

THE HERO OF TRAFALGAR.

Incidents in the Life of Admiral Horatio Nelson.

The Centenary of Whose Great Naval Victory Will be Celebrated Saturday

"England expects that every man will do his duty."

The history of Trafalgar, which changed the history of the world and assured to Britain the supremacy of the Seas, will be recalled with greater enthusiasm than ever this year—the hundredth anniversary of the great naval battle, and of the death of Nelson.

The whole world over, wherever British subjects are gathered, the memory of the gallant admiral will be honored. On Saturday next, Oct. 21, the men and women and children throughout the empire will unite to commemorate the centenary of the great victory, and on the Sunday pulpits will resound with sermons relative to the lessons which can be derived from Nelson's life and death.

The question is often asked why Nelson should be the chief war hero of the British race. That question is answered by Lord Rosebery in the Trafalgar Centenary number of the United Service Magazine.

"Nelson stands alone. There is no figure like his among all those who have ploughed the seas."

Lord Rosebery asks why Nelson's memory is so green while that of Wellington is so comparatively dim, and replies:

"The explanation is not easy. A cynic might say that the reason lay in Nelson's avoidance of politics. There is a grain of truth in this. Political generals and political admirals are rarely popular if Great Britain. Others would allege as a cause the glorious circumstances of Nelson's death. There is something in that also, but it is clearly inadequate. For even in life there was this notable difference: Wellington's soldiers trusted him; Nelson's sailors trusted and loved him."

"Again, it must be remembered that the sea is a British element; that our sailors have generally been more popular than our soldiers."

"There are other reasons. There was perhaps, the fascinating incongruity of so great a warrior's soul being incased in so shrivelled a shell. Then there was his chivalrous devotion to his officers and men; their interests and their honor were his own. There was the manifest and surpassing patriotism. There was the easy confidence of victory. In him the pugnacious British instinct was incarnate; with Nelson to see the foe was to fight him; he only found himself in the fury of the battle."

"His unwearied pertinacity was not less remarkable. For twenty-six months he did not set foot on land. He hunted the enemy's fleet from Malta to the mouths of the Orinoco with the relentless and untiring activity of a sleuth-hound, and back again to Europe. Again, he was brilliantly single-minded, unselfish and unswerving. His only covetousness was that of Henry V.:

"But if it be a sin to covet honor, I am the most offending man alive."

"All these qualities appealed irresistibly to mankind."

"But the main cause of his popularity, splendor of victory apart, is broader and simpler—Nelson was eminently human. Vain and simple as a child; open and generous to a fault; the prey of a vulgar adventurousness, who lured him to the one disaster of his life; he was easily understood and heartily appreciated by the people. Characteristic sayings and doings of his, such as the people love, were universally bandied about, the racing to the masthead to encourage his timid midshipmen; the placing of the telescope to his blind eye when the signal to withdraw was hoisted, which he was determined not to see; the signal of Trafalgar, 'Nelson expects every man to do his duty,' happily changed to 'England expects every man to do his duty,' the pithy 'Victory or Westminster Abbey!' Traits like these went home."

"To this was added the sense of ill-usage—a great secret of popularity. Our tape-bound governments always found some trusted veteran to put over Nelson's head. For his glorious victory of Copenhagen no medal was given. But the more the idol was flouted, the deeper he became."

Lord Rosebery closes with a glowing tribute to the "supreme British Admiral." "Austere moralists," he says, "may easily and indeed justly, reprobate glaring parts of his career. He loved not wisely but too well. He committed at Naples an act little, if at all, short of crime. But spots, even the blackest, are invisible on great luminaries; and only on great luminaries are they invisible. Nor was he heedless of his errors. In the hour of death he was mindful of the day of judgment. Let them that are free of stain cast the stone."

"GOD AND MY COUNTRY."

"God and my country!" These memorable words, uttered nearly one hundred years ago by one of the greatest of Englishmen, as he lay dying constitute the noblest text upon which any lesson of national character or national growth can be founded.

The man whose last words were spent in this utterance was Horatio Nelson, and they were the motto of his life, the key note of his career. They were spoken on the actual completion of one of the greatest victories of which history, ancient and modern, holds record; they are inseparably associated with the magic words "Nelson" and "Trafalgar," that still thrill the breast of every Briton with pride and grati-

tude; and they stand out bright and triumphant on the closing page of a life that must ever remain an inspiration and an example to every patriot.

It was a sad, yet a great day for England, the twenty-first day of October, 1805; sad, because the son went down on the cold still form of the nation's hero; great because it saw the majestic dawning of the greatest power the world has so far known—the naval supremacy of England. After the lapse of a century, during which developments have taken place of which the wildest vision of Nelson's day never dreamed, it is possible to look back upon that day with feelings in which sorrow has no part—feelings of unalloyed pride and admiration in which the whole empire shares, and in which even the bitterest enemies of that empire will not deny that its sons are wholly justified. For Nelson, in 1805, was the nation's darling, and the nation's pride; and "Nelson" in 1905 is the name of a man who died, as he had lived, in the service of his country, whose laurels remain untarnished after the lapse of a hundred turbulent years, whose name lives forever in the hearts of the nation in whose glorious list of achievements and the simple grandeur of his career, a dominant figure of honor, devotion and patriotism.

LITTLE RECORD OF HIS YOUTH.

It may seem strange, but it is nevertheless true, that of Nelson's earliest we have but a brief and incomplete record. He was a native of Norfolk, the fifth son and sixth child of Edmund Nelson, then rector of the parish of Burnham Thorpe. He was born on September 29, 1758. On his mother's side he was connected with a great English family, for she was the grand-niece 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 and feeble. He had various troubles throughout his life, great suffering, frequently an invalid, and strangely susceptible to climatic changes and conditions.

NELSON GOES TO SEA.

The seizure of the Falkland Islands by Spain in 1770 and the dispatch of a punitive expedition by England, was the immediate cause of Nelson's going to sea. His uncle, Captain Maurice Suckling, was appointed to the command of the Reasonable, and as he had promised to provide for one of his sister's children, the Nelson family being very poor, young Horatio himself volunteered to go to sea with him. Suckling himself was staggered by the suggestion that a 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 foreboding as this that the most dazzling career the sea has ever seen began.

The war with Spain did not come off, at the Spaniards yielded without duce to his profession, and though fighting. Still, Nelson was introduced but little schooling, that did not prevent him from learning sea-manship. Moreover, Captain Suckling kept his promise, and a cadet with solicitude. He was watched the career of the young navy-transferred to the command of the Triumph, then stationed as guard-ship in the Medway, and he entered Nelson on her books.

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 quarterdeck as an officer. His uncle had meantime obtained the post of Controller 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.

A CAPTAIN BEFORE HE WAS 21.

After the death of Captain Suckling, in 1778, Nelson found a friend at headquarters in Sir Peter Parks, 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 extraordinarily 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—in 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.

HIS FIRST TASTE OF BATTLE

It is curious that Nelson's promotion thus far was accorded without the aim 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 Juan, then held by the Spaniards, and controlling Lake Nicaragua, the mastery of which would have given

him 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.

HE CAME TO QUEBEC IN 1782.

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.

A MARVELLOUS RECORD.

Then followed in quick succession his remarkable record of victories. Appointed to the captaincy of the Agamemnon, at the sieges 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 for 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.

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 the situation at a glance and seizing upon the key of the whole of the Spanish admiral's plan, abandoned, without orders, his own line, and disregarding the order 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 men. He boarded two vessels, both much larger than his own, leading his men in person with the cry: "Westminster Abbey or victory!" He took the flagship, and he 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.

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 pain and was laid up for a considerable period.

THE BATTLE OF THE NILE.

The next great incident in Nelson's career was the campaign and battle of the Nile which 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 battle of Copenhagen can only be merely mentioned, though it was of momentous importance to Britain.

THE LAST CALL.

It was in proud obedience to the request of the British Government that Nelson left to take up his command and fight his last battle. No admiral ever had such a send-off. He tried to avoid any demonstration at his embarkation, but the people were not to be denied, and blessed him as he passed. "England has had many heroes," wrote Southey, of this incident, "but never one who so entirely possessed the love of his fellow-countrymen as Nelson." I had their huzzas before," said Nelson himself to Captain Hardy, as they took their places in the boat. "Now I have their hearts."

On the morning of Oct. 5, with the enemy in sight and battle certain, the following entry was made by Nelson in his private diary: "May the great God whom I worship, grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory; and may no misconduct in anyone tarnish it, and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature of the British fleet. For myself, individually, I commit my life to Him who made me, and may His blessing light upon my endeavors for serving my country faithfully. To Him I resign myself and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend."

Then followed that famous signal which has become a watchword for

the British navy for all time. At first dictated by Nelson it ran: "Nelson confides that every man will do his duty." The officer to whom it was said suggested that "Nelson" be changed to "England," and that instead of "confides," which would have to be spelled out, should be signalled "expects," for which there was a code number. Nelson accepted the changes, and the signal fluttered out on the breeze, to be received with round after round of ringing British cheers, that must have gladdened Nelson's heart, even at that solemn hour.

At twenty minutes past twelve the first shot in the battle was fired from the French admiral's flagship; at half-past five o'clock on the same day the battle was over; the combined naval strength of France and Spain had been destroyed; Nelson's task was done.

The battle saved England and Europe; it cost England Nelson's life. At half-past one he was shot through the back bone, and lingered in great agony, which he bore with heroic fortitude, for three hours—long enough to know that the victory was complete, and that he had done his duty. Indeed, his last words spoken before those with which this brief sketch opens, were: "Thank God, I have done my duty."

Nelson's last message to his country was in a few words to those who stood around him as he lay dying. "Remember," he said, "I leave Lady Hamilton and my daughter Horatia as a legacy to my country—never forget Horatia!" Shortly before the battle he added a codicil to his will which he spoke of to the services Lady Hamilton had rendered England, and proceeded: "Could I have rewarded those services I would not now call upon my country; but as that has not been in my power, I leave Emma, Lady Hamilton, therefore, a legacy to my king and country that they will give her an ample provision to maintain her rank in life. I also leave to the beneficence

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of my country my adopted daughter,

Charlotte Nelson Thompson; and I desire she will in future use the name of Nelson only. These are the only favors I ask of my king and country at this moment when I am going to fight their battle. May God bless my King and country and all those whom I hold dear."

Nelson's only favor asked from his King and country was never granted, and Lady Hamilton was left to die in most abject poverty in a little French town, and buried in a nameless grave!

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