

his brilliant career. His offer to Congress to serve in the navy was accepted, and he was appointed first lieutenant in the Alfred. When the commander-in-chief of the squadron came on board, Jones unfurled the national flag—the first time its folds were ever given to the breeze. What that flag was, strange as it may seem, no record or tradition can certainly tell. It was not the stars and stripes, for they were not adopted till two years after. Our author thinks it was a pine tree, with a rattlesnake coiled at the roots, as if about to spring, and that is the generally received opinion.

At all events it unrolled to the breeze, and waved over as gallant a young officer as ever trod a quarter-deck. If the flag bore such a symbol it was most appropriate to Jones, for no serpent was ever more ready to strike than he. Fairly afloat—twenty-nine years of age—healthy—well knit, though of light and slender frame—a commissioned officer in the American Navy—the young gardener saw with joy the shores receding as the fleet steered for the Bahama Isles. A skilful seaman—at home on the deck, and a bold and daring man—he could not but distinguish himself, in whatever circumstances he might be placed. The result of this expedition was the capture of New Providence, with a hundred cannon, and abundance of military stores. It came near failing, through the bungling management of the commander-in-chief, and would have done, but for the perseverance and daring of Paul Jones.

As the fleet was returning home he had an opportunity to try himself in battle. The Glasgow, an English ship was chased by the whole squadron, yet escaped. During the running fight, Jones commanded the lower battery of the Alfred, and exhibited that coolness and daring which afterwards so characterized him.

Soon after, he was transferred to the sloop Providence, and ordered to pat to sea on a six weeks' cruise. It required no ordinary skill or boldness to keep this little sloop hovering amid the enemy's cruisers, and yet avoid capture. Indeed, his short career seemed about to end, for he found himself one day, chased by the English frigate Solebay, and despite of every exertion, overhauled, so that at the end of four hours his vessel was brought within musket shot of the enemy, whose heavy cannon kept thundering at him. Gallantly returning the fire with his light guns, Jones, though there seemed no chance of escape, still kept his flag flying, and nothing but his extraordinary seamanship saved him. Finding himself lost in the course he was pursuing, he gradually worked his little vessel off till he got the Solebay on his weather quarter, when he suddenly exclaimed 'up helm' to the steersman, and setting every sail that would draw, stood dead before the wind, bearing straight down on the English frigate, and with his flag still fluttering in the breeze, passed within pistol shot of his powerful antagonist. Before the enemy could recover his surprise at this bold and unexpected manœuvre, or bring his ship into the same position, Jones was showing him a clean pair of heels. His little sloop could outtail the frigate before the wind, and he bore proudly away. He soon after had another encounter with the English frigate Milford. He was lying to, near the Isle of Sable, fishing, when the Milford hove in sight. Immediately putting his vessel in trim, he tried the relative speed of the two vessels, and finding that he could outtail his antagonist, let him approach. The Englishman kept rounding to as he advanced, and pouring his broadsides on the sloop, but at such a distance that not a shot told. Thus Jones kept irritating his more powerful enemy, keeping him just such a distance as to make his firing ridiculous. Still it was a hazardous experiment, for a single chance shot crashing through his rigging might have reduced his speed so much as to prevent his escape.

He continued cruising about, at the end of forty-seven days returned to Newport with sixteen prizes. He next planned an expedition against Cape Breton, to break up the fisheries; and though he did not wholly succeed, he returned to Boston in about a month with four prizes and a hundred and fifty prisoners. The clothing, on its way to the Canada troops, which he captured came very opportunely for the destitute soldiers of the American army. During this expedition Jones had command of the Alfred, but was superseded on his return, and put again on board his old sloop, the Providence. This was the commencement of a series of unjust acts on the part of our government towards him, which as yet could not break away from English example, and make brave deeds the only road to rank. It insists, according to the old rule, with which Bonaparte made such wild work, on giving the places of trust to the sons of distinguished gentlemen. Jones remonstrated against this injustice, and pressed the government so closely with his importunities and complaints, that to get rid of him it sent him to Boston to select and fit out a ship for himself. In the mean time he recommended measures to the government respecting the organizing and strengthening of the navy, which shows him to have been the most enlightened naval officer in our service, and that his sound and comprehensive views were equal to his bravery. Most of his suggestions adopted, and the foundation of the American navy laid—thanks to the first man who ever hoisted our flag on the seas.

Soon after, (June, 1777,) he was given command of the Ranger, and informed in his commission that the flag of the United States was to be thirteen stripes, and the union thirteen stars on a blue field, representing a new constellation in the heavens. With joy he hoisted this new flag, and put to sea in his badly-equipped vessel, steering for France, where he was by order of his government to

take charge of a large vessel, there to be purchased for him by the American Commissioners. Failing in this enterprise, he again put to sea in the Ranger, and steered for Quibero Bay. Here, sailing through the French fleet with his brig he obtained a national salute, the first ever given our colors. Having had the honor first to hoist our flag on the water, and the first to hear the guns of a powerful nation thunder forth their recognition of it, he again put to sea and boldly entered the Irish Channel and captured several prizes.

Steering for the Isle of Man, he planned an expedition which illustrates the boldness and daring that characterized him. He determined to burn the shipping in Whitehaven, in retaliation for the injuries inflicted on our coast by English ships. More than three hundred ships lay in this port, protected by two batteries composed of thirty pieces of artillery, while eighty rods distant was a strong fort. To enter a port so protected and filled with shipping, with a single brig, and apply the torch, under the very muzzles of the cannon, was an act unrivalled in daring. But Jones seemed to delight in these reckless deeds—there appeared to be a sort of witchery about danger to him, and the greater it was the more enticing it became. Once when government was making arrangements to furnish him with a ship, he urged the necessity of giving him a good one, "for," said he, "I intend to go in harm's way." This was true, and he generally managed to carry out his intentions.

It was about midnight on the 22nd of April (1778) when Jones stood boldly into the port of Whitehaven. Having got sufficiently near, he took two boats and thirty-one men and rowed noiselessly away from his gallant little ship. He commanded one boat in person, and took upon himself the task of securing the batteries. With a mere handful of men he scaled the breastwork, seized the sentinel on duty before he could give the alarm, and rushing forward took the astonished soldiers prisoners and spiked the cannon. Then leaving Lieutenant Wallingsford to fire the shipping, hastened forward with only one single man to take the fort. All was silent as he approached, and boldly entering, he spiked every cannon, and then hurried back to his little band. He was surprised, as he approached, not to see the shipping in a blaze, and demanded of his lieutenant why he had not fulfilled his orders. The latter replied that his light had gone out, but he evidently did not like his mission, and purposely neglected to obey orders. Everything had been managed badly, and to his mortification he saw the day beginning to dawn, and his whole plan, at the moment when it promised complete success, prostrated. The people, rousing from their slumbers, saw with alarm a band of men with half-burnt candles in their hands standing on the pier, and began to assemble in crowds. Jones however refused to depart, and indignant at the failure of the expedition, entered alone a large ship, and coolly sat down and kindled a fire in the steerage. He then hunted about for a barrel of tar, which having found he poured over the flames. The blaze shot up around the lofty spars, and wreathed the rigging in their spiral folds, casting a baleful light over the town. The terrified inhabitants seeing the flames shoot heavenward, rushed towards the wharves; but Jones posted himself by the entrance to the ship with a cocked pistol in his hand, threatened to shoot the first who should approach. They hesitated a moment, and then turned and fled. Gazing a moment on the burning ship and the panic struck multitude, he entered his boat and leisurely rowed back to the Ranger, that sat like a seagull on the water. The bright sun had now risen and was bathing the land and sea in its light, revealing to the inhabitants the little craft that had so boldly entered their waters, and they hastened to their fort to open their cannon upon it. To their astonishment they found them spiked. They, however, got possession of two guns which they began to fire, but the shot fell so wide of the mark that the sailors in contempt fired back their pistols.

The expedition had failed through the inefficiency of his men, and especially one deserter who remained behind to be called the "Saviour of Whitehaven;" but it showed to England that her own coast was not safe from the hand of the spoiler, and that the torch she carried into our ports might be hurled into hers also. In carrying it out, Jones exhibited a daring and coolness never surpassed by any man. The only drawback to it was that it occurred in the neighbourhood of his birth-place, and amid the hallowed associations of his childhood. One would think that the familiar hill-tops and mountain ranges, and the thronging memories they would bring back on the bold rover, would have sent him to the other portions of the coast to inflict distress. It speaks badly for the man's sensibilities, though so well for his courage.

He next entered Kirkcubright Bay in a single boat, for the purpose of taking Lord Selkirk prisoner. The absence of the nobleman alone prevented his success. The next day, as he was off Carrickfergus, he saw the Drake, an English ship of war, working slowly out of the harbor to go in pursuit of the Ranger that was sending such consternation along the Scottish coast. Five small vessels filled with citizens accompanied her part of the way. A heavy tide was setting landward and the vessel made feeble headway, but at length she made her last tack and stretched boldly out into the channel. The Ranger, when she first saw the Drake coming out of the harbor, ran down to meet her, and then lay to till the latter had cleared the port. She then filled away and stood out in the centre of the channel. The Drake

had, in volunteers and all a crew of a hundred and sixty men, besides carrying two guns more than the Ranger. She also belonged to the regular British navy, while Jones had an imperfectly organized crew, and but partially used to the discipline of a vessel of war. He, however, saw with delight his formidable enemy approach, and when the latter hailed him, asking what ship it was, he replied: "The American Continental ship Ranger! We are waiting for you; come on!"

Alarm fires were burning along both shores, and the hill tops were covered with spectators witnessing the meeting of these two ships. The sun was only an hour high, and as the blazing fire-ball stooped to the western wave Jones commenced the attack. Steering directly across the enemy's bow, he poured in a deadly broadside, which was promptly returned, and the two ships moved gallantly away, side by side, while broadside after broadside thundered over the deep. Within close musket-shot they continued to sweep slowly and sternly onward for an hour, wreathed in smoke, while the incessant crash of timbers on board the Drake told how terrible was the American's fire. First her fore and main top-sails were carried away—then the yards began to tumble, one after another, while her ensign, fallen also, draggled in the water. Still, Jones kept pouring in his destructive broadsides, which the Drake answered, but with less effect, while the topmen of the Ranger made fearful havoc amid the dense crew of the enemy. As the last sunlight was leaving its farewell on the distant mountain tops, the commander of the Drake fell, shot through the head with a musket-ball, and the British flag was lowered to the stripes and stars.

Jones returned with his prizes to Paris, and offered his services to France. In hopes of getting command of a larger vessel, he gave up the Ranger, and soon had cause to regret it, for he was left for a long time without employment. He had been promised the Indian; and the Prince of Nassau, pleased by the daring of Jones, had promised to accompany him as a volunteer. But this fell through, together with many other projects, and but for the firm friendship of Franklin, he would have fared but poorly in the French capital.

After a long series of annoyances and disappointments, he at length obtained command of a vessel, which, out of respect to Franklin, he named 'The Bon Homme Richard,' the Poor Richard. With seven sail in all, a snug little squadron for Jones, had the different commanders been subordinate—he set sail from France and steered for the coast of Ireland. The want of proper subordination was soon made manifest, for in a week's time the vessels, one after another, had parted company, to cruise by themselves, till Jones had with him but the Alliance, Pallas, and Vengeance.

In a tremendous storm he bore away, and after several days of gales and heavy seas, approached the shores of Scotland. Taking several prizes near the Frith of Forth, he ascertained that a twenty-four gun ship, and two cutters were in the roads. These he determined to cut out, and landing at Leith, lay the town under contribution. The inhabitants supposed his little fleet to be English vessels in pursuit of Paul Jones; and a member of Parliament, a wealthy man in the place, sent off a boat, requesting powder and ball to defend himself, as he said, against the pirate Paul Jones. Jones very politely sent back the bearer with a barrel of powder, expressing his regrets that he had no shot to spare. Soon after in his pompous, inflated manner he summoned the town to surrender; but the wind blowing steadily off the land, he could not approach with his vessel.

At length, however, the wind changed, and the Richard stood boldly in for the shore. The inhabitants as they saw her bearing steadily up towards the town, were filled with terror, and ran hither and thither in affright; but the good minister, Rev. Mr Shirra, assembled his flock on the beach, to pray the Lord to deliver them from their enemies. He was an eccentric man, one of the quaintest of the quaint old Scotch divines, so that his prayers, even in those days, were often quoted for their oddity and even roughness.

Whether the following prayer is literally true or not, it is difficult to tell, but there is little doubt that the invocation of the excited eccentric old man was sufficiently odd. It is said that, having gathered his congregation on the beach in full sight of the vessel, which, under a press of canvass, was making a long tack that brought her close to the town, he knelt down on the sand, and thus began:—

"Now, dear Lord, dinna ye think it a shame for ye to send this vile pirate to rob our folk o' Kirkaldy; for ye ken they're pair enow already, and hae naething to spare. The way the wind blaws he'll be here in a jiffie, and wha kens what he may do? He's nae too good for onything. Mickle's the mischief he has done already. He'll burn their hooses, tak their very claes, and tirl them to the sark. And wae me! wha kens but the bloody villain might tak their lives? The pair weemen are maist frightened out o' their wits, and the bairns skirling after them. I canna think of it! I canna think of it! I hae been lang a faithful servant to ye, Lord; but gin ye dinna turn the wind about and blaw the scoundrel out o' our gate I'll nae str a foot; but will just sit here till the tide comes. Sae tak ye'r will o't."

To the no little astonishment of the good people, a fierce gale at that moment began to blow, which sent one of Jones's prizes ashore, and forced him to stand out to sea. This fixed

for ever the reputation of good Mr Shirra, and he did not himself wholly deny that he believed his intercessions brought on the gale, for whenever his parishoners spoke of it to him, he always replied, "I prayed, but the Lord sent the wind."

Stretching from thence along the English coast Jones cruised about for awhile, and at length fell in with the Alliance, which had parted company with him a short time previous. With this vessel, the Pallas and Vengeance, making, with the Richard, four ships, he stood to the North; when on the afternoon of September 23, 1779, he saw a fleet of 41 sail hugging the coast. This was the Baltic fleet, under the convoy of the Serapis, of 41 guns, and the Countess of Scarborough of 21 guns. Jones immediately issued his orders to form a line of battle, while with his ship he gave chase. The convoy scattered like wild pigeons, and ran for the shore, to place themselves under the protection of a fort, while the two war ships advanced to the conflict. It was a beautiful day, the wind was light, so that not a wave broke the smooth surface of the sea, and all was smiling and tranquil on land as the hostile forces slowly approached each other. The piers of Scarborough were crowded with spectators, while the old promontory of Flamborough, over three miles distant, were black with the multitude assembled to witness the engagement. The breeze was so light that the vessels approached each other slowly, as if reluctant to come to the mortal struggle, and mar that placid scene and that beautiful evening with the sound of battle. It was a thrilling spectacle, those bold ships with their sails all set moving sternly up to each other. At length the cloudless sun sank behind the hills, and twilight deepened over the waves. The next moment the full round moon pushed its broad disc above the horizon, and shed a flood of light over the tranquil waters, bathing in her soft beams the white sails that now seemed like gently moving clouds on the deep. The Pallas stood for the Countess of Scarborough, while the Alliance, after having also come within range, withdrew, and took up a position where she could safely contemplate the fight. Paul Jones, now in his element, paced the deck to and fro, impatient for the contest; and at length approached within pistol-shot of the Serapis. The latter was a new ship, with an excellent crew, and throwing, with every broadside, 76 pounds more than the Richard. Jones, however, rated this lightly, and with his old, half worn-out merchantman, closed fearlessly with his powerful antagonist. As he approached the latter, Captain Pearson hailed him with—

'What ship is that?'

'I can't hear what you say,' was the reply 'What ship is that?' rung back; 'answer immediately, or I shall fire into you.'

A shot from the Richard was the significant answer and immediately both vessels opened their broadsides. Two of the three old eighteen pounders of the Richard burst at the first fire, and Jones was compelled to close the lower deck ports which were not opened again during the action. This was an ominous beginning. The broadsides now became rapid, presenting a strange spectacle to the people on shore. The flashes of the guns amid the cloud of smoke that hung around the vessels, followed by the roar that shook the coast, while the dim moonlight, serving to but half reveal the struggling vessels, conspired to render it one of terror and of dread. The two vessels kept moving along side of each other, constantly crossing each other's track; now passing the bow and now passing the stern; pouring in each turn a terrific broadside, that made both friend and foe stagger. Thus fighting and manœuvring they kept onward, until at length the Richard got foul of the Serapis, and Jones gave orders to board. His men were repulsed, and Capt. Pearson hailed him to know if he struck. "I have not yet begun to fight," was the short and stern reply of Jones; and packing his top-sails, while the Serapis kept full, the vessels parted, and again came alongside, and broadside answered broadside with feeble effect. But Jones soon saw that this mode of fighting would not answer. The superiority of the enemy in weight of metal gave him great advantage in this broadside to broadside firing; especially as his vessel was old and rotten, while every timber in that of his antagonist was new and staunch; and so he determined to throw himself aboard of the enemy. In doing this he fell off farther than he intended, and his vessel catching a moment by the jib-boom of the Serapis carried it away, and the two ships swung broadside to broadside, the muzzles of the guns touching each other. Jones immediately ordered them to be lashed together; and in his eagerness to secure them helped, with his own hands, to tie the lashings, Capt. Pearson did not like this close fighting, for it destroyed all the advantage his superior sailing, and heavier guns gave him, and so let drop an anchor to swing his ship apart. But the two vessels were firmly enclenched in the embrace of death, for, added to all the lashings, the anchor of the Serapis had hooked the quarter of the Richard, so that when the former obeyed her cable, and swung round to the tide, the latter swung also. Finding that he could not unlock the desperate embrace in which his foe had clasped him the Englishman again opened his broadsides. The action then became terrific; the guns touched muzzles—and the gunners, in ramming home their cartridges, were compelled frequently to thrust their ramrods into the enemy's ports. Never before had an English commander met such a foeman nor fought such a battle. The timbers rent at every explosion; and huge gaps opened in the sides of each vessel, while they trembled at each discharge as if in the mouth