

"When she quitted Spithead, for Halifax, the *Leander* was so lumbered with stores, that the ship would scarcely have made the voyage, had she not received a refit in Cork; and even then it was fortunate, much as was to be expected from her captain and officers, that the *Leander* did not encounter one of the American 44s.

"Another ship, of the same force in guns, and nearly so in men, as the *Leander* and *Newcastle*, was produced by raising upon the *Akbar*, formerly a teak-built Indiaman, and more recently known as the 44-gun frigate *Cornwallis*. The *Akbar* proved a very indifferent cruiser, sailing heavily, and rolling to such a degree, that she was constantly carrying away or springing her masts. The ship actually stowed 450 tons of water; while the *Caledonia*, a ship of double her measurement, could not stow more than 421 tons. The *Akbar* has since been converted to the only purpose for which, and carrying a cargo, she was ever adapted, a troop-ship.

"If it was deemed necessary to build, or equip ships to oppose the large American frigates in fair combat, they should have been frigates, and two-decked ships like the *Leander*, *Newcastle*, and *Akbar*. There was a frigate laid down in the year 1813, which would have answered every purpose; but, after the draught of the *Java* had been prepared as that of a regular frigate, to carry 52 guns, the pen of authority filled up the gangway with a barricade and a row of ports, and hence the *Java* was built as a 60-gun two-decked ship, similar to the *Newcastle* and *Leander*. If the American frigates, of 1533 tons, could not carry, with ease, their gangway guns, and the two last-named British 60 gun ships, averaging 1564 tons, found some inconvenience in carrying theirs, how could it be expected that the *Java*, of 1458 tons, could bear the eight additional guns ordered for her?"

Besides these two anomalous classes of frigates, the cut down seventy-fours, and the fifty; a few ships were constructed to which the name of frigates was really applicable. Two fine frigates were then afloat, but one carried a broad-side of only twenty-six guns, while the forty-fours carried one of twenty-eight; the proverb of "*L'an scottato ha paura de l'acqua calda*"* is here applicable; the Admiralty

had not scrupled to send out thirty-sixes, with instructions compelling them to bring to action any single-decked enemy's vessel, however superior; but now they hesitated to send a fine vessel, nay two, for the *Egyptienne* was rejected also, though mounting the proper number of guns, because she was inferior to her expected adversary by one broadside gun. The *Firth*, *Liffey*, *Severn*, *Glasgow*, and *Liverpool* were accordingly built, manned with a complement of three hundred men and boys, and with an armament of fifty guns—twenty-eight long twenty-four pounders, twenty carronades, thirty-two pounders, with two long nines. A new gun was also tried, and found to answer expectations. Says James—"The six-and-half feet thirty-three cwt. twenty-four pounders not having been found heavy enough, some guns of the same calibre were constructed, from a foot to a foot-and-a-half longer, and weighing from forty to forty-three cwt."

It is singular, that although American sloops were hunting for British frigates all over the ocean, as soon as the intention of arming British frigates with such guns was promulgated, the Americans seem to have suddenly mislaid their orders for hunting down the British, and we accordingly find that the *Java* was the last British frigate they captured or brought to action, although not, as we shall hereafter see, the last they fell in with.

Some of the minor classes of ships, must now receive our attention, as we shall soon have several cases to record, proving that the Americans were as keenly awake to "out-build the British in sloops," as they had outwitted them in their frigates.

To whatever is classed under one head, people are disposed, and not unnaturally, to attach the notion also, of equality, so that when there does exist any difference, the stronger is sure to triumph over the weaker party,—while there always will be found many, whom it will be hard to convince that any disparity of force really existed: such is the difficulty of removing an impression once conveyed, and of substituting for it another.

The Americans had built their new sloops, the *Peacock*, *Wasp*, and *Frolic*, and to meet these on anything like equal terms, it was deemed necessary to build new vessels. What were considered equal terms by the Admiralty,

* The burn child dreads the fire.