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ALTHAM.*

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CHAPTER XVIII.

"Besirew me but I love her heartily ;
For she is wise, if I can judge of her ;
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true ;
And true she is, as she hath proved herself ;
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair and true,
Shall she be placed in my constant heart."

Merchant of Venice.

Halifax is proverbially gay and hospitable at all times—more particularly during war ; but never was it more remarkably so than on the Shannon's arrival. It required all Jonathan's previous bragging to give such zest to so usual an occurrence then, as that of an enemy's frigate of slightly superior force being brought in ; but the American navy of the day consisted but of a few frigates, to which, however, we had scarcely one of anything like equal force to oppose. Had Captain Brooke captured a Frenchman of the same superiority, little, comparatively speaking would have been thought of it. Uncle Sam had entirely succeeded in persuading himself, and more than half convincing such of our countrymen as were ignorant of naval affairs, that at sea his prowess was unequalled. It was therefore that such gratulation was expressed when the first action of nearly equal ships, set the question so effectually at rest.

As to the capture of a solitary frigate, it was a matter of no importance to England, and the loss could be but slightly felt by the United States ; but morally considered, it was a conquest. The infant navy of America could only hope to console their country for the total destruction of her foreign commerce, (which it was unable to protect,) by triumphs in single actions of equal ships, and hitherto their rulers and Press had furnished the people with an abundant harvest of "glorious news," rating sloops of 10 and 18 guns, as "fine frigates," when taken from

* Continued from Number 10, page 540.