

## CHAPTER XII.

*Operations in Chesapeake Bay—Arrival of rear-admiral Cockburn—Preparations for attacking the United States' frigate Constellation in James's River—Her retreat to a safer position—Wanton firing from the shore upon the British boats—Death of two men in consequence—Arrival of admiral Warren—Gallant affair at the mouth of the Rappahannock—Rear-admiral Cockburn's detached command to the head of the bay—Advance upon French-town—Heavy fire upon the boats from a battery—Landing of the British—Flight of the American militia—Destruction of cannon, public stores, and vessels—Admiral Cockburn's system of operations—American misrepresentations corrected—Purchase of stock at Turkey Point and Specuic Island—Display of colours, and firing of cannon, at Havre de Grace—Attack upon this place—Its short but spirited resistance—Disrespect shown to a flag of truce—Consequent proceedings by the British—Destruction of a valuable cannon-foundry—Gross misstatement of the American editors—Ridiculous behaviour of a prisoner named O'Neil, and ludicrous threat in case of his detention—Advance upon George-town and Frederick-town—Precious warning to the inhabitants—Their violent pro-*

*ceedings, and destructive fire upon the British—Destruction of houses in consequence—Visit of the British to another town—Civil deportment of the inhabitants, and its salutary effects—Remarks on the American militia-system—Impressions of the American farmers—Capture of the United States' schooner Surveyor—Noble conduct of lieutenant Crie of the Narcissus—Arrival of troops in the Chesapeake—Affair between H.M.S. Junon and 15 American gun-boats—Open preparations for attacking Craney Island—Correspondent preparations on the part of the Americans—Landing of a division of British at Pig-Point—Advance of another division towards Craney Island—Unexpected grounding of the boats close under the American battery—Impossibility to reach the shore—Destructive fire upon the boats, as well as upon the struggling crews in the water—Remarks upon the attempt to capture Craney Island—Attack upon, and capture of Hampton—Excesses committed there by a part of the British force—American strictures on the occasion—Departure from the coast of the corps that committed the excesses—Landing of the British at Ocracoke and Portsmouth, and capture of two fine letters of marque—American misstatements corrected.*

A THREATENING attitude upon the Atlantic frontier of the United States, in the nei.g14)0,91.\_

hood of the capital especially, being considered likely to weaken the efforts of the American government, now so openly and earnestly directed against our Canadian possessions, rear-admiral Cockburn, in the Marlborough 74, with some frigates and smaller vessels, entered the Chesapeake bay on the 4th of March, 1813.

The United States' frigate *Constellation*, lying in James's river, near Norfolk, became the first object of attack ; but the preparatory movements of the British squadron drove her to a safe position, higher up the river. The rear-admiral afterwards advanced up the bay, sounding and reconnoitring. During the passage. of the boats along the shore, in the execution of this service, the Americans frequently fired at them, and, in one instance, killed two men, besides wounding several others ; although not a musket had been, on any occasion, discharged from the boats.

About the end of March, admiral Warren, from Bermuda, bringing with him the *San Domingo* 74, and some other ships, arrived in the Chesapeake. In his way up the bay, the admiral detached a force to attack four armed schooners, lying at the mouth of the Rappahannock river.. The breeze failing, the capture of the whole four was effected by five British boats, under the orders of lieutenant (now captain) James Polkinghorne, of the *St. Domingo*..

\* For the full particulars of this gallant exploit, see James's Naval Occurrences, p. 367.

In a week or two after a junction had been formed between admiral Warren and rear-admiral Cockburn, the latter was directed, with a squadron of small vessels, including two of the captured schooners, to penetrate the rivers at the head of the bay, and endeavour to cut off the enemy's supplies ; as well as to destroy his foundries, stores, and public works ; particularly a depot of flour, military and other stores, ascertained, by the information of some Americans, to be at a place called French-town, situate at a considerable distance up the river Elk. Accordingly, the rear-admiral, with H.M. brigs *Fantonie* and *Mohawk*, and the *Dolphin*, *Racer*, and *highflyer*, tenders, on the evening of the 98th of April, moved towards the river. Having moored the brigs and schooners as far within the entrance as could be effected after dark, the rear-admiral took with him, in the boats of his little squadron, 150 marines, under captains Wybourn and Carter, and five artillery-men, under lieutenant Robertson, of that corps, and proceeded to execute his orders.\*

The boats, owing to ignorance of the way, having entered the Bohemia instead of keeping in the Elk river, did not reach the destined place till late on the following morning. This delay enabled the inhabitants of French-town to

\* App. No. 8.

make arrangements for the defence of the stores and town ; **for** the security of which a six-gun battery had lately, been • directed. As soon as the boats approached within gun-shot of it, a heavy fire was opened upon them. Disregarding this, however, the marines quickly landed ; and the American militia fled from the battery to the adjoining woods.

The inhabitants of the town, situate at about a mile distant, having, as far as could be ascertained, taken no part in the contest, were not in the slightest degree molested ; but a considerable quantity of flour, of army-clothing, saddles, bridles, and other equipments for cavalry ; also various articles of merchandize, and the two stores in which they had been contained ; together with five vessels, lying near the place,- were entirely consumed. The guns of the battery, being too heavy to be carried away, were disabled ; and the boats departed, with no other loss than one seaman wounded in the arm by a grape-shot. The Americans lost one man killed by a rocket, but none wounded.

The rear-admiral's system, and which he had taken care to impart ,to all the Americans captured or voluntarily coming on board, the squadron, was—to. land without offering molestation to the unopposing inhabitants, either in their persons or properties ; to capture

or destroy all articles of merchandize and munitions of war ; to be allowed to take off; upon paying the full market price, all such cattle and supplies as the British squadron might require : but, should resistance be offered, or menaces held out, to consider the town as a fortified post, and the male inhabitants as soldiers ; the one to be destroyed, the other, with their cattle and stock, to be captured.

Both the editor of the " Sketches of the War" and of the " History of the War" confine the conflagration at French-town, to the two store-houses and their contents ; and so does a writer in a respectable American periodical publication, of very recent date, subjoining to his account of the burning of the warehouses,— " but no private dwellings, as has erroneously been stated."\* Yet is the editor of the " History of the United States" so totally disregarding of truth, as to accuse the British of having plundered and destroyed the whole village.- **Mr.** Thomson finds it convenient to deScribe the contents of the store-houses as goods belonging to merchants of Baltimore and Philadelphia, and to be totally silent about any military stores ; but general Wilkinson expressly says : — " By the defective arrangements of the war-department, he (rear-admiral Cockburn)

• North American Review, Vol. V. p. 158.  
f Mist. of the United States, Vol.      p. 283.

succeeded in destroying the military equipments and munitions found there ; of which, I apprehend, the public never received any correct account."\*

As the boats, in their way down the Elk, were rounding Turkey Point, they came in sight of a large estate, surrounded by cattle. The rear-admiral landed ; and directing the bailiff, or overseer, to pick out as many oxen, sheep, and other stock, as were deemed sufficient for the present use of the squadron, paid for them to the full amount of what the bailiff alleged was the market price. Not the slightest injury was done ; or, doubtless, one of our industrious historians would have recorded the fact.

Having learnt that cattle and provisions, in considerable quantity, were at Specucie Island, the rear-admiral, with the brigs and tenders, proceeded to that place. In his way thither it became necessary to pass in sight of Havre de Grace, a village of about 60 houses, situate on the west-side of the Susquehanna, a short distance above the confluence of that river with the Chesapeake. Although the British were a long way out of gun-shot, the Americans perceived Havre de Grace must needs fire at them from a six-gun battery, and display to their view, as a further mark of defiance, a large American

\* Wilkinson's Mem. Vol. I. p. 732.

ensign. This determined the rear-admiral to make that battery and town the next object of attack. In the meanwhile, he anchored his squadron off Specucie Island. Here a part of the boats landed, and obtained cattle upon the same terms as before. A complaint having been made, that some of the subordinate officers had destroyed a number of turkies, the rear-admiral paid the value of them out of his own pocket. The Americans, as they were driving the cattle to the boats, jeered the men, saying,— " Why do you come here?! Why don't you go to Havre de Grace ? There You'll have something to do." About this time a deserter gave the people at Havre de Grace, who had already been in preparation, notice of the intended attack.

After quitting Specucie Island, the rear-admiral bent his course towards Havre de Grace; but the shallowness of the water admitting the passage of boats only, the 150 marines and the five artillery men embarked at midnight on the 2d of May, and proceeded up the river.\* The Dolphin and Highflyer tenders attempted to follow in support of the boats, but shoal water compelled them to anchor at the distance of six miles from the point of attack. By daylight, the boats succeeded in getting opposite to the battery ; which mounted six guns, 12 and 6-pounders, and opened a smart fire upon

the British. The marines instantly landed to the left ; which was a signal to the Americans to withdraw from their battery. Lieutenant G. A. Westphall, has ing, in the mean time, stationed his rocket-boat close to the battery, now landed with his boat's crew, turned the guns upon the American militia, and drove them to the extremity of the town.

The inhabitants still keeping up a fire from behind tile houses, walls, and trees, lieutenant by the admiral's orders, held out a flag of truce, and called upon them to desist. In obedience to so doing, these "unoffending citizens" fired at the British lieutenant, and actually shot him through the hand that was bearing the flag of truce. After this, who could wonder if the British seamen and marines turned to the right and left, and demolished every thing in their way. The townspeople themselves had constructed the battery ; and yet not a house in which an inhabitant remained was injured. Several of the inhabitants, principally women, who had fled at first, came again into the town, and got back such articles as had been taken. Some of the women actually proceeded to the boats, and, upon identifying their property, had it restored to them. Many of the inhabitants who had remained peaceably in their houses, as a proof that they were well informed of the principle upon which Sir George

Cockburn acted, frequently exclaimed to him —" Alas, sir, I told them what would be the consequence of their conduct. It is a great pity so many should suffer for a head-strong few. Those who were the most determined to fire upon you the other day, saying it was impossible you could take the place, were now the first to run away." Several of the houses that were not burnt did, in truth, belong to the chief agents in those violent measures that caused such severity on our part ; and the very towns-people themselves pointed out the houses. Lieutenant Westphal, with his remaining hand, pursued and took prisoner an American captain of militia ; and others of the party brought in an ensign and several privates, including an old Irishman, named O'Neill. After embarking the six guns from the battery, and taking or destroying about 130 stands of small-arms, the British departed from Havre de Grace.

One division of boats, headed by the rear-admiral, then proceeded to the northward, in search of a cannon-foundry, of which some of the inhabitants of Havre de Grace had given information. This was found, and instantly destroyed ; together with five long 24-pounders, stationed in a battery for its protection ; 28 long 32-pounders, ready for sending away ; and eight long guns, and four carronades, in the boring-house and foundry. Another division

of boats was sent up the Susquehanna ; and returned, after destroying five vessels and a large store of flour.

..No event of the war has been more grossly exaggerated than the proceedings of the British at Havre de Grace. Happily, so much inconsistency and contradiction prevail in the American accounts, that we shall have no great difficulty in exposing the authors to the merited indignation of the disinterested reader. One editor says :—" From Frenclitown they (the British) proceeded down the Elk, ascended the river Susquehanna, and attacked, plundered, and burnt the neat and flourishing, but *unprotected* village of Havre de Grace ; for which outrage no provocation had been given, nor could excuse be assigned."\* Another says:—" In expectation of an attack from the enemy, the people of Havre de Grace had made preparations for the defence of the place ; and a battery had beew\*rected, of two 6-pounders, and one nine."t Six long 12 and 6-pounders, the reader will recollect, were taken by us from that: very battery. The same editor admits, that a fire was kept up from the battery till the British commenced their debarkation ; " when says he, " except O'Neill, an old citizen of Havre de Grace, abandoned their posts ; and,

\* Hist. of the U. S. Vol. M. p. 283.

t Sketches of the War, p. 209.

following the militia, who had fled with shameful precipitation, left the women and children of the place to the mercy of the invaders."\* A third editor says :—" A small party of militia were stationed at Havre de Grace ; who, on the approach of the enemy, made a slight resistance, and then retreated. An Irishman," (this is more intelligible than Mr. Thompson's designation<sup>4</sup> named O'Neill, with a courage amounting to rashness, and an enthusiasm not confined by cold loyalty, opposed his single arm to the British host, and was taken prisoner and carried on board the fleet, but afterwards relea<sup>Sed</sup>."1-

Another American account says " **The** inhabitants of Havre de Grace had, for three weeks previous to this period, been making preparations for defence ; and several companies of militia were called in to their aid."—" The militia, amounting to about 250, were kept to their arms all night ; patrols were stationed in every place where they could possibly be of any service ; the volunteers at the battery were at their guns, and a general determination seemed to prevail of giving the enemy a warm reception."1: **What, then;'** becomes of doctor Smith's assertion, that Havre de Grace was " unprotected ;" or that " no excuse could **be**

\* Sketches of the War, p. 209.

+ Mist. of the War, p. 170.

North American Review, Vol. V. p. 160.

assigned" for attacking it ?-?- Perhaps this gentleman grounded his statement upon Mr. Munro's official communication to sir Alexander Cochrane ; wherein, as a matter of state-convenience, and in the very teeth of the British official account, announcing the capture of six pieces of cannon, and 130 stands of arms, the American secretary chose to describe the inhabitants of Havre de Grace as " unarmed." In the same spirit of rancor, doctor Smith declares, that " the whole of this little town, house after house, was consigned to the flames."\* Mr. Thomson is not explicit upon this point ; but Mr. O'Connor expressly says :—" Twenty-four of the best houses in the town were burned ;"† and the Boston reviewer says " It has been said, in a respectable history of the times," (can this mean doctor Smith's work ?) " that one house only escaped the flames ; but this is a mistake. Havre de Grace consisted of about 60 houses, and of these not more than 40 were burnt."‡ As, according to the same account, several of the houses were, when the British landed, " already in flames," from the " tremendous discharge ,of balls, rockets, and shells," we may consider Mr. O'Connor's estimate as alluding exclusively to those destroyed by the British while on shore. It is not a little extra-

\* Hist. of the United States, Vol. III. p. 283.

+ Hist. of the War, p. 170.      N. Amer. Rev. Vol. V. p. 160.

ordinary, that the same writer who dwells so upon the state of " preparation" in which the inhabitants were, should say : " It is not easy to assign any cause, other than the caprice of its projector, for this violent attack on a defenceless and unoffending village. No reasons of a public nature could have induced it. No public property was deposited there, nor were any of its inhabitants engaged in aiding the prosecution of the war."\*

Although it would be idle to question the zeal and industry of any one of our three historians, Mr. Thomson alone has declared that the British " cut open the bedding of the citizens to augment the flames ;: destroyed the public stages ; maimed the horses ; cut to pieces the private baggage of the passengers ; tore the cloathing of some of the inhabitants from their backs; and left to others those only which they wore; in short, robbing private travellers on the highway of :,their money and apparel." Mr. Thomson next: , affirms that, " when several ladies of the first distinction" had taken refuge " in a spacious and elegant private mansion," a British officer " was entreated to suffer this house, at least, to escape the general conflagration ; but, as he .was obeying the orders of admiral Cockburn, the mostite could do was to suspend his purpose, until those unprotected

North American Review, Vol. V. p. 162.

women could prevail upon the admiral to countermand them."\* That the latter part of this statement is utterly false, appears by the testimony of one of the sufferers ; one who dates his letter from the spot ; who complains that the destruction of Havre de Grace has " ruined" Mini: and who, therefore, must write with highly irritated feelings against the British. He says : The inhabitants fled at the approach of the sailors, and the women took shelter in the house of Mr. Mark Pringle ; which a party was proceeding to destroy, when Mr. Pringle, with a flag, met them, and they *very readily* desisted." t —

One would suppose that the destruction, by an enemy, of 45 pieces of cannon, chiefly long 32 and 24-pounders, would have appeared of sufficient national importance, to engage the attention of such as profess to detail the events of a war. But it was necessary to cast every possible odium upon the British, and therefore highly impolitic to admit that they performed a single act of legitimate warfare. Mr. Thomson is the only editor who deplores the loss " of 50 pieces of elegant cannon ;" but he makes amends for his unguarded acknowledgment, by declaring, that the furnace which was battered down, was " private property," and that the

\* Sketches of the War, p. 210.

Philadelphia Gazette, May 4, 1813.

British, " as the last act of atrocity with which this expedition was destined to be marked, tore up a small bridge, constructed over a deep, though narrow creek, and over which travellers of every description were obliged to pass, or venture through a wider channel, at the imminent hazard of their lives." So that a small party, on shore in an enemy's country, and expecting to be attacked by an enraged population, collecting from all points, are to leave standing a bridge, by which alone, probably, their position can be assailed ; because, forsooth, the destruction of that bridge would compel the inhabitants to " venture through a wider channel, at the imminent hazard of their lives." This is such a refinement in warfare, as we did not expect to hear broached by an American. Doctor Smith and Mr. O'Connor, although they have added to the list of enormities committed by the British, that of burning " Mr. Hughes's foundry," have rejected the story of the bridge, as too ridiculous even for them to publish.

Mr. O'Connor, with a fellow-feeling, perhaps, extols highly the courage and enthusiasm of his friend O'Neill. This contemptible old wretch, when taken on board the rear-admiral's ship, cried bitterly ; exclaiming every now and then, "God bless king George—I detest the Americans,—will do all I can to save the British," &c. &es.

\* Sketches of the War, .p. 211.



Nekt day his daughter, an interesting young woman, came on board, and begged hard for his discharge ; urging that he had a large family dependant on him for support. Her tears prevailed, and she carried her father on shore. In a week or ten days afterwards, rear-admiral Cockburn had occasion to go on board the San Domingo; when, to his great surprise, admiral Warren showed him a letter he had just received from the American secretary of state, declaring, if a hair of O'Neil's head was hurt, what his government would do, &c. This ludicrous application was replied to in a proper manner, and the affair ended.

.On the night of the 5th of May, the same party of British marines and artillery-men again embarked in the boats, and proceeded up the river Sassafras, separating the counties of Kent and Cecil, towards the villages of George-town and Frederick-town, situate on opposite sides of the river, nearly facing each other. Having intercepted a small boat with two of the inhabitants, rear-admiral Cockburn halted the detachment, about two miles from the town ; and then sent forward the two Americans in their boat, to warn their countrymen against acting in the same rash manner as the people of Havre de Grace had done ; assuring them that, if they did, their towns would inevitably meet with a similar fate ; but that, on the contrary, if they

did not attempt resistance, no injury should be done to them or their towns ; that vessels and public property only, would be seized ; that the strictest discipline would be maintained ; and that whatever provision or other property of individuals the rear-admiral might require for the use of the squadron, would be instantly paid for in its fullest value.\* The two Americans agreed in the propriety of this ; said there was no battery at either of the towns ; that they would willingly deliver the message, and, had no doubt the inhabitants would be peaceably disposed.

After waiting a considerable time, the rear-admiral advanced higher up ; and, when within about a mile from the towns, and between two projecting points of land which compelled the boats to proceed in close order, a heavy fire was opened upon them from one field-piece, and, as conjectured, 3 or 400 militia, divided and entrenched on the opposite sides of the river. The fire was promptly returned, and the rear-admiral pushed on shore with the marines; but, the instant the American militia observed them fix their bayonets, they fled to the woods, and were neither seen nor heard of afterwards: All the houses, excepting those whose owners had continued peaceably in them, and taken no part in the attack, were forthwith destroyed; as were

\* App. No. 10.

four vessels lying in the river, together with some stores of sugar, of lumber, of leather, and other merchandize. On this occasion, five of the British were wounded. One of the Americans who entreated to have his property saved, wore military gaiters ; and had, no doubt, assisted at the firing upon the British. Agreeably to his request, however, his property was left untouched.

Mr. Thomson says : " The invaders were gallantly resisted more than half an hour, when they effected a landing ; and, marching towards the town, compelled the militia to retire. Colonel Veazy effected his retreat in excellent order."\* To prove that this was a gallant affair, Mr. Thomson has made the American force " about 80 militia, and one small cannon," and the British force " 18 barges, each carrying one great gun, and manned altogether by 600 men." Mr. O'Connor contents himself with accusing us of burning the *unprotected* villages of Frederick and George-town.

On his way down the river, the rear-admiral visited a town situated on a branch of it. Here a part of the inhabitants actually pulled off to him ; and, requesting to shake hands, declared he should experience no opposition whatever. The rear-admiral accordingly landed, with the officers, and, chiefly out of respect to his rank, a

IP Sketches of the War, p.

small personal guard. , Among those that came to greet him, on his landing, were observed two inhabitants of George-town. "These men, as well as an inhabitant of the place who had been to George-town to see what was going on, had succeeded in persuading the people to adopt, as their best security, a peaceable demeanor. Having ascertained that there were no public property nor warlike stores, and obtained, upon payment of the full value, such articles as were wanted, the rear-admiral and his party re-embarked. Soon afterwards, a deputation was sent from Charlestown, on the north-east river, to assure the rear-admiral, that the place was considered as at his mercy ; and, similar assurances coming from other places in the upper part of the Chesapeake, the rear-admiral and his light squadron retired from that quarter.

None of the American historians notice the lenient conduct observed towards the inhabitants of the two last-mentioned towns ; unless we are to consider Mr. Thomson as glancing at the subject, when he complains of " the treachery of some citizens of the republic." These editors find relief for their rancorous spirit either way. If the inhabitants preserve their towns by not opposing us, they are " traitors, tories, or British agents : " if they make resistance; and their towns, sharing the fate of other

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stormed places, are burnt, we are " vile incendiaries, unprincipled marauders."

Much is said by American editors, about robbing the inhabitants of their cattle and live stock ; but the truth is, the farmers themselves considered the British squadron in the Chesapeake as their best market. Not contented, however, with getting the highest prices for their stock, small as well as large ; their eggs, butter, milk, cheese, garden-stuff, &c. they frequently practised Upon their liberal purchasers the grossest impositions.

One writer, doctor Smith, alluding to the proceedings in the *Chesapeake*, expresses himself thus : " History blushes to recapitulate the depredations and Conflagrations which were here perpetrated. The pen of the historian cannot record one solitary exploit of honorable warfare, worthy the arms of an heroic nation. The outrages of their sailors and marines were to the last degree shocking and indefensible. They committed indiscriminate havoc upon every species of private property along the shores of the bay, and on the margin of its inlets."

This is the very language that was used by the *National Intelligencer*, " *National Advocate*," " *Democratic Press*," and other American newspapers, " known to be friendly

\* History of the United States, Vol. III. p. 282.

to the war," for the double purpose of prejudicing the British character in the eyes of the other nations of Europe, and of filling the ranks of the American army from among the western, or Kentucky patriots. American citizens of the first consequence, in Baltimore, Annapolis, and Washington, when they have gone on board the British Chesapeake squadron, as they frequently did, with flags, to obtain passports, or ask other favors, and these inflammatory paragraphs- were shown to them, never failed to declare, with apparent shame, that they had been penned without the slightest regard to truth, but merely to instigate their ferocious countrymen in the western states to rally round the American standard. Yet does the sober historian of the United States not

blush" to record as truth these party-serving lies. Such statements soil the historic page ;: and, by their influence on the passions, may tend, at some future day, to rekindle the flames of war between the two nations.

Fortunately, we have American testimony to aid us in repelling the principal charge advanced against the British by this nest of calumniators, " They (the British) were always," says the writer in the *Review*, " desirous of making a fair purchase, and of paying the full value of what they received; and, it is no more than

justice to the enemy to state that, in some instances, money was left behind, in a conspicuous place, to the full amount of what had been taken away."\*

We in England may find it difficult to consider, as soldiers, men neither embodied nor Brest in regimentals. That circumstance has not escaped the keen discernment of the American government : hence we are so often charged, in proclamations and other state-papers, with attacking the "inoffensive citizens of the republic." The fact is, every man in the United States, under 45 years of age, is a militia-man ; and, during the war, attended in his turn, to be drilled, or " trained." He had always in his possession either a musket or a rifled-barrel piece; knew its use from his infancy ; and with it, therefore, could do as much execution in a smock frock or plain coat, as if he wore the most splendid uniform. These soldiers in citizens' dresses were the men whom rear-admiral Cockburn so frequently attacked and routed ; and who, when they had really acted up to the character of " non-combatants," were invariably spared, both in their persons and properties. The rear-admiral wished them, for their own sakes only, to remain *neutral* ; but general Hull, in his famous proclamation, prepared

\* North American Review, Vol. V. p. 158.

with so much care at Washington, invited the Canadian people to become open traitors to their country ; and visited upon them that refused, all " the horrors and calamities of war."\*

On the 12th of June the boats of the *Narcissus* 42, containing about 40 men, under the command of lieutenant Crie, first of that ship, and of lieutenant P. Savage, of the marines, were despatched up York river, in the Chesapeake, to cut out the United States' schooner *Surveyor*, mounting six 12-pound carronades. Captain S. Travis, her commander, had furnished each of his men with two muskets. They held their fire until the British were within pistol-shot ; but the latter pushed on, and finally carried the vessel by boarding, with the loss of three men killed, and six wounded. Captain Travis had five men wounded. His crew amounted to 16 and so gallant was their conduct, as well as that of their commander, in the opinion of lieutenant Crie, that that officer returned captain Travers his sword, accompanied by a letter, not less complimentary to him than creditable to the writer. Mr. Thomson has added, " a tender" to the boats of the frigate ; and declares that the force of the British was " nine times superior"§ to that on board the *Surveyor*. Lieutenant Crie's letter would

\* Vol. 1. App. No. 4. — American Nav. Mon. p. 219  
App. No. 10. § Sketches of the 'War, p. 213;

have set this matter right, and conferred an honor upon the British commanding officer: either of which reasons would suffice to prevent its appearance in the pages of the "Sketches of the War." None of the other historians have noticed the action.

Admiral Warren, who had left the Chesapeake for Bermuda, returned to his command early in June; bringing with him, according to newspaper-account, a detachment of battalion marines, 1800 strong; 300 of the 102d regiment; 250 of the Independent Foreigners, or Canadian chasseurs; and 300 of the royal marine-artillery; total 2650 men.

On the 18th of June II. **M. S. Junon**, of 46 guns, anchored in Hampton roads; and captain Sanders despatched his boats to capture or destroy any vessels that might be found at the entrance of James's river. Commodore John Cassin, the naval commanding-officer at Norfolk, observing this, directed the 15 gun-boats at that station to be manned with an additional number of seamen and marines from the *Constellation* frigate, then moored at the navy-yard, also with 50 infantry from Craney Island; and, under the command of captain Tarbin, to attempt the capture or destruction of the *Junon*.

It was not till about 4 P.M. on the 20th, that this formidable flotilla, armed with upwards of 30 guns, half of which were long 32 and 24-

pounders, and manned with, at least, 500, men, commenced its attack upon the *Junon*, then lying becalmed. Captain Sanders warmly returned their fire with his long eighteens; hoping that they would soon venture to approach within reach of his carronades. - This the gun-boats carefully avoided; and, between them and the frigate, a distant cannonade, very slightly injurious to either party, was maintained for about three quarters of an hour. A breeze now sprang up; which enabled the *Barrosa*, of 42, and the *Laurestinus*, of 28 guns, lying aboard, to get under weigh, in the hope to have share in the amusement. The *Junon*, also, was at this time under **sail**, using her best efforts to give a more serious complexion to the contest; but commodore Cassin, who, as we are assured, was in his boat during the whole of the action, considering that the flotilla had done enough to entitle him to display both his fighting, and his qualifications, in an official letter, very prudently ordered the 15 gun-boats to make the best of their way back to Norfolk.

Commodore Cassin's letter\* will afford a richer treat, when it is known, that the *Junon*, so "severely handled" as to be placed "upon a deep career, with a number of boats and stages round her," received only one or two shots in her hull, and sustained no other loss than **ori.**

\* App. No. 12.

Man killed. Three of the gun boats are stated to have received damage; one man is also acknowledged to have been killed, and two men wounded. The *Barrosa*, a 42-gun frigate, is under 950, "a razee" from 1640 to 1700 tons;\* yet the American commodore could discover no difference between those two classes of ships. Mr. Thomson is the only editor who has recorded this gun-boat exploit. He declares the *Junon* was "much shattered;" that "the Americans had 15 guns, the British, 150 and upwards;" that "captain Tarbell's conduct, as well as that of lieutenants Gardner, Henly, and others, received the fullest approbation of the surrounding garrisons, and of the citizens of Norfolk."1-

The appearance of the two frigates and sloop in Hampton roads soon brought to Norfolk and its vicinity as many as 10000 militia; and the works, recently constructed there, were all manned, ready for defending that important post. At Hampton, also, a militia force had assembled; and batteries were erecting, in case that town should prove the object of attack.

On the 20th of June, 13 sail of British ships, consisting of three 74s, a 64 *armee es flute*, four frigates, and five sloops, transports, and tenders, lay at anchor; the nearest within "'''''' the furthest off within thirteen, miles

\* James's *Na.*, Occarr: p. 34. Sketches of the War, p. 214.

of Craney Island. An assemblage of boats at the "sterns of several of the ships, on the afternoon of that day, gave no very unequivocal notice to the people on shore, that some expedition was on foot. Accordingly, "Craney Island being rather weakly manned,"\* the commanding officer at Norfolk sent 150 of the *Constellation's* seamen and marines, to a battery of 18-pounders on the north-west, and about 480 Virginia militia,<sup>1</sup> exclusive of officers, to reinforce a detachment of artillery, stationed with two 24 and four 6-pounders on the west, Side of the island. Captain Tarbell's 15 *gun-boats* were also moored in the best position for contributing to the defence of the post.

After two days' parade of boats and bustle among the British ships, a division of 17 or 18 boats, at day-light on the morning of the 22d, departed with about 800 men, under major-general Beckwith, round the point of Nansmond river, and landed them at a place called Pig's point, near to the narrow inlet separating the main from Craney Island. Owing to some error in the arrangements, unexpected obstacles presented themselves. An attack from that quarter being therefore considered hopeless, and the position itself not tenable, the troops, in the course of the day, re-embarked, and returned to the squadron.

' App. No. 12..

Sketches of the War, p. 213.

A second division of boats, 15 in number, containing a detachment of 500 men, from the 102d regiment, Canadian chasseurs, and battalion-marines, and about 200 seamen, the whole under the command of captain Peelle of the *St. Domingo*, arrived, at about 11 o'clock in the forenoon, off the north-west side of the island, directly in front of the battery manned by the *Constellation's* men. Great difference of opinion prevailed among the officers engaged in the expedition, about the propriety of making the attack at that time of tide, it being then the ebb. Captains Hanchett, Maude, and Romilly of the engineers, were decidedly against it ; captain Pechell was for it.; and he, being the senior officer, of course carried his point. Captain Hanchett then volunteered to lead the boats to the attack ; which he was permitted to do.

Captain Hanchett's boat was the *Diadem's* launch, carrying a 2-1-pound carronade, the only boat so armed in the division. He had taken his station about 60 yards a-head of the other boats ; and was pulling, under a very heavy and long-continued fire from the batteries, directly in front of them, when, his boat unfortunately took the ground, at the distance of about 100 yards from the muzzles of the enemy's guns.. j Captain Hanchett, who had been previously standing up in his boat, ...and being his men to hasten forward, now wrapped round his

body a union jack, and prepared to wade on shore to storm the American battery. At that instant one of the seamen, having plunged his boat-hook over the side, found three or four feet of slimy mud at the bottom. A check thus effectually given to a daring enterprise, in which all were so ready to join, captain Hanchett waved his hat for the boats a-stern to keep a-float. In the hurry of pulling and ardor of the men, this warning was disregarded ; and one or two of the boats grounded. Two others, owing to their having received some shot that had passed through the sails of the *Diadem's* launch, sank

In the meanwhile, the Americans at the battery, well aware of the shoal, had anticipated what happened; and, feeling their own security, poured in their grape and canister with destructive effect.. A 6 pound shot, which had passed through a launch on the starboard side of captain Hanchett's boat, and killed and wounded several men, struck that officer on the hip, and he instantly fell ; but was quickly on his legs again. While he was assisting to save the men that were struggling in the water, in consequence of their boat having been sunk, a langridge shot entered his left thigh. This gallant officer stood as long as he could, and then fainted. A little water, however, restored him ; and, after seeing the boats withdrawn from the fire, captain Hanchett went to the rear and reported himself to captain Pechell : that

done, the wounded captain ordered himself to be shifted into a lighter boat, which conveyed him to his own ship, • the Diadem, then lying at anchor twelve miles off.

While ' the men` from the sunken boats, and who consisted chiefly of the Canadian chasseurs, or Independent Foreigners,` were struggling for their lives in the water and mud, the Constellation's "marines, and the American infantry, waded a short distance into the water, and deliberately fired at them. When informed of the circumstance, the American authorities, very naturally, declared it untrue : as had been frequently done before, too, " an investigation was ordered ;" and which, of course, " resulted in a complete refutation of the allegations."\* But, the fact having passed in full view, not Only of the officers and men in the other boats, but of sir T. Sidney Beckwith and his party, from their position on the main-land, any attempts at denial could only add to the enormity of the 'offence.

Huddled together, as the boats were, when they struck the ground ; and that within canister-range of a battery, which kept upon them an incessant fire of more than two hours' duration, it required no very expert artillerists to sink three of the boats, and to kill three teen and wound sixteen ; especially when 'aided. h the "muskets of those humane individual., s ho 'waded

history of the United States, Vol. 111. p. 285.

into the water to fire at the drowning crews. Including 10 seamen, 62 are reported as missing.\* Of these, it appears, 40 gained the shore, and " deserted" to the Americans. As more than that number of missing appear to have belonged to the two foreign companies, this *Rreates* no surprise ; especially as the only alternative left to the men was to become prisoners of war. Admitting the American statement to be correct, 22 must have perished in the water ; the majority of whom, owing to the proximity of the sinking boats to the Diadem's launch, and the strenuous exertions of captain Hanchett and his men to save the drowning crews, must have dropped beneath the merciless bullets of the American troops. The whole loss on our side, which, as we have seen, amounted to 81, has been magnified by the American editors, to 200 ; and they add, with a degree of exultation, rendered ridiculous by the powerless condition to which accident had reduced the invading party, that **on the side of the invaded, not a man . was either killed, .or. wounded."**

One American editor makes the British force that arrived in front of the island-battery about 4000 'men," many of whom were French, and those that landed on the main upwards of 800 soldiers ;" yet, in the Nl ry

App, No. 13. 1- Sketches Of the War, p. 215,



next page, he declares that " 3000 British soldiers, sailors, and marines, were opposed to 480 Virginia militia, and 150 sailors and marines."\* The batteries were nothing in the account, although Mr. Thomson had just done telling us what destruction they had caused. Another editor, Mr. O'Connor, declares that " 1500 men attempted to land in front of the island ;1- and that the force that landed on the main was " reported, by deserters and others, to exceed 3000 tnen."t. The postscript to commodore Cassin's letter states, that " the number of the enemy engaged in the attack was nearly 3000 ;"1. implying, of course, that those not engaged were excluded from the estimate. Another writer, whose zeal it would be criminal to question, says :— " An attempt was made against Craney Island, by a force exceeding 1200 men ; who were repulsed with disgrace by 700 raw troops, sailors and marines, without the loss of a man." II We have, in addition to Mr. Thomson's, general Wilkinson's high authority for stating, that a part of the invading force consisted of " a corps designated *chasseurs Britanniques*; composed of foreign renegadoes under British officers."

It is surprising with what facility the American

\* Sketches of the War, p. 216.

Apri? No. 11

Inst, of the War, p. 171.

Wilkinson's Mem. Vol.

733.

historian can, by **his** powers of distortion,. convert every event he records to the national advantage. The check which the expedition experienced, when the Diadem's launch and two or three of the foremost boats struck the ground, is represented as " a momentary pause" caused by the " galling tire from the battery ;"\* and to prove, decidedly, the existence of no other obstacle to the landing of the British, than' " this gallant resistance by the naval division on the island," Mr. Thomson follows up his " momentary pause" with,— " Every attempt to approach the shore having heretofore failed, the enemy determined on returning to his shipping with as little delay as possible." Not one of the other historians mentions a word about the British boats having grounded : all was effected by the " invincible American seamen and marines." We have seen already, and shall see again, as we proceed, that the American editors, in their histories, and the American commanders; in their official letters, can, when the occasion serves, magnify a difficulty, be it ever so slight, into one which no bravery can siimount.

The policy of attacking Crane Wand, as a means of getting at Norfolk, has been much questioned ; but there can be only one opinion,' surely, about the wisdom of sending boats, in` broad day-light, to feel their way to the shore;

\* Sketches of the NVar, p. 215.

over shoals and mud-banks; and that in the very teeth of a formidable battery. Unlike most other nations, the Americans in particular, the British when engaged in expeditions of this nature, always rest their hopes of success upon valor rather than numbers. But still had the veil of darkness been allowed to screen the boats from view, and an hour of the night chosen, when the tide had covered the shoals with deep water, the same little party might have carried the batteries ; and a defeat, as disgraceful to those that catiſ?cl, as honorable to those that suffered in it . beenſop,verted into a victory. As it was, the affair of Craney island, dressed.Ifp to advantage in the Alperican official account, and properly commented upon by the government-editors, was hailed throughout the union as a glorious triumph, fit for Americans to achieve.

On the night of the 25th of June, the effective men of the 102d regiment, Canadian chasseurs, and battalion, marines ; also, three companies of ship's marines, the whole- amounting to about 2000 men, commanded by major-general Beek, with, embarked in a diyiou of boats, placed under the orders. of rear-admiral Cockburn, and covered by the Mohawk sloop, and the launches of the squadron., , About half an hour before, day-light ,on, the 26th, the advance, consisting of about 650 men, along

with two 6-pounders, under lieutenant-colonel Napier, landed two miles to the westward of Hampton, a town about 18 miles from Norfolk, and separated from it by Hampton-roads. Shortly afterwards, the main body, consisting of the royal marine-battalions under lieutenant-colonel , Williams, landed ; and the whole moved forward.

A full detail of the little skirmishes that ensued with, certainly, a very inferior body of militia, will be found in Admiral Warren's and sir Sydney Beckwith's despatches.\* As might be expected, the town, and its seven pieces of cannon, fell into our hands, after a trifling loss of five killed, 33 wounded, and 10 missing ;\* or, according to Mr. Thomson, of " 90 killed and 120 wounded."1. The Americans admit a loss of seven killed, 12 wounded, 11 missing, and one prisoner ; total 31.t

Our force, on this occasion, has been, by the American editors, more fairly stated than usual ; but they have contrived to make it up, by proportionably diminishing their own. Mr. Thomson tells us that, early in June, from " the suspicious movements and menacing attitudes" of the British squadron lying in Hampton-roads, " the citizens of all the surrounding towns became apprehensive of an:attack ;" that

\* App. Nos. 14 and 15.

+ Sketches of the War, p. 240.

" at Norfolk the militia force very soon consisted of 10000 men ;" but that " at Hampton, a force of not more than 450 had yet been organized." After the British squadron had practised, during three weeks, " suspicious movements and menacing attitudes," in the very front of Hampton, within 18 miles of which,

10000 men" had already been collected, Mr. Thomson gravely enumerates the force that resisted the British, when they attacked and carried the town of Hampton, at " 438 men;" a smaller number even, than, at the very commencement of these " suspicious movements and menacing attitudes," he admits, had then been organized. Upon the whole, therefore, we shall incur no risk of over-rating the American force at Hampton, by fixing it at 1000 men.

A subject next presents itself for investigation, upon which it is painful to proceed. As soon as the Americans were defeated, and driven from Hampton, the British troops, or rather, " the foreign renegadoes," (for they were the principals), forming part of the advanced force, commenced perpetrating upon the defenceless inhabitants acts of rapine and violence, which un pitying custom has, in some degree, rendered inseparable from places that have been carried by storm ; but which are as revolting to human nature, as they are disgraceful to the flag

Sketches of the War, p. 218.

that would sanction them. The instant these circumstances of atrocity reached the ears of the British commanding officer, orders were given to search for, and bring in, all the Canadian chasseurs distributed through the town ; and, when so brought in, a guard was set over them. The officers could do no more : they could not be at every man's elbow, as he roamed through the country in search of plunder ;—and plunder the soldier claims as a right, and will have, when the enemy has compelled him to force his way at the point of the bayonet.

No event of the war was so greeted by the government-editors, as the affair at Hampton.. All the hireling pens in the United States were put in requisition, till tale followed tale, each out-doing the last in horror. The language of the brothel was exhausted, and that of Billingsgate surpassed, to invent sufferings for the American women, and terms of reproach for their *British* ravishers. Instances were not only magnified, but multiplied, tenfold ; till the whole republic rang with peals of execration against the British character and nation. A few of the boldest of the anti-government party stood up to undeceive the public, but the voice of reason was drowned in the general clamour ; and it became as dangerous, as it was useless, to attempt to gain a hearing. The " George-town Federal Republican," of July 7, a newspaper

published just at the verge of Washington-city, and whose editor has the' happy priviledge of remaining untainted amidst a corrupted atmosphere, contains the following account :—" The statement of the women of Hampton being violated by the British, turns out to be false, A correspondence upon that subject and the pillage said to have been committed there, has taken place between general Taylor and admirai Warren. Some plunder appears to have been committed, but it was confined to the French troops employed. Admiral Warren complains, on his part, of the Americans, having continued to fire upon the struggling crews of the barges, after they were sunk."\*

It will be scarcely necessary to mention, that, so far from the above statement, or any thing at all resembling it, appearing in the American histories from which we occasionally extract,—the most violent paragraphs out of the most violent journals, have alone that high honor assigned to them. One author, the reverend doctor Smith, has, unfortunately,—heedless how he prostituted his superior talents,—dressed up these calumnies in far more elegant language than either of his contemporaries.

Almost immediately after the affair at Hampton, captain Smith, who commanded the two companies of Canadian chasseurs, waited upon

\* Sec p. 60.

the commander-in-chief, and informed him that, having remonstrated with his men for **their** behaviour at Hampton, they, - one and **all**, declared, that they would show no quarter to any American whatever, in consequence of their comrades having been so basely fired at, when without arms, in the water, before the batteries at Craney Island. Upon captain Smith's expressing himself convinced that these foreigners would act up to their determination, sir John Warren ordered the two companies away from the American coast ; and, although troops were subsequently much wanted in that quarter, the Canadian chasseurs, or Independent foreigners, were never again employed in **the** British service.

On the 11th of July, sir John Warren detached rear-admiral Cockburn, with the Sceptre 74, (into which ship he had now shifted his flag,) the Romulus, Fox, and Nemesis, **all** *armée en flute*, the Conflict gun-brig, and Highflyer and Cockchafer tenders ; having on board the 103d regiment, of about .500 rank and **file,\* and a small detachment of artillery, to Ocracoke harbor, situate on the North-Carolina coast; for the purpose of putting an end to the commerce carried on from that port, by means of inland navigation, and of destroying any vessels that might be found there. During the night of the**

\* Afterwards sent to the Canadas.

12th, the squadron arrived off Ocracoke bar; and, at two o'clock on the following morning, the troops were embarked in their boats ; which, accompanied by the Conflict and tenders, pulled in three divisions, towards the shore. Owing to the great distance and heavy swell, the advanced division, commanded by lieutenant Westphal', first of the Sceptre, did not reach the shoal-point of the harbor, behind which two large armed vessels were seen at anchor, till considerably after day-light : consequently, the enemy was fully prepared for resistance. The instant the boats doubled the point, they were fired • upon by the two vessels ; but lieutenant Westphall, under cover of some rockets, pulled directly for them ; and, had just got to the brig's bows, when her crew cut the cables and abandoned her. The schooner's colours were hauled down by the enemy about the same time. The latter vessel proved to be the Atlas, letter of marque; of Philadelphia, mounting 10 guns, and measuring 240 tons : the former, the Anaconda, letter of marque, of New York, mounting 18 long 9-pounders, and measuring 387 tons.

· in the course of the morning the troops were landed,. and took possession of Ocracoke and the town. of Portsmouth, without the slightest opposition. The inhabitants behaved with civility,.and their property was, in consequence, not molested ; although both Mr. Thompson

and Mr. O'Connor have stated differently. One says : — " About 3000 men were landed at Portsmouth ; where they destroyed the private property of the inhabitants, and treated the place with no more forbearance than they had 'shown at Georgetown and Fredericktown.". Mr.O'Connor makes the attacking party amount to no more than " between 7 and 800 ;" declares that " the country was pillaged and laid waste by the enemy for several miles ;"-t and, having found out that some women died, and others were taken ill, in the neighbourhood, about the time of the attack, *supposes* that it all arose from " apprehensions of being treated like the unfortunate females at Ilampton."t — After remaining on shore for two days, rear-admiral Cockburn, with his troops and seamen, re-embarked ; not, it would appear, because he had performed the service entrusted to him, but—on account of his " not feeling himself competent to the attack on Newburn, now that its citizens were preparing to receive him."" No sooner had the British departed, than the American militia flocked to the post ; thus presenting us with a new system of military defence.

\* Sketches of the War, p. 224. -1 History of the War, p. 178.