAPTER XI. Round the World on a Man-of-War
(continued).

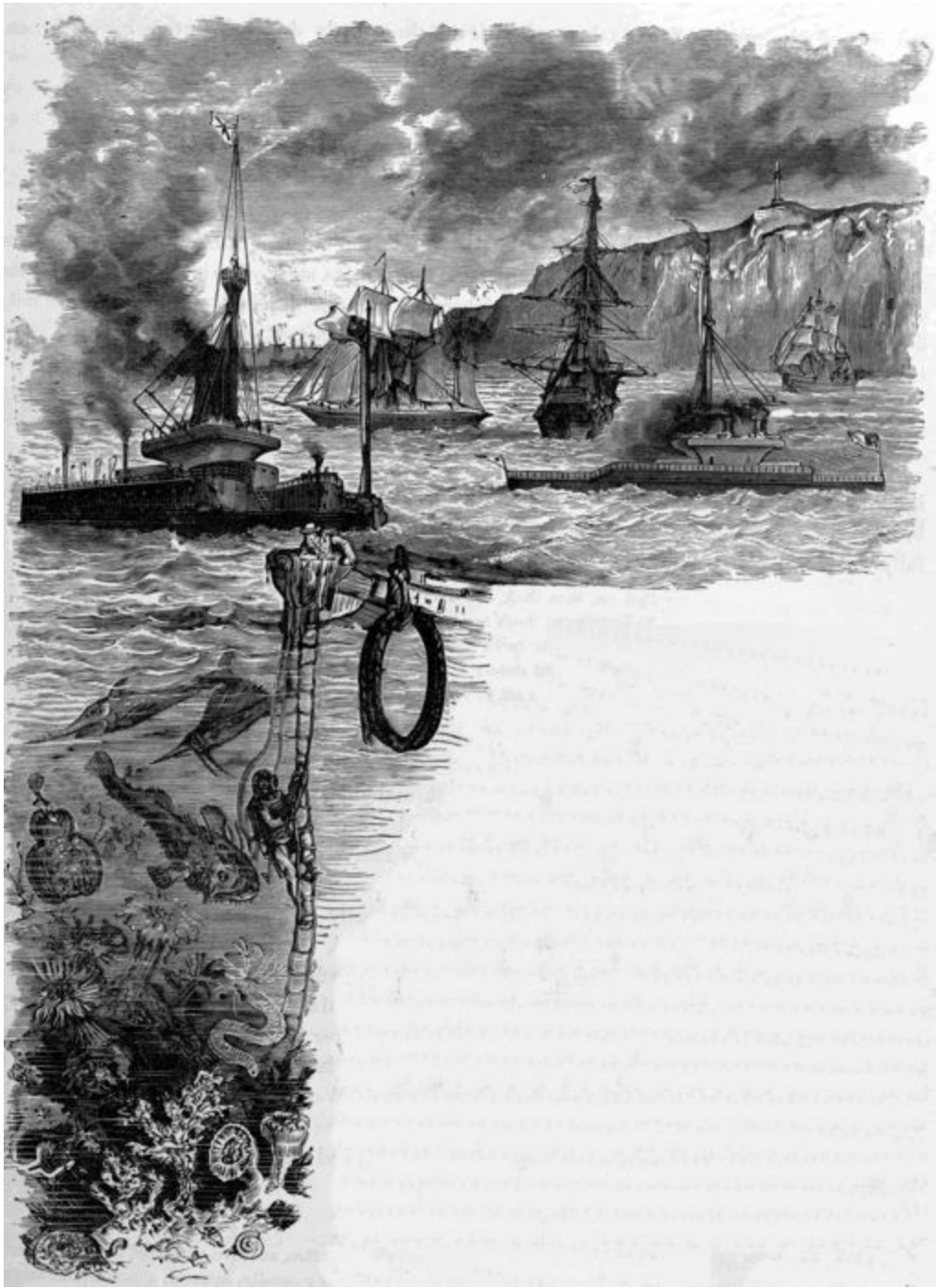
CHAPTER XII. Round the World on a Man-of-War
(continued).

CHAPTER XIII. The Service.—Officers' Life on Board.

CHAPTER XIV. The Reverse of the Picture—Mutiny.

CHAPTER XV. The History of Ships and Shipping Interests.

CHAPTER XVI. The History of Ships and Shipping Interests
(continued).



THE SEA.

[Table of Contents](#)

One can hardly gaze upon the great ocean without feelings akin to awe and reverence. Whether viewed from some promontory where the eye seeks in vain another resting-place, or when sailing over the deep, one looks around on the unbounded expanse of waters, the sea must always give rise to ideas of infinite space and indefinable mystery hardly paralleled by anything of the earth itself. Beneficent in its calmer aspect, when the silvery moon lights up the ripples and the good ship scuds along before a favouring breeze; terrible in its might, when its merciless breakers dash upon some rock-girt coast, carrying the gallant bark to destruction, or when, rising mountains high, the spars quiver and snap before the tempest's power, it is always grand, sublime, irresistible. The great highway of commerce and source of boundless supplies, it is, notwithstanding its terrors, infinitely more man's friend than his enemy. In how great a variety of aspects may it not be viewed!

The poets have seen in it a "type of the Infinite," and one of the greatest¹ has taken us back to those early days of earth's history when God said—

“ ‘Let there be firmament
Amid the waters, and let it divide
The waters from the waters.’ ...
So He the world
Built on circumfluous waters calm, in wide
Crystalline ocean.”

“Water,” said the great Greek lyric poet,² “is the chief of all.” The ocean covers nearly three-fourths of the surface of our globe. Earth is its mere offspring. The continents and islands have been and *still are being* elaborated from its depths. All in all, it has not, however, been treated fairly at the hands of the poets, too many of whom could only see it in its sterner lights. Young speaks of it as merely a

“Dreadful and tumultuous home
Of dangers, at eternal war with man,
Wide opening and loud roaring still for more,”

ignoring the blessings and benefits it has bestowed so freely, forgetting that man is daily becoming more and more its master, and that his own country in particular has most successfully conquered the seemingly unconquerable. Byron, again, says:—

“Roll on, thou dark and deep blue ocean—roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deeds.”

And though this is but the exaggerated and not strictly accurate language of poetry, we may, with Pollok, fairly address the great sea as “strongest of creation’s sons.” The first impressions produced on most animals—not excluding altogether man—by the aspect of the ocean, are of terror in greater or lesser degree. Livingstone tells us that he had intended to bring to England from Africa a friendly native, a man courageous as the lion he had often braved. He had never voyaged upon nor even beheld the sea, and on board the ship which would have safely borne him to a friendly

shore he became delirious and insane. Though assured of safety and carefully watched, he escaped one day, and blindly threw himself headlong into the waves. The sea terrified him, and yet held and drew him, fascinated as under a spell. “Even at ebb-tide,” says Michelet,³ “when, placid and weary, the wave crawls softly on the sand, the horse does not recover his courage. He trembles, and frequently refuses to pass the languishing ripple. The dog barks and recoils, and, according to his manner, insults the billows which he fears.... We are told by a traveller that the dogs of Kamtschatka, though accustomed to the spectacle, are not the less terrified and irritated by it. In numerous troops, they howl through the protracted night against the howling waves, and endeavour to outvie in fury the Ocean of the North.”

The civilised man’s fear is founded, it must be admitted, on a reasonable knowledge of the ocean, so much his friend and yet so often his foe. Man is not independent of his fellow-man in distant countries, nor is it desirable that he should be. No land produces all the necessities, and the luxuries which have begun to be considered necessities, sufficient for itself. Transportation by land is often impracticable, or too costly, and the ocean thus becomes the great highway of nations. Vessel after vessel, fleet after fleet, arrive safely and speedily. But as there is danger for man lurking everywhere on land, so also is there on the sea. The world’s wreck-chart for one year must, as we shall see hereafter, be something appalling. That for the British Empire alone in one year has often exceeded 1,000 vessels, great and small! Averaging three years, we find that there was an annual loss during that period of 1,095 vessels and 1,952 lives.⁴ Nor are the ravages of ocean confined to the

engulfment of vessels, from rotten “coffin-ships” to splendid ironclads. The coasts often bear witness of her fury.

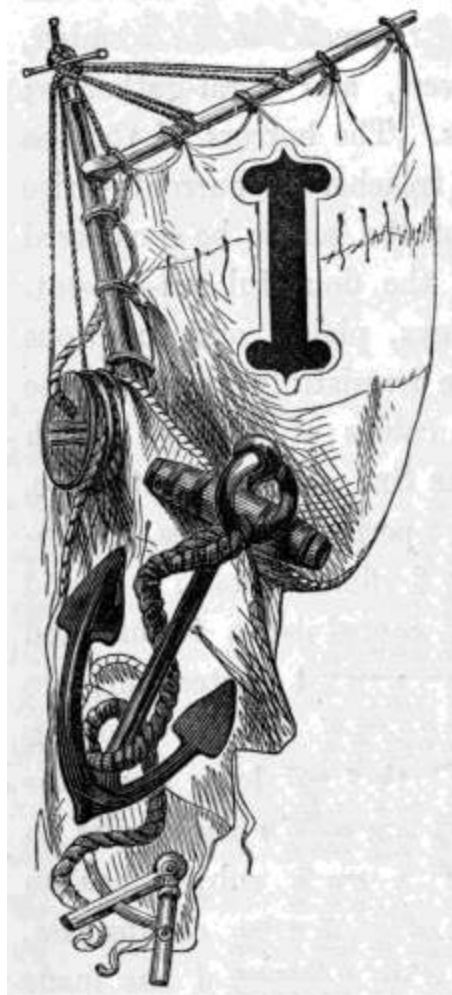
The history of the sea virtually comprises the history of adventure, conquest, and commerce, in all times, and might almost be said to be that of the world itself. We cannot think of it without remembering the great voyagers and sea-captains, the brave naval commanders, the pirates, rovers, and buccaneers of bygone days. Great sea-fights and notable shipwrecks recur to our memory—the progress of naval supremacy, and the means by which millions of people and countless millions of wealth have been transferred from one part of the earth to another. We cannot help thinking, too, of “Poor Jack” and life before the mast, whether on the finest vessel of the Royal Navy, or in the worst form of trading ship. We recall the famous ships themselves, and their careers. We remember, too, the “toilers of the sea”—the fishermen, whalers, pearl-divers, and coral-gatherers; the noble men of the lighthouse, lifeboat, and coastguard services. The horrors of the sea—its storms, hurricanes, whirlpools, waterspouts, impetuous and treacherous currents—rise vividly before our mental vision. Then there are the inhabitants of the sea to be considered—from the tiniest germ of life to the great leviathan, or even the doubtful sea-serpent. And even the lowest depths of ocean, with their mountains, valleys, plains, and luxurious marine vegetation, are full of interest; while at the same time we irresistibly think of the submerged treasure-ships of days gone by, and the submarine cables of to-day. Such are among the subjects we propose to lay before our readers. The Sea, as one great topic, must comprise descriptions of life on, around, and in the ocean—the perils, mysteries, phenomena, and poetry of the great deep. The subject is too vast for superfluous detail: it would require as many

volumes as a grand encyclopædia to do it justice; whilst a formal and chronological history would weary the reader. At all events, the present writer purposes to occasionally gossip and digress, and to arrange facts in groups, not always following the strict sequence of events. The voyage of to-day may recall that of long ago: the discovery made long ago may be traced, by successive leaps, as it were, to its results in the present epoch. We can hardly be wrong in believing that this grand subject has an especial interest for the English reader everywhere; for the spirit of enterprise, enthusiasm, and daring which has carried our flag to the uttermost parts of the earth, and has made the proud words "Britannia rules the waves" no idle vaunt, is shared by a very large proportion of her sons and daughters, at home and abroad. Britain's part in the exploration and settlement of the whole world has been so pre-eminent that there can be no wonder if, among the English-speaking races everywhere, a peculiar fascination attaches to the sea and all concerning it. Countless thousands of books have been devoted to the land, not a tithe of the number to the ocean. Yet the subject is one of almost boundless interest, and has a special importance at the present time, when so much intelligent attention and humane effort is being put forth to ameliorate the condition of our seafarers.

CHAPTER I. Men-of-War.

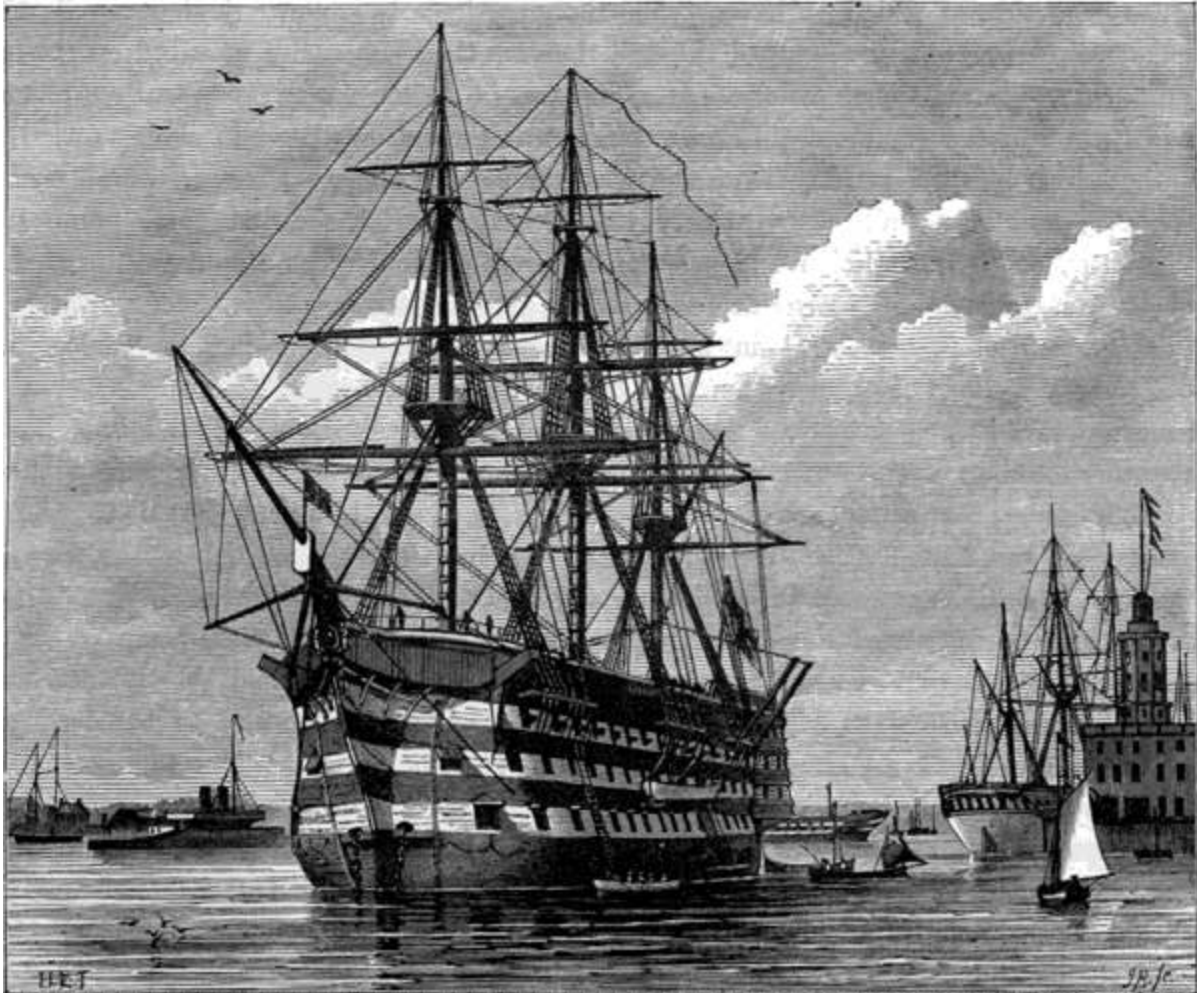
[Table of Contents](#)

Our Wooden Walls—The *Victory*—Siege of Toulon—Battle of St. Vincent—Nelson's Bridge—Trafalgar's glorious Day—The Day for such Battles gone—Iron v. Wood—Lessons of the Crimean War—Moral Effect of the Presence of our Fleets—Bombardment of Sebastopol—Red-hot Shot and Gibraltar—The Ironclad Movement—The *Warrior*—Experiences with Ironclads—The *Merrimac* in Hampton Roads—A speedily decided Action—The *Cumberland* sunk and *Congress* burned—The first Monitor—Engagement with the *Merrimac*—Notes on recent Actions—The *Shah* and *Huascar*—An Ironclad tackled by a Merchantman.



If the reader should at any time find himself a visitor to the first naval port of Great Britain—which he need not be told is Portsmouth—he will find, lying placidly in the noble harbour, which is large enough to accommodate a whole fleet, a vessel of modern-antique appearance, and evidently very carefully preserved. Should he happen to be there on October 21st, he would find the ship gaily decorated with wreaths of evergreen and flags, her appearance attracting to her side an unusual number of visitors in small boats from the shore. Nor will he be surprised at this when he learns that it is none other than the famous *Victory*, that carried Nelson's flag on the sad but glorious day of Trafalgar, and went bravely through so many a storm of war

and weather. Very little of the oft-shattered hulk of the original vessel remains, it is true—she has been so often renewed and patched and painted; yet the lines and form of the old three-decker remain to show us what the flag-ship of Hood, and Jervis, and Nelson was in general appearance. She towers grandly out of the water, making the few sailors and loiterers on deck look like marionettes—mere miniature men; and as our wherry approaches the entrance-port, we admire the really graceful lines of the planks, diminishing in perspective. The triple battery of formidable guns, peeping from under the stout old ports which overshadowed them, the enormous cables and spare anchors, and the immensely thick masts, heavy shrouds and rigging, which she had in old times, must have given an impression of solidity in this good old “heart of oak” which is wanting even in the strongest-built iron vessel. Many a brave tar has lost his life on her, but yet she is no coffin-ship. On board, one notes the scrupulous order, the absolute perfection of cleanliness and trimness; the large guns and carriages alternating with the mess-tables of the crew. And we should not think much of the man who could stand emotionless and unmoved over the spots—still pointed out on the upper deck and cockpit below—where Nelson fell and Nelson died, on that memorable 21st, off Trafalgar Bay. He had embarked, only five weeks before, from the present resting-place of his brave old ship, when enthusiastic crowds had pressed forward to bless and take one last look at England’s preserver. “I had their hurrahs before,” said the poor shattered hero; “now I have their hearts!” And when, three months later, his body was brought home, the sailors divided the leaden coffin into fragments, as relics of “Saint Nelson,” as his gunner had termed him.



THE "VICTORY" AT PORTSMOUTH.

The *Victory* was one of the largest ships of war of her day and generation. She was rated for 100 guns, but really carried 102, and was classed first-rate with such ships as the *Royal Sovereign* and *Britannia*, both of 100, carrying only two in excess of the "brave old *Téméraire*"—made still more famous by Turner's great picture—and the *Dreadnought*, which but a few years back was such a familiar feature of the reach of the Thames in front of Greenwich. She was of 2,164 tons burden, and, having been launched in 1765, is now a good 112 years of age. Her complement was 841 men. From the first she deserved her name, and seemed destined to be associated with little else

than success and triumph. Nelson frequently complains in his journals of the unseaworthiness of many of his vessels; but this, his last flag-ship, was a veritable “heart of oak,” and endured all the tests that the warfare of the elements or of man could bring against her.

The good ship of which we have spoken more particularly is now enjoying a well-earned repose, after passing nearly unscathed through the very thick of battles inscribed on the most brilliant page of our national history. Her part was in reality a very prominent one; and a glance at a few of the engagements at which she was present may serve to show us what she and other ships like her were made of, and what they were able to effect in naval warfare. The *Victory* had been built nearly thirty years when, in 1793, she first came prominently to the front, at the occupation and subsequent siege of Toulon, as the flag-ship of Lord Hood, then in command of a large fleet destined for the Mediterranean.

France was at that moment in a very revolutionary condition, but in Toulon there was a strong feeling of loyalty for the Bourbons and monarchical institutions. In the harbour a large French fleet was assembled—some seventeen vessels of the line, besides many other smaller craft—while several large ships of war were refitting and building; the whole under the command of the Comte de Trogoff, an ardent Royalist. On the appearance of the British fleet in the offing, two commissioners came out to the flag-ship, the *Victory*, to treat for the conditional surrender of the port and shipping. The Government had not miscalculated the disaffection existing, and the negotiations being completely successful, 1,700 of our soldiers, sailors, and marines were landed, and shortly afterwards, when a Spanish fleet appeared, an English governor and a Spanish

commandant were appointed, while Louis XVII. was proclaimed king. But it is needless to say that the French Republic strongly objected to all this, and soon assembled a force numbering 45,000 men for the recapture of Toulon. The English and their Royalist allies numbered under 13,000, and it became evident that the city must be evacuated, although not until it should be half destroyed. The important service of destroying the ships and magazines had been mainly entrusted to Captain Sir Sidney Smith, who performed his difficult task with wonderful precision and order, and without the loss of one man. Shots and shells were plunged into the very arsenal, and trains were laid up to the magazines and storehouses; a fire-ship was towed into the basin, and in a few hours gave out flames and shot, accompanied by terrible explosions. The Spanish admiral had undertaken the destruction of the shipping in the basin, and to scuttle two powder-vessels, but his men, in their flurry, managed to ignite one of them in place of sinking it, and the explosion which occurred can be better imagined than described. The explosion shook the *Union* gunboat to pieces, killing the commander and three of the crew; and a second boat was blown into the air, but her crew were miraculously saved. Having completed the destruction of the arsenal, Sir Sidney proceeded towards the basin in front of the town, across which a boom had been laid, where he and his men were received with such volleys of musketry that they turned their attention in another direction. In the inner road were lying two large 74-gun ships—the *Héros* and *Thémistocle*—filled with French prisoners. Although the latter were greatly superior to the attacking force, they were so terrified that they agreed to be removed and landed in a place of safety, after which the ships were destroyed by fire. Having done all that man could

do, they were preparing to return, when the second powder-vessel, which should only have been scuttled by the Spaniards, exploded. Wonderful to relate, although the little *Swallow*, Sir Sidney's tender, and three boats were in the midst of the falling timbers, and nearly swamped by the waves produced, they escaped in safety. Nowadays torpedoes would settle the business of blowing up vessels of the kind in a much safer and surer manner. The evacuation was effected without loss, nearly 15,000 Toulonese refugees—men, women, and children—being taken on board for removal to England. Fifteen French ships of war were taken off as prizes, while the magazines, storehouses, and shipping were destroyed by fire. The total number of vessels taken or burned by the British was eighteen of the line, nine frigates, and eleven corvettes, and would have been much greater but for the blundering or treachery of the Spaniards, and the pusillanimous flight of the Neapolitans. Thus the *Victory* was the silent witness of an almost bloodless success, so far as our forces were concerned, in spite of the noise and smoke and flame by which it was accompanied. A little later, she was engaged in the siege of Bastia, Corsica, which was taken by a naval force numbering about one-fourth of their opponents; and again at Calvi, where Nelson lost an eye and helped to gain the day. In the spring of 1795 she was again in the Mediterranean, and for once was engaged in what has been described as a "miserable action," although the action, or want thereof, was all on the part of a vice-admiral who, as Nelson said, "took things too coolly." Twenty-three British line-of-battle ships, whilst engaging, off the Hyères Isles, only seventeen French, with the certainty of triumphant results, if not, indeed, of the complete annihilation of the enemy, were signalled by Admiral Hotham to discontinue the fight. The disgust of the

commanders in general and Nelson in particular can well be understood. The only prize taken, the *Alcide*, blew up, with the loss of half her crew, as if in very disgust at having surrendered, and we can well believe that even the inanimate timbers of the *Victory* and her consorts groaned as they were drawn off from the scene of action. The fight off the Hyères must be inscribed in black, but happily the next to be recorded might well be written with letters of gold in the annals of our country, although its glory was soon afterwards partially eclipsed by others still greater.

When Sir John Jervis hoisted his flag on board the *Victory* it marked an epoch not merely in our career of conquest, but also in the history of the navy as a navy. Jervis, though then over sixty years of age, was hale and hearty, and if sometimes stern and severe as a disciplinarian, should long be remembered as one who honestly and constantly strove to raise the character of the service to its highest condition of efficiency, and he was brave as a lion. As the Spanish fleet loomed through the morning fog, off Cape St. Vincent, it was found that Cordova's force consisted of twenty-nine large men-of-war, exclusive of a dozen 34-gun frigates, seventy transports, and other vessels. Jervis was walking the quarter-deck as the successive reports were brought to him. "There are eighteen sail of the line, Sir John." "Very well, sir." "There are twenty sail, Sir John." "Very well, sir." "There are twenty-seven sail of the line, Sir John; nearly double our own." "Enough, sir, no more of that, sir; if there are fifty I'll go through them." "That's right, Sir John," said Halliwell, his flag-captain, "and a jolly good licking we'll give them."

The grand fleet of Spain included six ships of 112 guns each, and the flag-ship *Santissima Trinidad*, a four-decker, carrying 130. There were, besides, twenty-two vessels of

eighty and seventy-four guns. To this large force Jervis could only oppose fifteen vessels of the line, only two of which carried 100 guns, three of ninety-eight guns, one of ninety, and the remainder, with one exception, seventy-four each. Owing to gross mismanagement on the part of the Spaniards, their vessels were scattered about in all directions, and six⁵ of them were separated wholly from the main body, neither could they rejoin it. The English vessels advanced in two lines, compactly and steadily, and as they neared the Spaniards, were signalled from the *Victory* to tack in succession. Nelson, on the *Captain*, was in the rear of the line, and he perceived that the Spaniards were bearing up before the wind, either with the intention of trying to join their separated ships, or perhaps to avoid an engagement altogether. By disobeying the admiral's signal, he managed to run clear athwart the bows of the Spanish ships, and was soon engaged with the great *Santissima Trinidad*, four other of the larger vessels, and two smaller ones. Trowbridge, in the *Culloden*, immediately came to the support, and for nearly an hour the unequal contest continued, till the *Blenheim* passed between them and the enemy, and gave them a little respite, pouring in her fire upon the Spaniards. One of the Spanish seventy-fours struck, and Nelson thought that the *Salvador*, of 112 guns, struck also. "Collingwood," wrote Nelson, "disdaining the parade of taking possession of beaten enemies, most gallantly pushed up, with every sail set, to save his old friend and messmate, who was, to appearance, in a critical situation," for the *Captain* was being peppered by five vessels of the enemy's fleet, and shortly afterwards was rendered absolutely incapable—not a sail, shroud, or rope left, with a topmast and the steering-wheel shot away. As Dr. Bennett sings⁶—

“Ringed round by five three-deckers, she had
fought through all the fight,
And now, a log upon the waves, she lay—a
glorious sight—
All crippled, but still full of fight, for still her
broadships roared,
Still death and wounds, fear and defeat, into
the Don she poured.”

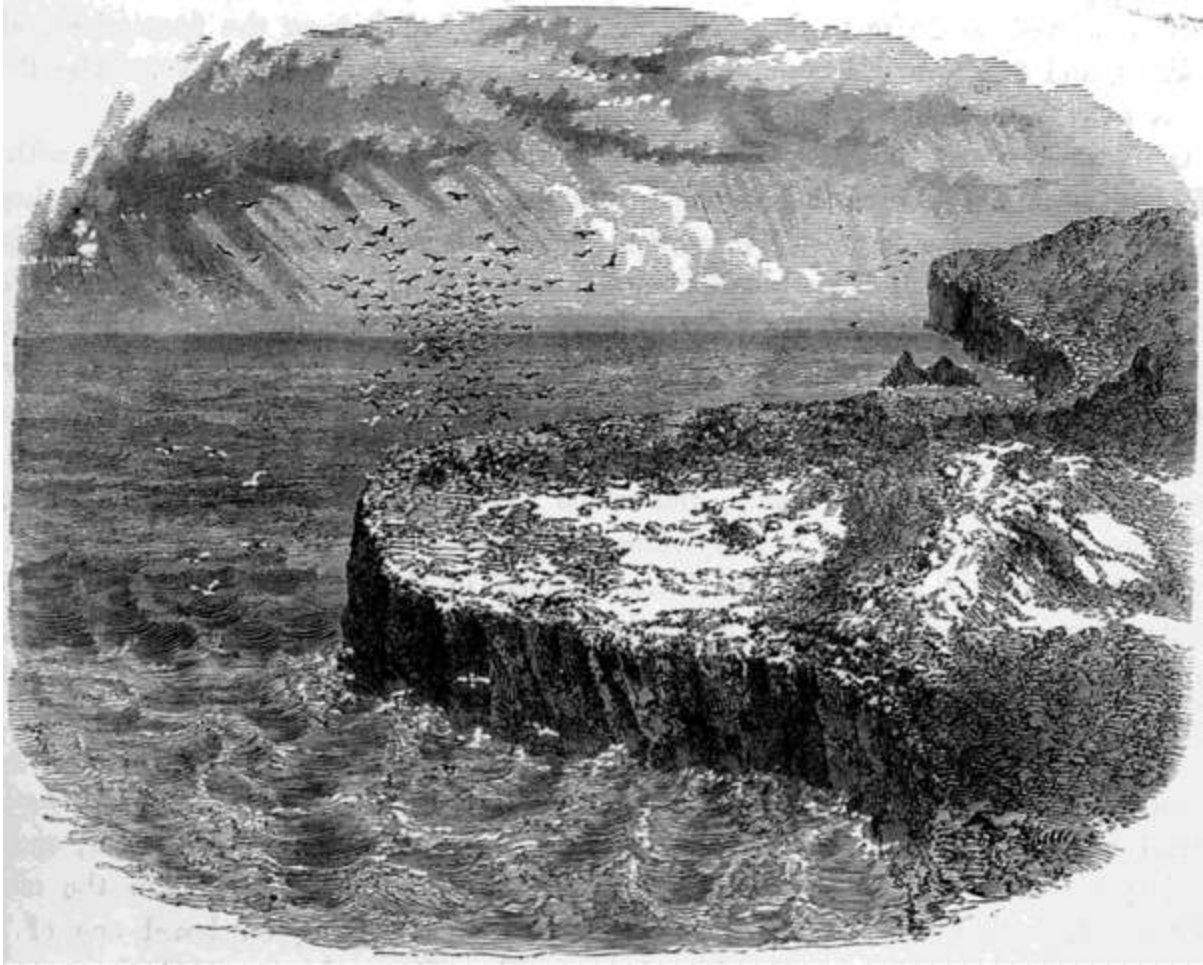
Two of Nelson’s antagonists were now nearly *hors de combat*, one of them, the *San Nicolas*, in trying to escape from Collingwood’s fire, having got foul of the *San Josef*. Nelson resolved in an instant to board and capture *both*—an unparalleled feat, which, however, was accomplished, although

“To get at the *San Josef*, it seemed beyond a
hope;
Out then our admiral spoke, and well his
words our blood could stir—
‘In, boarders, to their seventy-four! We’ll make
a bridge of her.’ ”

The “bridge” was soon taken; but a steady fire of musketry was poured upon them from the *San Josef*. Nelson directed his people to fire into the stern, and sending for more boarders, led the way up the main-chains, exclaiming, “Westminster Abbey or victory!” In a few moments the officers and crew surrendered; and on the quarter-deck of a Spanish first-rate he received the swords of the vanquished, which he handed to William Fearney, one of his bargemen, who tucked them, with the greatest *sang-froid*, in a perfect

sheaf under his arm. The *Victory* came up at the moment, and saluted the conquerors with hearty cheers.

It will be hardly necessary here to point out the altered circumstances of naval warfare at the present day. A wooden vessel of the old type, with large and numerous portholes, and affording other opportunities for entering or climbing the sides, is a very different affair to the modern smooth-walled iron vessel, on which a fly would hardly get a foothold, with few openings or weak points, and where the grappling-iron would be useless. Apart from this, with heavy guns carrying with great accuracy, and the facilities afforded by steam, we shall seldom hear, in the future, of a fight at close quarters; skilful manœuvring, impossible with a sailing vessel, will doubtless be more in vogue.



ROCKS NEAR CAPE ST. VINCENT.

Meantime, the *Victory* had not been idle. In conjunction with two of the fleet, she had succeeded in silencing the *Salvador del Mundi*, a first-rate of 112 guns. When, after the fight, Nelson went on board the *Victory*, Sir John Jervis took him to his arms, and insisted that he should keep the sword taken from the Spanish rear-admiral. When it was hinted, during some private conversation, that Nelson's move was unauthorised, Jervis had to admit the fact, but promised to forgive any such breach of orders, accompanied with the same measure of success.

The battle had now lasted from noon, and at five p.m. four Spanish line-of-battle vessels had lowered their colours. Even the great *Santissima Trinidad* might then have

become a prize but for the return of the vessels which had been cut off from the fleet in the morning, and which alone saved her. Her colours had been shot away, and she had hoisted English colours in token of submission, when the other ships came up, and Cordova reconsidered his step. Jervis did not think that his fleet was quite equal to a fresh conflict; and the Spaniards showed no desire to renew the fight. They had lost on the four prizes, alone, 261 killed, and 342 wounded, and in all, probably, nearly double the above. The British loss was seventy-three killed, and 227 wounded.

Of Trafalgar and of Nelson, both day and man so intimately associated with our good ship, what can yet be said or sung that has gone unsaid, unsung?—how when he left Portsmouth the crowds pressed forward to obtain one last look at their hero—England’s greatest hero—and “knelt down before him, and blessed him as he passed;”⁷ that beautiful prayer, indited in his cabin, “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 of the British fleet,” or the now historical signal which flew from the mizen top-gallant mast of that noble old ship, and which has become one of the grand mottoes of our tongue, are facts as familiar to every reader as household words.

The part directly played by the *Victory* herself in the battle of Trafalgar was second to none. From the very first she received a raking fire from all sides, which must have been indeed severe, when we find the words extorted from Nelson, “This is too warm work to last long,” addressed to Captain Hardy. At that moment fifty of his men were lying dead or wounded, while the *Victory’s* mizen-mast and wheel were shot away, and her sails hanging in ribbons. To the

terrible cannonading of the enemy, Nelson had not yet returned a shot. He had determined to be in the very thick of the fight, and was reserving his fire. Now it was that Captain Hardy represented to Nelson the impracticability of passing through the enemy's line without running on board one of their ships; he was coolly told to take his choice. The *Victory* was accordingly turned on board the *Redoubtable*, the commander of which, Captain Lucas, in a resolute endeavour to block the passage, himself ran his bowsprit into the figurehead of the *Bucentaure*, and the two vessels became locked together. Not many minutes later, Captain Harvey, of the *Téméraire*, seeing the position of the *Victory* with her two assailants, fell on board the *Redoubtable*, on the other side, so that these four ships formed as compact a tier as though moored together. The *Victory* fired her middle and lower deck guns into the *Redoubtable*, which returned the fire from her main-deck, employing also musketry and brass pieces of larger size with most destructive effects from the tops.

“*Redoubtable* they called her—a curse upon
her name!
'Twas from her tops the bullet that killed our
hero came.”

Within a few minutes of Lord Nelson's fall, several officers and about forty men were either killed or wounded from this source. But a few minutes afterwards the *Redoubtable* fell on board the *Téméraire*, the French ship's bowsprit passing over the British ship. Now came one of the warmest episodes of the fight. The crew of the *Téméraire* lashed their vessel to their assailants' ship, and poured in a raking fire. But the French captain, having discovered that—

owing, perhaps, to the sympathy exhibited for the dying hero on board the *Victory*, and her excessive losses in men—her quarter-deck was quite deserted, now ordered an attempt at boarding the latter. This cost our flag-ship the lives of Captain Adair and eighteen men, but at the same moment the *Téméraire* opened fire on the *Redoubtable* with such effect that Captain Lucas and 200 men were themselves placed *hors de combat*.

In the contest we have been relating, the coolness of the *Victory*'s men was signally evinced. "When the guns on the lower deck were run out, their muzzles came in contact with the sides of the *Redoubtable*, and now was seen an astounding spectacle. Knowing that there was danger of the French ship taking fire, the fireman of each gun on board the British ship stood ready with a bucketful of water to dash into the hole made by the shot of his gun—thus beautifully illustrating Nelson's prayer, 'that the British might be distinguished by humanity in victory.' Less considerate than her antagonist, the *Redoubtable* threw hand-grenades from her tops, which, falling on board herself, set fire to her,... and the flame communicated with the foresail of the *Téméraire*, and caught some ropes and canvas on the booms of the *Victory*, risking the destruction of all; but by immense exertions the fire was subdued in the British ships, whose crews lent their assistance to extinguish the flames on board the *Redoubtable*, by throwing buckets of water upon her chains and fore-castle."⁸

Setting aside, for the purpose of clearness, the episode of the taking of the *Fougueux*, which got foul of the *Téméraire* and speedily surrendered, we find, five minutes later, the main and mizen masts of the *Redoubtable* falling—the former in such a way across the *Téméraire* that it formed a bridge, over which the boarding-party passed and

took quiet possession. Captain Lucas had so stoutly defended his flag, that, out of a crew of 643, only 123 were in a condition to continue the fight; 522 were lying killed or wounded. The *Bucentaure* soon met her fate, after being defended with nearly equal bravery. The French admiral, Villeneuve, who was on board, said bitterly, just before surrendering, "*Le Bucentaure a rempli sa tâche; la mienne n'est pas encore achevée.*"

Let the reader remember that the above are but a few episodes of the most complete and glorious victory ever obtained in naval warfare. Without the loss of one single vessel to the conqueror, more than half the ships of the enemy were captured or destroyed, while the remainder escaped into harbour to rot in utter uselessness. Twenty-one vessels were lost for ever to France and Spain. It is to be hoped and believed that no such contest will ever again be needed; but should it be needed, it will have to be fought by very different means. The instance of four great ships locked together, dealing death and destruction to each other, has never been paralleled. Imagine that seething, fighting, dying mass of humanity, with all the horrible concomitants of deafening noise and blinding smoke and flashing fire! It is not likely ever to occur in modern warfare. The commanders of steam-vessels of all classes will be more likely to fight at out-manœuvring and shelling each other than to come to close quarters, which would generally mean blowing up together. It would be interesting to consider how Nelson would have acted with, and opposed to, steam-frigates and ironclads. He would, no doubt, have been as courageous and far-seeing and rapid in action as ever, but hardly as reckless, or even daring.



THE “VICTORY” AT CLOSE QUARTERS WITH THE “REDOUBTABLE.”

“And still, though seventy years, boys,
Have gone, who, without pride,
Names his name—tells his fame
Who at Trafalgar died?”

May we always have a Nelson in the hour of national need!

The day for such battles as this is over; there may be others as gloriously fought, but never again by the same means. Ships, armaments, and modes of attack and defence are, and will be, increasingly different. Those who have read Nelson’s private letters and journals will remember how he gloried in the appreciation of his subordinate officers just

before Trafalgar's happy and yet fatal day, when he had explained to them his intention to attack the enemy with what was practically a wedge-formed fleet. He was determined to break their line, and, Nelson-like, he did. But that which he facetiously christened the "Nelson touch" would itself nowadays be broken up in a few minutes and thrown into utter confusion by any powerfully-armed vessel hovering about under steam. Or if the wedge of wooden vessels were allowed to form, as they approached the apex, a couple of ironclads would take them in hand coolly, one by one, and send them to the bottom, while their guns might as well shoot peas at the ironclads as the shot of former days.

Taking the *Victory* as a fair type of the best war-ships of her day (a day when there was not that painful uncertainty with regard to naval construction and armament existing now, in spite of our vaunted progress), we still know that in the presence of a powerful steam-frigate with heavy guns, or an 11,000-ton ironclad, she would be literally nowhere. She was one of the last specimens, and a very perfect specimen, too, of the *wooden* age. This is the age of iron and steam. One of the largest vessels of her day, she is now excelled by hundreds employed in ordinary commerce. The Royal Navy to-day possesses frigates nearly three times her tonnage, while we have ironclads of five times the same. The monster *Great Eastern*, which has proved a monstrous mistake, is 22,500 tons.

But size is by no means the only consideration in constructing vessels of war, and, indeed, there are good reasons to believe that, in the end, vessels of moderate dimensions will be preferred for most purposes of actual warfare. Of the advantages of steam-power there can, of course, be only one opinion; but as regards iron *versus* oak,

there are many points which may be urged in favour of either, with a preponderance in favour of the former. A strong iron ship, strange as it may appear, is not more than half the weight of a wooden vessel of the same size and class. It will, to the unthinking, seem absurd to say that an iron ship is more buoyant than one of oak, but the fact is that the proportion of actual weight in iron and wooden vessels of ordinary construction is about six to twenty. The iron ship, therefore, stands high out of the water, and to sink it to the same line will require a greater weight on board. From this fact, and the actual *thinness* of its walls, its carrying capacity and stowage are so much the greater. This, which is a great point in vessels destined for commerce, would be equally important in war. But these remarks do not apply to the modern armoured vessel. We have ironclads with plates eighteen inches and upwards in thickness. What is the consequence? Their actual weight, with that of the necessary engines and monster guns employed, is so great that a vast deal of room on board has to be unemployed. Day by day we hear of fresh experiments in gunnery, which keep pace with the increased strength of the vessels. The invulnerable of to-day is the vulnerable of to-morrow, and there are many leading authorities who believe in a return to a smaller and weaker class of vessel—provided, however, with all the appliances for great speed and offensive warfare *at a distance*. Nelson's preference for small, easily-worked frigates over the great ships of the line is well known, and were he alive to-day we can well believe that he would prefer a medium-sized vessel of strong construction, to steam with great speed, and carrying heavy, but, perhaps, not the heaviest guns, to one of those modern unwieldy masses of iron, which have had, so far, a most disastrous history. The former might, so to speak, act