

# TRIBUTARY VERSES

UPON THE CAPTURE OF

THE AMERICAN FRIGATE CHESAPEAKE BY THE BRITISH  
FRIGATE SHANNON, JUNE 1, 1813;

ADDRESSED TO

**Sir Philip Bowes Vere Broke, Baronet,**  
**OF NACTON, SUFFOLK.**

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BY

**LIEUTENANT M. MONTAGU**  
**OF THE ROYAL NAVY.**

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TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

**A CORRECT COPY OF CAPTAIN BROKE'S LETTER,**  
**FROM THE LONDON GAZETTE.**

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**1814.**

FROM THE LONDON GAZETTE.

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ADMIRALTY OFFICE, JULY 6, 1813.

CAPTAIN CAPEL *of the LA HOGUE, Senior Officer on the HALIFAX Station, has transmitted the following Letter to J. W. CROKER, Esq. detailing the brilliant Capture of the AMERICAN Frigate CHESAPEAKE:*

SHANNON, HALIFAX, JUNE 6, 1813.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to inform you, that being close in with Boston Light House, in his Majesty's ship under my command, on the 1st inst. I had the pleasure of seeing that the United States' frigate Chesapeake (whom we had long been watching) was coming out of the harbour to engage the Shannon: I took a position between Cape Ann and Cape Cod, and then hove

to for him to join us—the enemy came down in a very handsome manner, having three American ensigns flying; when, closing with us, he sent down his royal yards. I kept the Shannon's up, expecting the breeze would die away. At half-past five P. M. the enemy hauled up within hail of us on the starboard side, and the battle began, both ships steering full under the topsails. After exchanging between two and three broadsides, the enemy's ship fell on board of us, her mizen channels locking in with our fore-rigging. I went forward to ascertain her position, and observing that the enemy were flinching from their guns, I gave orders to prepare for boarding. Our gallant bands, appointed to that service, immediately rushed in, under their respective officers, upon the enemy's decks, driving every thing before them with irresistible fury. The enemy made a desperate but disorderly resistance.

The firing continued at all the gang-ways and between the tops, but in two minutes time the enemy were driven, sword in hand, from every post. The American flag was hauled down, and the proud old British Union floated triumphant over it. In another minute they

ceased firing from below, and called for quarter. The whole of this service was achieved in fifteen minutes from the commencement of the action.

I have to lament the loss of many of my gallant shipmates, but they fell exulting in their conquest.

My brave First Lieutenant, Mr. Watt, was slain in the moment of victory, in the act of hoisting the British colours; his death is a severe loss to the service. Mr. Aldham, the Purser, who had spiritedly volunteered the charge of a party of small-arm men, was killed at his post on the gangway. My faithful old clerk, Mr. Dunn, was shot by his side. Mr. Aldham has left a widow to lament his loss: I request the Commander in Chief will recommend her to the protection of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

My veteran boatswain, Mr. Stephens, has lost an arm. He fought under Lord Rodney on the 12th April. I trust his age and services will be duly rewarded.

I am happy to say, that Mr. Samwell, a midshipman of much merit, is the only other officer wounded besides myself, and he not dangerously. Of my gallant seamen and marines we had twenty-three slain and fifty-six

## 6

wounded. I subjoin the names of the former. No expressions I can make use of can do justice to the merits of my valiant officers and crew: the calm courage they displayed during the cannonade, and the tremendous precision of their fire could only be equalled by the ardour with which they rushed to the assault. I recommend them all warmly to the protection of the Commander in Chief.

Having received a severe sabre wound at the first onset, whilst charging a party of the enemy who had rallied on their forecastle, I was only capable of giving command till assured our conquest was complete, and then directing Second Lieutenant Wallis to take charge of the Shannon, and secure the prisoners, I left the Third Lieutenant, Mr. Falkiner, (who had headed the main deck boarders) in charge of the prize. I beg to recommend these officers most strongly to the Commander in Chief's patronage, for the gallantry they displayed during the action, and the skill and judgment they evinced in the anxious duties which afterwards devolved upon them.

To Mr. Etough, the acting master, I am much in-

debted, for the steadiness in which he conn'd the ship into action. The Lieutenants John and Law, of the marines, bravely boarded at the head of their respective divisions.

It is impossible to particularize every brilliant deed performed by my officers and men ; but I must mention, when the ship's yard arms were locked together, that Mr. Cosnahan, who commanded in our main-top, finding himself screened from the enemy by the foot of the top-sail, laid out at the main yard arm to fire upon them, and shot three men in that situation. Mr. Smith, who commanded in our fore-top, stormed the enemy's fore-top from the fore-yard arm, and destroyed all the Americans remaining in it. I particularly beg leave to recommend Mr. Etough, the acting master, and Messrs. Leake, Clavering, Raymond, and Littlejohn, midshipmen. This latter officer is a son of Captain Littlejohn, who was slain in the Berwick.

The loss of the enemy was about 70 killed, and 100 wounded. Among the former were the four Lieutenants, a Lieutenant of Marines, the Master, and many other officers. Captain Laurence is since dead of his wounds.

The enemy came into action with a complement of 440 men; the Shannon, having picked up some recaptured seamen, had 330.

The Chesapeake is a fine frigate, and mounts 49 guns, eighteens on her main deck, two-and-thirties on her quarter-deck and forecastle. Both ships came out of action in the most beautiful order, their rigging appearing as perfect as if they had only been exchanging a salute.

I have the honour to be, &c.

*(Signed)* P. B. V. BROKE.

TO Capt. the Hon. T. BLADEN CAPEL, &c. HALIFAX.

*List of Killed on Board his Majesty's Ship SHANNON.*

G. T. L. Watt, First Lieutenant; G. Aldham, Purser; John Dunn, Captain's Clerk; G. Gilbert, William Berilles, Neil Gilchrist, Thomas Selby, James Long, John Young, James Wallace, and Joseph Brown, able seamen; Thomas Barr, Michael Murphy, Thomas Molloy, Thomas Jones, and John O'Connelly, ordinary seamen; Thomas Barry, first class, boy.

MARINES.—Samuel Millard, corporal; James Jayms, Dominique Sader, and William Young, privates.

SUPERNUMERARIES.—William Morrisay, John Moriarty, and Thomas German.

*(Signed)*

P. B. V. BROKE, Captain.

ALEX. JACK, Surgeon.





## *ADDRESS TO THE READER.*

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IN submitting to the public a Poem of superior excellence, an apology might justly be considered as a bold innovation on the time and patience of the reader, as well as an insult to his understanding: but, as the following effusions are not presented under so flattering a guise, some observations may be deemed necessary. Justice to the author compels me to make known that they are not published with his sanction: by his letter, which accompanies this Address, it appears, they were written merely as a sincere tribute of respect to the exalted character, whom they faintly attempt to eulogize. The Poem falling into the hands of a very

particular friend of Captain Broke, he conceived it possessed merit, and accordingly insisted on its publication; being desirous to perpetuate, if possible, an achievement—the remembrance of which can never fail to produce the most grateful emotions in the breast of every Englishman.

Those who are best acquainted with Captain Broke, are well aware that he is tenacious of any commendation, however becoming—and as anxious to avoid praise, as he is zealous in his endeavours to deserve it. In every department of life he has appeared in, his general deportment has stamped him as a man of genuine worth, and worthy of the esteem uniformly manifested towards him, by those who have the pleasure of his acquaintance.

In Lieutenant Montagu's letter will be seen the high opinion entertained of Captain Broke as a commander in a Navy—which has, by a series of glorious victories, attained a pre-eminence, rendering it capable of insuring protection to those, with whom we desire to maintain an honourable alliance; while, at the same time, it becomes a terror to our enemies: of the truth of this latter assertion the subject before us furnishes an incontestible

proof.—That the wreath of British triumphs may long continue to blossom with equally-decisive marks of our naval superiority, is the warm wish of,

The reader's humble servant,

*THE PRINTER.*



TO SIR PHILIP BOWES VERE BROKE, BART.

SIR,

I TAKE the liberty of sending you some verses herewith, which I have written upon the gallant and glorious exploit you lately performed, with a skill and valour so truly British, in his Majesty's ship Shannon. In doing this I have been inspired only by that admiration and gratitude, which, in common with every Englishman, and the navy in particular, I feel for the signal service you have rendered to your country—in humbling the overweening pride of an insolent enemy, and in recovering the lustre of the British flag, tarnished

## 12

rather by the unconquerable chances of war, by than fault on the part of those who so bravely defended it.

I now venture to hope, Sir, that on consideration of the motives that induce a stranger thus to address you, you will pardon the liberty he takes.

I request you, Sir, to do me the honour of accepting this effusion of my very humble Muse, with this expression of my sentiments—and to believe that I am,

With the greatest respect,

SIR,

Your most obedient and very humble servant,

M. MONTAGUE,

LIEUT. R. N.

PORTSMOUTH, Nov. 28, 1813.

# TRIBUTARY VERSES,

*&c. &c. &c.*

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FOR twice ten years proud France, in vain,  
Had sought to overthrow the reign  
Of England on the sea ;  
But still in her triumphal car  
Britannia rode, and rul'd the war,  
And scorn'd the weak decree.

## 14

The unrelenting foe then cast  
His eye across the wat'ry waste,  
That parts the western world ;  
And, burning with his fell design,  
He hop'd America would join  
The banner he'd unfurl'd.

Impell'd, at length, by French intrigue  
And latent hate, to join the league  
That plotted England's ruin,  
She basely rais'd her impious hand  
To overthrow her parent land—  
Nor mark'd her own undoing.

## 15

She sent her vaunted 'cruisers out,  
All mann'd with seamen bold and stout,  
A pick'd and daring band ;  
But mostly traitors, sordid, base,  
Vile Britons of degen'rate race,  
Whom infamy shall brand.

By fortune favour'd as by might,  
Unmatch'd in force—as swift in flight,  
Awhile they cruis'd unwreck'd :  
And Britain, with amazement, saw  
These vain marauders give the law  
Upon the sea unchecked.



## 16

She saw her GUERRIERE's colours torn ;  
The FROLIC's, too—and heard, to mourn,  
Her PEACOCK's drowning knell :  
But most the MACEDONIAN's fate  
She wept ; and scarce less great  
Her grief when JAVA fell.

The guardian Genius of her fleet,  
All unaccustom'd to defeat,  
Reverse but ill could brook ;  
Indignant at the outrage new,  
Around that fleet her eyes she threw  
With eager anxious look.

## 17

And, gazing on the wooded main,  
With pride embitter'd now with pain,  
While burst a rending sigh—  
She thought on former triumphs gain'd  
By that proud navy she had train'd  
“ To conquer or to die!”

Dispelling then each painful doubt,  
A frigate fair she singled out,  
Of plain but warlike show ;  
And, while, to hear the heav'nly maid,  
In silence warring winds obey'd,  
The waves were hush'd below.

## 18

“ SHANNON,” said she, “ on yonder coast

“ The vain American makes boast

“ He has my pow’r defi’d—

“ Go, wreak upon the braggart foe

“ A vengeance terrible, though slow,

“ And humble low his pride.”

The SHANNON heard, attentive all,

And, quick obedient to the call,

Went forth without delay ;

For Boston Bay she boldly stood,

Where, she had information good,

A Yankee frigate lay.

## 19

As left the sun its orient bed,  
And o'er the wave new glories shed,  
In beams of golden light—  
The SHANNON stood close in, to throw  
The gauntlet to the haughty foe,  
And dare him to the fight.

Exulting with their late success,  
Nor now anticipating less,  
The enemy came out ;  
Right down upon the SHANNON steer'd,  
In dread array, with quarters clear'd,  
And crew complete and stout.

As onward to the fight they bore,  
Slow moving from their native shore,  
By ev'ry tie endear'd :  
From crowded quay and peopled beach,  
As far as loudest tongue could reach,  
Their countrymen them cheer'd.

Nor wanted now our gallant tars  
A record bright of former wars  
To cheer them in the fight :  
Yet, better far than brightest story,  
They had, to spur them on to glory,  
“ An enemy in sight.”

## 21

It was of June the glorious first  
The fight was fought—by France how curs'd  
The memorable day !  
On which brave HOWE, in ninety-four,  
The beaten fleet of Gallia bore  
To British ports away.

Th' undaunted SHANNON mark'd his aim,  
As full before the wind he came,  
To seek the bloody strife;  
And, laying-to, all well prepar'd,  
Her foe she to the combat dar'd—  
To end alone with life.

## 22

Stream'd from his peak and tall mast-head  
The mingled stripes of white and red,  
As nearer still he came ;  
While from the SHANNON's proudly flew  
The pendant of unfading blue,  
Her ensign of the same.

And, as they floated on the breeze  
In wanton sport, with careless ease,  
And woo'd the ambient air—  
Th' intrepid tar who bade them fly,  
With eyes uplifted to the sky,  
Thus breath'd his mental prayer:—

## 23

“ Almighty God ! as good as great !

“ Whose will is sure unerring fate,

“ Vouchsafe to hear my pray'r :

“ This day may victory be mine—

“ But thine the praise, the glory thine,

“ And my brave comrades spare.

“ Yet, should thy will divine be so,

“ To give the battle to the foe,

“ Thy judgments right I'll own :

“ But never shall, while I may live,

(“ So help me, and my sins forgive !)

“ These colours be hauled down.”



## 24

Now, while the fierce opponents clos'd,  
In deepest silence all repos'd ;  
And, still as they drew nigh,  
Each sailor shook his messmate's hand,  
And thought upon his native land,  
And check'd the rising sigh.

Yet this alone a transient thought,  
The moment nobler feelings brought,  
To warm each Briton's breast :  
Such ardour now their bosoms fir'd,  
As though by Honour's self inspir'd  
To fill her high behest.

## 25

Enthron'd amid the conscious sky,

Britannia's Genius from on high

Beheld th' approaching war ;

And, hanging o'er the dread event,

Yet of the issue confident,

Thus spoke each dauntless tar :

“ My true-born sons, if still the same,

“ Now prove your title to the name

“ Held heretofore so glorious :

“ Fifteen short minutes will decide

“ If triumph still with you does side—

“ If England's still victorious.”

## 26

Ha! mark the first loud-pealing gun--

The dreadful conflict has begun,

And shakes the atmosphere :

Thick volumes of convolving smoke,

By flashing gleams of fire broke,

Spread through the lurid air.

The death-wing'd bolts of British thunder

Now rive the hostile oak asunder,

And scatter ruin round ;

Its deaf'ning peals extend their roar

To Massachuset's frightened shore,

And o'er her hills resound.

## 27

Impervious clouds of thick'ning white  
Conceal the combatants from sight,  
While roars the battle's tide :  
The winds, affrighted, fly the main—  
Ah, gentle zephyrs ! come again,  
And throw the veil aside.

List ! now a pause—it grows more clear,  
Above the smoke their mast-heads peer,  
No more by darkness shielded :  
Ha ! see, they lock—the British board !  
On, heroes, on ! may ev'ry sword  
By giant strength be wielded !

## 28

'They rush--the daunted foe retire ;

'The guns, deserted, cease their fire--

Huzzas now rend the sky :

Loud cheers on conquest's wing are borne,

Down, down the faded stripes are torn,

And British colours fly !

O glorious day ! transporting sight !

The hostile stars are set in night,

Nor more insulting shine.

No longer be thy hope deferr'd,

Immortal BROKE ! Thy pray'r is heard--

The victory is thine !

## 29

The hero heard the joyful sounds  
As, bleeding fast with ghastly wounds,  
All faint and pale he fell ;  
And, as his sailors bare him down,  
“ Cheer up,” said he, “ the day’s your own,  
“ My wounds will soon be well.”

Exhausted nature could no more—  
Let balmy rest the Chief restore,  
And sooth his anguish’d pain :  
Meanwhile brave WALLIS\* may supply  
His Captain’s place, and FALKINER† vie  
In skill, nor vie in vain.

\* Second Lieutenant of SHANNON.      † Third.

## 30

Go, then, Columbia! boast no more—

But weep your short-liv'd triumphs o'er ;

Your CHESAPEAKE is lost !

This day our British tars have shewn,

With skill and valour *all their own*,

How poor, how false your boast.

The “ Infant Navy's” laurel boughs

That vaunting deck'd your shameless brows,

Are wither'd all and torn ;

Nor ever, while a Briton breathes,

Shall leaf that twines in British wreaths

By you again be worn.

## 31

The faithful Muse now weeps to tell

What gallant Britons nobly fell

Upon this bloody day :

The setting sun shone on the grave

Of five-and-twenty seamen brave,

While fifty wounded lay.

Brave WATT,\* who, by his Captain's side,

Had through the carnage death def'd,

At length in vict'ry dies :

His flitting soul but stay'd to note

The British flag in triumph float,

Then sought its native skies.

\* First Lieutenant of the SHANNON.



## 32

Fain would my song transmit to fame

Full many a tar of lesser name,

Who shar'd his glorious fate ;

Of those the hapless ALDHAM\* stands

The foremost in the gallant band,

While weeps his widowed mate !

Nor shall, those heroes names among,

Brave LAWRENCE!† thine remain unsung,

Who met an equal doom :

Though pale thy mangled corse is now,

The laurel wreath that deck'd thy brow

For ever green shall bloom.

\* Purser of SHANNON.

† Captain of CHESAPEAKE.

## 33

Of LUDLOW,\* too, the lay shall tell,  
Who bravely fought and nobly fell—  
His race so early run !  
Of foemen full twice thirty slain,  
Sunk deep beneath the crimson'd main,  
Before the set of sun.

Roll light the wave upon her dead !  
Their sepulchre is ocean's bed—  
All fathomless and vast !  
Their fun'ral knell the cannon rung ;  
While soft, a requiem was sung,  
Upon the distant blast.

\* First Lieutenant of CHESAPEAKE.

## 34

The foe has fall'n—the fight has ceas'd :  
Brave PEAKE ! thy manes, now appeas'd,  
    May henceforth sleep in rest.  
The retributive off'ring made,  
Go seek, with gallant LAMBERT's shade,  
    The mansions of the blest.

Now homeward, with her prize in tow,  
Behold the happy SHANNON go,  
    Her trophies proud to sport :  
Ye gentle winds that round her play,  
Improve and guard her destin'd way  
    Within the shelt'ring port.

## 35

He comes—Illustrious Chief! prepare  
The splendid wreath—'tis his to wear,  
Of never-fading bays :  
Prepare the bright perennial crown,  
While loud the trump of high renown  
Resounds the victor's praise.

Brave tars! what joy to you, returning—  
With anxious hope your bosoms burning,  
And wish no more to roam ;  
To meet again each well-known face,  
The cordial hand—the fond embrace,  
The hearty welcome home.

## 36

A grateful country, too, will greet  
Your glad return—and ye shall meet  
Her daughters' sweetest smiles :  
And, as ye tell th' inspiring tale,  
With conscious pride her sons will hail  
“ The guardians of her isles.”

Nor will the valour you have shewn  
Contemporary praise alone  
Beget, but deathless glory ;  
For history's recording page  
Shall tell to many a future age  
The animating story.

## 37

My Muse would fain her theme pursue,  
To pay your worth the tribute due,  
But finds her efforts vain :  
Some abler Bard must wake the string ;  
And, soaring high on bolder wing,  
Proclaim the lofty strain.

THE END.