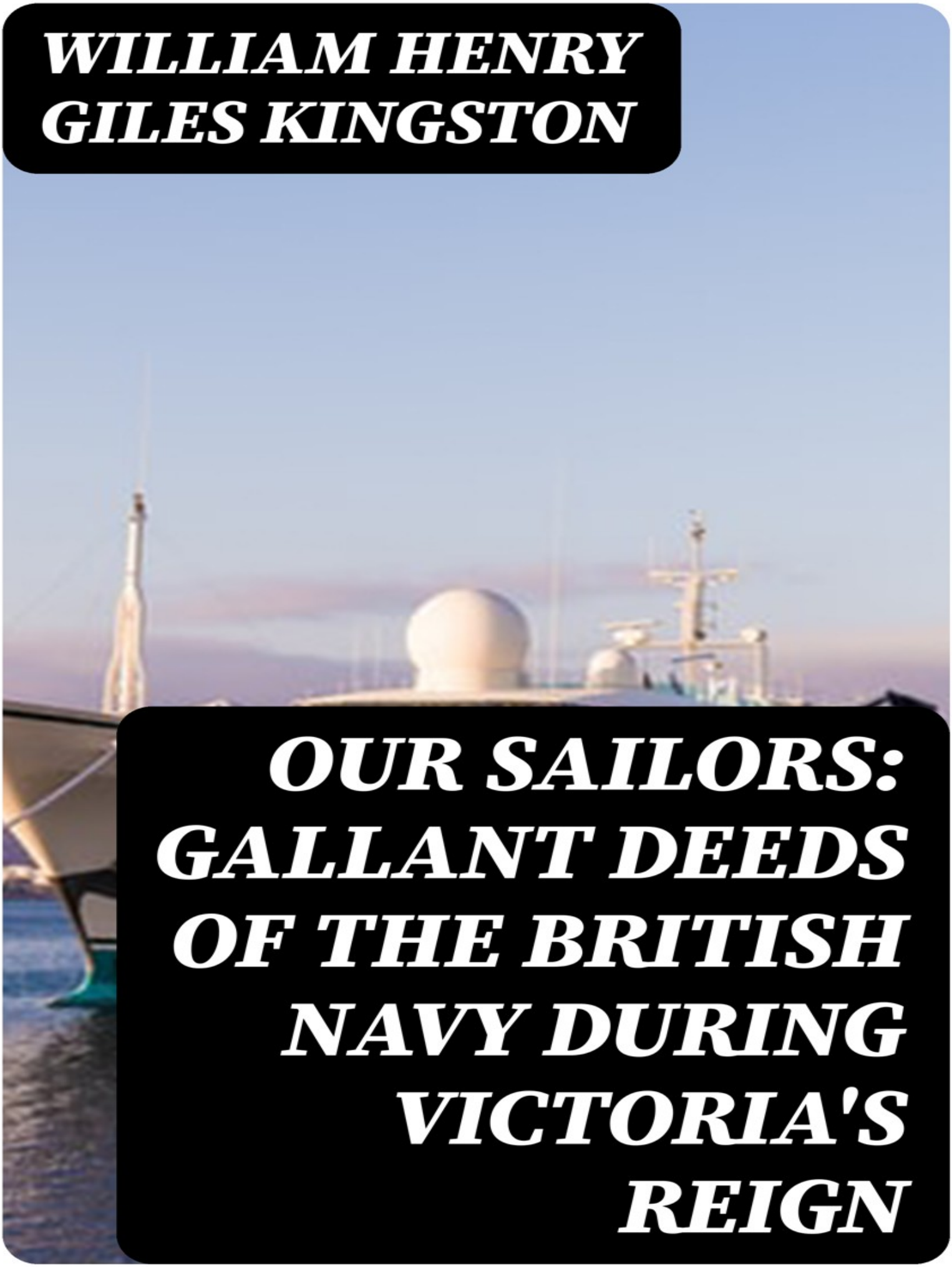

WILLIAM HENRY GILES KINGSTON

OUR SAILORS: GALLANT DEEDS OF THE BRITISH NAVY DURING VICTORIA'S REIGN

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"Our Sailors"

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Chapter One.

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Our Sailors.

“Let fall the topsails, hoist away—up anchor, round goes the capstan—sheet home—haul taut the braces! and away we glide, to prove to our countrymen that British sailors have not been sleeping on beds of roses for the last quarter of a century since her gracious Majesty Queen Victoria came to the throne.” So wrote our author some forty years ago. “Up anchor, full speed ahead,” is, we suppose, the modern equivalent for his nautical simile, and very prosaic and commonplace it sounds; but we shall find that the romance of the Navy did not go out with the last of the sailing frigates, and that the age of steam and electricity, of enormous ironclads and rapid cruisers, affords as great a scope for individual daring, resource, and heroism as the days of sailing frigates and boarding parties; and that though in recent years our sailors have not had many chances of using their weapons on the sea, the Naval Brigade has taken its part in many an expedition, on land, and on all occasions the British tar has proved himself a worthy successor to the heroes of Trafalgar and the Nile.

During the earlier years of the Great Queen’s reign her sailors had little to do in the fighting line, though on the West Coast of Africa the slave traffic gave occasion to many a lively skirmish, and on other seas various events from time to time afforded an opportunity for showing that their weapons were as effective as of old.

The capture of Aden.

Somewhat of that character was the capture of Aden, an Arab town on the entrance of the Red Sea. A former sultan or chief of Aden had by treaty given up the place to the British; but his successor, not approving of the bargain, refused to submit to it. As it was important for the English to hold the place, to facilitate the navigation of the Red Sea, an expedition, under Captain Smith of the *Volage*, was sent by Sir Frederick Maitland, then Commander-in-Chief on the East India Station, to bring the Sultan to reason.

It was not a big affair, though unhappily it cost several lives, but its result was important and lasting. Captain Smith’s expedition comprised, besides HMS *Volage*, three smaller vessels and some transports. On the 19th of January 1839 he bombarded the town and landed his troops, who after a short resistance overcame the Sultan’s army, and hoisted the flag on its walls, and Aden became a port of the British Empire, as it has remained ever since.

From early times it had been a very important centre for the trade between Europe and the East, but when the Portuguese opened up the route to India by the Cape it lost its advantage. In the hands of the British its prosperity has returned, and the return of the Eastern trade by means of

the Suez Canal to the Red Sea has raised it to a far higher position than ever it possessed in ancient days; it is now the great coaling station for the British fleet and merchantmen in the East. The trade passing through it to and from Southern Arabia exceeds five millions a year, and it is also a strongly fortified naval station.

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War on the coast of Syria—1840.

The next affair in which our bluejackets were engaged was the war on the coast of Syria, in 1840. The causes of this were as follow. Mehemet Ali, Pasha or Governor of Egypt, wished not only to make himself altogether independent of the Sultan of Turkey, who claimed to be his sovereign, but also to hold possession of Syria. Into that country he sent an army under the command of Ibrahim Pasha, who was everywhere successful, and was approaching Constantinople itself. This so alarmed the Sultan, that he was about to ask for assistance from the Russians. On this, England, France, and Austria thought it high time to interfere; for had the Russians once taken possession of Constantinople, it would have been a difficult matter to turn them out again. Accordingly, those three powers sent to the Turks to promise them assistance if they would hold out, and immediately despatched a large number of ships-of-war to the coast of Syria. Sir Robert Stopford was Admiral of the British fleet, and Sir Charles

Napier, having his broad pennant flying, commanded a squadron under him.

Bombardment of Beyrout—September 1840.

The first place attacked was the town and fortress of Beyrout. The English had thirteen sailing ships and four steamers. There was a Turkish squadron of seven ships, under Admiral Walker, who was then in the service of the Sultan, and three Austrian ships. Though cannonaded for several days, the place still held out. However, on the 2nd of October an Egyptian gunner, who had deserted, came on board the *Hastings* at Beyrout, and gave information that a train had been laid along the bridge to the eastern castle, where a large quantity of powder was concealed; and he undertook to guide a party to cut the train and seize the powder.

Commander Worth at once offered to perform this dangerous service, and numbers volunteered to follow him. He embarked in one of the boats of the *Hastings*, protected by the launch and pinnace of the *Edinburgh*, and covered by the fire of the ships. Dashing on in the face of a heavy fire of musketry, he landed on the bridge, cut off the train, and then forced his way into the castle, over the walls of which he threw some sixty or seventy barrels of powder, and succeeded in bringing off thirty-one barrels more.

Unfortunately, in this service, Mr Luscomb, a midshipman of the *Hastings*, was killed; the Egyptian, and two seamen of the *Hastings* and one of the *Edinburgh*, were wounded.

Capture of Sidon.

While the fleet lay off Beyrout, it was considered important to drive the Egyptians out of Sidon, a strong and important place. Commodore Napier undertook to perform the work, and be back off Beyrout in three days. With two steamers and five other ships, having on board 750 English and 800 Turkish marines, he appeared off the place on the 26th September. The town having been summoned to surrender, and no answer being given, was cannonaded for half an hour. Captain Austin, at the head of the Turkish battalion, landed, but was very warmly received, and several of his followers were killed. The fleet again accordingly opened fire, and battered down a number of houses, after which the commodore, at the head of the main body of the British marines, and Captain Henderson at the head of another, in the most spirited manner broke open the gates, fought their way in, and took possession of the castle. Numberless acts of gallantry were displayed. Among others, there was a complete race from the spot where they landed between Mr James Hunt, a midshipman of the *Stromboli*, and Signor Dominica Chinca, a midshipman of the Austrian frigate *Guerriera*, who should first plant their colours on the walls of the town. All now appearing quiet in the town, the commodore left a guard in the castle, and descended into it. No town was ever taken where less blood was unnecessarily spilt, or disorders more speedily put a stop to.

Attack on the Castle of D’Jebel.

A strong body of Albanian troops being posted in the Castle of D’Jebel, Captain Martin was despatched in the

Carysfort, with the *Dido* and *Cyclops*, having on board 220 marines and 150 armed mountaineers, to turn them out.

As soon as the marines were prepared for landing, the ships opened their fire on the castle, which was returned by musket-shots.

After the fire had been continued for an hour, the marines, commanded by Captain Robinson, accompanied by a large party of armed mountaineers, pushed off from the *Cyclops*, and formed on the beach to the south of the town, their landing being covered by the ships, which again opened on the castle. The fire from the ships and the launch's carronades having cleared the gardens in front of the castle, the signal was made to push on. The marines on this advanced with their invariable gallantry to the assault; but when they got within thirty yards of the towers, a destructive fire was opened on them from a crenelated outwork, having a deep ditch in front, which was completely masked from the fire of the ships, and numbers fell killed and wounded. In vain Captain Robinson and the other officers looked for some part of the castle wall which might prove practicable. No gate was accessible, and they were therefore compelled to abandon the enterprise. The ships again started firing on the castle, but it was so stoutly built that no impression could be made on it, and at half-past five the firing ceased and the landing party re-embarked.

As the force was retiring it was discovered that an English flag, which had been planted on a garden wall by the pilot of the *Cyclops* as a signal to the ships, had been accidentally left there; it could not be suffered to fall into the hands of the enemy, and therefore had to be recovered,

whatever the cost. It was a dangerous undertaking to run the gauntlet of the enemy's guns and bring it back, but Lieutenant Grenfell and a seaman from the *Cyclops* volunteered to attempt it. Their progress was watched with much anxiety. They crept along from cover to cover, and at last reached the flag, which they hauled down, and hastened back again with their prize. Loud cheers greeted them as they returned to the ships uninjured and successful.

Although the attempt to take the castle by storm had not been successful, it was not found necessary to renew it on the following day, for when morning came it was found that the steady fire from the ships had proved too much for the nerves of the garrison, and that rather than face it another day they had vacated the position and stolen away under cover of the night.

Bombardment and capture of Acre—3rd November 1840.

Ibrahim Pasha, who had taken Acre in 1837, had commenced to strengthen it greatly; but the fortifications he had designed were not completed when the allied squadron of twenty ships, mostly line-of-battle ships, appeared off it, 2nd November 1840. Towed by the steamers, the ships the next morning speedily took up their positions, and opened their fire in the most spirited manner.

After the ships had hotly engaged the batteries for nearly two hours, the grand magazine blew up with a most tremendous explosion, whether caused by a shell or by accident it is difficult to say. A large number of the garrison were blown up, and many probably were buried alive in the

ruins or in the casements. The guns, however, notwithstanding this catastrophe, kept up their fire with great spirit to the last. About sunset the signal was made to discontinue the engagement; but the commodore kept the fire up some time after dusk, lest the enemy should be tempted to re-man their guns. The flag-lieutenant then brought the orders to withdraw.

In the middle of the night a small boat brought off the information that the Egyptian troops were leaving the town, and in consequence, at daylight, 300 Turks and a party of Austrian marines landed, and took unopposed possession of the place. The havoc caused by the guns of the squadron on the walls and houses was very great, though, notwithstanding the hot and long-continued fire they had been exposed to, the ships escaped with little damage, and the amount of casualties was very small, being fourteen English and four Turks killed, and forty-two wounded.

An entire battalion, which had been formed near the magazine, ready to resist any attempts to storm, was destroyed. The appearance of the dead and wounded, as they lay scattered about the town, was very dreadful, but they seemed to excite but little sympathy in the breasts of the Turks. Every living creature within the area of 60,000 square yards round the magazine had ceased to exist, the loss of life being computed from 1200 to 2000 persons. Certainly two entire regiments were annihilated, with fifty donkeys, thirty camels, twelve cows, and some horses.

This was the first occasion on which the advantages of steam had been fully proved in battle, by the rapidity with which the steamers took up their positions, and the

assistance they rendered to the other ships; as also by the destruction caused through the shells thrown from them.

On the 4th another explosion took place, by which a marine was killed and Captain Collier had his leg fractured.

The garrison being placed in a state of order, was left under the command of Sir Charles Smith, with 3000 Turkish troops and 250 marines, under Lieutenant-Colonel Walker, with the protection of the *Pique* and *Stromboli*.

The results of the capture of Acre were very important. Ibrahim Pasha evacuated Syria, and Mehemet Ali gave up the whole Turkish fleet, which sailed for Marmorice under Admiral Walker. Soon after, the Sultan sent a firman, according to the Pasha the hereditary possession of Egypt, without any interference on the part of the Porte, while a yearly tribute of 2,000,000 pounds was to be paid to the Sultan, besides about 2,000,000 pounds more of arrears.

Thus terminated the part taken by the British at that time in the affairs of Turkey and Egypt.

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Warfare in Chinese Waters—1840-1842.

The war in China was undertaken to punish the Government for the numerous injuries and insults they had offered to the English, and, by teaching them to respect our power, to induce them to trade with us on fair and equal terms, and to treat us in future as one civilised people should treat another; also to demand reparation of

grievances, and payment for the property of British subjects destroyed at Canton; to obtain a guarantee against similar occurrences in future; and, what was of the greatest importance, to open up the trade at the different ports along the coast.

With these objects to be accomplished, a large squadron and a number of transports, containing a considerable body of troops, were despatched in 1840 by the Governor-General of India to the Chinese seas.

Soon after this a large fleet arrived from England, under the command of Admiral the Honourable G. Elliot, while Sir Gordon Bremer had his broad pennant flying on board the *Wellesley*. Captain Elliot, RN, it must be understood, was acting on shore as Chief-Superintendent of Trade.

The Chinese are a very clever people, but though their civilisation is very ancient it has been stationary for ages, and all change and advance of Western ideas has been violently opposed both by the governing classes and the people. In the matter, however, of armament they have in recent years made great advance, but at this time this advance had hardly yet commenced, and they had nothing to oppose to the British fleet.

Not having the real thing, with great ingenuity they proceeded to extemporise an imitation, the appearance of which they hoped would be sufficient to frighten off the foreigner. They purchased an English trading vessel, the *Cambridge*, intending to turn her into, at least in appearance, a man-of-war, and built some strange-looking little schooners upon a European model, for the purpose of employing them against the English. Commissioner Lin also

got up some sham fights at the Bogue, dressing those who were to act as assailants in red coats, in order to accustom the defenders to the sight of the red uniform,—the redcoats, of course, being always driven back with tremendous slaughter. They also ran up formidable-looking forts along the banks of many of their rivers, which on examination, however, turned out to be merely thin planks painted. The object of these was to alarm the barbarians, and to prevent them from entering their harbours. But the crowning and most ingenious device was the construction of some vessels, with large paddle-wheels like those of steamers, which were worked inside by men; though, that they might appear to be real steamers, they had, it is said, funnels and fires under them to create a smoke.

Although from these accounts it would appear that the Chinese were not very formidable enemies, it must be understood that they also possessed some forts which were really very strong; and that though the true Chinese are not very fond of fighting, and, from their peculiar temperament, (looking upon discretion as the better part of valour), prefer running away to stopping with the certainty of being shot or bayoneted, yet that, as they fully understand division of labour, they employ a large number of Tartars to do their fighting for them. These Tartars are very brave fellows, and so are their officers; and in numberless instances they preferred death to defeat. They invariably fought to the last; and often, when they could fight no longer, cut the throats of their wives and children, and then their own, rather than yield. This horrible practice arose undoubtedly from ignorance, they believing that their conquerors would ill-

treat and enslave them if they captured them alive. Besides these Tartar troops, who were far from contemptible enemies, our gallant redcoats and bluejackets had to contend with the pernicious climate of the south of China, by which, more than by the jingall-balls of the enemy, numbers were cut off. The Tartars we have been speaking of are powerful men, armed with long spears, and often they crossed them with the British bayonet, for which the long spear was sometimes more than a match. Hand-to-hand encounters with the Tartar troops were not uncommon, and our men learned to their cost that they had held the Chinese too cheap. Instances occurred in which the powerful Tartar soldier rushed within the bayonet guard of his opponent, and grappled with him for life or death.

A full description of the numerous actions which took place from the commencement to the termination of the war, extending over so many months, would at the present day be far from interesting. We shall, therefore, but briefly allude to some of them.

Capture of Chusan.

The crisis had come. The Chinese had determined to drive away the “foreign devils” from their coasts, and the “foreign devils” had equally determined to show that they were a match for the Celestials.

On 5th July 1840, Chusan, a small island in the Chinese sea, fell into the hands of the British. The previous day, HMS *Conway, Alligator*, and *Wellesley*, with a troopship and two transports, arrived in Chusan harbour. The ships took up position opposite a large Joss House or Temple. Sir Gordon

Bremer was in command of our force. In the evening a deputation was sent on shore, calling upon the governor to surrender the town of Chusan and avoid unnecessary bloodshed. The Chinese admiral and two mandarins themselves came to refuse this offer. During that night the people were seen strengthening their fortifications, while the inhabitants were flying up the river in their merchant junks, which were allowed to pass without impediment, although their cargoes, probably containing much that was valuable, would have made the fortunes of many a British officer. However, they were allowed through untouched, for our bluejackets had not come to war against civilians and women and children. Indeed, to their credit, in no instance throughout the war did the helpless suffer injury at the hands of either British soldiers or sailors.

On the 5th, vast crowds could be seen along the hills and shores, and the walls of the city were lined with troops. Twenty-four guns were placed on the landing-place, which, with the appearance of several war-junks, showed that resistance was going to be offered.

The troops were landed in two divisions, under Major-General Burrell’s supervision. The fire from the batteries and from the shores was soon silenced by the British “men of war.” Not far distant from the city was a hill surrounded on three sides by a deep canal and very boggy land, and our troops took up position on this hill; and though fire was opened on them till nearly midnight, the effects of it were scarcely felt. On the morning of the 6th the guns were directed towards the city, but as no sound could be heard or troops seen, it was thought that the city had probably been

evacuated, and a party was sent forward to find out if this was the case. The walls of the city were scaled, and then it was found that, with the exception of one or two unarmed Chinese, the place was empty. Over the principal gate was a placard on which was inscribed, “Save us for the sake of our wives and children.” The British flag was, without loss of time, hoisted upon that gate.

On 19th August 1840, Captain Smith, in the *Druid*, and a few smaller ships of war and some troops, attacked and defeated the Chinese in a very spirited manner, stationed in some fortifications known as the Macao Barrier. The guns were spiked, and the whole of the troops fled; nor did they ever again occupy the barrier. Two junks were sunk, and the rest allowed to escape round the opposite point, while the barracks and the other buildings were burned. The British, having four men only wounded, re-embarked, and the ships returned the same evening to their former anchorage in Macao roads. This well-timed and important piece of service of Captain Smith’s was the last hostile movement of the British during the year 1840. On the 6th November a truce was announced by Admiral Elliot, and on the 29th he resigned his command from extreme ill-health, and returned to England, leaving Sir Gordon Bremer as commander-in-chief.

After this, nothing very remarkable was done till the Bogue forts were captured, on the 7th January 1841. The Chinese Emperor had only opened negotiations for the purpose of gaining time it was resolved, therefore, to attack Canton itself. Several fleets of war-junks were destroyed, some of the junks being blown up with all on board. On the

26th of February the Boca Tigris forts were taken by Sir Gordon Bremer; and, on the 5th of March, the squadron having advanced up the river, Howqua’s Fort was captured. Other forts in succession fell into the hands of the British force; and on the 28th of March, the passage up to Whampoa being forced, the forts of Canton and a large Chinese flotilla were captured. After this, the Chinese came to terms; trade was again opened, and went on for some time with great activity. All this time, however, the treacherous Chinese were plotting how they might exterminate the English; and, on the night of the 21st of May, a bold attempt was made by them to destroy the British fleet by means of fire-rafts. The attempt, however, was happily defeated, and warlike operations were once more commenced.

During these operations, Mr Hall performed a gallant act, which probably saved the lives of Captains Elliot and Herbert and all standing near. A congreve rocket had been placed in a tube and ignited, when it hung within it instead of flying out. In another moment it would have burst, scattering destruction around, had not Mr Hall thrust his arm into the tube and forced it out from behind. The rush of fire, however, severely burnt his hand, and caused him much suffering; it was long, indeed, before he recovered the use of it.

Canton was now attacked both by sea and land; and after some severe fighting, which lasted from the 23rd up to the 30th of May, that important city was taken possession of by the British.

Amoy was captured on the 26th of August in a dashing manner, and Chinghae on the 10th of October 1841, and Ningpo was occupied on the 12th of the same month. Early in the year, Captain Hall and the officers and crew of the *Nemesis* had a spirited brush with the Chinese, to the north of Chusan. After this, the enemy kept at a distance from that place.

Several attempts were made by the Chinese to destroy the ships of the squadron, each time defeated by the vigilance of the officers and crews. On the 13th of May 1843, Chapoo, a large town near the sea, was attacked and captured; and Woosung and Shanghai shared the same fate on the 16th and 19th of June, the greater part of the fighting on both occasions being performed by the seamen and marines of the fleet.

Capture of Chin-Keang-Foo and Nankin—21st July 1842.

We now come to the crowning victory of the British in China in this war.

Considerable reinforcements having arrived, it was resolved to advance on Nankin itself, the ancient capital of the empire, as the most certain way of bringing the Chinese to terms. To reach that city, the admiral had determined to conduct his fleet, consisting of nearly eighty sail, including two line-of-battle ships, up the great river Yang-Tze, into the very heart of the empire, 200 miles from the sea.

On the 6th July, this imposing fleet passed up the river without any opposition, the Chinese having even withdrawn their guns from most of the towns on its banks, to escape

the injury they expected would be inflicted had they made any hostile demonstration. At Seshan, however, about fifteen miles below Chin-Keang-Foo, some batteries at the foot of a hill, mounting about twenty guns, opened their fire on the *Pluto* and *Nemesis*, as those vessels were surveying in advance. On the following day, the batteries having fired on the *Modeste*, she very speedily drove out their garrisons, and destroyed them completely.

On the 16th, the naval and military commanders-in-chief went up the river in the *Vixen*, followed by the *Medusa*, to reconnoitre the approaches to Chin-Keang-Foo. They approached the entrance of the Imperial Canal, which passes close to the city walls, and is one of the greatest works in China for facilitating the internal water communication through the country. As no soldiers were seen on the walls, and no other preparations for defence were visible, it was hoped that resistance would not be offered, and that thus all effusion of blood would be spared. When, however, some of the officers landed on Golden Island, which is opposite the mouth of the Great Canal, and climbed to the top of the pagoda in the centre of the island, they discovered three large encampments on the slope of the hills to the south-west of the city. This showed that the Chinese had a large army ready to defend the place, though it was doubted if the troops would fight. The British land force consisted of about 7000 men of all arms. It had been determined that none of the ships-of-war should be engaged in the attack. The *Auckland* was therefore the only vessel which fired into the city, when employed in covering the landing of the troops.

On the evening of the 20th all preparations were completed for the attack, which was to take place at daylight the next day. A body of seamen and marines, however, under Captain Peter Richards, took an active part in the engagement, accompanied by Sir William Parker, who forced his way with the general through the gates of the city. Lord Saltoun's brigade was the first on shore, and, gallantly attacking the Chinese encamped outside the walls, soon drove them over the hills. General Schoedde's brigade, however, was received by a hot fire of guns, jingalls, and matchlocks, and in consequence he gave orders for immediately escalading the walls. The Tartars fought with the most determined bravery, often in hand-to-hand combats, and several of the British officers and men were wounded. The walls were soon scaled; and, as the troops scoured them to the right and left, they fell in with Sir Hugh and Sir William, who had forced their way in at the gate, while Captains Peter Richards and Watson, with the seamen and marines, had scaled the walls in another direction. Still, in the interior of the city, the Tartars held every house and street where they could hope to make a stand, determined to sell their lives dearly; and often, when driven back by superior force, they with perfect deliberation put an end to their own lives, and frequently those of their wives and children.

While these events were taking place, another of a more naval character was enacting elsewhere. The *Blonde* was anchored off the mouth of the Grand Canal, and her boats had been employed in the morning in landing the artillery brigade. At ten o'clock they were ordered away to carry

some of the artillery, with two howitzers, up the canal, to create a diversion in favour of the troops. They were under the command of Lieutenant Crouch, of the *Blonde*, who had with him Messrs Lambert, Jenkins, and Lyons, midshipmen. The barge, cutter, and a flat were a little in advance, when, coming suddenly in sight of the west gate of the city, they were assailed by a heavy fire of jingalls and matchlocks from the whole line of the city wall, running parallel with the canal. As the wall was nearly forty feet high, the gun in the barge could not be elevated sufficiently to do service, and the fire of the musketry was ineffectual. Lieutenant Crouch and Mr Lyons, midshipman, two artillery officers, sixteen seamen, and eight artillerymen were wounded. As it would have been madness to have remained longer than necessary exposed to such a fire, the men leaped from the boats, which they abandoned, and took shelter under cover of some houses in the suburbs. The crews of the launch and pinnace, however, which were some way astern, remained under cover of some buildings, and escaped without loss. Lieutenant Crouch’s party now saw that their only chance of escape was to join the latter, though to do so they would have to pass across a wide space, exposed to the fire from the walls. They succeeded, however, in doing this without loss, and in getting on board the two boats. The whole party returned down the canal to the *Cornwallis*, where they reported what had happened to Captain Richards. They were compelled to leave some of the wounded behind, who, it is satisfactory to report, were kindly treated by the Chinese,—a strong proof of the advantage of the example set by the British.

As soon as Captain Richards was informed of the circumstances which had occurred, he landed with 200 marines at the entrance of the canal, where he was joined by 300 men of the 6th Madras Native Infantry, under Captain McLean.

This body then made their way through the suburbs, to escalade the city walls. At the same time the boats of the *Cornwallis*, under Lieutenant Stoddart, with those of the *Blonde*, pulled up the canal, with orders to bring off the boats and guns which had been left behind, and to endeavour to check the fire of the Chinese, while Captain Richards' party were engaged in escalading the walls. As soon as Captain Richards landed, he was joined by Captain Watson and Mr Forster, master of the *Modeste*, with a boat's crew and a small body of seamen from that ship.

A quantity of rubbish was found near the walls, on which the ladders were planted by Captains Peter Richards and Watson, when, in face of a strong body of Tartars, who opened a tremendous fire on them, they began the hazardous ascent. Captain Richards escaped unhurt; but Captain Watson was wounded, as was Lieutenant Baker, of the Madras Artillery; and a marine, who with them was one of the first on the walls, was killed.

At this juncture, Lieutenant Fitzjames brought up some rockets and lodged one in a guard-house, which, catching fire, threw the enemy into such consternation that they gave way, followed by Captain Richards, who, at the head of his men, had jumped down into an open space between two gateways. At the same moment the gate was blown open by powder bags; and Sir William Parker, with the third brigade

under General Bartley, accompanied by Sir Hugh Gough, dashed over its ruins. Several officers and a large number of men suffered from the effects of the hot sun. The Naval Brigade having in consequence rested for some time in a guard-house, on hearing some firing, again sallied out, when they were met by a sudden fire from a body of Tartars, drawn up across a street behind a small gateway. Here Lieutenant Fitzjames was wounded, as were several of the men.

The British, however, uttering a loud cheer, attacked the Tartars with such fury that they were soon driven back and put to flight, when numbers fell by their own hands. The city was speedily in entire possession of the British, when every means was taken to spare life, to prevent plunder, and to restore order. We must not omit to speak of the gallantry of several naval officers mentioned by Sir Hugh Gough. Having heard that the canal was fordable, he had sent Major Gough to ascertain the fact, accompanied by Captain Loch, RN, who acted as an amateur throughout the campaign, as the general's extra aide-de-camp, and Lieutenant Hodgson, of the *Cornwallis*, as also by Lieutenant Heatley. Instantly rushing down the bank, the four officers plunged into the canal and swam across, thus proving the impracticability of fording it.

The city was now completely in the power of the British; but, in consequence of the bad drainage and the number of dead bodies left in the houses, the cholera broke out, and raged with fearful violence among the troops, even though they were removed to an encampment outside the walls. The number of Tartars who destroyed themselves and

families was very great; while much damage was committed by the Chinese plunderers, who flocked in from the country, and pillaged in every direction; yet, although the place had been taken by assault, none of the British troops were allowed to plunder or to commit violence of any description.

These triumphant successes of the British had at length brought the Emperor to reason.

The true state of affairs was represented to him; and, on the 20th of August, his commissioner came on board the *Cornwallis*, with authority to treat for peace. On the 24th, the visit was returned by Sir Henry Pottinger, Sir Hugh Gough, Sir William Parker, and upwards of a hundred officers.

On the 29th, a treaty of peace, for which the British had been so long contending, was happily signed on board the *Cornwallis* by Sir Henry Pottinger on the part of Great Britain, and by Ke-Ying, Elepoo, and New-Kien, on the part of the Emperor of China.

While the British fleet remained in the China seas, several gallant acts, well worthy of record also, were performed by some of the officers of the ships.

Although a very imperfect account has been given of the operations in the China seas, enough has been said to show that the Tartar troops were no despicable enemies, while the bluejackets of Old England had ample opportunities of exhibiting their daring courage, as well as that perseverance, discipline, endurance, and humanity, for which they have ever been conspicuous.

A timely rescue.

Callao, 20th August 1844.

Her Majesty’s ship *Collingwood*, Captain R. Smart, was lying off the port of Callao, in China, on the 20th of August 1844. There were at the time two mates on board, Mr Roderick Dew and the Hon. Frederick William Walpole. The latter officer had, it appears, in the afternoon gone on board a cutter-yacht, belonging to a gentleman at Callao. As night came on there was a fresh breeze blowing, which knocked up a short chopping sea. It was also very dark, so that objects at any distance from the ship could scarcely be discerned. The officer of the first watch on that night was Lieutenant Richard R. Quin, and the mate of the watch was Mr R. Dew. In those seas the currents run with great rapidity, and where the ship lay there was a very strong tide. Just as the quartermasters had gone below to call the officers of the middle watch, it being then close upon twelve o’clock, the look-out man forward reported a boat ahead under sail. The lieutenant of the watch, on going to the gangway, observed a small cutter on the starboard bow, which, as well as he could make out through the obscurity, appeared to be hove to. He judged from the position of the cutter that she wished to communicate with the ship, but it was impossible to see what was taking place on board of her. Shortly afterwards a dark object was observed on the water on the starboard bow approaching the ship, but it did not look like a boat. When it was at the distance of seventy or eighty yards, it was hailed by the sentry. An answer was returned, but too indistinctly for the officers aft to understand what was said. The sentry, however, on the forecastle seems to have made out the answer, for he instantly sung out the

startling cry of “A man overboard!” No boats were down at the time; and in that hot tideway in another minute the drowning man would have been swept past the ship, and carried in all probability out to sea, where he must have perished. Mr Dew was forward. Whether or not he knew the person who was in peril of his life, I cannot say; probably any human being would equally have claimed his aid; but without a moment’s hesitation he jumped fearlessly overboard, and swam to the assistance of the man he supposed was drowning. He struck out bravely, but could not at first succeed in the object for which he was aiming. Meantime the order for lowering a boat was given; but long before she was got into the water the figure of a human being was discerned close to the ship. The sentry again hailed, when a voice, which was recognised as that of Mr Walpole’s, answered with a cry for help. Mr Dew cheered him up by letting him know that he was coming to his assistance; and very soon after he got up to him, and found him clinging to a small boat full of water, and, as he was encumbered with a heavy pea-coat, holding on with the greatest difficulty. Mr Dew, who was lightly clad and fresh, enabled him to guide the swamped boat up to the ship, near which the current was of itself carrying her. As they passed near the gangway, a coil of rope was hove to them, which they getting hold of, the boat was hauled alongside, and Mr Walpole and his gallant preserver Mr Dew were brought safely upon deck. Mr Walpole then gave an account of the accident which had befallen him. He had shoved off from the cutter in her dinghy, which was very soon swamped; and as the tide would not allow him to regain the vessel, he

was being carried rapidly to destruction, and would, he gratefully asserted, have inevitably perished, had it not been for the heroic conduct of Mr Dew, who, under Providence, was thus the means of preserving his life.

Chapter Four.

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Capture of a Venezuelan Squadron—February 1841.

Among the numerous states which have arisen from the fragments of the Spanish empire in South America is that of Venezuela, of which Carthagena on the northern coast, and on the eastern shore at the entrance of the Gulf of Darien, is one of the chief towns. Although the inhabitants have proved themselves on many occasions to be a brave and gallant people, they too frequently, after they drove out the Spaniards, quarrelled among themselves, and at the time of which we write had allowed their navy to fall into a very disorganised condition. It appears that the British merchant brig *Jane and Sarah*, in company with a sloop called *Little William*, were lying at Sapote, a harbour near Carthagena, when, on the 6th of February 1841, some Venezuelan ships-of-war, under the orders of General Carmona, attacked the two vessels and plundered them of a large amount of goods and specie. A Colonel Gregg and other passengers, together with their crews, were taken on shore and imprisoned. We are not aware of what crime Colonel Gregg and the other persons were accused. They found means, however, to

communicate their condition to the British consul resident at Carthagena, who immediately interested himself on their behalf, and applied to the Government for their release.

His intercession was perfectly unsuccessful. As soon, therefore, as he was able, he sent off a despatch to Lieutenant De Courcy, commanding HM brig *Charybdis*, stationed on the coast to protect British interests, and which was fortunately then in the neighbourhood. Immediately on receiving the communication, Lieutenant De Courcy came off the port of Carthagena, and despatched a boat with an officer bearing a letter to the commodore of the squadron, then at anchor inside, demanding the release of Colonel Gregg and the other British subjects.

The Venezuelan squadron consisted of a corvette, a brig, and three schooners of war. When the officer got on board the corvette, he found the commodore, who treated him with great insolence, observing that, as the letter was not written in Spanish, he could not understand it, and therefore could not receive it, treating the threatened interference with the greatest contempt. The unfortunate Colonel Gregg, it appears, was shot, immediately after the application for his release had been made; so that probably the commodore was acting under the orders of the Government, who were little aware of the punishment they were about to draw down on the head of the commander of their ships.

As soon as the British officer had returned on board the *Charybdis*, and reported these circumstances, Lieutenant de Courcy determined to compel attention to his communications. The *Charybdis* was rated as a six-gun brig, but she carried only one long gun amidships and two