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Title: A Short History of H.M.S. Victory

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Release date: September 23, 2012 [EBook #40847]

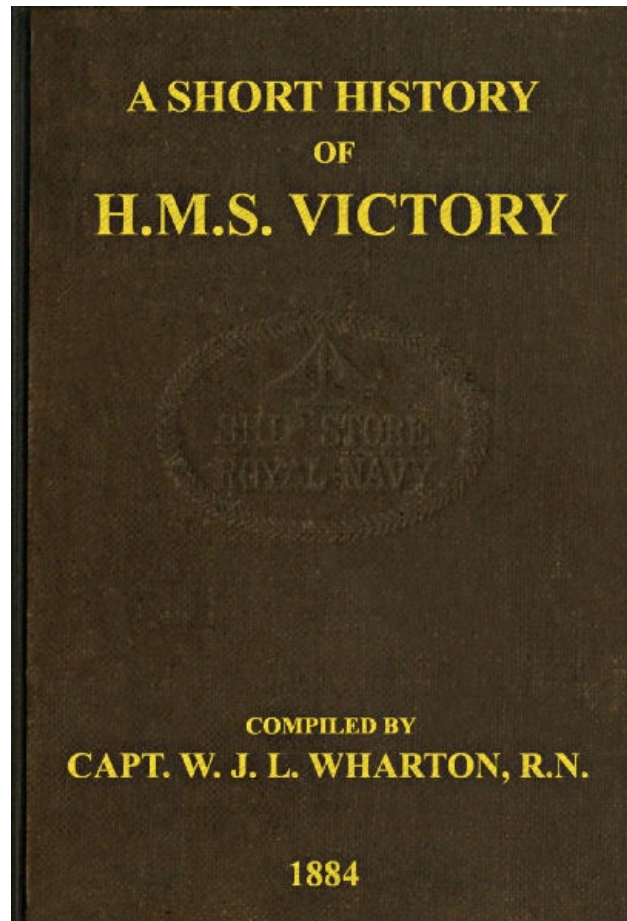
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A SHORT HISTORY  
OF  
H.M.S. 'VICTORY.'

GATHERED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES,

AND COMPILED BY

CAPTAIN W. J. L. WHARTON, R.N.

"WHOSE LIFE WAS ENGLAND'S  
GLORY."

*Shakespeare.*

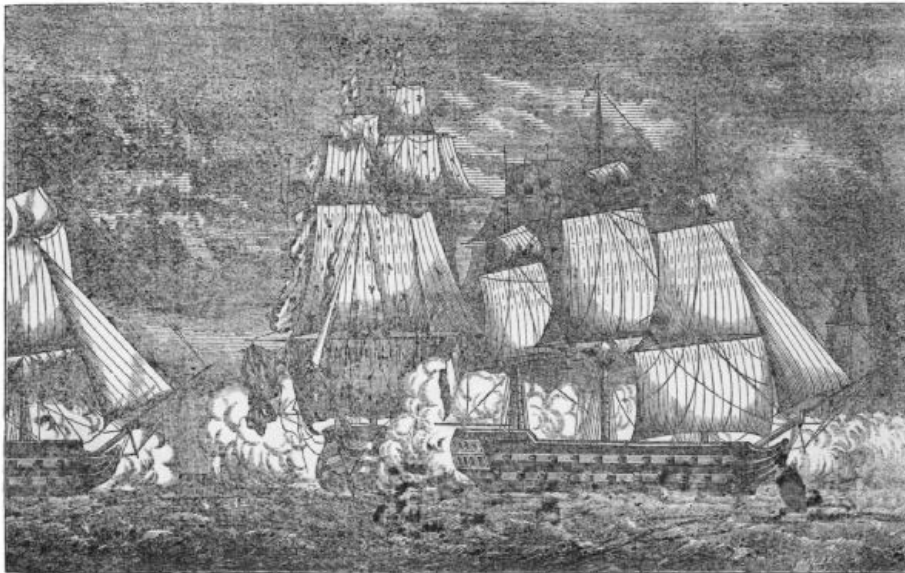
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Portsmouth:  
GRIFFIN & CO., 2, THE HARD,  
(Publishers by Appointment to H.R.H. Duke of Edinburgh).

—  
1884.

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The "Salvador del Mundo" striking to the "Victory" at St. Vincent.

EVERY Englishman, we imagine, knows that the "VICTORY" was the ship which bore Lord Nelson's flag, and on board of which he received his death wound in the moment of triumph over the combined fleets of France and Spain, off Cape Trafalgar; but as very few are aware of her numerous and distinguished services, extending over many years, and preceding that sad yet glorious climax, this memoir of her career has been drawn up, with the hope of making her history from her launch to the present time better known; and that the hundreds who yearly visit her may carry away a record of their visit, to remind them of the classic ground they have been treading, and recall to their recollections some of the splendid deeds of the past, which gained for England the proud title of "Mistress of the Seas."

There have been "VICTORY'S" in the English navy ever since the year 1570, and as each successive ship, from old age or misfortune, has disappeared from the list, another has soon after appeared to take her place.

The ship immediately preceding the existing "VICTORY," was, like her, a first-rate three-decker, carrying 110 guns, and was accounted the finest ship in the service. In 1744 she was the flagship of Admiral Sir J. Balchen, a venerable officer of 75 years of age, who had been called from the honourable retirement of Greenwich Hospital to command a fleet destined to relieve Sir Charles Hardy, then blockaded in Lisbon by a superior French force, under the Count de Rochambault. On returning from the successful performance of this service, the fleet was dispersed in the chops of the Channel by a tremendous gale, on October 4th. The rest of the ships, though much shattered, gained the anchorage of Spithead in safety, but the "VICTORY" was never more heard of, though from the evidence of fishermen of the island of Alderney, she was believed to have run on to the Caskets, some dangerous rocks lying off that island, where her gallant crew of about a thousand perished to a man.

[4]

In 1765, on the 7th May, was launched from Chatham Dockyard the present "VICTORY" which had been built from designs of Sir Thomas Slade, then surveyor of the navy.

Her principal dimensions are as follows:—

	feet.	ins.
Length from figure head to taffrail	226	6
Length of keel	151	3
Length of gun-deck	186	0
Extreme beam	52	0
Depth of hold	21	6
Tonnage	2162 tons.	

Her armament was in 1778—

Lower deck	30 long 32-pounders.
Middle deck	30 long 24-pounders.
Main deck	32 long 12-pounders.
Upper deck	12 short 12-pounders.
	104 Guns.

In 1793 she had four 32-pr. carronades substituted on upper deck, and six 18-pr. carronades added on the poop, making her total number of guns at this time 110. The six last were subsequently removed, as at Trafalgar she had no guns on the poop. In 1803, two 68-pr. carronades were placed on the forecastle, instead of two 32-pr., when the weight of her broadside fired from 52 guns was 1160 pounds. It may here be mentioned, for the sake of comparison, that the weight of the broadside of the *Monarch*, a modern ironclad, carrying but six guns, [A] is 2515 lbs., or more than twice that of the "VICTORY."

[5]

[A] Not including one that only fires aft.

As it happened, in 1765 England was at peace with all the world, so the "VICTORY" lay quietly at her moorings at Chatham for 13 years, but in 1778, when war with France became imminent, she was commissioned by Captain Sir J. Lindsey on 15th March, and on Admiral Hon. Augustus Keppel being appointed to the command of the Channel Fleet he selected her as his flagship, and she was sent round to Portsmouth, where, on May 16th, she hoisted his flag. On the 7th June

Keppel sailed from St. Helen's, with 21 sail of the line, 3 frigates, and 3 sloops, having Sir Robert Harland and Sir Hugh Palliser as his Vice-Admirals. His position was a peculiar and delicate one, as war was not yet declared, though all chance of peace being maintained was at an end, but it was known that large and rich fleets of merchantmen from our East and West Indian possessions were on their way home, and it was unadvisable to allow any French frigates to cruise at large and carry intelligence of their whereabouts to Brest; besides this, Admiral Byron with a small squadron was on the point of sailing to reinforce our fleet on the American coast, and Keppel was expected to cover his path. Under these circumstances, when two French frigates hove in sight on the 17th June, Keppel determined to detain them; one, the *Licorne*, submitted after firing one broadside, but the other, the *Belle-Poule*, attempted to escape, was pursued, and after a long chase, brought to action by the *Arethusa*, Captain Marshall. The two frigates were nearly equal in force, and after one of the most desperate contests on record, the fight terminated by the *Belle-Poule* drifting amongst the rocks of her own coast, leaving the *Arethusa* a dismantled hulk, to be found by the *Valiant*, and towed home. This action is perpetuated in the well-known sea song, the "Saucy Arethusa."

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From the *Licorne*, Keppel learnt the unexpected and unpleasant intelligence that the French fleet in Brest amounted to 32 sail of the line and 12 frigates; as his own only numbered 21, prudence dictated a return for reinforcement, and he very unwillingly turned his back on France, anchoring at St. Helen's on the 27th of June, and detaining another French frigate, the *Pallas*, on his way.

On the 10th of July, war being now declared, he again sailed, with 25 sail of the line, and was joined off Plymouth by 5 more, making his total force 30 of the line and 4 frigates; with these he now proceeded in search of the French Admiral D'Orvilliers, who, with 32 ships of the line and many frigates, had left Brest a few days before, hearing that the expected British merchant fleets were at hand. The object of the French was, of course, the capture of these rich prizes, and they naturally wished to avoid a meeting with the British men-of-war before this was accomplished. On the other hand, the English longed for the battle, as the shortest and safest mode of saving their convoys. So when the two fleets sighted one another on the 23rd, the French, being to windward, did their best to avoid an engagement, and held their wind; on which Keppel finding he had no chance of overtaking them if he kept his line of battle, hoisted the signal for a general chase, and kept it flying.

Thus for four days were both fleets working to windward, during which, two French line of battle ships were cut off, but from their superior sailing escaped capture. Keppel hoped that D'Orvilliers would bear up to their rescue, but the wily Frenchman knew that if he did, he would have to give up all hopes of his prize, and preferred that his stray vessels should trust to their heels, which as we have seen, bore them in good stead on this occasion. However, this made the two fleets numerically equal, and, on the forenoon of July 27th, being then some 100 miles west of Ushant, the joy in the British fleet was excessive, when they found that a shift of wind brought them into such a position that an engagement was inevitable. The French still tried to evade the fight, and put about on the other tack, bringing the heads of the two lines pointed in nearly opposite directions, and in this way the British van, commanded by Sir R. Harland, came in action with the French centre, and standing on until close to their line, ran along it to leeward. The rest of the fleet followed, taking their positions in the line as quickly as they could, the "VICTORY" being in about the centre.

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It will be seen by this, that the fleets, after once meeting, were parting each moment, and at the end of about two hours, their respective rears were clear of one another. Keppel then did his best to renew the battle, but from the French practice of aiming at the spars, his ships were so crippled that the "VICTORY," and some four others, were alone able to wear after the enemy. Under these circumstances, and hoping to bring the enemy to action again next day, as they also were much scattered and disabled, the English Admiral got his ships together and repaired damages. Unfortunately, the wind came fair for Brest in the night, and the French, having succeeded in concealing their movements, by stationing their frigates to show misleading lights, ran for, and gained that port. Their mast heads only were visible in the morning, and Keppel, after chasing for two hours, found it hopeless and gave up the pursuit.

Thus, for want of the manœuvre of "breaking the line," which Rodney, under precisely similar circumstances, so successfully practised four years later, this engagement had no results beyond that of saving the convoys, one of which passed the scene of action the very next day. The "VICTORY" had, at one time, six enemy's ships on her, and was much cut up in hull and rigging; her loss was 11 killed and 24 wounded, being the largest number rendered *hors de combat* in any one ship of the British fleet, save one, the *Formidable*. The total loss was 113 killed and 373 wounded. The French loss was never correctly ascertained, but, as it was the English custom to fire at the hulls, it was probably much more severe. Keppel returned to port, and after refitting, again sailed from Plymouth on the 23rd August, but never again met the enemy, and eventually arrived at Portsmouth on the 28th of October.

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This is the history of a ship, and not of the times, so we have strictly nothing to do with subsequent events that arose out of this engagement; but, as they created great excitement, perhaps a short account of the sequel may not be altogether out of place. At this period of our history, the British public expected some tangible proofs of our naval superiority whenever our fleets met an equal enemy, in the shape of ships captured or destroyed; and the indecisive results of the action of the 27th July, gave rise to a multitude of paragraphs in the newspapers, commenting on the conduct of the different Admirals, especially that of the Commander-in-Chief, and Sir Hugh Palliser, and attributing blame to one or the other, as their fancy, or rather their

politics dictated: the principals themselves (who were both members of the House of Commons, but of opposite parties), in exculpating themselves, became involved in mutual recriminations, and finally Sir Hugh Palliser preferred charges against Admiral Keppel, for, in a few words not doing his best to "burn, sink, and destroy." Suffice it to say, that a Court Martial to try Admiral Keppel met at Portsmouth on January 7th, 1779, and sat at the Governor's house, by special Act of Parliament, on account of the bad health of the accused, until February 11th, when it honourably acquitted him, and declared the charges "malicious and ill-founded." Keppel, by his former victories and frank condescending manners, had long rendered himself the idol of the navy and people, and the first disappointment felt at the meagre results of his engagement had been succeeded by a strong popular reaction in his favour, when it was understood that he would be placed on his trial. The news of his acquittal was received throughout the country with an extraordinary burst of joy. On the sentence being made known, a signal gun was fired at Portsmouth, upon which the ships at Spithead immediately cheered and saluted, and a fleet of Indiamen, lying at the Mother Bank, fired 19 volleys. Nor were they behind hand on shore in manifesting their delight; the bells of Portsmouth church rang for the day, the late prisoner was escorted from the court by a vast crowd, attended by some of the most illustrious in the land; and such was his popularity, that not only Portsmouth, but other towns were illuminated, and the inhabitants rejoiced in the most frantic way, as if for a great national deliverance.

[9]

Admiral Keppel was requested to retain the command of the fleet, but refused, and was succeeded by Sir Charles Hardy, who hoisted his flag in the "VICTORY," on the 19th March, 1779. Sir Charles found himself with 37 ships of the line, which seems a large force, but the accounts of the day state that a number of them were very badly manned; however that may be, after sailing on June 16th, he was cruising off Ushant on August 20th, when intelligence reached him that the French and Spanish fleets had effected a junction at Cadiz, and were then off Plymouth; he learnt also that they consisted of 67 sail of the line, besides more than 30 frigates, and smaller vessels. Sir Charles made sail after them, and sighted them on 1st September, off Scilly, when finding that his information as to their force was correct, and reflecting that the safety of the country would in a great measure depend on him should the enemy attempt a landing, he retired to Spithead. This is, we believe, the only time that the "VICTORY" was ever forced to show her stern to an enemy.

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The combined fleets, after making a great show, and indulging in a parade off Plymouth, quitted the Channel without attempting any enterprise. The British Admiral cruised till the end of the year, when the "VICTORY" returned to Portsmouth with her division, and, being placed in dock, was coppered for the first time. In the spring, whilst preparing to take the sea again, Sir C. Hardy was seized with an apopleptic fit, and died on 14th May, 1780.

Admiral Geary then hoisted his flag in the "VICTORY," on 24th May, on succeeding to the command of the Channel fleet, and sailed early in June, with 29 line-of-battle ships, 14 of them three-deckers. He stationed himself off Brest, which he watched for three months, his object being to prevent the French from getting out, and joining the Spaniards fitting in Cadiz; when, having over 2500 sick on board his fleet, he returned to Spithead on the 18th August. He captured a valuable convoy of merchantmen during his cruise, but did not have a chance of measuring his strength with the enemy. Feeling his health failing, Admiral Geary resigned his command, and the "VICTORY" struck his flag on the 28th August.

Vice-Admiral Darby, who was on board the *Britannia*, then took command of the Channel fleet, and the "VICTORY" flew the flag of Rear-Admiral Drake, the 3rd in seniority, but only for one cruise, as being afflicted with severe attacks of gout, this officer resigned his post on 29th December.

The "VICTORY" was next destined to be the flagship of a squadron fitting for service in the North Sea, under Vice-Admiral Hyde Parker, who hoisted his flag in her on March 20th, 1781, at Portsmouth. On May 20th, she sailed for the Downs, with five other ships; but a few days after her arrival at that anchorage, Admiral Parker shifted his flag to the *Fortitude*, a 74, as being better adapted for cruising in the narrow seas to which he was bound, and the "VICTORY," returning to Spithead, hoisted the broad pendant of Commodore Elliott, and bore it for one cruise with the fleet, in which nothing of importance took place.

[11]

In September of the same year, Rear-Admiral Kempenfelt, hoisted his flag as fourth Admiral of Channel fleet and cruised with it for two months; but in December he was detached in command of a squadron of 12 sail of the line and 5 frigates, to attempt to intercept M. de Guichen, who had sailed from Brest, with a convoy, carrying troops and laden with warlike stores intended for the Count de Grasse in the West Indies.

Early on the 12th December, when 40 leagues west of Ushant, the look out frigate, *Tisiphone*, Captain James Saumarez, made the signal for an enemy's fleet, and boldly crowded all sail to close them. In a short time, when the day was fully broke, Kempenfelt found to his disgust, that the enemy was much stronger than he had been led to expect, as he could count 19 line of battle ships amongst the crowd of ships to leeward of him; he therefore decided to watch his opportunity before attacking; and, after sailing along with, and to windward of the French fleet for a few hours, his patience was rewarded by perceiving that the van and centre, with most of the men-of-war, were separated by a slight gap from the rear. He at once made a dash for the opening, and, while with the "VICTORY" and some others, he engaged the rear of the French centre, and prevented their returning to the rescue, his other vessels passed to leeward and captured the whole of that division of the convoy—15 ships—sinking four frigates that rashly, but

most gallantly, endeavoured to protect them.

As the wind was now fair for England, he formed his fleet round the prizes, and keeping up a running fire, carried the whole of the captured ships into Plymouth in the face of the enemy, and despite their utmost endeavours to prevent him. [12]

Kempenfelt then returned to Spithead with his squadron, of which he retained command till the month of March next year, when he struck his flag in the "VICTORY," and hoisted it on board the *Royal George*. In this ship he was unhappily drowned on the 29th August, on her capsizing at Spithead, when over 900 persons perished in a few minutes. The "VICTORY" was a witness of the melancholy catastrophe, and her boats saved many of the survivors.

Lord Howe next hoisted his flag in the "VICTORY" on assuming command of the Channel Fleet, and cruised in the course of the summer of 1782, but without any meetings with the enemy or incidents worth recording.

At this time, the attention of England, and indeed her enemies, was almost entirely fixed on the defence of Gibraltar by General Elliot, and the probable fate of that fortress, which though it had been besieged by both sea and land for more than three years, had never been so hardly pressed as now. Admiral Darby with a powerful fleet had relieved the garrison from the greatest possible distress the year before, but the supplies he then landed were now nearly exhausted, the garrison were again commencing to feel the pangs of hunger, and it was well known that the Spaniards had been for months making preparations for an attack of a new kind, and on a grand scale, which they trusted would compel the proud stronghold to lower its colours. The new feature in the attack was the construction of ten large floating batteries, so covered and protected as to be considered practically invulnerable; these were armed with 154 pieces of the heaviest ordnance, and backed up as they were by 48 French and Spanish sail of the line, and 40,000 troops, the expected assault was enough to make England tremble for the result. It was accordingly resolved to make a great effort to relieve Gibraltar, and in such a manner that it should be not only a temporary but a permanent relief and to this end a fleet of 36 sail of the line was got together, which was to convoy a large number of merchantmen, laden with every description of supplies, and carrying troops to reinforce the garrison. [13]

This fleet sailed on September 11th, with Lord Howe in the "VICTORY," as Commander-in-Chief, and as Juniors, Vice-Admirals Barrington and Millbank; and Rear-Admirals Alexander Hood and Hughes.

Before this succour could arrive, the grand attack on Gibraltar had taken place. On September 9th the enemy's batteries, after a temporary silence while preparing for the struggle, re-opened, and continued a rain of shot and shell, with scarcely any intermission, to the 13th, when the fleet and floating batteries being brought into their assigned positions, joined in the bombardment.

It is not our province to relate the details of that memorable day—enough to state that the arrangements which General Elliot's energy had made were equal to the occasion; the invulnerable floating batteries were set on fire, the fleet repulsed, the land attack took no effect, and the baffled enemy, with enormous losses, withdrew from active attack, to wait the results of the famine with which they well knew the besieged were threatened, and which they hoped would effect the capitulation their arms had failed to force.

But Howe was approaching, not rapidly, for foul winds detained him, but surely, and the combined fleets lying off Algeciras were on the *qui vive* to prevent his landing any supplies, when on October 10th, a terrific gale assailed them, which dismasted one, and drove five of their number from their anchors; two of these got away into the Mediterranean, but the other three went on shore in the bay, one of them under our forts, where the crew were made prisoners.

The very next day, while the enemy was thus thrown into disorder, the British fleet made its appearance in the Straits; and in the evening, four of the transports succeeded in getting safe under the guns of Gibraltar, without any attempt on the part of the combined fleets to hinder them, much to the astonishment of Howe, who on learning some days before of the failure of the grand attack, had also learnt the avowed intention of the enemy to give him battle, and had called all the Admirals on board the "VICTORY," and made known to them his determination to force his way through at all hazards. The rest of the convoy from light winds and bad management were swept past the Rock by the current, and lost this favourable opportunity of accomplishing their errand, a most fatal mischance, as ships once driven to the eastward of Gibraltar, are sometimes weeks before they can gain their anchorage on the western side. The men-of-war followed, and spent next day in endeavouring to work up with the transport against the strong easterly current, in hopes of getting them in, before the enemy, whose misfortunes they had now heard of were enabled to interfere; but on the morning of the 13th the combined fleets, having completed their refitting, weighed, and sailed out of the bay, apparently intending to engage the English ships, which were then but a few miles to the eastward of Europa point, and in full sight of the garrison. Although the gale of the 10th had reduced the enemy's force by six, yet they still far out-numbered Howe's, as they mustered 80 sail of men-of-war, forty-four of which were of the line, while Howe had but thirty-six with which to protect his charge; nevertheless, he waited the advance with impatience and confidence, having sent the merchant ships to the Zaffarin Islands, as a rendezvous, until they should hear of the result of the battle. But the enemy suddenly altered his course and running past the British ships, disappeared in the dusk of evening. Next day, neither of the fleets were to be seen from the Rock, but some of the transports that had slipped back, arrived, filling the garrison with joy. Thus several days passed, [14]

when on the 18th, the remainder of the convoy, who had heard of no engagement and ventured to leave their retreat at Zaffarin, arrived in safety, completing the primary object of their mission. Next morning both fleets were again in sight from Gibraltar, with an easterly wind, the British nearest. Howe had been following the enemy, who was searching in vain for the missing convoy; but now, hearing that his charge were all safely at anchor, and not wishing to fight in the narrow space of the Straits, the British Admiral, after landing a further supply of powder, collected from his ships as he passed, under sail for the open sea, and having gained it, awaited a second time the enemy's attack. [15]

The combined fleet, which had been reinforced by the junction of the two ships that had been driven from Algeciras were thus to windward, and had the entire option of time and distance in their hands; they chose to advance very leisurely, and to keep at a great distance, firing apparently at the spars of the British ships, and never giving them the opportunity of getting into close action. After continuing this distant cannonade for some hours, the enemy again hauled off, having inflicted a loss of 68 killed, and 280 wounded on the English. The "VICTORY" herself did not lose a man, or fire a single shot, and the other ships only returned the fire very occasionally. Howe was much blamed for not making greater exertions to engage the enemy, but it is easier to talk of getting a fleet to windward than to do it, and he does not seem to have had it in his power to do more than he did. The morning after this skirmish, the enemy being nowhere to be seen, Howe, according to orders, broke up his fleet in detachments to reinforce various stations, and returned home himself in the "VICTORY" to Portsmouth, which he reached on November 10th. Preliminaries of peace were already at this time being discussed, and were signed on 20th January following, and "VICTORY" was paid off at Portsmouth on February 27th, after a commission of nearly five years, during which she had established the character of being the best sailing three-decker ever launched. This character she ever after maintained, and it led to her being almost invariably chosen as flagship, by every officer who had the chance of so doing. [16]

On preparations being made in June 1790, in expectation of war with Spain, the "VICTORY" was again commissioned. Lord Howe at first had his flag in her, but when the *Queen Charlotte* was ready, he went to that ship, and Lord Hood succeeded him in the "VICTORY." She remained at the North ready for service throughout that year, and part of the next, when Hood was appointed to command the Northern Fleet, fitting out in case our friendly relations with Russia, then trembling in the balance, could not be maintained; but the difficulty passed away, and in the summer of 1791 she was paid off and returned into ordinary.

But in February, 1793, when the French Republic had sealed its former acts of lawlessness by the execution of the King, Louis XVI, and had further cut itself off from civilization by declaring war against the world, or against such parts of the world as it was not already fighting with, that war which is known in our annals as the "War with the Republic," commenced in earnest.

England's fleets were at once brought forward, and the "VICTORY" was again manned as the flagship of Lord Hood, who was now appointed Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean. He hoisted his flag at Portsmouth on the evening of the 6th of May, and his Lordship sailed on the 22nd of the same month, accompanied by 6 two-deckers and 5 frigates, which composed the last detachment of the fleet he was to command; 14 other line-of-battle ships and some frigates having preceded him, under Vice-Admirals Hotham and Cosby, and Rear-Admirals Goodall and Gell.

On the 24th a junction was effected with Admiral Hotham's divisions, and after waiting off Scilly a fortnight for the passing of a convoy, Hood bore away for Gibraltar with 11 sail of the line.

The first object of importance in the Mediterranean was the reduction of Toulon if possible. In that port, the great Southern French Arsenal, were known to be upwards of 30 sail of the line, 17 of them ready for sea, under the orders of Admiral Trogoff, but as that officer was a staunch monarchist, he was not expected to do anything that would further the cause of republicanism, and the existence of a strong royalist party in the south of France, favoured the supposition that instead of resisting the British, the Toulonese would receive them with open arms, as their only chance of protection from that republic they so thoroughly hated and feared. [17]

Such being the posture of affairs, Hood hurried out to his station, watering his ships at Cadiz, (for Spain was now our ally against the common enemy) and Gibraltar. From the latter place the fleet sailed, on June 27th, and on the 7th July fell in with a Spanish fleet of 24 sail whose Admiral sent a message to Lord Hood, to say that he had 1900 men sick and was going into Carthagena, and, said the Captain of the frigate "no wonder, for we have been 60 days at sea." This speech did not raise their new allies in the estimation of the British, who laughed at such a notion, and left the Spaniards to follow to Toulon, which was sighted on the 19th July, and a flag of truce was sent in to propose an exchange of prisoners. To this the enemy would not accede, but they were now acquainted with the presence of Lord Hood's fleet off the port, and those causes of dissension we have mentioned began to operate, with the most important final results.

Lord Hood cruised for a fortnight in sight of Toulon, then sailed for Nice to show himself there, and on his return on 20th August, heard that proposals were being made in Toulon to put themselves under his protection. On the 23rd, Commissioners came on board the "VICTORY" from Marseilles with full powers to treat for peace, offering a conditional surrender of Toulon and all the shipping, declaring a monarchical government the leading object of their negotiation, and praying for speedy help against the armies of the convention that were at that moment approaching. [18]



Our space will not permit a full account of the proceedings at this time, and we must satisfy ourselves by stating that Toulon was taken possession of on the 27th August, without a blow, despite the threatened opposition of Admiral St. Julien, the second in command, who was thorough republican; the Spanish fleet hove in sight the same day, and Toulon was soon occupied by the combined forces, and vigorous steps taken to keep possession of our "extraordinary acquisition," as Nelson in one of his letters calls it. But the enemy were at hand, mustering stronger and stronger every day, and by November, General Dugommier was besieging the town with 40,000 men, while the defenders, who only mustered 16,000, were of different nationalities and had to man a line 15 miles in length. On December 16th a position on the heights commanding Toulon was carried by the besiegers, and a council of war, hastily summoned, determined to evacuate the town, carry off as many ships as possible, and burn the rest. The evacuation was carried out successfully, the troops and seamen were all embarked, and 15,000 of the inhabitants took refuge from the rage of their countrymen on board the fleets. But the rest of the programme was not so completely performed; the Spaniards had charged themselves with the destruction of the ships in the inner harbour, but either by carelessness or treachery, they very imperfectly performed their task. They did *not* fire the ships of war but *did* set alight to the powder vessels which it was arranged should be scuttled; these blew up, nearly destroying Captain Sidney Smith, who was burning the ships in the outer mole; he gallantly attempted to repair the omission, but was repulsed by the fire of the republicans who were already in the town, and had to retire, leaving the work but half done. Of 58 ships in the port when Lord Hood arrived, 14 were destroyed, 19 carried off, and 25 left to the French.

In all these operations the men of the "VICTORY," if not the ship herself, bore an active part, as they were landed, and helped to man the batteries with the other ship's companies, and suffered great losses in the continual bombardment to which they were exposed. On one occasion, indeed, the ship was like to have become the heroine of an adventure which might have ended her days, for, on October 23rd, in one of the disputes, which, as might be expected, were not unfrequent between our quondam enemies the Spaniards and ourselves, Don Juan de Langara, the Spanish Admiral, placed three of his three-deckers round the "VICTORY," as she lay in the outer road of Toulon, as a "gentle moral persuasion" on behalf of his demands. As the English fleet at that time was reduced by the absence of detachments to 10 sails, and their crews were weakened by the landing parties, the Spanish Admiral with his 17 sail, could have destroyed our ships, had he dared to carry matters so far; but Lord Hood was firm, and the Spanish ships resumed their former positions without any further demonstrations. [19]

The British fleet now withdrew to Hyères, where they lay and revictualled; and on the 24th of January, 1794, thinking that something might yet be done to assist the royalist faction in Corsica, Lord Hood proceeded with a fleet of 60 sail, including transports, for the Bay of Fiorenzo. While on the passage, a furious gale arose which dispersed them, and the "VICTORY," amongst others, was nearly disabled, losing her mainyard and many of her sails, and was at one time in danger of being lost. The scattered fleet put into Porto Ferrajo on the 29th. Detachments of ships were sent from here, with the troops, to attack San Fiorenzo, the principal port of Corsica; and on the 19th February, after standing a bombardment of eleven days, this town capitulated. By this time the "VICTORY" herself had arrived.

Lord Hood then tried to persuade General Dundas, who commanded the troops, of the practicability of taking Bastia, the capital of the island; but that officer differed, and not only refused to take any part in the attempt, but would not even lend a mortar or gun, or any stores for the service, so that Hood had actually to send to Naples for these most necessary articles for a siege; for, probably believing that the energy of Nelson, then Captain of the *Agamemnon*, who had borne a most prominent part in these previous undertakings, was sufficient to carry anything through with success, the Admiral determined to attempt it alone with his sailors, and 1000 men of different regiments who were embarked in the ship as marines. He cruised in the "VICTORY" for some days, before Bastia, and then returned to San Fiorenzo, leaving everything to the direction of Nelson, who worked as he always did, untiringly. On April 4th Hood again went round and assisted with his men, etc., in raising the shore batteries; and on the 11th, when all was ready, a boat from the "VICTORY" went in to demand the capitulation of the town. This was refused with scorn, by the brave Frenchman, St. Michel, who replied, that he "had red-hot shot for our ships, and bayonets for our men;" the "VICTORY," on receiving this reply, hoisted a red flag, the preconcerted signal, and immediately the batteries opened. The town replied, and for some weeks the siege went on with varying success. [20]

During this period General D'Aubant, who had succeeded General Dundas, would ride over with his staff from San Fiorenzo, a distance of only twelve miles, and watch the operations, his own men remaining inactive the while, and it was his extraordinary conduct that urged the seamen to exertions of which they might otherwise have been incapable. The fire of the besiegers grew hotter and hotter; new batteries were erected, and guns mounted on heights deemed insurmountable, and on 19th May, their efforts were rewarded by a boat from the town coming on board the "VICTORY," with a proposal of surrender.

The preliminaries were speedily arranged, and on the 22nd the town and two frigates were given up. "When I reflect on what we have achieved," says Nelson in a letter to his wife, "I am all astonishment. I always was of opinion, have ever acted up to it, and never have had any reason to repent it, that one Englishman was equal to three Frenchmen." [21]

Calvi, the other principal town in Corsica, was now looked upon as a desirable acquisition, but before anything could be done, Hood received intelligence that the French fleet had left Toulon,



and immediately sailed in pursuit. He met Admiral Hotham's squadron next day, and with 13 sail of the line, sighted the Frenchmen on June 10th. The enemy were chased for two days, but before they could be overtaken they escaped into Gourjean Bay, where it was found impossible to attack them, and Lord Hood returned with the "VICTORY" and three other ships to Martello Bay, leaving Vice-Admiral Hotham, with the remainder, to watch the French, which we may remark, he did for five months without success.

Nelson had been sent back to Bastia with his ship, as soon as the inferiority of the enemy's fleet had been ascertained, and as General Stuart, who had arrived with a reinforcement, and was now in command of the troops, was a very different man to either of his successors, and as anxious as Nelson himself to lose no time in attacking Calvi, the *Agamemnon* and transports went at once from Bastia to a small bay about 3 miles from Calvi, where they arrived on June 19th, and proceeded to land. On the same day the "VICTORY" and *Britannia* anchored in Martello Bay, and after sending parties of men by land to join Stuart and Nelson, they came round to Calvi on the 27th, with all the munitions of war they could muster, and lay off and on during the siege.

The "VICTORY" landed 7 of her own lower deck guns for the batteries, as well as some guns she had from the *Commerce de Marseilles*, and sent a strong party of seamen to assist, but was not able to get into action herself from the strength of the sea defences of the town. The seamen from *Agamemnon*, "VICTORY," and transports, guided and incited by Nelson's indomitable energy, again performed prodigies in the way of work; they once more dragged guns up to positions considered by the troops unattainable, made the batteries, and fought them, and gained the warm praise and thanks of General Stuart, for the valuable assistance they afforded.

[22]

The town surrendered on August 10th, after enduring a siege of 51 days. In these operations, several officers and men of the "VICTORY" were killed and wounded.

Nelson himself was nearly slain, but got off with the loss of an eye. His wound was never reported, and he only casually mentioned that he had received a slight hurt which laid him up one day. All this time, Lord Hood, on whose health the anxious work at Toulon had told considerably, remained on board the "VICTORY" and sent supplies to the shore parties when required. The ship was once blown off by a gale, but resumed her position after an absence of a week.

The "VICTORY" next proceeded to Genoa, and in the first week of November, she left for England, taking Lord Hood with her, his health not being able to stand the fatigues of the command any longer. She arrived at Portsmouth in December, and Lord Hood went on leave, but rehoisted his flag on the 14th April following, after the ship had had a thorough refit.

On May 1st, 1795, the "VICTORY" was again a spectator of the destruction of a sister first rate, the *Boyne* of 98 guns, which caught fire and blew up at Spithead, where remnants of her remain to this day off Southsea Castle, marked by a green buoy.

On 2nd of May, as Lord Hood was on the point of leaving to resume his command, he was ordered to strike his flag, and "VICTORY" sailed out on 24th May, as a private ship,<sup>[B]</sup> with Rear-Admiral Man, who was taking a reinforcement out to Admiral Hotham, then confirmed Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean. Man joined Hotham's fleet off Minorca on June 14th, and on 8th July, on the fleet weighing from San Fiorenzo Bay, to pursue the enemy, he shifted his flag to the "VICTORY."

[23]

[B] "A private ship" is a man-of-war that does not have an Admiral on board.

The French fleet of 17 sail, under Admiral Martin, were sighted off Hyères at daylight on July 13th, and the signal for a general chase was thrown out by the *Britannia*, Admiral Hotham's flagship.

The "VICTORY" was always celebrated for her good sailing qualities, and on this occasion they shone out particularly conspicuous, for, at half-past noon, she, with the *Culloden* and *Cumberland*, came within range of the rearmost of the enemy, while the rest of their companions were astern at distances ranging from 1 to 9 miles, the Commander-in-Chief being one of the farthest, for the *Britannia* was as bad a sailer as the "VICTORY" was a good one. They opened fire, but at this moment the wind unfortunately failed, and they were unable to get into close action, though at the end of an hour the *Alcide*, a seventy-four, struck. They still hoped to make more prizes, but had by four o'clock drifted so near the shore, that the signal to discontinue the action was made, and the French escaped through the shoals, the passages between which they were familiar with, into Fréjus Bay.

The *Alcide*, which had made a most gallant defence, unluckily took fire shortly after striking, and blew up with the loss of all her crew, save 200. In the skirmish, the "VICTORY" was the greatest sufferer, having her rigging much cut, and all her lower masts badly wounded. She lost 5 killed (2 officers), and 16 wounded.

[24]

Man retained his flag in her until October, when he shifted to the *Windsor Castle*, and was succeeded by Vice-Admiral Robert Linzee, who flew his flag in the "VICTORY" for a month only. During this period she was cruising with a fleet, watching Toulon, and going from port to port in that vicinity, until the 3rd of December, 1795, when being at San Fiorenzo in Corsica, Sir John Jervis, who had arrived from England a few days before, hoisted his flag in her as Commander-in-Chief, and at once proceeded off Toulon. He remained cruising between that port and Minorca, with a fleet of about 13 sail, until the autumn of 1796, but up to this time no incidents took place

that are worth recording.

Spain had made a peace with France in 1794; and now in August 1796, an alliance, offensive and defensive, was concluded between the two powers. This put Sir John Jervis in a very critical position, as the united French and Spanish fleets amounted to 38 ships of the line, while Sir John, who was at Martello Bay, had but 15. It was determined accordingly, to evacuate Corsica, as the power of the French republic, and the deeds of their countryman, Buonaparte, were awaking feelings in the inhabitants that were not amicable to England. This was completed on the 2nd November, and Sir John and all his fleet sailed from Corsica, and escorted the transports to Gibraltar, which was reached on December 11th. On the 16th he went on to Lisbon to meet some expected reinforcements from home.

Here he remained until the 18th January, when he sailed with 10 ships only; but on February 6th 5 more joined from England, when his force consisted of the following line-of-battle ships, with which he cruised, awaiting news of the enemy.

110	"VICTORY"	[ Admiral Sir John Jervis, K.B. Captain Robert Calder. Captain George Grey.	[25]
100	<i>Britannia</i>	[ Vice-Admiral Charles Thompson. Captain Thomas Foley.	
98	[ <i>Barfleur</i> <i>Prince George</i> <i>Blenheim</i>	[ Vice-Admiral Hon. W. Waldegrave. Captain James R. Dacres. Rear-Admiral William Parker. Captain John Irwin. Captain Thomas L. Frederick.	
80	<i>Namur</i>	Captain James H. Whitshed.	
74	[ <i>Captain</i> <i>Goliath</i> <i>Excellent</i> <i>Orion</i> <i>Colossus</i> <i>Egmont</i> <i>Culloden</i> <i>Irresistible</i>	[ Commodore Horatio Nelson. Captain Ralph W. Miller. Captain Sir Charles Knowles, Bart. Captain Cuthbert Collingwood. Captain Sir James Saumarez. Captain George Murray. Captain John Sutton. Captain Thomas Troubridge. Captain George Martin.	
64	<i>Diadem</i>	Captain George H. Towry.	

On the 13th, when off Cape St. Vincent, Commodore Nelson in the *Minerve* frigate, joined, and reported having been chased by the Spaniards. This was a fleet of 27 sail of the line, which had passed the Straits on the 5th, and was then working up for Cadiz, with the intention of picking up more ships there, and then proceeding for Brest to join the French.

The morning of the 14th, the 'glorious St. Valentine's day,' 1791, broke thick and misty, but as soon as daylight made its appearance, the Spaniards were sighted to the S.W.; one by one they were made out through the fog, and reported to the Admiral, who received the report of their increasing numbers with imperturbability, and when the whole 27 sail were fully in sight, and Captain Calder expressed some hesitation about the wisdom of coping with such odds, he exclaimed, "Enough Sir, were there *fifty* I will go through them." [26]

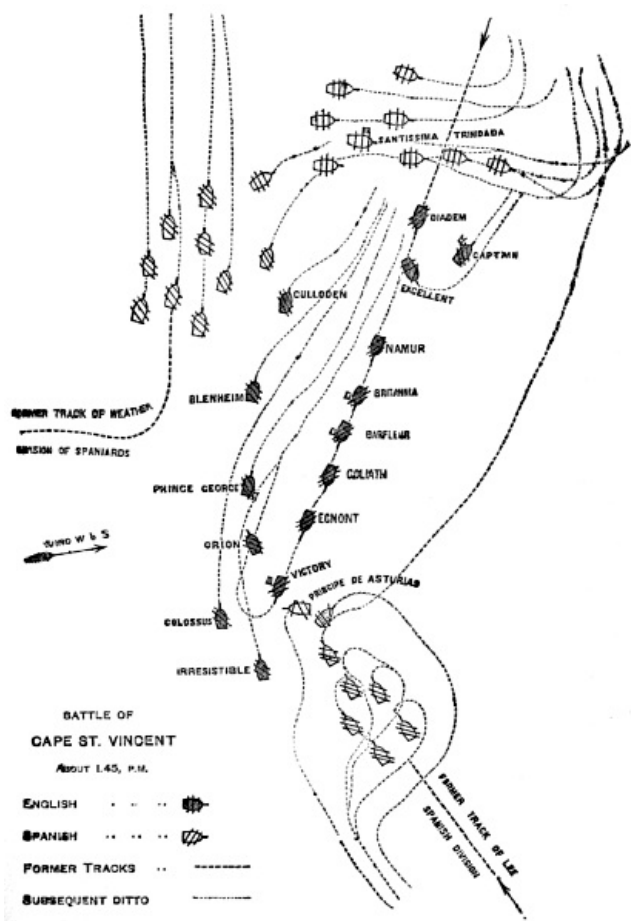
The Spanish fleet were much scattered and in no particular order, but some eight ships were considerably to leeward of the rest, leaving a distinct gap, which was, however, rapidly narrowing, by the nineteen ships to windward running down to join their companions. For this gap the British ships pushed with all sail in a compact line, "VICTORY" in the centre. A few minutes hesitation might have been fatal, for had the enemy got all his ships together, the 15 English vessels would have fought against great odds; but Jervis was a bold Commander, to whom indecision was unknown, and who was well aware of the value of the presence of a man like Nelson, and, indeed, it was mainly by the latter's daring manœuvre at a later period of the action, that the Spaniards were prevented from effecting their junction.

As it was, they were just in time, and as soon as the weather division of Spaniards saw the head of the English line between them and their friends, they hauled to the wind on the opposite tack, hoping to get round the rear of the British line, and so effect their purpose. Their lee division still stood determinedly on, and attempted to cut the British line ahead of the "VICTORY" herself, but she, by her rapid advance, frustrated this, and forced the *Principe de Asturias*, of 112 guns, to put about to avoid a collision. The Spanish ship, which bore the flag of one of their Rear Admirals, let fly her broadside as she shot up in the wind, but either from the obscurity caused by [27]

smoke, or by mistaken orders this was done at the wrong time, and extraordinary to relate, not a shot struck the "VICTORY." With a ringing cheer of derision from her crew, the British flagship repaid the compliment, but with interest, for as the Spanish three-decker slowly turned round and presented her stern to her, the whole of the "VICTORY'S" guns were discharged into it with destructive effect. The Spaniard ran straight away to leeward, followed by his whole division, and until the close of the day, never appeared again in the action.

In the mean time, the weather division, as has been said, were intending to round the rear of our line, and so join their ships to leeward, but Nelson, in the *Captain*, the third ship of the line from the rear, saw their object the instant their van bore up together astern, and immediately wearing round, plunged fearlessly into their midst. He was followed by the *Culloden* and *Excellent*, and the Spanish Admiral, daunted by this spirited conduct, hauled to the wind, and gave up the attempt.

The annexed plan may help to the comprehension of the position of affairs at this period of the action.



[See larger image](#)

The other British ships in the meantime were tacking in succession, and one after another came into action to the support of their comrades.

The "VICTORY" engaged the *Salvador del Mundo*, a 112 gun ship, which had already been mauled by the *Excellent*, and forced her to strike her colours. This was at 3, p.m., and shortly afterwards, Sir John, who was discreet as he was bold, observing that about 24 Spaniards (composed of the 8 lee ships, and odd ships of the weather division, who were all fresh) were bearing down on them, made the signal to close up to cover the prizes; this was immediately done, and the Spaniards, not liking the look of the compact line of the British, hauled off, and made no effort to continue the action.

In this battle, Nelson particularly distinguished himself, as in his little 74, the *Captain*, he boarded in succession, and took, the *San Nicholas*, of 80, and *San Josef*, of 112 guns; the "VICTORY" passing just at that time, gave the gallant *Captain* three cheers. Nelson went on board the "VICTORY" after the action, and was warmly embraced by Sir John Jervis, on the very quarter-deck on which he was to fall, covered with glory, eight years later, and not far from the place where this battle had been fought.

[28]

But for all these details we must refer the reader to *James's*, *Drinkwater's*, and other accounts.

The "VICTORY," strange to say, had but 1 man killed, and 8 wounded; the total loss in the English fleet being about 350 killed and wounded.

The fruits of the victory were the *San Josef*, *Salvador del Mundo*, 112, *San Nicholas*, 80, and *San Isidro*, 74; a result, that considering these prizes were wrested from 27 ships by 15, cannot but

be considered as most glorious.

The enemy, next day, had it in their power to renew the action with 21 ships. Who can say what the result might have been, for some of our vessels were so disabled as to render it necessary to tow them; but though the Spaniards once made a feint, as if they would attack, they finally disappeared, allowing our fleet and prizes to arrive safely at Lagos Bay, in Portugal, where they anchored on the 16th.

On the 19th, they experienced a gale of wind that drove the "VICTORY" from her anchors, whereby she had a most narrow escape of being wrecked. On the 23rd they sailed, and arrived at Lisbon on the 28th, without accident or molestation.

The news of the battle of Cape St. Vincent, as it was called, was received in England with frantic joy; great rejoicings took place throughout the kingdom, the fleet received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, Sir John Jervis was created Earl of St. Vincent, Admirals Thompson and Parker were made Baronets, and the gallant Commodore Nelson was invested with the honours of the Bath. [29]

On the 28th March Sir John Jervis was reinforced by a squadron from England, when he shifted his flag on the 30th from the "VICTORY" to the *Ville de Paris*, a new three-decked ship.

The fleet sailed next day (the "VICTORY" being now a private ship) and proceeded off Cadiz, where Nelson had been cruising for some time watching the Spanish ships, who, ever since the 16th of February had lain in that port, hooted and jeered at by the populace, and their Admirals and Captains disgraced.

Jervis blockaded Cadiz during the summer, the "VICTORY" serving in sometimes the outer, sometimes the in-shore squadron, and sending her boats to take part in the night attacks, undertaken by Commodore Nelson, with the hopes of shaming the Spaniards to come out. On one of these occasions, 5th July, some of her men were wounded. But the Dons were not to be lured out, and on the approach of winter, Earl St. Vincent withdrew his vessels to the Tagus, and amongst other ships sent the "VICTORY" home, with the prizes taken on February 14th. She arrived at Spithead on October 1st, and thence going to Chatham, paid off on November 26th, after another long and eventful commission of nearly five years duration.

Worn out, and unfit for further active service, the poor old "VICTORY" was here degraded to the office of prison hospital ship, which she filled for two years, when, unwilling that such a favourite and fast sailing ship should be lost to the country, the Admiralty directed her to be thoroughly repaired. This took a year, and in the spring of 1801 she came out of dock almost a new ship, but she was not ready for service in the Baltic campaign of that date, and had rest at Chatham for still two years. [30]

The peace concluded between England and France in 1802 was not of long duration, for on April 29th, 1803, war was again declared; this had been foreseen, and early in the month, great preparations were made in all the dockyards. Lord Nelson was appointed Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, and selected the "VICTORY" as his flagship. She was commissioned at Chatham, on April 9th, and on 16th May arrived at Spithead. Nelson was waiting for her, but could not get away for a few days; and such was his impatience to sail, that in answer to everyone who spoke to him on the 19th of his departure, he said, "I cannot sail till to-morrow, and that's an age."

He went on board on the 20th, and sailed in a violent squall of wind and rain the same afternoon, having orders to speak Admiral Cornwallis off Brest, and if necessary to leave the "VICTORY" with him, and go on a frigate. On the 22nd he was in sight of Brest, but no Cornwallis was to be seen, and after chafing for a day, his anxiety did not permit him to wait any longer, so striking his flag in the "VICTORY," he went on board the *Amphion*, leaving the former ship to find the Admiral of the Channel Fleet, and if not required, to follow him with all speed.

Within forty hours after Lord Nelson left him, Captain Sutton met Lord Cornwallis, and was immediately permitted to resume his voyage. A few days after, the "VICTORY" fell in with the *Ambuscade*, a French frigate, formerly an English one, which she re-captured, and on the 12th June, she anchored at Gibraltar. After watering, she left on the 15th, called at Malta on the 9th July, and on the 30th, joined the squadron of 5 line-of-battle ships, off Cape Sicie, when Lord Nelson at once shifted into her, bringing Captain T. Masterman Hardy with him, from the *Amphion*, Captain Sutton of the "VICTORY" exchanging.

For 18 months subsequent to this, there is no fact worth recording in the history of the "VICTORY." [31] During that time Lord Nelson, with a fleet that averaged 10 sail of the line, closely watched the road of Toulon, where a French fleet lay at anchor, going occasionally to Agincourt Sound, in Sardinia, for water, &c., but the French never showed any sign of moving, until the beginning of 1805, though every stratagem was tried to entice them to come out.

Spain had declared war with England on 12th December, 1804, and Buonaparte had formed a great plan for the invasion of Britain, the first step to the accomplishment of which, was to gain the command of the Channel. This could only be done by placing an overwhelming force of ships there, and by misleading the English as to his design. With this object in view, Admiral Villeneuve, who was now in command at Toulon, prepared for sea, and embarked on board his 11 ships, 3,500 soldiers.

His orders, as subsequently ascertained were, to proceed to the West Indies, effect a junction there with a fleet of 21 sail from Brest, land his troops, and if opportunity offered, ravage our colonies; then return with speed to Ferrol, where the Spaniards were to have a fleet of at least 25 sail ready to join him, and with this overpowering force, he was expected to keep our ships at bay, while the bold originator of this scheme, Napoleon, crossed the Channel himself, at the head of 170,000 men. We shall see how much easier this was to plan than to carry out.

On January 12th, 1805, well nigh worn out with watching, hoping, and fearing, his ships and their rigging rotten, Nelson left his station off Toulon, for the anchorage at Agincourt Sound, which he called his "home," to water and refit, leaving his two frigates to watch the enemy.

The fleet now consisted of the following ships:—"VICTORY," 104, *Royal Sovereign*, 100, *Canopus*, 80, *Spencer*, 74, *Leviathan*, 74, *Tigre*, 80, *Superb*, 74, *Belleisle*, 74, *Swiftsure*, 74, *Conqueror*, 74, *Donegal*, 74. [32]

On the 17th Villeneuve put to sea, and on the 19th January, at 2 p.m., the fleet in Agincourt Sound was electrified by the appearance of the frigates, with the welcome signal flying, "enemy is at sea." In two hours the ships were under weigh, and made sail for the passage between Biche and Sardinia, a passage so narrow that the ships had to proceed in single line, directed by the lights of their next ahead, and led by the "VICTORY," who took them through in safety.

Nelson had nothing to guide him as to where the French were bound, but he knew they could not be far off, and dispatched the few frigates he had to scour the coasts in search, but all to no purpose—no tidings could be obtained. A gale that arose on the 21st, and that lasted a week, blew in the teeth of the fleet as it attempted to go south, and Nelson was wild at the thought that they had escaped him. The only place his reasoning led him to suppose they could have sailed for, was Egypt, and thither he turned his ships' heads. He arrived off Alexandria on 7th February, but found no sign of them there either; immediately he retraced his steps, and called off Malta, and here he learnt that the French fleet were dispersed and disabled by the gale on the 21st, and had returned to Toulon, scattered and crippled.

Nelson, in a letter to Admiral Collingwood, thus writes on the subject. "Buonaparte has often made his brags that our fleet would be worn out by keeping the sea; that his was kept in order and increasing by being kept in port; but he now finds I fancy, *if Emperors hear truth*, that his fleet suffers more in one night, than ours in a year."

By March 12th, the British fleet, after struggling with a continuation of gales, succeeded in regaining their station off Toulon, and to their joy, saw the enemy still at anchor, and after watching them till the 27th, they proceeded to Palma Bay to get that refit they so much required, as during all this cruise, every ship had been strained to her utmost. [33]

Villeneuve took the first opportunity to escape again, after his ships were repaired, and on 29th March ran out of Toulon roads; on the 31st he was discovered off Cape Sicie, by the *Phæbe*, which vessel lost no time in communicating her intelligence to the Admiral, who was again on his way to Toulon; and once more the exciting chase began. The frigates, most unfortunately, lost the French ships, and could give no intelligence of their apparent destination. Again Nelson thought of Egypt, and proceeded off Sicily, sending ships right and left to get information, and on the 15th April, when off Palermo, he first heard of the evident intention of the enemy to go westward. At once he made sail in pursuit, but the fates were against him, and while the French in their passage down the Spanish coast had been favoured with easterly winds, he could get nothing but westerly gales. "I believe," he says, "this ill luck will go near to kill me."

It was the 4th May, before the "VICTORY" and her consorts anchored in Tetuan Bay to water and provision. Sailing the next day, they put into Gibraltar for a few hours, and learnt nothing there, but that the enemy's fleet had passed the Straits on the 8th April, nearly a month in advance of them. Nelson at once went to Cape St. Vincent, hoping to get news, and the next day he received the first reliable information from an American brig, which was to the effect, that on the 9th April, the French fleet of 11 sail had appeared off Cadiz, been joined by a squadron of five Spanish and 2 French line-of-battle ships, and immediately resumed their voyage. He then heard from an Admiral Campbell in the Portuguese service, that their destination was the West Indies; this tallied with his own ideas, and he instantly decided on following.

On May 10th he put into Lagos Bay to get more provisions, and on the 11th, having sent the *Royal Sovereign* back to the Mediterranean, as a slow sailer who was likely to hinder him, he started in pursuit of the 18 ships of the enemy, with but 10 of his own. His anxiety at this time was extreme; he was very ill, and had been told by his physicians that he ought to go home, but "salt beef and the French fleet is far preferable to roast beef and champagne without them;" he writes, "my health or my life even must not come into consideration at this important crisis." Captain Hardy is reported to have said to him, "I suppose, my Lord, that by crowding all this sail you mean to attack those 18 ships?" "By God, Hardy," said he, "that I do;" and on the passage over, he took every opportunity of making his plans known to his captains, that a success might be ensured if possible. Barbadoes was reached on June 4th, and here he received information that led him to suppose that either Tobago or Trinidad was the object of the combined fleet, who had been seen on the 28th May, and, embarking 2000 men, he hurried on for the latter island. Off Tobago he received corroborative news from an American schooner, who must have deceived him on purpose and all was preparation in the English fleet. [34]

Early on the morning of the 7th June, the ships stood along the north shore of Trinidad; and had

anything been wanting to confirm the intelligence they had received, it was supplied in the conflagration of a battery, that protected a little cove in the steep coast, and the flight of its garrison, who were seen speeding away in the direction of the town. The remembrance of Aboukir Bay rose in their minds, every man expected that the deeds of that glorious day would be repeated in the Gulf of Paria, and as the ships sailed, prepared for battle, through the Bocas of Trinidad, expectation was strained to the utmost, to catch the first glimpse of the enemy they fully relied on seeing on rounding the point.

What was their astonishment then on coming in view of the town, to find the Union Jack still waving over the forts, and no French men-of-war to be seen. [35]

Nelson at once anchored for the night without communication, and early next morning sailed for Grenada.

In the meantime, the town of Puerto d'España, the capital of Trinidad, was the scene of the wildest excitement. The lieutenant of artillery in command of the above-mentioned out-post, finding a fleet close to him in the morning, and making no doubt it was that of the enemy (for no one knew of Nelson's arrival in the West Indies), had burnt his barracks, thrown his guns over the cliff, and hastened back to the town, spreading dismay with the intelligence that the French were upon them. The inhabitants at once fled to the interior, the troops were drawn into the forts, and the town was left at the mercy of the French Republicans, of whom there were many in the island, and who now came forward and proclaimed themselves, believing their friends were at hand.

The movements of the fleet were inexplicable to the governor, and he was at once puzzled and relieved, when daylight revealed the strange ships underweigh, and leaving their shores. It was some days before the mystery was explained, and they learnt that Nelson had paid them a visit.

He, in the meanwhile, was hurrying along the chain of islands to the north, getting information, true or false, every day. On the 11th he heard that the enemy, now consisting of 20 sail, had passed Antigua, steering northward; and at once concluding that they were bound for Europe, he landed the troops at Antigua on the 12th, and left next day for Gibraltar, not without hopes of still catching them up.

This promptitude on the part of Nelson in following Villeneuve to the West Indies, doubtless saved some of our possessions there, as there was no force to withstand the combined fleets; but such was the terror of his name, that no sooner did the enemy hear of his approach, although he had but half their number of ships, than they immediately started again on their return, without attempting to carry out that part of their programme, which directed them to ravage our colonies. [36]

Nelson's squadron, after a most tedious voyage, arrived at Gibraltar on July 20th, when he went on shore; this was the first time for two years that he had put his foot out of the "VICTORY," for such had been his anxiety during his long blockade of Toulon to be ready at any moment, that it had never suffered him to leave his ship for an instant. Nothing up to this time had been heard of the enemy, and the indefatigable Nelson, after watering and provisioning at Tetuan, sailed again on the 23rd July.

He spoke Admiral Collingwood's squadron on 26th, and receiving information that the enemy had gone to the northward, he proceeded for Ushant, off which, on August 15th, he met Admiral Cornwallis with the Channel fleet of 24 sail of the line, and from him received an order to leave eight of the ships with him, and repair with "VICTORY" and *Superb* to Portsmouth.

The two ships arrived at Spithead on the 18th, when they were put in quarantine for a day, to Nelson's great indignation; they were then released, and Nelson went to his home at Merton, to get that rest he so badly needed. The "VICTORY" remained at Spithead, and did what repairs she could at that anchorage during her brief stay.

A short account of the proceedings of the combined fleets up to this time, may tend to the elucidation of the state of affairs.

When Villeneuve made his escape from the Mediterranean, the Brest squadron attempted to put to sea to join him at Martinique, but the determined front put on by Lord Gardner, who commanded the Channel fleet, then blockading Brest, daunted the enemy, who put back again into port. This was failure number one, in Buonaparte's scheme. [37]

We have followed Villeneuve with his 20 sail of French and Spanish line-of-battle ships to Antigua; thence he proceeded for Brest, intending to effect a junction with the fleet awaiting him there; but on July 22nd, Sir Robert Calder, who was watching Ferrol and had been warned by a frigate from Lord Nelson of the probable approach of the enemy, met and engaged him, and though he numbered but 15 to 20, he took two ships of the line, and forced the French admiral from his design. This was the second breakdown in the programme; however, Villeneuve got into Ferrol and joined the ships there, which made his force 29 sail of the line, and with these he sailed on August 9th, but, for some unexplained cause, instead of now making his way to Brest, he turned south and entered Cadiz on the 21st, driving off Admiral Collingwood's small squadron.

On September 2nd, Captain Blackwood, on his way to London with the news of the combined fleets having left Ferrol, called at 5 a.m. at Merton, where he found Lord Nelson up and dressed; the latter immediately said, "you bring me news of the French and Spanish fleets, I shall have to

give them a drubbing yet;" and going up to town with him, offered his services to the Admiralty. These were gladly accepted, and the "VICTORY" again hoisted his flag on September 15th, and sailed the same day in company with the *Euryalus*, Captain Blackwood, which frigate he afterwards despatched ahead to direct that the "VICTORY" should not be saluted on her arrival, in order that the enemy should be unaware of the reinforcement. On the 28th of the same month he joined, and took command of, the fleet off Cadiz, which, by the junction of Sir Robert Calder's ships to Admiral Collingwood's now consisted of 29 sail. [38]

On October 4th, Nelson dispatched Rear-Admiral Louis with 5 sail of the line to Gibraltar, but a small squadron from England joined a few days afterwards, making up his fleet to the following 27 sail of the line.

104	[	"VICTORY"	]	[	Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson, K.B. Capt. Thos. Masterman Hardy.
100	[	<i>Royal Sovereign</i>	]	[	Vice-Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood. Captain Edward Rotheram.
	[	<i>Britannia</i>	]	[	Rear-Admiral Earl of Northesk. Captain Charles Bullen.
98	[	<i>Temeraire</i>	]	[	Captain Eliab Harvey.
	[	<i>Prince</i>	]	[	Captain Richard Grindall.
	[	<i>Neptune</i>	]	[	Captain Thos. Francis Freemantle.
	[	<i>Dreadnought</i>	]	[	Captain John Conn.
80	[	<i>Tonnant</i>	]	[	Captain Charles Tyler.
74	[	<i>Belleisle</i>	]	[	Captain William Hargood.
	[	<i>Revenge</i>	]	[	Captain Robert Moorsom.
	[	<i>Mars</i>	]	[	Captain George Duff.
	[	<i>Spartiate</i>	]	[	Captain Sir Francis Laforey, Bart.
	[	<i>Defiance</i>	]	[	Captain Philip Charles Durham.
	[	<i>Conqueror</i>	]	[	Captain Israel Pellew.
	[	<i>Defence</i>	]	[	Captain George Hope.
	[	<i>Colossus</i>	]	[	Captain James N. Morris.
	[	<i>Leviathan</i>	]	[	Captain Henry W. Bayntun.
	[	<i>Achille</i>	]	[	Captain Richard King.
	[	<i>Bellerophon</i>	]	[	Captain John Cooke.
	[	<i>Minotaur</i>	]	[	Captain Charles J. M. Mansfield.
	[	<i>Orion</i>	]	[	Captain William Codrington.
	[	<i>Swiftsure</i>	]	[	Captain William G. Rutherford.
	[	<i>Ajax</i>	]	[	Lieut. John Pilfold.
	[	<i>Thunderer</i>	]	[	Lieut. John Stockham.
64	[	<i>Polyphemus</i>	]	[	Captain Robert Redmill.
	[	<i>Africa</i>	]	[	Captain Henry Digby.
	[	<i>Agamemnon</i>	]	[	Captain Sir Edward Berry.

Before continuing our narrative, we must again remind our readers that this is but the history of one ship, and that in our account of Trafalgar, only a sufficient general description of the movements of the fleet will be given, to render the "VICTORY's" part intelligible; for details, we must again refer to *James's Naval History*, where the most complete account of the action that has been published, will be found. [39]

On 19th October, the Franco-Spanish fleet, of 33 sail of the line, under Admiral Villeneuve, as Commander-in-Chief, and Admiral Gravina, (Spanish), as second, came out of Cadiz, and, after some manœuvring, at daylight on the 21st, the two fleets were in sight of one another, being then about 20 miles west of Cape Trafalgar. The wind was light, from the W.N.W., and the enemy were in a straggling line on the starboard tack, under easy sail; the British fleet were in two columns on the port tack, and some ten miles dead to windward. At 6.50, the "VICTORY" made the signal to bear up, on which the enemy wore together, thus presenting his port broadside to the English fleet, which bore down with a very light wind right aft, and with all studding sails set; the "VICTORY" leading the port line, and the *Royal Sovereign* the starboard, the latter being somewhat in advance.

Thus the British very slowly closed with the enemy, Lord Nelson refusing to allow the *Temeraire*, his next astern, to take the lead, and thereby bear the brunt of the battle. His Lordship visited the decks of his ship, exhorted his men not to throw away a shot, and was received with cheers as he again went on deck. Having made every other signal to his fleet he thought necessary, he finished with that most celebrated one—"England expects that every man will do his duty,"—which, at 11.40, was hoisted at the "VICTORY's" mizen-topgallant-masthead, and was received by [40]



most of the ships with cheers.

This made, Lord Nelson’s customary signal on going into action—“Engage the enemy more closely”—was hoisted at the main, and there remained until the mast was shot away.

At noon, the action commenced by the *Fougoeux* opening fire on the *Royal Sovereign*, on which the British Admirals hoisted their flags, and all their ships the white ensign, having also, each, two Union Jacks in the rigging. Twenty minutes later the enemy’s ships ahead of the “VICTORY” began a furious cannonade on her, which killed in a short time amongst many others, Mr. Scott, Lord Nelson’s secretary. Seeing Nelson’s intention to break the line, the enemy closed up ahead of him, making an almost impenetrable line; but the “VICTORY” still held her course, and steered straight for the mass of ships grouped round the *Bucentaure*, a French 80, on board of which was Villeneuve, the French Commander-in-Chief, though he never showed his flag during the action.

Nelson directed Captain Hardy to run on board any ship he chose, as it was evident they could not pass through the line without a collision, and at 12.30, not having as yet fired a single shot, the “VICTORY” passed slowly under the stern of the *Bucentaure*, so close as almost to be able to catch hold of her ensign, and discharge the port guns in succession right into her cabin windows, placing about 400 men *hors de combat*, by that one broadside, and almost disabling her from further resistance. The position of the ships at this moment is shown in the accompanying plan.



[See larger image](#)

At the same time the “VICTORY” fired her starboard guns at two vessels on that side of her, and five minutes later ran on board the *Redoutable*, a French 74, hooking her boom iron into the Frenchman’s topsails, and so dropped alongside, the “VICTORY” being on the *Redoutable’s* port side, and the latter closing her lower deck ports to prevent boarding. A tremendous cannonade ensued, the “VICTORY” firing her port guns at the *Bucentaure* and *Santissima Trinidad*, her starboard ones being very fully employed by the *Redoutable* which was so close alongside, that the men on the “VICTORY’S” lower deck on each discharge dashed a bucket of water into the hole made in the enemy’s side by the shot, to prevent the spread of the fire that might have destroyed both ships indiscriminately.

[41]

During this time the British ships were coming into action one after another, but very slowly, as the wind, light all the morning, had now fallen to a mere air, barely sufficient to bring all our vessels up; thus the first ships engaged had dreadful odds against them, and the loss of life in them was great.

After bringing the *Redoutable* to close action as before described, Lord Nelson and Captain Hardy, side by side, calmly walked the centre of the quarter deck, from the poop to the hatchway. At about 1.25, in their walk forward his Lordship turned a little short of the hatchway, Captain Hardy took the other step, and turned also, and beheld the Admiral in the act of falling. He had been wounded by a musket ball fired from the mizen-top of the *Redoutable*, which struck him in

the left shoulder as he turned, and thence descending, lodged in the spine. He sank on to the very spot that was still red with his secretary's blood, and was raised by Sergeant Secker, of the Marines, and two seamen, who under Captain Hardy's directions, bore him to the cockpit. "They have done for me at last, Hardy," said the hero as he fell. "I hope not," said Hardy. "Yes," was the reply, "they have shot my backbone through." But his presence of mind was still strong, and he gave directions for the tautening of the tiller ropes as he was carried below, and covered his face and decorations with a handkerchief, that he might not be recognised.

[42]

The cockpit was crowded with wounded, and with difficulty he was borne to a place on the port side, at the foremost end of it, and placed on a purser's bed with his back resting against one of the wooden knees of the ship. Here the surgeon examined his wound, and at once pronounced it mortal.

In the meantime the battle raged furiously, the men stationed in the *Redoubtable's* tops (Nelson would allow none in the "VICTORY," for fear of setting fire to the sails), had nearly cleared the "VICTORY'S" upper deck, 40 men being killed or wounded on the deck alone. The French, seeing this, attempted to board, but were driven back with great gallantry by the few men that remained, headed by Captain Adair, of the Marines.

At about 1.50 the *Redoubtable* ceased firing, and two midshipmen and a few men were sent from the "VICTORY" to assist in putting out a fire that had burst out on board of her, and the "VICTORY" then proceeded to get herself clear, leaving her prize lashed to the *Temeraire*, that had just fouled her on the other side. The "VICTORY" was by this time so crippled in her spars and sails that all efforts on her part to get into *close* action (Lord Nelson's favourite position), with another enemy were ineffectual; but she still continued engaged on the port side with the *Santissima Trinidad* and other ships; and later, with a fresh batch of the enemy's ships that passed along the line and eventually escaped.

By 4.30 p.m. the action was over, and a victory was reported to Lord Nelson just before his death. We left him in the cockpit, where he was attended by Dr. Scott, the chaplain, and Mr. Burke, the purser. He had sent the doctor away to attend to the other wounded, and lay in great agony, fanned with paper by those two officers, and giving his last directions as to those he loved; but ever and anon interrupted by the cheers of the "VICTORY'S" crew, he would ask the cause, and being told it was a fresh enemy's ship that had struck her flag, his eye would flash as he expressed his satisfaction. He frequently asked for Captain Hardy, and that officer not being able to leave the deck, his anxiety for his safety became excessive, and he repeated, "he must be killed;" "he is surely destroyed." An hour had elapsed before Hardy was able to come to him, when they shook hands, and the Admiral asked—"How goes the day with us." "Very well, my Lord," was the reply; "we have about 12 of the enemy in our possession."

[43]

After a few minutes of conversation, Hardy had again to return on deck, and shortly after the "VICTORY'S" port guns redoubled their fire on some fresh ships coming down on her, and the concussion so affected Lord Nelson that he cried in agony, "Oh! 'VICTORY!' 'VICTORY!' how you distract my poor brain;" but, weak and in pain as he was, he indignantly rebuked a man, who in passing through the crowded cockpit struck against and hurt one of the wounded.

Captain Hardy again visited him in about another hour, and, holding his Lordship's hand, congratulated him on a brilliant victory, saying, he was certain that 14 ships had surrendered. "That is well," he answered, "but I bargained for 20." Then, Hardy having again to go on deck, Nelson after emphatically telling him to anchor, and declaring his intention to direct the fleet as long as life remained, said, "kiss me Hardy," the Captain knelt down and kissed him, when he said, "Now I am satisfied. Thank God I have done my duty." Twenty minutes later he quietly passed away, having again and again repeated to his last breath, the words above mentioned. They were, it has been well remarked, the whole history of his life.

On the firing ceasing, the "VICTORY" had lost 57 killed and 103 wounded, and found herself all but a wreck. The tremendous fire to which she was exposed, when leading her line into action, had caused great damage, at a very early period of the battle, and before she herself fired a gun, many of her spars were shot away, and great injury was done to the hull, especially the fore part of it.

[44]

At the conclusion of the action, she had lost her mizen-mast, the fore-topmast had to be struck to save the foremast; the mainmast was not much better, and it took all the exertions of her crew to refit the rigging sufficiently to stand the bad weather that followed.

The actual number of prizes taken by 5 p.m., on October 21st, were 19; so that Nelson's desired number was nearly made up; but from their disabled condition, they were nearly all wrested from us by the gales that succeeded the battle. Lord Nelson had doubtless foreseen this, and thence his wish to anchor, and as a matter of fact, most of those few ships and prizes that did anchor, rode the gale out in safety and were saved; but the majority of the vessels were either anchorless, or in such deep water that they could not with convenience anchor.

The "VICTORY'S" trophy, the *Redoubtable*, was one of those that sunk after the action in deep water, and in her, as in many of the other vessels lost, went down her prize crew of British seamen. The English fleet were in nearly as disabled a state as their prizes, as might be expected after such a battle, and it is a matter of wonder that some of them were not lost on the treacherous shoal that swallowed up so many of the captured ships.

The enemy's fleet of 33 sail was disposed of as follows:

Taken into Gibraltar	4	} 19 lost to the enemy.
Burnt by the English	3	
Sunk by the English	3	
Wrecked during the gale	9	

Struck, but afterwards got into Cadiz crippled	2	} 14 saved to the enemy.	[45]
Escaped into Cadiz damaged	4		
Escaped into Cadiz perfect	4		
Escaped to the South, but captured by Sir R. Strachan on the 4th Nov., and taken into Plymouth	4		

On the 22nd, the day after the battle, the breeze was fresh from the S.S.W., and it was all the ships could do to increase their distance from the shore, such as were manageable towing those that were totally dismasted. On the 23rd it blew a gale, and then the misfortunes of the victors commenced; the hawsers of many of the ships towing parted, and the English vessels had too much to do to save themselves and one another, to attempt to get hold of the prizes again, so they drifted helplessly away, two to be blown safe into Cadiz, but seven to meet an awful end amongst the breakers of that shallow coast. Five others were burnt and sunk to ensure their not falling into the enemy's hands again.

On the morning of this day, the remnant of the enemy's ships put to sea to attempt to recapture some of their friends, but the gale coming on, the only result was the loss of two more of themselves, one of which fell into our hands before going ashore. The "VICTORY," with the small amount of sail she could show to the gale, laboured deeply in the heavy sea, and on the 24th, when the wind moderated a little, she was taken in tow by the *Polyphemus*. In the afternoon, managing to rig up some jury topmasts and a mizen-mast, she was more comfortable, but at 5 p.m. next day, on the storm increasing, the towing hawser parted, the mainyard carried away, and her sails split to ribbons. With nothing now to steady her, the "VICTORY" rolled dangerously and unmanageably, and an anxious night was passed, but happily for her as well as other of our ships, the violence of the wind abated in the morning, and the *Neptune* taking her in tow, after two days brought her safely into Gibraltar.

In the meantime Lord Nelson's remains had been placed in a cask of brandy, as the best means at hand of preserving them, and on the 3rd of November, having refitted, the "VICTORY," accompanied by the *Belleisle*, sailed on the melancholy duty of conveying the body of her hero to England, and, after a most boisterous passage, reached Spithead, on December 4th. [46]

Here she was the object of a most intense and reverential attention, her battered sides, with, in many places, the shot yet sticking in them; her still bloody decks; her jury masts and knotted rigging;—all attested the severity of the ordeal she had gone through; while the flag that still waved, but at half-mast, reminded the spectator that the great Admiral who had such a short time before sailed from that very anchorage to victory, had now, also, returned to his grave. Amongst other injuries, the "VICTORY's" figure-head, a coat of arms supported by a sailor on one side and a marine on the other, was struck by shot, which carried away the legs of the soldier and the arm of the sailor, and the story goes (but we cannot vouch for its truth), that all the men who lost legs in the action were marines, and those who lost arms sailors. The figure-head is still the same, but the wounded supporters have been replaced by two little boys, who, leaning affectionately on the shield, seem certainly more fitted for the peaceful life of Portsmouth Harbour than for the hard times their more warlike predecessors lived in.

The "VICTORY" left Spithead on December 11th for Sheerness, which was reached on the 22nd, when the hero's remains, having been deposited in the coffin made from the mainmast of the *L'Orient* (the French flagship at the Nile), were transferred to Commissioner Grey's yacht for conveyance to Greenwich, and thence to St. Paul's. As this was done, Lord Nelson's flag, which had flown half-mast ever since the action, was lowered for the last time. The "VICTORY" then went to Chatham, paid off on the 16th of January, 1806, and underwent another thorough repair.

It was agreed on all sides that the enemy fought harder and more desperately at Trafalgar than they had ever done before, and at the same time it was undeniable that the victory was the most complete ever gained. The exultation that arose in the breasts of all who heard how the pride of the enemy had been humbled, was embittered by the thought that their hero and idol was dead; that he, whose very name ensured victory, would never again lead his ships to the thickest of the fight, and men doubted whether even the triumph of Trafalgar was not too dearly bought. But Nelson had done his work. Never after did the enemy show a large fleet at sea; and he himself fell, as he had often wished, in the moment of victory; leaving behind him an undying fame, and such an example of entire devotion to his country's service as had never before been equalled in the world's history. [47]

Mr. Devis, the painter of the picture of the "Death of Nelson," now on board the "VICTORY," went round in her from Spithead to Sheerness. On the voyage he took portraits of all the characters depicted, and sketched the locality, so that this picture may be considered as a truly historical and faithful one.

In the commencement of 1808, our ally, Sweden, being threatened by an invasion by Russia, a fleet was sent to the Baltic to assist them, of which Sir James Saumarez was appointed Commander-in-Chief, and the "VICTORY" was once more called into active service as his flagship.

She was commissioned on 18th March, by Captain Dumaresq, and sailed for the Baltic shortly after, arriving at Gottenburg at the end of April. To this place the fleet was followed by a force of 10,000 men under Sir John Moore, who, however, in consequence of disagreements, were withdrawn in June and returned to England, leaving Sir James with the "VICTORY" and ten 74-gun ships, to protect Sweden against Russians, Danes, French, and Prussians. In August, the advanced division of the Anglo-Swedish fleet met the Russians, and chasing them into Rogerwick, destroyed one 74 and blockaded the remainder in that port. Sir James, who was on his way north, received this intelligence a few days afterwards, and hastened to join.

[48]

On arriving on August 30th, off Rogerwick, he found the enemy safe inside, and at once made preparations for an attack. On the 1st September, in company with the *Goliath*, the "VICTORY" stood in to reconnoitre, and having silenced a battery that engaged them, a good view of the enemy's position was obtained, and the next day fixed for the assault. Unfortunately, the next day broke with a gale of wind, the ships were unable to move, and the storm lasting eight days, gave the enemy time to bring troops from Revel, and to erect batteries on all sides, making any attempt at attack hopeless. Sir James therefore, after watching the port till September 30th, sailed for Carlscrona, where he remained till winter warned him to depart for England. He arrived in the Downs on 9th December, and at once struck his flag.

The operations in the Baltic in this, and the other four years in which the "VICTORY" was flagship of Sir James Saumarez, were, as far as she herself was concerned, mainly confined to political schemes and transactions; the active work, such as it was, being done by the frigates and gun-boats, many of which latter, however, were manned by the "VICTORY's" officers and men; the Russian fleet never came out again, but remained shut up in Cronstadt, which was much too strong to be attacked; thus the proceedings are of very little interest, and beyond the fact of her being employed, we have little to record.

She went out almost immediately after the striking of Saumarez's flag in 1808, as a private ship in the squadron which was dispatched to Corunna to bring home the army of the unfortunate Sir John Moore, and returned to Portsmouth on January 23rd. During this cruise she was commanded by Captain Searle, but on her going round to Chatham for a refit, Captain Dumaresq again returned to her, and Sir James Saumarez re-hoisting his flag on April 8th, 1809, she once more sailed for the Baltic, on the navigation being reported open. The best part of this year was spent by the "VICTORY" and fleet of 10 sail, in blockading the Russian ships in Cronstadt. One successful boat attack was made, when 8 of the enemy's gun-boats were destroyed, but otherwise there was no fighting. In the autumn, Sweden was forced to make peace with Russia, on terms dictated by the latter, that would have doubtless been harder, had not the presence of the British fleet prevented any active employment of the Russian ships. The "VICTORY" returned to the Downs by Christmas, and the Admiral struck his flag.

[49]

On the 11th March, 1810, Saumarez resumed his command, and proceeded to Hawke Roads, in Sweden, and thence to Hano Bay, near Carlscrona, where he laid most of the year, having a ship or two watching the Russians; but as they never ventured out, nothing was done, and "VICTORY" sailed on 10th October, with 1000 sail of merchantmen under her convoy. These were seen safely through the Belt, and Sir James then remained with all his ships at Hawke Bay, as late as the ice permitted him, to prevent the possibility of the Russian fleet from the White Sea entering the Baltic. The Swedes about this time were compelled by Napoleon to declare war with England, but the feelings between the two countries were privately as friendly as before. Hearing that the Archangel ships were laid up, Saumarez sailed for England, and arriving on 3rd December, hauled down his flag.

The "VICTORY" then again made a trip to the coast of Portugal, this time with the flag of Rear-Admiral Sir Joseph S. Yorke, who took a squadron of 7 line-of-battle ships to Lisbon, with a reinforcement of 6500 men for Sir Arthur Wellesley, then blockaded in his intrenchments at Torres Vedras by Massena; but she returned to the Nore in time to hoist Sir James Saumarez's flag for the fourth year, on the 2nd April, 1811.

He proceeded to Wingo Sound, and there remained nearly the whole year. The anomalous state of affairs between Sweden and ourselves continued, and as public enemies and private friends we remained until the end of the year, when Sweden concluded an alliance with England. The "VICTORY's" boats made various expeditions against the Danes, and captured several gun-boats.

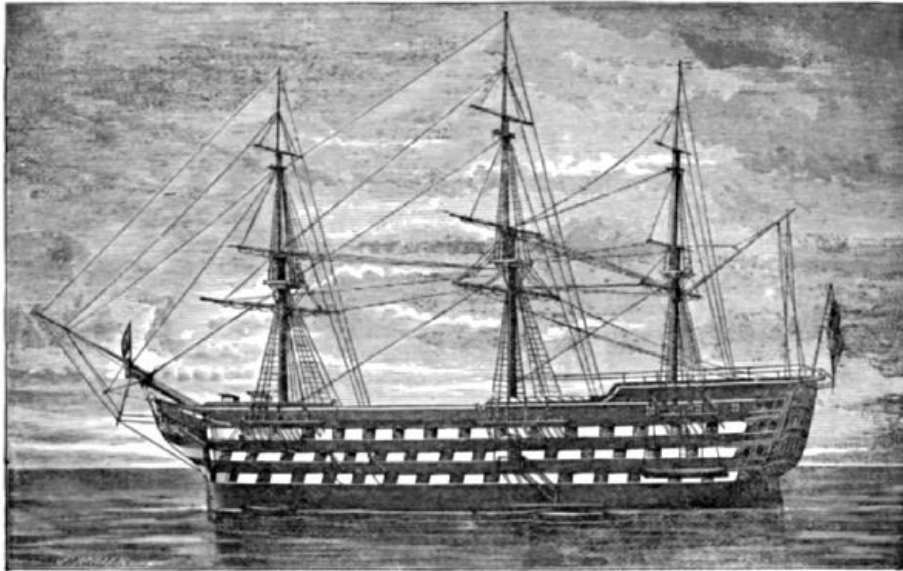
[50]

On December 18th, the fleet left Wingo for England; and on the 23rd a gale arose, by which they were dispersed, and H.M.S. *St. George* and *Defence* were wrecked on the western coast of Jutland, and the *Hero* off the Texel; but the "VICTORY" and other ships weathered it in safety, and anchored at St. Helen's on Christmas Day, when Sir James struck his flag.

On April 14th, 1812, it was again hoisted, and on the 28th, "VICTORY" sailed with a squadron of 10 sail of the line, and took her station as usual at Wingo. The naval operations this year were more active than before; the Danes had equipped a good many frigates and small craft for attacks on the Swedish coast, and frequent engagements took place between them and our smaller vessels; but "VICTORY" was not herself in action. In October, orders were received from England to send his flagship home, and on the 15th of that month, Sir James shifted his flag to the *Pyramus*, and "VICTORY" sailed for England, and arriving at Portsmouth, was paid off in November.

This was the last active service of this glorious old ship, though she was on the point of being sent to sea again in 1815, when no less than six Admirals, on applying for commands, named the "VICTORY" as the ship they would wish to have, although there were many new ships, larger, and

carrying much heavier ordnance; but the prestige attached to the "VICTORY," besides her well known sailing qualities, outweighed every other consideration. Waterloo, however, soon put an end to that war, and the "VICTORY" was never re-commissioned.

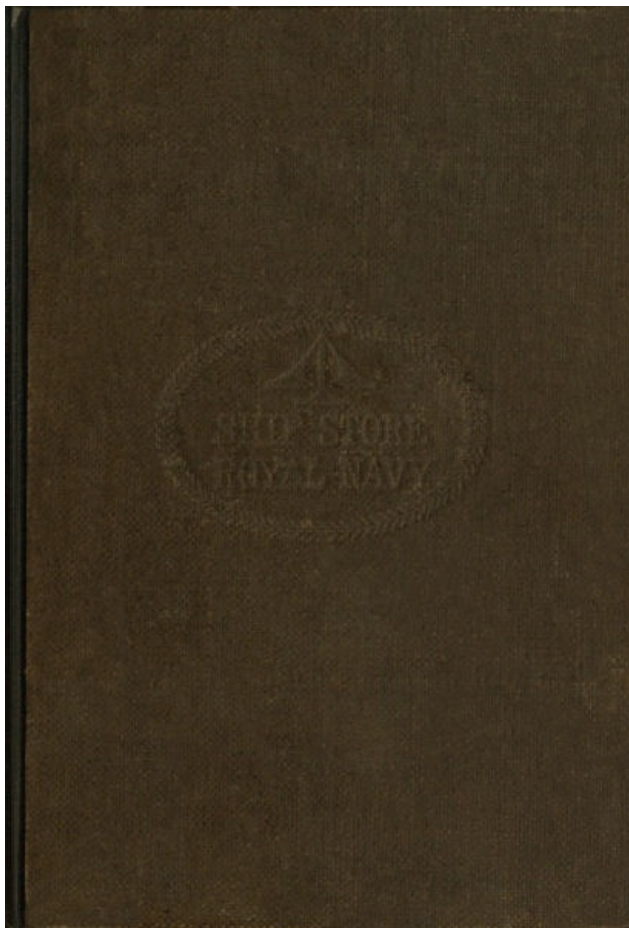


THE "VICTORY" AS SHE NOW LIES IN PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR.

In 1825 she was made flagship in Portsmouth harbour, and ever since that date, with but few intervals, she has continued to bear the flags of Admirals, who, having like her, spent their lives in the service of their country, terminate their active careers by holding the highest post in the British Navy,—the command at Portsmouth. Every year, as the 21st October, the anniversary of Trafalgar, comes round, daylight discovers the "VICTORY" with a wreath of laurel at each mast-head, a continual memorial of the deeds of that ever-to-be-remembered day, when at one blow the naval power of two great nations was crippled, and the superiority of England established without dispute. [51]

In 1844, Queen Victoria happened to be passing through the harbour on this day, and learning the cause of the decoration of the "VICTORY," at once pulled on board, and went round the ship. Her Majesty evinced much emotion, when shown the almost sacred spots where the hero fell and died; and plucking some leaves from the wreath that enshrined the words on the poop, "England expects that every man will do his duty," kept them as a memento.

The "VICTORY" now no longer bears the Admiral's flag; the increasing numbers of seamen in our depôts, rendered in 1869 a larger ship more convenient, and she is retained in her position in the harbour solely as a reminiscence of the past; and it almost seems a pity that she cannot be now fitted up internally, as nearly as possible as she was at Trafalgar, that the thousands of annual visitors might form a better idea of the state of the decks of a man-of-war of the olden time when going into action; and that in these days of rapid and enormous changes in both shipbuilding and ordnance, a type of the man-of-war that won England her pre-eminence, might be preserved to all time.



### **Transcriber's Note**

Minor punctuation errors have been repaired. Hyphenation and accent usage have been made consistent. Archaic and variant spelling, grammar and punctuation usage is preserved as printed.

Ditto marks within tables have been replaced with words.

Page 18 references Admiral St. Julien, "who was thorough republican." It's possible that the word 'a' may have been omitted following 'was,' but as it may be correct as printed, no change has been made.

The following printer errors have been fixed:

Page 10—apoplectic amended to apoplectic—... Sir C. Hardy was seized with an apoplectic fit, ...

Page 14—Island amended to Islands—... having sent the merchant ships to the Zaffarin Islands, ...

Page 24—countrymen amended to countryman—... and the deeds of their countryman, Buonaparte, ...

Page 34—Eary amended to Early—Early on the morning of the 7th June, ...

Page 37—go amended to got—... however, Villeneuve got into Ferrol ...

Page 40—Admiral amended to Admirals—... on which the British Admirals hoisted their flags, ...

Page 40—amongst amended to amongst—... which killed in a short time amongst many others, Mr. Scott, ...

Page 48—dipatched amended to dispatched—... as a private ship in the squadron which was dispatched ...

The frontispiece illustration has been moved to follow the title page. Other illustrations have been moved where necessary so that they do not fall in the middle of a paragraph.

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