

might take advantage of some more favorable change in his affairs. Such delays Decatur wisely determined to avoid. He had the power to obtain the recognition of American rights, and he knew that naught but sheer power could gain the respect of this half-civilized despot. The commissioners, after consultation, refused to go on shore, and declared to the captain of the port and the Swedish consul, who were authorized to act for the Dey, that negotiations must be carried on on board the *Guerriere*. They also presented the draft of a treaty, to which they declared the Dey must assent, and the stipulations of which would not be essentially altered. In fine, they would have his majesty understand that they were to dictate the terms of peace, and not he. This was high ground to take in treating with these states; but it could be, and was, maintained.

The captain of the port now desired that at least hostilities should cease while negotiations were going on. To this request Decatur promptly replied, "Not a minute; if your squadron appears in sight before the treaty is actually signed by the Dey, and sent off with the American prisoners, *ours will capture it.*"

After further discussion, and some slight alterations in the terms, the agents of the Dey carried the treaty on shore to obtain his consent and signature. In the mean time, a corsair hove in sight, coming in toward the harbor, close under the shore. True to his word, that hostilities should not cease until the treaty was assented to, Decatur made signal for the squadron to chase. This movement of the fleet hastened matters on shore, for soon the boat, with a white flag, was seen coming off. It had been agreed that this should be the signal that the treaty was really signed. When discovered, therefore, making all haste toward the *Guerriere*, Decatur felt obliged to order the chase to be relinquished.

This treaty secured for the Americans advantages, in some points, over all other nations, and in all respects placed them on a footing with the most favored. Its principal articles provided, that no more tribute should be paid; that no Americans should be enslaved; that all American vessels should be treated hospitably, and their wants relieved in Algerine ports; that the neutrality of the Algerine ports should be maintained in case of war; and that, generally, the Regency should subject itself to the recognized law of nations. The captives held at the time were also given up, and sent on board the flag-ship.

The prizes, which Decatur had made, were given back to the Dey, at his most urgent request, as it was found that they required considerable repairs in order to be sent home, and especially because it was urged that such restoration of the vessels would go far toward reconciling the people to a treaty, which withdrew so many of their long-allowed privileges. The Dey was but a late usurper, and sat quite uneasily on his throne. It was policy for the United States to strengthen his position with his people, as this would be more likely to insure the observance of an obnoxious treaty. A little of the secret history of this despotic court is revealed in the remark of the Dey's prime minister to the British consul, while this work of justice was going on,—“You told us that the Americans would be swept from the seas in six months by your navy, and now they make war upon us with some of your own vessels, which they have taken from you!”