

NELSON'S DISTINGUISHED CAREER.

Little Known of His Early Life--His Reason for
Going to Sea.

GREAT BATTLE IN WHICH HE WON TRIUMPHS FOR BRITAIN.

WARDENS OF THE WAVE.

London, Oct. 20.—A feature of The Times' Trafalgar Centennial edition published today, is a poem by the poet Laureate, Alfred Austin, entitled "Wardens of the Wave." It is as follows:

Not to exult in bragart vein
Over our gallant foes,
No boast of victories on the Main
Which Heaven alone bestows;
Vainglorious, clamorous
drum,
For which the vulgar crave,
Not these, nor any such become
The Wardens of the Wave.

No; but when slumbering war
hounds wake,
To one's last gasp of breath,
Face combat for one's country's sake
With male disdain of death,
Twas thus did Nelson live, did die
Far from his land and home,
Making his roof of storm-swept sky
His pillow of the foam.

And if today our race recall
His last triumphant doom,
Place wreaths on his unfading pall
And flowers above his tomb;
Tis to remind us still to keep
Aggressions lust in awe,
And with dominion of the deep
Guard freedom, peace, and law.

Nor yet alone upon the waves
That sent him shore,
Seevive that disciplines, not enslaves
Should rule us as of yore,
So that our Is, and Citadel
May tranquilly respond
With the clear signal, "All is well,"
To every sea beyond.

Today, Oct. 21, 1905, is the centennial anniversary of Nelson's great victory at Trafalgar and all over the British empire the event is being joyfully celebrated.

It may seem strange, but it is nevertheless true, that of Nelson's earliest days we have but a brief and incomplete record. Beyond a few stories, characteristic enough, there is hardly any available information of his boyhood and youth. In fact, the first thirty years of his life were comparatively uneventful—uneventful that is, compared with those that came after and that were saturated with the incidents that changed the politics of the world. He was a native of Norfolk, the fifth son and sixth child of Edmund Nelson, then rector of the parish of Burnham Thorpe, and was born on Sept. 29, 1758. On his mother's side he was connected with a great English family, for she was the grandniece of Sir Robert Walpole, one of England's most famous prime ministers. Nelson himself was named after Sir Robert's second brother, Horatio. He was one of eleven children, but only two of them were destined to grow old. His mother died in the prime of life, and he was always frail of body and at various times throughout his life a great sufferer, frequently an invalid, and susceptible to climatic changes and conditions. But throughout that life the wonderful strength of purpose that trod bodily weakness under foot, was dominant, and at the call of duty never failed him or his country.

The seizure of the Falkland Islands by Spain in 1770 and the despatch of a punitive expedition to England, was the immediate cause of Nelson's going to sea. His uncle, Captain Maurice Suckling was appointed to the command of the "Raisonnable," and as he had promised to provide for one of the children of his sister, the Nelson family being very poor, young Horatio himself volunteered to go to sea with him. Suckling himself was staggered by the suggestion of the boy of such puny frame and fragile constitution should be sent to sea. "But let him come," he said. "If a cannon ball takes off his head he will at least be provided for." It was under such gloomy forebodings as this that the most dazzling career the sea has ever seen, began.

The war with Spain did not come off as the Spaniards yielded without fighting. Still, Nelson was introduced to his profession, and though he got but little schooling, that did not prevent him from learning seamanship. Moreover, Captain Suckling kept his promise, and watched the career of the young naval cadet with solicitude. He was transferred to the command of the "Triumph," in the Mediterranean, as guardship in the Mediterranean, and he entered Nelson on her books. Here plenty of work was waiting for the boy, and Suckling, after he had been there some time, sent him out in a merchantman to the West Indies to learn the elements of his profession under conditions tending to most rapidly develop his powers. He returned, to use his own words, "a practical seaman, with a horror of the Royal Navy," a prejudice that life on a merchantman was well calculated to inflame, and accentuate at that period. On his return to England, after a year, Suckling gave him plenty of active, semi-detached duty in the boats of the "Triumph." It is a curious feature of Nelson's career that this kind of a duty, when he was in a position of temporary independent authority, though not in chief com-

mand, but answerable for all that happened on the spot, characterized the greater part of his brilliant service during which, from its commencement until two years before Trafalgar he was only for brief periods commander-in-chief, yet nearly always acting apart from his superior officer. It was this that developed in his character that fearlessness of responsibility which helped him so much throughout his career.

An expedition to the North Pole did not in the least dampen the enthusiasm and ardor of the young seaman. He set off to the East Indies this time and during the better part of three years served as a seaman aloft, afterwards being rated as a midshipman, and later taking his place finally on the quarter deck as an officer. His uncle had meantime obtained the post of Comptroller of the Navy, and obtained for him on his return from the East Indies a position as acting lieutenant on the Worcester, a small ship of the line, on which he gained for himself a reputation for professional capacity and won the confidence of his superiors. It was not that he was a great sailor, so far as handling a ship with great dexterity and precision were concerned, from the first he aimed higher, his ambition was to become a great commander. He nevertheless possessed a perfect knowledge of his profession, and this, gained by experience and combined with his zeal, intelligence and energy enabled him to pass an examination for a lieutenant before he was nineteen years old. He was promoted two days later to be lieutenant on the Lowestoffe, a thirty-two gun frigate, and there he had for his captain William Locker, in whom he found a friend whose devotion ended only with Locker's death two years after the Battle of the Nile.

MERIT WON HIS PROMOTION.

After the death of Captain Suckling in 1778, Nelson found a friend at headquarters in Sir Peter Parker, the commander-in-chief, and the following year he was made a post captain, and took up his place as captain of a frigate while still wanting three months to his twenty-first birthday. Interest had undoubtedly had a share in effecting this extraordinary rapid promotion, but at the same time Nelson's proved abilities and deserts were recognized and rewarded.

Thus, well started on his naval career, with all obstacles in the way of promotion cleared from his path, those days a post-captain rose to be an admiral by seniority alone—Nelson began the glorious career he had marked out for himself under the most favorable auspices that could have been desired.

It is curious that Nelson's promotion thus far was accorded without the claim of service in actual battle. But his initiation was not long in coming. In January, 1780, he went with the British governor of Jamaica on a brilliantly conceived but ill-starred expedition to take Fort San Juan, then held by the Spaniards, and controlling Lake Nicaragua, the mastery of which would have given them the command of the Isthmus of Panama, the value of this in connection with a trans-isthmian route even then being appreciated. Here he greatly distinguished himself, and although the expedition was unsuccessful, his brilliant services were handsomely acknowledged by Governor Dalling.

At this time he fell ill, and passed through a very serious and painful experience on a bed of sickness. But the indomitable spirit of the man showed itself even in ill health, for before he was fit to go out he had applied for employment. In estimating Nelson's heroism due emphasis must be laid on the sickly fragility of his bodily frame thus demonstrated. It was his extraordinary mental energy and high sense of duty that mocked at difficulties rather than triumphed over them.

IN LOVE AT QUEBEC.

In 1782 Nelson came on convoy duty to Quebec, where he fell desperately in love with a fair Canadian. Marriage at such a period would have wrecked his career, and a cool-headed friend succeeded in dissuading him from making the rash step he contemplated. But little information is available regarding this romance, though it is certain that Nelson, who was all his life peculiarly susceptible to the fascination of charming women, was saved from making a very serious mistake by the cool interference of a watchful friend. In 1783 the West Indian fleet, to which he had been attached after leaving Quebec, returned home, and Nelson was presented at court. He was then twenty-five years of age, and had won the deep regard and esteem of Lord Hood, then the most famous sea captain of the age.

Nelson went to France for a short time, though it was long enough for him to fall in love with the charming daughter of an English clergyman at St. Imer. However he did not marry her, though it is by no means certain that he did not propose to her. He came back to England and was appointed to the West Indian squadron. On arrival in the West Indies once more Nelson found

himself the senior captain. He had not been there long before he became engaged in a serious dispute with the admiral in command and also with several of the prominent colonists. He conceived the idea of putting down with a strong hand the smuggling that was going on between the new United States and the British West Indian colonies. The admiral did not think with him, but so convinced was Nelson of the correctness of his attitude that he defied the admiral, and was backed up by the British Government.

THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY.

At length came the chance for which he had waited so long. The naval position of England was by no means secure. France and Spain had been threatening her, and the armed neutrality of the northern powers made the situation by no means reassuring. When, at length, war was declared between England and France in 1793, Lord Hood did not forget Nelson. He recommended him for a captaincy, and he was appointed to the Agamemnon. Here, with opportunities for the display of the genius for initiative which had characterized his earlier actions, Nelson won high praise. He had the worst ship in the fleet, yet with that ship he did wonders. Deeds of stupendous daring and heroic seamanship astounded even those who had learned to expect great things from him, and in one or two cases he actually distinguished himself in a manner that won the applause even of those who had followed his fortunes with envious eyes since his appointment to a post-captaincy. At the siege of Bastia and Cadiz he won the approbation of his chiefs and later, in March 1795, performed one of those feats which were eminently characteristic of the man. Lord Hotham, who was then in command in the Mediterranean, had engaged a French fleet of superior force off the coast of Italy, and in the fight a large French '84 became dismasted and drew out of the fight, being taken in tow by a frigate and conveyed by two ships of the line. Nelson, seeing this, drew his own ship away from the rest of the British fleet, engaged the whole of the hostile squadron, and succeeded in nearly destroying the '84 while he kept the remainder at bay, with hardly any loss to himself. This action won for him high encomiums from Lord Hotham, and his name began to be well known to the enemy.

Work in the Mediterranean, co-operating with Austria against Napoleon, occupied the attention of the coming admiral for some time after this, and it was not until the battle of St. Vincent that his next great chance came. But already his name was synonymous throughout the fleet for energy, daring resource and heroism that proved most infectious when he had to lead men, the sailors on his own ship loved him, and his facility almost amounting to genius, for winning the affection of those with whom he was brought into close contact, had endeared him to his officers, while those with whom he had served in the past were watching his career with the greatest interest.

At St. Vincent Admiral Sir John Jervis, later Lord St. Vincent, had succeeded in cutting off nine of the enemy's ships; and the Spanish admiral was in the process of wheeling his van to reform when Nelson, seeing upon the key of the whole of the Spanish admiral's plan, abandoned, without orders, his own line, and disregarding the orders of his own admiral to return, engaged the whole of the advancing squadron which formed the van of the Spanish fleet for half an hour, until the danger was past. His conduct on this thrilling occasion was of that brilliant daring which made him in later years the darling of the nation, even as he was then the darling of his own crew. He boarded the vessels, both much larger than his own, leading his men in person with the cry: "Westminster Abbey or victory!" He took the flagship, and won the day for England, Jervis, who had been known to say that "the test of a man's courage is responsibility," forgave the disobedience to his signal, and although there were some unpleasant passages between him and Nelson arising out of the latter's description of the battle, the country was wild with delight at the victory, and Nelson got his reward in the Order of the Bath and his admiral's pennant.

All this time Nelson had maintained the most cordial relations of frank and genuine affection for his wife, whom he had met in the Island of Nevis in the West Indies, and who was the youthful widow of Dr. Joseph Nisbet, of that island. Indeed, it was not until some time later that domestic happiness marred his private life.

In July 1797, Nelson lost his right arm. He had planned an assault upon Tenerife, to secure the Spanish treasure ships anchored there. A night attack was made, which Nelson himself led, and it was when in the act of landing that he was struck by a grape shot in the right elbow. It became necessary to amputate the whole arm above the elbow, and, owing to the primitive character of the surgery of that day, he suffered much



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pain and was laid up for a considerable period.

THE NILE.

The next great incident in Nelson's career was the campaign and battle of the Nile. The British Government had found it impossible to make peace except on impossible terms, and therefore decided upon a distinctly offensive campaign against France, and to Nelson, on the urgent recommendation of the First Lord of the Admiralty, Earl Spencer, the duty was assigned of directing naval operations in the Mediterranean. After a long chase Nelson succeeded in cornering the French fleet in the Bay of Aboukir. The French admiral had anchored his fleet behind a series of dangerous shoals into which he did not for one moment believe that the British fleet would follow. The situation, however, was one that appealed acutely to Nelson's love of daring. He took his fleet in after the Frenchmen, and annihilated the naval power of France in an engagement, which he directed throughout with consummate skill, absolute fearlessness and incredible heroism.

The battle of the Nile opened up a new era for the British navy. It

made the British fleet the mistress of the seas, and it made the name of Nelson a terror to the navies of Europe. A victory of so stupendous and unparalleled a character, won by such quick comprehension, skill of preparation, and genius in stage management, astounded all Europe, and gave Napoleon something to think about for a long time. Nelson lost his eye, but England gained what she has never given up since.

The memorandum issued by the admiral at the conclusion of the fight is a notable instance of the sincere and earnest belief he manifested throughout his career in the Divine power to aid the efforts of men. "Almighty God," he wrote, "having blessed His Majesty's arms with victory, the admiral intends returning public thanksgiving for the same at 2 o'clock this day; and he recommends every ship doing the same as soon as convenient." To those under his command he issued this simple but heartfelt "general order": "The admiral desires they will accept his most sincere and cordial thanks for their very gallant behaviour in this glorious battle." This habit, which was always characteristic of him, of associating with

himself in grateful remembrance and gratitude those who had followed his fortunes and fought with him, enthroned Nelson king in the hearts of his men, and won for him from all ranks that devotion and hero-worship which were so forcibly exemplified when he died.

The news of the battle was received with a commotion in proportion to its greatness. The government rewarded Nelson by advancing him to the lowest rank in the peerage—a trumpety recognition of the great services he had rendered the nation. The world took up the duty of showing the government what it ought to have done. The Czar, the Sultan, the two kings of Sardinia, and the two Sicilies sent messages and rich presents; the Houses of Parliament voted their thanks and a pension of \$9,600 a year; the East India Company acknowledged the security gained for their East Indian possessions by a gift of \$18,000, and from cities and corporations all over the world came letters and other recognitions of his services. Perhaps the most valued were those from the three great admirals under whom he had served—Lord Howe, Lord Hood and Lord St. Vincent, who cordially admitted that the battle was the greatest that history could produce.



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