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LIFE OF  
LORD NELSON.

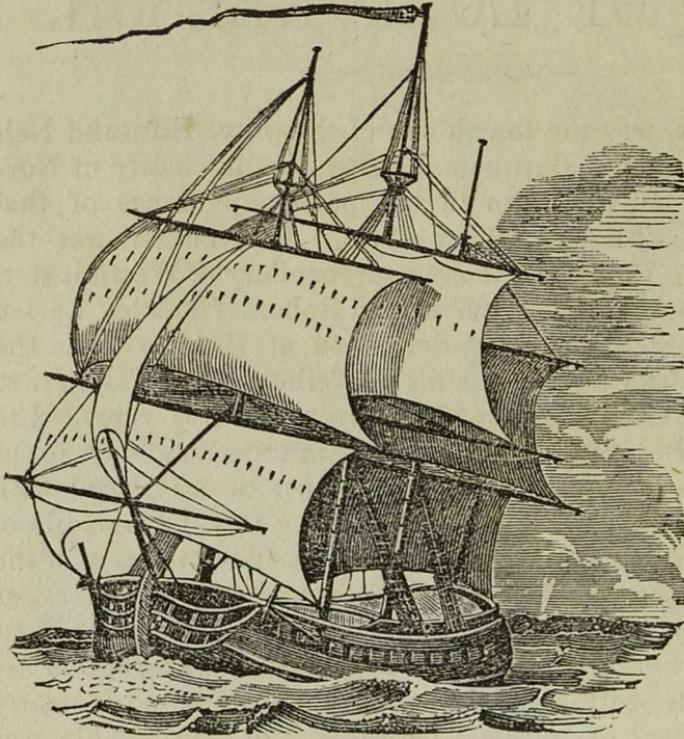
# LIFE OF LORD NELSON.



**N**ELSON was the fourth son of the Rev. Edmund Nelson, rector of Burnham Thorpe, in the county of Norfolk. He was born in the parsonage house of that parish on the 29th September 1758. His mother was the daughter of the Rev. Dr Suckling, prebendary of Westminster, whose grandmother was sister to Sir Robert Walpole, Earl of Orford. Our hero received the name of Horatio from the then Earl of Orford, who was his godfather. He was sent to the high-school of Norwich, from which he was removed to North Waltham; but he did not remain long at school, for at the early age of twelve he was at his own desire placed with his uncle, Captain Suckling, commanding the *Raisonnable* of 64 guns, then lying at Chatham. This early deprivation of the comforts of family and home is the more worthy of remark, as his constitution was feeble and even sickly, and the brilliant career of our hero's life goes far to disprove the common assertion so often obstinately maintained, that the mind is nearly wholly dependent on physical causes. The *Raisonnable* was soon after paid off, and Suckling was put in command of the *Triumph* guard-ship; but as this appointment did not suggest any means of active employment for young Nelson, he was sent a voyage on board a West India merchant-ship. On Horatio's return to England, his uncle, though pleased with his seamanship, did not fail to discover some lurking symptoms of prejudice against the navy, imbibed from the notions entertained by his late shipmates, which he himself set about correcting, and occasionally permitted him, as a reward for diligence, to go in the cutter and decked long-boat attached to the Chatham station. By this means young Nelson, who lost no opportunity for improvement, acquired a competent knowledge of piloting.

Nelson received his first commission as a lieutenant under Captain Robinson of the Worcester of 64 guns, with whom he sailed until 1777.

On the ninth of April, Nelson was commissioned to the Lowestoffe of 32 guns, Captain Locker, as second lieutenant,



and with him proceeded to Jamaica. Our trade in the West Indies was at that period suffering great annoyance from French and American privateers. During a heavy gale, and with the sea running high, an American Letter of Marque\*

struck her colours to the Lowestoffe. The first lieutenant being at the moment absent, Captain Locker exclaimed, in reproachful terms, "Have I then no officer who can board the prize?" Nelson instantly seized the occasion, and gently drawing back the master, who had approached the gangway, said, "It is my turn now, if I come back it will be yours!"

In 1797 Nelson mainly contributed to the brilliant victory over the Spanish fleet off Cadiz. At daybreak a sight of the enemy was obtained—an enemy so superior in force that a commander of less determined character would have hesitated

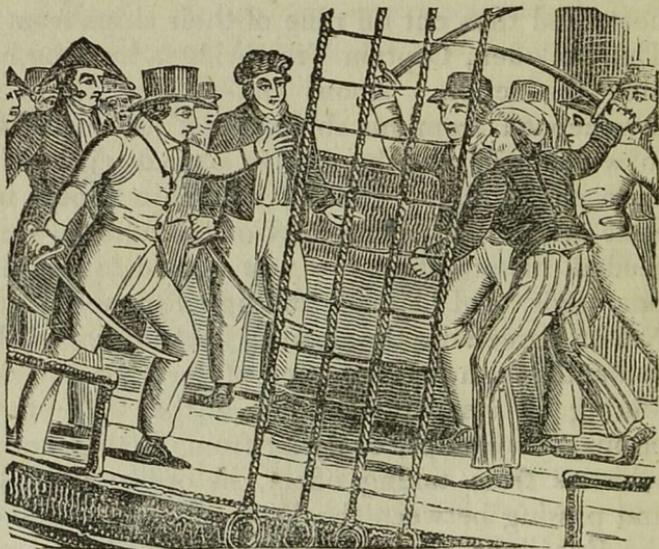
\* Armed vessels so called, the property of private parties, empowered by their respective governments to capture and appropriate to their own advantage ships belonging to an enemy.

to commence an engagement. Before the enemy had time to form in regular order of battle, Sir John Jervis, by carrying a great press of sail, came up with them, passed through their fleet, and thus cut off nine of their ships from the main body. The Culloden, Captain Trowbridge, had the honour of beginning the action. About half-past eleven o'clock the firing commenced from his ship against the enemy's headmost ship to windward, and by twelve o'clock eight of the nine ships were put to flight, and did not again appear in action till the close of the day. This part of the admiral's plan having succeeded, his attention was now turned to the main body of the Spaniards, and he made the signal to tack in succession. But Nelson perceiving the Spanish fleet to bear up before the wind, evidently with an intention of forming their line, and then joining their separated ships, at that time engaged with some of our centre ships, or flying from us, to prevent either of their schemes from taking effect, he ordered the ship to be wore, and passing between the Diadem, Captain G. W. Towry, and the Excellent, Captain C. Collingwood, at a quarter past one o'clock was close in action with the headmost, and, of course, leewardmost of the Spanish division, the San Nicholas.

After a destructive fire had been maintained for a short time, Nelson gave orders to board the enemy; when, to use his own words, "The soldiers of the 69th regiment, with an alacrity which will ever do them credit, and Lieutenant Pearson of the same regiment, were amongst the foremost in this service. The first man who jumped into the enemy's mizzen chains was Captain Berry, late my first lieutenant. Captain Miller was in the very act of doing so, but I directed him to remain: he was supported from our sprit-sail yard, which hooked in the San Nicholas's mizzen rigging. A soldier of the 69th regiment having broke the upper quarter gallery window, jumped in, followed by myself and others as fast as possible.

"I found the cabin doors fastened, and the Spanish officers fired their pistols at us through the windows; but having burst open the doors, the soldiers fired, and the Spanish brigadier (commodore with a distinguishing pendant,) fell when retreating to the quarter-deck, on the larboard side near the wheel. Having pushed on to the quarter-deck, I found

Captain Berry in possession of the poop, and the Spanish ensign hawling down. I passed with my people, and Lieutenant Pearson on the larboard gangway to the forecastle, where I met two or three Spanish officers, prisoners to my seamen, and they delivered me their swords, which as I received I gave to Wm. Fearney, one of my bargemen, who put them with the greatest *sang froid* under his arm.



“The Minerve being sent to my assistance by the admiral, I went on board her, and directed Captain Cockburn to hoist my pendant, and carry me to the van, and place me on board any of the line of battle ships then engaged. However before this could be effected, the signal began to wear and discontinue the action, I went with Captain Cockburn on board the *Victory*, when the admiral received me on the quarter-deck, and, having embraced me, said, he could not sufficiently thank me, and used kind expressions, which could not fail to make me happy. From the *Victory* I went to the *Irresistible 74*, Captain G. Martin, who was ordered to hoist my pendant, as my own ship was completely disabled, and she was then taken in tow by the *Minerve*. My bruises were now looked at, and found but trifling.”

Shortly after this he commanded a force on an expedition to *Teneriffe*, where he lost his right arm. He returned to England about the end of the year 1797, when he was kindly received by his sovereign, who expressed deep sorrow at the loss he had sustained, and a hope that he might yet be able to secure the glory of his country.

The battle of the Nile was fought on the 1st of August,—an

action which, by Nelson's great exertions, ended in the total discomfiture of the French fleet.

The battle of Copenhagen was the next great engagement. It took place on April 2nd 1801. The Danish fleet comprised nineteen ships, and floating batteries, supported by the Crown Islands, mounting 88 cannon, and some guns on the island of Amak. The English had twelve sail of the line, and a proportionate number of smaller vessels. During the heat of the action, the vice-admiral (now Lord Nelson) was on the quarter-deck, when a shot knocked some splinters from the main-mast. He observed, with a smile, "It is warm work, and this day may be the last to any of us at a moment;" and then stopping short at the gangway, he used an expression never to be forgotten—"But, mark you, I would not be elsewhere for thousands."

Soon after this, Nelson received the thanks of Parliament, and was elevated to the rank of a Viscount.

The brilliant career of the great English commander was terminated by the celebrated battle of Trafalgar, on October 21st 1805. In this action he was commander-in-chief, and it was in it that he made use of the ever-memorable signal—"ENGLAND EXPECTS THAT EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY." It was a private signal to the fleet, and was the last that was issued previous to the commencement of the engagement. The enemy's line consisted of thirty-three ships, eighteen of which were French, and fifteen Spanish. The British fleet consisted of only twenty-seven sail of the line. The enemy had not only the advantage in point of size as well as numbers, but a superiority of about three hundred and fifty guns; besides this, ten thousand of their choicest troops were distributed through the fleet to ensure success by boarding; and their ships were furnished with fire-balls and combustibles of every description, in the hope of setting the British ships on fire. Nelson commanded the Victory, and singled out for attack the Santissima Trinidad, in contending with which ship on a former occasion, in 1797, he had already acquired considerable renown. Having got alongside his tremendous opponent, which he familiarly called his old acquaintance, he ordered the ships to be lashed together. The battle now raged with a fury not to be described; and the enemy's ports being full of men, and the guns muzzle to muzzle, the carnage was

most horrible. The crash, too, as the falling masts, yards, &c., were incessantly mowed down by the respective shots on both sides, with the almost general blaze and tremendous uproar, had an awful grandeur which no verbal description or graphic delineation can ever faithfully convey to the eye and ear.

Our hero amidst this most terrific scene appeared to be literally in his glory. He was quite enraptured with the bravery and skill of all under his command; nor was he displeased to find that the enemy in general fought like men worthy of being conquered, of being themselves conquerors in a better cause. In a dress richly covered with the honours which he had acquired by his prowess in former battles, he stood a conspicuous object of emulation to all the heroic men who surrounded him in this. Never had his aspiring and enraptured heart beheld a victory more brilliantly glorious awaiting their noble exertions. Ineffable delight, blended with much benignity beamed over the hero's countenance. Conscious of being engaged in contending for all that is dear to man, and that he was struggling in a righteous cause, he doubted little the success of his country; while his only personal solicitude was, that if he fell it might be in the arms of victory. Still, however, though to all appearance success was about to crown his efforts, the prize as it were within his grasp, he could not but be conscious that individual danger every where hovered around. The *Santissima Trinidad* carried full sixteen hundred men, including a corps of troops, among whom were several sharpshooters; and many other ships had also Tyrolese marksmen on board. Amidst the conflict of cannon fired muzzle to muzzle, showers of bullets were directed on the quarter-deck, where the distinguished hero stood fearlessly giving his orders, and cheerfully abiding every peril. His heart was animated, and his spirits were gay, and the stump of his right arm, which he always pleasantly denominated his fin, moved the shoulder of his sleeve up and down with the utmost rapidity, as was his custom when he felt greatly pleased.

About fifteen minutes past one, while his lordship was walking the middle of the quarter-deck with Captain Hardy, a ball was fired from the enemy's mizzen-top, which struck the epaulette on his left shoulder, and penetrated his chest. He fell with his face on the deck. Captain Hardy, was on his

right (the side furthest from the enemy) and some steps in advance of his lordship, on turning round, saw a serjeant-major of marines and two seamen raising him from the deck, where he had fallen on the same spot on which a little before his secretary had breathed his last, with whose blood his lordship's clothes were much soiled. Captain Hardy expressed a hope that he was not severely wounded; to which the gallant chief replied: "They have done for me at last, Hardy."—"I hope not," answered Captain Hardy.—"Yes," replied his lordship; "my backbone is shot through."

Captain Hardy ordered the seamen to carry the admiral to the cockpit; and now two incidents occurred strikingly characteristic of this great man, and strongly marking that energy and reflection which in his heroic mind rose superior even to the immediate consideration of his present awful condition. While the men were carrying him down the ladder from the middle deck, his lordship observed that the tiller-ropes were not yet replaced; and desired one of the midshipmen stationed there to go upon the quarter-deck and remind Captain Hardy of that circumstance, and request that new ones should immediately be rove. Having delivered this order, he took his handkerchief from his pocket and covered his face with it, that he might be conveyed to the cockpit at this crisis unnoticed by the crew.

The surgeon then examined the wound, and endeavoured to discover the course of the ball, which he soon found had penetrated deep into the chest and had probably lodged in the spine. This being explained to his lordship, he replied, that he was confident that his back was shot through.

He anxiously inquired about the state of the battle, which, although suffering the most extreme agony, he regarded far more than his wound. At times the pains seizing him more violently, he suddenly and loudly expressed a wish to die; then again growing calm and collected, he addressed himself to Dr. Scott, speaking low, in broken unconnected sentences. At first he cried incessantly for drink, and was supplied from time to time with lemonade. After each draught he seemed relieved for a short time, and again addressed a few sentences to Dr. Scott; then the pain again seizing him, he would hastily call out, "Drink, drink!" His lower extremities soon

grew cold and insensible, and the copious effusion of blood from his lungs frequently threatened suffocation. His eyes, however, appeared to brighten and his spirits to revive on hearing the cheers given by the crew of the *Victory*, as the different ships of the enemy surrendered. He frequently expressed a great desire to have his face wiped, repeating to Dr. Scott, "Wipe my face, doctor! doctor, wipe my face!" This being done for a considerable time, he seemed to receive some comfort, but soon grew extremely anxious to see Captain Hardy. His lordship had several times sent for him, and not finding him come, began to imagine he was no more. It was found difficult to efface this idea; and Dr. Scott felt it necessary himself to call Captain Hardy, who had been unwilling to quit his post at such an interesting period.

About half-past four o'clock, however, Captain Hardy attended on his lordship, who eagerly inquired how many ships were captured. On being informed by the captain that twelve which he could see had certainly struck, and that probably more might have surrendered, as the victory seemed nearly complete, the dying hero hastily exclaimed, "What! only twelve; there should have been at least fifteen or sixteen by calculation! However," added he, after a short pause, "twelve are pretty well!" He then added, "Kiss me;" and Captain Hardy immediately kneeling, respectfully kissed the wan cheek of his adored commander. The dying hero now desired that his affectionate regards might be presented to his brave officers and men, and said that he could have wished once more to have beheld his beloved friends and relatives, or even to have survived till he had seen the fleet in safety; but as neither was possible, he felt resigned, and thanked God for having enabled him to do his duty to his king and his country. His lordship latterly with great urgency directed Dr. Scott to rub his breast and the pit of his stomach, where it seems possible he now felt the blood beginning more painfully to flow in a state of increasing congelation. "Rub me, rub me, doctor!" he often and loudly repeated. This melancholy office was continued to be almost incessantly performed by Dr. Scott, till his lordship expired, and indeed for some time after. The last words the immortal Nelson uttered were, "Thank God, I have done my duty."

The hero of Aboukir sunk to rest on the bosom of Victory, which crowned the last achievement of his life with a glory that even eclipsed the lustre of all his former exploits. Nineteen sail of the line were the prize of this dearly bought conquest; while the enemy lost between twenty and thirty thousand seamen, four admirals, one general, and most of their best officers. Among the prisoners was Villeneuve himself, the French admiral, who, frantic with grief and despair, considered his defeat as a dream, and could not persuade himself that his fine fleet had, within the short space of four hours, been consigned to total destruction.

The account of Nelson's death was received with extreme sorrow and regret even by the enemy, some of whom were observed to shed tears on the occasion. "Though he had been the ruin of their navy," they said, "yet they could not help lamenting his fall, as being the most generous enemy and the greatest commander of the age."

When intelligence of the engagement was transmitted to their Majesties at Windsor, the queen called the princesses around her, and read the despatch aloud, while the whole royal group dropped a tear to the memory of the illustrious dead. The king in particular was deeply afflicted.—A proclamation was issued for a day of thanksgiving for the signal and important victory obtained by his lordship; and his Majesty was pleased to confer on his brother and heir the dignity of an earl.

The remains of Lord Nelson were conveyed home in the Victory, and lay in state several days at Greenwich. On Thursday, January 9, 1806, the corpse, attended by an immense procession, was conveyed to St. Paul's, and interred in a vault exactly under the dome.

**THE END.**

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