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ARNOLD'S ENGLISH TEXTS

THE  
LIFE OF NELSON

BY

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LONDON  
EDWARD ARNOLD

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## THE PLAN OF THIS TEXT

THE following pages contain portions taken from five of the nine chapters in Southey's *Life of Nelson*. The portions selected contain the accounts of each of Nelson's four great battles, and each chapter here given is complete in itself. Considerable omissions have been made in Southey's text, the punctuation has been modernized by the freer use of full-stops, and the inordinately long paragraphs of the original have been broken up into small ones. The dates within which the events narrated in each chapter happened have been given under each title, and a marginal synopsis has been added throughout.

Sufficient notes for the understanding of the text have been given in the form of foot-notes, since experience tends to show that, where notes are detached from the text, they are either not used or committed to memory independently of the text itself.

No notes are given on words of which a sufficient explanation can be found in one of the excellent shilling Dictionaries now obtainable, as the Editor holds that every scholar of or above the age of twelve should possess a copy of an English Dictionary.

A short account of the book will be found prefixed to the text.

The Questions given at the end are intended to draw out of the scholars their knowledge of the text, to show that they have understood it, and to give them opportunities for practising the writing of their own language.

H. B. B.

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## THE BOOK AND ITS STORY

SOUTHEY'S *Life of Nelson* owes its origin to a corresponding *Life* written by two authors and published five years after Nelson's death. Of this book Southey wrote a review in the form of a magazine article, and, later, he set to work to condense and rearrange the enormous amount of material contained in it. As a result, his much shorter and more interesting *Life of Nelson* was published in 1813.

In the story of Nelson's life as it is told by Southey absolute historical accuracy in matters of small detail must not be looked for. What Southey aimed at showing was the greatness of his hero, who, though constantly struggling against bodily weakness, yet by his 'surpassing genius' and burning enthusiasm succeeded in gaining for his country 'the most signal victory that ever was achieved upon the seas,' who was worshipped by his seamen, and who was held by the people at large as the saviour of their country.

Southey's *Life of Nelson* has been, since the time of its first publication, a general favourite, and of the many prose and poetical writings of its author this is the only one now widely read. Many writers have thought it the best book that Southey ever wrote, and some have even considered it to be the best short biography in the English language.

# THE LIFE OF NELSON

## CHAPTER I

### FIRST YEARS AT SEA

[1770-1773]

HORATIO, son of Edmund and Catherine Nelson, was born September 29, 1758, in the parsonage house of Burnham Thorpe, a village in the county of Norfolk,<sup>1</sup> of which his father was rector Nelson's  
birth.

Mrs Nelson died in 1767, leaving eight out of eleven children. Her brother, Captain Maurice Suckling, of the navy, visited the widower upon this event, and promised to take care of one of the boys. Three years afterwards, when Horatio was only twelve years of age, being at home during the Christmas holidays, he read in the county newspaper that his uncle was appointed to the *Raisonnable*, of sixty-four guns. "Do, William," said he to a brother who was a year and a half older than himself, "write to my father, and tell him that I should like to go to sea with uncle Maurice" Accordingly, Cap- Captain  
Suckling's  
promise

<sup>1</sup> Near the coast between Hunstanton and Cromer.

tain Suckling was written to. "What," said he in his answer, "has poor Horatio done, who is so weak, that he above all the rest should be sent to rough it out at sea? But let him come, and the first time we go into action a cannon-ball may knock off his head, and provide for him at once"

It is manifest from these words that Horatio was not the boy whom his uncle would have chosen to bring up in his own profession. **Horatio's bodily weakness** He was never of a strong body, and the ague, which at that time was one of the most common diseases in England, had greatly reduced his strength, yet he had already given proofs of that resolute heart and nobleness of mind, which, during his whole career of labour and of glory, so eminently distinguished him.

When a mere child, he strayed a-birds'-nesting from his grandmother's house in company with a cow-boy. The dinner hour elapsed, he **His lack of fear.** was absent, and could not be found, and the alarm of the family became very great, for they apprehended that he might have been carried off by gipsies. At length, after search had been made for him in various directions, he was discovered, alone, sitting composedly by the side of a brook which he could not get over "I wonder, child," said the old lady when she saw him, "that hunger and fear did not drive you home." "Fear! grandmamma," replied the future hero, "I never saw fear What is it?"

Once, after the winter holidays, when he and his brother William had set off on horseback to return

to school, they came back because there had been a fall of snow, and William, who did not much like the journey, said it was too deep for them Schoolboy honour to venture on. "If that be the case," said the father, "you certainly shall not go, but make another attempt, and I will leave it to your honour. If the road is dangerous, you may return, but remember, boys, I leave it to your honour." The snow was deep enough to have afforded them a reasonable excuse, but Horatio was not to be prevailed upon to turn back. "We must go on," said he, "remember, brother, it was left to our honour!"

There were some fine pears growing in the schoolmaster's garden, which the boys regarded as lawful booty, and in the highest degree Lawful booty tempting, but the boldest among them were afraid to venture for the prize. Horatio volunteered upon this service. He was lowered down at night from the bedroom window by some sheets, plundered the tree, was drawn up with the pears, and then distributed them among his school-fellows without reserving any for himself. "I only took them," he said, "because every other boy was afraid."

Early on a cold and dark spring morning Mr. Nelson's servant arrived at this school, at North Walsham,<sup>1</sup> with the expected summons for Horatio

<sup>1</sup> The Paston Grammar School at North Walsham, a country town which lies between Cromer and Yarmouth. A brick, on which the initials 'H N' have been cut, is carefully preserved as a Nelson relic. Nelson was, for a short time, also at the Norwich Grammar School, opposite the entrance to which now stands his statue.

to join his ship. The parting from his brother William, who had been for so many years his playmate and bedfellow, was a painful effort, and was the beginning of those privations which are the sailor's lot through life. He accompanied his father to London. The *Raisonna-ble* was lying in the Medway. He was put into the Chatham stage, and on its arrival was set down with the rest of the passengers, and left to find his way on board as he could. After wandering about in the cold without being able to reach the ship, an officer observed the forlorn appearance of the boy, questioned him, and, happening to be acquainted with his uncle, took him home and gave him some refreshments. When he got on board, Captain Suckling was not in the ship, nor had any person been apprised of the boy's coming. He paced the deck the whole remainder of the day without being noticed by anyone, and it was not till the second day that somebody, as he expressed it, "took compassion on him."

Nelson had not been many months on board . . . when his love of enterprise was excited by hearing that two ships were fitting out for a voyage of discovery towards the North Pole. In consequence of the difficulties which were expected on such a service, these vessels were to take out effective men instead of the usual number of boys. This, however, did not deter him from soliciting to be received, and by his uncle's interest he was admitted as coxswain under Captain Lutwidge, second in command.

Nelson  
joins the  
"Raisonna-  
ble"

He is made  
coxswain

They sailed from the Nore on the 4th of June. On the 6th of the following month they were in latitude  $79^{\circ} 56' 39''$ , longitude  $9^{\circ} 43' 30''$  E. The next day, about the place where most of the old discoverers had been stopped, the *Racehorse* was beset with ice, but they hove her through with ice-anchors. Captain Phipps continued ranging along the ice, northward and westward, till the 24th, he then tried to the eastward. On the 30th he was in latitude  $80^{\circ} 13'$ , longitude  $18^{\circ} 48'$  E., among the islands and in the ice, with no appearance of an opening for the ships. The weather was exceedingly fine, mild, and unusually clear.

Here they were becalmed in a large bay, with three apparent openings between the islands which formed it, but everywhere, as far as they could see, surrounded with ice. There was not a breath of air, the water was perfectly smooth, the ice covered with snow, low and even, except a few broken pieces near the edge, and the pools of water in the middle of the ice-fields just crusted over with young ice. On the next day the ice closed upon them, and no opening was to be seen anywhere, except a hole or lake, as it might be called, of about a mile and a half in circumference, where the ships lay fast to the ice with their ice-anchors. They filled their casks with water from these ice-fields, which was very pure and soft. The men were playing on the ice all day; but the Greenland pilots, who were farther than they had ever been before, and considered

that the season was far advancing, were alarmed at being thus beset

The next day there was not the smallest opening, the ships were within less than two lengths of each other, separated by ice, and neither having room to turn. The ice, which the day before had been flat and almost level with the water's edge, was now in many places forced higher than the mainyard, by the pieces squeezing together. A day of thick fog followed. It was succeeded by clear weather, but the passage by which the ships had entered from the westward was closed, and no open water was in sight, either in that or any other quarter. By the pilots' advice the men were set to cut a passage, and warp through the small openings to the westward. They sawed through pieces of ice twelve feet thick, and this labour continued the whole day, during which their utmost efforts did not move the ships above three hundred yards; while they were driven, together with the ice, far to the north-east and east by the current. Sometimes a field of several acres square would be lifted up between two larger islands, and incorporated with them; and thus these larger pieces continued to grow by aggregation. Another day passed, and there seemed no probability of getting the ships out without a strong east or north-east wind. The season was far advanced, and every hour lessened the chance of extricating themselves

Young as he was, Nelson was appointed to command one of the boats which were sent out to

explore a passage into the open water. It was the means of saving a boat belonging to the *Racehorse* from a singular but imminent danger. Some of the officers had fired at and wounded a walrus. As no other animal has so human-like an expression in its countenance, so also is there none that seems to possess more of the passions of humanity. The wounded animal dived immediately, and brought up a number of its companions, and they all joined in an attack upon the boat. They wrested an oar from one of the men, and it was with the utmost difficulty that the crew could prevent them from staving or upsetting her, till the *Carcass's* boat came up, and the walruses, finding their enemies thus reinforced, dispersed.

Young Nelson exposed himself in a more daring manner. One night, during the mid-watch, he stole from the ship with one of his comrades, taking advantage of a rising fog, and set out over the ice in pursuit of a bear. It was not long before they were missed. The fog thickened, and Captain Lutwidge and his officers became exceedingly alarmed for their safety. Between three and four in the morning the weather cleared, and the two adventurers were seen, at a considerable distance from the ship, attacking a huge bear. The signal for them to return was immediately made. Nelson's comrade called upon him to obey it, but in vain, his musket had flashed in the pan, their ammunition was expended; and a chasm in the ice, which divided him from the bear, probably preserved his life. "Never mind,"

A walrus-  
fight

An  
adventure  
with a  
polar bear

he cried, "do but let me get a blow at him with the butt-end of my musket, and we shall have him." Captain Lutwidge, however, seeing his danger, fired a gun, which had the desired effect of frightening the beast, and the boy then returned, somewhat afraid of the consequences of his trespass. The captain reprimanded him sternly for conduct so unworthy of the office which he filled, and desired to know what motive he could have for hunting a bear. "Sir," said he, pouting his lip, as he was wont to do when agitated, "I wished to kill the bear that I might carry the skin to my father."

A party were now sent to an island, about twelve miles off—named Walden's Island in the chart, **Unexpected intelligence** from the midshipman who was entrusted with this service—to see where the open water lay. They came back with information that the ice, though close all about them, was open to the westward, round the point by which they came in. They said also, that upon the island they had had a fresh east wind. This intelligence considerably abated the hopes of the crew, for where they lay it had been almost calm, and their main dependence had been upon the effect of an easterly wind in clearing the bay. There was but one alternative, either to wait the event of the weather upon the ships, or to betake themselves to the boats.

The likelihood that it might be necessary to sacrifice the ships had been foreseen. The boats, accordingly, were adapted, both in number and size, to transport, in case of emergency, the whole

crew; and there were Dutch whalers upon the coast, in which they could all be conveyed to Europe. As for wintering where they were, that dreadful experiment had been already tried too often. No time was to be lost, the ships had driven into shoal water, having but 14 fathoms. Should they, or the ice to which they were fast, take the ground, they must inevitably be lost, and at this time they were driving fast towards some rocks on the north-east. Captain Phipps had sent for the officers of both ships, and told them his intention of preparing the boats for going away. They were immediately hoisted out, and the fitting began. Canvas bread-bags were made, in case it should be necessary suddenly to desert the vessels, and men were sent with the lead and line to the northward and eastward, to sound wherever they found cracks in the ice, that they might have notice before the ice took the ground, for in that case the ships must have instantly been crushed or upset.

On the 7th of August they began to haul the boats over the ice, Nelson having command of the four-oared cutter. The men behaved excellently well, like true British seamen; they seemed reconciled to the thought of leaving the ships, and had full confidence in their officers. About noon, the ice appeared rather more open near the vessels, and as the wind was easterly, though there was but little of it, the sails were set, and they got about a mile to the westward. They moved very slowly, and they were not now nearly

so far to the westward as when they were first beset. However, all sail was kept upon them, to force them through whenever the ice slacked the least. Whatever exertions were made, it could not be possible to get the boats to the water's edge before the 14th, and if the situation of the ships should not alter by that time, it would not be justifiable to stay longer by them. The commander therefore resolved to carry on both attempts together, moving the boats constantly, and taking every opportunity of getting the ships through.

A party was sent out next day to the westward, to examine the state of the ice. They returned with tidings that it was very heavy and close, consisting chiefly of large fields. Out of the grip of the ice. The ships, however, moved something, and the ice itself was drifting westward. There was a thick fog, so that it was impossible to ascertain what advantage had been gained. It continued on the 9th, but the ships were moved a little through some very small openings. The mist cleared off in the afternoon, and it was then perceived that they had driven much more than could have been expected to the westward, and that the ice itself had driven still farther. In the course of the day they got past the boats, and took them on board again. On the morrow the wind sprang up to the north-north-east. All sail was set, and the ships forced their way through a great deal of very heavy ice. They frequently struck, and with such force that one stroke broke the shank of the *Race-*

*horse's* best bower anchor,<sup>1</sup> but the vessels made way, and by noon they had cleared the ice and were out at sea. The next day they anchored in Smeerenberg harbour, close to that island of which the westernmost point is called Hakluyt's Headland, in honour of the great promoter and compiler of our English voyages of discovery<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The anchor carried on the starboard side of the vessel's bows

<sup>2</sup> Richard Hakluyt was an English clergyman who published, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, several volumes dealing with English, French, and Spanish voyages. The island mentioned in the text lies off the extreme north-west corner of Spitzbergen

## CHAPTER II

### THE BATTLE OFF CAPE ST VINCENT

[JANUARY—MARCH, 1797]

NELSON'S mind had long been irritated and depressed by the fear that a general action would take place before he could join the fleet. <sup>On</sup> <sub>board the</sub> "Captain" At length he sailed from Porto Ferrajo<sup>1</sup> with a convoy for Gibraltar, and, having reached that place, proceeded to the westward in search of the admiral. Off the mouth of the Straits he fell in with the Spanish fleet, and on the 13th of February, reaching the station off Cape St Vincent, communicated this intelligence to Sir John Jervis. He was now directed to shift his broad pendant<sup>2</sup> on board the *Captain*, seventy-four, Captain R. W. Miller, and, before sunset, the signal was made to prepare for action, and to keep during the night in close order. At daybreak the enemy were in sight.

The British force consisted of two ships of one hundred guns, two of ninety-eight, two of ninety,

<sup>1</sup> A harbour on the northern coast of Elba.

<sup>2</sup> The flag flown by a commodore or the senior officer of a squadron. Its shape—broad, tapering slightly, and swallow-tailed—serves to distinguish it from the narrow pendant flown by the junior captains.

eight of seventy-four, and one of sixty-four—fifteen of the line in all, with four frigates, a sloop, and a cutter. The Spaniards had one four-decker of one hundred and thirty-six guns, six three-deckers of one hundred and twelve, two eighty-fours, eighteen seventy-fours—in all twenty-seven ships of the line, with ten frigates and a brig. Their admiral, Don Joseph de Cordova, had learnt from an American, on the 5th, that the English had only nine ships, which was indeed the case when his informer had seen them, for a reinforcement of five ships from England, under Admiral Parker, had not then joined, and the *Culloden* had parted company

Upon this information, the Spanish commander, instead of going into Cadiz, as was his intention when he sailed from Carthagena, determined to seek an enemy so inferior in force; and relying, with fatal confidence, upon the American account, he suffered his ships to remain too far dispersed, and in some disorder. When the morning of the 14th broke, and discovered the English fleet, a fog for some time concealed their number. The look-out ship of the Spaniards, fancying that her signal was disregarded, because so little notice seemed to be taken of it, made another signal that the English force consisted of forty sail of the line. The captain afterwards said he did this to rouse the admiral. It had the effect of perplexing him and alarming the whole fleet.

The absurdity of such an act shows what was

The British  
and  
Spanish  
fleets

Alarm in  
the Spanish  
fleet

the state of the Spanish navy under that miserable Government by which Spain was so long oppressed and degraded, and finally betrayed. In reality, the general incapacity of the naval officers was so well known, that in a pasquinade<sup>1</sup> which about this time appeared at Madrid, wherein the different orders of the State were advertised for sale, the greater part of the sea officers, with all their equipments, were offered as a gift, and it was added, that any person who would please to take them should receive a handsome gratuity.

Before the enemy could form a regular order of battle, Sir John Jervis, by carrying a press of sail, came up with them, passed through their fleet, then tacked, and thus cut off nine of their ships from the main body. These ships attempted to form on the larboard tack, with a design of passing either through the British line or to leeward of it, and thus rejoining their friends. Only one of them succeeded in this attempt, and that only because she was so covered with smoke that her intention was not discovered till she had reached the rear. The others were so warmly received that they put about, took to flight, and did not appear again in the action till its close.

The admiral was now able to direct his attention to the enemy's main body, which was still superior in number to his whole fleet, and more so in weight

<sup>1</sup> A lampoon, or satire. The word is made from the name—Pasquino—of a witty Roman tailor who lived about the year 1600 A. D.

of metal. He made signal to tack in succession. Nelson, whose station was in the rear of the British line, perceived that the Spaniards were bearing up before the wind, with an intention of forming their line, going large, and joining their separated ships, or else of getting off without an engagement. To prevent either of these schemes, he disobeyed the signal without a moment's hesitation, and ordered his ship to be wore<sup>1</sup> This at once brought him into action with the *Santissima Trinidad*, one hundred and thirty-six, the *San Joseph*, one hundred and twelve, the *Salvador del Mundo*, one hundred and twelve, the *San Nicolas*, eighty, the *San Isidro*, seventy-four, another seventy-four, and another first-rate.<sup>2</sup> Trowbridge, in the *Culloden*, immediately joined and most nobly supported him, and for nearly an hour did the *Culloden* and *Captain* maintain what Nelson called "this apparently, but not really, unequal contest"—such was the advantage of skill and discipline, and the confidence which brave men derive from them.

Nelson  
and  
Trowbridge  
disobey  
the signal.

The *Blenheim* then passing between them and the enemy, gave them a respite, and poured in her fire upon the Spaniards. The *Captain* was now incapable of further service either in the line or in chase. She had lost her fore-topmast; not a sail, shroud, or rope was left;

The  
"Captain"  
after  
the fight.

<sup>1</sup> To 'wear' (=veer) a ship is to bring it partly round so that it shall receive the wind on its other side.

<sup>2</sup> A 'first-rate' warship in Nelson's time was one which carried one hundred guns or more

and her wheel was shot away. Nelson therefore directed Captain Miller to put the helm a-starboard, and calling for the boarders, ordered them to board.

Captain Berry, who had lately been Nelson's first lieutenant, was the first man who leaped into the enemy's mizen-chains<sup>1</sup> Miller, when Boarding the "San Nicolas" in the very act of going, was ordered by Nelson to remain Berry was supported from the spritsail-yard,<sup>2</sup> which locked in the *San Nicolas's* main rigging. A soldier of the 69th broke the upper quarter-gallery<sup>3</sup> window and jumped in, followed by the commodore himself, and by others as fast as possible The cabin doors were fastened, and the Spanish officers fired their pistols at them through the window, the doors were soon forced, and the Spanish brigadier fell while retreating to the quarter-deck Nelson pushed on, and found Berry in possession of the poop, and the Spanish ensign hauling down He passed on to the fore-castle, where he met two or three Spanish officers, and received their swords. The English were now in full possession of every part of the ship, and a fire of pistols and musketry opened upon them from the admiral's stern gallery of the *San Joseph*.

<sup>1</sup> The 'chains' of a vessel were, at that time, broad wooden planks projecting from its sides, and used for holding the blocks through which passed the shrouds of the masts, &c., the supporting ropes reaching from the mast-heads to the sides of the vessel

<sup>2</sup> A spar slung across the bowsprit of a vessel, on which a 'sprit-sail' was rigged In Nelson's time a large ship had three of these sails under its bowsprit

<sup>3</sup> A projecting balcony erected on each side of a vessel towards the stern.

Nelson having placed sentinels at the different ladders, and ordered Captain Miller to send more men into the prize, gave orders for boarding that ship from the *San Nicolas*. It was done in an instant, he himself leading the way. Berry assisted him into the main-chains,<sup>1</sup> and at that very moment a Spanish officer looked over the quarter-deck rail and said they surrendered. It was not long before he was on the quarter-deck, where the Spanish captain presented to him his sword, and told him the admiral was below, dying of his wounds. There, on the quarter-deck of an enemy's first-rate, he received the swords of the officers, giving them as they were delivered, one by one, to William Fearney, one of his old "Agamemnon," who, with the utmost coolness, put them under his arm. One of his sailors came up, and with an Englishman's feeling took him by the hand, saying he might not soon have such another place to do it in, and he was heartily glad to see him there. Twenty-four of the *Captain's* men were killed, and fifty-six wounded, a fourth part of the loss sustained by the whole squadron falling upon this ship. Nelson received only a few bruises.

The  
surrender  
of the  
"San  
Joseph"

As soon as the action was discontinued, Nelson went on board the admiral's ship. Sir John Jervis received him on the quarter-deck, took him in his arms, and said he could not sufficiently thank him. For this victory the commander-in-chief was rewarded with the title

The  
rewards of  
victory.

<sup>1</sup> Each mast—fore, main, and mizen—had its 'chains'

Earl St. Vincent Nelson, who, before the action was known in England, had been advanced to the rank of rear-admiral, had the Order of the Bath given him.<sup>1</sup> The sword of the Spanish rear-admiral, which Sir John Jervis insisted upon his keeping, he presented to the mayor and corporation of Norwich, saying that he knew no place where it could give him or his family more pleasure to have it kept than in the capital city of the county where he was born.<sup>2</sup> The freedom of that city was voted him on this occasion.

<sup>1</sup> The 'Order of the Bath' is a system of knighthood that dates back to the accession of Henry IV of England. Nelson, as a Knight of the Bath, now became Sir Horatio Nelson, K B.

<sup>2</sup> This sword of Don Xavier Francisco Winthuysen, the captain of the *San Joseph*, is carefully preserved in the Norwich Guildhall, and with it is preserved the letter dated from the *Irresistible*, 20th Feb., 1797, by which Nelson accompanied the gift.

CHAPTER III  
THE ATTACK ON SANTA CRUZ  
[MAY-JULY, 1797]

SIR HORATIO, who had now hoisted his flag as Rear-Admiral of the Blue,<sup>1</sup> was sent to bring away the troops from Porto Ferrajo. Having performed this, he shifted his flag to the *Theseus*. That ship had taken part in the mutiny in England,<sup>2</sup> and, being just arrived from home, some danger was apprehended from the temper of the men. This was one reason why Nelson was removed to her. He had not been on board many weeks before a paper, signed in the name of all the ship's company, was dropped on the quarter-deck, containing these words "Success

On board  
the  
"Theseus."

- In Nelson's time the British navy was divided into three squadrons—in order of precedence the red, white, and blue squadrons. Each of these had three ranks of admirals—admirals, vice-admirals, and rear-admirals. There were thus nine ranks, to the lowest of which Nelson was now appointed. As a rear-admiral his flag would be flown from the mizen- or rear-mast

<sup>2</sup> In April, 1797, the sailors in the fleet then stationed at Spithead refused to go to sea until their grievances—small pay, bad food, stoppage of pay when sick or even when wounded, and inconsiderate flogging—were redressed. Lord Howe succeeded in quelling the mutiny

attend Admiral Nelson! God bless Captain Miller! We thank them for the officers they have placed over us. We are happy and comfortable, and will shed every drop of blood in our veins to support them, and the name of the *Theseus* shall be immortalized as high as her captain's "

Wherever Nelson commanded, the men soon became attached to him. In ten days' time he would have restored the most mutinous ship in the navy to order. Whenever an officer fails to win the affections of those who are under his command, he may be assured that the fault is chiefly in himself.

While Sir Horatio was in the *Theseus*, he was employed in the command of the inner squadron at the blockade of Cadiz. During this service the most perilous action occurred in which he was ever engaged. Making a night attack upon the Spanish gunboats, his barge was attacked by an armed launch, under their commander, Don Miguel Tregoyen, carrying twenty-six men. Nelson had with him only his ten bargemen, Captain Freemantle, and his coxswain, John Sykes, an old and faithful follower, who twice saved the life of his admiral by parrying the blows aimed at him, and at last actually interposed his own head to receive the blow of a Spanish sabre, which he could not by any other means avert—thus dearly was Nelson beloved.

This was a desperate service—hand to hand with swords, and Nelson always considered that his personal courage was more conspicuous on this

occasion than on any other during his whole life. Notwithstanding the great disproportion of numbers, eighteen of the enemy were killed, all the rest wounded, and their launch taken. Nelson would have asked for a lieutenantcy for Sykes if he had served long enough, his manner and conduct, he observed, were so entirely above his situation that Nature certainly intended him for a gentleman. But though he recovered from the dangerous wound which he received in this act of heroic attachment, he did not live to profit by the gratitude and friendship of his commander.

Twelve days after this rencontre, Nelson sailed at the head of an expedition against Teneriffe. A report had prevailed a few months before that the viceroy of Mexico, with the treasure-ships, had put into that island. This had led Nelson to meditate the plan of an attack upon it, which he communicated to Earl St. Vincent.

The report concerning the viceroy was unfounded, but a homeward-bound Manilla ship put into Santa Cruz at this time, and the expedition was determined upon. It was not fitted out upon the scale which Nelson had proposed. Four ships of the line, three frigates, and the *Fox* cutter, formed the squadron; and he was allowed to choose such ships and officers as he thought proper. No troops were embarked, the seamen and marines of the squadron being thought sufficient. His orders were to make a vigorous attack, but on no account to land in person, unless

Nelson's  
gratitude

An  
expedition  
against  
Teneriffe.

Prepara-  
tions and  
plans.

his presence should be absolutely necessary. The plan was, that the boats should land in the night, between the fort on the north-east side of Santa Cruz Bay and the town, make themselves masters of that fort, and then send a summons to the governor.

By midnight the three frigates, having the force on board which was intended for this debarkation, **The plans miscarry** approached within three miles of the place, but, owing to a strong gale of wind in the offing, and a strong current against them inshore, they were not able to get within a mile of the landing-place before daybreak, and then they were seen and their intention discovered. Trowbridge and Bowen, with Captain Oldfield of the marines, went, upon this, to consult with the admiral what was to be done, and it was resolved that they should attempt to get possession of the heights above the fort. The frigates, accordingly, landed their men; and Nelson stood in with the line-of-battle ships, meaning to batter the fort for the purpose of distracting the attention of the garrison. A calm and contrary current hindered him from getting within a league of the shore, and the heights were by this time so secured, and manned with such a force, as to be judged impracticable.

Thus foiled in his plans by circumstances of wind and tide, he still considered it a point of honour that **A second attempt.** some attempt should be made. This was on the 22nd of July. He re-embarked his men that night, got the ships on the 24th to anchor about two miles north of the town, and made show

as if he intended to attack the heights. At six in the evening, signal was made for the boats to prepare to proceed on the service as previously ordered

When this was done, Nelson addressed a letter to the commander-in-chief—the last which was ever written with his right hand. “I shall not,” said he, “enter on the subject why we are not in possession of Santa Cruz. Your partiality will give credit that all has hitherto been done which was possible, but without effect. This night I, humble as I am, command the whole destined to land under the batteries of the town, and to-morrow my head will probably be crowned with either laurel or cypress. I have only to recommend Josiah Nisbet<sup>1</sup> to you and my country ”

Perfectly aware how desperate a service this was likely to prove, before he left the *Theseus* he called Lieutenant Nisbet, who had the watch on deck, into the cabin, that he might assist in arranging and burning his mother's letters. Perceiving that the young man was armed, he earnestly begged him to remain behind. “Should we both fall, Josiah,” said he, “what would become of your poor mother? The care of the *Theseus* falls to you; stay, therefore, and take charge of her.” Nisbet replied: “Sir, the ship must take care of herself; I will go with you to-night, if I never go again.”

<sup>1</sup> Nelson had in 1787 married, in the West Indies, the widow of a Doctor Nisbet. Josiah Nisbet was her son, and therefore Nelson's stepson, or, as he calls him, his 'son-in-law'

He met his captains at supper on board the *Sea-horse*, Captain Freemantle, whose wife, whom he had lately married in the Mediterranean, presided at table. At eleven o'clock, the boats, <sup>The plans for the second attack</sup> containing between 600 and 700 men, with 180 on board the *Fox* cutter, and from 70 to 80 in a boat which had been taken the day before, proceeded in six divisions towards the town, conducted by all the captains of the squadron, except Freemantle and Bowen, who attended with Nelson to regulate and lead the way to the attack. They were to land on a mole, and thence hasten as fast as possible into the great square, then form and proceed as should be found expedient.

They were not discovered till about half-past one o'clock, when, being within half-gunshot of the <sup>Their non-success</sup> landing-place, Nelson directed the boats to cast off from each other, give a huzza, and push for the shore. But the Spaniards were excellently well prepared. The alarm bells answered the huzza, and a fire of thirty or forty pieces of cannon, with musketry from one end of the town to the other, opened upon the invaders. Nothing, however, could check the intrepidity with which they advanced. The night was exceedingly dark. Most of the boats missed the mole, and went on shore through a raging surf, which stove all to the left of it. The Admiral, Freemantle, Thompson, Bowen, and four or five other boats, found the mole. They stormed it instantly, and carried it, though it was defended, as they imagined, by four

or five hundred men. Its guns, which were six-and-twenty pounders, were spiked, but such a heavy fire of musketry and grape was kept up from the citadel and the houses at the head of the mole, that the assailants could not advance, and nearly all of them were killed or wounded.

In the act of stepping out of the boat, Nelson received a shot through the right elbow, and fell. But, as he fell, he caught the sword, which he had just drawn, in his left hand, determined never to part with it while he lived, for it had belonged to his uncle, Captain Suckling, and he valued it like a relic. Nisbet, who was close to him, placed him at the bottom of the boat, and laid his hat over the shattered arm, lest the sight of the blood, which gushed out in great abundance, should increase his faintness. He then examined the wound, and taking some silk handkerchiefs from his neck, bound them tightly above the lacerated vessels. Had it not been for this presence of mind in his son-in-law, Nelson must have perished. One of his bargemen, by name Lovel, tore his shirt into shreds, and made a sling with them for the broken limb. They then collected five other seamen, by whose assistance they succeeded at length in getting the boat afloat, for it had grounded with the falling tide. Nisbet took one of the oars, and ordered the steersman to go close under the guns of the battery, that they might be safe from its tremendous fire. Hearing his voice, Nelson roused himself, and desired to be lifted up in the boat that he might look about him. Nisbet

Nelson's  
life again  
saved

raised him up, but nothing could be seen except the firing of the guns on shore, and what could be discerned by their flashes upon the stormy sea.

In a few minutes a general shriek was heard from the crew of the *Fox*, which had received a shot <sup>The</sup> under water, and went down. <sup>loss of</sup> Ninety-  
the "*Fox*." seven men were lost in her; eighty-three were saved, many by Nelson himself, whose exertions on this occasion greatly increased the pain and danger of his wound.

The first ship which the boat could reach happened to be the *Seahorse*, but nothing could induce him to go on board, though he was assured <sup>Nelson's</sup> that if they attempted to row to another <sup>conspicuous</sup> ship it might be at the risk of his life. <sup>bravery.</sup> "I had rather suffer death," he replied, "than alarm Mrs. Freemantle by letting her see me in this state, when I can give her no tidings whatever of her husband." They pushed on for the *Theseus*. When they came alongside he peremptorily refused all assistance in getting on board, so impatient was he that the boat should return, in hopes that it might save a few more from the *Fox*. He desired to have only a single rope thrown over the side, which he twisted round his left hand, saying, "Let me alone; I have yet my legs left and one arm. Tell the surgeon to make haste and get his instruments. I know I must lose my right arm; so the sooner it is off the better." The spirit which he displayed in jumping up the ship's side astonished everybody.

The total loss of the English in killed, wounded,

and drowned amounted to 250. Nelson made no mention of his own wound in his official despatches, but in a private letter to Lord St. Vincent —the first which he wrote with his left hand—he shows himself to have been <sup>His</sup> <sup>despair</sup> <sup>at the</sup> <sup>failure</sup> deeply affected by the failure of this enterprise. “I am become,” he said, “a burthen to my friends and useless to my country, but by my last letter you will perceive my anxiety for the promotion of my son-in-law, Josiah Nisbet. When I leave your command I become dead to the world; ‘I go hence, and am no more seen.’ ”—“A left-handed admiral,” he said in a subsequent letter, “will never again be considered as useful; therefore the sooner I get to a very humble cottage the better, and make room for a sounder man to serve the State.”

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PURSUIT OF THE FRENCH FLEET

[MARCH 29—AUGUST 1, 1798]

EARLY in the year 1798 Sir Horatio Nelson hoisted his flag in the *Vanguard*, and was ordered to rejoin Earl St. Vincent. Immediately on his rejoining the fleet, he was despatched to the Mediterranean with a small squadron, in order to ascertain, if possible, the object of the great expedition which at that time was fitting out, under Buonaparte, at Toulon. The defeat of this armament, whatever might be its destination, was deemed by the British Government an object paramount to every other; and Earl St. Vincent was directed, if he thought it necessary, to take his whole force into the Mediterranean: to relinquish for that purpose the blockade of the Spanish fleet as a thing of inferior moment. But if he should deem a detachment sufficient, "I think it almost unnecessary," said the First Lord of the Admiralty<sup>1</sup> in his secret instructions, "to suggest to you the

<sup>1</sup> The chief member of the Board of Commissioners in whose hands Government places the control of the navy.

propriety of putting it under Sir Horatio Nelson." It is to the honour of Earl St. Vincent that he had already made the same choice.

The armament at Toulon consisted of thirteen ships of the line, seven forty-gun frigates, with twenty-four smaller vessels of war and nearly 200 transports. Mr. Udney, our consul at Leghorn, was the first person who procured certain intelligence of the enemy's design against Malta, and from his own sagacity foresaw that Egypt must be their after-object.

The plans  
of the  
French  
fleet

Nelson sailed from Gibraltar on the 9th of May, with the *Vanguard*, *Orion*, and *Alexander*, seventy-fours, the *Caroline*, *Flora*, *Emerald*, and *Terpsichore* frigates, and the *Bonne Citoyenne* sloop of war, to watch this formidable armament. On the 19th, when they were in the Gulf of Lyons, a gale came on from the north-west. It moderated so much on the 20th as to enable them to get their topgallant masts<sup>1</sup> and yards aloft. After dark it again began to blow strong, but the ships had been prepared for a gale, and therefore Nelson's mind was easy. Shortly after midnight, however, his main-topmast<sup>1</sup> went over the side, and the mizen-topmast, soon afterward. The night was so tempestuous that it was impossible for any signal to be either seen or heard, and Nelson determined, as soon as it should be daybreak, to wear, and scud before the gale; but

The Eng-  
lish fleet in  
a storm

<sup>1</sup> See the note on page 49.

at half-past three the foremast went in three pieces, and the bowsprit was found to be sprung in three places.

“I ought not,” said the Admiral, writing to his wife—“I ought not to call what has happened to the *Vanguard* by the cold name of accident I believe firmly it was the Almighty’s goodness to check my consummate vanity. I hope it has made me a better officer, as I feel confident it has made me a better man. Figure to yourself, on Sunday evening at sunset, a vain man walking in his cabin, with a squadron around him, who looked up to their chief to lead them to glory, and in whom their chief placed the firmest reliance that the proudest ships of equal numbers belonging to France would have lowered their flags—figure to yourself, on Monday morning when the sun rose, this proud man, his ship dismasted, his fleet dispersed, and himself in such distress that the meanest frigate out of France would have been an unwelcome guest.”

Nelson had indeed more reason to refuse the cold name of accident to this tempest than he was then aware of, for on that very day the French fleet sailed from Toulon, and must have passed within a few leagues of his little squadron, which was thus preserved by the thick weather that came on.

The first news of the enemy’s armament was that it had surprised Malta. Nelson formed a plan for attacking it while at anchor at Gozo; but on the 22nd of June intelligence reached him that the

French had left that island on the 16th, the day after their arrival. It was clear that their destination was eastward—he thought for Egypt—and for Egypt, therefore, he made all sail. Had the frigates been with him he could scarcely have failed to gain information of the enemy; for want of them, he only spoke<sup>1</sup> three vessels on the way. Two came from Alexandria, one from the Archipelago, and neither of them had seen anything of the French.

He arrived off Alexandria on the 28th, and the enemy were not there, neither was there any account of them; but the governor was endeavouring to put the city in a state of defence, having received advice from Leghorn that the French expedition was intended against Egypt, after it had taken Malta. Nelson then shaped his course to the northward, for Caramania,<sup>2</sup> and steered thence along the southern side of Candia, carrying a press of sail both night and day, with a contrary wind

Baffled in his pursuit, he returned to Sicily. The Neapolitan ministry had determined to give his squadron no assistance, being resolved to do nothing which could possibly endanger their peace with the French Directory.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To 'speak' a vessel at sea is to hold communication with its captain by means of signalling flags

<sup>2</sup> Or Karaman—the coast district of Asia Minor, north of Cyprus

<sup>3</sup> During the years 1795-6, the French Government, being in the hands of five 'Directors,' was known as the 'Directory.'

By means, however, of Lady Hamilton's influence<sup>1</sup> at court, he procured secret orders to the Sicilian governors, and under those orders obtained everything which he wanted at Syracuse—a timely supply, without which, he always said, he could not have recommenced his pursuit with any hope of success

On the 25th of July he sailed from Syracuse for the Morea. Anxious beyond measure, and irritated that the enemy should so long have eluded him, the tediousness of the nights made him impatient, and the officer of the watch was repeatedly called on to let him know the hour, and convince him, who measured time by his own eagerness, that it was not yet daybreak. The squadron made the Gulf of Coron<sup>2</sup> on the 28th. Trowbridge entered the port, and returned with the intelligence that the French had been seen, about four weeks before, steering to the south-east from Candia. Nelson then determined immediately to return to Alexandria, and the British fleet accordingly, with every sail set, stood once more for the coast of Egypt

On the 1st of August, about ten in the morning, they came in sight of Alexandria. The port had been vacant and solitary when they saw it last; it was now crowded with ships, and they perceived with exultation that the tri-colour

<sup>1</sup> Lady Hamilton was the wife of Sir William Hamilton, the English ambassador at Naples.

<sup>2</sup> Now known as Koroni, or Kalamata—the more westerly of the two gulfs on the southern coast of the Morea.

flag<sup>1</sup> was flying upon the walls. At four in the afternoon, Captain Hood, in the *Zealous*, made the signal for the enemy's fleet. For many preceding days Nelson had hardly taken either sleep or food. He now ordered his dinner to be served while preparations were making for battle, and when his officers rose from the table and went to their separate stations, he said to them "Before this time to-morrow, I shall have gained a peerage or Westminster Abbey."

The French, steering direct for Candia, had made an angular passage for Alexandria, whereas Nelson, in pursuit of them, made straight for that place, and thus materially shortened the distance. How the fleets had missed each other The comparative smallness of his force made it necessary to sail in close order, and it covered a less space than it would have done if the frigates had been with him, the weather also was constantly hazy. These circumstances prevented the English from discovering the enemy on the way to Egypt, though it appeared, upon examining the journals of the French officers taken in the action, that the two fleets must actually have crossed on the night of the 22nd of June. During the return to Syracuse the chances of falling in with them were fewer.

<sup>1</sup> The national flag during the French Revolution. It was formed of three vertical stripes, coloured respectively white, blue, and red.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BATTLE OF THE NILE

[AUGUST 1, 1798]

THE French fleet arrived at Alexandria on the 1st of July, and Brueys,<sup>1</sup> not being able to enter the port, which time and neglect had ruined, moored his ships in Aboukir Bay, in a strong and compact line of battle, the headmost vessel, according to his own account, being as close as possible to a shoal on the north-west, and the rest of the fleet forming a kind of curve along the line of deep water, so as not to be turned by any means in the south-west. By Buonaparte's desire, he had offered a reward of 10,000 livres to any pilot of the country who would carry the squadron in; but none could be found who would venture to take charge of a single vessel drawing more than twenty feet. He had therefore made the best of his situation, and chosen the strongest position which he could possibly take in an open road.

During the whole pursuit it had been Nelson's practice, whenever circumstances would permit, to

<sup>1</sup> The admiral in command of the French fleet.

have his captains on board the *Vanguard*, and explain to them his own ideas of the different and best modes of attack, and such plans as he proposed to execute, on falling in with the enemy, whatever their situation might be. There is no possible position, it is said, which he did not take into calculation. His officers were thus fully acquainted with his principles of tactics, and such was his confidence in their abilities that the only thing determined upon, in case they should find the French at anchor, was for the ships to form as most convenient for their mutual support, and to anchor by the stern. "First gain the victory," he said, "and then make the best use of it you can."

Nelson's  
confidence  
in his  
officers

The moment he perceived the position of the French, that intuitive genius with which Nelson was endowed displayed itself, and it instantly struck him that where there was room for an enemy's ship to swing there was room for one of ours to anchor. The plan which he intended to pursue, therefore, was to keep entirely on the outer side of the French line, and station his ships, as far as he was able, one on the outer bow, and another on the outer quarter, of each of the enemy's. This plan of doubling on the enemy's ships was projected by Lord Hood when he designed to attack the French fleet at their anchorage in Gourjean Road.<sup>1</sup> Lord Hood found it impossible to make the attempt; but the thought was not

His plan  
of attack.

<sup>1</sup> This happened in 1794. The Gourjean Roads lie off the south coast of France, to the east of Toulon.

lost upon Nelson, who acknowledged himself on this occasion indebted for it to his old and excellent commander. Captain Berry, when he comprehended the scope of the design, exclaimed with transport "If we succeed, what will the world say?"—"There is no *if* in the case," replied the Admiral. "That we shall succeed is certain, who may live to tell the story, is a very different question."

A French brig was instructed to decoy the English, by manœuvring so as to tempt them towards a shoal lying off the island of Bekier; but Nelson either knew the danger or suspected some deceit, and the lure was unsuccessful

Captain Foley led the way in the *Goliath*, out-sailing the *Zealous*, which for some minutes disputed this post of honour with him. He had long conceived that if the enemy were moored in line of battle in with the land, the best plan of attack would be to lead between them and the shore, because the French guns on that side were not likely to be manned or even ready for action. Intending, therefore, to fix himself on the inner bow of the *Guerrrier*, he kept as near the edge of the bank as the depth of water would admit; but his anchor hung, and, having opened his fire, he drifted to the second ship, the *Conquerant*, before it was clear, then anchored by the stern, inside of her, and in ten minutes shot away her mast. Hood, in the *Zealous*, perceiving this, took the station which the *Goliath*

intended to have occupied, and totally disabled the *Guerrier* in twelve minutes.

While these advanced ships doubled the French line, the *Vanguard* was the first that anchored on the outer side of the enemy, within half pistol-shot of their third ship, the *Spartiate*. <sup>The</sup> "*Vanguard*." Nelson had six colours flying in different parts of his rigging, lest they should be shot away—that they should be struck no British admiral considers as a possibility. He veered half a cable, and instantly opened a tremendous fire, under cover of which the other four ships of his division, the *Minotaur*, *Bellerophon*, *Defence*, and *Majestic*, sailed on ahead of the Admiral. In a few minutes every man stationed at the first six guns in the fore part of the *Vanguard's* deck was killed or wounded—these guns were three times cleared.

Captain Louis, in the *Minotaur*, anchored next ahead, and took off the fire of the *Aquilon*, the fourth in the enemy's line. The *Bellerophon*, Captain Darby, passed ahead, and <sup>The</sup> "*Minotaur*" and "*Bellerophon*." dropped her stern anchor on the star-board bow of the *Orient*, seventh in the line, Brueys' own ship, of one hundred and twenty guns, whose difference of force was in proportion of more than seven to three, and whose weight of ball from the lower deck alone exceeded that from the whole broadside of the *Bellerophon*. The action commenced at half after six; about seven night closed, and there was no other light than that from the fire of the contending fleets.

Trowbridge, in the *Culloden*, then foremost of the

remaining ships, was two leagues astern. He came on, sounding, as the others had done. As he advanced, the increasing darkness in-  
 creased the difficulty of the navigation, and suddenly, after having found eleven fathoms water, before the lead could be hove again he was fast aground, nor could all his own exertions, joined to those of the *Leander* and the *Mutine* brig, which came to his assistance, get him off in time to bear a part in the action. His ship, however, served as a beacon to the *Alexander* and *Swiftsure*, which would else, from the course which they were holding, have gone considerably farther on the reef, and must inevitably have been lost. These ships entered the bay, and took their stations in the darkness in a manner long spoken of with admiration by all who remembered it.

The first two ships of the French line had been dismasted within a quarter of an hour after the commencement of the action, and the others had in that time suffered so severely that victory was already certain. The third, fourth, and fifth were taken possession of at half-past eight.

Meantime, Nelson received a severe wound on the head from a piece of langridge shot.<sup>1</sup> Captain Berry caught him in his arms as he was falling. The great effusion of blood occasioned an appre-

<sup>1</sup> Shot used for tearing sails and rigging, and made of bolts, nails, and other pieces of iron fastened together. The word is also spelt 'langrage.'

hension that the wound was mortal. Nelson himself thought so; a large flap of the skin of the forehead, cut from the bone, had fallen over one eye, and, the other being blind,<sup>1</sup> he was in total darkness. When he was carried down, the surgeon—in the midst of a scene scarcely to be conceived by those who have never seen a cock-pit in time of action, and the heroism which is displayed amid its horrors—with a natural and pardonable eagerness, quitted the poor fellow then under his hands that he might instantly attend the Admiral. “No!” said Nelson, “I will take my turn with my brave fellows”

Nelson  
wounded  
severely.

When the surgeon came in due time to examine his wound—for it was in vain to entreat him to let it be examined sooner—the most anxious silence prevailed; and the joy of the wounded men, and of the whole crew, when they heard that the hurt was merely superficial, gave Nelson deeper pleasure than the unexpected assurance that his life was in no danger. He was now left alone, when suddenly a cry was heard on the deck that the *Orient* was on fire. In the confusion he found his way up, unassisted and unnoticed, and, to the astonishment of everyone, appeared on the quarter-deck, where he immediately gave orders that boats should be sent to the relief of the enemy.

His  
fortitude.

It was soon after nine that the fire on board the *Orient* broke out. Brueys was dead. He had received three wounds, yet he would not leave his

<sup>1</sup> At the siege of Calvi, in 1794, Nelson had lost the sight of his right eye, owing to a shot driving some sand into it.

post; a fourth cut him almost in two. He desired not to be carried below, but to be left to die upon the deck. The flames soon mastered his ship. Her sides had just been painted, and the oil-jars and paint-buckets were lying on the poop. By the prodigious light of this conflagration the situation of the two fleets could now be perceived, the colours of both being clearly distinguishable. About ten o'clock the ship blew up with a shock which was felt to the very bottom of every vessel. Many of her officers and men jumped overboard, some clinging to the spars and pieces of wreck with which the sea was strewn, others swimming to escape from the destruction which they momentarily dreaded. Some were picked up by our boats, and some, even in the heat and fury of the action, were dragged into the lower ports of the nearest British vessel by the British sailors. The greater part of her crew, however, stood the danger till the last, and continued to fire from the lower deck. This tremendous explosion was followed by a silence not less awful. The firing immediately ceased on both sides, and the first sound which broke the silence was the dash of her shattered masts and yards falling into the water from the vast height to which they had been exploded.

About seventy of the *Orient's* crew were saved by the English boats. Among the many hundreds who perished were the commodore, Casa-Bianca, Bianca, and his son, a brave boy, only ten years old. They were seen floating on a

shattered mast when the ship blew up. She had money on board—the plunder of Malta—to the amount of £600,000 sterling.

The masses of burning wreck which were scattered by the explosion excited, for some moments, apprehensions in the English which they had never felt from any other danger. Two large pieces fell into the main and fore-tops of the *Swiftsure* without injuring any person. A port fire<sup>1</sup> also fell into the main-royal<sup>2</sup> of the *Alexander*, the fire which it occasioned was speedily extinguished. Captain Ball had provided, as far as human foresight could provide, against any such danger. All the shrouds and sails of his ship, not absolutely necessary for its immediate management, were thoroughly wetted, and so rolled up that they were as hard and as little inflammable as so many solid cylinders.

Results  
of the  
explosion

The firing recommenced with the ships to leeward of the centre, and continued till about three. At daybreak the *Guillaume Tell* and the *Généreux*, the two rear ships of the enemy, were the only French ships of the line which had their colours flying. They cut their cables in the forenoon, not having been engaged, and stood out to sea, and two frigates with

The escape  
of four  
French  
ships

<sup>1</sup> A tube firmly packed with inflammable substances, and used in firing guns

<sup>2</sup> The uppermost of the four sails carried by the central or main mast. These were, in order of ascent, the main-sail, the main-topsail, the main-topgallant sail, and the main royal. Each of these had its particular mast. The fore-mast and mizen-mast each carried its corresponding four sails.

them. The *Zealous* pursued, but as there was no other ship in a condition to support Captain Hood, he was recalled. It was generally believed by the officers that, if Nelson had not been wounded, not one of these ships could have escaped. The four certainly could not, if the *Culloden* had got into action, and if the frigates belonging to the squadron had been present, not one of the enemy's fleet would have left Aboukir Bay. These four vessels, however, were all that escaped, and the victory was the most complete and glorious in the annals of naval history. "Victory," said Nelson, "is not a name strong enough for such a scene," he called it a conquest.

Of thirteen sail of the line, nine were taken and two burnt, of the four frigates, one was sunk, another, the *Artemise*, was burnt in a villainous manner by her captain, M. Estandlet, who, having fired a broadside at the *Theseus*, struck his colours, then set fire to the ship, and escaped with most of his crew to shore. The British loss in killed and wounded amounted to eight hundred and ninety-five. Westcott was the only captain who fell. Three thousand one hundred and five of the French, including the wounded, were sent on shore by cartel,<sup>1</sup> and five thousand two hundred and twenty-five perished.

As soon as the conquest was completed, Nelson sent orders through the fleet to return thanksgiving in every ship for the victory with which Almighty God had blessed his Majesty's arms. The French

<sup>1</sup> An agreement for the exchange of prisoners.

at Rosetta, who with miserable fear beheld the engagement, were at a loss to understand the stillness of the fleet during the performance of this solemn duty. But it seemed to affect many of the prisoners, officers as well as men, and, graceless and godless as the officers were, some of them remarked that it was no wonder such order was preserved in the British navy, when the minds of our men could be impressed with such sentiments after so great a victory, and at a moment of such confusion.

Thanks-giving throughout the fleet

Nelson was now at the summit of glory. Congratulations, rewards, and honours were showered upon him by all the states and princes and powers to whom his victory gave a respite. He was created Baron Nelson of the Nile and of Burnham Thorpe, with a pension of £2,000 for his own life and those of his two immediate successors.

Rewards and honours

## CHAPTER VI

### THE VOYAGE TO THE BALTIC

[MARCH 12—APRIL 2, 1801]

THE Addington administration<sup>1</sup> was just at this time formed; and Nelson, who had solicited employment, and been made Vice-Admiral of the Blue, was sent to the Baltic, as second in command under Sir Hyde Parker, by Earl St. Vincent, the new First Lord of the Admiralty.

Nelson a  
Vice-  
Admiral.

The three northern Courts had formed a confederacy for making England resign her naval rights. The Danish navy at this time consisted of twenty-three ships of the line, with about thirty-one frigates and smaller vessels, exclusive of guardships. The Swedes had eighteen ships of the line, fourteen frigates and sloops, seventy-four galleys and smaller vessels, besides gunboats, and this force was in a far better state of equipment than the Danish. The Russians had eighty-two sail of the line and forty frigates. Of these, there were forty-seven sail of the line at Cronstadt, Revel, Petersburg, and Arch-

The  
Northern  
Confederacy

<sup>1</sup> The Ministry formed with Mr. Addington as Prime Minister

angel; but the Russian fleet was ill-manned, ill-officered, and ill-equipped.

Such a combination under the influence of France would soon have become formidable, and never did the British Cabinet display more decision than in instantly preparing to crush it. They erred, however, in permitting any petty consideration to prevent them from appointing Nelson to the command. The public properly murmured at seeing it entrusted to another, and he himself said to Earl St. Vincent, that, circumstanced as he was, this expedition would probably be the last service that he should ever perform. The Earl, in reply, besought him not to suffer himself to be carried away by any sudden impulse.

The  
Cabinet's  
mistake.

The fleet sailed on the 12th of March. Mr. Vansittart<sup>1</sup> sailed in it, the British Cabinet still hoping to obtain its end by negotiation. It was well for England that Sir Hyde Parker placed a fuller confidence in Nelson than the Government seems to have done at this most important crisis.

The fleet  
set sail.

Mr. Vansittart left the fleet at the Scaw, and preceded it in a frigate with a flag of truce. Precious time was lost by this delay, which was to be purchased by the dearest blood of Britain and Denmark.

Time lost

On the 21st Nelson had a long conference with Sir Hyde; and the next day addressed a letter to him, worthy of himself and of the occasion. "The

<sup>1</sup> The British envoy to Copenhagen.

more I have reflected," said Nelson to his commander, "the more I am confirmed in opinion that not a moment should be lost in attacking the enemy.

**Nelson's  
opinion on  
the delay**

They will every day and every hour be stronger, we shall never be so good a match for them as at this moment. The only consideration is, how to get at them with the least risk to our ships."

Supposing him to force the passage of the Sound, Nelson thought some damage might be done among the masts and yards, though perhaps not one of them but would be serviceable again. Supposing them through the Belt, he proposed that a detachment of the fleet should be sent to destroy the Russian squadron at Revel, and that the business at Copenhagen should be attempted with the remainder

**The two  
routes  
possible**

The pilots, as men who had nothing but safety to think of, were terrified by the formidable report of the batteries of Elsinore, and the tremendous preparations which our negotiators, who were now returned from their fruitless mission, witnessed. They therefore persuaded Sir Hyde to prefer the passage of the Belt. "Let it be by the Sound, by the Belt, or anyhow," cried Nelson, "only lose not an hour!"

**The pilots'  
advice**

On the 26th they sailed for the Belt. Such was the habitual reserve of Sir Hyde that his own captain, the captain of the fleet, did not know which course he had resolved to take till the fleet were getting under weigh.

**Their  
advice not  
taken**

When Captain Domett was thus apprised of it, he

felt it his duty to represent to the admiral his belief that, if that course were persevered in, the ultimate object would be totally defeated. Nelson entirely agreed with him, and it was finally determined to take the passage of the Sound, and the fleet returned to its former anchorage.

The next day was more idly expended in despatching a flag of truce to the governor of Cronenburg Castle, to ask whether he had received orders to fire at the British fleet, as the Admiral must consider the first gun to be a declaration of war on the part of Denmark. A soldier-like and becoming answer was returned to this formality. During this intercourse a Dane, who came on board the commander's ship, having occasion to express his business in writing, found the pen blunt, and holding it up, sarcastically said "If your guns are not better pointed than your pens, you will make little impression on Copenhagen!"

Another  
flag of  
truce

On that day intelligence reached the Admiral of the loss of one of his fleet, the *Invincible*, seventy-four, wrecked on a sandbank as she was coming out of Yarmouth. Four hundred of her men perished in her.

Loss  
of the  
"Invincible"

Nelson, who was now appointed to lead the van, shifted his flag to the *Elephant*, Captain Foley—a lighter ship than the *St. George*, and therefore fitter for the expected operations. The two following days were calm. Orders had been given to pass the Sound as soon as the wind would permit, and on the afternoon of the 29th the ships were cleared for action.

The  
English  
ships  
cleared for  
action

with an alacrity characteristic of British seamen. At daybreak on the 30th it blew a topsail breeze<sup>1</sup> from the north-west. The signal was made, and the fleet moved on in order of battle, Nelson's division in the van, Sir Hyde's in the centre, and Admiral Graves' in the rear.

Great actions, whether military or naval, have generally given celebrity to the scenes whence they are denominated, and thus petty villages, and capes and bays known only to the coasting trader, become associated with mighty deeds, and their names are made conspicuous in the history of the world. Here, however, the scene was every way worthy of the drama. The political importance of the Sound is such that grand objects are not needed there to impress the imagination; yet is the channel full of grand and interesting objects, both of art and nature.

This passage, which Denmark had so long considered as the key of the Baltic, is in its narrowest part about three miles wide, and here **The city of Elsinore** the city of Elsinore is situated—except Copenhagen the most flourishing of the Danish towns. Every vessel which passes lowers her top-gallant sails and pays toll at Elsinore—a toll which is believed to have had its origin in the consent of the traders to that sea, Denmark taking upon itself the charge of constructing lighthouses and

<sup>1</sup> A breeze which would allow the topsails to be spread, but which was too strong to allow the spreading of those above them. See note on page 49

erecting signals to mark the shoals and rocks from the Cattegat to the Baltic, and they on their part agreeing that all ships should pass this way in order that all might pay their shares, none from that time using the passage of the Belt, because it was not fitting that they who enjoyed the benefit of the beacons in dark and stormy weather should evade contributing to them in fair seasons and summer nights. Of late years about ten thousand vessels had annually paid this contribution in time of peace

Adjoining Elsinore, and at the edge of the peninsular promontory, upon the nearest point of land to the Swedish coast, stands Cronenburg Cronenburg, Helsingburg and Copenhagen Castle, built after Tycho Brahe's design,<sup>1</sup> a magnificent pile—at once a palace, and fortress, and state prison, with its spires and towers, and battlements and batteries. On the left of the strait is the old Swedish city of Helsingburg, at the foot and on the side of a hill. The isles of Huen,<sup>2</sup> Saltholm, and Amak<sup>2</sup> appear in the widening channel, and at the distance of twenty miles from Elsinore stands Copenhagen, in full view—the best city of the north, and one of the finest capitals of Europe, visible, with its stately spires, far off.

A council of war was held in the afternoon. It was apparent that the Danes could not be attacked without great difficulty and risk; and some of the

<sup>1</sup> Tycho Brahe was a famous Danish astronomer, who lived about the time of our Queen Elizabeth. His observatory was situated on the island of Huen

<sup>2</sup> Now spelt Hven, and Amager.

members of the council spoke of the number of the Swedes and the Russians whom they should afterwards have to engage as a consideration which ought to be borne in mind Nelson, who kept pacing the cabin, impatient as he ever was of anything which savoured of irresolution, repeatedly said, "The more numerous the better I wish they were twice as many—the easier the victory, depend on it."

The plan upon which he had determined, if ever it should be his fortune to bring a Baltic fleet to action, was to attack the head of their line, and confuse their movements. "Close with a Frenchman," he used to say, "but out-manceuvre a Russian" He offered his services for the attack, requiring ten sail of the line and the whole of the smaller craft. Sir Hyde gave him two more line-of-battle ships than he asked, and left everything to his judgment.

The enemy's force was not the only, nor the greatest, obstacle with which the British fleet had to contend, there was another to be overcome before they could come in contact with it. The channel was little known and extremely intricate. All the buoys had been removed, and the Danes considered this difficulty as almost insuperable, thinking the channel impracticable for so large a fleet. Nelson himself saw the soundings made and the buoys laid down, boating it upon this exhausting service, day and night, till it was effected. When this was done he thanked God for having enabled him to get through this difficult part of his duty.

On the morning of the 1st of April the whole fleet removed to an anchorage within two leagues of the town, and off the north-west end of the Middle Ground, a shoal lying <sup>The fleet off</sup> exactly before the town, at about three-quarters of a mile distance, and extending along its whole sea-front <sup>Copenhagen</sup> The King's Channel, where there is deep water, is between this shoal and the town, and here the Danes had arranged their line of defence as near the shore as possible nineteen ships and floating batteries, flanked, at the end nearest the town, by the Crown Batteries, which were two artificial islands at the mouth of the harbour—most formidable works, the larger one having, by the Danish account, sixty-six guns, but, as Nelson believed, eighty-eight.

The fleet having anchored, Nelson, with Riou in the *Amazon*, made his last examination of the ground, and about one o'clock, returning to his own ship, threw out the signal to weigh <sup>Anchorage at</sup> It was received with a shout <sup>nightfall.</sup> throughout the whole division. They weighed with a light and favourable wind. The narrow channel between the island of Saltholm and the Middle Ground had been accurately buoyed; the small craft pointed out the course distinctly, Riou led the way. The whole division coasted along the outer edge of the shoal, doubled its farther extremity, and anchored there off Draco Point,<sup>1</sup> just as the darkness closed—the headmost of the enemy's line not being more than two miles distant.

<sup>1</sup> Now spelt Dragør—the most easterly extremity of Amager.

The Danes meantime had not been idle. No sooner did the guns of Cronenburg make it known to the whole city that all negotiation was at an end, that the British fleet was passing the Sound, and that the dispute between the two crowns must now be decided by arms, than a spirit displayed itself most honourable to the Danish character. All ranks offered themselves to the service of their country. The university furnished a corps of twelve hundred youths, the flower of Denmark—it was one of those emergencies in which little drilling or discipline is necessary to render courage available, they had nothing to learn but how to manage the guns, and were employed day and night in practising them. When the movements of Nelson's squadron were perceived, it was known when and where the attack was to be expected, and the line of defence was manned indiscriminately by soldiers, sailors, and citizens.

This was an awful night for Copenhagen—far more so than for the British fleet, where the men were accustomed to battle and victory, and had none of those objects before their eyes which render death terrible. Nelson sat down to table with a large party of his officers. He was, as he was ever wont to be when on the eve of action, in high spirits, and drank to a leading wind and to the success of the morrow. After supper they returned to their respective ships, except Riou, who remained to arrange the order of battle with Nelson and Foley, and to draw up instructions. Hardy meantime went in a small boat to examine the channel between them and the

**The night  
before the  
battle**

enemy, approaching so near that he sounded round their leading ship with a pole, lest the noise of throwing the lead should discover him.

At daybreak it was announced as becoming perfectly fair. Nelson, who was already up, breakfasted, and made signal for all <sup>Daybreak</sup> captains.

Between eight and nine, the pilots and masters were ordered on board the Admiral's ship. The pilots were mostly men who had been mates in Baltic traders, and their hesitation about the bearing of the east end of <sup>The indecision of the pilots.</sup> the shoal and the exact line of deep water gave ominous warning of how little their knowledge was to be trusted. The signal for action had been made, the wind was fair—not a moment to be lost. Nelson urged them to be steady, to be resolute, and to decide, but they wanted the only ground for steadiness and decision in such cases, and Nelson had reason to regret that he had not trusted to Hardy's single report. This was one of the most painful moments of his life, and he always spoke of it with bitterness. "I experienced in the Sound," said he, "the misery of having the honour of our country intrusted to a set of pilots who have no other thought than to keep the ships clear of danger, and their own silly heads clear of shot."

At length Mr. Bryerly, the master of the *Bellona*, declared that he was prepared to lead the fleet. His judgment was acceded to by the <sup>The signal to weigh.</sup> rest; they returned to their ships; and at half-past nine the signal was made to weigh in succession.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BATTLE OF COPENHAGEN

[APRIL 2, 1801.]

CAPTAIN MURRAY, in the *Edgar*, led the way. The *Agamemnon* was next in order, but, on the first attempt to leave her anchorage, she could not weather the edge of the shoal, and lay aground. Nelson had the grief to see his old ship in which he had performed so many years' gallant services, immovably aground at a moment when her help was so greatly required. Signal was then made for the *Polyphemus*, and this change in the order of sailing was executed with the utmost promptitude, yet so much delay had thus been unavoidably occasioned that the *Edgar* was for some time unsupported, and the *Polyphemus*, whose place should have been at the end of the enemy's line where their strength was the greatest, could get no farther than the beginning, owing to the difficulty of the channel. There she occupied, indeed, an efficient station, but one where her presence was less required.

The *Isis* followed with better fortune, and took her own berth. The *Bellona*, Sir Thomas Bould

Thompson, kept too close on the starboard shoal, and grounded abreast of the outer ship of the enemy, this was the more vexatious inasmuch as the wind was fair, the room ample, and three ships had led the way. The *Russell*, following the *Bellona*, grounded in like manner. Both were within reach of shot, but their absence from their intended stations was severely felt.

Each ship had been ordered to pass her leader on the starboard side, because the water was supposed to shoal on the larboard shore. Nelson, who came next after these two ships, thought they had kept too far on the starboard direction, and made signal for them to close with the enemy, not knowing that they were aground. But when he perceived that they did not obey the signal, he ordered the *Elephant's* helm to starboard, and went within these ships, thus quitting the appointed order of sailing, and guiding those which were to follow. The greater part of the fleet were probably, by this act of promptitude on his part, saved from going on shore.

Each ship, as she arrived nearly opposite to her appointed station, let her anchor go by the stern, and presented her broadside to the Danes. The distance between each was about half a cable. The action was fought nearly at the distance of a cable's length from the enemy.

At five minutes after ten the action began. The first half of our fleet was engaged in about half an hour, and by half-past eleven the battle became

general. The plan of the attack had been complete; but seldom has any plan been more disconcerted by untoward accidents. Of twelve ships of the line, one was entirely useless, and two others in a situation where they could not render half the service which was required of them. Of the squadron of gun-brigs only one could get into action. The rest were prevented by baffling currents from weathering the eastern end of the shoal; and only two of the bomb-vessels could reach their station on the Middle Ground, and open their mortars on the arsenal, firing over both fleets. Riou took the vacant station against the Crown Battery with his frigates, attempting with that unequal force a service in which three sail of the line had been directed to assist.

Nelson's agitation had been extreme when he saw himself, before the action began, deprived of a fourth part of his ships of the line. But no sooner was he in battle, where his squadron was received with the fire of more than a thousand guns, than—as if that artillery, like music, had driven away all care and painful thoughts—his countenance brightened, and, as a bystander describes him, his conversation became joyous, animated, elevated, and delightful.

The commander-in-chief meantime, near enough to the scene of action to know the unfavourable accidents which had so materially weakened Nelson, and yet too distant to know the real state of the contending parties, suffered the most dreadful anxiety. To get to his

The battle  
begins

Nelson's  
agitation.

Sir Hyde  
Parker's  
signal.

assistance was impossible ; both wind and current were against him. Fear for the event in such circumstances would naturally preponderate in the bravest mind , and at one o'clock, perceiving that after three hours' endurance the enemy's fire was unslackened, he began to despair of success. " I will make the signal of recall," said he to his captain, " for Nelson's sake. If he is in a condition to continue the action successfully, he will disregard it , if he is not, it will be an excuse for his retreat, and no blame can be imputed to him." Captain Domett urged him at least to delay the signal till he could communicate with Nelson, but in Sir Hyde's opinion the danger was too pressing for delay. " The fire," he said, " was too hot for Nelson to oppose , a retreat, he thought, must be made. He was aware of the consequences to his own personal reputation, but it would be cowardly in him to leave Nelson to bear the whole shame of the failure, if shame it should be deemed." Under a mistaken judgment, therefore, but with this disinterested and generous feeling, he made the signal for retreat.

Nelson was, at this time, in all the excitement of action, pacing the quarter-deck. A shot through the mainmast knocked the splinters about, and he observed to one of his officers with Nelson in action. a smile, " It is warm work ; and this day may be the last to any of us at a moment "—and then, stopping short at the gangway, added with emotion, " But, mark you, I would not be elsewhere for thousands."

About this time the signal lieutenant called out that No. 39—the signal for discontinuing the action —was thrown out by the commander-in-  
 The signal ignored chief He continued to walk the deck, and appeared to take no notice of it The signal officer met him at the next turn, and asked him if he should repeat it. “No,” he replied, “acknowledge it.” Presently he called after him to know if the signal for close action was still hoisted, and being answered in the affirmative, said, “Mind you keep it so” He now paced the deck, moving the stump of his lost arm in a manner which always indicated great emotion. “Do you know,” said he to Mr. Ferguson, “what is shown on board the commander-in-chief? No. 39!” Mr Ferguson asked what that meant. “Why, to leave off action!” Then, shrugging up his shoulders, he repeated the words, “Leave off action? Now, hang me if I do! You know, Foley,” turning to the captain, “I have only one eye—I have a right to be blind sometimes.” And then, putting the glass to his blind eye in that mood of mind that sports with bitterness, he exclaimed, “I really do not see the signal!” Presently he exclaimed, “Hang the signal! Keep mine for closer battle flying! That’s the way I answer such signals! Nail mine to the mast!”

The action continued along the line with unabated vigour on our side, and with the most determined resolution on the part of the Danes.  
 The advantages of the Danes. They fought to great advantage, because most of the vessels in their line of defence were without masts; the few which had any stand-

ing had their topmasts struck, and the hulls could only be seen at intervals.

The Prince Royal<sup>1</sup> had taken his station upon one of the batteries, whence he beheld the action and issued his orders. Denmark had never been engaged in so arduous a contest, and never did the Danes more nobly display their national courage. A youth of seventeen, by name Villemoes, particularly distinguished himself on this memorable day. He had volunteered to take the command of a floating battery, which was a raft, consisting merely of a number of beams nailed together, with a flooring to support the guns. It was square, with a breast-work full of port-holes, and without masts—carrying twenty-four guns and 120 men. With this he got under the stern of the *Elephant*, below the reach of the stern-chasers, and under a heavy fire of small arms from the marines, fought his raft, till the truce was announced, with such skill, as well as courage, as to excite Nelson's warmest admiration.

Between one and two the fire of the Danes slackened; about two it ceased from the greater part of their line, and some of their lighter ships were adrift. It was, however, difficult to take possession of those which struck, because the batteries on Amak Island protected them, and because an irregular fire was kept up from the ships themselves as the boats approached. This arose from the nature of the

The  
courage of  
the Danes.

An  
irregular  
proceeding.

<sup>1</sup> The eldest son of the King of Denmark, called also the 'Crown Prince' on page 69.

action. The crews were continually reinforced from the shore, and fresh men coming on board did not inquire whether the flag had been struck, or perhaps did not heed it—many or most of them never having been engaged in war before, knowing nothing therefore of its laws, and thinking only of defending their country to the last extremity. The *Danbrog* fired upon the *Elephant's* boats in this manner, though her commodore had removed her pendant and deserted her, though she had struck, and though she was in flames.

By half-past two the action had ceased along that part of the line which was astern of the *Elephant*, but not with the ships ahead and the Crown Batteries. Nelson, seeing the manner in which his boats were fired upon when they went to take possession of the prizes, became angry, and said he must either send on shore to have this irregular proceeding stopped, or send a fire-ship and burn them. Half the shot from the *Trekroner*,<sup>1</sup> and from the batteries at Amak, at this time struck the surrendered ships, four of which had got close together, and the fire of the English in return was equally or even more destructive to these poor devoted Danes.

Nelson, who was as humane as he was brave, was shocked at this massacre—for such he called it—and, with a presence of mind peculiar to him-

<sup>1</sup> The larger of the two Crown Batteries mentioned on page 59. The word means 'Three Crowns,' and refers to those of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, which were once united.

self, and never more signally displayed than now, he retired into the stern galley, and wrote thus to the Crown Prince "Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson has been commanded to spare Denmark when she no longer resists."

*Nelson's  
letter to the  
Crown  
Prince.*

The line of defence which covered her shores has struck to the British flag, but if the firing is continued on the part of Denmark, he must set on fire all the prizes that he has taken, without having the power of saving the men who have so nobly defended them. The brave Danes are the brothers, and should never be the enemies, of the English" A wafer was given him, but he ordered a candle to be brought from the cockpit, and sealed the letter with wax, affixing a larger seal than he ordinarily used. "This," said he, "is no time to appear hurried and informal." Captain Sir Frederick Thesiger, who acted as his aide-de-camp, carried this letter with a flag of truce

In somewhat more than half an hour after Thesiger had been despatched, the Danish adjutant-general, Lindholm, came bearing a flag of truce, upon which the Tre Kroner ceased to fire, and the action closed, after four hours' continuance. He brought an inquiry from the Prince. What was the object of Nelson's note? The British admiral wrote in reply "Lord Nelson's object in sending the flag of truce was humanity; he therefore consents that hostilities shall cease, and that the wounded Danes may be taken on shore. And Lord Nelson will take his prisoners out of the vessels, and burn or carry off

*The flag  
of truce*

his prizes as he shall think fit. Lord Nelson, with humble duty to his Royal Highness the Prince, will consider this the greatest victory he has ever gained if it may be the cause of a happy reconciliation and union between his own most gracious sovereign and his Majesty the King of Denmark."

Sir Frederick Thesiger was despatched a second time with the reply, and Nelson, losing not one of the critical moments which he had thus gained, made signal for his leading ships to weigh in succession—they had the shoal to clear, they were much crippled, and their course was immediately under the guns of the *Trekroner*.

The *Monarch* led the way. This ship had received six and twenty shot between wind and water. She had not a shred standing, there was a double-headed shot in the heart of her foremast; and the slightest wind would have sent every mast over her side. The sky had suddenly become overcast, white flags were waving from the mastheads of so many shattered ships, the slaughter had ceased, but the grief was to come, for the account of the dead was not yet made up, and no man could tell for what friends he would have to mourn.

The very silence which follows the cessation of such a battle becomes a weight upon the heart at first, rather than a relief, and though the work of mutual destruction was at an end, the *Danbrog* was at this time drifting about in flames. Presently she blew up,

while our boats, which had put off in all directions to assist her, were endeavouring to pick up her devoted crew, few of whom could be saved.

The fate of these men, after the gallantry which they had displayed, particularly affected Nelson. The Danes were an honourable foe, <sup>Nelson's</sup> they were of English mould as well as <sup>sympathy</sup> English blood, and, now that the battle had ceased, he regarded them rather as brethren than as enemies.

There was another reflection also, which mingled with these melancholy thoughts, and predisposed him to receive them. He was not here <sup>His</sup> master of his own movements, as at <sup>resolution</sup> Egypt. He had won the day by disobeying his orders, and, in so far as he had been successful, had convicted the commander-in-chief of an error in judgment. "Well," said he as he left the *Elephant*, "I have fought contrary to orders, and I shall perhaps be hanged! Never mind, let them!"

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

[SEPTEMBER 14—OCTOBER 21, 1805]

EARLY on the [14th of September] Nelson reached Portsmouth, and, having despatched his business on shore, endeavoured to elude the populace by taking a by-way to the beach, but a crowd collected in his train, pressing forward to obtain sight of his face. Many were in tears, and many knelt down before him, and blessed him as they passed. England has had many heroes, but never one who so entirely possessed the love of his fellow-countrymen as Nelson. All men knew that his heart was as humane as it was fearless, that there was not in his nature the slightest alloy of selfishness or cupidity, but that, with perfect and entire devotion, he served his country with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength; and therefore they loved him as truly and as fervently as he loved England. They pressed upon the parapet to gaze after him when his barge pushed off, and he was returning their cheers by waving his hat. The sentinels, who endeavoured to prevent them from trespassing upon

this ground, were wedged among the crowd, and an officer, who, not very prudently upon such an occasion, ordered them to drive the people down with their bayonets, was compelled speedily to retreat, for the people would not be debarred from gazing till the last moment upon the hero—the darling hero—of England.

He arrived off Cadiz on the 29th of September—his birthday. Fearing that, if the enemy knew his force, they might be deterred from venturing to sea, he kept out of sight of land, desired Collingwood to fire no salute and hoist no colours, and wrote to Gibraltar to request that the force of the fleet might not be inserted there in the *Gazette*. His reception in the Mediterranean fleet was as gratifying as the farewell of his countrymen at Portsmouth, the officers, who came on board to welcome him, forgot his rank as commander in their joy at seeing him again.

His Arrival  
in the  
fleet.

On the day of his arrival, Villeneuve<sup>1</sup> received orders to put to sea on the first opportunity. Villeneuve, however, hesitated when he heard that Nelson had resumed the command. He called a council of war, and their determination was that it would not be expedient to leave Cadiz unless they had reason to believe themselves stronger by one-third than the British force.

Ville-  
neuve's  
hesitation

In the public measures of this country secrecy is seldom practicable and seldom attempted. Here,

<sup>1</sup> The admiral in command of the combined French and Spanish fleets

however, by the precautions of Nelson and the wise measures of the Admiralty, the enemy were for once kept in ignorance, for, as the ships appointed to reinforce the Mediterranean fleet were despatched singly, each as soon as it was ready, their collected number was not stated in the newspapers, and their arrival was not known to the enemy. But the enemy knew that Admiral Louis, with six sail, had been detached for stores and water to Gibraltar. Accident also contributed to make the French admiral doubt whether Nelson himself had actually taken the command. An American, lately arrived from England, maintained that it was impossible, for he had seen him only a few days before in London, and at that time there was no rumour of his going again to sea.

The station which Nelson had chosen was some fifty or sixty miles to the west of Cadiz, near Cape St. Mary's. At this distance he hoped to decoy the enemy out, while he guarded against the danger of being caught with a westerly wind near Cadiz, and driven within the Straits.

At this time he was not without some cause of anxiety, he was in want of frigates—the eyes of the fleet, as he always called them—to the want of which the enemy before were indebted for their escape, and Buonaparte for his arrival in Egypt. He had only twenty-three ships. Others were on the way, but they might come too late; and though Nelson never doubted of victory, mere victory was not what he looked to: he wanted to annihilate the enemy's fleet.

On the 9th Nelson sent Collingwood what he called in his diary "the Nelson-touch" "I send you," said he, "my plan of attack, as far as a man dare venture to guess at the very uncertain position the enemy may be found in, but it is to place you perfectly at ease respecting my intentions, and to give full scope to your judgment for carrying them into effect. We can, my dear Coll, have no little jealousies We have only one great object in view—that of annihilating our enemies, and getting a glorious peace for our country. No man has more confidence in another than I have in you, and no man will render your services more justice than your very old friend, Nelson and Bronte."<sup>1</sup>

"The  
Nelson-  
touch"

The order of sailing was to be the order of battle—the fleet in two lines, with an advanced squadron of eight of the fastest sailing two-deckers. The second in command, having the entire direction of his line, was to break through the enemy, about the twelfth ship from their rear, he would lead through the centre, and the advanced squadron was to cut off three or four ahead of the centre. This plan was to be adapted to the strength of the enemy, so that they should always be one-fourth superior to those whom they cut off. Nelson said that "his admirals and captains, knowing his precise object to be that of a close and decisive action, would supply any deficiency of signals and

The plan  
of attack

<sup>1</sup> In 1799 the King of Naples had bestowed on Nelson a Sicilian estate worth about £3,000 a year, and had created him Duke of Bronte

act accordingly. In case signals cannot be seen or clearly understood, no captain can do wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy "

One of the last orders of this admirable man was that the name and family of every officer, **Nelson's** seaman, and marine, who might be killed **humanity** or wounded in action, should be as soon as possible returned to him, in order to be transmitted to the chairman of the patriotic fund, that the case might be taken into consideration for the benefit of the sufferer or his family

About half-past nine in the morning of the 19th, the *Mars*, being the nearest to the fleet of the ships which formed the line of communication **Hopes and** with the frigates inshore, repeated the **fears** signal that the enemy were coming out of port. The wind was at this time very light, with partial breezes, mostly from the south-south-west. Nelson ordered the signal to be made for a chase in the south-east quarter About two the repeating ships announced that the enemy were at sea All night the British fleet continued under all sail, steering to the south-east. At daybreak they were in the entrance of the Straits, but the enemy were not in sight. About seven, one of the frigates made signal that the enemy were bearing north. Upon this the *Victory* hove to, and shortly afterwards Nelson made sail again to the northward. In the afternoon the wind blew fresh from the south-west, and the English began to fear that the foe might be forced to return to port.

A little before sunset, however, Blackwood, in

the *Euryalus*, telegraphed that they appeared determined to go to the westward. "And that," said the Admiral<sup>1</sup> in his diary, "they shall not do, if it is in the power of Nelson and Bronte to prevent them." Nelson had signified to Blackwood that he depended upon him to keep sight of the enemy. They were observed so well that all their motions were made known to him, and, as they wore twice, he inferred that they were aiming to keep the port of Cadiz open, and would retreat there as soon as they saw the British fleet. For this reason he was very careful not to approach near enough to be seen by them during the night.

At daybreak the combined fleets were distinctly seen from the *Victory's* deck, formed in a close line of battle ahead, on the starboard tack, about twelve miles to leeward, and standing to the south. Our fleet consisted of twenty-seven sail of the line and four frigates, theirs of thirty-three and seven large frigates. Their superiority was greater in size and weight of metal than in numbers. They had four thousand troops on board; and the best riflemen that could be procured, many of them Tyrolese, were dispersed through the ships.

Soon after daylight Nelson came upon deck. The 21st of October was a festival in his family, because on that day his uncle, Captain Suckling, in the *Dreadnought*, with two other line-of-battle ships, had beaten off a

The  
enemy's  
movements

The two  
fleets

Nelson's  
superstition.

<sup>1</sup> Nelson had now risen to the rank of Vice-Admiral of the White. See note on page 27.

French squadron of four sail of the line and three frigates. Nelson, with that sort of superstition from which few persons are entirely exempt, had more than once expressed his persuasion that this was to be the day of his battle also, and he was well pleased at seeing his prediction about to be verified

The wind was now from the west—light breezes, with a long heavy swell. Signal was made to bear  
 His prayer  
 before the  
 battle  
 down upon the enemy in two lines, and the fleet set all sail. Collingwood, in the *Royal Sovereign*, led the lee line of thirteen ships, the *Victory* led the weather line of fourteen. Having seen that all was as it should be, Nelson retired to his cabin and wrote the following prayer

“ May the great God whom I worship grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory, and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it, and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet! For myself individually, I commit my life to Him that made me, and may His blessing alight on my endeavours for serving my country faithfully! To Him I resign myself, and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen, Amen, Amen.”

Blackwood went on board the *Victory* about six. He found him in good spirits, but very calm, not  
 Calmness  
 and  
 expectancy.  
 in that exhilaration which he felt upon entering into battle at Aboukir and Copenhagen. He knew that his own life would be particularly aimed at, and seems to have looked

for death with almost as sure an expectation as for victory. His whole attention was fixed upon the enemy. They tacked to the northward, and formed their line on the larboard tack, thus bringing the shoals of Trafalgar and St Pedro under the lee of the British, and keeping the port of Cadiz open for themselves. This was judiciously done, and Nelson, aware of all the advantages which it gave them, made signal to prepare to anchor.

Villeneuve was a skilful seaman, worthy of serving a better master and a better cause. His plan of defence was as well conceived, and as original, as the plan of attack. He formed the fleet in a double line, every alternate ship being about a cable's length to windward of her second, ahead and astern.

Ville-  
neuve's  
plan of  
defence

Nelson, certain of a triumphant issue to the day, asked Blackwood what he should consider as a victory. That officer answered that, considering the handsome way in which battle was offered by the enemy, their apparent determination for a fair trial of strength, and the situation of the land, he thought it would be a glorious result if fourteen were captured. He replied, "I shall not be satisfied with less than twenty."

Expecta-  
tions of  
victory

Soon afterwards he asked him if he did not think there was a signal wanting. Captain Blackwood made answer that he thought the whole fleet seemed very clearly to understand what they were about. These words were scarcely spoken before that signal was made which will be

Nelson's  
last signal.

remembered as long as the language, or even the memory, of England shall endure—Nelson's last signal—"ENGLAND EXPECTS THAT EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY!" It was received throughout the fleet with a shout of answering acclamation, made sublime by the spirit which it breathed and the feeling which it expressed. "Now," said Lord Nelson, "I can do no more We must trust to the great Disposer of all events and the justice of our cause I thank God for this great opportunity of doing my duty"

He wore that day, as usual, his admiral's frock-coat, bearing on the left breast four stars of the different orders with which he was invested. <sup>His personal</sup> Ornaments which rendered him <sup>adornments</sup> so conspicuous a mark for the enemy were beheld with ominous apprehension by his officers. It was known that there were riflemen on board the French ships, and it could not be doubted but that his life would be particularly aimed at They communicated their fears to each other, and the surgeon, Mr Beatty, spoke to the chaplain, Dr. Scott, and to Mr. Scott, the public secretary, desiring that some person would entreat him to change his dress or cover the stars, but they knew that such a request would highly displease him. "In honour I gained them," he had said when such a thing had been hinted to him formerly, "and in honour I will die with them" Mr. Beatty, however, would not have been deterred, by any fear of exciting his displeasure, from speaking to him himself upon a subject in which the weal of England, as well as

the life of Nelson, was concerned, but he was ordered from the deck before he could find an opportunity

This was a point upon which Nelson's officers knew that it was hopeless to remonstrate or reason with him. But both Blackwood and his own captain, Hardy, represented to him how advantageous to the fleet it would be for him to keep out of action as long as possible, and he consented at last to let the *Leviathan* and the *Temeraire*, which were sailing abreast of the *Victory*, be ordered to pass ahead.

Yet even here the last infirmity of this noble mind was indulged, for these ships could not pass ahead if the *Victory* continued to carry all her sail, and so far was Nelson from shortening sail, that it was evident he took pleasure in pressing on, and rendering it impossible for them to obey his own orders. A long swell was setting into the Bay of Cadiz. Our ships, crowding all sail, moved majestically before it, with light winds from the south-west. The sun shone on the sails of the enemy, and their well-formed line, with their numerous three-deckers, made an appearance which any other assailants would have thought formidable. But the British sailors only admired the beauty and the splendour of the spectacle, and in full confidence of winning what they saw, remarked to each other, "What a fine sight yonder ships would make at Spithead!"

The French Admiral, from the *Bucentaure*, beheld the new manner in which his enemy was advancing

—Nelson and Collingwood, each leading his line; and pointing them out to his officers, he is said to have exclaimed that such conduct could not fail to be successful. Yet Villeneuve had made his own dispositions with the utmost skill, and the fleets under his command waited for the attack with perfect coolness. Ten minutes before twelve they opened their fire. Eight or nine of the ships immediately ahead of the *Victory*, and across her bows, fired single guns at her to ascertain whether she was yet within their range.

As soon as Nelson perceived that their shot passed over him, he desired Blackwood and Captain Prowse, of the *Sirius*, to repair to their respective frigates, and, on their way, to tell all the captains of the line-of-battle ships that he depended on their exertions, and that, if by the prescribed mode of attack they found it impracticable to get into action immediately, they might adopt whatever they thought best, provided it led them quickly and closely alongside an enemy. As they were standing on the front poop, Blackwood took him by the hand, saying he hoped soon to return and find him in possession of twenty prizes. He replied, "God bless you, Blackwood! I shall never see you again."

Nelson's column was steered about two points more to the north than Collingwood's, in order to cut off the enemy's escape into Cadiz. The lee line, therefore, was first engaged. "See," cried Nelson, pointing to the *Royal Sovereign*, as she

steered right for the centre of the enemy's line, cut through it astern of the *Santa Anna*, three-decker, and engaged her at the muzzle of her guns on the starboard side—"see how that noble fellow Collingwood carries his ship into action!" Collingwood, delighted at being first in the heat of the fire, and knowing the feelings of his commander and old friend, turned to his captain and exclaimed "Rotherham, what would Nelson give to be here!"

Nelson and  
Colling-  
wood

The enemy continued to fire a gun at a time at the *Victory*, till they saw that a shot had passed through her main-topgallant sail, then they opened their broadsides, aiming chiefly at her rigging, in the hope of disabling her before she could close with them. Nelson, as usual, had hoisted several flags, lest one should be shot away. The enemy showed no colours till late in the action, when they began to feel the necessity of having them to strike. For this reason the *Santissima Trinidad*, Nelson's "old acquaintance," as he used to call her, was distinguishable only by her four decks, and to the bow of this opponent he ordered the *Victory* to be steered

The  
enemy's  
lack of  
colours

Meantime an incessant raking fire was kept up upon the *Victory*. The Admiral's secretary was one of the first who fell, he was killed by a cannon shot while conversing with Hardy. Captain Adair, of the marines, with the help of a sailor, endeavoured to remove the body from Nelson's sight, who had a great

The  
death of  
Mr Scott.

regard for Mr Scott, but he anxiously asked, "Is that poor Scott that's gone?" and being informed that it was indeed so, exclaimed, "Poor fellow!"

Presently a double-headed shot struck a party of marines who were drawn up on the poop, and killed eight of them, upon which Nelson immediately desired Captain Adair to disperse his men round the ship, that they might not suffer so much from being together. A few minutes afterwards a shot struck the fore-brace bits<sup>1</sup> on the quarter-deck, and passed between Nelson and Hardy, a splinter from the bit tearing off Hardy's buckle and bruising his foot. Both stopped, and looked anxiously at each other, each supposed the other to be wounded. Nelson then smiled, and said, "This is too warm work, Hardy to last long."

Captain  
Hardy  
wounded.

The *Victory* had not yet returned a single gun fifty of her men had been by this time killed or wounded, and her main-topmast, with all her studding-sails and their booms, shot away. Nelson declared that in all his battles he had seen nothing which surpassed the cool courage of his crew on this occasion. At four minutes after twelve she opened her fire from both sides of her deck. It was not possible to break the enemy's lines without running on board one of their ships. Hardy informed him of this and asked him which he would prefer. Nelson replied, "Take your choice, Hardy, it does not

<sup>1</sup> The wood to which the ropes used in changing the position of the fore-sail are made fast.

signify much." The master was ordered to put the helm to port, and the *Victory* ran on board the *Redoubtable* just as her tiller-ropes were shot away

The French ship received her with a broadside, then instantly let down her lower-deck ports for fear of being boarded through them, and never afterwards fired a great gun during the action. Her tops, like those of all the enemy's ships, were filled with riflemen. Nelson never placed musketry in his tops. He had a strong dislike to the practice, not merely because it endangers setting fire to the sails, but also because it is a murderous sort of warfare, by which individuals may suffer and a commander now and then be picked off, but which never can decide the fate of a general engagement.

Captain Harvey, in the *Temeraire*, fell on board the *Redoubtable* on the other side. Another enemy was in like manner on board the *Temeraire*; so that these four ships formed as compact a tier as if they had been moored together, their heads all lying the same way. The lieutenants of the *Victory* seeing this, depressed their guns of the middle and lower decks, and fired with a diminished charge, lest the shot should pass through and injure the *Temeraire*. And because there was danger that the *Redoubtable* might take fire from the lower-deck guns, the muzzles of which touched her side when they were run out, the fireman of each gun stood ready with a bucket of water, which, as soon as the gun was discharged, he dashed into the

hole made by the shot. An incessant fire was kept up from the *Victory* from both sides, her larboard guns playing upon the *Bucentaure* and the huge *Santissima Trinidad*.

It had been part of Nelson's prayer that the British fleet might be distinguished by humanity in the victory he expected. Setting an example himself, he twice gave orders to cease firing upon the *Redoubtable*, supposing that she had struck, because her great guns were silent, for, as she carried no flag, there was no means of instantly ascertaining the fact. From this ship, which he had thus twice spared, he received his death-wound. A ball fired from her mizentop, which in the then situation of the two vessels was not more than fifteen yards from that part of the deck where he was standing, struck the epaulette on his left shoulder, about a quarter after one, just in the heat of action. He fell upon his face, on the spot which was covered with his poor secretary's blood. Hardy, who was a few steps from him, turning round, saw three men raising him up. "They have done for me at last, Hardy!" said he. "I hope not!" cried Hardy. "Yes," he replied, "my backbone is shot through!"

Yet even now, not for a moment losing his presence of mind, he observed, as they were carrying him down the ladder, that the tiller-ropes, which had been shot away, were not yet replaced, and ordered that new ones should be rove<sup>1</sup> immediately. Then, that he

Nelson  
receives his  
death-  
wound

His  
presence  
of mind

<sup>1</sup> Passed through the blocks on which they turned

might not be seen by the crew, he took out his handkerchief and covered his face and his stars. Had he but concealed these badges of honour from the enemy, England perhaps would not have had cause to receive with sorrow the news of the battle of Trafalgar.

The cockpit was crowded with wounded and dying men, over whose bodies he was with some difficulty conveyed, and laid upon a pallet in the midshipmen's berth. It was soon perceived, upon examination, that the wound was mortal. This, however, was concealed from all except Captain Hardy, the chaplain, and the medical attendants. He himself being certain, from the sensation in his back and the gush of blood he felt momentarily within his breast, that no human care could avail him, insisted that the surgeon should leave him, and attend to those to whom he might be useful, "for," said he, "you can do nothing for me."

The scene  
within the  
cockpit.

All that could be done was to fan him with paper, and frequently give him lemonade to alleviate his intense thirst. He was in great pain, and expressed much anxiety for the event of the action, which now began to declare itself. As often as a ship struck, the crew of the *Victory* hurrahed, and at every hurrah a visible expression of joy gleamed in the eyes, and marked the countenance, of the dying hero. But he became impatient to see Captain Hardy, and, as that officer, though often sent for, could not leave the deck, Nelson feared that some fatal cause prevented

Nelson's  
pain and  
anxiety

him, and repeatedly cried, "Will no one bring Hardy to me? He must be killed! He is surely dead!"

An hour and ten minutes elapsed from the time when Nelson received his wound before Hardy could come to him. They shook hands <sup>Nelson and Hardy</sup> in silence, Hardy in vain struggling to express the feelings of that most painful and yet sublimest moment. "Well, Hardy," said Nelson, "how goes the day with us?"—"Very well!" replied Hardy, "ten ships have struck, but five of the van have tacked, and show an intention to bear down upon the *Victory*. I have called two or three of our fresh ships round, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing"—"I hope," said Nelson, "none of our ships have struck?" Hardy answered, "There is no fear of that!" Then, and not till then, Nelson spoke of himself. "I am a dead man, Hardy," said he, "I am going fast, it will be all over with me soon." Hardy observed that he hoped Mr. Beatty could yet hold out some prospect of life. "Oh no!" he replied, "it is impossible, my back is shot through. Beatty will tell you so." Captain Hardy then once more shook hands with him, and, with a heart almost bursting, hastened upon deck.

By this time all feeling below the breast was gone; and Nelson, having made the surgeon ascertain this, said to him, "You know I am <sup>Nelson's suffering</sup> gone. I know it. I feel something rising in my breast"—putting his hand on his left side—"which tells me so." And upon Beatty's inquiring whether his pain was very great, he replied, "So

great that I wish I was dead. Yet," said he in a lower voice, "one would like to live a little longer too!"

Captain Hardy, some fifty minutes after he had left the cockpit, returned, and, again taking the hand of his dying friend and commander, congratulated him on having gained a <sup>His last</sup> <sup>command</sup> complete victory. How many of the enemy were taken he did not know, as it was impossible to perceive them distinctly, but fourteen or fifteen at least. "That's well!" cried Nelson, "but I bargained for twenty!" And then, in a stronger voice, he said, "Anchor, Hardy, anchor!" Hardy, upon this, hinted that Admiral Collingwood would take upon himself the direction of affairs. "Not while I live, Hardy," said the dying Nelson, ineffectually endeavouring to raise himself from the bed—"Do you anchor."

His previous order for preparing to anchor had shown how clearly he foresaw the necessity of this. Presently, calling Hardy back, he said to him in a low voice, "Don't throw me over- <sup>Hardy's</sup> <sup>farewell</sup> board," and he desired that he might be buried by his parents, unless it should please the king to order otherwise. Then, turning to Hardy, "Kiss me, Hardy," said he. Hardy knelt down and kissed his cheek, and Nelson said, "Now I am satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty!" Hardy stood over him in silence for a moment or two, then knelt again and kissed his forehead. "Who is that?" said Nelson, and being informed, he replied, "God bless you, Hardy!" And Hardy then left him—for ever.

Nelson now desired to be turned upon his right side, and said, "I wish I had not left the deck, for I shall soon be gone." Death was indeed rapidly approaching. His articulation now became difficult, but he was distinctly heard to say, "Thank God, I have done my duty!" These words he repeatedly pronounced, and they were the last words that he uttered. He expired at thirty minutes after four—three hours and a quarter after he had received his wound

Within a quarter of an hour after Nelson was wounded, about fifty of the *Victory's* men fell by the enemy's musketry. They, however, on their part, were not idle, and it was not long before there were only two Frenchmen left alive in the mizen-top of the *Redoubtable*. One of them was the man who had given the fatal wound. He did not live to boast of what he had done. An old quartermaster had seen him fire, and easily recognized him because he wore a glazed cocked-hat and a white frock. This quartermaster and two midshipmen, Mr. Collingwood and Mr. Pollard, were the only persons left in the *Victory's* poop, the two midshipmen kept firing at the top, and he supplied them with cartridges. One of the Frenchmen, attempting to make his escape down the rigging, was shot by Mr. Pollard, and fell on the poop. But the old quartermaster, as he cried out, "That's he, that's he!" and pointed at the other, who was coming forward to fire again, received a shot in his mouth and fell dead. Both the midshipmen then fired at the same time, and the fellow

dropped in the top. When they took possession of the prize, they went into the mizen-top and found him dead, with one ball through his head and another through his breast.

The total British loss in the battle of Trafalgar amounted to one thousand five hundred and eighty-seven. Twenty of the enemy struck. Unhappily, the fleet did not anchor, as Nelson, almost with his dying breath, had enjoined. The results of the sea-fight A gale came on from the south-west. Some of the prizes went down, some went on shore, one effected its escape into Cadiz, others were destroyed, four only were saved, and those by the greatest exertions.

The wounded Spaniards were sent ashore, an assurance being given that they should not serve till regularly exchanged, and the Spaniards, with a generous feeling, which would not Spanish generosity perhaps have been found in any other people, offered the use of their hospitals for our wounded, pledging the honour of Spain that they should be carefully attended there. When the storm, after the action, drove some of the prizes upon the coast, they declared that the English, who were thus thrown into their hands, should not be considered as prisoners of war, and the Spanish soldiers gave up their own beds to their shipwrecked enemies.

It is almost superfluous to add that all the honours which a grateful country could bestow were heaped upon the memory of Nelson. His brother was made an Earl, with a grant of £6,000

a year, £10,000 was voted to each of his sisters; and £100,000 for the purchase of an estate. A public funeral was decreed, and a public monument Statues and monuments also were voted by most of our principal cities. The leaden coffin in which he was brought home was cut in pieces, which were distributed as relics of St. Nelson—so the gunner of the *Victory* called them—and when, at his interment, his flag was about to be lowered into the grave, the sailors who assisted at the ceremony with one accord rent it in pieces, that each might preserve a fragment while he lived

The  
country's  
rewards to  
its dead  
hero

The people of England grieved that funeral ceremonies, and public monuments, and posthumous rewards were all which they could now bestow upon him whom the king, the legislature, and the nation would have alike delighted to honour, whom every tongue would have blessed, whose presence in every village through which he might have passed would have wakened the church bells, have given school-boys a holiday, have drawn children from their sports to gaze upon him, and “old men from the chimney corner” to look upon Nelson ere they died. The victory of Trafalgar was celebrated, indeed, with the usual forms of rejoicing, but they were without joy, for such already was the glory of the British navy through Nelson's surpassing genius, that it scarcely seemed to receive any addition from the most signal victory that ever was achieved upon the seas. And the destruction

Rejoicing  
without  
joy

of this mighty fleet, by which all the maritime schemes of France were totally frustrated, hardly appeared to add to our security or strength, for while Nelson was living to watch the combined squadrons of the enemy, we felt ourselves as secure as now, when they were no longer in existence.

There was reason to suppose, from the appearances upon opening the body, that in the course of nature he might have attained, like his father, to a good old age. Yet he cannot be said to have fallen prematurely whose work was done, nor ought he to be lamented who died so full of honours and at the height of human fame. The most triumphant death is that of the martyr, the most awful that of the martyred patriot, the most splendid that of the hero in the hour of victory, and if the chariot and the horses of fire had been vouchsafed for Nelson's translation, he could scarcely have departed in a brighter blaze of glory. He has left us, not indeed his mantle of inspiration, but a name and an example which are at this hour inspiring thousands of the youth of England—a name which is our pride, and an example which will continue to be our shield and our strength.

The name  
which is an  
English-  
man's pride

## QUESTIONS ON THE TEXT

1 'ON the 6th they were in latitude  $79^{\circ} 56' 39''$ , longitude  $9^{\circ} 43' 30''$  E' Explain clearly what this statement means, and mark on a map the approximate position denoted (I)

2 Tell in your own words the story of the Polar Expedition in which Nelson took part, and construct a chart to illustrate it (I)

3 Produce evidence of the unsatisfactory condition of the Spanish Navy in 1797 (II)

4 Imagining yourself to have been an English prisoner on board the *San Joseph*, write a letter giving a full account of the battle off Cape St Vincent (II)

5 Rewrite the paragraph 'Boarding the *San Nicholas*,' on page 24, replacing each of the following words or phrases by another of similar meaning mizen-chains, spritsail-yard, main rigging, upper quarter-gallery, commodore, quarter-deck, poop, ensign, fore-castle, stern gallery (II)

6 Make a list, in order, of the different ranks of admirals in Nelson's time, underline those held by Nelson at one time or another, and add dates where you can (III)

7 In Nelson's despatches the words quoted on page 28, lines 5, 6, are thus given 'the name of the *Theseus* shall be immortalized as high as the *Captain's*' Which of the two versions do you think is likely to be the correct one? Give full reasons for your answer (III)

8 Describe in your own words the events of the 19th, 20th, and 21st of May, 1798, and show their importance (IV)

9 Draw a map showing the course taken by Nelson in his pursuit of the French Fleet in 1798, and state the reasons that he was unsuccessful until August 1 (IV)

10 It is said that in Wellington's campaigns none of his officers had an inkling of what his plans were How does this compare with the practice followed by Nelson? Which do you consider the better practice? Give your reasons (V).

11 'That intuitive genius with which Nelson was endowed' Describe a striking example of this from the events of 1798 (V)

12 Make a list of the French and English ships engaged in the Battle of the Nile, and add, where you can, the part taken in the fight by each (V).

13 Describe the destruction of the *Orient*, from the point of view of—

(a) An English sailor

(b) A French soldier at Rosetta (V).

14 Describe the political circumstances that gave rise to the Battle of Copenhagen (VI)

15 Construct a chart showing the route taken by the English fleet from Yarmouth to Copenhagen, and the events which happened on the voyage (VI)

16 Describe the geographical situation and importance of Elsinore, and state if you have ever heard or read elsewhere of this city (VI)

17 Imagining yourself to have been a Danish University student taking part in the defence of Copenhagen, write accounts of—

(a) The advance of the English fleet

(b) The battle (VI, VII)

18 Describe the natural and artificial defences of Copenhagen, and show clearly how the former almost caused the defeat of the English fleet (VI, VII)

19 Tell in your own words the story of Sir Hyde Parker's signal, and from it criticize the last words of Chapter VII (VII)

20 Describe the plans adopted by Nelson to draw Admiral Villeneuve out of Cadiz Harbour, and those for giving him battle when this was done (VIII)

21 'These four ships formed as compact a tier as if they had been moored together' Illustrate this statement with a plan, and describe the effects of such a curious condition of affairs (VIII)

22 Describe the part taken in the Battle of Trafalgar by Admiral Collingwood (VIII)

23 To what circumstances do you attribute Nelson's death? (VIII)

24 Construct a letter giving an account of the Battle of

Trafalgar, and supposed to be written by either Captain Hardy or Midshipman Pollard (VIII)

25 Make a diagram to show the various points of the compass mentioned in the text

26 Make a list of (a) the captains with whom Nelson was associated, (b) the ships in which he served at different times, and write a few lines about each

27 Explain the following terms to warp through the opening, a seventy four, to form on the larboard tack, to pass to leeward, to tack in succession, to put the helm a starboard, six-and-twenty pounders, to scud before the gale, to veer half a cable to cut their cables, the lee line, two points more to the north

28 Make a drawing of a 'first rate' in Nelson's time, and name those parts of it with which you are acquainted

29 Describe the occasions when Nelson was wounded, and specially refer to those on which his life was saved

30 With what poems dealing with any of the events in Chapters V and VII are you acquainted? Give quotations from them

31 Relate one incident in Nelson's life to show clearly each of the following traits in his character

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| (1) Fearlessness | (6) Humanity        |
| (2) Persistency  | (7) Humility        |
| (3) Impetuosity  | (8) Promptitude     |
| (4) Sagacity     | (9) Self-confidence |
| (5) Piety        | (10) Love of glory  |

32 Supposing the *Dreadnought* mentioned on page 77 to have been a sister ship of the *Victory*, describe the various points of contrast between it and the *Dreadnought* of our own day

33. Write out from memory

- (a) Nelson's two letters to the Crown Prince
- (b) Nelson's prayer before the Battle of Trafalgar
- (c) The concluding twelve lines of the text

NOTE —A supplement to *The Sphere*, October 21, 1905, contained many most useful pictures and diagrams dealing with the life of Nelson











