

CHAPTER XXII.

The Navy—Loss of the United States' Frigate President—The Constitution engages and captures the British Frigate Cyane, and Sloop of War Levant—Capture of the Sloop of War Penguin, by the Hornet.

THE blockade of the frigates United States and Macedonian, and the sloop of war Hornet, at New London, having continued, until the only season at which they could possibly escape, had elapsed, the Hornet was ordered to remain at her station as a guard ship, whilst the frigates were to be moved up New London river, to the head of navigation for heavy vessels, and there to be dismantled. Commodore Decatur, and the crew of the United States, were transferred to the frigate President, then moored at New York. In the course of the winter, a cruise to the East Indies was determined on, at the navy department, to be performed by a squadron, consisting of that frigate, the sloop of war Peacock, then also at New York, the sloop of war Hornet, and the Tom Bowline, a merchant vessel, bought into the service as a store ship. The Hornet was therefore directed to proceed to the same harbour. On the night of the 18th of November, capt. Biddle passed the blockading squadron without being discovered, and joined commodore Decatur, at New York. That port had been also constantly blockaded, and several frigates, sloops of war, and a razee, were at that time cruising off the Hook. On the 14th of January, commodore Decatur thinking it more likely to get to sea with the President singly, directed captain Warrington to follow him with the Peacock, and Hornet, as soon as the Tom Bowline was in readiness, and having assigned the island of Tristan d'Acunha, as the first place of rendezvous, proceeded to the bay, with a view of escaping from Sandy Hook in

Commodore Decatur.

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Navy.